

HIDDEN HISTORY

Japanese Internment Camps WWII Told By Two Families

November 14, 2019 5:30pm



Toshiharu Kano My grandfather, Shunichi Nekomoto, was President of the Japanese Contractors' Association and Hawaii Japanese Association and a member of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. He often entertained high ranking Japanese officials visiting Hawaii.

In 1939, the United States Navy contracted Shunichi to widen and deepen the entrance to Pearl Harbor. He, therefore, possessed blueprints of the port.

The evening of December 7, 1941, the day Japan attacked; six FBI agents broke down the door of his home. He was arrested, handcuffed, blindfolded and transported to San Francisco and later to Lordsburg Justice Department Camp, New Mexico. The US government accused him of passing blueprints of Pearl Harbor to the Japanese military and charged him with treason, without any proof. During the interrogation at Lordsburg, agents informed him that he had been under surveillance for 2 years. From the Lordsburg facility he was taken to Heart Mountain Internment Camp outside Cody Wyoming. He and other Japanese prisoners were marched at gunpoint through miles of rattlesnake infested desert in the dark of night. He was one of the prisoners known as the Infamous Seven. They were kept separate from other internees and prohibited contact with them. Armed guards protected the fenced perimeter from towers. Shunichi remained imprisoned at Heart Mountain for about 2 years. In 1944 he was repatriated to Japan.

After the war ended, the Japanese government gave citizens the opportunity to change their surname. My grandfather liked the meaning of the name Kano, 'to double your investment'.

Ted Nagata, 83

Born in Sanata Monica, Ca. moved to the bay area in 1940. Was interned at Tanforan race track, and Topaz Utah Internment (now called Incarceration) for three and half years.



Settled in SLC, Graduated from U of U . Now retired after 40 years graphic design. Member of last generation of incarcerate.

ICW Event Center

November 14, 2019 ~ Time 5:30 pm

1775 South 4130 West, SLC, UT 84104