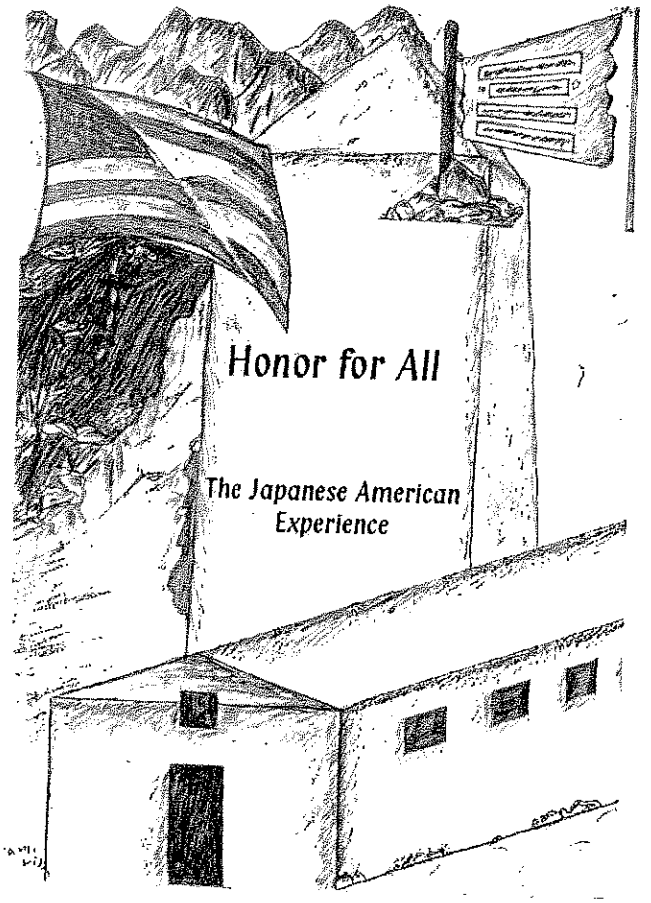

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Biographies written by seventh grade students at Harmon Middle School, Aurora, Ohio
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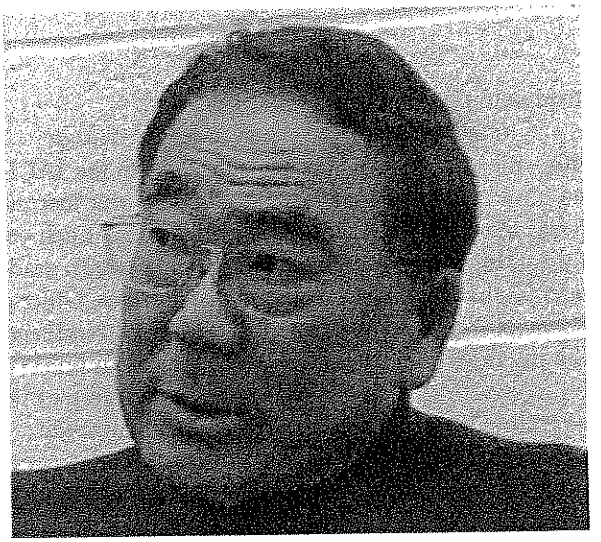
If your group, class or organization would like to hear a first hand account of this painful chapter in American history from individuals who have lived through it, please contact:

Ed Ezaki
JACL Speakers Bureau
7395 Stonybrook Dr.
Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130
(440) 234-5565



Dr. Roy Usaku Ebihara

By
Victoria
and
Chelsea

Introduction

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A special thank you goes to teachers Marge Tirpak and Chris Flynn who worked to make this possible.

Renee , 2005

The Instant of Pearl Harbor
The story of Roy Usaku Ebihara

Who knew life could change in one instant? How can one instant suddenly make someone look like the enemy? Who knew people would turn on innocent people just because of a race or color? This instant happened after the terrifying bombing of Pearl Harbor when Japanese families were imprisoned in ghostly internment camps just because they were Japanese. This is the story of Roy Ebihara, one of the many Japanese children put in these camps.

Roy was a young boy who hadn't thought much of war or violence before Pearl Harbor was attacked. He spent his time with his many siblings along with going to school and church, basically living a normal life. Roy never thought much of how different he was at the time, but was just enjoying being a young boy.

His mother spent most of her time tending to the garden, cooking, and cleaning while his father worked as a machinist for the Santa Fe Railroad. He was a very loyal worker who did his work efficiently. Life was normal, until Pearl Harbor.

It was Sunday, December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked. There was much commotion around the Ebihara small house, too many questions

unanswered. What was happening? What would happen to us? Those questions were some of the many that ran through the Ebihara's mind. Later that frightful day, the family was informed the children weren't to go to school because they couldn't promise their safety. "What did I do to make this happen?" Roy thought. He never thought of himself as Japanese,but as a normal American boy trying to grow up like any other American child. He never wanted to change his appearance before, other than the size of his nose. Why was he suddenly different because he was Japanese?

Every day after Pearl Harbor was now full of fright. His father had lost his job because they didn't want a Japanese working on the railroad. They had no money and little food that the grocer gave them. The children spent days playing quiet indoor games while their nights were spent huddling together and taking turns sleeping and guarding.

Days passed as the family waited in fear for something to happen. There was nothing they could do but wait. It wasn't safe in their beloved town because people now hated them. Finally, on January 20, 1942, strange men in black clothes told them to come out of the shed where they were hiding. Barking uncontrollably, their dog ran to their defense. Angered and frustrated, the men shot him and ordered the frightened family to pack everything they could carry because they were leaving that night. Like animals, the Ebiharas were herded into state patrol cars, to be driven to an unknown place. Roy was completely terrified, as any young child would be. "I cried and cried myself to sleep."

The camp was unbelievably horrible. It sat at the base of the snow-capped mountains, seventeen miles from a town called Capitan. Roy remembers that the dreary camp used to be part of an abandoned civilian conservation corp. To the adults, this was a horrible experience, but to the children it was more like an extended vacation. By day, they played games with their friends from the Kimura family, and, by night, they squirmed in beds full of bed bugs. Everything seemed great to the youngsters, but the parents worried about their education, and they knew the US constitution guaranteed a right to an education. After testifying, the parents were told the children could go to school in Capitan. Only after three days at school, the parents in Capitan threatened the Japanese; they didn't want their children going to school with the little Japanese American children. It wasn't long before the family left for another internment camp, never seeing their friends from the Kimura family again. "I often wondered what happened to the Kimura family," Roy said.

Solemnly and silently, the family rode off again on a train. When they finally reached their destination, they found themselves in the middle of the scorching Topaz, Utah, desert. Seas of grainy sand stretched for miles around the camp making escape impossible. Forty-three blocks were encircled by barb-wire gates and guard towers that held in 10,000 Japanese people.

Two hundred to three hundred people lived on each block, which had public utilities and latrines with absolutely no privacy. The Ebihara family was given half of a barrack since they had such a large family. Each person was given a thin army mattress and blankets. No sheets were provided and the beds were very uncomfortable. Privacy was also limited in these barracks; conversations could be heard clearly through the thin walls.

In the dining barracks Roy and his family spent time eating together, unlike many families who were forced into these camps. It was a Japanese tradition to eat meals together and helped the family stay strong and close. The food served wasn't at all like their delicious food at their own home. Many times they were served lumpy boiled potatoes, hard beef tongue that was resistant to being cut, and dried apricots. Although these meals weren't pleasant, the choice was either starve or eat.

The family tried to make the best of things by spending time away from the dusty, stuffy barrack. Roy, like other kids, spent his time playing basketball, marbles, tops, baseball, and stickball. He tried making games out of anything he could find, like finding the largest scorpion. His older brothers and sisters went to many dances to keep themselves busy. Roy's mother and father didn't have any jobs, so they fixed dirt roads and planted gardens.

After six or seven months, Roy's older sister Amy, testified that she didn't think it was right to put the Japanese in internment camps. "I don't think it is right for us to sit in this internment camp!" Amy claimed. "We didn't have anything to do with this bombing except having the heritage of America's enemies. Why should we be punished for something that we weren't apart of? Many of the people moved here because they knew America had so many opportunities for them, so why would they go against a country that has shown them a better life?"

Amy was allowed to leave Topaz in the summer of 1943, and the family left in December, 1943 for Cleveland, Ohio.

When the Ebihara family moved to Ohio, people thought that they were Chinese, not Japanese. No one had seen a Japanese person for a year now. They were instructed not to say anything about camp

and not to socialize with any other families. Soon they moved into a tiny house, and Roy's older brothers and sisters took over the household responsibilities since his mother couldn't speak English.

Since he had limited schooling in the camp, Roy had to start first grade all over and finished first grade at age ten at Clark Elementary. In fear, he never played outside for recess with the others. He was thought of as different because of the way he looked.

His father once again went back to work as a machinist. Everyday a FBI agent followed him to work to watch him. It wasn't the most pleasant experience, but it put food on the table, and he enjoyed being a tool and die maker again.

As you can see, life never went back to normal for the Ebiharas and other Japanese families. Roy's older brothers and sisters were harassed frequently on the streets. They couldn't even tell anyone they were Japanese, for fear of their house being burned down or being beaten up. Even as Roy got older and graduated from college, it was hard for him to find a loan so he could start practicing optometry because no local banks would give a loan to a non-white person then.

Once the word got out about these internment camps, many people were shocked of these tragic stories.

"Why didn't you bring it up? How could you keep this a secret for so long?" Roy's friends asked him years later.

His answer was simple. "You had never asked me."

Years later, Roy's family and many other Japanese American families received a letter of apology from the United States government, along with 20,000 dollars. This gesture was kind, but it couldn't take away the horrible memories that were in their hearts.

It was hard talking to his family and friends about this since it had been a haunted secret for so long. There was nothing really pleasant to remember about the camp, but they would not complain. The Ebihara's philosophy was always to be loyal to their country. They thought that they shouldn't be angered by what happened. America was young then, and it had much to learn about prejudice. Roy only hopes that America has learned a lesson, never to be repeated.

Roy's words
In his words what happened to him. Thank you, Roy for sharing this story with me.

Sunday, December 7, 1941 started out as a nice day. The sunlight was streaming through the bedroom window, so I didn't want to get up for Sunday school. I suppose it was close to 10:00 am when my father startled everyone, shouting with excitement to my mother. Father always tuned to radio Hawaii every Sunday morning on his short-wave Philco radio. We all rushed to the living room to see what the commotion was about. He said that Japanese warplanes were attacking Pearl Harbor at this very moment. I did not understand or comprehend the significance of all of this.

We didn't go to Sunday school that day nor did we go to school after that Sunday. Even my father came home carrying his lunch pail the next morning, being told that he was no longer needed. We were now scared, worried about how we would survive with no food on the table. Father trekked out to see the local grocer, Mr. Morris. Having known us for many years, he kindly extended credit for us and all of the Japanese families.

Christmas and New Year's were not the same. They came and went with out fanfare, no real celebration like the year before, when the men folk, with headbands around their heads, would pound the hot steamed rice with large wooden mallets into a huge pasty dough to make the traditional "mochi". We now lived in fear, wondering what to do or when the gang of town rowdies was going to come across the railroad tracks to harm us. We were now considered the enemy.

The days were spent playing indoor games with my younger brother, Bill, and my older sisters, Mary and Kathy. By nights, we huddled in fear. Then, late January of 1942, some men came to us to inform the family that we must pack belongings that we can carry, that we would be leaving that night, where we didn't know. Awakened from our sleep, we were herded into State Patrol cars, rushed out into the darkness. I cried and cried myself to sleep off and on. The roads no longer were smooth and the bumpy ride and the talking by my parents woke me up. The blackness was now replaced by a glimmer of daylight, and I saw mountains! Real mountains! Never have we ever seen mountains! My father finally had a smile on his face. The monotonous plains we had lived in were now replaced by tall pines and mountains. The trees seemed to reach to the skies, and the mountains were snow-capped and beautiful.

We moved into a portion of an old, abandoned Civilian Conservation Corp barracks. The first nights experience would never be forgotten. For not long after we went to bed, being bitten all over our bodies

awakened us. When Dad turned on the lights, hundreds of bed bugs were crawling all over the place!

I'm sure the adult folk were not happy with the detention and confinement, but for the children it was like an extended vacation. We romped through the empty barracks, chased wild games, searched for Indian artifacts such as arrowheads and broken pieces of pottery, played in the mountain streams, and played every conceivable game we could imagine. We became close with the Kimura family for they too had an army of kids.

Once the war started, certain food items and soap were rationed. My dad volunteered to make soap for everyone to use, and it was quite a project, for he mixed lye and animal fat, and made a considerable mess. The final product was so strong that it not only cleaned the dirt off of your body, it seemed to nearly "burn" and took the skin off too!

The major parental concern was the education for us kids, and once we were quite settled in, the issue was brought to the attention of the authorities. (After all, the Constitution guaranteed the right to an education for All-American citizens.) One day, we found ourselves being transported some twelve miles to a town of Capitan to go to school. The schoolhouse was a simple two storied structure that housed all the grades. The children looked pretty much like American Indians, and they disliked us, taunting us and calling us "dirty Japs". I don't recall learning anything in those few days of school, and only a vague recollection of the town itself, except for the memory of a tall wooden carved Indian statue and a large piece of petrified wood in front of the general store. (My sister) Amy's efforts to teach us reading, writing, and arithmetic were perhaps in vain, for we could care less about learning. This was a vacationland for me, and I was going to make the most of it. We communed with nature daily. We harvested wild watercress, pine nuts in season, and trapped wild game for the dinner table.

When winter came all of this joy came to an end, for all the families were now told that we must now move to the several larger federal detention centers located throughout the remote parts of the West. Our family decision was to join our brother, Henry in Topaz, Utah where he was already confined there. In the middle of December, 1942, with our belongings packed, with tearful good-byes to the Kimura family, perhaps never to see them again, we boarded the train from Carrizozo, New Mexico to Delta, Utah.

What a horrible change! The winds of the desert seemed to blow constantly, blasting our faces with large grains of sand, bone-chilling cold nights and nothing but desert beyond the barracks. Line of

people waiting for chow time, and so many Asian face behind high barbed wire fences and armed sentries in high towers. We were prisoners of war.

I hated every day that I spent in Topaz. I refused to learn and often jumped out the schoolroom window when the teacher wasn't looking. Kids taunted us, laughed at us because we talked with a southern accent. We were the only Japanese family with a southern accent! Others did not welcome our family for my sister, Amy, seemed often to be at odds with the relocation authorities or the populous leadership in the "block". Brother, Henry, argued for the need to volunteer for the service to prove our loyalty to America, at a time when morale was low, and people were angered by their treatment as second-class citizens. Harsh words were spoken at the mess hall meetings. We were now hated by our "own kind". I even had to fend for myself, being beaten up so many times.

My sister, Amy's threat to walk out, perhaps to martyr herself, forced the authorities to hasten our exodus from Topaz. My brother, Henry, and Amy were released to live and work in Cleveland, Ohio in the summer of 1943, soon followed by my father. Then in December 1943, the rest of us in the family left Topaz. The trains were filled with men and women in uniform, and they were frightening to me since many were drunk and rowdy, and asking us if we were "Chinks" or Indians. It was so cold when we arrived in Cleveland's Union Terminal, that we wrapped ourselves in the Indian blanked we brought with us. I could hear the people remark that a band of Indians had arrived.

Life in Cleveland seemed no easier for we were constantly harassed and badgered about our race. We passed as Chinese. I was nearly ten years old now, and I was zipped through first grade and then into second grade, at loss as to what was expected of me, not having any understanding of what was going on. In spite of my lost educational time, I seemed to manage to make up for it, and eventually graduated from high school at the age of nineteen.

I can now look back and appreciate the comfort, love, and security provided by my older brothers and sisters, the parental influence to succeed in education, to have faith in our country, to be a good citizen at all times. As my brother, Henry, stated, "The children in our family tried very hard against overwhelming obstacles to serve our country loyally and faithfully, and to become its useful contributing citizens worthy of being considered Americans."

Roy Usaku Ebihara
11/20/01

Tom Fuginoto

2

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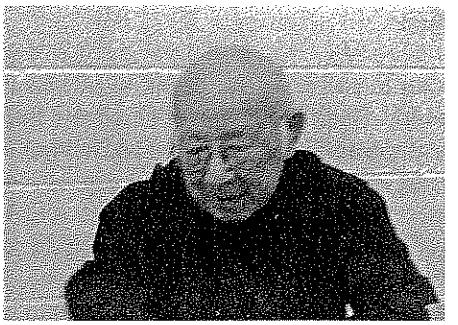

Tom Fujimoto

By

Jessica

Introduction

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Renee Caminati
Reading Teacher
2004

Before I begin telling the story of Tom Fujimoto, I would like to extend my thanks to him. Through his story, I not only learned some extraordinary history, but I also learned one of the characteristics of the Japanese and Japanese-American people: the courage and ability to move on when things get tougher than ever.

Tom's story tells of an experience in a Japanese-American internment camp in the midst of WWII. He has kept it inside ever since he was let out of camp. It was truly an honor that I got to listen to his life story. His words taught me lessons that I could never have learned in my life, and I hope that this book teaches you, too.

And now I present to you the biography of Tom Fujimoto.

Sunday, December 7, 1941, a date that almost everyone knows of, Japanese warplanes bomb Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Even so, many people have not heard of the Japanese-American internment camps that were constructed in the midst of WWII. This biography is for those who do not hold much information about the camps. Tom Fujimoto was in a camp called the Manzanar War Relocation Center, an internment camp. This is his story.

Tom lived a normal life in Los Angeles, California. His parents owned a restaurant, and he worked in the field of

metallurgy. He had two sisters: one ten years younger and one five years younger.

Los Angeles was a prejudiced area. Tom and his family couldn't go to some restaurants or barbershops. They knew which ones they could and could not go to, and it was very unfair.

On April 1, 1942, Executive order No. 9066 was issued. It stated that all persons of Japanese ancestry had to report to a certain area in a certain amount of time.

When Tom and his family heard this news, they were shocked. Tom was in his late twenties at the time, and, having an American Red Cross teaching certificate, was told to teach at the hospital. Tom's first thought was "What is going to happen to my parents?" Their parents were *Issei*, which means first generation, or to emigrate from Japan to the U.S. Tom and others were more concerned with the fate of their parents than with the fate of themselves. "We didn't know what was going to happen to our parents," Tom says.

Their second thought was, "What are we going to pack?" The government allowed the families one bag, and the decision of what to pack was a hard one. Tom's family stored mostly all of their belongings, but after their release, they discovered that their things had been stolen or broken.

In May of 1942, Tom arrived at Manzanar in his car. Of course, cars that were owned by Japanese-Americans were not allowed in camp, so his Caucasian friend drove it back to Los Angeles. Most of the Japanese-Americans arrived on bus or train.

"Why were only Japanese people sent to camp while Italians and Germans were also our enemy?" Tom speaks. Whenever he thinks about his internment in Manzanar, he remembers that when in grade school, he said the Pledge of Allegiance, just as we do today. "For liberty and justice for all", he quotes, "...The Japanese had no justice," Tom says again. They were interned against their will while they were American citizens.

Life in Manzanar at first was a little questionable because of the living conditions. The hospital was constructed better (it was sealed for the patients), but there was only one block constructed by volunteers when they first arrived at Manzanar. The shelters could not be called homes, much less shacks. But shacks they were, constructed of tar paper and wood with big gaps between the floorboards. "At night the sand would sweep under the floor and into our barrack, and in the morning, we had to sweep it out again," Tom remembers, displaying the effect with a scooping hand gesture.

Later, linoleum was installed over the wood to keep the internees warm. During the hot summers, they also had a form of "air conditioning", a fan!

The families decorated their barracks in different ways. A popular thing to do was make rock gardens. Rocks and plants were cultivated and arranged in a decorative

scheme. "The block that had the best rock garden," Tom says, "was block 34."

Soon internment life became more and more tolerable. Mothers didn't keep watch over their children as much. Tom's parents thought of camp as "paradise". Inside camp, the adults tried to duplicate what they did outside of camp to make life at Manzanar as livable and enjoyable as possible. There were many sports to play and other activities such as judo and wrestling. Tom worked in the hospital most of the time, but he was also in the Glee and Drama Clubs. There were different types of glee clubs. One kind of glee club sang Japanese songs. There was another in which the members sang traditional American songs. In the drama club, the members performed plays for the internees.

Tom also played baseball, which was a very popular sport. The games attracted very large crowds and were exciting to watch.

As far as holiday celebrations went, Christmas was celebrated throughout the camp, although most of the people in camp were not Christians. Individual clubs celebrated Easter, Valentines Day, and other holidays.

"You could make camp miserable, happy-go-lucky, or good," Tom says. Most of the camp members made the best as they could out of camp. After all, the people were "...Homogeneous," Tom remembers. "You could share your feelings freely. Everyone was Japanese. In Los Angeles, you couldn't share your feelings that way. In camp, if you didn't like someone, you could tell them."

The mess halls at camp were also a very memorable thing. There were some cooks that were very inexperienced, whereas there were others that were chefs before camp. The hospital mess hall had the best food. Because of this, the camp members flocked to the block and the food rations were low. This lead to riots.

Most of the riots in camp were because of the food shortage. The Caucasians that worked in camp sold the sugar meant for the internees to people outside of camp. The people who flocked to the good mess halls were also some of the cause for the food shortage.

Tom's sisters (who had already graduated from high school when they arrived in camp) liked working in the Caucasian mess halls because they could take the extra food such as cakes, pies, etc. Who wouldn't like working places where you get extra sweets?

There were few people drafted in camp. Tom was drafted, but he didn't fight or take part in the war. He received his draft notice, which said that he had to be in New Mexico by a certain date. He went to his camp director who wouldn't let him leave. So Tom didn't have to go to New Mexico after all.

Privacy in camp was very limited. The latrines did not have stalls around the toilets. There were separate

restrooms for the men and women as well as showers, but the privacy issues were many.

I asked Tom what he appreciated most when he was let out of camp. "The privacy," he replies. When you are at your home or someone else's, you can close the bathroom door. Imagine being in camp, where you can't even close a door or put walls around toilets. Living conditions, as you can see, were not good at all.

The weather was another thing at camp that made the Japanese-American's situation intolerable. The winters at Manzanar were severe, but the children found all the snow that fell amazing. Living in Los Angeles, most people had never seen snow. It was warm in Los Angeles, but in Manzanar, the landscape was all desert, and the summers were also extreme.

There were also many, many sandstorms in camp. "When you were walking back from the showers, a sandstorm would hit, and you'd have to walk right back and take a shower again," Tom laughs.

It amazes me how Tom can laugh at such a terrible experience. "When we relocated to Cleveland, I tried to live as normal of a life as possible," he says.

Tom's work in the hospital was to do minor surgeries; set broken bones and attend to sprains and other injuries. He visited other areas of Manzanar because he had access to the ambulance service.

Tom also visited other camps to see friends that resided there. Other camps he visited were Minidoka in Idaho, and Granada (called "Amache") in Colorado.

"The camps were basically laid out the same," Tom says. They had laundry rooms, barracks, showers and latrines.

"Another very memorable thing in camp was the friendships I made," Tom says, today he is still in touch with friends that he made in camp.

"Camp life was not that bad, but there are so many misconceptions about what camp life was like," Tom says. There were canteens where people in camp sold things like food and clothing, but when they first arrived at Manzanar, they were given heavy army coats. You could buy the items with the salary that you made. Professionals made $19.00 a month, and non-professionals made $16.00 a month. You were also allowed to receive packages from friends or family outside of camp, although most people, like Tom, had relatives in Japan.

Before camp, Tom thought that the government's decisions about putting Japanese and Japanese-Americans in internment camps were unfair, and he thought the same way when he was let out of camp.

In November of 1945, Manzanar closed. Tom and his family relocated to Cleveland because they had friends who lived there. Tom described Cleveland as a "...cosmopolitan city." There were people of many races:

Polish, Mexican, and others. He didn't experience any racism in Cleveland, unlike Los Angeles. Tom felt as though Cleveland was his home. This was why he never moved out of the Cleveland area.

A few years ago, Tom took his only son to Manzanar. The only thing that was still standing was the auditorium. Now a little of Manzanar is being rebuilt as an exhibit to display camp life.

Today, Tom lives in Rocky River. He was asked to share his camp experience for the first time this year, and I am so happy that he decided to do so.

After my interview, I asked Tom if he had any advice for the present generation, and he did. "We should trust each other and try to get along no matter what nationality you are. Be tolerant of each person, each race. That way, I think we will get along well. We are all equal; let's keep it that way."

I couldn't agree more.

S. Yamane

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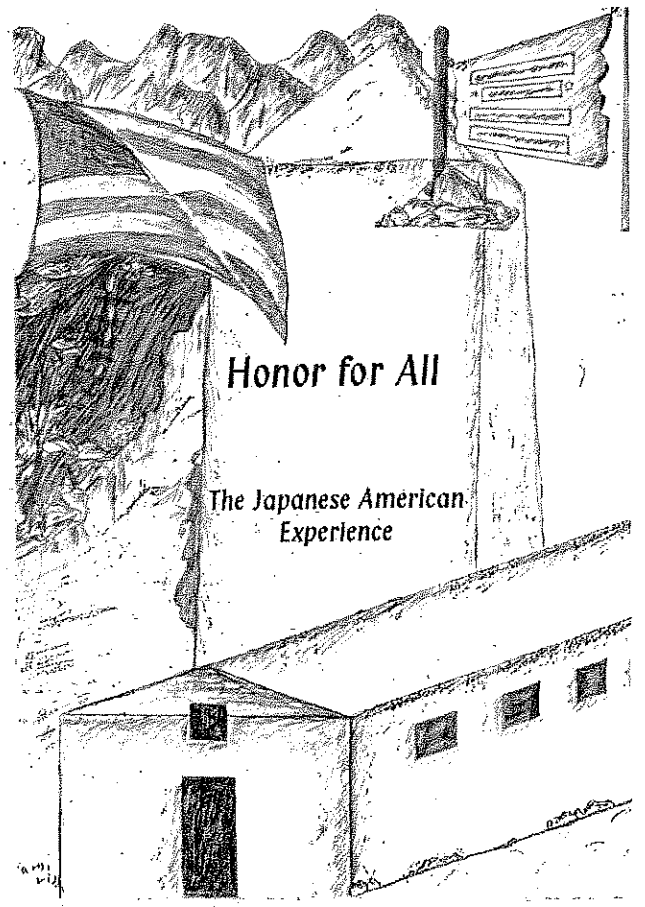

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Sadie Yamane

By: Alyssa

Introduction

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Renee Caminati
Reading Teacher
2003

Sadie Katato is a Japanese American born on the West Coast of the California. She led a typical American life until her entire family was imprisoned at a Japanese internment camp in the middle of the desert after the Pearl Harbor bombing. This is her story...

When Sadie was young, she lived in a small, integrated town, Delano, California with her mother, father, and older sister. Although they did not grow up around many Japanese families, her family joined a Japanese American community group. The group went on picnics and did other traditional Japanese activities.

Born in America, Sadie's father, had been a farmer in California, was a purchasing agent in a produce market of the onset of World War II. Sadie's mother was a seamstress. Sadie and her older sister were in elementary school at the time.

Sadie and her family lived among the poor white Americans and Mexicans. For fun she went to the movies, played with friends, and went to school. She was just another American kid growing up. However, there were still traces of her Japanese heritage in her: the Japanese movies at the Buddhist church, even though they were Christian, Japanese dancing lessons, and Judo lessons.

Pearl Harbor was bombed was Sunday, December 7, 1941. Sadie will always remember that it was a Sunday because on Sundays all her relatives would come over for dinner. As news came over the radio that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, Sadie saw a stunned look on all the adult s faces. Sadie didn t understand what had happened because she was only six and she didn t know what Pearl Harbor was, but she knew something terrible had happened. The family s first reaction was just like any other American family s reaction. After the shock wore off, the family realized that looking like the enemy wasn t a good thing at all. Even though they were in Americans, they became the foreign enemy.

After December 7th, 1941, the Japanese Americans had certain restrictions placed on them by the United States government. They weren t allowed on the streets or outside after 8 pm. It was hard for Sadie to enjoy school because everyone she knew started looking at her

differently. It was as though she was the enemy herself. Often she would be taunted or teased after school. The Chinese kids were also tormented because white Americans couldn t tell the difference between Chinese and Japanese people. The Chinese people made buttons that said I am Chinese to prevent mix-ups between Japanese and Chinese. Sadie s father had a Chinese friend and he was able to get some Chinese buttons that they would wear them when they went out. If they were stopped by police, they would tell the officer they were Chinese and show them the buttons. The buttons only worked for a little while, though.

One day the FBI and the chief of police came to Sadie s house to search the property. The chief of police, a friend of Sadie s father, came to help him through the trauma. The FBI confiscated all knives over six inches, any guns or radios they had, all Japanese things, and anything else that looked like a weapon. Everyone was frightened.

Sadie s family was ordered to leave their home, taking only the bedding and clothes that they could carry. Sadie practiced carrying her bag because she was so little and she wanted to take all of her clothes. The government set up warehouses for the Japanese to store their things for the duration of the war, but many people had yard sales to get rid of their belongings. Sadie's family sold everything. Sadie even had to give away her dog. It was a very trying time for her and her family.

Sadie's family arrived at the train station without knowing where they were going. When they boarded the trains, they saw guards standing near the exits. They had rifles with bayonets in their hands. It was May, 1942 when Sadie and her family arrived at Poston, the largest of the internment camps. It was located in the middle of the desert in Arizona and it held about 20,000 people.

Poston was a foreign place to Sadie and her family. It was hot, barren, and dry, much different than southern California. Every night as Sadie fell asleep she would dream of California poppies, green fields, lavender paintbrushes, and wild flowers. At Poston everything was drab and colorless; there was nothing green, no electricity, and no running water. The internment camp was

not really ready for the families. Sadie, her older sister, mother, and father shared one large room.

The barracks were all in a straight line and the latrines, mess hall, laundry room, recreation hall, and store room were located in the center of each camp. Poston was divided into three mini camps and each mini camp was divided into four quads. Sadie and her family lived in camp one, quad three. All of the internees were given identification tags with a number on them. They had to wear them at all times. It took Sadie over fifty years to forget her number!

The first night, the sand rolled across the ground as a soft breeze blew through the desolate desert and a voice blared loudly in the camp, screeching, "All internees need to report to the camp center with bags." Many of the adults crept toward the center of the camp warily, fearful of what awaited them when they arrived. Their fears were relieved when they emerged to find a pile of straw. The straw cracked and broke as they rapidly stuffed it into the bags trying to get enough straw for a comfortable mattress. The internees trudged back to their desolate barracks and slept on the hard floor with nothing but the limp, straw-stuffed mattress between them and the spaces between planks on the floor. When everyone woke up they would find sand grains sticking to their sweaty skin.

Many young children thought it was peculiar to be around so many other Japanese people because they were used to being the only Japanese child in the school. They would often tell their parents, "If this is Japan, I want to go back to America!" It was a very unusual experience for Sadie.

At set times in the day people would line up to get water. They were handed a tin cup, which they used to hold the one-cup of water they were allowed. The water was in a large garbage pail and was always warm and tasted weird because it was disinfected. Sadie's parents always got Sadie close to the front of the line because she always whined about everything. One day she started crying in line for water because she was so thirsty, then everyone in line started crying because of how bad his or her situation was. Her sister, who is three years older, told her to stop whining and asking her parents for things they couldn't give Sadie because it made

her parents sad. Sadie tried to stop whining and her parents became a little bit happier.

The internees were told they were going to receive the same kind of food as the army. It wasn t the best food; yet it wasn t the worst. It was just acceptable, and they had to lean to deal with it. The Japanese Americans were a little disappointed because there weren t any potatoes or rice in their diets anymore. They did eat a lot of Spam, though.

As time progressed, the camp became more habitable. The Japanese Americans were given army cots to sleep on and a light bulb was put in each room. They also had latrines with freestanding toilets and showerheads. Sadie didn t like not having privacy and wouldn t go in them unless no one was there. But eventually she got over it. For all meals they ate in the mess hall using picnic tables as dinner tables and tin trays as plates. Family life was breaking down because all the high school kids would sit together, all the young kids sat together, and no one sat with his family. Sadie s dad was the block manager in their part of camp, so he gave every table a family name and each person had to sit at their family table. This helped the family stick together.

To make the barracks more pleasing, Sadie's family got tin can lids from the kitchen to cover the holes in the floor. They also used crates from food to make folding chairs and other furniture to sit in. There was a waiting list for wood from the kitchen because so many people wanted it. Each time a shipment of food came in, people would run to the kitchen for the wood. Some people had enough money saved up, so they were able to buy pre-made furnishings. Sadie's mother made curtains to cover the grotesque windows of the barrack. She also made rugs out of rags to cover up the gaps in the floorboards. Sadie and her sister drew pictures on sheets to cover the bland walls. Some people were so desperate for flowers, they made paper ones and stuck them in their house.

Every morning Sadie and her family would get up and walk over to the latrines and showers in their slippers and bathrobes. After they came back to their barrack, the mess hall bell would ring and everyone would go for breakfast. Then the kids would go to school. The schools were

started in barracks and teachers from the outside eventually volunteered to teach classes for the high school. After school they would play red rover, kick-the-can, or basketball. Eventually they got good playground equipment to play with after school. They also had clubs or activities children could get involved in. For example, Sadie's husband once told her he was involved in Boy Scouts. He got all of the badges except the water badges because there was no water near the camps. All the adults got jobs. Her dad was a block manager. He received the highest pay which was about $19 or $20 a month. He was the block manager because he was bi-lingual and very vocal. Sadie's mother worked in the kitchen. Many people bought clothes and other things from the Sears and Montgomery catalogs.

Sadie celebrated her seventh birthday at camp. Although she says they never had cakes or store bought gifts, it was always a fun celebration. Everyone would make presents out of paper or anything they had. One year for Christmas, they made a huge origami Christmas tree with paper ornaments. That year a church sent presents for all the children. Sadie's sister kept in touch with the people from the church for many years after the camp closed.

The camps had many fun things for people of all ages to do if they ever got bored. Once a week they would watch a movie after sunset out in the open. Everyone would use their folding chairs they made using crates. They also had dances for teens in the recreation room. Talent shows, social gatherings, and sewing groups also gathered in various places throughout the camp.

Sometimes, when Sadie and her friends were playing they would talk to the guards. Most of the guards were nice and surprised to see families running around having fun instead of prisoners of war. One guard even brought the children candy bars to eat. But there were other guards who were trigger happy. So you had to really know the guards and watch your back.

Sadie's father was very vocal, and he always was telling someone how he was going to sue the government once he got out of camp. All his relatives would tell him to be quiet. This is because trouble makers were sent to different

camps where people weren't treated as well as they were in Poston. Although Sadie thought being interned was wrong, she knew there was nothing she could do about it. As she got older it became easier to express herself.

During the war a Congressmen came into the camp to see what was happening. He told people it was like a Little America behind barbered wire. Sadie agreed that it really was. Life for all Japanese Americans in internment camps was livable now.

After about two years of living in Poston, they finally left camp. Sadie's father didn't want to raise his family in an internment camp, so he left and found a job working on farms in Alliance, Nebraska. At the time he worked harvesting the sugar beets. After he had saved enough money, Sadie's father filled out the necessary paper work and sent for the rest of his family.

When Sadie was released, she felt heavenly and free. She was ecstatic to be able to go wherever she pleased, whenever she pleased. But the apprehension of war still going on made everyone a little uneasy. There wasn't much prejudice at Sadie's new school, which made her feel more welcome in town.

A few years later the family moved to Chicago, Illinois. Then they moved again to Cleveland. Sadie's father heard a commercial about Cleveland, "Cleveland, the best location in the nation!" Sadie's father heard the commercial and said, "Ok, that is where we are moving." They moved to Cleveland and Sadie hasn't moved since.

In Cleveland, both of Sadie's parents found work. Her father did factory work on the weekdays and did gardening on the weekends. Her mom, like other women, did house work and worked in factories. Sadie's mother-in-law worked as a seamstress. Jobs were not too hard to find for most Japanese Americans.

When Sadie had a writing assignment in school about a personal experience she would always write about what she went through at the internment camp. Most people who read her stories weren't even aware of what happened to the Japanese people. A lot of people thought it

was a very interesting topic and her papers always received an A.

Learn from your mistakes! Sadie was not very delighted when she heard America was thinking about putting all Muslims and Arab-Americans in internment camps. She was glad when she heard people saying putting them in internment camps was not the right thing to do. "It is true that people learn from their mistakes. I'm glad they do," Sadie said. When good people do nothing, terrible things can happen. If you see something wrong then stop it, don't just let it happen. If you didn't do anything, and said it wasn't your fault, you're wrong. It is partly your fault for not doing anything. Learn from your mistakes and stick up for what is right!