

Feb. 8, 1945

Editor Leader. In your paper of two weeks ago I noticed in your district news a notice of the loss of two of our fine young men, and right below how the people of Leland welcomed the Japanese back to our district. Whoever put that item in the news took in more territory than they had any right to do, for I as a resident citizen, do not approve of the Japs coming back now, or any other time. How are we to know who are loyal Japs and who are not? The governor of our state, who is supposed to know all the inside facts of those things, does not approve of any Japs coming back here, so why should we be forced to welcome them? The People seem to think that Japs who were born here are bound to be loyal. Maybe some of them are. But who are they?

People seem to ignore the notices, "Remember Pearl Harbor," or they have forgotten about it. They seem to forget that Jap officials were in Washington, D.C. in a conference with our president, when the "friendly Japs" bombed us with disastrous results. We are out working every day for the war effort, and buying bonds, and also getting along without many things we need, and worst of all, sacrificing the lives of the best of the young men of our country to put the Japs and their allies back where they belong, and yet people welcome the Japs back. When the boys who come back from overseas find their jobs filled with Japs while they go begging for work, I just know they will do it with a smile.--James Ramsay, Leland.

Feb. 15, 1945

In the last issue of The Leader, February 8, there was a communicated contribution relative to the family of Japanese who had just returned and according to the Leland Correspondent had been given a welcome by the Leland people. If The Leader were read nowhere but in Leland this communication might go unquestioned. But The Leader is not only read in Leland, but it is read all over the County of Jefferson, and not only over the state of Washington, but in many other states in the United States. And overseas. To strangers it might seem that we had a tremendous Japanese problem in Leland and that there was a vigilante committee about ready to begin expelling the Japanese.

The fact is there is no Japanese question in Leland and never was. While transient families of Japanese have been going and coming as work presented attractions, for 15 years, or near that, there has been but one family. And that family owned and operated their own home and have ever been considered one of the best families in Leland regardless of color.

Going back to more than 40 years ago James Munn, who had recently built a telephone system found that his work of maintaining the telephone line and running a farm was too much for one man. He tried hired help, first one and then another, all proving more or less unsatisfactory, so he finally got in touch with parties in Canada. (Jim Munn was a Scotch Canadian, naturalized, of course) and through these Canadian parties he got hold of a young Japanese man who was well recommended to be able to give satisfaction and work. His name was Kaichi Kawamoto and he not only proved satisfactory, but he proved to be a real jewel. Of course some of the busybodies got nosy pretty soon and began asking, "Why did you get a Jap to work for you? Why not get a white man?" To all of these questions Jim Munn gave the same answer: "Kawamoto is yellow on the outside only, but on the inside he is white as any man, and a whole lot whiter than a lot that I know."

So Kawamoto stayed on for several years and went from farming, gathering a number of his men about him and putting in a little logging camp on the Munn property to take out cedar that had been damaged by fire some time earlier. The cedar was sold to the Green Mill at Quilcene, another pioneer industry, and kept the little logging industry running for some time.

Eventually Kawamoto felt able to send back to Japan for his wife, whom he had been away from for a number of years and when she came he looked about for a permanent home which in several years he located and took possession of in the name of his little son, Joe Kawamoto. Joe was a native born citizen and thereby protected by all the rules that protect any other person born in the United States.

He developed a nice farm and brought up a nice family. Joe has been running the place himself for a number of years, and his parents make their home with him and his wife, another native-born, and of course protected by all the laws of the United States for their native born citizens. When war was declared on the United States and threw everything into the war program the Kawamoto family was forced to join the rest of the evacuees. They were sent to Tule Lake. Shortly after arriving there the U.S. army sent out a questionnaire to all Japanese in the Tule Lake colony to state yes or no to the following questions: "Do you forswear all allegiance to Japan", and "Will you be willing to go anywhere that the country needs you?"

As was expected, a storm immediately broke out in Tule Lake and pro-United States and anti-United States factions. Joe and the other Kawamotos stood staunchly by the colors, although the situation looked serious for some time. However, the questionnaire proved satisfactory to the army as far as the Kawamoto family was concerned, and they were soon taken to Oregon to help harvest the beet crop. They stayed in Oregon about three months and then were returned to Tule Lake.

In three more months Joe Kawamoto signed up a contract with a big farmer in Idaho for two years to take the management of his farm. For this service he received \$2400 annually. He was asked the first of January to sign up for another two years at the same price, but as his father had a serious illness in September, a partial stroke, he longed to come back to Leland. Said he wanted to die at home. So Joe Kawamoto made application to the F. B. I. and the Western Defense Commander General Pratt to return to Leland. So the Kawamoto family returned. And the Leland community, of a large share of it who had been friends before, welcomed the Kawamotos back home, which is no more than could be expected, knowing the character and standing of the family.

Right here the Leland Correspondent which most know is none other than the only pioneer left in Leland, Mrs. Ana Munn says she apologizes to James Ramsay for taking in so much territory. In this welcome she neglected to exempt forty acres in the far north of the community which belongs to the Ramsays and wishes to ask shall she fence them in, too? So long asking whether or not the Japanese will be loyal. How are we to know that anyone is going to be loyal except by trial. And the Kawamotos have stood the trial, at least a good lot of it.