

Jim Akagi
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Core Subject

WRA Library Washington

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE IN A WAR

Before the bombing of Pearl Harbor I always used to go ice skating every Saturday and it was my favorite sport. I also like football and we played very often. On December 7, 1941, I was playing football when a friend of mine told us that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese. I could not believe this and I felt so embarrassed because I was practically the only Japanese around the district. The rest were all Americans. I did not go out so much as I used to on account of being Japanese.

When the word of evacuating came I knew I had to leave my friends and go live with Japanese people. I did not know more than five families of Japanese and if I did they forgot me. Before I left Seattle for Puyallup, I said good-bye to many of my friends and got their addresses so I can write to them from our assembly center. We evacuated on April 30, 1942 and came to Puyallup, Washington to live. I gave away most of my play things, but now I wished I did not. I didn't know even 1 single person in our camp, (camp A) Every day my kid brother and I played by ourselves all day long. A recreation leader of our section lived near us and I got to know him pretty well. He asked me to play baseball and ping-pong which I did and got to know many friends. The first month I didn't know anybody but the second month I knew many friends.

Then we were to be transferred to Idaho where we will stay for the duration. We were going on the train and I never rode a train before. I thought it was going to be fun, but later I thought differently. We were busy packing all week and then came the day when our camp was supposed to be moved. Section six (6) moved first then section five (5) and so on till section two(2) was supposed to go.

We ate breakfast at 4:00 o'clock AM and I was not sleepy for the first time. Section one (1) was the only section left and some of my friends were still there. We got on the train and made ourselves at home. We had very good food on the train, and later we were allowed to visit different cars.

The scenery was beautiful, but the train ride was getting boring. The night on the train was very cold, but I slept well. We were behind schedule when we came to Idaho. We got the bus to take us to camp. It was about five minutes later when we came into camp where many people were there waiting for us. We checked in to get a place to live. We got a place where my married sister was across the small hallway. The first week it was very dusty and I was hoping for rain. The second, third fourth etc. weeks were also very dusty. Then around September 28, 1942 it started

to get cold. We heard very much about going to school and did not like it. One day I heard that we had to register for school and was a little jittery about it. It wasn't so bad as I thought, because after we registered it was about two or three weeks later, since we registered that we went to school. When school started I hated it at first, but gradually began to like it. It was about freezing then, and a lake by our place froze, so I went ice-skating again which reminded me about Seattle very much. Many people from our section ordered ice skates and went ice-skating with the rest of us who already had it. When it started snowing it ruined the ice so we had to quit for awhile. Christmas was coming soon but somehow I was not glad of it. I guess it was because I was in camp.

On Christmas day I slept till a quarter to ten, and then I woke up to wash. It was kind of cold, and I was thinking of a muddy Christmas instead of a white Christmas.

Just then it started to snow, and I got mad because it will ruin the ice like it always did. There was a very strong wind and it was like a small blizzard. To me Christmas was like an ordinary day, but inside of me I was kind of happy. That night we ate supper which was turkey and later we had a small program. Then Santa Claus came in and started to yell out names for children to get their Christmas present. I got a scarf, color pencils, and a knife for Christmas from Santa Claus. Some small children cried when they saw him. It was a pretty swell Christmas even though it was in camp.

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