


Testimony of: Thomas P. Takayoshi

  
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Since I was only six years old at the time of the evacuation, the incidents that I remember most about this period come back almost like dreams.

December 7, 1941. Riding in the car with my parents listening to the news reports thinking even then that problems were going to come up and somebody was going to have to pay for them.

The ice cream store that my folks owned and the neighborhood where we lived. Everything nice and serene. Everybody happy and getting along.

Attending the Maryknoll School and enjoying it very much.

Being rushed through the preparations for my First Communion, because nobody knew what the facilities for religion would be like when "we left".

First Communion Day. Walking up the aisle with three other kids all older than myself.

The confusion that surrounded us on the day we left home. Soldiers. People milling about. People sitting on suitcases. Everybody seemed sad. My Grandmother seeing us off; crying.

Puyallup. Wooden partitions. Straw mattresses that itched like hell. More confusion. Angry people. Crappy food. Having to be quiet because there was no privacy. Sheets hung across the stalls. Wooden floors. Dirt everywhere.

Getting sick from food poisoning. Being in the hospital and not seeing my parents for "years". The rotten bitch of a nurse that loved tormenting me who told me my parents were never going to come to get me and who I heard refer to me as "the little Jap in the corner" to another nurse.

Moving again. This time by train.

Idaho. Dust. Barracks. Soldiers in the watchtowers. Soldiers with bayonets attached to their rifles walking guard duty. Outdoor toilets. Walking to the communal showers. Mess halls crowded with people. Lousy food which I couldn't eat half the time. Oppressive heat. Sagebrush for miles around. Sandstorms. More dust that came through the cracks in the walls. Going to school and really hating it for the first time. Probably suspecting that I was being taught by teachers who were not qualified.

Winter. Cold. Mud everywhere. Hearing about an old man that went looking for sagebrush and was found frozen to death. The wood stove. Christmas and the small artificial tree that my mother put up. My grandmother visiting us and bringing cans of tuna fish and spam. Probably the reason I still love them today.

My father going into the Army. Missing him terribly.

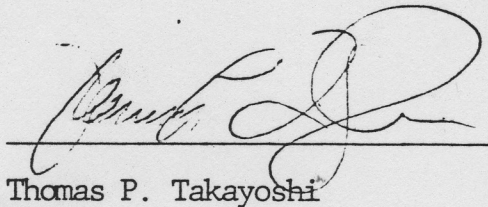
On the move again. This time to Omaha. Another school. More new people. Another Christmas tree. This time a real one. A huge one. After it was decorated, my mother took my brother and me out. While we were gone, the tree fell over.

Here we go again. This time to Indianapolis. My father being discharged from the Army. Being reunited in Indianapolis. All of us living with my aunt and uncle who had preceeded us. Another new school. Another set of new people.

We finally move into a permanent home. Just one more new school. Getting sick the day before I started school. My teacher telling my mother that I'm at least a year behind everybody else. The agony that I went through with math. The humiliation of the F that I got in math during the first grading period. Working like hell to get it up to a decent grade during the rest of the year.

For years, finding it simply amazing how so many people, especially people my age know absolutely nothing about this sordid edisode in this Country's history.

As compensation, I feel that everyone who was interned should receive at least \$50,000.00 plus \$25.00 for each day they were interned.

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Thomas P. Takayoshi