

Mrs. Matsuda



Seattle, Wa.

She is a retired person.

My husband and I had a cleaning shop. We had 2 helpers. We had 2 pressing machines, 1 hat pressing machine, 2 sewing machines, a large truck. We tried to sell the business when we were ordered to evacuate. We had a hard time. Finally a Chinese bought everything for \$1500.

We had 2 small children, ages 8 and 9. We were very worried about education for them in the camp. We were the very first to arrive at Puyallup and the camp was not ready. We had soldiers with guns trained on us all the way-even machine guns. It was a terrible feeling. When we saw the towers with machine guns, it was a big shock.

Once a week, there was an investigation of our room to see if we had any weapons. They searched our place everytime even though they knew that we had nothing. We were not supposed to have any knives over 3 inches long. It was such an insult that they would keep coming back even though they knew we didn't have anything.

On the train to Portland and on to Minidoka, they forced us to keep the shades pulled down the whole time. They acted as though we were something to hide, and we felt so helpless. That was the worst feeling-having soldiers with guns guarding us all the time.

Minidoka was very dirty because it rained so much. The mud was awful. We had to wear boots all the time. We were there 3 years because of the small children.

One of my sons was hit on the leg by a latrine door which was swung open by the man using the toilet. He developed an infection which caused him pain until he was married. He required frequent rest and massage to ease the pain. No one could diagnose his problem. He even served in the Korean war where he still suffered from leg pains. This had gone on for 20 years. At last he had an operation which cured him.

Because my husband and myself came from Japan, we felt that there was nothing we could do about the situation, but it must have been bad for all those who were citizens and were born here. All of us had hard times because of discrimination. It was hard for anyone to get a job.

I spent 3 days burning up things that I had that were Japanese. All the books, children's things, pictures. Several white friends consented to keep a few boxes of our goods. When we came back, we got most of it back, but one man said he got a divorce and his ex-wife took all our things. One of our friends said that her neighbor reported her to the FBI because she took in her boxes of belongings. The agent came to investigate, and was told that we were good upstanding friends and had nothing to hide.

We came back and worked hard. I did sewing, housework. We never did get into the cleaning business again. We asked a real estate agent about starting again in the Greenwood area, but he said not to come back there-it was too dangerous for us.

I will not ask for money for the relocation. I feel that the government should apologize and offer to pay us. I'll take it, but I won't ask for it.

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