



VOLUME III, NUMBER 5
National Council for
Japanese American Redress

NEWSLETTER

NCJAR is seeking redress from the U.S. government through a class action lawsuit for the mass exclusion of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

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- Mr. and Mrs. Kazuo Yoshinaka

*ronin contributor of \$1,000
or more; some remain anonymous.
+member, NCJAR board.

DEAR FRIENDS,

August 1986

IN JUNE, I was in Portland for a forum on redress organized by Chisao Hata and the Portland Chapter of the JACL. In July, Ellen Carson and I were in Seattle for a meeting of questions and answers organized by Chizuko Omori and the Washington Area Coalition for Redress.

On the flight to Seattle, I read Harry Ueno's Manzanar Martyr. All three events proved enlightening. Chisao and her friends demonstrated that a JACL chapter can invite NCJAR to discuss the lawsuit and survive unscathed by bolts of lightning. I also learned that rank-and-file JACLers can and do see the lawsuit as a viable form of redress.

(A good friend of mine who has been active for many years in the JACL explained that NCJAR and I are considered to be "the enemy" by many JACLers.)

MANZANAR MARTYR IS a primary document of Japanese-American history. It is Harry Ueno's account of his life as a Kibei Nisei—an American born in Hawaii, sent to Japan as a young child, and, still a youth, returned to America. He describes his childhood in Hawaii and Japan, his rebellion and return to America, his struggle to survive, his travels up and down the West Coast, to the Midwest, and starting his family in Los Angeles.

He tells of his family's exile to the Manzanar prison camp, his emergence as a leader of the Kitchen Worker's Union, and his frustrating attempts to hold accountable the camp's administration in its allocation of food, especially sugar. His "martyrdom"—I think the term a little overblown—occurs when he is arrested on December 5, 1942 as one of a group of attackers of Fred Tayama. His arrest causes the "Manzanar riot" in which eleven inmates are shot by the military police, two fatally. In the aftermath, none of those who did the shooting, the soldiers, are arrested, but 16 inmates are removed to a penal colony under heavy armed guard for about a year. None of these men ever received a hearing or trial. Ueno steadfastly maintains his innocence. He coveted an opportunity for a formal hearing.

I must say that I believe him. It's not just that a person is innocent until proven guilty and the government's failure even to provide a forum for such proof. It's through

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An Issue for All Americans

Continued from page 1 DEAR FRIENDS

my meetings with Harry and Yaso Ueno, our correspondence through the years, and my reading of many primary documents concerning his case. As the editors of this oral history point out, Harry Ueno was an ordinary person caught in an extraordinary situation. You can read Manzanar Martyr and make your own decision. I'm proud to have Harry as a named plaintiff for our lawsuit and a *ronin* supporter of NCJAR.

SEATTLE MADE ANOTHER of several occasions for me to listen to Ellen Carson. None seem repetitive. I learn something new each time. Perhaps this newness is an illusion caused by the many things I have yet to understand about our lawsuit. In Seattle I was struck by her explanation of the difference between the legislative and judicial branches of our democratic system. The legislative branch enables majority rule. The judicial branch, especially as undergirded by our Constitution, protects the rights of individuals and minorities. A nice balance. One would not want a minority, certainly not an individual, to hold power; hence, majority rule. But as we minorities too clearly realize, the majority can trample on our human rights and freedoms; hence, the protection of the courts.

WE TAKE THIS principle with us as we continue with our journey to the Supreme Court. This month we file for a writ of certiorari, a request to be heard by the Court. There are many issues to be heard, some quite technical. I put these still too technical issues into a mental box marked "to be examined later when my understanding improves."

For us, the main issue is sovereign immunity—much like the notion that the king can do no wrong, even, you may recall, when he wears no clothes. It bars us from suing the Government for the violation of our constitutional rights. Ellen's explanation here is again enlightening. Of what value are these constitutional guarantees if the Government can violate them without penalty? These rights are there to protect us from the Government. The right to due process, equal protection of the laws, and *habeas corpus*, three of the fifteen causes of action in our complaint, are essential to individual freedom. For such essential guarantees of freedom, surely citizens must be able to hold the Government accountable for their violations and not be permitted to hide behind something called "sovereign immunity." Where is this "sovereign immunity" written into our Constitution—oh, you strict constructionists?

OUR REDRESS MOVEMENT now rises to raise a substantial challenge to our democratic system. It's a great opportunity for us. You can participate. We estimate the cost for this next stage to be around \$40,000 to \$50,000. We need your help.

Speaking of which, we recently acquired three more *ronin*: Yae and Bob Imon, two officers of our NCJAR board; Aiko and Jack Herzig, our dedicated researchers and NCJAR's "Washington branch;" and Jim Akutsu, a draft resister (Minidoka) and the model for John Okada's hero in No No Boy. They are our 46th, 47th, and 48th *ronin*. Now that we've broken the barrier of 47, there's room for many more!

Peace,

WILLIAM HOHRI



NCJAR newsletter
editor: Eddie Sato

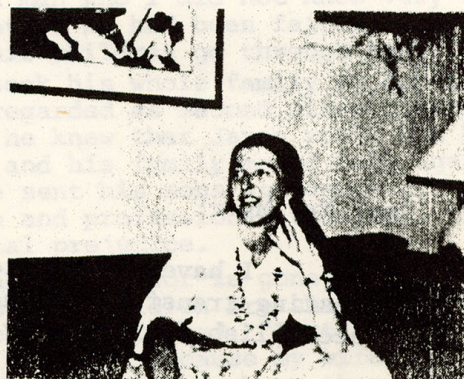
Winifred McGill
Doris Sato

An impromptu get-together with Ms. Carson

ELLEN CARSON WAS here to speak at a conference held at the Chicago Hilton & Towers on the morning of July 25, 1986.

The evening before her speaking engagement, a few board members of NCJAR dined with Ellen at a Thai restaurant. Later, the group met at the home of Haru and Sam Ozaki.

The topic of discussion at the impromptu get-together dealt with the possibility of the lawsuit being heard in the Supreme Court. e.s.



CONTRIBUTORS

ARIZONA: David C. Moore.

ARKANSAS: L. Craig Rains.

CALIFORNIA: M/M George Buto, Don/Midori Date, Mary/Chuck Furutani, George R. Ikeda, Mamoru/Susan Kanda, Gary M. Kitano, Sadame/Mits Kojimoto, Paul/Marjorie Miyazaki, Friends in Monterey Park, Mitsui/Edith Oba, Helen (Ota) and Alex Salazar.

CHICAGO: Kerry/Carolyn Berland, Bill/Flora Hidaka, Mary Iwaoka, Nelson/Taka Kitsuse, Bob/Yae Imon, Alice S. Uchiyama.

HAWAII: Ernest Uno.

ILLINOIS: M/M Paul Arakawa.

INDIANA: M/M Theodore Chihara.

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VIRGINIA: Jack/Aiko Herzig.

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WASHINGTON, DC: Kaz Oshiki, Kumao Toda.

WISCONSIN: Hideo/Tamiko Yamata.

■ If you do not wish to have your name printed, please indicate when you remit.

LETTERS

I AM VERY impressed and grateful to you in Chicago who are carrying on this magnificent effort. Here's hoping that it turns out well for all of us.

CHIZUKO OMORI
Seattle, WA

Many thanks
for your newsletter.

SADAME and MITS
KOJIMOTO
San Francisco, CA

I FIND YOUR newsletter one of the consistently intelligent, compassionate sources of information on both the subject of the wartime relocation and that of the current drive for redress.

ART HANSEN
Long Beach, CA

JUST READ YOUR June issue after watching the evening news and the announced intention of President Reagan to appoint Judge Scalia to the Supreme Court to replace newly-named Chief Justice Rehnquist. Ouch! It seems fair to state right off the top that this appointment does not bode well for the redress suit if, and when it reaches the Court.

I do look forward to each issue of the newsletter and even as I rejoice with all of you for each little victory, I know that the campaign will continue to be a long and arduous one. As a former internee, all I can offer is "gambare!"

ERNEST UNO
Aiea, HI

November 6, 1942

Dear Mr. Myer:

I have your letter of November 4 enclosing petition requesting transfer of evacuees at Minidoka to internment camps to accomplish family unity.

Alien civilian internment is in the hands of the Department of Justice so far as internment and release is concerned, although the actual policing of the camps is a responsibility of the Army. I suggest, therefore, that this petition be taken up with Mr. Ennis of the Department of Justice.

While ordinarily I would favor any steps toward family unity in appropriate cases, I am not particularly enthusiastic about a wholesale transfer which would subject the Nisei to further Issei contamination. It is a question of balancing the relative merits of segregation based on loyalty, which we all endorse, against segregation based on family ties. If any steps are taken, I think it would be better to parole selected internees to relocation centers than to transfer the remainder of the family into internment camps.

Sincerely ,

John J. McCloy
Assistant Secretary of War

Mr. Dillon S. Myer, Director
War Relocation Authority
Room 812, Barr Building
Washington, D.C.

JMH: JJMcC:jhs

■ NOTE: NCJAR is indebted to Aiko Herzig for providing the (above) document. It was re-typed for clarity.

ASW 014.311 Segregation of Japs
Classif. No. ASW 254 Minidoka

■ The following address was delivered
on September 15, 1978 for the 70th Anniversary
of Seattle's St. Peter's Episcopal Parish.

By
Joseph M.
Kitagawa

The legacy of the Isseis

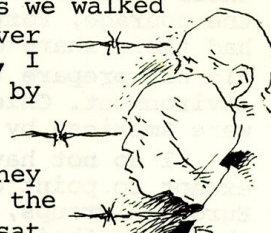
ON THIS OCCASION when you are paying tribute to the legacy of the Isseis, who through their lifelong toil and devotion have prepared the way for their descendants, I thought it might be appropriate for me to share with you my personal account of how I came to know the world of the Isseis through our shared life in the internment camps.

In the fateful year of 1941, I was studying in Berkeley, California. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, I found myself eating canned beans in the Alameda County jail, and from there I was shipped to Santa Fe and then to Lordsburg, New Mexico, with my fellow internees, all of whom were Isseis.

During my internment camp days, I often read and reread the story of Daniel in the old testament. According to the story, which is familiar to all of you, Daniel's enemies persuaded the king to sign a document that was designed to cast him in the den of lions, and when he learned one day that the document had been signed, we are told that Daniel went to his chamber where he had windows open toward Jerusalem, and he got down upon his knees three times and prayed. This story, too, had special significance to all of us then, because in those days we all prayed with our windows open toward home. Like Daniel, who was vexed by the uncertainty of his life, my fellow internees were haunted by ambiguities which enveloped their existence.

EVERYDAY, AS THE bright New Mexico sun faded behind a skyline decorated only with sagebrush, we all gathered together and shared our frustrations and problems. It was through these daily contacts that I came to know the Isseis. I was fascinated to listen to the endless tales of these new friends, who had crossed the Pacific earlier with adventuring hearts. By the time I knew them, however, their faces, once youthful and proud, bore the creases of years of hardship.

Many of them were from California, Oregon and Washington, but some were from Hawaii and Alaska. All of them had worked tirelessly throughout their adult life on their farms or in their shops, enduring humiliation and discrimination, with a firm determination to provide a better future for their offspring. I could readily understand what a traumatic and baffling experience it was for them suddenly to be uprooted from their homes because of war on the grounds that they were not citizens of this country, when by law they could not seek citizenship. And as we walked together along the barbed wire in the daytime, or as we tried to cover ourselves against the cold at night in the draughty wooden barracks, I could sense that my Issei friends were deeply troubled, not so much by the experience of the physical discomfort or even the loss of their homes and property but more by the sense of uncertainty they felt concerning their own future or their wives and children from whom they were separated. It was on such an occasion that I suddenly realized the emotional impact of the Hebrew Psalm: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion!" They too must have prayed with their windows open toward home.



EVEN NOW, I cherish my memories of those fellow internees, who had allowed me to glimpse into the world of the early Japanese immigrants through our life together. Many of them originally came from the areas of Japan which had been greatly affected by the transition from the feudal regime to the imperial rule that took place in 1868. The year 1868 marked not only the political upheaval but also social, economic, and cultural changes as well. Gone were the social and political institutions of the feudal age, and with them many of the traditional values and mores of the culture. In this circumstance, some of the ambitious youths came to America, the alleged land of opportunities and fabulous fortunes. Little did those young Japanese immigrants realize that they were coming to that part of America which had earlier vigorously recruited Chinese laborers and then subjected them to virtual slavery when they arrived. The Chinese were accused of remaining strangers in the land, residing apart by themselves, and adhering to the strange customs of their homeland. They were not allowed to testify against a white person

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5 The legacy of the Isseis

in a court of law even though they were subject to heavy taxes, and they were excluded from schools.

SIMILARLY, JAPANESE IMMIGRANTS were initially welcomed by the West Coast agricultural and business interests, but soon they became targets of discrimination. Persistent pressures from the West Coast eventually led to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1922 that Japanese were ineligible for American citizenship and to the passage of the 1924 Quota Act which legally terminated Japanese immigration altogether.

Understandably, the life of the Japanese immigrants on the West Coast was not an enviable one. I still get nightmares when I recall the horror stories told by my Issei friends about the long hours they had to work each day for meager pay, part of which was pocketed by their bosses. But then they were still young and eager to make quick money and return to Japan, as indeed some lucky ones did. However, for many, their first hopes of getting rich quick soon gave way to the reality of the situation, and they settled down on the West Coast by bringing wives from the old country. Being unfamiliar with their new environment, American mores, and the English language, the Issei pioneers underwent extreme hardship. The only source of comfort to them was their family life, which was made possible by the loving care of long-suffering Issei women, the unsung heroines of the tortured drama of Japanese immigrants to America. In the course of time, with the increase of family groups, there developed a need for some kind of community life. And those Issei forbears, who were virtually ignored by the Japanese government, barely tolerated by the officialdoms of their new land, and largely excluded from participation in American community life, were forced to develop their own form of community. While we may argue today whether or not such a community pattern was desirable over the long run, it was the only option available for the early settlers. For at least in their own communities, they were not refused service in restaurants, barbershops, or accommodations in boarding houses.

MY EXPOSURE TO fellow internees taught me the simple yet important lesson that Isseis were not categories but persons—individuals with an amazing variety of habits, temperaments and backgrounds. If there are common Issei traits, as I think there are, they were derived from their common experience of living under trying conditions in a new land and from their concern for their descendents. And the more I listened to their stories, the more I came to admire the strength of their character as well as the courage, fortitude and sense of dedication of Issei women. No doubt, the Isseis had their share of limitations and blindspots. After all, their upbringing in Japan did not prepare them to cope with many of the problems they had to face in their new environment. Chief among them was the question of how to raise their children, who were American by birth.

I do not have to rehearse the painful experience of the Niseis to this audience, except to point out that like children of immigrant groups, especially those of non-European groups, the second generation Japanese Americans were destined to go through phases in their life—the first phase when they were not conscious of their minority status, the second phase when they became aware of their social marginality as a result of their experience, and the third phase which encompassed the longer period of a more permanent adjustment, or lack of adjustment, which they made or attempted to make to their situation. Understandably, Issei parents had the greatest difficulty in understanding the second phase of their own children's growth. In spite of their serious effort, the Isseis were not prepared to appreciate the depth of their children's emotional insecurity caused by the Nisei's own realization that they were not accepted completely either by the community of their own parents or by the American society at large. Many church leaders, too, failed to understand the intricate Issei-Nisei relationship in that normal adolescent rebellion against parental authority often turned into serious cultural cleavage between "Japanese" and "American" children. To make the matter more complex, many Nisei reached early adulthood during the 1930's and 40's under the shadow of the depression and the mass evacuation. And it was only when their Nisei children, who by virtue of their birth and education were citizens of this country, also were uprooted from their homes and sent to war relocation centers without due process of law, that many Issei parents came to realize the dilemma and the depth of agony of their children.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6 The legacy of the Isseis

I REMEMBER ONCE in our usual daily walks, a man who I did not know very well confided in me his sense of bewilderment. Evidently, he had been fairly successful in his business, but he could not stand to see his children go through humiliating experiences. So against his wife's counsel, he took his whole family to Japan, thinking that there, his children would not be regarded as second class citizens. But the minute they arrived at his native town, he knew that Japan would not be the place for his "American" children. Thus, he and his family moved back again to the West Coast and rebuilt their business. He sent his sons and daughters to college, and hoped that with a college education and professional training, they could hold their own in society in spite of racial prejudice.

"But now," he said sadly, "everything we had worked for is gone. I am here in this internment camp, while my wife and children are sharing one dusty room in a relocation center." Then he continued, "I still think we were right in coming back to this country, because my wife says, 'this is where my children belong and we should be where they are.' True, we have lost everything, but there are good times and bad times, and my wife and I can live somehow. But, what hurts me is the fact that my children's loyalty to their country is questioned."

Not knowing what to say, I simply nodded my head, and we kept walking silently. Parenthetically, I might add that similar stories were told by many others. After the end of the walk, we parted. My walking companion did not say a word, but he had tears in his eyes. I knew then he was going to pray that night with his windows open toward the relocation center which was the temporary home of his wife and children. Later, after I moved to Minidoka, Idaho, I learned that one of his sons had volunteered for the army and was killed in action on the Italian front. I remembered his son at the altar, for I knew my friend, a devout Buddhist, wanted me to do that.

IT IS NOT strange, therefore, that even today, after thirty-five years, I remember many of my fellow internees at Santa Fe and Lordsburg. I still correspond with some of them, but, many are gone already.

Most Isseis never attained nor acquired much wealth. They have, however, left a precious legacy in their valiant spirit, which enabled them to endure and overcome almost insurmountable difficulties, disappointments and setbacks throughout their life.

Once a famous rabbi touched the hearts of a Jewish audience when he said: "You are perhaps the children of dealers in old clothes, but remember, you are the descendants of prophets."

In a similar vein, I want to remind you that you are the descendants of those heroic Issei men and women. Let us hope it will be possible for us to live up to their legacy.

PERMISSION TO PRINT WAS GRANTED

- The Reverend Dr. Joseph M. Kitagawa was Priest-in-charge of the Holy Apostles in Minidoka, Idaho (1942-1945), and served in the same capacity at Seattle's St. Peter's during the post-war years (1945-1946), before coming to Chicago. He is Professor Emeritus, Dean of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago.

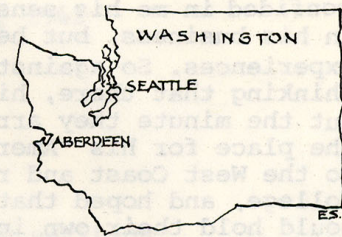
His brother, the late Daisuke Kitagawa (1910-1970), author of "Issei and Nisei," was the Secretary of Racial and Ethnic Relations of the World Council of Churches. Before World War II, Father Dai was Priest-in-charge of both St. Peter's and sister church St. Paul's in Kent, Washington. He was interned in Tule Lake.

Both were originally from Japan. "Since our father was a clergyman, we moved from one city to another, mostly in the Osaka-Nara-Kyoto area," said Father Joe.

e.s.

100 percent plus loyal Americans

MID-APRIL 1942 was a special time in my life. Aberdeen, Washington, was still in a rainy winter-spring where we saw 113 inches of rain. The early confusion of the war was receding and the FBI finally released my mother on the day after Easter (they were busy with Easter holidays at the center in Seattle). A thorough check cleared our whole family. My widowed mother was pronounced safe and at fifteen, I had my first security clearance.



Earlier, the FBI had ransacked our house and store. My brother Perry, sister Dolly and I were subject to a military curfew at sundown to prevent us, we were told, from flashing signals to Japanese submarines or aircraft. If anyone of Japanese ancestry had even a firecracker, it was assumed they were spies armed with signal flares.

BEING 100 PERCENT plus loyal Americans, we were law-abiding good citizens. I was so loyal that I was proud of the fact I knew so little Japanese. Ignorance, I believed, meant I was that much more American. For us, the melting pot equaled cultural assimilation which meant being white Anglo-Saxon in looks, outlook and thinking. Schools taught being "American" was not a matter of race and I believed it.

By April 1942, I knew this was not quite true. Americans of Japanese ancestry were being sent to "Assembly Centers" like state fair grounds where animal stalls were the "temporary" homes for thousands. We joked about running at Puyallup or Tanforan or Santa Anita, or some other exotically named place. They all held too many things in common: they smelled, they were inadequate for housing families, they were substandard in terms of U.S. federal prison standards.

SINCE THE FBI had cleared us, I was naive to think we might not be evacuated. We were "safe" and even the lame excuse for the coming evacuation: "it is to protect those of Japanese ancestry" had no meaning for us. Aberdeen was our home. We belonged. In fact, if evacuated many would think, "Ha! They must have done something otherwise they would not have been sent off." Evacuation implied guilt.

We were not ordered to an assembly center. Since the Alien Exclusion Act of 1923 barred our mother from becoming an American citizen, we worried about being split again. Sure, Mom talked a little funny, but she raised us as Americans. Our loyalty was proven by the FBI clearance and her release. Still, we worried and Mom helped prepare us in case we were to be divided again. She was stricter in instructing Perry who was boss and was to be obeyed. Then she began to drive him very hard.

Before the war ended, Mom was the one sought by the U.S. Army to teach at the University of Chicago. She agreed on the condition she could work for peace. She won. Forty years later, she died in peace in Chicago.

MORSE SAITO

- The (above) article is from Morse Saito's column BATTLING WINDMILLS. It was sent to the editor by Berry Suzukida. Berry said: "I met Morse' mother here in Chicago around 1980. She was a wonderful person. She used to visit some friends here at Heiwa Terrace." Saito's column was in the April 21, 1986 edition of the Mainichi Shinbun.

C O R R E C T I O N

The following from David Moore's letter printed in the June newsletter should read:

"But what you are doing will hopefully give pause to those who might, at some future time, consider another 'Evacuation' expedient."

The incorrect word is cause.

A book on Harry Ueno

Enclosed are photos taken at the "book party." Harry and his wife Yaso, drove down from San Jose and spent all afternoon signing the books.

HANNAH HOLMES
Los Angeles, CA

The "book party" with Harry Ueno was held on Saturday afternoon, July 12th, at the Amerasia Bookstore in Little Tokyo.

Ralph Lazo (right) was the first non-Japanese to be interned at Manzanar. Lazo is a ronin and supporter of NCJAR.



For those wishing to purchase MANZANAR MARTYR:
An Interview with Harry Y. Ueno,
please write to:

Oral History Program
California State University, Fullerton
Library 431
Fullerton, CA 92634

- A limited edition of the hardcovers have been printed at \$13.95 per copy (plus \$1 postage).

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a free-lance oral historian
who has written much
on the exclusion and
detention of Japanese Americans.



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