

My name is Frances Kay Nakasone, Bellevue, WA 98004, in real estate sales, Age 57,
a widow.

There are so many memories - too many to relate and others too painful to recall.
I have chosen a few which I feel should be told.

My late husband was 21 years old at the time, an Engineering student at the University of Washington. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, he decided not to wait to be drafted but to volunteer for duty. He went first to the Army Recruiting Office. When he started to climb the steps to the building, a guard shouted and ordered him to leave. When he protested, and tried to force his way up the stairs, two guards held their rifles against him and shoved him down the steps. He could not believe what had happened, and despite this rejection and humiliation, on that same day, he tried to volunteer again - this time for the Navy. He could not get past the guards there either. He told me about these incidents when we were in Minidoka. I recall his words "Despite all the prejudice we faced growing up in Seattle, I always felt deep down that I was an American. I had no doubt about it -- until that day. Gee, to think that I didn't even make it up the steps of the Armory - they wouldn't even let me in the door."

The last frantic days before leaving Seattle to go to the Assembly Center, my father and brother were busy winding up business matters, my mother was in the hospital with tuberculosis, so my two sisters and I (I was 18 years old at the time) were responsible for disposing of our household belongings. I recall a woman coming to our home and offering to buy the complete furnishings. She said that she was in no particular hurry to have them delivered and suggested that we use them right up until the last day. We appreciated her consideration and agreed to deliver the goods the evening prior to our departure date. She made a small down payment (I do not remember if it was \$10 or \$20) and promised to pay the balance upon delivery. We hired a friend who was in the transfer business to deliver the furniture and instructed him to collect the balance of the amount owed us. Per our agreement, on the eve of our departure, he delivered the truckload to her home. When he asked for payment, she shouted obscenities at him and ordered him to leave. When he tried to retrieve the furniture to load back onto the truck again, she beat him with a broom handle and chased him out of her home. He did manage to retrieve a few items. The delivery man returned to our home that night, bruised and apologetic. He brought back a few items, but of course, no payment for the goods he delivered. For the entire family's possessions we received \$20 - or was it \$10? There was nothing he or we could do. It was late at night and we had orders to leave the next morning.

The incident I have related was upsetting but the most heartbreaking part of those days when we had to leave Seattle was knowing that we would have to leave my sick mother behind. She was a tuberculosis patient at Riverton Sanitarium. When we last visited her, none of us knew when we would see her again. Her condition was such that we did not expect her to recover for at least a year or more. Miraculously she recovered much sooner than anyone expected and was able to join us at the Assembly Center in Puyallup about August of 1942. We were overjoyed to have the family reunited. Little did we realize that we would be together only a few short weeks. Shortly after her arrival at the Assembly Center, we were moved to Minidoka where, probably because of her history of tuberculosis, she was asked to go to the hospital for a physical check-up. She was placed in quarantine. When nurses came into her room wearing gauze face masks, she feared that she again had TB. When she asked if she had the dread disease again, she was given a "no" answer, but considering the circumstances, she believed that she was being lied to. She tried to escape from the hospital and ran in front of a moving truck. They labelled her as mentally sick and sedated her until she was nothing more than a vegetable. She was then sent to the Idaho State Mental Hospital in Blackfoot, Idaho. While my mother was in Blackfoot, my sisters and I left Minidoka for the Midwest and my brother volunteered for the 442nd. On my brother's last leave before going overseas, he visited Mother at Blackfoot. He did not know what to expect and was pleasantly surprised to find her well. In his words "She was perfectly normal. There was absolutely nothing wrong with her. I don't think that there was ever anything wrong with her". He said that the hospital personnel "acted scared" when he arrived in his U.S. Army uniform. When he asked for her release, they did so immediately. My mother is dead and cannot tell you of the horrors she faced there. She and I seldom talked about her personal experiences in Blackfoot because I did not want her to have to recall those terrible months. She did tell me that she fought her World War II in Blackfoot. She said that most of the hospital attendants treated her and the other

Japanese patients there as war enemies and that they were badly mistreated. She also told me that she saw a friend of ours (an elderly Japanese man, also from Seattle) brutally beaten several times. That man died in Blackfoot.

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