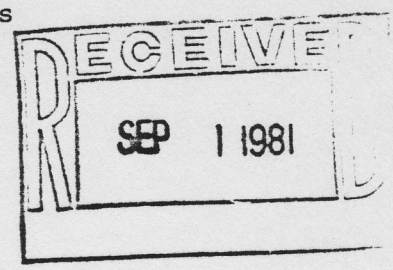


TO: Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians  
 FROM: Homer Yasui  
 [REDACTED], Portland, OR 97215  
 SUBJ: Testimony on behalf of mother, Shidzuyo Miyake YASUI  
 Date: 31 AUG 1981



My name is Homer YASUI. I am a Nisei, who was born and reared in Hood River, OR. For the past 31 years I have lived in Portland, OR, where my wife and I have reared our own family.

I do not wish to testify on my behalf, but I do wish to raise some pertinent points on how the forceful evacuation affected my Issei mother. Both of my parents have been dead for over 20 years, and since they cannot speak for themselves, then let me say the words.

At the time of the "evacuation", my mother was 55 years old, and responsible for the guidance of seven children. My father, Masuo YASUI, had been interned as a "potentially dangerous enemy alien" on March 6, 1942. By the time of our forced removal to the Pinedale Assembly Center in California, this left my mother as the acting head of the family, which at that time consisted of only her, my 15 year old sister, and me. According to some policy -- certainly not hers -- our original family of nine was scattered to the East, the Midwest, Minidoka, and several different blocks in both Pinedale and Tule Lake.

My mother, like most Issei women, was neither trained for, nor had any experience in handling business affairs. But because of the evacuation, it devolved upon her to say whether some or all of our farms should be sold, what plans should be made for the further education of her children, where we would go, and how we were to live.

The evacuation years were exceedingly difficult years for her, because it was as if she was suddenly made a widow. And in a very real sense, by a sweeping edict issued in the name of the U.S. government, she did lose her husband of 30 years, and was in effect made a widow.

Before February 19, 1942, my parents owned or controlled over 400 acres of farmland. Most of this property was in crop bearing fruit orchards, with the exception of about 20 acres in Green Point, Oregon. This latter piece of ground grew mostly tree stumps, but even so, it had the potential of becoming an orchard. Altogether, just in land alone, my eldest brother estimates that our family lost in excess of \$100,000.00 1942 dollars.

Other witnesses have testified that it was no simple or fair matter to dispose of property in about one months time, so I will not belabor that point. The simple facts are, that in my mother's case, although she did have two sons who were of voting age, when a decision had to be made -- as it did repeatedly -- the buck stopped with her. Because of the bewildering blizzard of rumors and conflicting reports, it was my mother who had to make the final decisions on the disposal of our farms and real properties, on the basis of such information.

The very fact that my father was interned on grounds unknown to us, and the fact that we were put in prison camps by our own government on the basis of being members of an allegedly undesirable alien nation, made it imperative that my mother salvage as much as she could. She did this all right, but for years afterward, not only she, but also my father berated her for letting the property go so cheaply.

Until my father died in 1957, it was common to hear them re-discussing how the property deals should have been handled. My mother was a very tough woman, in the

sense of having inner strength and pride, but she had her share of grief again after the war, reliving all the mistakes that was made in these real estate transactions. She saw her family scattered North, South, and East. One son was an enlisted man in the U.S. Army. Her husband was locked up in an enemy alien internment camp in a series of such places. Another son was jailed for nine months, and fined \$5,000.00 for daring to defy a military curfew applicable only to those of Japanese ancestry, and to enemy aliens. My mother lived through all of these things unbroken, but certainly not unscarred.

In 1953, both my parents became naturalized American citizens. Very obviously they considered America as their permanent home. Yet when their spiritual parent country, the United States of America, punished tens of thousands of us unjustly, on the basis of our ancestry, to what authority could they complain and obtain an equitable hearing? There were none then, and it has been only recently that there is one now.

It is for this wrong, allegedly committed in the heat of hysteria, that I, Homer YASUI, ask for \$100,000.00 for every incarcerated individual, or their heirs, from the government of the United States of America. In asking this, I am only reiterating the wording on a 10¢ U.S. postage stamp that says "people's right to petition for redress".

*Homer Yasui*