

NIDOTO NAI YONI
LET IT NOT HAPPEN AGAIN

SIX DAYS' NOTICE

*The Japanese Americans of Bainbridge Island,
the war that took them, and the neighbors
who kept their farms*

A STORYBOOK OF RECORD
1883 · 1942 · 1945 · TODAY

“Let it not happen again that a group of people are singled out, that their loyalty and patriotism be questioned because of their race or ancestry.”

Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial

FOREWORD

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

This is a true story. Every date in it can be checked, and should be. The photographs of exhibit panels reproduced here were taken at a Bainbridge Island display built from the collections of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community and the Densho Digital Archives. The panels appear as plates between the chapters, as they appeared on the wall: creased, glassed, lit by an ordinary window.

The story concerns 227 people. Farmers, mostly. Strawberry farmers, a barber, a butcher, schoolchildren with baggage tags tied to their coats. On March 30, 1942, the United States Army removed them from their island because of their ancestry. They were the first in the nation. More than 120,000 people followed them into the camps, two thirds of them American citizens. No court ever convicted one of them of espionage. Not one.

Bainbridge Island is worth telling about for a second reason. When the government failed its own citizens, some neighbors did not. A newspaper kept its word. Farmhands kept the strawberries alive. And in April of 1945, when the ferry brought the first families home, people were standing at the dock.

“It's like they were waiting for us.”

Lilly Kodama, removed from Bainbridge Island at age seven

CHAPTER ONE

YAMA

The village on the hill, 1883 to 1922

Begin with lumber. In the 1870s the Port Blakely Mill on the south end of Bainbridge Island was cutting more timber than almost any yard on earth, and it needed hands. They came from everywhere. Among them, beginning in the early 1880s, came young men from Japan.

Above the mill they built a settlement and called it Yama, the Japanese word for mountain. Nearly 300 people lived there at its height. Yama had a hotel, restaurants, a tofu shop, bathhouses, barbershops, a bakery, and about fifty homes. A horse drawn wagon delivered groceries from the general store at Yama and at Port Blakely. Children were born there. Children were buried there.

The mill closed in 1920 and Yama emptied. The families did not leave the island. They cleared stumps and planted strawberries, opened stores, cut meat at the Eagle Harbor Market. Their berries went to Seattle by the ton. Their sons and daughters went to Bainbridge High School. By December of 1941 the Japanese community had been on the island for nearly sixty years. They were not newcomers. They were neighbors.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

During the 1870s, Bainbridge Island welcomed a surge of immigrants from around the globe to work at the Port Blakely Mill, then the largest lumber yard in the world. Soon nearly 300 Japanese residents bustled around Yama, the small settlement they built near the mill.



Top:
A view of the sawmill workers at the Port Blakely Mill, Bainbridge Island, WA, c. 1919. Courtesy of BIJAC.

Bottom:
General store at Yama, the Japanese village in Port Blakely, Bainbridge Island, WA, 1890s. Courtesy of BIJAC.



Left:
Strawberry farm, Bainbridge Island, WA, c. 1925. Courtesy of BIJAC.
Below:
General store at Bainbridge Island, Bainbridge Island, WA, c. 1914. Courtesy of BIJAC.



Yama boasted a hotel, restaurants, a tofu shop, Japanese bathhouses, barbershops, a bakery and about 50 homes. Some of these thriving businesses would integrate into the larger Bainbridge Island community when the mill closed in 1920.

With the mill shut down, the Japanese residents of Bainbridge left Yama and started new lives as strawberry farmers, butchers, and store owners. These people served Japanese and non-Japanese residents, and contributed greatly to the Island economy.



Below:
Men working at the Eagle Harbor Meat Market following the closing of the mill Bainbridge Island, WA, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC.
Left:
Family picnic, Bainbridge Island, WA, 1930s. Courtesy of BIJAC.

Exhibit panel: sawmill workers at Port Blakely, the Yama general store, a strawberry field, a family picnic in the 1930s, and a butcher at the Eagle Harbor Meat Market, 1942. Historic photographs courtesy of BIJAC.

CHAPTER TWO

WAR

December 7, 1941 to February 19, 1942

Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. Bainbridge Island sat in the middle of a war map: the Bremerton Naval Shipyard to the west, the Sand Point Naval Air Station and a torpedo station across the water, Seattle eight miles by ferry. Suspicion arrived before any order did.

Island families read the papers and understood. They burned kimonos in burn barrels. Painted scrolls, letters from grandparents, heirlooms carried across the Pacific went into outhouses and stoves, destroyed by their owners so that no agent could call them evidence. In early February the FBI came anyway. Agents confiscated radios, guns, binoculars, and the dynamite the farmers used for clearing stumps. They arrested 34 island men without charges. Eleven were shipped to Department of Justice camps out of state. Their families learned where they were by letter, later.

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. It named no ancestry. It did not have to. It gave the Army power to declare military zones and remove anyone from them. Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt of the Western Defense Command chose to begin with one small island in Puget Sound.

“Oh, we were very, very nervous, because hey, we have the face of the enemy.”

Gerald "Jerry" Nakata, Bainbridge Island

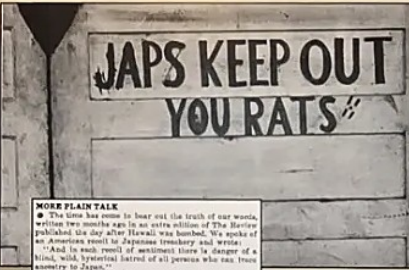
WAR

"Oh, [we were] very, very nervous, because hey, we have the face of the enemy."

— Gerald "Jerry" Nakata (In Defense of our Neighbors, 46)

Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, a wave of anti-Japanese sentiment swept the nation. These racist attitudes were troubling to Japanese Americans who had lived harmoniously with their neighbors for decades. The atmosphere was especially tense on Bainbridge Island, which was located near several possible Japanese targets, such as the Seattle shipyard, the Sand Point Naval Air Station, the Naval Torpedo Station, and the Bremerton Naval Shipyard.

Right:
Anti-Japanese graffiti.
Courtesy of
Densho Digital
Archives.
Bottom:
Excerpt from
Bainbridge Review
article by West
Weekend
reporting on
seizures of
Japanese-owned
property in
the area.
Courtesy of
the Densho Digital
Archives.



MORE PLAIN TALK
The time has come to bear out the truth of our words, written two months ago in an extra edition of The Review published the day after Hawaii was bombed. We spoke of an American revolt to Japanese treachery and wrote: "And in such revolt of sentiment there is danger of a blind, wild, hysterical hatred of all persons who are true to their country to Japan."
Up and down the Pacific Coast, in the newspapers, and in the halls of Congress are words of hatred now for all Japanese, whether they be citizens of America. These words resulted in a shocking massacre when Henry McLane, with all the intelligence of a blind pig, wrote in the Seattle Times: "Fortunately, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them."

SEIZURES OF GUNS MADE BY F. B. I.



Left:
Bainbridge Island Review
headline, Bainbridge
Island WA, February 5,
1942. Courtesy of
Densho Digital Archives.
Below:
Shortly after the bombing
of Pearl Harbor, Japanese
Americans were ordered
to surrender their
weapons and radios.
Seattle WA, 1942.
Courtesy of Densho
Digital Archives.

So as not to cast doubt about their allegiance to the United States, Japanese American families hid or destroyed objects linked to their 'enemy' ancestry. Kimonos, painted scrolls and other treasured heirlooms brought across the Pacific were thrown into outhouses or burned. In early February, the FBI confiscated radios, guns, dynamite and binoculars from the Japanese American residents, and arrested 34 local leaders without cause. Eleven of these men were taken to Department of Justice internment camps out of state.

Public Proclamation No. 1 was issued, stating that enemy aliens living on the West Coast, including people of Japanese descent, were to be removed at military discretion to incarceration camps. Voluntary evacuation from the 'exclusion zone' was encouraged, but this order lasted only three weeks before being cancelled.

Right:
President Franklin D. Roosevelt
signing the decision of war
against Japan, December 8,
1941. Courtesy of Densho
Digital Archives.



Exhibit panel: anti-Japanese graffiti, a Seattle Police property receipt, the Bainbridge Island Review headline on FBI seizures of February 1942, and President Roosevelt at his desk. Courtesy of BIJAC and Densho Digital Archives.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORDER

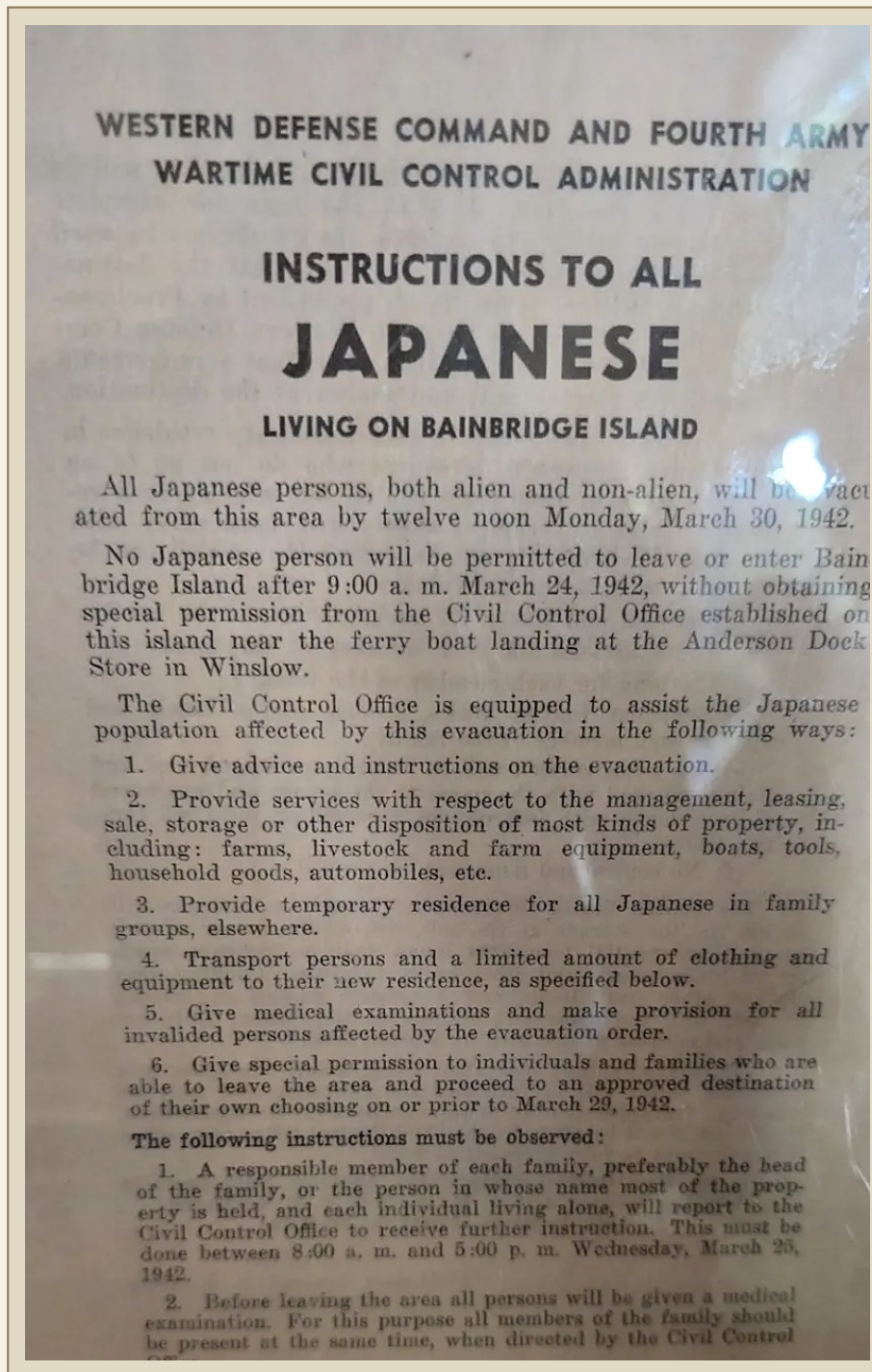
March 24, 1942

It went up on telephone poles and store windows on March 24, 1942: Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1, the first in the United States. INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL JAPANESE LIVING ON BAINBRIDGE ISLAND. All persons of Japanese ancestry, citizen and alien alike, would be gone by noon on Monday, March 30. Six days.

Read the poster closely. It is courteous. The Civil Control Office near the ferry landing at the Anderson Dock Store in Winslow stood ready to give advice, arrange medical examinations, and assist with the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property: farms, livestock, boats, tools, household goods, automobiles. The government offered every service except the one that mattered, which was to let them stay.

Six days to decide the fate of a farm that took twenty years to clear. Six days to find someone to trust with a house, a truck, a dog. Families could bring only what they could carry or wear. Everything else was sold for pennies, stored on faith, or left. The berry crop was in the ground and June was coming. Someone else would pick it, or no one would.

CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDER NO. 1



The Army poster of March 24, 1942, issued by the Western Defense Command and Wartime Civil Control Administration: all Japanese persons, "both alien and non-alien," to be removed from Bainbridge Island by noon, March 30, 1942.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE JOURNEY

March 30, 1942

On the morning of March 30, 1942, Army trucks rolled down the island roads and collected 227 men, women, and children, two thirds of them American citizens. Soldiers carried rifles with fixed bayonets. Some of the same soldiers carried luggage, and babies, and some of them wept while they did it. The families walked down Taylor Avenue to the Eagledale ferry dock and boarded the Kehloken for Seattle. Classmates from Bainbridge High stood on the hillside and cried.

A Seattle news photographer caught Fumiko Hayashida on the dock, holding her sleeping thirteen month old daughter, a baggage tag hanging from her coat like freight. The picture went around the world. She had not been told where she was going. Neither had anyone else.

Pets were forbidden. The Moji family left their dog King with a willing neighbor. After they were taken, King refused to eat, and starved. From Seattle a train with blacked out windows carried the islanders 1,000 miles south to the Owens Valley of California, to a half built camp in the desert called Manzanar. They were its first prisoners.

“You're taking away some of our best friends.”

Earl Hanson, Bainbridge Island, to the soldiers, March 30, 1942

JOURNEY

JOURNEY

"[They] are heavy hearted because they have been told that they must prepare to move from this Island – move inland to places they have never seen and amidst people who will not welcome them"

– Milly and Walt Woodward, The Bainbridge Review, March 5, 1942 (In Defense, 55)

On March 30, 1942, the remaining Japanese American residents of Bainbridge Island, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, were forcibly removed from their homes under Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1. The non-Japanese residents bid a sad farewell to their friends. Even some of the soldiers who escorted the Japanese Americans out felt sympathetic; some helped families carry their luggage and even their children. Many had tears in their eyes as they helped families carry luggage and young children.



Some of the 100 men on Bainbridge Island helped the soldiers hand out and pass the exclusion notice that led to the exclusion of the Japanese American community Bainbridge Island, WA, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC.



Left: Evacuation Day Bainbridge Island, March 30, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC & Densho Digital Archives.



Right: Army trucks were used to transport people from their homes to the Eagledale Ferry dock Bainbridge Island, March 30, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC & Densho Digital Archives.

The Moji family was forced to leave their dog King behind, as pets were not allowed in the concentration camps. The couple was lucky enough to have a neighbor who was willing to care for the dog while they were gone, but after they were taken King refused to eat and eventually starved to death.

"You're taking away some of our best friends."

– Earl Hanson (In Defense, 68)

The Japanese Americans were taken to a dock at Eagle Harbor, where they boarded the ferry for Seattle. From there, a train carried the prisoners to California. The Japanese American prisoners were then bused to the Manzanar Relocation Center in the Owens Valley.



Left: The families are escorted from their homes on Evacuation Day Bainbridge Island, March 30, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC & Densho Digital Archives.



Right: The women and their children were to board a general ferry to Seattle and an evacuation ship Bainbridge Island, WA, March 30, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC & Densho Digital Archives.

Exhibit panel: exclusion notices handed out on Bainbridge Island, Army trucks on evacuation day, families at the Eagledale dock, and a mother carrying her children to the ferry, March 30, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC and Densho Digital Archives.

LILLY KODAMA AND FAMILY

Lilly Kodama and Family - March 30, 1942



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Daily News

SPECIAL FINANCING NOW IS THE TIME TO SAVE ON GORGEOUS CARPET PR



Clarence Murakami, president of Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, stands with Lilly Kodama of Bainbridge Island, who was one of the first Japanese Americans forced into an internment camp 75 years ago. (Jesse Major/Periplus Daily News)

Japanese American recalls internment amid fears of modern parallels

JESSE MAJOR • Fri Jan 27th, 2017 11:46am

PORT ANGELES — Lilly Kodama, who was one of the first Japanese Americans forced into an internment camp 75 years ago, fears the United States didn't learn from its mistake.

Kodama of Bainbridge Island was 7 years old when soldiers ushered her onto a ferry that started her journey to an internment camp in a desert.



Seven year old Lilly Kodama and her family at the dock on March 30, 1942, children wearing government baggage tags; and Lilly Kodama seventy five years later at the memorial wall, still telling the story.

CHAPTER FIVE

MANZANAR

April 1942 to February 1943

The train stopped at Lone Pine, California, on April 1, 1942, beneath the Sierra Nevada. Manzanar was not finished. The islanders watched carpenters nail tar paper to pine boards that would be their walls. A barrack room held a stove, a hanging light bulb, army cots, two blankets each, and a mattress cover to be stuffed with straw by hand. Sand blew up through the gaps in the floor. Ten thousand people would eventually live inside the wire.

Nearly all the other inmates were city people from Los Angeles. The farm families from Puget Sound, used to rain and cedar, found themselves out of place in an alkaline desert among strangers. Meals came in mess halls, a thousand at a sitting. Toilets stood in open rows without partitions. Fathers who had run farms now stood in line for everything. Family authority, built over decades, wore away in months.

The Bainbridge Islanders petitioned the government for a transfer north, to the camp in Idaho where the rest of western Washington's Japanese Americans were held. After nearly a year, the government agreed. In February 1943 they packed again, this time for a place called Minidoka.

“But in camp, when you got in camp, it was like another world.”

Tats Kojima, Bainbridge Island

MANZANAR

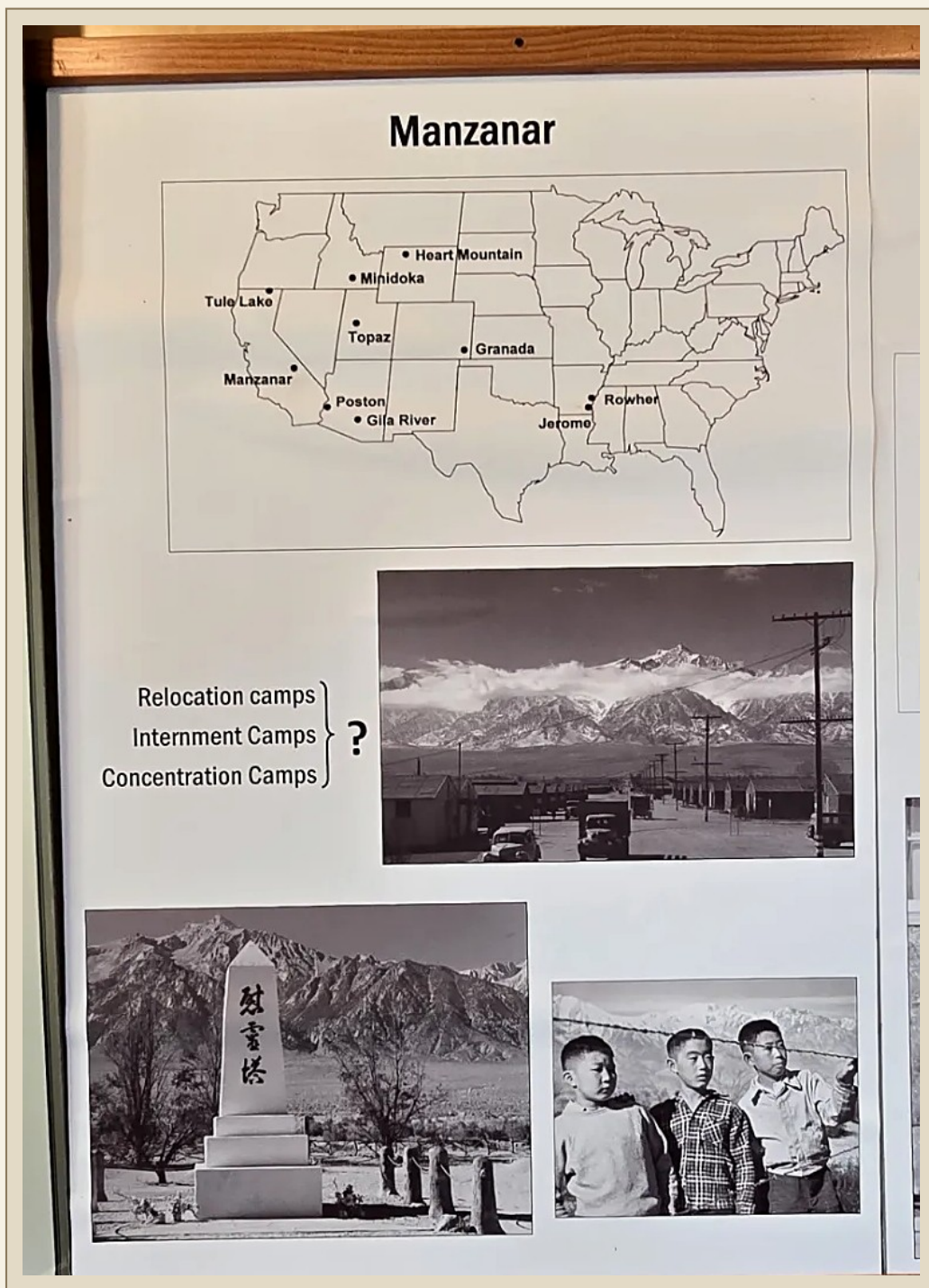


Exhibit panel: the ten War Relocation Authority camps; barracks beneath the Sierra Nevada; the cemetery monument at Manzanar; and three boys at the fence line. The panel asks which name is honest: relocation camp, internment camp, concentration camp.

CHAPTER SIX

MINIDOKA

February 1943 to 1945

Minidoka sat on sagebrush flats near Hunt, Idaho. Summer meant dust. Winter meant mud to the ankle, and the islanders cut their own wooden sandals to get across it. The barracks were the same barracks: four families to a building, one room to a family, no privacy anywhere. But at Minidoka the Bainbridge people were among Washington and Oregon neighbors, and that counted for something. They were the last group to fill a block in one of the last camps completed.

The islanders kept their community alive by hand. Paul Ohtaki, a Bainbridge High graduate who had set type for the island paper before the war, wrote dispatches from camp so that folks back home could follow their neighbors: weddings, graduations, births, a column headed Find Friends at Minidoka. Young men left the camp in Army uniform for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which fought in Italy and France and became one of the most decorated units in American history. They enlisted from behind barbed wire. Their parents remained behind it.

Three years passed this way. Straw mattresses, mess hall bells, a flag on a pole over the barracks, school photographs against tar paper. The children grew. The island got farther away, and closer.

LIFE IN CAMP

"But in camp, when you got in camp, it was like another world."

-Tats Kojima

Nearly all other inmates at the camp were city folk from California, and the farm families from the Northwest found themselves out of place. After nearly one year at Manzanar, the Bainbridge Islanders successfully petitioned a transfer to the Minidoka Relocation Center in southern Idaho, where other Japanese Americans from Washington and Oregon were held.



Left: Manzanar with American flag, 1940. Courtesy of BIJAC & Densho Digital Archives.
Bottom: Mud seen rising and eating around Minidoka, ID, December 10, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC.



Left: Geta, Japanese wooden sandals, were useful for keeping feet out of the dirt and mud. These were made by a Japanese craftsman at Manzanar, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC.
Bottom: A muddy road near Block 44, Minidoka, ID, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC. Courtesy of Densho Digital Archives.



In the concentration camps, conditions were miserable. Living quarters were tarpapered barracks designed to be split between four families. Rooms were bare except for a stove and a hanging light bulb. Each person was given a set of four army blankets, and one mattress, which they had to stuff with straw themselves. Sand came up through the floor when the wind blew during the summer, and mud was ankle deep during the winter.

In camp, there was no privacy. Everyone in the family shared a single room. There were rows of toilets and showerheads without partitions or doors. Many of the formal family traditions were forced aside and parental control and family life quickly deteriorated.



Left: Two young Japanese, Minidoka, ID, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC.
Bottom: Mess hall in the mess hall, Manzanar, CA, July 3, 1942. Courtesy of Densho Digital Archives.



Exhibit panel: the flag over Manzanar, handmade geta sandals for the mud, a muddy lane at Minidoka in 1942, children on the boardwalk, and the mess hall. Courtesy of BIJAC and Densho Digital Archives.

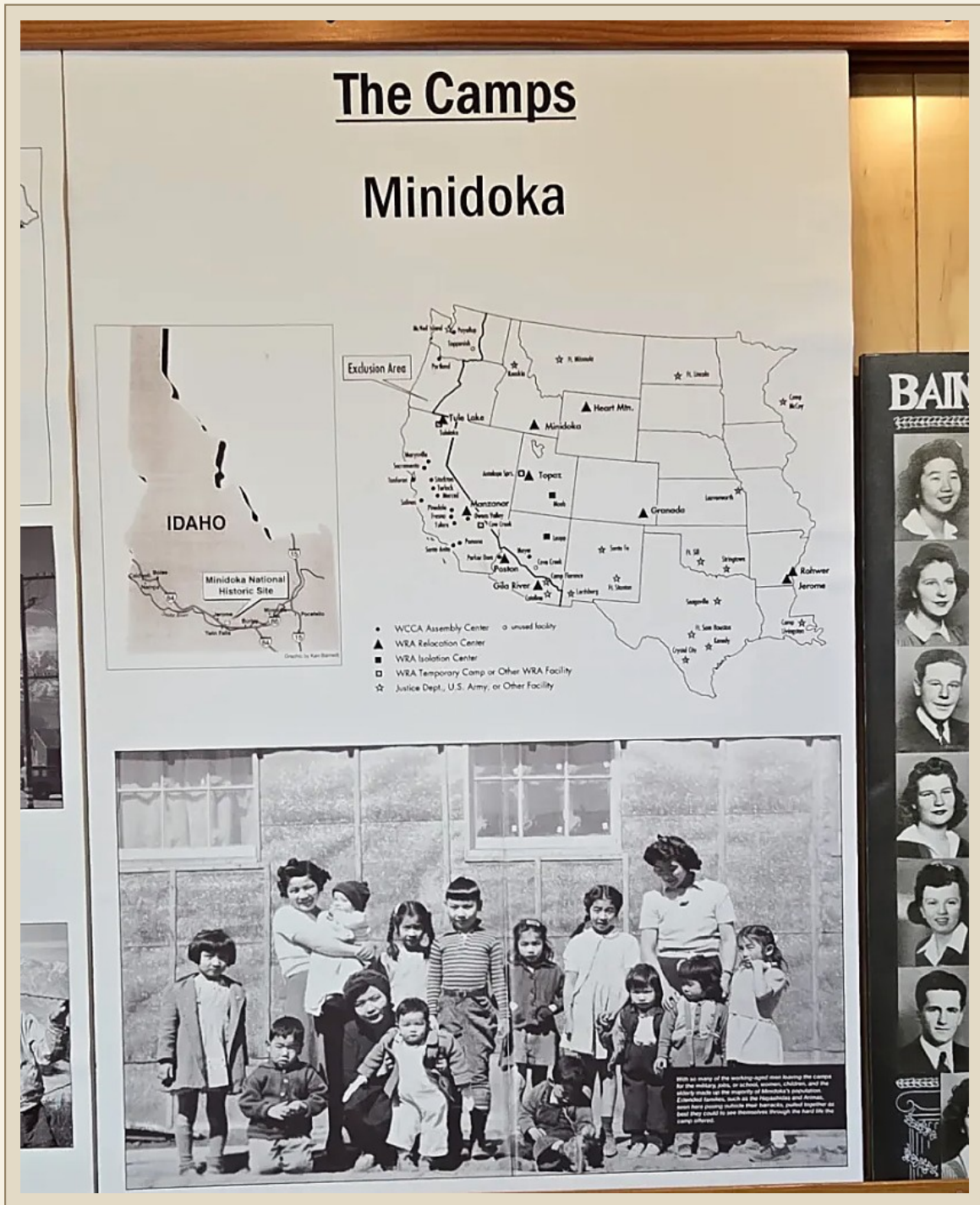


Exhibit panel: the exclusion zone and camp map of the western United States, the Minidoka National Historic Site in Idaho, and the children of Minidoka posing outside their barracks in the 1940s.

MEANWHILE, ON BAINBRIDGE

The ones who spoke

In 1940 a young couple named Walt and Milly Woodward bought the weekly Bainbridge Review. Two months before Pearl Harbor they pledged on the front page to speak the truth, unafraid. The day after the attack, while coastal papers printed hate, the Review warned its readers against blind hatred of their Japanese American neighbors. It kept warning them, in print, every week, through the whole war. Among West Coast newspapers this made the Review nearly alone.

The Woodwards did something more practical than editorials. They hired the removed islanders as correspondents. Paul Ohtaki and others filed camp news from Manzanar and Minidoka, and the Review printed it beside the school lunch menus and the ferry schedule, so that the exiles stayed what they had always been: islanders, neighbors, names.

Not everyone agreed. A man named Lambert Schuyler founded the Live and Let Live Legion to preach that the Japanese should never return. Most islanders declined to join. The Legion disbanded. Meanwhile Filipino farmhands and white neighbors worked the strawberry fields of absent families, paid the taxes on some of the farms, and kept the equipment oiled. None of this was required of them. That is the point.

“Bainbridge is a very exceptional place. There were people here willing to stick out their necks for us even before we left and while we were gone.”

Frank Kitamoto, Bainbridge Island

MEANWHILE, ON
BAINBRIDGE...

"Bainbridge is a very exceptional place ... there were people here [who] were willing to stick out their necks for us even before we left and while we were gone."



Alison
Paul Dirac, Princeton, NJ, 1949.
Paul worked as a junior for the
Berkeley Group prior to the war
and moved to the UK afterwards.

Not everyone on the Island thought like the Woodward's did. Lambert Schuyler founded the Live and Let Live Legion, which publicly preached intolerance. Most of the residents rejected this view though, and the Live and Let Live Legion disbanded. The Bainbridge Islanders' vocal support of their neighbors made them distinct among West Coast communities.

By PAUL OHTAKI

Review Staff Correspondent

● HUNTS, Ida, Wednesday, March 14.—Greeted with "Welcome Back" by the "young and sporty" crowd which had been "thoroughly warmed for them, IRT members of the Island's land and time! Just some money arrived here from Mammoth, Calif., last Friday, and since then it has been a matter of the Islanders saying over and over again: "It's just like counting back home." For they found back home that it was just like this here. At Mammoth, the little group of 30 backsliders later found and have "back" amid the "back" of the "back" and there. "Their new location is in the 44, which is the last block in the shore area from Mammoth, California. A group-page from the Mammoth Beach, daughter position

tion at the center, welcomed the arrivals by saying, "It is our hope that you can make your stay here as pleasant as possible."

Indians found muddy underfooting and more unpleasant weather than at Manzanita but they also found countless friends who showed anxious to welcome them.

The trip was made in a seven-car train chartered by the Reconstruction Authority. The train included a pullman car for older people and young children. There was made possible by a passenger car. Indeed everyone supported by the Reconstruction Authority.

Indians found countless friends on the island.

A solemn gathering was given in the S. Sakai home Sunday, prior to the move for Miss. Mima Kameko Sakai's, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. Sakai, Wainawa, engagement to Mr. Suen Isamu Nakao, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Nakao, also of Wainawa, was revealed. Because of the storm, their wedding date was not known. Miss Sakai is a 1928 Seaside High School graduate, while Mr. Nakao, also from the same school, was graduated in 1925.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SIGNS

What waited elsewhere

To measure Bainbridge, look off the island. In Kent, Washington, on March 2, 1944, a barber named G. S. Hanft posed for a photographer, grinning, pointing at the sign over his register telling Japanese customers they were unwelcome forever. In Seattle a woman stood on her porch under a banner declaring the block a white man's neighborhood and told the Japanese to keep moving. The Hearst papers ran the ouster of the Japanese as a running front page victory.

When the Nagaishi family returned to Seattle in 1945, they found their garage doors painted with graffiti telling them to leave. Anti-Japanese leagues met in halls up and down the coast to keep the returning families out. Newspapers printed the meeting notices. This was the ordinary weather of the West Coast in 1945.

The same ferry route, eight miles west, led to a different country. No committee on Bainbridge succeeded in organizing against the return. The island's shame is real and shared with the nation: its people watched 227 neighbors marched to a dock and did not stop it. Its honor is particular: when those neighbors came back, the island acted like their home. Both things are true. Keep both.

RACISM



Exhibit panel: a Kent, Washington barber and his sign, March 2, 1944; Hearst newspaper racks photographed by Dorothea Lange in Oakland, 1942; graffiti on the Nagaishi family garage, Seattle, 1945; and a Seattle porch banner.

CHAPTER NINE

HOMECOMING

April 1945

The exclusion orders fell at the start of 1945, and in April the first Bainbridge families came home from Minidoka after three years of imprisonment. The men came first, alone, to read the island's mood and find out whether it was safe to bring their wives and children. What they found were neighbors at the dock.

Homecoming was not simple. Some families returned to farms gone to weeds and were forced to sell. Getting fields back into production took seasons. But islanders showed up with what they had: legal advice, borrowed trucks, hands for weeding. The Woodward's paper had kept the exiles' names in local print for three years, and it is hard to hate a name you have been reading beside the ferry schedule.

Of the island's Japanese American community, roughly 150 came home, more than half, a higher share than almost any community on the West Coast, where many families never went back at all. The Kitamotos returned. The Kodamas returned. The strawberries came back into bearing. In most places the story ends with scattering. On Bainbridge it ends with a dock, and people standing on it.

“It's like they were waiting for us.”

Lilly Kodama, on returning to Bainbridge Island, 1945

HOME COMING

HOME COMING

"It's like they were waiting for us."

-Lilly Kodama

The end of the war meant release after over three years of imprisonment. The first Bainbridge Islanders to return home arrived in April of 1945. After reading of the anti-Japanese activities on the Island, some of the men returned early to determine if it was a safe environment for their families. In most cases their neighbors welcomed them back, and were willing to help them to reestablish their Island lives.



Left: The Hayashida family takes one last photo at the gate to Minidoka before they leave for the trip home to Bainbridge Island, Minidoka, ID, 1940s. Courtesy of BJAC.



Photo: Store of furrier shop with anti graffiti, November 11, 1944. Courtesy of Densho Digital Archives.

However, in communities off the Island, like Seattle, there were many successful efforts to prevent Japanese Americans from returning. Newspapers were an essential element in perpetuating racism, publicizing anti-Japanese meetings. All of the returning families were grateful for the peaceful atmosphere of Bainbridge Island, which made their homecoming easier.

Many of the island's residents who were not of Japanese descent cared for the property of those who were forced to leave. Getting the farms up and running again was a very difficult task, and some families were forced to sell. Fortunately, some Islanders were willing to assist their newly returned friends, with anything from offering legal advice to weeding the crops.

"So, in a lot of ways this is a very special Island. And I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we [have] been here for so long, and because this is a close-knit community."

-Frank Kitamoto

Exhibit panel: the Hayashida family photographed at the Minidoka gate before the trip home, 1945, and a Seattle storefront painted with anti-Japanese graffiti, November 1944, the welcome that awaited returnees off the island.

CHAPTER TEN

THE MEMORIAL

1998 to today

For decades the story was carried privately, the way hard stories are. In 1998 the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community resolved to build a memorial at the place where it happened: the old Eagledale ferry landing at Eagle Harbor, the exact ground the 227 crossed on March 30, 1942.

Architect Johnpaul Jones, an island resident, designed a story wall of old growth red cedar, granite, and basalt, 276 feet long, one foot for each of the island's 276 Japanese American residents of 1942, each name and age carved into it. Friezes along the wall tell the story in five movements: immigration, inclusion, exclusion, incarceration, return. In 2008 Congress attached the site to the Minidoka National Historic Site, binding the island to the Idaho desert in law as it was bound in memory. The wall was dedicated in 2011, with survivors of the ferry present.

Over the entrance stand three Japanese words: Nidoto Nai Yoni. Let it not happen again. Not a plea. An instruction, left by the people it happened to, addressed to everyone who walks down that path to the water.

“As you approach it, does it create in you a different sense of being?”

Sada Omoto, on what the memorial should do

THE MEMORIAL

THE MEMORIAL

Today, the Japanese American population on Bainbridge Island is small, but the legacy of those imprisoned lives on. In 1998, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) agreed to create a memorial to commemorate the experiences of the 277 people removed from the Island. The result is the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial located at Eagle Harbor, where the ferry carrying the Japanese American residents departed from in 1942. In 2007, Congress authorized the memorial as an extension of Minidoka National Monument.



Above:
Close up of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial with the Kitamori family names. Bainbridge Island, WA. Courtesy of BIJAC.



Right:
Shigeko Kitamoto holds a photo of herself and her children on evacuation day. Bainbridge Island, WA. Courtesy of Frank Kitamoto.



Left:
The Hayashida family on their last day at Minidoka, 1942. Courtesy of BIJAC.



Below:
Frank Kitamoto and Fumiko Kitamoto in the memorial dedication. Bainbridge Island, WA. Courtesy of Frank Kitamoto.

The memorial wall, designed by Johnpaul Jones, lists the names of the individuals forcibly removed from the Island in 1942. The final memorial project will include an interpretive center and a symbolic recreation of the dock that led the Japanese Americans to the ferry. This new interpretive space provides community members a place to share their stories as well as house historic documents and artifacts, some of which you have seen in this exhibit.



"I think the memorial should be an emotional experience. It ought to really, as an art form, cause one to think about what happened. Not the question of how many were on the boat ... but more than that, as you approach it, does it create in you a different sense of being?"

- Sada Omoto

Exhibit panel: the memorial wall with family names; Shigeko Kitamoto holding the 1942 photograph of herself and her children on evacuation day; the Hayashida family on their last day at Minidoka; and the interpretive center design at Eagle Harbor.

TIMELINE

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1883 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japanese immigrants begin work at the Port Blakely Mill; the village of Yama grows above it, home to nearly 300. |
| 1920 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mill closes. Families stay, turning to strawberry farming, stores, and trades across the island. |
| Dec. 7, 1941 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. Island families burn heirlooms rather than have them called evidence. |
| Feb. 1942 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FBI agents seize radios, guns, and stump dynamite; 34 island men are arrested without charge. |
| Feb. 19, 1942 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, authorizing military exclusion zones. |
| Mar. 24, 1942 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1 is posted on Bainbridge Island, the first in the nation. Six days' notice. |
| Mar. 30, 1942 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 227 islanders, two thirds of them citizens, board the ferry Kehloken at Eagledale under armed guard. |
| Apr. 1, 1942 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The islanders become the first prisoners at Manzanar, California, still under construction. |
| Feb. 1943 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At their own petition, the Bainbridge families transfer to Minidoka, Idaho, among Northwest neighbors. |
| 1943 to 1945 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Island sons serve in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, among the most decorated units in U.S. history. |
| Jan. 1945 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exclusion orders end. In April the first Bainbridge families return; neighbors meet them at the dock. |
| 1988 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Civil Liberties Act: a formal apology and \$20,000 in redress to each surviving internee. |
| 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congress makes the Eagledale site part of the Minidoka National Historic Site. |
| 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 276 foot memorial story wall is dedicated at Eagle Harbor, bearing all 276 names. |

AFTERWORD

THE LEDGER

Count it up. More than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry removed from the West Coast. Two thirds American citizens. Convictions for espionage or sabotage among them: zero. In 1983 a federal commission reviewed the record and named the causes in eight words: race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership. In 1988 Congress passed and President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, an apology on behalf of the nation and \$20,000 to each surviving internee. Money for farms, businesses, educations, and years that money does not buy back. The ledger does not balance. Honest ledgers sometimes cannot.

The Constitution did not fail in 1942. The people charged with keeping it failed, which is a different thing, because it means the failure was a choice, and the keeping is also a choice, every time. An executive order, a general, a poster on a telephone pole: that was the whole machinery. It ran because almost no one stood in front of it.

Almost. A newspaper couple who promised to speak the truth, unafraid, and did. Farmhands who kept other men's fields alive for three unpaid years. Soldiers who cried while obeying. Islanders standing on a dock in April of 1945, waiting. None of them could stop the ferry from leaving. They could decide what the island would be when it came back. That decision is the inheritance. Nidoto Nai Yoni.

CREDITS

SOURCES & NOTES

Plates. The exhibit panels reproduced in this book were photographed on Bainbridge Island. The historic photographs within them are credited on the panels to the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) and the Densho Digital Archives, with individual images by Dorothea Lange and Seattle press photographers. This book is a personal keepsake, made for family remembrance and education.

Principal sources. Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (bijac.org); the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial (bijaema.org); the National Park Service, Minidoka National Historic Site; Densho Digital Archives (densho.org); the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (1983); the Civil Liberties Act of 1988; and Milly and Walt Woodward's *Bainbridge Review*, 1941 to 1945.

Quotations. Spoken recollections of Gerald Nakata, Tats Kojima, Lilly Kodama, Frank Kitamoto, Earl Hanson, and Sada Omoto are reproduced from the exhibit panels, several as collected in *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, the history of the Woodwards and the Review.

A note on numbers. 227 people were removed from the island on March 30, 1942. The memorial wall carries 276 names: every Japanese American resident of Bainbridge Island in 1942, including those already arrested, already serving, or forced to move before the ferry sailed. Both numbers are correct. Both are on the wall.

To visit. Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, 4192 Eagle Harbor Drive NE, Bainbridge Island, Washington. The path runs downhill to the water, the way they walked.

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