

COMMISSION ON WARTIME, RELOCATION, AND INTERNMENT
OF CIVILIANS ACT
August 24, 1981
11 p.m.

The following document contains the testimonies of:

Tana Marumoto
Mrs. Azumano
Umato Matsushima
John. T. Yoneyama
Ben Kasubuchi

Sponsored by the Oregon Nisei Coalition for Redress

INTRODUCTION:

^{NA}
Tamei Marumoto

"What kind of reparation do we deserve after ⁽⁴⁰⁾41 years of bearing the guilt of Pearl Harbor?"

Mrs. Azumano

(translated) "I would like very much to have the American government write this paper to say 'We are sorry.'"

John Yoneyama

(translated) "However, I do believe that if there are Japanese in need, I hope that the government would do something for them."

Ben Kasubuchi

"I'd ask you to find a word, a suitable word, to describe but.... Emotionally(?) suffer, that's the only thing it is. I suffered."

TESTIMONY OF TANA MARUMATO

Miyuki Yasui, Interviewer.

I am interviewing people today who have gone through the war time experience of evacuation due to Executive Order 9066. I have with me a resident of Portland who has gone through this experience and is here to tell us about it.

Q: Will you tell us your name.

A: My name is ^{an}Mar^otana Marum^oato. I'm more commonly known as Tana Marum^oato. I was born and raised in Montana and my father, at the time of his death, was leasing a farm. He had served in the Spanish American War with the promise that if he did so, he would get citizenship in the U.S., but I think the only time I ever heard my father swear was at the government for ^{renegeing}reneging on that promise. Of course then, my mother and father both passed away in 1937 and 1938. We lost our farm and that was the reason that my younger sister and I went ^{re}to ⁱⁿSeattle at the outbreak of the war. When the Exec. Order came out that we would have to leave Seattle, we didn't know what to do. We had no home to go to, ~~(My employees wanted to adopt us but~~ ~~but I couldn't see two single Japanese girls living in~~ ~~Seattle.)~~ We would have no freedom whatsoever and all our friends would be gone, so we voluntarily evacuated to Montana. We were frightened when we saw that camp, it was sort of like the big barn and there was a little yard in the front of it and the whole thing was surrounded by coils and coils of barbed wire.

Q: Now, did your family consist of just you and your sister.

A: No, I had a big brother. My brother's name was George Washington Tsuyama. He was named after George Washington and that was on his birth certificate. My brother immediately volunteered and enlisted in the U.S. Army. After he entered the service, he studied and became the first police and prison sergeant of Japanese descent. But, during one of his furloughs, he came to visit me and for the first time, he learned about the mass removal and incarceration of the people of Japanese descent. And so when he got back to Camp Cox in Missouri, he made a decision. He said that he had to press his active duty. Of course, with my husband in service and my brother-in-law already in Europe as a medical officer and the fact that we had lost our parents just four years past was hard too. But, he said that isn't the reason he had joined. He said he had joined because he didn't want any of us, his brothers and his sisters, to ever be ashamed of Pearl Harbor. The next thing we knew, we got that telegram. "Your brother is missing in action in the Vosges mountains in France. What kind of a price tag do you put on my brother, on the members of my family whose lives were shattered because of this incarceration and the shame until what kind of reparation do we deserve after 41 years of bearing the guilt of Pearl Harbor?"

TESTIMONY OF MRS. AZUMANO

My name is Dale Hashimoto, I am interviewing on August 24, 1981.

Q: Could you give me your name?

A: Mrs. Azumano

Q: Where do you live? Where is your residence presently?

A: 2802 S.E. Moreland.

Q: What you do in Portland?

A: Yes.

Q: In Portland.

A: I just stayed in Portland. 63 years.

Q: What is your age?

A: Eighty-six, or a little over.

Q: Where were you living at the time of evacuation?

A: Williams Avenue near Tillamook Street. I had worked in a business on Williams Avenue.

Q: With your husband.

A: Yes.

Q: And who was your family. How many children?

A: George Azumano. ^{with ARMY} Reiko Azumano, she stayed with me. She going to down-town to pay for college time during wartime.

Q: She was in college. What did you do about a grocery store.

A: Grocery store. I sold to friends, Chinese people, very, very cheap because I can find out some other person to buy me more money because I have to evacuate. My evacuation date almost a last day, May 5. I remember telephone call from ^{government} gentleman, "No Japs in this town." He put up a big sign I'll never forget. Sometimes I cried.

Q: What did you do with the other personal belongings?

A: Gave it away to my friend, my customer, save it for me if I come back to Portland, so I can buy sewing machine, you know. My good customer, Mrs. Dolt, she keep for me.

Q: I see. Now, who was the situation in the Assembly Center like. Do you remember?

A: I don't like the whole thing. One thing, before the bathroom completed house. I don't know how many day, maybe one month over, I just don't know exactly. Nighttimes after Raney, just a ^{RAINY} month and I got the ^{MOD} boots, to go to the bathroom. ^{Leg} One rig up, another one starting up just a little hard.

Q: Oh yes.

A: No room store, just cold winds go through.

Q: You got a big hole?

A: A big hole.

Q: No partitions?

A: No, no. (translated) Someone returned to the West Coast to ascertain that there was no longer any danger of being beaten up and so on. So, we decided that it was no good staying in this kind of situation so I came back to Berkeley Street in Portland. As far as redress and composition are concerned, we are thankful that we can live and able to take this and eat. As far as the compensation is concerned, I would like very much to have the American government write a paper to say we are sorry. That paper is what I'd like to see. Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF UMATA MATSUSHIMA

My name is Dr. Hashimoto, I am interviewing on August 24, 1981.

Q: What is your name.

A: Umata Matsushima.

Q: Where do you live.

A: 905 S.E. Ash St. Portland, Oregon.

Q: Age.

A: 82. Japanese born, carried Japanese food also curious too. Came to Portland direct from Japan.

Q: What happened at the time of Pearl Harbor.

A: ^{Federal Reserve} People came after, and closed the store.

Q: What did they do to you.

A: Well, they asked me check all books and straighten up books and have two days after Pearl Harbor to go up to Immigration Office and check everything and put me in Japanese Pig box.

Q: Which means what.

A: That means conden ^(county jail) ?

Q: What happened to your family. What was your family, now you had a wife.

A: Wife and two children.

Q: Two boys. All right, and what happened to your store.

A: They locked it up and ~~put it in~~ ^{alien custodian} enemy area and custody and took care of all of it. I had nothing to do with it.

Q: Now, after you were in jail, what did they do.

A: Well, you mean store?

Q: No, about you.

A: Well, I was in jail.

Q: Why did they take you?

A: I don't know. That's a big question.

Q: Did they ask you ^{dad} ~~to~~ do any crime or anything?

A: No. They ask me many thing.

Q: They did not accuse you. All right then, from the County jail in Portland where were you sent.

A: I was there in December, ~~1928~~ and then moved to Montana. Very cold.

Q: Now, when was it that you found out the condition of your store. What happened to your store.

A: Well, my wife had the power of attorney and she was trying to sell all merchandise. So, she sent me wire to Montana, and it came about four or five days after she sold the store.

Q: What kind of a price do you think you got.

A: One-third of the wholesale price. My little kid was about 2 years old I think and called me uncle. I hadn't seen them in a couple of years.

Q: So he called you uncle instead of dad. Tell me, what do you think of the whole compensation, reparation redress and that kind of a question. Does the government owe something to you.

A: I think the government is [?] overcrowded.

Q: Why.

A: German people and Italian people stay right there. But Japanese ^{only} owners, even
2nd generation, American citizens are relocated, more than \$100,000.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN T. YONEYAMA

My name is Dr. Hashimoto, I am interviewing on August 24, 1981.

Q: What is your name.

A: My name is John Terukichi Yoneyama.

A: I live in Gresham.

Q: Where did you live at the time of WW II.

A: I lived in Gresham. I had 16 acres of strawberries and 10 acres of cane at least and other vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower. I had five children with the oldest being 8-years-old and youngest six months at the time of evacuation.

Q: Tell us about the way you took care of the property.

A: The first order was to the farmers must keep producing; we have to plan things that must be planted. We had to borrow money from the bank and purchase fertilizers to fertilize the land and cultivate and keep producing. The government officials would visit us and send us buyers. All these people had no experience in this sort of thing and kept saying, "Oh, that's too high a price, come down, come down." The government kept telling us that we don't know when an evacuation might come, so you must hurry and settle your

accounts. They wouldn't tell us exactly when the evacuation order would come. One of our children was born in a relocation center. The child was ill and this was an unknown disease. We had almost given up, but he got well. He's healthy now.

Q: What do you think of the reparation, compensation and redress that sort of question concerning the damage evacuation and relocation has done to you.

A: However, I do believe that if there are Japanese who are in need, I would hope that the government would do something for them.

TESTIMONY OF BEN KASUBUCHI

My name is Dr. Hashimoto, and I am interviewing on August 24, 1981.

Q: Would you give me your name please.

A: My name is Ben Kasubuchi.

Q: You live where now.

A: 1318 S.E. Palm Street, Portland, Oregon.

Q: Your age.

A: 77 years old.

Q: Would you tell me what the situation is leading up to the evacuation. Say it starts in the middle of 1941 or so.

A: I was ^{AN} in Alaska ^{CANNERY FOREMAN} for a Libbey McNeil Libbey ^{SEASON IS} and after ~~she~~ is over, they come back to Seattle. My wife with a home down in Western Oregon so that she wanted to be with her mother. So, child and wife were based in Portland.

Q: Yes; then lived in Gresham, and then the war started. Then what happened.

A: I tried to go back to Seattle gathering my property, but I was ordered that Japanese cannot cross the state border but I can go he said if I could go through a bridge.

TESTIMONY OF
BEN KASUBUCHI
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Q: But then when did you go into the Assembly Center.

A: I don't quite remember the date, but the first part of May.

Q: How did you go. Did they take you on the bus.

A: Yes. Took a bus up there to *stockyard* in Portland.

Q: Would you describe the facilities and accommodations and situation there.

A: Oh my gosh, it makes me sick to the stomach to think about. You see, first of all, like livestock, great big barns. Ceilings are so high that they put up plywood, I think about 4 by 8. Doorways, no doors nothing, open ceiling.

Q: Nothing above you or anything.

A: Only thing we could carry was personal belongings and bedding. Now, we have to take my blanket to hang over the doorway. Only way to keep people from peeking inside. But, that place smells just like a pig pen.

Q: Why was that.

A: Why was that?

Q: I mean, why did it smell.

A: It was a stockyard.

Q: Yes. Now, how long did you stay in the Assembly Center.

A: I stayed there about three weeks.

Q: How come you left early.

A: I just can't stand it living in a place like that, so I don't care what happened to me, I want to go Tule Lake. They asked for volunteers to go to Tule Lake and I thought that a lot of people who went to Tule Lake and they might machine gun us or shoot us down. I didn't care, I would take the chance.

Q: What did you find at Tule Lake.

A: When I got the opportunity to go to Tule Lake, everywhere just barracks and barbed wire fence and army towers. That's about all I could see. The first thing I noticed was the barbed wire fence. We weren't criminals or anything.

Q: What kind of a lodging was it.

A: Well, the building was army barracks and called one block. They had 72 blocks, but that was later on. When we first went in there, there were only 9 blocks. One block is a hospital and the other 8 blocks. The minute we got there, they appoint me as block manager for Block 14. I'll never forget that after we got into Tule Lake, early part of June, people from Seattle, he passed away. We don't know what to do. We're not the minister or preacher,

but you can let the lid air there. So, I went to the ^{ADMINISTRATION} undertaker's office and I told one of the ^{ADMINISTRATION} head of the association, I forgot his name, so and so died this morning so I want to make funeral arrangements and no minister or preacher so that they can conduct a funeral service. I asked him how about chaplain in the army. No, we don't have any, we don't have a chaplain here. So, you as the block manager go ahead and take care of this yourself. Now he shoved all the responsibility on my poor shoulders. Now, what can I do.

Q: What did you do.

A: So, I asked him, we haven't got no casket. Oh, that's all right, we can make a casket, let me call a carpenter. The carpenter comes around to do one by 12, two pieces, 24 inches wide, cut the length, pound in nails and that's the casket. We take it, body loaded and bury it. Now, those things I can't get off my mind.

Q: What do you think the government should do.

A: They talk about the 25,000, they showed the Oregonian, Journal, Pacific Citizen. But, if they're going to give us, I take it. But, one thing I like to ^{Point out} ~~clear-up~~. They ask us particularly what country would the United States with any other country have war, fight and don't like to see it happen again what happened again like during WW II. I hope the government realizes that and it never happens again for any nation, anytime.