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My name is Saburo Surita. I was born in Waimea, on the island of Kauai (Hawaii) in 1899. At present, I am 82 years old and reside in Gardena, California. My family started a wholesale bakery in Hawaii in 1925. My father, I and three other brothers were doing quite well operating the "Holly Bakery," that by 1941 was putting out 80,000 loaves a day. We had 7 delivery trucks, 30 employees on a 24 hour shift, with good outlets to stores, markets, schools, cafeterias and restaurants.

In February of 1942 after Pearl Harbor was attacked, I was picked up by the FBI and taken to the Immigration Office and interrogated for three straight days. I was frisked and all of my personal belongings were taken from me. They had no evidence that I was disloyal in any way. As a matter of fact, after Pearl Harbor, the military came to request the use of our trucks for military purposes on a rental basis. We agreed to simply donate them for their use when needed. I was still being held when I received a letter from my brother telling me that the business was being taken over by the authorities. The bakery was to be put under the control of the Alien Custodian Office because my father had retired and was living in Japan at the time. All of our assets were frozen and members of our family were put on salary. They had to purchase every loaf of bread as if it were not their business anymore. Since I was being held, I was given no salary and my wife was left with five children to take care of with no income. My son of fifteen, then the oldest of my children, had to go to school part-time so that he could work at the bakery to earn money for my family. He developed a very bad allergy to flour and has been so afflicted since. My younger brothers did the best they could to keep up the business in my absence, but the sudden emergency and crisis situations brought business to a standstill.

After being held in the immigration compound for three months, I was shipped to the Sand Island Detention Camp, a POW camp a few miles from the main island of Honolulu. Other Japanese being held there with me were slowly being moved to camps on the mainland (New Mexico etc..). While at Sand Island, we were allowed visits by our wives with barbed wire fences between us. This was a prison camp with heavy military guards and electrical wire fences, strict curfew rules and daily attendance checks. We were told that we could be reunited with our families if we agreed to go to mainland concentration camps. We agreed and my wife and children were interned with me at Jerome, Arkansas. We were there for a year and a half and were then moved to the camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

After the war ended, we were released and wound up in St. Paul, Minnesota. We started a small restaurant to make a living. As soon as we could afford to, we went back to Hawaii. There, I found that the bakery was being put up for auction by the authorities. Business was bad but my brothers and I decided to try and re-purchase our own business. All of our assets, which had been frozen during the war, were completely gone. It was hard for me to raise any money but my brothers and I managed to reclaim our bakery. We tried everything to revive our business. I spent weeks and months soliciting our old customers but five years of absence had taken its toll. Too much was lost and our morale as a family was very low. We decided to sell out so it went for \$70,000. Before the war, we could easily have sold it for \$250,000.

I lost all interest in business and as the years went by, my vigor and health declined. I was also saddened by the knowledge of the death of one of my brothers, who was with my father in Japan, during the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. I developed stomach ulcers and needed medication for many years and my nerves were always in poor condition. My wife also suffered terribly from

the mental stress of all of this and her health deteriorated throughout the camp years (her health is not good to this day). No longer feeling a part of my former community in Hawaii, I left Hawaii when my son decided to go to school in Chicago.

Today I live in retirement in Gardena, We, my wife and I, live on social security and rent our house. I feel that the government owes me an indemnity for the years I suffered. My imprisonment and the years spent by my entire family in the concentration camps left terrible scars. The loss of my livelihood, my property, the mental stress and the inability to provide my children a good education or a financial legacy has affected me deeply.

date

signature