

TO: THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND
INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS

FROM: AKIO T. HOSHINO

SUBJECT: THE EFFECT OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 ON MY LIFE

My name is AKIO T. HOSHINO and I reside at [REDACTED], Seattle, Washington 98178. I was born in Seattle, Washington in April of 1919, grew up and attended the public schools here until 16 years of age at which time I began to work to help support the family. I am now employed as a building engineer of a large hotel here in Seattle, 62 years of age and would rather live out the rest of my remaining life quietly without raising emotional and perhaps physical turmoil. The issues and consequences of what happened during the Second World War seem far away and buried, not worthwhile to dig up and agitate again.

My son and two daughters are now quite grown up, planning and looking forward to lives of their own as Citizens of the United States. Looking back, there was a time when I also looked forward in the same way with the same hopes. My parents, not out of their own choice but because of the law, were aliens whose hopes were to see their offsprings establish themselves as citizens with rights and opportunities promised to everyone regardless of race or creed. Their dreams were shattered, my hopes and livelihood became limited, and uncertainty was in the background of everything I did because of the Executive Order 9066 and its effect on myself and my family.

Right after Pearl Harbor I volunteered my services to the so called Home Guards and spent several weeks drilling and learning guard duty at the old Armory now the Food Circus at the Seattle Center. My parents watched with mixed emotions, having experienced discrimination all their lives, as I went out nightly for training. One night, without any explanation, I was called out from the ranks and requested to hand in my resignation. My disappointment and disenchantment must have been evident that night when I came home. My mother still speaks of their grief to see their son learning to accept the fact that equality was not all true. With this as a back-drop, evacuation was forced upon us and I spent my time interpreting and helping the Japanese community in the process of uprooting and moving

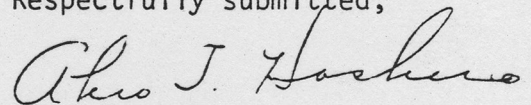
to an unknown future. With the family, I ended up at the Minidoka Internment Center in Idaho with one of the advance teams to prepare the camp for the arrival of trainloads of evacuees. Out in the middle of sagebrush country, choking with dust when dry and oozing with mud when wet, surrounded with barbed wire and armed military guards, I lived feeling the pressure from various elements voicing "prove yourself as good citizens by volunteering into the army" to the other extreme "renounce your citizenship since you are already classed as enemy aliens". Then came the draft and I was again a citizen with a duty to protect my rights and way of life. But, I still had to apply for and get a pass to leave the camp and get past the army guards to go get drafted. I had to make an agonizing decision that would alter the future life of the whole family. I could meekly accept my second-class citizenship and be drafted, renounce my citizenship and ask to be deported knowing that my parents and sisters would go with me, or refuse to be drafted under existing conditions and fight back through the courts. Realizing the consequences and uncertain of the future, the family cried together as I made the choice to resist the draft. The court ruled simply that the only issue was that I had not appeared for induction into the army and therefore guilty and sentenced me to 3 years and 3 months in a federal penitentiary. During my incarceration, the war ended and the camps were closed. My parents and sisters were forced out and given transportation back to Seattle. My parents often spoke of their feelings and loneliness as they stood on a street corner that first night with no lodging that they knew of. An acquaintance who had returned earlier happened to see them and took my sisters to his home making it easier for my parents to locate a place for the night for themselves. After serving my term, I returned to my family to try and begin to make some sort of a life for myself. I lived what may be called a low profile life as much as possible not wishing any confrontation or emotional encounters. Having been raised as a law abiding citizen, I sensed more than what actually did occur, the ostracizing and humiliation from the society. Gradually, with hard work and perseverance, I established a home and family of my own and acquired the material belongings that let us live

comfortably. I joined PTAs and church oriented activities to support the education of my children, avoiding at all times, controversial and public debate type of matters where I may become involved in personal matters of the past. I still refrain from involvement in activities outside of my church as much as possible because of my insecurity.

Now, realizing that my children, even with their education and with the changing social atmosphere, may be still subjected to the same treatment that I had gone through, perhaps having to make the agonizing decisions I was forced to make, I have suppressed my desire to stay quiet and am making this testimony and plea to the Commission. What has happened to me cannot be changed and I must take the scars with me to my grave. But if there is anything I can do for my children and any other citizen of the United States from having to go through the traumatic experience I was subjected to, I must overcome my fear and hesitancy and voice my opinion, perhaps for the last time.

The above is my life as a result of the evacuation and internment. Your recommendation back to the Congress will determine whether there ever will be a second-class United States Citizen again. Make it clear that future generations may rely on it when they say "- - one nation, under God, indivisible with Liberty and Justice for All" Thank you for this opportunity to express my wishes and for your patience and understanding.

Respectfully submitted,



Akio T. Hoshino

Dated this 24th day of August, 1981