

Henry Sukezo Takayoshi

Seattle, Wa. 98122

Age: 82

Retired

At the time of evacuation, Mr. Takayoshi resided on Bainbridge Island, Wa., with his wife and five children, the oldest child was not yet ten years old. He was a truck farmer, raising vegetables, plants and flowers. He owned two greenhouses plus one and a half acres of land. He shipped his products to stores in the Seattle area, and paying freight charges on the ferry.

With orders to evacuate within a week, he tried to sell his greenhouse business. Since he had no offers, he had advertised in Real Estate Papers. He still didn't have responses so he was forced to leave his two greenhouses with all the unsold vegetables, plants and flowers, plus all the equipment and furnaces. He also had difficult times collecting monies for products he had delivered. By weeks end he had collected around four hundred dollars of which he divided half with his mother.

His father had bought his grandchildren a brand new piano for three hundred dollars. The highest bid was \$25.00. The sentimental value held by the family, especially the children was shattered.

He spoke of a very friendly caucasian family across the street. The children were always playing, eating and sleeping at each others homes. With Pearl Harbor, the neighbor's children abruptly stopped playing with them and instead started calling them Japs. Their children were bewildered and they were worried and concerned about their welfare and impact of this change in attitudes. Not knowing where they were to be taken and also being ordered to pack whatever they could carry, they gave away their clothing and furnitures. Questions such as, what type of clothing to take, was the climate to be warm or cold and how long? What about their education? The uncertainty was very traumatic and stressful.

Mr. Takayoshi's eyes became misty when he spoke of the time they had to walk between soldiers with bayonets when they were stepping off the ferry. They were then herded onto an old train. He wondered what crime he and his family had committed!

The Bainbridge Island people were separated from the Seattle group and sent to Manzanar. His mother and sister were separated and sent to Hunt, Idaho. The children missed their grandmother and so he requested to be transferred to Hunt, a year later. Manzanar was fifty miles away from Death Valley and the sand storms caused much havoc. He remembers trying to eat food mixed with sand.

The sand dust would seep into their barrack room, covering everything with dust. The children would cry refusing to eat and trying to get sand out of their eyes.

He particularly despised the word "Jap". He remembers vividly his last ferry ride to Seattle as a free man delivering his products. He heard President Roosevelt using that term several times and was deeply angered. His wife, a nisei, second generation Japanese American, lost her citizenship when she married him. Subsequently she took the examination and became a naturalized citizen. Imagine, she was born in the United States!!.

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