

F. L. Coffey

To the

Redress Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians

June 18, 1981

Herbert V. Nicholson, Quaker missionary to Japan 1915 - 1940, 1950 - 1961
Worked with interned Japanese during war and took milk goats to Japan
and Korea 1948 and 49. *Back in Japan 1950 - 1961.*

Born [redacted], Rochester, N. Y. Nisei, as parents born in England

I should have gone to Manzanar with my church, Sawtelle Japanese United Methodist. but because my hair was the wrong color I had to stay at home and do what I could to help them in their time of trouble. I was hounded by the F. B. I. and spent one night in a county jail in Colorado as a Japanese spy. I was also called "Jap lover" and other such names. I and my two sons had hernia operations from lifting too much Japanese furniture. Perhaps we need redress of some kind!

I feel honored to be given a few minutes at this hearing and believe that my wide experience with Japanese both in Japan and America will be of special value.

I would like to place those who need redress in ~~four~~⁵ categories.

First. Potentially Dangerous. After preaching in Japanese and English at our church in West Los Angeles ^{Dec 7th 1941} news came over the radio about Pearl Harbor ~~December~~ 7th, 1941. We gathered our church members at the church and what a pathetic group we were. Words can not describe the terrible feeling as we realized that our two countries were at war with loved ones and many dear friends on the other side. We knew we were facing a serious future with anti-Japanese feeling so strong in California.

That evening I had supper with the Sakamoto family and old Giusuke Sakamoto told me that he was on the F. B. I. black list as he had been in the Japanese army in the Russo-Japanese war. He said there were about 200 such men including old Mr. Hiraiwa of Pasadena who was in the Chino-Japanese war in the last century. Sure enough a local policeman came about eight o'clock to get Sakamoto San. He was very much embarrassed because he bought vegetables and fruit at the Sakamoto shop and knew the old man was an honest law-abiding person in spite of not being a citizen because of a law that broke our bill of rights. Mrs. Sakamoto served him tea and cakes and the dear old gentleman was taken away in disgrace to the police station. I found out the next day that he had been taken to the Terminal Island Immigration prison, so I went down there ~~the next day~~ *at once*.

Besides the army veterans a lot of fisherman and the cream of the Issei

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communities up and down the coast were picked up that night - about 600 in all - including fifty women. The men were later taken to Missoula

Because of public opinion more and more Issei were taken till finally about 4,500 were in custody. The American Friends Service Committee asked me to visit homes where men had been picked up and I went with two other Quakers all thru Imperial Valley and from San Diego up to Seattle visiting such homes. From there I went to Missoula where I was witness in many hearings and interpreter in 52. What absurd attempts at justice they were! When at the last hearings in Santa Fe I had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Ennis, who was in charge of all this business. He told me that they never found a single case of espionage or sabotage and yet had to keep some in detention because of public opinion! I wish you would check on this and then try to find any of these potentially dangerous persons who might still be alive, or perhaps their sons and daughters and write a message of apology and perhaps give a token gift. Also a handful of Nisei were put in jail without any reason, such as Togo Tanaka and Gordon Hirabayashi. Will you forgive us Togo?

Second. Those who moved voluntarily East or into Zone B. of California. I would like to mention Dr. Yamaguchi and his doctor wife and another Nisei doctor who moved their clinic to Del Rey, rented a small hotel and fixed it up as a hospital at an expense of about \$10,000. They received a notice that they had to go to a relocation center. ^{They don't go.} Six farmer families moved from Palos Verdes to near Porterville, rented several hundred acres, cleared the land and planted tomatoes. They had to go to a camp before they picked a single tomato. Does that make sense?

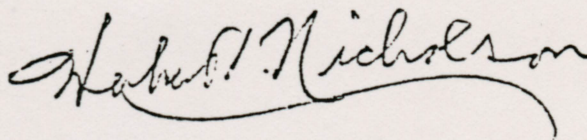
Third All who were taken to relocation centers, often via assembly centers, surely need redress especially since they cooperated so wonderfully. What other minority group in America would have been treated that way without demonstrations and many problems. The Irish would have kicked over the traces!

Fourth Terminal Island and Bainbridge forced removals on 48 hours notice surely need compensation. What an unnecessary suffering to impose on those folks!

Fifth Nisei caught in Japan and unjustly imprisoned, such as Tomoyo Kawakita, and Tokyo Rose. I wonder if she ever got her 10,000 fine returned. Then there

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In conclusion, I have given two of you a little book, "Valliant Odyssey," and hope some of you have read it. On the back cover is a picture of me speaking to the assembled multitude at the dedication of Mansarar as an historical site, April 14, 1973. I would suggest that you finish your report with something like what I said at that time. "Will you please forgive us as we pledge whole-heartedly to join with you in the determination that such a thing as concentration camps shall never happen again in our beloved country."



Herbert V. Nicholson

July 15, 1981