

S—I—T (SURPRISING—INTERESTING—TROUBLING QUOTES RELATING TO JAPANESE-AMERICAN INTERNMENT

What do you find *surprising, interesting, and/or troubling* about the following quotes?

1. So as soon as I took them home, three tall white men were at my door, and my father had just come home from the hospital the day before. And when I opened the door to the white men who were knocking on the door, they asked if a Mr. Nakahara lived there. I said, "Oh, yeah, but he just came home from the hospital, and he's sleeping in the back." Well, these three guys walked in -- I didn't know what they were 'til later, but it was the FBI identification. And they didn't say anything, they just went in the house, went into the back, woke up my father and said, "Put on your bathrobe and slippers," I guess. And they took him away just like that.

And so I called my mother, I was the only one home then, and she was just down the street at my aunt's. And I said, "Mom, come home quick. Some guys, some white men came and they took Pop somewhere, I don't know where, and they didn't tell me anything." And so she came home. And I think probably this was happening to a lot of other Japanese, and so we were calling each other up saying, "Did anyone come to your house yet?" Some of the people said yes, some said no, but they said they all had heard over the radio that Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. So we said, "Oh my god, I'll bet we're all going to be in trouble, 'cause we're Japanese, and people won't think of us as being American even if we are." -**Yuri Kochiyama, activist**

2. We were at the front window just gazing out, and suddenly, we saw two soldiers marching up the driveway, carrying rifles with shiny bayonets. They stomped up the front porch, and with their fists began pounding on the door. And that, I can't forget. . . . My father came out, answered the door. And we were ordered to leave the house. They were questioning my mother. And when she came out, she had our baby sister in one arm and a huge duffel bag in the other. Tears were streaming down her face. That, to us, was shocking and absolutely scary. . . . There just wasn't time to sell everything. My father sold his car, a Pontiac, dark green Pontiac, for \$5. -**George Takei, actor**
3. The secondhand dealers had been prowling around for weeks, like wolves, offering humiliating prices for goods and furniture they knew many of us would have to sell sooner or later. . . . [Mama] had brought along her pottery, her silver, heirlooms like the kimonos Granny had brought from Japan, tea sets, lacquered tables, and one fine old set of china, blue and white porcelain, almost translucent. On the day we were leaving, Woody's car was so crammed with boxes and luggage and kids we had just run out of room. Mama had to sell this china.

One of the dealers offered her fifteen dollars for it. . . . Her eyes blazed up at him. She had been packing all night and trying to calm down Granny, who didn't understand why we were moving again and what all the rush was about. Mama's nerves were shot, and now navy jeeps were patrolling the streets. She didn't say another word. She just glared at this man, all the rage and frustration channeled at him through her eyes.

He watched her for a moment and said he was sure he couldn't pay more than seventeen fifty for that china. She reached into the red velvet case, took out a dinner plate and hurled it at the floor right in front of his feet.

The man leaped back shouting, "Hey! Hey, don't do that! Those are valuable dishes!"

Mama took out another dinner plate and hurled it at the floor, then another and another, never moving, never opening her mouth, just quivering and glaring at the retreating dealer, with tears streaming down her cheeks. **-an excerpt from pp. 12-13 of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's memoir, *Farewell to Manzanar***

4. I don't want any of them here. They are a dangerous element. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese. [W]e must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map. **-General John DeWitt, Commander of the Western Defense Command, April 13, 1943**
5. The stables just reeked . . . of urine and horse manure. It was so degrading for people to live in those conditions. It's almost as if you're not talking about the way Americans treated Americans. **-Rev. Ernest Uno**
6. I was advisor to a high school girls' group called Hijinks, and we went out caroling. And we went to the, to the guard towers where people were, the soldiers were stationed to guard us. And I can see the, I can just picture how cold it was and the frost glistening on the barbed wire and our singing songs. And I could -- we thought we were being smart. [Laughs] But, and this poor voice that was almost choking with tears said, "Well, thank you." And how lonely he must have been up there. Those are the kinds of memories you have about Christmas. **-Kara Kondo, activist**
7. I didn't feel guilty because I didn't do anything wrong. . . . Every day in school, we said the pledge of the flag, "with liberty and justice for all," and I believed all that. I was an American citizen, and I had as many rights as anyone else. **-Fred Korematsu, activist**
8. Korematsu was not excluded from the military area because of hostility to him or his race. He was excluded because we are at war with the Japanese Empire . . . because they [the military authorities] decided that the military urgency of the situation demanded that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be segregated from the West Coast temporarily. **-Justice Hugo Black**
9. We are of the view that Mitsuye Endo should be given her liberty. In reaching that conclusion we do not come to the underlying constitutional issues which have been argued. For we conclude that, whatever power the War Relocation Authority may have to detail other classes of citizens, it has no authority to subject citizens who are concededly loyal to its leave procedure. **-Justice William O. Douglas**

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