

TO: THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION
AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: Roy Yoshio Sakamoto

I am Roy Yoshio Sakamoto of Seattle, Washington. I am a native citizen of the United States of America and was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. I am now seventy years old and am presently retired from business.

I shudder in recalling many of my experiences of the forced incarceration of the Japanese Americans. I choose to submit this written testimony in an effort to seek truth and justice for the Japanese Americans and for all Americans regarding the coerced internment of U.S. citizens during the Second World War.

The negative effects of the evacuation permeated every aspect of our lives. Being put into the camps meant an actual lack of control over our lives and the lives of our children. We were stripped of choices and opportunities that had an effect on us then and that continue to have an effect now.

I was thirty-one years old at the time of the evacuation and was working as a foreman at the Main Fish Company in Seattle. I had begun as a box maker, and by 1942, I had worked for fifteen years to achieve the foreman position. I was earning \$400. per month when we were notified to go to the camps.

My wife and I had four young children at the time. We were purchasing our home and were working hard at raising our family

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and living right lives. We were investing in furniture. We had recently bought a brand new 1941 Dodge and we felt that we were just beginning to approach the quality of life that is part of the American Dream.

I had studied about my country in school. I believed in the Constitution of the United States. I firmly believed that we wouldn't have to go to the camps because we were American citizens by birth.

The total camp experience for me is one of violation of freedom and denial of opportunity. I believe in free enterprise and I was working hard. I was at a prime age, beginning to achieve success, and the government stopped me. Following internment, it was not a matter of returning and taking up where one left off. It was a matter of starting all over again.

To this day, I maintain that had the time in camp not been imposed on me, I would have continued to work my way forward in a company or would have ventured much earlier into a business of my own. Had the government not intervened and interrupted to halt my progress, my business career and my accomplishments would have continued along in a natural course and in the successful path that I had begun to establish. Had I been free to capitalize on opportunities, as people outside of camp were able to do, I would have been much richer in experiences and financially well off today.

