

SCR 14 testimony from Roy Ouchida

Providing testimony is limited to 10 minutes. I would normally do this except that it is in Salem and time limit is 10 minutes. My normal presentation is about one hour. Not really sure how to cut it down to 10 minutes because I don't know what should be really emphasized.

I feel as though that I'm letting down the Ouchida family, but am unable to correct it.

You know, there isn't all that can be said beyond what Nancy has written except that our family was in the Minidoka Camp for 2-1/2 years. True, we had to sell or pack as much as we could in 6 days. That 6 days is probably the worst thing a government could do to any American citizen. In our case we had just got electric power so the house was wired for electric lights and power outlets. We changed our wood kitchen stove for an electric range, tossed out our icebox for a refrigerator, put an electric motor on our gas engine Maytag washer, installed an electric motor water pump to replace our rope and bucket water system, all at great expense, only to be all taken away at a stroke of a pen. We could not sell our new International Harvester tractor and the implements so it was consigned to the dealer where we bought it new. Hessel's Implement company did sell it a few month later, after their hefty consignment fee. Our nearly new Chrysler sedan luckily was bought by our great Norwegian neighbor, the Nyberg's. They also drove us to the Assembly Center rather than having the Army pick us up in a truck. They also stored our truck and many boxes of stuff in their barn. Unfortunately, mice and mold got into almost everything. I am forever grateful to the Nyberg's.

The Assembly Center was a stinky place of horse stuff since we were in the "horse barn." Room divider were plywood on a wood floor with no ceiling or doors. Beds were bags of straw. One small restroom for each sex for hygiene, etc. Picnic tables for meals if you can stand staying in line for "food."

We were there April '42 to August '42, with August being one of the hottest on record. Boy, did it stink!!!!!!!!!!!!

Then came the train ride to who knows where. Answer, Minidoka, ID, near Jerome/Twin Falls, ID. Hot and dusty in the summer, very cold in the winter with single wall construction barracks covered with black tarpaper to seal out the weather, but could not keep out the dust in summer nor the cold in winter because of the 1/2" space between the floor boards. We 7 survived in a 20x25 room with 7 folding canvas cots, a coal-fired pot-bellied stove and slept on folding canvas cots. That's it folks!!!

Strange European type food was served in a common dining hall after waiting in line. To shower, there was line for one of six shower heads in one room. To wash or shave wait for one of the six or eight basins in the other room. Need to go potty, wait for one of the 6 commodes lined-up on one wall, all without dividers or doors (Welcome to US Army boot camp facilities of WWII).

Need to wash your clothes? Well, welcome to concrete twin tubs and your newly purchased scrub board. Good-by painless back and smooth skinned hands. Oh, soap? Wonder where we can get some?? Oh, maybe the "canteen" 3 blocks away. Problem is, whose got any money unless you have a job working for the Camp, making \$16 a month. Maybe you are an MD or a Dentist, why you'll be paid \$20 a month!!!! Picking spuds for one week, on the "outside," paid \$100!

I am happy and thank-full for all those teachers that accepted a government job to teach us and were brave enough to live in the camp, without fences. Only the Military Police that pointed their guns towards us had a fenced guarded compound.

While basic necessities, were provided for survival, believe me when I say it was miserable. I am glad that I was not a married person that needed privacy or a teenage of dating age. That must have been unbearable!

With all this crap going on, many volunteered for the military, farm workers for harvest, etc.

I am forever thankful for all the persons of Japanese ancestry that were in the Interment Camp that were Doctors, Dentists, Nurses, Teachers, caregivers, Policemen, Fire fighters, mechanics, chefs, janitors, farmers, florists, artists, gymnasts, and everyone else that had a skill that made the Interment Camp feel like a true community, with or without government intervention!

I have so much more to say, but this it, for now!

Roy Ouchida