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MY EXPERIENCES DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF WAR

On December seventh, 1941, when I first heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor; I was very shocked. Our family thought we would lose much of the business in our grocery store with most of our neighbors being white people. To our surprise the business went down only a little. The war did not effect our Christmas and New Year much either. We traded gifts as we did the Christmas of 1940 and everything went fine.

The next few months went very quickly for me. With the evacuation coming most of the Japanese pupils at school didn't care much about their school work. Even though we missed two months of school work and played around most of the semester, the teachers promoted us to the next grade.

Then in April the evacuation began in Seattle. The papers showed when different zones were going to be evacuated. I was living in zone, the next to the last zone to be evacuated. On Monday, May 11th at about 1:00 P.M. we said our last "good-byes" and left for Puyallup on the busses. It took us almost two monotonous hours of riding to reach Puyallup. When we arrived there we were met by a large group. At first I didn't know where I was but later I found out from a friends that I was in Area D.

The first week in Area D was filled by writing letters, taking a physical exam, and looking around our new surroundings. About four days after we arrived at Puyallup, I got a job at the mess supply. After almost two weeks of work I had to quit because I was underage. I spent the next two and a half months by just playing. I made lots of friends anyway. The it was announced in August that we were to be relocated sometime that month. First the advance crew went. Then the different blocks went. I was living in Block One and left Puyallup with the next to the last group leaving Area D. That day, August 18, 1942, was my most exciting one. This was because it was going to be my first train ride and also because this was going to be the first time I was to leave the State of Washington.

We left the Puyallup Station about 9:30 A.M. We stayed at Portland for quite a while before we left for Minidoka. On the train we didn't have anything to do so my friends and I decided to play cards. We played all that day and the only time we weren't playing was when we were eating. The next day we were tired of playing cards so we thought we might as well watch the scenery or visit some other friends at the other end of the train. The scenery was beautiful till we got into Idaho where it got very boring. At last the train came to a stop. Soon we transferred from the train to the busses. A little later we reached the camp. We passed a few blocks before we came to a stop. Our family was almost the first to get off the bus. We were guided through the mess hall, then to the laundry room. From there a guide took us to our new home. Even though it was very hot and dusty I was very glad to get settled down again.

The next day when I first looked around the camp, I was very disgusted. Chiefly because it was very dusty and also because we were surrounded by sagebrushes. It was so dusty of the first month and a half I had to take a shower every day so I wouldn't be white with dust. It was a cold shower at that. The first two and a half months were spent by playing. Then in November my friend and I got jobs as swampers at the warehouse. Again with almost two weeks of work I had to quit. This time it was because of school. At school I learned only a little. Anyway I made some new friends.

Thanksgiving and Christmas were just like the ordinary days out here. The only things which made it feel like those days were the food we got. Also the presents we got on Christmas reminded me that this important day was here. That was about all though.

I don't like this camp life very much but I'm trying to make the best of it. I think everybody should.