

My name is Mutsu Homma, daughter of the late Reverend and Mrs. Wada of the American Baptist denomination, and the wife of the late Dr. Kyushiro Homma, dentist, and mother of three children. I have two brothers and a sister. During World War II, we were divided into five separate relocation camps.

Because of the uncertainties of the war, the Japanese people wanted their teeth problems taken care of before they were evacuated. We knew that most of the people would not be able to pay in full but my husband said, "We are in the same boat. I like to help friends." He worked until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. every day and did laboratory work after that.

He received an U.S. Army order to open a dental clinic at the Santa Anita Racehorse Track which was the assembly center for the Japanese. This order came one week before all the West Los Angeles Japanese and Japanese Americans had to go to Manzanar relocation camp, and the date was April 28, 1942. The army official told my husband there was no dental equipment or medicine so that he would have to take his own to Santa Anita. My husband bought a new portable dental drilling machine, medication, and dental instruments, even surgical soap. His salary in Santa Anita was \$16.00 a month.

After ten years of dental practice in West Los Angeles and those several months of working on people preparing to leave for relocation camps, he had more than \$20,000 in uncollected bills. The Japanese people's bank accounts were frozen and they were not allowed to take money out, so many had no access to funds to pay us. They offered us family antiques and goods, but we did not want to take the things. One Caucasian lawyer in the same office building told my husband to leave those statements to him, so we did. My husband died of a heart attack in Amache relocation camp in Colorado, from overwork. Before he died, he told me to see this lawyer. In 1956, I went back to West Los Angeles to look for him but he had also died.

After the army ordered the Japanese evacuated to Manzanar, other people poured into West Los Angeles to buy the Japanese people's household goods. I never sold anything, I was scared of them.

They walked into the house and said, "I want this piano. How much?" I repeatedly said that I do not want to sell the piano because the piano is my life. I started piano lessons when six years old and went to the University of Southern California College of Music. They said you can't take the piano to Manzanar so I'll buy it. They put the piano on a truck and left \$25.00 for the Baldwin piano.

Another time I found persons loading the washing machine on a truck so I begged them not to take it since I had three little children I had to wash for every day. They finally unloaded the washer but by that time the dining room set was gone. People were very rude and acted like we were inferior. What was left we stored with Bekins and paid for it yearly.

My husband was the head of the dental clinic in Santa Anita. He had received the best recommendation from the West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Since there was no dental equipment he had to make everything. It took him two weeks to make dental operatory chairs and organize the clinic. He lost 30 pounds in two weeks.

The day we were sent to Santa Anita, we picked up our youngest son from the hospital who was suffering from pneumonia. There was no milk for the children for four days. In the 104 to 110 degree heat we had to wait three times per day in long lines to wait to go into the mess hall to eat. My two year old son got sun stroke. He is still suffering headaches from time to time.

Later we were sent to Amache relocation camp in Colorado where my husband died. One life insurance company would not pay the insurance of \$3,000.00 because we were accused of being enemy aliens.

After the war, my father became the minister of the Japanese Baptist Church in Seattle. Since I was recently widowed I decided to join my mother and father with my three young children. I did not get any help or support from the American government and had to raise my three children. It was very, very hard.

Even today, I cannot see any war pictures or read stories about the war. I cannot face it.

I hope this sort of thing never happens again to anybody. It is very painful for me to talk about this, but for the good of people, I am willing to do this.