

## Days that will Live In Infamy

Freedom and justice for all. This phrase was instilled in me from the time I entered grade school and learned to salute the American flag, and pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Being born in the United States, this is the only nation I know, the only nation I owe allegiance to, altho my parents were Japanese. Japan to me, when I was young, was just a foreign country.

For about 19 years, freedom and justice seemed to be a real viable thing. School days, fun days, working in the berry and bean fields during the summer, in order to make enough money and save enough money for the day that I could go to college. Free to choose my own future and free to attend any school of my choosing. Finally with the savings and help from my parents I entered the University of Washington in 1940, in the school of pre medicine.

A college degree was very important to me because I realized that only by getting a degree can a person of ethnic origin achieve a semblance of financial stability. Jobs were very scarce for the non skilled minority.

The first two quarters in college were very interesting and an enjoyable phase in my life. By 1941 I was just getting the feel of the more serious purpose in life and looking forward to a challenging future in medicine.

Then on the morning of December 7, 1941, the future suddenly became uncertain. The United States was at war with Japan. At first the full impact of this act was not realized. I was an American, therefore, Japan was now the enemy of my country. But others in the country did not share this same feeling. All they knew was the fact that my face was that of a "Jap", therefore I was now and alien, an enemy. This feeling became intensified when the president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order, #9066, declaring that we were a menace, that we are certainly a part of the enemy faction and ordered our deportation to concentration camps.

Now for the first time the meaning of "Freedom" was being challenged. I soon found out that I had lost my freedom. But there was still "Justice". Certain human rights organizations were soon at work, defending our rights as citizens of the nation, but for naught. They lost. Now "Justice" had very little or no meaning at all. The anti Japanese feeling amongst the peoples of this nation, backed by the presidents order was too strong an element to fight.

The years of saving for a college education now seemed wasted. Hope of continuing my education seemed impossible. The interruption of my education hurt, but more frustrating was the hurried preparations to meet the evacuation deadline set forth by the government. Many personal belongings were disposed of at bargain basement prices, a considerable loss to us because of the urgency of the situation.

Verbal abuses from the citizenry was common place. Threats of violence were also made. But more disturbing was the rudeness of many of the sales people in some of the stores as we now shopped for suit cases and other things for travel. We never had these items, because in those days we could not afford to travel.

Then a tour of part of the country started. First to Puyallup, Wa. Just a temporary stop we were told. Then the grand tour by train to a desert compound at Minidoka, Ida. We were moved into hastily constructed, single room, single walled, tar papered condos. We were all asked to eat, sleep and live in this not so private atmosphere. If you wanted privacy, you went out to the sage brush, where only the jack rabbits and rattlesnakes played. If you became seriously ill and were fortunate to have one of the interned Japanese doctors treat you, you were OK, but if one of the government appointed doctors treated you, you had a 50% chance of survival.

Work in the compound only paid 8 dollars a month and after a few months I realized that this income could never pay for a college education, so I left Minidoka to work on a plantation in White Oak, Georgia. One hundred dollars a month with room and board seemed good at that time. However the fact that I could not return to Seattle hurt me deeply.

After 4½ years active duty in the Army, I returned to Seattle in August of 1947, and thanks to army pay saved and the GI Bill I resumed my studies at the University of Washington. However since six years had passed since I was interrupted in my education, I gave up on pre medicine and chose an allied field of medicine, Pharmacy. The years lost could never be made up.

For many years I was willing to go along with the status quo. Not rock the boat. Even willing to forget those trying years of the evacuation, because I felt I was a member of one big family, the United States. However, when others who I looked upon as akin to me have recently stated publicly, that I was at that time an enemy, that I deserved what happened, then I feel some action should be taken. This is like opening up an old wound, but sometime this is necessary to clear up the festering within.

The peoples of this nation so vehemently condemn Hitler for his discrimination against one race of people, but are very complascent about a similar action on the part of our government against one race of people. Is this type of action justified when the U.S. does it, but condemned when other nations do the same? Some say that the camps were just internment or relocation centers, but when the compounds were surrounded



by barbed wire and armed troops are stationed in towers over looking the camp, what else can you call it. When looking for an excuse for one's action, I guess one can be found. Since many of the camps were located in arid, desert type terrain the half blind may have thought the concentration camp like compounds were only a mirage, that they never existed.

Justice can be done to some degree, by an act of redress.

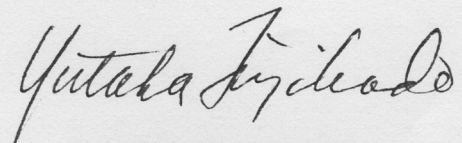
Conclusion:

- (1) The United States government acknowledge the error of such an order as #9066.
- (2) Admit the act was discriminatory.
- (3) That in the future any act which would deprive freedom and justice from any person residing in the United States never be enacted.
- (4) Accomplishments as well as the failures of the United States be included in our history books. That the events that resulted from E.O. #9066 did happen and were real. A real Boo Boo.
- (5) Compensation of moneys be made to the survivors of the evacuation. Moneys directed to be held for projects in Education or Health of the survivors or their dependents. Or cash compensation to the survivors directly.
- (6) That those individuals that were <sup>wrongfully</sup> imprisoned and interned, or <sup>wrongfully</sup> imprisoned due to controversy with E.O. #9066 be given additional compensation and that records of such arrest and imprisonment be destroyed.
- (7) Never again should the U.S. Government perpetrate injustices or hardships by such the like of E.O. #9066 because of a persons race, color, religion or political beliefs.

I believe compensation is justified, when we see demonstrators and dissidents that parade around the white house getting compensation because their civil rights were violated and they were imprisoned.

We did not demonstate, we did not revolt. Most of us complied with E.O.#9066 because as citizens we felt we must obey. Infact we were never tried in court, we were condemned without a trial. This action certainly was a gross violation of our civil rights.

May freedom and justice be real, for ever and ever.



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