

GEORGE M. KIDA.....the rest of the story
by Keith McCoy

If Paul Harvey were among us and had read a recent obituary in THE ENTERPRISE he would have hastened to tell "the rest of the story" in his memorable way.

In his absence I feel a compulsion to tell the rest of the story about George M. Kida to round out the routine obituary that appeared in the paper on November 19, 1998. It is a story of circles of love working within circles of love -- made all the stronger because they crossed and criss-crossed ethnic lines. I can tell the story because ^{his} Japanese man was my cousin. Yes, my cousin. Literally -- and legally.

It all started back in the 1860's when George and Sarah Pyatt found their "square mile of land" out in the Snowden area. Sade Pyatt, as she came to be known, was a sister of my paternal grandmother. Hence the family connection.

Shortly before the turn of the century, the Pyatts hired a young Japanese man who came looking for farm work. He, Kenjiro Kida, served them well. In a few years they sent him back to Japan to marry and bring his bride to join them. At about this time Sade Pyatt was kicked by a cow and ^{made} invalid with a spinal injury. She desperately needed help in the home.

The lovely young Japanese lass, Miyuki, became Kay to all who knew her. In 1911 she and Kenjiro had a son whom they named George Moses Kida. The happy, smiling boy was largely raised at the bedside of Sade Pyatt who showered him with affection and training.. From the start, the Pyatts were Grandpa and Grandma. An unusually strong bond developed between between these five people.

In their late years the Pyatts wanted to give the ranch to the Kidas in appreciation of their long years of service. The current law of the land did not permit ^{people of Japanese origin} to own

land here. So the Pyatts made an end-run around the obstacle. They legally adopted George Moses Kida as their son. This, combined with his birth here, made it possible for him to accept the land for his family. George and Sade Pyatt died in 1939 and 1945 respectively.

What seemed to be the happy solution to a problem was clouded by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. George Kida, grievously crippled by a boyhood accident, could not follow his desire to join the military in defense of America. His parent's loyalty to America was unquestioned. Though many influential people in the community stepped forward to try to get the Kidas exempt from incarceration, they were taken to internment camp at Tule Lake, California.

We all know of too many cases where loyal Japanese, thus rudely taken from their enterprises, lost everything during World War II. Not so the Kidas. The strong loops of love and caring within these families had extended beyond their fence lines.. The generous Kay Kida had assisted neighbor Al Johnson in the care of his invalid mother. In appreciation, he added the Kida's burdens to his own and kept the operation intact for them until war's end. Then he, like the Pyatts in their declining years, shared the warmth of the Kida home. The circles of love and caring had widened again.

George Kida, always the busy one despite his physical handicap, developed business connections in Northern California and the Klamath Falls basin during the war years. He was a dairy inspector in the area and later, as owner and operator of heavy equipment, was a successful contractor.

With George thus occupied, the elder Kidas sold the ranch and moved into White Salmon where they built a fine home, rental property, and established a fine cherry orchard and the area's most spectacular flower garden. Kay Kida found time to become involved in several women's activities through which she gained much affection and respect.

Kay Kida did carry one great disappointment through the years. On their wedding trip to the United States, Kenjiro announced that they would be Americans now -- and that it would be unfitting for her to bring her extensive Japanese trousseau to her new home. Dutifully -- but with great heartbreak -- she jettisoned her several trunks at sea. But, at long last, in the 1960's, her deep hurt was overcome by her joy of becoming a naturalized American citizen. The well-remembered Gertrude Pollard had tutored the Kidas so that they could gain this coveted goal.

The elder Kidas lived to reach the age of 90, dying in 1962 (1969) and 1982. Son George has been back in White Salmon for many years now as a respected citizen, grateful that he and his parents could realize the "American Dream" so fully. His success has permitted him to make substantial bequests to his friend Mitsuko M. Combs who gave him good care in his late years, to the Perry Trade Institute of Yakima in appreciation of special training he received there, to Columbia High School for scholarships and to the White Salmon Masonic Lodge No 163 AF & AM with which he was affiliated for more than 38 years.

Circles of love

Rest of the man's life story told

By KEITH MCCOY

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heavy rainfall