

July 21, 1981'

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Our family unit (on the day of evacuation) consisted of Father, Mother, two teen age daughters, a very young son (8 years old), and myself 23 years old. Ours was not an aggressive nor rebellious family by nature since we were raised to believe in God, obey our parents, be kind to your neighbors and friends and you will be treated accordingly. Our parents were Buddhists but since the small community we were raised in had no church, our parents felt we were better off to attend a Christian church than none at all.

Once the evacuation decree was issued, we were move from the Seattle downtown area in April in an early contingent of confused, distressed evacuees. We were driven in buses with an armed soldier on each to army barracks, being hastily constructed on the Pyallup Fair grounds parking lots. Many others were housed in the grandstand area on the fair grounds. Each family was assigned a number to be worn and placed on our worldly belongings--only what you could carry, including bedding, clothing, and very little else. We sold our cleaning business to a Chinese fellow for a token \$50, and dumped everything else, valuable for otherwise. At the time we evacuated, there was no place to store our furniture or personal belongings. We were frightened, there was no one we could appeal to for advise, if the Government could issue an order putting American citizens into a concentration camp without a hearing--almost anything could happen and be blamed on war time hysteria. Due to the fact that we had destroyed all our records, we have never filed for any restitution, ~~of any kind.~~

I remember our first hour in camp the newspapers wanted to take pictures and interview us. At the time I remember all I could think of was to be left alone and refused. During our first weeks in camp, we used to sit by the barbed wire fence and watch the frogs jump the water puddles. Our thoughts were even the frog is freer than we, he can jump right out of this fenced area and go his way. We were fortunate that we had friends who visited us talking through the barbed wire fence and trying to encourage us.

We participated in the operation of the camp by doing work that we were qualified to do. As a consequence I am sure the administrative costs were much less than if we did not help. My husband, Harry, and I were married in August of that year by Rev. E. Andrews "Andy" in the First Baptist Church in Tacoma. We cajoled our supervisors and the camp director to release us so we could have our wedding outside, not in captivity. We were driven to Tacoma and met there by Andy and our friends, Barney and Frankie Rasmussen. None of our family were allowed to attend but we were able to buy some goodies to take back for a reception.

In September, we were herded on board trains to be taken to Minidoka, a more permanent type camp. Again with armed guards we were on our way, the train cars must have been used by the troops during the first World War -- they were heated with pop bellied stove. We arrived at Minidoka to more unfinished barracks. There was dust, dust everywhere on that barren land which later turned into gooey, sticky mud.

We resigned ourselves to this lot and tried to make the most of it. The whole camp worked at making ourselves self governing. Everyone worked at jobs and were paid the massive sum of \$6 to \$11 depending upon the skill level. We worked at making our lives more comfortable so got much cooperation from our administration.

Now we found ourselves working and planning on how best to get out of camp, and get a job. We were required to get a security clearance before we would be allowed to leave. Also, we had to have a sponsorer or a definite job offer before we would be released. As soon as our security clearances came through we made job applications and headed out and away to Chicago. Who wanted to stay where you had to live behind barbed wire, and policed by armed soldiers.

We were among the first Japanese to relocate, our housing was a problem. Many landlords did not want "Japs" living in their apartments, but after much persistent searching we finally found livable quarters. I remember that we spent most of our holidays from work searching and upon finally finding a place -- cleaning and debugging.

One of the supervisors working with my husband said to him about one year later that they had watched him very closely as they wondered if he wouldn't try to bomb them out or something. However, he said, I find you are just the same as I am with the same needs and desires to live in harmony and trust.

Fortunately I found a job with a man who felt he should "make right" what the country had done to us. He helped us find better housing and better jobs. Since the Yasui family wished to relocate to Chicago from Sugar City, Idaho, he helped us find a location for a cleaning shop as well as cleaning up the location and finding all the equipment we would need to operate. Everything was still in very short supply. Naturally we had many qualms about starting a business -- would people patronize us, would we be harassed? We found that we could get along (Mother, Father and one sister were involved in the business). Harry and I continued working at our jobs.

After the order was released saying that Japanese-Americans and cleared aliens of Japanese ancestry would come back to the west coast, we decided to make another move and return to Seattle (September 1968). My father-in-law died never knowing that he could return to his beloved west coast. The order was issued the day after his death. My father was terminally ill with cancer and was not able to return. He died in Chicago.

After our return to Seattle, we have progressed in our jobs and home (Harry and I are now retired from The Boeing Company). We are happy in our present lives but wonder if something like the evacuation of the Japanese could not happen again. We wonder also if things would have been different if there had been no evacuation. Unfortunately, war time hysteria can cause people to react in ways they would never do if they took time to think things out logically. I feel that a monetary redress plan should be put into motion so that no other community of people such suffer such an indignity. *No other way can make the Nation as aware*

so as not to allow such another occurrence as this.