

My name is Shuzo Chris Kato and I reside at [REDACTED] in Seattle, WA.

I am presently the Principal of Chief Sealth High School in Seattle and I am 54 years of age.

Before evacuation I was living in the family hotel located at 511 King St. in Seattle and I was a sophomore at Broadway High School. My parents owned a 45 room hotel and also a tavern - restaurant - pool hall - card room complex located in the Maynard Building at 2nd Ave So. And Washington St.

My reaction to evacuation was one of obedience to the government edict to show the loyalty I had for my country. My parents reacted with extreme pressures and anxieties placed on their shoulders due to their concern as to what would happen to the family and the businesses they would have to leave behind.

We only took what we could carry, as instructed, and left behind countless family heirlooms and treasures. Since three of my brothers were younger (3,7, and 11) my older brother, 18 and myself, 15, and the parents had to be responsible for carrying the suitcases and dufflebags that contained our belongings.

I believe my parents received only about \$7,000 total for all the businesses mentioned above and the true value must have been ten times as much. Of course, what my parents would have made during the war had they been able to operate such establishments in a defense town like Seattle is unmeasureable.

An example of the profits made by the people that bought our hotel can be realized from the fact that the buyer had only \$500 to put down on the \$2500 price that my father was forced to accept since the day of evacuation was fast approaching. Within two months, while we were still in the assembly center, the buyer sent the remaining \$2000 to pay off the bill.

For six months we were at Camp Harmony and the living conditions there were terrible . There was no privacy since the walls of the barracks were not insulated, and did not reach to the roof. Privacy was denied again in the shower rooms and the rest rooms where no stalls or door existed.

(2)

The temporary quarters were just bare rooms with each family occupying one room only. Our family had two adults and five children and yet we were allowed only one room.

As we entered Camp Harmony, we were all handed mattress covers and pillow sheets and then directed to a pile of hay where we commenced to fill the cloth bags which became our mattresses and pillows for the 6 month period.

No schools were provided at the temporary center although we had to leave our schools in Seattle 3-4 months before the actual end of the term. The government was denying the Japanese Americans their Constitutional rights of being able to choose their own place of residence and also the right to equal education for all its citizens.

To get to Camp Harmony we were all herded like livestock onto Army trucks. The ride was cold, dirty, crowded and humiliating. To be looked on by others as a group of people different and not worthy of being an American. Some of the red-necks in the crowd of onlookers hurled epithets or called us by using derogatory terms.

In September of 1942, we were thrown into the oldest and dirtiest passenger train cars that one could imagine and transported to our new and permanent camps which at first was referred to as Minidoka, located in the south Central part of Idaho. The camp at that time was dusty, dirty, windy, and again terrible as far as living conditions. It was located right in the middle of the desert-like sagebrush country and one could easily realize why no one had lived there before.

All we were given from the government was a pillow, blanket, a steel cot and a hay filled mattress and thrust again into an empty room that only had a pot-bellied stove for furniture.

At this time, this was my first venture into stealing for the family. My friends and I would crawl under the barbed wire fence surrounding the contractor's lumber pile, to steal wood so that our families could have at least a bench

and a table besides the 7 cots that just about took up all the space in the room. The government destroyed the important family structure of the Japanese families by forcing them to eat in the mess halls and use communal showers and lavatories. When we first arrived at Minidoka, everyone was forced to use out-houses since the sewer system had not been built. For about a year, the residents had to brave the cold and the stench of these accomodations.

Schools were not set up until almost the close of 1942, so the school age children were deprived of any kind of education for a period of almost a year. The schools were makeshift since they were barracks converted into classrooms and the wash room became the biology and chemistry laboratories. The dining hall became the only large space available for PE activities or assemblies. No gymnasium was made available until 1944 exactly two years after we had set foot into Minidoka. The libraries were inadequate and contained mostly donated out-dated books. Textbooks were of the same quality. The teaching staff made of of mostly people who had worked as teacher-missionaries or on Indian reservations. The majority of them were not highly educated nore enthusiastic like the teachers we were all accustomed to in Seattle.

The children in the concentration camps were truly denied their right to attend any school of their choosing and the chance to receive equal and quality education that their peers were receiving outside the barbed wires.

My parents had been paying taxes in the State of Washington up to the time of evacuation and now it was impossible for any of us to take advantage of the Washington State universities because of the residence restrictions. My older brother was attending the University of Washington in 1942, and he was denied the Constitutional right to continue his education there because of this order.

I attended Hunt high School for two years and I graduated in June of 1944. In april of that year, we read a notice stating that any American citizen graduating from high schools that year could apply for the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) by passing a physical and taking an academic exam. Three of us seniors of Hunt High School paid our own bus fares to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, Utah to see if we could be a participant in that program. Weall passed the physical and the exam and headed back to Minidoka to await the call into the services.

The ASTP program guaranteed attendance at one of the major universities, a college education, and subsistence for clothing and living. One day just before our graduation exercises, we got a letter from the U.S. Army stating that the program was closed to Americans of Japanese descent. Again the government came up with a decision that denied a specific ethnic group an opportunity for equal education. Also, they were telling us that the Nisei boys were good enough to be drafted as infantry or foot soldiers, but would be denied a chance to become officers by taking part in a program like the ASTP.

ANother ruling that was degrading to the Nisei, was the requirement that anyone (even though they were members of the U.S. ARmy) if they wished to visit their families or relatives in the concentration camps, had to get a pass to come into the camp. Everyone had to pay for the food that they ate , and for the bed that they slept in while visiting. My brother was in the Army and he came to get married but he was subjected to this type of humiliation and extra expense.

Imagine the kind of outcry that would have come from other ethnic groups if they were subjected to this kind of treatment while serving the United States Army.

I left Minidoka in 1944 and went to a small college in Kansas, because that was about the only one left open due to the late refusal I got from the ASTP program. I went there a year and in May of 1945, I signed on with a wheat harvesting crew that took me to Oklahoma , Kansas and South Dakota. While cutting wheat in the vicinity of Eureka, Kansa I stopped in at a restaurant to have lunch. The proprietor

5

pointed at a Blue -Star flag in the window and refused me service. I felt like telling him that my brother was killed in October of 1944 in France serving with the 442nd , and that he was lucky to still have his son alive. However, I took the humiliation and hurt since I was with other members of the crew and didn't want them to get involved.

I went into the services for two years and I started back to the University of Washington in 1947 as a sophomore in the field of chemistry. I received a BS in chemistry in 1950 and worked for the National Bureau of Standards for three years. During those three years, I studied for a teaching certificate part-time and in 1953 I received a contract from the Seattle School District. I was a teacher for 18 years and in 1972 became an administrator and in 1977 was appointed as the 1st Japanese-American principal of a senior high school in the Seattle District..

Until 1950, the Seattle School District did not hire a Japanese-American. This was a most difficult problem for Nisei leaving the Universities with teaching certificates. Even today, the scars of the War have not been completely healed since I still receive phone calls from adults referring to my ethnic background as reason why I should be in an administrative position.

I believe that the terms set forth by the National Committee for Redress are fair and reasonable. The U.S. Government can never match with money the sufferings, the humiliations and the tragedies brought about by the Evacuation Order. Many of the people that suffered most, the Isseis, are already gone. They are the ones that should have benefitted from such payments and redress.

It is incoceivable that a respected government like the United States, with its policies on human relations and respect , would turn down a request from the incarcerated thousands.