

My name is Elaine Ishikawa Hayes. I was evacuated from Sacramento, California with my mother and four sisters on March 23rd, 1942 to Walerga Assembly Center and from there in August, to Tule Lake Relocation Camp. I was eighteen at the time, my youngest sister was six.

My father was confined to Wiemar Tuberculosis Sanitarium, approximately fifty miles from Sacramento. My father's confinement was particularly tragic in that he was separated from the rest of us for the duration of the war, perhaps the only Japanese left -- alone in the hostile period in Northern California. My mother and I saw him once in October, 1946, shortly after travel was allowed to California after the war. One sister, who was attending University of California at Berkeley, visited him on week-ends when she could. We were not able to move from Chicago where we had relocated at the time. He died two months later. He was alone, desperately ill and without family! We were deprived of a full family relationship to his dying day.

For my mother, after my father became ill, life became a heavy burden and challenge but she persevered. Despite the deprivation of American Citizenship and Naturalization Classes, she learned her English, learned to drive, learned the terminologies of the business world and continued my father's insurance business. This, for an issei woman, born and bred in Japan in the early 1900s, now with five children, entering a very male-dominated, competitive business in the ethnic community was near impossible.

From 1934 to 1941 she was able to build a successful business, using some intuitive social service skills, particularly for farm families, widows of farmers and their children and sheer stamina and hard work. She was on the road for many days at a time, traveling at night, stopping at Japanese inns or

motels or friends that came to know her. At first she hired house-keepers to stay with us, but we soon learned to run the house-hold ourselves: she called often long-distance to check at home and to tell us where she was

Her earnings of \$300.00 or \$400.00 a month was a considerable amount in those days and though there was little in the way of tangible assets the business and clientel developed. Evacuation destroyed all of this -- all the months or worry, the thousands of miles of driving, alone late into the night, on strange country roads -- all over Northern California. The Japanese communities were totally destroyed, her clients uprooted.

Another very trying worry for her was the fact that one of my four sisters, age nine, had had a leg amputation and was using an artificial leg. The recovery from an accident in 1938 and adjustments to artificial limbs was a horrendous one. The worry and emotional trauma for both my mother and sister caused by the Evacuation was almost worse. Physically, the rough terrain of Walerga Assembly Center and later at Tule Lake was an extreme hardship and being miles away from medical facilities or specialists was a constant worry. When the leg finally broke, some good nuns took it to San Francisco for repairs and it was months before it was returned. I remember that my mother, though almost hysterical with anger could not permit missing any school (even in barracks) and ordered me to carry her if necessary. For my sister the stigma of appearing on crutches, with one leg, in a classroom of strange faces was more than she was willing to endure. (Struggle, we did to the school steps, luckily a sensitive, young nisei teacher, on her first teaching day won her over. There-

after she "walked" on crutches without her artificial leg, in desert heat, mud or snow to school and back to our barrack room.

When Tule Lake was designated to become a segregated camp, my mother ordered to Camp Amache in Colorado. She felt that the Camps were not a proper environment to raise children in and was also fearful of not being able to escape quickly with a crippled nine-year-old in case of violence or fire or any other threatening occurrence. She accepted a position as a house-mother in a Winnebago Indian Boarding School in northern Wisconsin. In the fall of 1943 she drove there with my three younger sisters and with the help of a college student on his way to University of Minnesota. En Route, they were met with hostile stares and treatment (ei refused rooms for overnight stays at motels) during the height of the war. In Nielsville, Wisconsin she again faced a new and an uncertain environment and heavy work. (The two older of us were in college by then.)

For people like my mother who have even meagerly but stalwrtly fought against great odds to gain a livelihood and independence - to have it all torn away - war hysteria or no - there must be some restitution!

Waine Iwakawa Hayes
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