

BACKGROUND - Draft Presentation

We are here to remember February 19, 1942, the day F.D.R. signed E.O. 9066. In that one action, he --with the knowledge and approval of all the branches of the U.S. Government, ~~eliminated~~<sup>reduced</sup> the basic (democratic) rights of Japanese Americans --citizens and non-citizens.

120 thousands of us were rounded up and put into make over horse stalls called "assembly centers", then shipped inland into Concentration Camps A.K.A. "Relocation centers".

Here on the East Coast, in New York City, Japanese American ministers and other community leaders were rounded up and incarcerated on Ellis Island for (18) months.

This mass incarceration did not happen over night. E.O. 9066 was preceeded by a half a century of discrimination.

The isei, 1st generation, first came to the U.A. at the turn of the century to work the farmlands, railroads and fisheries along the West Coast. They experienced a day-to-day type of discrimination in their lives. Mr. K. Hashimoto was one of these isei, and although he recently passed away, he continues to be a source of knowledge, strength and inspiration to us all.

In a foreward of one of the two books he published, he wrote about that time in history..."(QUOTE)

These every day discriminatory practices were institutionalized in laws which denied Asian imigrants the access to citizenship. (site: 1970-Free white alien; 1870-Free people of African decent; ammended in 1873-Black and white free men)

Asian imigrants were further denied the right to own land or property by the Alien Land Laws in California, Washington (Oregon?)

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Racism towards Asians was further whipped up by the vicious attacks by the yellow journalism of the Hearst Press; which scapegoated Japanese for the economic recession of the 1930's.

The sum total of this --the disenfranchisement of the Japanese population; their inability to own land and property; and the racism whipped up by the media, made us very vulnerable targets, and set the stage for the issuing of E.O. 9066.

\*We do not live in a vacume now, immune from events occuring on an international scale; and we certainly were victimized by the international events which took place in 1942.

--In (1940) the powers that be were at war with one another. This was accompanied by heightened militarism and blind patriotism.

--What is clear in retrospect, is that the U.S. Governement needed a way aggressively enter WWII; and they found their way by ignoring the warnings that were clear to them regarding the planned bombing attack on Pearl Harbor.

--The bombing of Peral Harbor signaled the full fledged entry of the U.S. into the War, and set up the smoke screne for the government to incarcerated 120 thousand Japanese Americians -citizens and non-citizens.

\*think about this more; should it be here?

The Asian Community has always challaged these overt acts of racism. A review of court cases from 1922 to 1925 show four separate instances of Asians suing the governeemt of citizenship. Many isei bought property under the name of their children --who were born citizens of the U.S..

The film, Unfinished Business, gives an account of the present day struggles for R/R.