

Source A: Toku Machida Shimomura, entries from her diary dating from the attack on Pearl Harbor to her internment at the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho (excerpts), 1941–1943

NOTE: Toku Machida Shimomura, a midwife and nurse living in Seattle, Washington, was interned in Camp Minidoka, Idaho, from 1942 to 1945. Born in Japan, Toku Machida moved to the United States in 1912 as part of an arranged marriage to Yoshitomi Shimomura. Toku maintained a diary for the 56 years she lived in the United States.

Diary Entries of Toku Machida Shimomura

December 7, 1941 (Seattle, Wash.)

When I came back from church today, I heard the dreamlike news that Japanese airplanes had bombed Hawaii. I was shocked beyond belief. I sat in front of the radio and listened to the news all day. They said that at 6 a.m. Japan declared war on the United States. Our future has become gloomy. I pray that God will stay with us.

December 12, 1941 (Seattle)

It was fair and clear weather today. I spent all day at home. Starting today we were permitted to withdraw up to \$100 from the bank. This was for our sustenance of life, we who are enemy to them. I deeply appreciated Americans' large heartedness in dealing with us.

December 25, 1941 (Seattle)

Christmas in the time of war. We spent time at home quietly as all of the family joyfully got together. For this we were all thankful. We had a pleasant Christmas, with Roger as the center of attention.

December 31, 1941 (Seattle)

At last, today will end this year which has been full of changes. This has been the first time in my life that I had to encounter such horrible events. All of the family got together and spent time in the warmth of the house. There is nothing as precious as family gatherings. We did a lot of house cleaning preparing for the New Year.

February 3, 1942 (Seattle)

I finally decided to register my fingerprints today after putting this off for a long time. Mrs. Sasaki and I went to the post office at the appointed time of 9 a.m. We finished the strict registration two hours later. I felt that a heavy load had been taken off of my mind.

April 18, 1942 (Seattle)

Today most of the stores in the Japanese section of town closed down. In this manner, our community of 40 years has come to a profound end. Reminiscing over the past, my eyes filled with tears. I had high blood pressure again so I received a second injection. I stayed in bed and rested, but my heart was filled with deep emotions thinking about the future.

April 21, 1942 (Seattle)

At last the order for evacuation was given formally by General DeWitt. There were some limitations to the first move. Kazuo (son) along with some others will leave here on the 28th as an advance party. In haste, we prepared for the leave.

April 28, 1942 (Camp Harmony Assembly Center, Puyallup, Wash.)

At last the day had arrived. It was time to leave Seattle, the city where we have lived for such a long time. Even though I tried not to cry, the tears flowed. Our group of 370 working people departed at 9:30 a.m. in a long string of cars and buses. We arrived at Puyallup at 11:30 a.m. We settled into our assigned place, A-2, number 27. We were all very dissatisfied with our army cots and cotton mattresses. Until late at night we heard a mixture of hammering and the crying voices of children. With much difficulty, I was eventually able to fall asleep.

May 21, 1942 (Camp Harmony)

It was partly clear today. In the evening there was a shower. All in all, it was fine weather. Early in the morning the laundry room looked just like a battlefield. As usual, I spent most of the time cleaning and doing laundry. For lunch they served wieners. For dinner, once again, it was bologna. I had a poor appetite.

June 16, 1942 (Camp Harmony)

First it rained, then it cleared up in the evening. Kazuo (son) got passes for papa and I to go to the isolation ward to visit Roger who has the chickenpox. The building was miserable and looked just like a jail. It is truly pathetic, but I guess it is for the protection of the public health. I prayed for his earliest possible recovery.

July 1, 1942 (Camp Harmony)

The heat is severe and there is no breeze. I heard that some rooms never got below 110 degrees yesterday and that the temperature in the sick room went up to 120 degrees. It was unbearable. During the afternoon I stood under the grandstand to avoid the sun. I stayed there until evening pleasantly conversing with Mrs. Kato and Mrs. Kaneko. I had no appetite today and went to bed exhausted.

August 17, 1942 (Camp Minidoka, Hunt, Idaho)

We arrived at Arlington, Idaho, unnoticed, at 5:30 a.m. Everybody looked terribly depressed. After lunch, the heat increased. Barely alive, we continued on. We made it to Rock Mountain at 2:30 p.m. We changed to buses, and after a 2 1/2-mile ride we arrived at the newly built camp at

4 p.m. Though the camp was still unfinished we could see the grand scale of this city near the mountains. We stared in amazement. I was assigned to Block 5-B-6, apt. A. After cleaning the dust from the room, I went to bed.

August 14, 1943 (Minidoka)

As usual I idled away the time without doing anything special. Papa sympathized with me over the fact that I am not involved with anything special. I wondered how anyone in this camp could live here without a deep sense of boredom.

Excerpted from Joe Nickell, "Imprisoned in Minidoka: Grandmother's Diary Memorializes Life as an Interned Japanese American Following Attack on Pearl Harbor." The Missoulian. October 4, 2009.

http://missoulian.com/lifestyles/territory/imprisoned-in-minidoka-grandmother-s-diary-memorializes-life-as-an/article_02cb6524-af96-11de-857e-001cc4c002e0.html.