



MY PARENTS

Don Kiyoshi and Sally Sadako Mitani

JOHN MITANI



May 8, 1942, Hayward, California

Members of the Mochida family awaiting an evacuation bus. Identification tags were used to aid in keeping the family unit intact during all phases of evacuation. Mochida operated a nursery and five greenhouses on a two-acre site in Eden Township. He raised snapdragons and sweet peas.

Photo by Dorothea Lange, National Archives

My maternal and paternal grandparents immigrated to the United States during the early 1900s. My father's parents settled near Fresno, while my mother's parents moved to Castroville along the Central Coast of California. Like many Japanese immigrants at the time, my grandparents made their living as truck farmers growing vegetables that could be sold locally.

My father's parents fulfilled the Japanese immigrant dream and made enough money to return to Japan where my father grew up. My mother's parents eked out a living to support their family that included my mother and her three older siblings.

A year or so before the United States declared war on Japan, my father finished high school and returned to America. He found work at a nursery in the Bay Area and was employed there when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Meanwhile, my mother was a senior in high school.

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
April 1, 1942.

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:
All that portions of the City and County of San Francisco, State of California, lying generally west of the north-south line established by Japanese Seven Bulevard, Washington Avenue, and Sacramento Street, and lying generally north of the east-west line established by California Street, to their intersection of Market Street and Division Market Street in San Francisco Bay.

All Japanese persons, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above-designated area by 12:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 1942.

No Japanese person will be permitted to enter or leave the above described area after 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 2, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the Provost Marshal at the Civil Control Station located at:
1301 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of real estate and personal property including and except business and professional equipment, buildings, household goods, boats, automobiles, livestock, etc.
3. Provide temporary residence education for all Japanese in family groups.
- 4.

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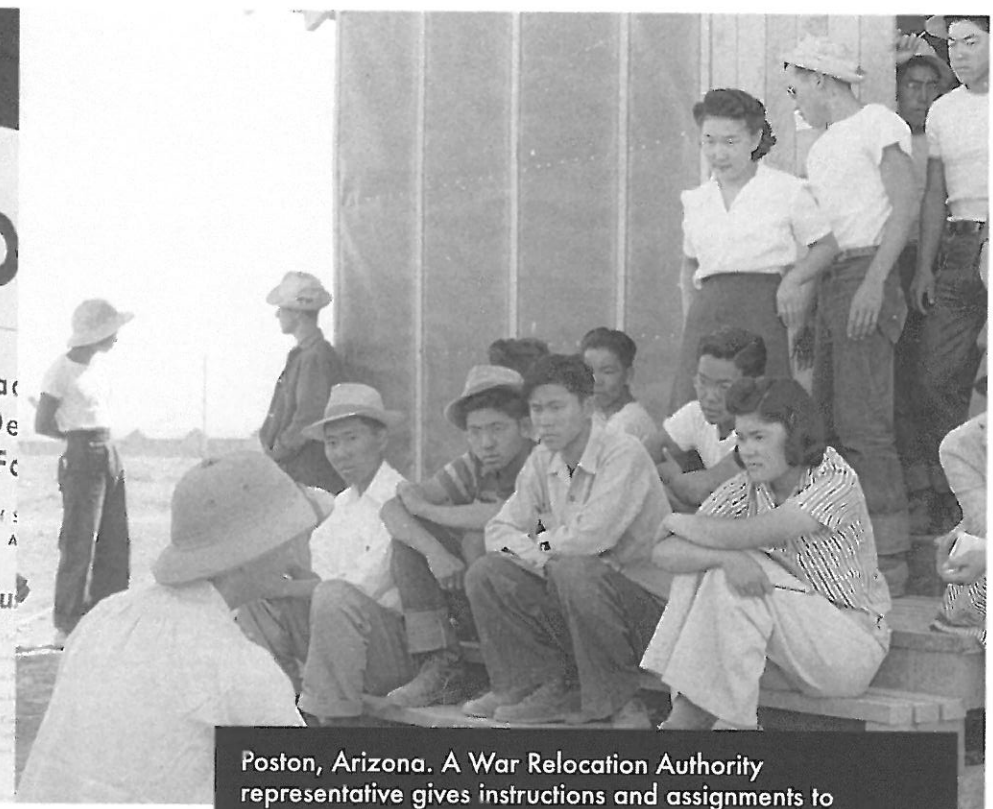
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Civilian Exclu

San Francisco, California. Exclusion Order posted at First and Front Streets directing removal of persons of Japanese ancestry from the first San Francisco section to be effected by the evacuation. The first civilian exclusion order was signed in the Presidio in San Francisco.

Photo by Dorothea Lange, National Archives



Poston, Arizona. A War Relocation Authority representative gives instructions and assignments to imprisoned people outside of a tar paper shack at the Poston internment camp.

Photo by Francis Stewart, National Archives

President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 a few weeks after Pearl Harbor. It led to the forced evacuation and internment of all those of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast of the U.S. to relocation centers scattered around the country. Given the timing, my mother was unable to finish her last few months of high school.

My mother, Sally Sadako Oshita, and her family were interned at a camp in Poston, Arizona.

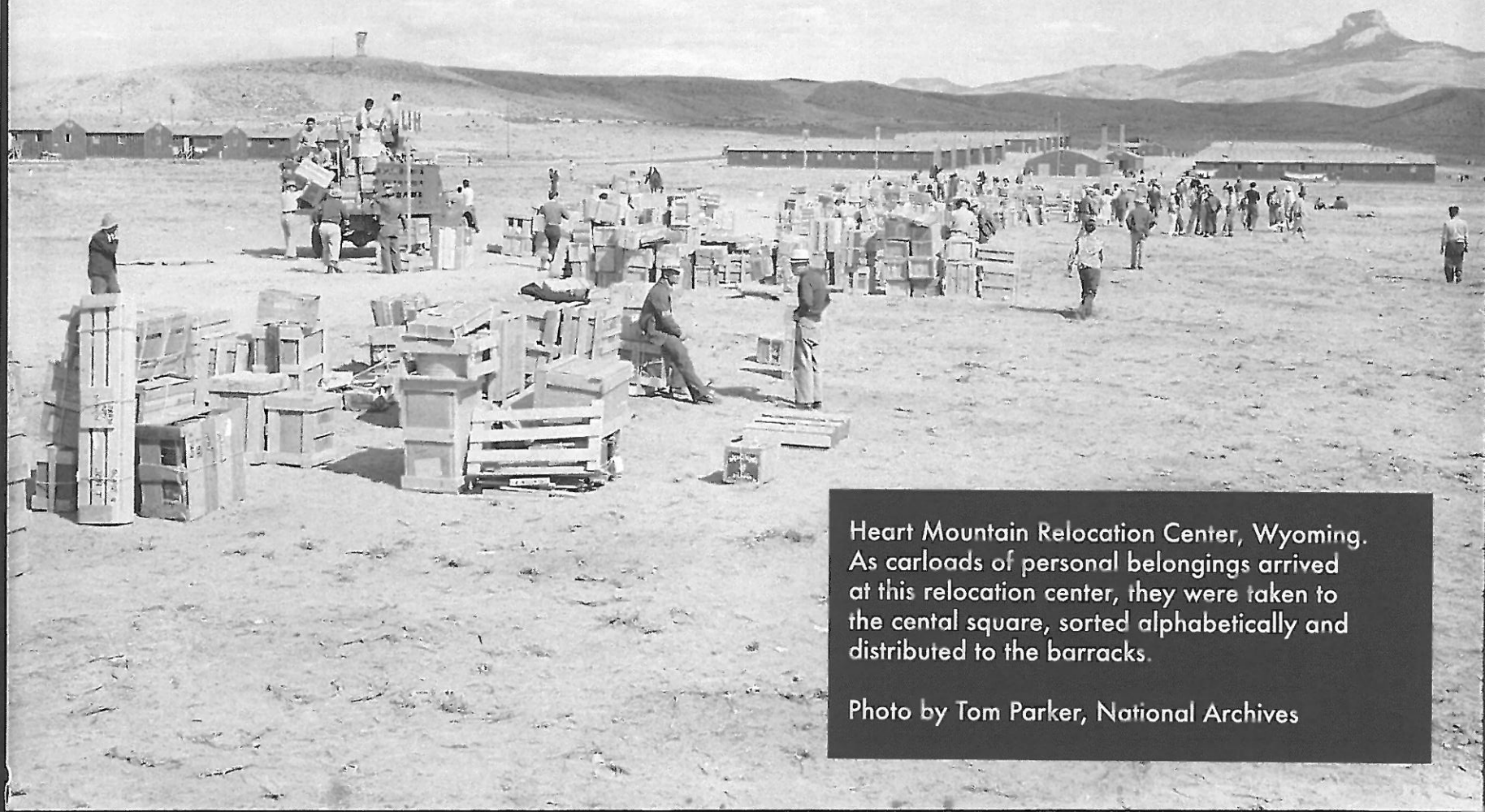
CAMP II BLOCK 219



Above - Sally Sadako Oshita (left) with unidentified women from Block 219, Camp II of the Poston War Relocation Center. Photo from "Poston in Pictures." Photographer unknown.

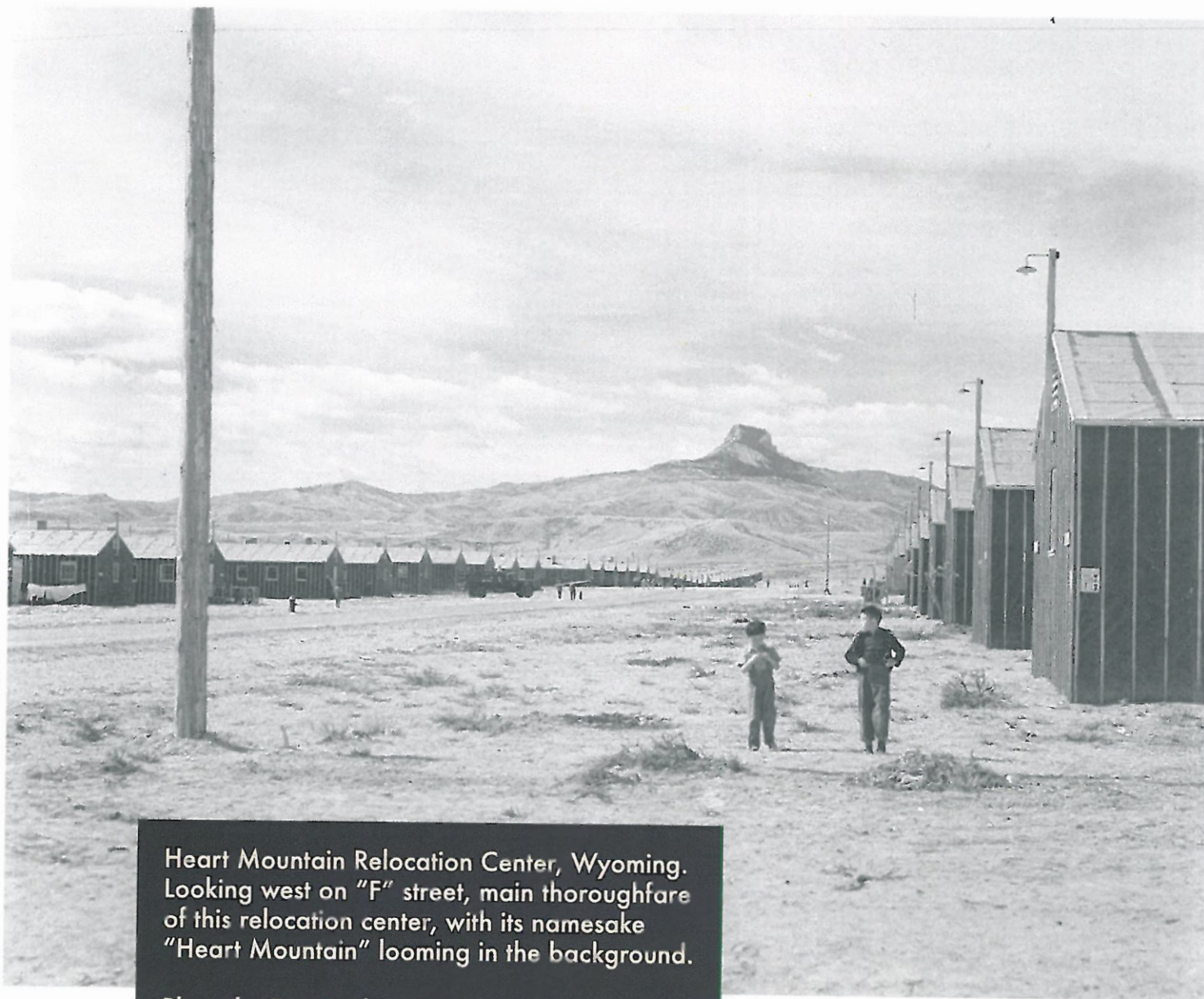
Left - Map of Block 219, Camp II of the Poston War Relocation Center. Sally Oshita and her family lived in

My father, Don Kiyoshi Mitani, was initially sent to a camp at Tule Lake in Northern California. He was subsequently moved to the camp at Heart Mountain, which you will visit during the Board meeting.



Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming. As carloads of personal belongings arrived at this relocation center, they were taken to the central square, sorted alphabetically and distributed to the barracks.

Photo by Tom Parker, National Archives



Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming. Looking west on "F" street, main thoroughfare of this relocation center, with its namesake "Heart Mountain" looming in the background.

Photo by Tom Parker, National Archives

My father grew up in the relatively equable climates of Hiroshima and would occasionally recall the brutal winters at Heart Mountain. My mother talked about the dry and dusty conditions at Poston and the hastily built tar paper shacks that she and others lived in. She told me about the paper-thin walls of their homes and how they provided little in the way of privacy. Both of my parents remembered the out-of-the-way and desolate conditions of their camps. There was an obvious reason for this. The U.S. government wasn't keen to advertise what it was doing to some of its citizens.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
HEART MOUNTAIN RELOCATION CENTER
Heart Mountain, Wyoming

NAME BY NAME ACCOUNTING OF ALL RESIDENTS

For Period Ending December 31, 1944

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NAME (LAST)	FIRST	MIDDLE	FAMILY NO.	CENTER ADDRESS	DATE OF BIRTH	AGE	MAR. STA. TUG.	CITIZENSHIP	ALIEN REG. NO.	S. I. X.	ORIGINAL ENTRY	DATE OF ENTRY	PRE-EVACUATION ADDRESS	DATE OF DEPT.	TYPE OF DEP.	DESTINATION
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
MINO	Seichi		22642	9-4-D	7/1/00-		S	A	2022398	M	FOAC	8/25/42	San Francisco, Calif.	10/30/45	TD-WG	Chicago, Ill.
MINOURA	Malley		32187	--	3/10/23		S	C		M	FOAC	8/27/42	Santa Clara, Calif.	4/7/44	Ind-Penal	Cheyenne, Wyo.
	Shimataro		"	14-7-F	1/1/79		M	A	1898127	M	"	"	"	11/6/45	TD-WG	Los Altos, Calif.
	Tamaya		"	"	4/4/99		M	A	1898129	F	"	"	"	11/6/45	"	"
MISHIMA	Daitaro		18339	29-23-F	4/4/99		W	A	1581413	M	SAAC	9/8/42	Los Angeles, Calif.	6/18/45	TD-WG	Minneapolis, Minn.
	Joe	Jafu	"	"	8/20/27		S	C		M	"	"	"	6/18/45	"	"
	Johany	Yuji	"	"	1/1/25		S	C		M	"	"	"	9/6/44	Ind-AP	Fort Logan, Colo.
	Kiyeko		"	"	3/27/23		S	C		F	"	"	"	11/10/45	Ind-Invit	Cleveland, Ohio
	Taro		"	"	6/16/20		S	C		M	"	"	"	2/5/44	Ind-Invit	Detroit, Mich.
MISHIRO	Amy		19602	15-11-C	3/27/36		S	C		F	T-Jero	6/15/44	Washon, Washington	10/24/45	TD-WG	Portland, Oregon
	Fumi		"	"	8/11/31		S	C		F	"	"	"	10/24/45	"	"
	Iki		"	"	3/20/02		M	A	582812	F	T-Jero	"	"	10/24/45	"	"
	Junso		"	"	7/10/98		M	A-	3677638	M	"	"	"	9/29/45	"	Wenatchee, Wash.
	Terry		"	"	9/16/27		S	C		M	"	"	"	6/1/45	"	Cleveland, Ohio
MITA	George	Tsuyoshi	35133	15-7-F	9/14/06		S	C		M	FRAC	8/31/42	Parker, Washington	3/14/45	TD-WG	Snake River, Wash.
	Iraire		"	"	6/3/83		M	A	4885435	M	"	"	"	9/14/44	Ind-Empl	Logan, Montana
	Maoru		"	15-7-F	6/12/23		S	C		M	Beas (FRAC)	12/9/42	Parker, Washington	1/22/45	TD-WG	Minneapolis, Minn.
	Kinoy		"	"	5/19/88		M	A	3254468	F	FRAC	8/3/42	"	10/19/45	"	Spokane, Wash.
MITAMURA	Akio		17861	--	1/1/27		S	C		M	SAAC	9/8/42	Los Angeles, Calif.	8/11/43	Ind-JaPan	Cleveland, Ohio
	Lucias	Sedako	"	--	9/23/24		S	C		F	"	"	"	7/27/43	Ind-Invit.	"
	Manue		"	--	8/1/96		S	A	3283932	M	"	"	"	5/8/43	Ind-Empl	Camp Savage, Minn.
	Taeko		"	--	1/12/98		M	A	2931392	F	"	"	"	8/11/43	Ind-JaPan	Cleveland, Ohio
MITANI	Kiyoshi		38773	27-5-D	7/1/22		S	C		M	T-Yule	3/1/43	Auburn, California	7/24/45	TD-WG	Crow Agency, Mont.
MITARAI	Elaine	Emiko	32105	--	6/14/11		S	C		F	SAAC	9/13/42	Sunnyvale, Calif.	2/27/44	Ind-JaPan	Richfield, Utah
	Melen	Kikuyo	"	--	7/50/08		M	C		F	"	"	"	"	"	"
	Henry		"	--	8/9/06		M	C		M	"	"	"	"	"	"
	Janet	Sumi	"	--	6/1/31		S	C		F	"	"	"	15/12/43	Ind-Empl	"
	Patricia	Sayako	"	--	10/29/37		S	C		F	"	"	"	2/27/44	Ind-JaPan	"
	Sayono		"	--	1/3/72		W	A		F	"	"	"	"	"	"
	Shirley	Chiyoee	"	--	8/27/34		S	C		F	"	"	"	"	"	"
MITARAI	Hessie		32106	--	3/30/10		M	C		F	SAAC	9/13/42	Sunnyvale, Calif.	7/7/43	Ind-JaPan	Milford, Utah
	Edward	Tukio	"	--	6/1/80		M	C		M	"	"	"	"	"	"
	Edward Jr.	Takiharu	"	--	12/12/31		S	C		M	"	"	"	"	Ind-Ja Pan	"
	Misao		"	--	4/5/95		S	C		M	"	"	"	"	"	"
	Wolph	Torao	"	--	3/9/38		S	C		M	"	"	"	"	"	"
	Richard	Kiyoshi	"	--	4/1/36		S	C		M	"	"	"	"	"	"
Rosie	Shizue	"	--	9/5/33		S	C		F	"	"	"	"	"	"	

A name by name accounting of all residents at Heart Mountain Relocation Center. Don Kiyoshi Mitani is listed here.

Document provided by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation

THE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
APPLICANT'S FULL NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)

Investigation Number
Family No. 24 227
Examination Station

1. Name KAWAIBO YOSH
Last First Middle

2. Date of Birth
Month and year of children

3. List any other persons wholly or partly dependent on you for support on the date of your application:
Name Address

Indicate to which of your dependents you propose to have assigned you on release

4. To the best of your knowledge, name the newspapers to which your father belonged and the papers and magazines to which he subscribed or which he has regularly read:
LOS ANGELES TIMES - NEWSPAPER

5. Have you ever been in Japan Yes No If so, give date and the purpose of the visit or visits:
1905 4 17

While interned at Heart Mountain in 1943, the U.S. government asked my father and other men older than 17 several questions in a “Statement of U.S. Citizenship of Japanese American Ancestry.” The questions were designed to identify those who were “loyal” and “disloyal.” Questions 27 and 28 went straight to the heart of the matter and asked the following:

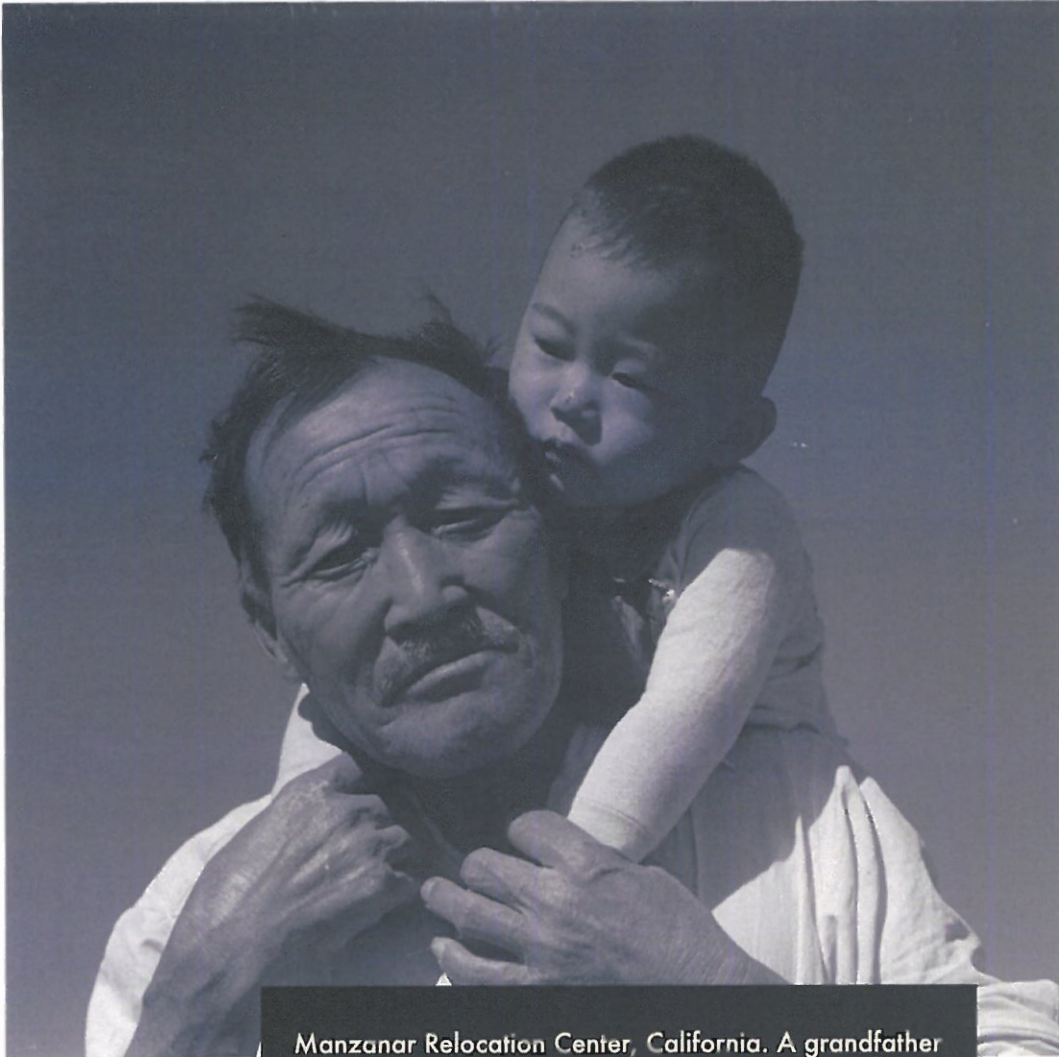
Question #27: “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?”

Question #28: “Will you swear unqualified allegiances to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or other foreign government, power or organization?”



San Francisco, California. Flag of allegiance pledge at Raphael Weill Public School, Geary and Buchanan Streets. Children in families of Japanese ancestry were evacuated with their parents and imprisoned for the duration in War Relocation Authority centers.

Photo by Dorothea Lange, National Archives

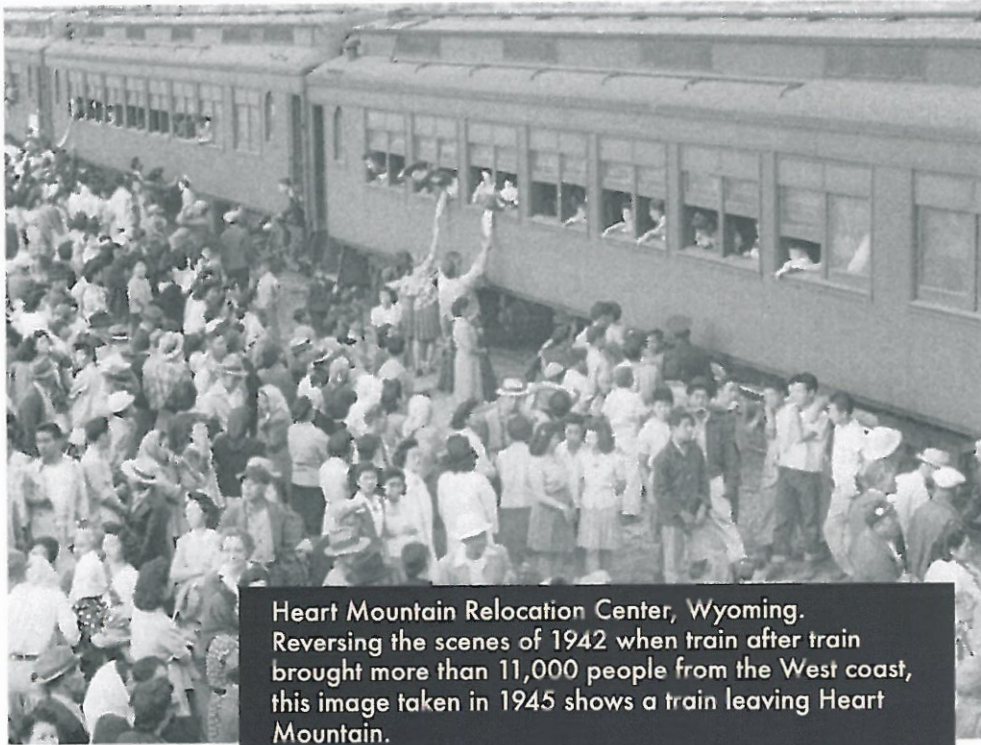


Manzanar Relocation Center, California. A grandfather and grandson interned at the Manzanar War Relocation Authority center.

Photo by Dorothea Lange, National Archives

My father told me that he answered “no and no” to these questions becoming an infamous “no-no boy” in the process. Those who did so were segregated in a special facility at Tule Lake. Some were even imprisoned. Why my father was able to remain at Heart Mountain is a mystery to me. He did tell me that he would change his answers to “yes-yes” so that he could go out to work in the neighboring community from time to time. Perhaps this was the reason he wasn’t moved back to Tule Lake or incarcerated.

My account of what my parents endured during the war is brief. This is because they and other members of their generation, the Nisei or second generation of Japanese immigrants, were reluctant to tell us, their children, about what they experienced during the war. This is an important part of the story. Some were probably angry. Others may have been ashamed. Virtually all were determined to forge a new and better life for themselves after being released.



Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming. Reversing the scenes of 1942 when train after train brought more than 11,000 people from the West coast, this image taken in 1945 shows a train leaving Heart Mountain.

Don Kiyoshi Mitani was released from Heart Mountain on July 24, 1945. His destination was listed as Crow Agency, Montana.

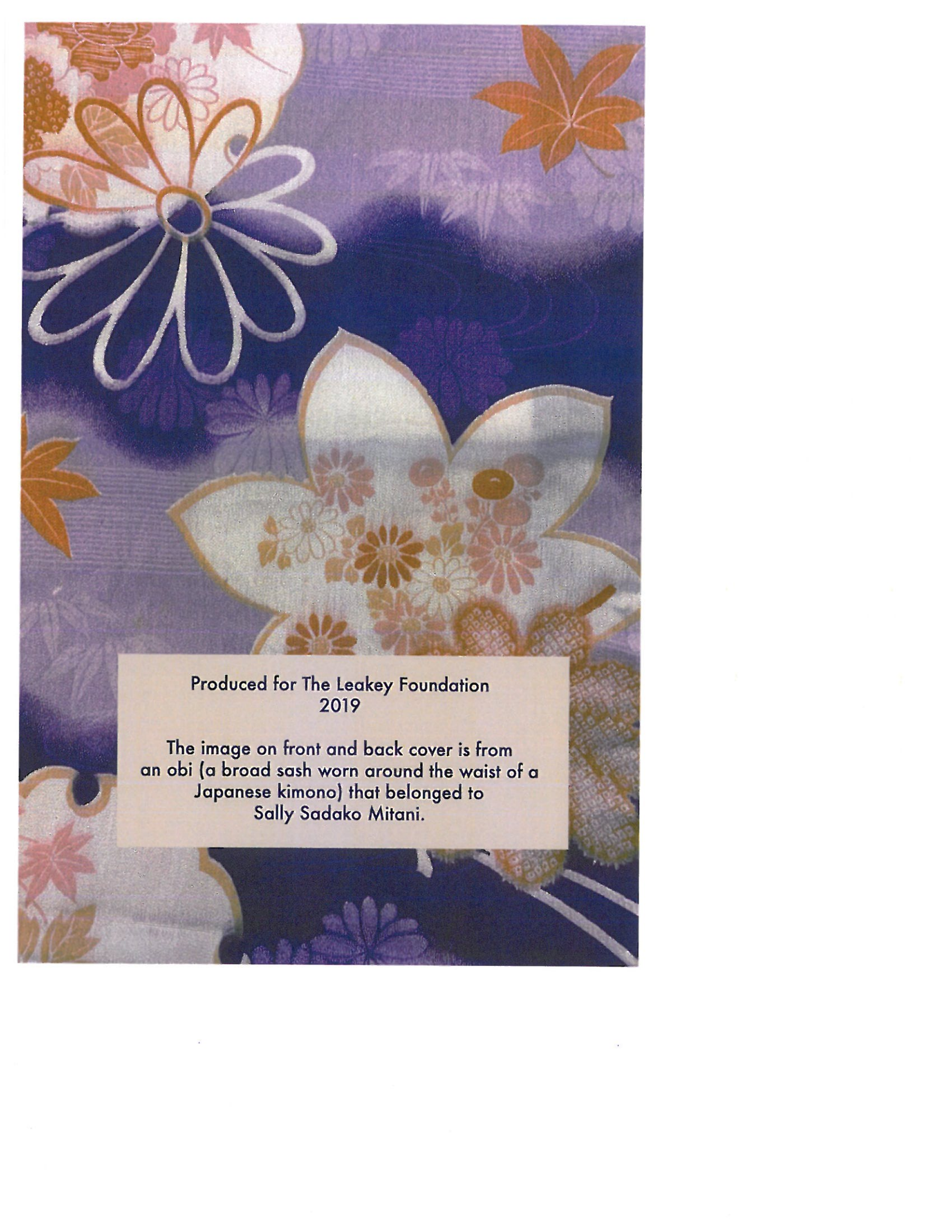
Photo courtesy of National Archives

After the war, the Nisei worked hard to reintegrate into American life. My interpretation is that to do so, they felt that they had to be more American than Americans. As a consequence, my brothers and I weren't taught much about our heritage - Japan, Japanese culture, or the Japanese language. The latter is a lasting regret, and one that I felt deeply as an adult when I worked with Toshisada Nishida and some of my other Japanese colleagues. I was embarrassed that I could not communicate with them in Japanese. But I understood why I was unable to do so.



My parents spent the duration of the war interned at Poston and Heart Mountain. After being released, they found their way to Los Angeles. My father began a short-lived career as a gardener, while my mother started an equally short-lived career as a seamstress. They were introduced to each other by a mutual friend and married in 1950.

My parents worked hard and lived long, happy, and productive lives after the war. They made sure that my two brothers and I were given opportunities denied to them in youth. My father passed away a few years ago, and my mother died last fall. I was incredibly lucky to have such loving and caring parents. I miss them.



Produced for The Leakey Foundation
2019

The image on front and back cover is from
an obi (a broad sash worn around the waist of a
Japanese kimono) that belonged to
Sally Sadako Mitani.