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“We Did Not Want To Go”:

Incarcerated Japanese Americans Forcibly Deported to Japan on the Gripsholm “Exchange”

Rachel Oda

DEDICATION

For Grandpa

You taught me the importance of knowing our history and preserving
our stories.

You taught me that justice is never guaranteed, and how to fight and win.

You taught me what it means to be a leader and an advocate.

I hope I make you proud.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel Oda is a trial lawyer at Quinn Emanuel and a 2025 graduate of UCLA School of Law.

This Article is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Sam Shigeru Miyamoto (1927–2017), a survivor of the Gripsholm “Exchanges,” whose scholarship and advocacy on this history form the inspiration and foundation of this work. I understand this Article to be one milestone in my lifelong effort to fight for justice, a commitment I inherit from him, and in establishing my place in the broader inter-generational continuum of Japanese Americans who build community and preserve our history. I am deeply grateful to Alden Hayashi and the Rikimaru family for generously sharing their family stories and trusting me with memories that are difficult to revisit. I take seriously my obligation to share our stories with truth, authenticity, and love. I also thank Professor Dave Marcus for his invaluable mentorship and his unwavering belief in me and in the importance of this project.

ABSTRACT

As the first of its kind, this Article centers survivor testimony, archival records, and original interviews to document the forced deportation of Japanese Americans on the SS *Gripsholm* during World War II. The event is often described as a wartime “exchange,” but that language obscures what the record reveals: a governmental regime that transformed Japanese ancestry into a marker of presumptive disloyalty; and then leveraged confinement, vulnerability, and the fear of continued state violence to compel Japanese Americans’ removal from the United

States. This was not neutral repatriation. This was state-engineered exile under conditions that rendered consent impossible. Focusing on the experiences of the Miyamoto, Rikimaru, and Yamane families, this Article shows the Gripsholm was the final stage of a broader racialized project of surveillance, arrest, incarceration then interrogation, family separation, and finally the forced abandonment of lives painstakingly built in the United States. It further demonstrates that the Gripsholm “Exchanges” formed a critical node in the larger architecture of anti-Asian racial exclusion, where law and administration converted wartime hysteria and racial prejudice into forced deportation and profound displacement.

This Article further argues that the Gripsholm survivors’ Redress Campaign is central to understanding the historical and legal significance of the Gripsholm episode. Initially, the Gripsholm families were denied redress. Yet the survivors persisted, documenting what happened to them, challenging the official account, and ultimately winning inclusion in redress. Their campaign exposed the falsity of the official record and the danger of institutional harm being covered up as neutrality, and coercion as consent. The survivors’ victory also proves that legal recognition and reparative justice do not arrive on their own. They are fought for by ordinary people who choose courage over cynicism. In recovering this history, this Article participates in a broader movement wherein Japanese Americans and other marginalized communities push back against racist revisionism that silences our voices and monopolizes formal scholarship on our own lived experiences, reclaiming narrative authority over our own histories. We did not want to go.

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is a cool day in February of 1942 and there is a knock at the door. Sam and his siblings race to see who it could be—maybe their neighbors want to play football in the yard or their parents’ friends are bringing over dessert. They reach for the door and swing it open with excitement. It is a tall man in an unfamiliar uniform. They do not recognize him. His eyebrows are furrowed and his voice is stern. He seems angry with them even though they have never met before. He demands to enter their home and holds out a badge that reads “FBI.” What is going on?

Little does Sam know, in a few minutes, this FBI agent will take his father away despite their cries and protests. Little does Sam know, this is the last time he will see his father for over a year because the FBI will lock his father up in a prison camp over a thousand miles away in a desolate location, even though his father has not committed a crime. The U.S. government and the FBI will provide his father with no attorney and no legal guidance, and will interrogate him for over a year about all aspects of their family’s life—what movies do you watch? Where do you go on the weekends? Where do you shop for groceries? Why these seemingly mundane topics made their father subject to criminal interrogation and incarceration will remain unclear to Sam and his family, but these topics will prove to be the only evidence the government has to justify its imprisonment and targeting of Sam’s family. Little does Sam know, in a few weeks his own government will fall prey to unfounded war hysteria, take all of his family’s property, freeze their bank accounts, uproot him from everything he has ever known, and force him along with 120,000 others into prison camps. Little does Sam know, in a year and a half, his family will be taken out of that prison camp and sent to Japan against their will on something the U.S. government will call the Gripsholm “Exchange.” They will be forced to leave behind their homeland, sent on a ship across the world for 96 days, and dropped off in a foreign country where they have never been and do not speak the language. Little do they know, this will stay with them forever. This is their story.

The Gripsholm “Exchange” consisted of two civilian “exchanges” between Japan and the United States during World War II.¹ The first of the two “exchanges” mainly consisted of diplomats, students, religious missionaries, and vacationers who seem to have consented to their participation in the “exchange” under no conditions of duress or coercion, as they were largely stuck on the wrong side of the Pacific when the war broke out and simply needed to return home.² This paper is not about them. The Second “Exchange” included Japanese Americans who were incarcerated in internment camps via Executive Order 9066. Then, they were further targeted, taken out of the camps, and deported against their will to Japan via the Gripsholm “Exchange.”³ Decades later, they were excluded from original redress provided by the 1988 Civil Liberties Act but created their own campaign

1. ATUSHI ARCHIE MIYAMOTO, *THE GRIPSHOLM EXCHANGES* (2006). A short concise report on the exchange of hostages during World War II between the United States and Japan as it relates to Japanese Americans.

2. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

3. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 19.

to be included in the effort and won.⁴ This paper exclusively focuses on these Japanese Americans.

I briefly note that Japanese Latin Americans were also held against their will by the U.S. government on the SS *Gripsholm*.⁵ Many were kidnapped from Latin America, robbed of their passports, forced into becoming stateless, and physically coerced onboard the SS *Gripsholm*.⁶ Although this paper will focus on the Japanese Americans onboard the *Gripsholm*, I want to clearly acknowledge that the Japanese Latin Americans faced distinct, horrifying injustices and the evidence I reviewed indisputably proves their participation in the “exchange” was involuntary.⁷

This paper aims to be the first of its kind. A survey of all formal academic publications indicated that no paper telling this particular story has been written and published yet.⁸ The Japanese American Gripsholm “Exchange” survivors were betrayed by their country, stripped of their constitutional rights, and incarcerated. The U.S. government subjected them to duress and coercion in year-long individual interrogations. Then, the U.S. government shipped them out of New York Harbor, across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and around the world to a country they did not know.⁹ For most Americans, New York Harbor and the Statue of Liberty symbolize the United States’ openness and inclusiveness to immigrants and the hope for a prosperous life of constitutionally-protected freedoms and rights. For these Japanese Americans, the Statue of Liberty was the last visual vestige they saw of America, as the SS *Gripsholm* pulled away from the shore. It no longer symbolized America’s openness to all and constitutional freedom but rather was a painful

4. *U.S. Agrees to Redress WWII Child Deportees*, RAJU SHIMPO, Oct. 3, 1996.

5. Stephen Mak, *Japanese Latin Americans*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Japanese%20Latin%20Americans> [<https://perma.cc/2Z6Q-ZRJU>] (last updated Sept. 12, 2024); see also Natsu Taylor Saito, *Justice Held Hostage: U.S. Disregard for International Law in the World War II Internment of Japanese Peruvians—A Case Study*, 40 B.C. L. REV. 275, 275, 287 (1998); see also Mark K. Hanasono, *Comment: Stranded in Japan and the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 Recognition for an Excluded Group of Japanese Americans*, 6 ASIAN L.J. 151 (1999).

6. Mak, *supra* note 5.

7. Mak, *supra* note 5.

8. See, e.g., Robert M. Jarvis, *Aboitiz & Co. v. Price: Some Lingering Questions*, 55 AM. J. LEGAL HIST. 64, 76 (2015). This discusses the Gripsholm “Exchange” but only from the perspective of a white American man traveling from Japan to America on the SS *Gripsholm*. Jarvis’s piece cites a *New York Times* article which states, “civilians freed by Japanese burst into song at the sight of Statue of Liberty,” portraying the passengers as joyful travelers returning to America with no regard for or mention of the Japanese Americans who were being deported to Japan in the place of these white Americans being returned. See Eric L. Muller, *The Japanese American Cases—A Bigger Disaster Than We Realized*, 49 HOW. L.J. 417, 425, 453–457 (2006). This describes the creation of the false hysteria about Japanese Americans as threats to national security, and follows the lives of a few Japanese Americans before, during, and after World War II to illustrate how unfounded and dangerous this hysteria was. In doing so, it briefly mentions a Japanese American taxi driver, John Mikami, who was deported to Japan via the SS *Gripsholm* “with other Japanese repatriates” when Mikami was scheduled to be a key eyewitness in defense of another Japanese American who was suspected of espionage against the United States. This is a very brief mention of the Gripsholm and does not go into any detail about the actual exchange.

9. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 15; see also Interview with Kazu Rikimaru by Richard Potashin, Manzanar Oral History Project, Manzanar Nat’l Hist. Site, Nat’l Park Serv. 1–38 (Dec. 14, 2006).

reminder of how their own country betrayed them. As Sam Miyamoto, a Japanese American incarcerated and Gripsholm survivor, describes, “even though we were born in the United States, our family was used in a hostage exchange with Japan to bring home Caucasian Americans from Japanese POW camps in Asia. I was only 14, but I still remember the day that my country said I was not welcome—just because my ancestors were from a different country.”¹⁰

First, this paper will discuss the origin of the Gripsholm “Exchange.” I will describe the context in which this “exchange” arose and under what terms Japan and the United States agreed to “exchange” people.

Second, I will discuss how various Japanese American families were forced out of the internment camps and ended up on the SS *Gripsholm*. Through the stories of the Miyamoto family, the Yamane family, and the Rikimaru family, I will share the experiences of different Japanese American families before, during, and after their voyage on the *Gripsholm*, including how some eventually returned to the United States after World War II ended.

Third, I will explain how the Japanese American Gripsholm survivors faced unique barriers to receiving redress. I will detail the campaign they created to be included in that redress, and their ultimate success in doing so. Finally, I will describe the ongoing effects of this experience on the lives of the survivors and their descendants.

Although this historical event has received diminutive scholarly attention, when it is referenced, it is typically described as the “Gripsholm Exchange.” I refer to it throughout this paper as the Gripsholm “Exchange,” noting quotation marks around the word “exchange.” It could be said that Japan and the United States were “exchanging” people as they executed the terms of their negotiated agreement to trade “one for one,” sending one person from the United States to Japan in order to receive another person from Japan to the United States.¹¹ However, the word “exchange” often connotes peaceful, reciprocal giving and receiving, and for those who were forcibly deported through this arrangement, the connotation of peace and reciprocity runs afoul of their experience. Not all who were transported did so voluntarily. Describing this moment in history as a consensual exchange adds insult to injury to those for whom this was involuntary. Not only did they endure the distinct hardship of being involuntarily deported and traded away to a foreign country they had never been to before, but they also face erasure in the retelling of their story by writers who either describe this painful moment in their lives as a voluntary departure or omit their stories from the literature altogether. To describe a traumatic, painful moment in many people’s lives as essentially a cruise vacation across the sea is beyond the pale for academic scholarship.¹² The use of

10. Sam Miyamoto, *Hostage*, NANKA NIKKEI VOICES, TURNING POINTS, Jan. 2002, at 119.

11. Evelyn Iritani, *The Gripsholm WWII Exchanges*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/The_Gripsholm_WWII_Exchanges [https://perma.cc/ZW3S-TT32] (last updated Sept. 9, 2024).

12. See Jack Nortrup, *The Education of a Western Lawyer*, 12 AM. J. LEGAL HIST. 4, 294, 294–305 (1968). This describes a white American judge keeping “morale up” on his voyage from Japan to America on the SS *Gripsholm* by throwing a party, and describes both trades (those going to America from Japan and those going to Japan from America) as a happy exchange of

euphemisms to describe different aspects of Japanese American incarceration is unfortunately common. For example, the U.S. government referred to the prison camps as “relocation centers.”¹³ “Relocation” fails to acknowledge the involuntary nature of their imprisonment. They were not moving to new homes. They were not relocating to a new city. The U.S. government forced them into horse barracks in desolate locations ringed with armed guards and barbed wire, only allowed them to bring one suitcase of their belongings, stripped them of their constitutional rights with no due process of the law, and held them there with no indication of when they would be released.¹⁴ In fact, Encyclopedia Britannica lists the Japanese American camps as prime examples of “concentration camps.”¹⁵ Language is a powerful tool that can be wielded for empowerment or oppression. The specific terminology we use to describe this experience is thus highly important. Therefore, I reference the Gripsholm “Exchange” with quotes around the word “exchange” to emphasize that this was not voluntary or peaceful for many of the Japanese Americans involved.

Finally, as Hanlon’s razor suggests, we should not attribute to malice what we can attribute to ignorance. However, as Sam Miyamoto said, “unethical writing caused 120,000 Japanese Americans to be thrown in camp during the war. The pen is more dangerous than a volley of machine guns, whenever emotions are inflamed and misdirected toward a group of people.”¹⁶ Upon researching this subject, not only did I find minimal scholarship telling this story, but I also found that a startling amount of the limited scholarship that does exist on this episode in history is

American people and Japanese people wanting to go back to their home country. *See also Who’s Who in this Issue*, 8 FREE WORLD 6, 486, 486–488 (1944). This describes a white American man returning to the United States on the SS *Gripsholm* with no mention of the Japanese Americans being traded the other direction. *See also* Jarvis, *supra* note 8, at 76 n.57. (“Nathaniel P. Davis, Internment in Manila—Part II, 21 FOREIGN SERV. J. 66, 109 (Feb. 1944) [hereinafter Davis Part II]. The Davis staffers were released as part of the second “Gripsholm Exchange,” so named because of the Swedish ship used to carry them back to the United States. *See 1,440 on Gripsholm Wildy Happy Here; Reticent on Trials—Civilians Freed by Japanese Burst Into Song at Sight of Statue of Liberty*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 2, 1943, at 1. *See also* BRUCE ELLEMAN, JAPANESE AMERICAN CIVILIAN PRISONER EXCHANGES AND DETENTION CAMPS, 1941–45, at 84–94 (2006) (describing the complicated negotiations leading up to their release). Although Price was not included (due to his lack of diplomatic credentials), the deal afforded him the means to get a letter to Leone in Salt Lake City. *See 3 More Utah Men Freed in Philippines*, SALT LAKE TRIB. Feb. 24, 1945, at 14 [hereinafter 3 More Freed] (“Mrs. Price last heard from her husband in January, 1944, when the Gripsholm brought mail to the United States from prisoners in the Philippines.”)) (underline added to emphasize the white Americans bursting into song upon arriving home).

13. *Terminology*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, <https://densho.org/terminology/> [<https://perma.cc/W4HL-SVUN>].

14. *Suitcase Project*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, <https://densho.org/catalyst/the-suitcase-project-what-would-you-bring/> [<https://perma.cc/L3QE-26CK>]; *see also Introduction to WWII Incarceration*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, <https://densho.org/learn/introduction/> [<https://perma.cc/W8DK-6MSE>]; *see also American Concentration Camps*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, <https://densho.org/learn/introduction/american-concentration-camps/> [<https://perma.cc/AQ6P-N7X6>].

15. *Concentration Camp*, ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/concentration-camp> [<https://perma.cc/U49U-LDPA>] (last visited Oct. 22, 2024).

16. Sam Miyamoto, *War Vet Defends Himself from Columnist’s Barb of Being ‘Anti-U.S.’*, RAFU SHIMPO, 1993.

blatantly racist, harmful, and revisionist.¹⁷ Upon speaking to Japanese American scholars, I learned this is indicative of a broader issue in scholarship on Japanese American incarceration where a group of published, white scholars such as Bruce Elleman write about Japanese American incarceration without citing sources written by Japanese American scholars and fail to incorporate primary source material written by the survivors themselves.¹⁸ Moreover, although the Japanese Americans who lived through internment and the Gripsholm were still alive when these scholars wrote their works, Elleman and other similarly situated scholars refused to and continue to refuse to speak to those Japanese Americans and their descendants when writing about the very experiences these people lived through.¹⁹ To write about a historical event without speaking to or citing the works of the people who lived it is, at best, poor scholarship. Further, there seems to be something perverse in choosing to write about a historical episode that is not as well-known and well-published as many other moments in history and failing to cite the scholarship written by the community itself, while knowing that your work will likely remain one of the few formally published works on the subject for decades if not forever, facing minimal pushback and painting you as the definitive author on the subject. This racist, revisionist scholarship causes distinct harms to the Japanese American community by failing to give credence to the works they write about themselves, preventing

17. See ELLEMAN, *supra* note 12. There are a multitude of revisionist, racist components of this work. The following examples only scratch the surface of how problematic this is. For example, Elleman portrays Japanese American internment as a “debate” with “[t]hose condemning th[e] program argu[ing]” it was racism, wartime hysteria, and failed political leadership (while failing to acknowledge this verbatim was Congress’s own statutory apology and explanation for internment) and “[o]n the other side of the debate, those who have defended the program” giving both sides seemingly equal credence. ELLEMAN, *supra* note 12, at 1. He blatantly states, “there was no organized movement to mistreat only Japanese-Americans, but rather a general concern applying to all nationals from enemy countries,” and goes to great lengths to obscure the basic differences between the mass targeting of Japanese Americans writ large and that of other communities. ELLEMAN, *supra* note 12, at 2. Finally, and most notably, he describes the Gripsholm Exchanges and states, “[t]his book will examine not only the fate of those people who were fortunate enough to be repatriated during the war, but also what happened to those unfortunate people who were forced to remain in the detention centers for the duration of the hostilities.” ELLEMAN, *supra* note 12, at 3 (emphasis added). This narrative of being “fortunate” to be part of the Gripsholm Exchange and repatriation (as if all of those who were part of the Gripsholm were returning to their country of origin, neglecting to mention the American citizens who were sent back to Japan against their will) is precisely what this paper aims to fight against. See also John Eric Schmitz, *Enemies Among Us: The Relocation, Internment, and Repatriation of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans During the Second World War* (2007) (Ph.D. thesis, American University) (on file with the American University Library). Schmitz states his purpose in writing the piece: “Traditional accounts focusing on the Japanese and arguing that widespread racial prejudice drove policies are incomplete and often inaccurate.” *Id.* at iii. He proceeds to suggest the federal government’s wartime hysteria and racism was fully justified by “a tremendous fear of the Fifth Columnists” as “the nation accepted relocation and internment as necessary expedients in dealing with those officially categorized, indeed ubiquitously called, enemies among us.” (emphasis added). *Id.* This is plainly disturbing.

18. See ELLEMAN, *supra* note 12; SCHMITZ, *supra* note 17.

19. See ELLEMAN, *supra* note 12; see also *Introduction to WWII Incarceration*, *supra* note 14.

their stories from being truthfully told, monopolizing the formal publication space on their lived experience, and putting them on the defensive to debunk these false historical narratives when sharing their own stories. Contrarily, this paper centers the voices of the Japanese Americans who were on the Gripsholm “Exchange.” Particularly in the context of these revisionist works, I hope this paper debunks these false, racist narratives and corrects the record on this extraordinary moment in American history.

II. ORIGINS OF THE GRIPSHOLM “EXCHANGE”

In this part, I will briefly describe the historical context of World War II internment, focusing on the racism and wartime hysteria Japanese Americans faced during that time. I will then discuss the negotiations between Japan and the United States regarding the Gripsholm “Exchanges” and the logistics of the first and second voyages.

A. Context

Ten years prior to the outbreak of World War II, federal agencies conducted detailed surveillance of Japanese American communities, creating custodial detention lists of those who would be arrested should war occur.²⁰ Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, government agents arrested those listed, most of whom were male community leaders targeted for the prominent roles they played in upholding the Japanese American community and celebrating Japanese American culture. Calls for stronger anti-Japanese measures grew and President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which mandated the incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese Americans who were living on the West Coast into desolate prison camps scattered across the country.²¹ During World War II, the internment and deportation of Japanese Americans had massive support—a 1942 opinion poll conducted in California found that 97 percent approved of the “relocation” program with only 2 percent disapproving, only 24 percent would permit incarcerated who were American citizens to return to their homes, and 69 percent were unwilling to hire American citizens of Japanese descent.²² A 1944 opinion poll found that 13 percent of the U.S. public were in favor of the *extermination* of all Japanese.²³ Public media also supported incarcerating Japanese Americans. On February 19, 1942, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* published, “until these doubtful American citizens, and all other Japanese, are taken into protective custody the Pacific defense will not be complete . . . You can’t tell a man’s loyalty by looking at him and there isn’t time now that we are at war to check on every individual. So why take a chance? The

20. *WWII Incarceration, Part Two, Looking Like the Enemy*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, <https://densho.org/learn/introduction/looking-like-the-enemy/> [https://perma.cc/R8LP-YHLW] [hereinafter *WWII Incarceration*].

21. *Id.*; see also *Introduction to WWII Incarceration*, *supra* note 14.

22. Arthur N. Feraru, *Public Opinion Polls on Japan*, 19 FAR E. SURV. 101, 101–03 (1950).

23. *Id.* at 101.

Japanese and the Japanese Americans should be taken into protective custody not only for the good of the United States but for their own welfare as well.”²⁴

In an article for the *Rafu Shimpo* newspaper, Sam Miyamoto wrote, “the internment of the Japanese Americans was one of the most popular things America did during the war. According to a survey made during the war, the *Times* received 11,621 letters in Southern California on how to handle the ‘Japanese problem.’ 96 percent favored the control (camp) of Japanese in this country for the duration of the war. 98 percent favored ‘trading’ Japanese now here for American war prisoners held in Japan, if that could be arranged. 93 percent favored a constitutional amendment after the war for the deportation of all Japanese from this country and forbidding future immigration. 80 percent favored American-born Japanese be included if such a deportation plan be adopted.”²⁵

Kazu Rikimaru personally recalls, “prior to World War II, there was a lot of prejudice. The Japanese knew what beaches they could go to, what parks, what theaters to go. The Blacks knew where they could go . . . the prejudice, it was there. It was strictly a Caucasian country.”²⁶ These patterns of widespread public support of anti-Japanese measures, governmental action, and overt social hostility towards Japanese Americans in the prewar and wartime years illuminate how entrenched racial prejudice and national security anxieties converged to enable one of the most sweeping violations of civil liberties in American history.

B. *Parameters of the “Exchange”*

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, thousands of Americans and Japanese were caught on the wrong side of the battlefield.²⁷ On December 9, 1941, two days after the start of the war, the U.S. government initiated prisoner exchange queries with Japan.²⁸ In the “exchange” negotiations, the U.S. was represented by neutral Switzerland and Japan was represented by neutral Spain.²⁹ At first, the two countries discussed exchanging diplomatic personnel, but their focus expanded to include Japanese journalists, businessmen, bankers, scholars, students, and dependents.³⁰

Densho, the definitive encyclopedia on Japanese American history, described the Gripsholm negotiations in the following way:

A key part of the repatriation negotiations was reciprocity, the notion that the two governments were trading equal numbers of people of equivalent value. But the U.S. was at a disadvantage. At the start of the war, there were at least 10,000 Americans scattered across what would become Japanese-held territory. The U.S. had far fewer bodies to offer in trade. In addition, U.S. military

24. Patricia Miye Wakida, *How a Public Media Campaign Led to Japanese Incarceration During WWII*, PBS (Sept. 23, 2021), <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/citizen-hearst-japanese-incarceration> [<https://perma.cc/EAC7-F9J4>].

25. Sam Miyamoto, *Cry for America*, RAFU SHIMPO.

26. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

27. Iritani, *supra* note 11.

28. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 9. Atsushi often cited SHUNSUKE TSURUMI, NICHIBEI KOKANSEN (2006).

29. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 9.

30. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 9.

leaders adamantly opposed repatriating anyone who might have information they deemed valuable to the war effort, such as knowledge of the U.S. coastline or port facilities.³¹

There were two “exchanges” during the war between the U.S. and Japan.³² Each “exchange” consisted of about 1,500 hostages from each side.³³ There are two misconceptions about these “exchanges.” First, although these “exchanges” are sometimes described as “POW exchanges,” they did not involve military personnel, except for a few military attachés.³⁴ Second, the goal of the “exchanges” was not to return Japanese American internees assembled at Tule Lake who had chosen to be deported to Japan.³⁵ For context, one of the prison camps Japanese Americans were held in during World War II was at Tule Lake, located near the California-Oregon border.³⁶ Following the infamous Loyalty Questionnaire in which the U.S. government required Japanese American incarcerated to answer “yes” or “no” to swearing *unqualified* allegiance to the United States, the incarcerated who refused to give an unqualified “yes” were segregated to Tule Lake and labeled as “disloyal.”³⁷ In 1944, nativist groups promoted legislation that would strip Japanese Americans of their U.S. citizenship. When passing the bill, Congressperson Bertrand Hearhardt remarked, “I am convinced that the method I propose, constitutional in all aspects, will reveal a large number of Japanese who are earnestly hoping for our defeat, secretly doing everything they can to insure a victory for our despicable foes.”³⁸ The fear of this proposed legislation combined with rising misinformation portraying renunciation as guaranteeing further safety led thousands of Tule Lake incarcerated to renounce their U.S. citizenship.³⁹ In response, the Justice Department began plans for mass deportation and after the war ended, significant legal battles ensued to prevent such removals.⁴⁰ These Tule Lake incarcerated and their battle against mass deportation after the war is often confused with the Gripsholm hostages. To be clear, these are completely separate events, and both Gripsholm “Exchanges” occurred *before* internees were segregated at Tule Lake.⁴¹ Permanent resident internees who opted for deportation and assembled at Tule Lake went to Japan *after* the war ended and did *not* go on the *Gripsholm*.⁴² These were separate, unrelated episodes during Japanese American internment. Further, the Tule Lake

31. Iritani, *supra* note 11.

32. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

33. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

34. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

35. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

36. Barbara Takei, *Tule Lake*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Tule%20Lake> [https://perma.cc/9FXB-GS6C] (last updated Sept. 13, 2024).

37. *Id.*

38. See CONG. REC. H1035 (Feb 1, 1944); *The Suyama Project*, UCLA ASIAN AM. STUD. CTR. https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/storybooks/suyama/lc_renunciants.aspx [https://perma.cc/U7MW-ZWWE]; *House Bill Hits Disloyal Japs*, THE SPOKESMAN-HERALD, Feb. 7, 1944.

39. *The Suyama Project*, *supra* note 38.

40. *The Suyama Project*, *supra* note 38.

41. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

42. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 7.

deportations were deportations, not “exchanges.”⁴³ The Tule Lake deportees were sent to Japan with America “receiving” no people in return for them. Moreover, the Japanese American families who were sent on the *Gripsholm* came from a variety of different internment camps, not just Tule Lake.⁴⁴

C. *The First “Exchange”*

The First “Exchange” seems to have been voluntary and peaceful. According to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, there were 640 diplomats and dependents, 600 non-resident Japanese nationals, 22 Thai diplomats, and 85 non-resident Thai nationals on the First Gripsholm “Exchange.” (Thailand had joined Japan, and had declared war on the U.S.).⁴⁵ Interestingly, the U.S. government’s file on the First “Exchange” lists 1,061 Japanese and does not list any Thai nationals.⁴⁶ Only a few of the passengers on the First “Exchange” did not possess Japanese citizenship.⁴⁷ For example, the Japanese record lists the American wife of a Japanese diplomat.⁴⁸ The minors on the First “Exchange” are also assumed to be citizens of Japan, with a few exceptions.⁴⁹

Exchange at sea was considered too hazardous, so the U.S. and Japan settled on Laurencos Marques, a territory of Portugal, for the site of the First “Exchange.”⁵⁰ The “Exchange” took place in July 1942 using two ships called the *Asama Maru* and the *Conte Verde*.⁵¹ Atsushi Miyamoto’s manifest on the Gripsholm “Exchanges” states:

The majority of passengers were Japanese diplomatic personnel and other Japanese nationals stranded in the U.S.⁵² They were not interned in concentration camps, but confined in hotels, including the lavish Greenbrier situated in a lush valley five hours from Washington D.C.⁵³ At Port Lourenco Marques in the capital of Mozambique, the passengers were traded for 1,554 Allied civilians, mostly American officials and their families who had been picked up in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Vietnam.⁵⁴ Due to the growing enmity between the two governments, it took more than a year to negotiate the Second “Exchange.”⁵⁵

D. *The Second “Exchange”*

The Second “Exchange” had a very different, much darker character. Miyamoto recounted that as minors they were “unfortunate victims in a hostage

43. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 7.

44. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 5.

45. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 6.

46. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 6.

47. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 6.

48. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 6.

49. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 6.

50. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 13.

51. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 15.

52. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 10–14; *see also* Sam Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, at 5 (on file with author).

53. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 5.

54. Iritani, *supra* note 11.

55. Iritani, *supra* note 11.

exchange program,” where they were “shipped to India to serve our national interest in an exchange with Japan to bring home ‘White’ American tourists and businessmen...these minor relocatees were victims of racism, wartime hysteria, and failure of political leadership.”⁵⁶ Rikimaru reflected, “It was racist. It got to me later. It would have been different if they let the Nisei come back. But only White Americans were allowed to come back.”⁵⁷

The Second “Exchange” was set to take place in Mormugao, Goa, India in September 1942.⁵⁸ The plan was to use the *Asamaru* and *Conte Verde* again for the Second “Exchange.” However, in September 1942, the “Exchange” was postponed indefinitely and the *Asama Maru* was returned for duty with the Japanese navy and the *Conte Verde* returned to Shanghai.⁵⁹ Finally, on August 26, 1943, negotiations were finalized, and the U.S. agreed to transport the passengers to Goa on the *Gripsholm*, and Japan agreed to transport their passengers on the *Teia Maru*, a French liner seized by Japan in Saigon.⁶⁰

On September 2, 1943, the *Gripsholm* set sail from New York Harbor with a reported 1,340 passengers on board.⁶¹ Along with some Japanese nationals, the manifest included unprecedented numbers of American citizens (Nisei) and U.S. permanent resident aliens (Issei), most of whom came from “relocation” camps.⁶² Half were ten years of age or under.⁶³ According to one source, 314 internees were from camps: 18 from Topaz, 30 from Poston, 71 from Hila, 22 from Amachi, 27 from Heart Mountain 38 from Jerome, 13 from Manzanar, 32 from Minidoka, 49 from Rohwer, and 17 from Tule Lake.⁶⁴

Additionally, a large contingent was from Central and South America, including 487 from Peru (including 117 children), 181 from Panama and Costa Rica (including 22 children), 48 from Mexico (including 13 children), and the rest from Ecuador, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras.⁶⁵

The internees arrived in Yokohama, Japan in mid-November.⁶⁶ The trip from New York was over 70 days.⁶⁷

III. THE GRIPSHOLM EXPERIENCE

In this part, I present the stories of three Japanese American families who were survivors of the Gripsholm “Exchange”—the Miyamotos, the Rikimarus,

56. See Naomi Hirahara, *Justice Dept. Proposes to Provide Redress for Minors Sent on POW Ship*, RAFU SHIMPO, June 13, 1996.

57. See Takeshi Nakayama, *Minor Deportees Finally Win Redress*, RAFU SHIMPO, Oct. 26, 1996.

58. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 10.

59. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 10.

60. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 10.

61. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

62. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

63. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 5.

64. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 5.

65. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 5.

66. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 24.

67. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 25.

and the Yamanes. Through the story of each family, I discuss how their families were initially treated by the U.S. government, how they survived on the *Gripsholm* voyage, how they survived in Japan once they arrived, and how some returned to America after the war ended. While there is no direct evidence of the U.S. government torturing the fathers of these three families during their year-long separations from their families, all signs—including interrogations and confinements—point to coercion. The evidence indicates the U.S. government leveraged the cruelty of internment against the eventual deportees to force them into “agreeing” to be part of the Gripsholm “Exchange.”

A. *How Families Were Initially Targeted*

In order to fill the quota of persons to be “exchanged,” some Japanese American families, previously interned by the U.S. government, were coerced into participating. In many cases, families separated into different internment camps were told that they would only be reunited if they agreed to participate in the “exchange.”⁶⁸ Below, I describe the three families I interviewed and their stories.

1. The Targeted Families

The Miyamoto family lived on a large farm they owned in Brawley, California where they grew cantaloupe and tomatoes.⁶⁹ Shinichi and Masu Miyamoto had six children, including Sam Miyamoto and Archie Miyamoto. Shinichi had immigrated to America in 1903 and had served in the U.S. military during World War I, building bridges in France. He was also the treasurer of a local civic organization and helped to build up and support the Japanese American community in Brawley.

Sam Miyamoto was fourteen years old when the FBI arrested his father, Shinichi.⁷⁰ Shinichi was taken into custody with 100 other Japanese American ranchers in the Imperial Valley in February of 1942.⁷¹ Sam recounts, “[o]ur bank account was frozen, then Dad, our only means of support, was taken to Bismarck, leaving Mom and four children to fend for ourselves.”⁷² His father had committed no crime and they had no indication of what the U.S. government suspected he did “wrong.”⁷³ To this day, the Miyamoto family has never received an explanation from the U.S. government of why they were targeted and what the U.S. government suspected them of doing that warranted such an individualized arrest, despite having filed multiple archival requests.

The Rikimaru family lived in what is now J-Town in downtown Los Angeles and owned a large, successful produce market called Rikimaru Brothers Produce Market on 9th Street and San Pedro.⁷⁴ Isamu Rikimaru immigrated to America in

68. *U.S. Agrees to Redress WWII Child Deportees*, *supra* note 4.

69. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

70. Sam Miyamoto, *Post War Resettlement Back to the West Coast: The Miyamoto Family From Brawley*, NANKA NIKKEI VOICES, at 28–29.

71. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

72. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 2.

73. See generally Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52.

74. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

the early 1900s.⁷⁵ Isamu started a farm truck business with his brother where they would haul produce from farms to city markets. Eventually, they founded their own market.⁷⁶ Isamu Rikimaru, along with his wife Tatsuko Tomita, had four children, including Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru.⁷⁷ The Rikimaru Brothers Produce Market stretched from 7th Street to 9th Street and operated like a farmer's market where the Rikimaru produce stand was front and center as the permanent table open and other producers could rent stalls and sell their goods next to them.⁷⁸ When the Rikimaru Market was confiscated after Executive Order 9066, it was close to doing \$1 million in business per year.⁷⁹ Kazu Rikimaru remembered his father was "doing quite well financially and played golf a few times a week."⁸⁰ The Rikimaru family lived in a smaller home between Western and Jefferson.⁸¹ Kazu also recalled that his father, Isamu, was active in local Japanese American social clubs such as Fukuoka-ken and Kashiakai at the time of his arrest.⁸² He donated money to the organizations and attended local picnic lunches at Elysian Park where families would share Japanese food they made and children would play games.⁸³ Kazu Rikimaru recalls participating in kendo and sumo tournaments on the weekends, celebrating Japanese holidays, and enjoying Japanese food and drinks at home.⁸⁴

75. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

76. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

77. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

78. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

79. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

80. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

81. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

82. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

83. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

84. Potashin, *supra* note 9.



Exhibit A - A Photo of the Rikimaru Brothers Produce Market



Exhibit B - The Exterior of the Rikimaru Brothers Produce Market

Kazu Rikimaru remembers the day Pearl Harbor was bombed and how his father was immediately arrested by the FBI.

At that time, we had one of the first portable radios on the market. And I was listening to the portable radio at Polytechnic High in Los Angeles, where my brother and friends were playing football; I was on the sidelines listening to the radio in the morning, and then I heard that Pearl Harbor was bombed. Well, I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was . . . When I got home, then it dawned on me that something serious happened, because there were two FBI agents in the house, they had searched the house, and they had me sit down and keep quiet. But then I had to go to the bathroom, and he wouldn't let me go, so after I cussed him out, then he let me go . . . Then, when my Dad came home, they had him put on his coat, and they took him away, and that was it.⁸⁵

Kazu Rikimaru recalls what the FBI told his father about his arrest, "They had checked all the Isseis from Japan, I understand the males, because they told my dad exactly what day he went to a particular laundry, dry cleaners, and what he checked in, and all that. So they were checking in on him, and all the other Japanese from Japan. So they knew who to pick up. The minute the war started, they knew exactly who to pick up."⁸⁶ Federal agents returned to the Rikimaru house two or three times after their father's arrest.⁸⁷ Kazu stated, "It left the family 'puzzled,' my Mother said. My Mother, who was only thirty-three, had four kids, was without her husband, and had never worked. They closed up my father's business at the Ninth Street Produce Market. We had no money. I don't know how my mother managed."⁸⁸

Like the Miyamoto family, the Rikimaru family still has not received an explanation of why they were targeted and what the U.S. government believed warranted the individualized arrest.⁸⁹ Even after years of exhausting administrative remedies for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and receiving "all relevant documentation," the Rikimaru family has no definitive explanation for why their father was targeted.⁹⁰ The only documentation they ever received is pictured below.⁹¹ When asked to speculate about why his father was arrested, Kazu offered, "I understand they picked up all the leaders, the movers and shakers of that era, and a lot of the ministers and businesspeople and educators. I think many were picked up."⁹² Kazu reflected, "It was a pretty turbulent time. Because of the national sentiment because of Japan's attack, there was not too much sympathy for the violations of our constitutional rights."⁹³

85. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

86. Potashin, *supra* note 9.

87. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, in Torrance, CA (Sept. 22, 2024).

88. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

89. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

90. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

91. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87; see Exhibit C.

92. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

93. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FILE NO. 100-7096

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

REPORT MADE AT LOS ANGELES	DATE WHEN MADE 1/27/42	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 12/7/41 1/27/42	REPORT MADE BY JAMES E. DALEY (A)
TITLE ISAMU RIKIMARU			CHARACTER OF CASE INTERNAL SECURITY (J) (ALIEN ENEMY CONTROL)

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject born Japan in 1898. Operated RIKIMARU Brothers Produce Company in Los Angeles. A supporting member of Nippon Kaigun Kyokai (Japanese Navy Association). Apprehended December 7, 1941 by Los Angeles Police Department. Presently in custody of Immigration and Naturalization Service, awaiting hearing.

AGENCY *IE*
 REQ. REC'D *4-26-42*
 REP'T FORW. *4-6-42*
 BY *[Signature]*

- P -

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 12-18-2003 BY 60267UC/NAL

REFERENCE:

Bureau teletype dated December 20, 1941.

DETAILS:

A review of the Los Angeles Field Division file on the Subject reflects that he resided at 209 West 30th Street, Los Angeles, California. He, with a brother, operated the RIKIMARU Brothers Produce Company at 825 South San Pedro Street, Los Angeles, California. He was born on April 22, 1898 in Japan at Onomura, Kasuya-gun, Fukuoka-Ken.

The files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service reflect that the Subject arrived at Seattle, Washington on board the AVA MARU on August 17, 1912 as a student; and that he obtained a re-entry permit No. 156439 issued July 29, 1937. This file also reflects that the Subject was in the United States from 1912 to 1937. This information was obtained from the Certificate of Admission of Alien, dated February 12, 1938, showing that the Subject was admitted at Los Angeles, arriving aboard the TATSUTA MARU.

APPROVED AND
 FORWARDED: *[Signature]* SPECIAL AGENT
 IN CHARGE

1 FEB 20 1942

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EX-1

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 7-3024

Exhibit C - The Rikimaru Family's Only Document Regarding Isamu's Detainment

b7C In Los Angeles File 65-449, serial 99 reflects that Subject is a supporting member of Nippon Kaigun Kyokai, as shown by the membership list of that organization, which was obtained at the time of the arrest of [] on June 7, 1941. This membership list was seized upon the authority of a search warrant issued by the United States Commissioner of the Southern District of California. The Nippon Kaigun Kyokai (Japanese Navy Association) is an organization of 202,287 people, with headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.

b7C A list of members of the Los Angeles office of the organization as above stated, was found in the effects of [] who, upon interview on June 8, 1941 by Special Agents A. D. HORN and A. P. LeGRAND, admitted his part in []

b7C Booklets setting forth the regulations of the organization were found in [] possession, and indicate that one task of the Nippon Kaigun Kyokai was the establishment of investigative agencies for study and research of domestic and foreign navies and marine transportation and other maritime matters.

ISAMU RIKIMARU was apprehended on December 7, 1941 by the Los Angeles Police Department, and is presently in the custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, awaiting a hearing.

The following is a description of the Subject as obtained from the Los Angeles Police Department:

Age	43 years
Born	April 22, 1898, Japan
Height	5 feet, 5 inches
Hair	Black
Eyes	Brown
Marital status	Married
Residence	209 West 30th Street, Los Angeles, California
Occupation	Produce merchant
Criminal record	None, as reflected by FBI No. 2,558,431.

- P E N D I N G -

These FBI records cite that Isamu Rikimaru financially contributed to and was a member of the Nippon Kaigun Kyokai, described as the Japanese Navy Association. However, Kazu Rikimaru and his sister Reiko Rikimaru both remember their father affirming he was not involved in that organization, and it was one of Isamu's rogue brothers who Isamu did not associate closely with who was actually a member of that group.⁹⁴

The Yamane family's story is crucially similar. Alden Hayashi, the son of Mary Yamane, recounted what his mother told him about her family's experience. Mary suspected her father was targeted because he was a wealthy businessman in Honolulu.⁹⁵ “It was a lot of Buddhist priests, Japanese language teachers—they were all targeted after Pearl Harbor. They were put in Sand Island in Honolulu Harbor, then shipped to the mainland. My mother's father ended up in a penitentiary in Santa Fe. He was held in captivity.”⁹⁶ Hayashi recalls his mother sharing, “[her father] would show Japanese films on his property and have people over. He was sort of, not an official leader, but he definitely was known.”⁹⁷ Hayashi also affirmed, “They didn't ask him if he wanted to go back to Japan then. They wanted to just imprison these people. They wanted to cut the head off the community. These were all the community leaders—they wanted to leave the community in disarray without the power to organize and protest what was to come.”⁹⁸ Also, like the Rikimaru family, Hayashi sought to understand his family's history by submitting FOIA requests to find any documentation of his grandfather's arrest, interrogations, or incarceration.⁹⁹ To his despair, the U.S. government informed Hayashi that there are “no documents.”¹⁰⁰ Hayashi appealed the FOIA answers for over a decade and eventually the U.S. government replied that Hayashi would have to formally sue them to pursue the inquiry further because he exhausted every other possible avenue.¹⁰¹ Hayashi stated, “At that point, I dropped it. I took it as far as I could. What they told me was if we did have any more documentation, it would have been destroyed in December of 1979. I am sure there are more documents.”¹⁰²

In summation, there are key similarities between the three families' stories. All three families had their male heads of household individually arrested and incarcerated with no explanation, no due process, and no legal counsel after Pearl Harbor was bombed and before their families were incarcerated in camps via Executive Order 9066. All three fathers—Rikimaru with his Japanese grocery store, Miyamoto with his community financing and involvement, and Yamane with his thriving business—were prominent leaders of the Japanese American community. All three arrests happened out of nowhere with no prior warning; all three were taken with no explanation of where they were going or for how long; all

94. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

95. Interview with Alden Hayashi (Sept. 13, 2024).

96. *Id.*

97. *Id.*

98. *Id.*

99. *Id.*

100. *Id.*

101. *Id.*

102. *Id.*

three left behind wives and multiple children; and all three were eventually reunited with their families via the Gripsholm "Exchange." Additionally, all three families never received an explicit explanation of why they were targeted in the first place, all three families have sought to uncover the records of their interrogations from the U.S. government, and the U.S. government failed to provide all three with any such records.

It is important to note—my point that the U.S. government *targeted* these three families *because* they were community leaders is not based solely on the pattern of arrest of the three families I described above. *Densho* confirms that the U.S. government surveilled male, Japanese American community leaders for a decade prior to the war to create "custodial detention lists."¹⁰³ My argument then is that based on the testimony of these three families, their male heads of household were part of this initial surveillance and targeting by the U.S. government described by *Densho*. I offer a few comments on this pattern of the FBI arresting those they perceived to be leaders of the Japanese American community after Pearl Harbor.¹⁰⁴

First, these arrests could indicate that the U.S. government was trying to decentralize and destabilize the Japanese American community so it could later more easily exert control over them, particularly in limiting resistance to future evacuation and internment orders. It is undisputed that the U.S. government targeted male heads of household who held social prominence in these initial individualized arrests. Therefore, because Japanese society was predominantly patriarchal, by targeting only male heads of household who held social prominence, the U.S. government effectively beheaded the Japanese American community of their leaders who would have been most likely to lead a resistance movement to incarceration and mobilize the community against later governmental oppression.

Second, by targeting those who externally expressed pride in Japanese culture, whether through film, providing Japanese groceries, funding community organizations, or otherwise, the U.S. government's actions had the effect of Japanese Americans viewing their own cultural practices as "dangerous" and incentivizing them to assimilate to whiteness for their own safety. By arresting Japanese American social leaders for their involvement with Japanese American culture, the U.S. government's actions suggested that pride in and expression of Japanese American culture and identity was problematic in and of itself and justified warrantless arrest. The U.S. government's targeting and unjust arrests based on how much one invested in their own cultural community essentially communicated to Japanese Americans that their constitutional rights and protections ended where their own cultural expression began. The more they celebrated and maintained their Japanese culture, the more dangerous they would be perceived by the State and their country, and the more they put themselves and their family at risk of arrest and imprisonment.

103. *WWII Incarceration*, *supra* note 20.

104. *WWII Incarceration*, *supra* note 20.

2. Coercion and Duress

Forced repatriation raises serious questions of law and policy. For Issei (people of Japanese descent who immigrated to the United States) whom the U.S. government barred from citizenship because of their race, forced repatriation back to Japan was enforced even when some refused voluntary repatriation.¹⁰⁵ For the children of the Issei, who were born in the United States and thus were American citizens, “deportation, expulsion from your own country, can be cruel. Socrates chose death over separation from his beloved Athens.”¹⁰⁶ Miyamoto satirically reflected, “Was it war or ethnic cleansing that our family traveled half way [sic] around the world. compliments of the U.S. government?”¹⁰⁷

Current scholarship on the Gripsholm “Exchange” either neglects to mention the Japanese Americans on board or broadly paints the entire historical episode as voluntary exchange. That is not so for the Japanese Americans. The survivors and their descendants whole-heartedly declare that they did not participate voluntarily. The involuntary nature of their deportation later became a key component of their redress campaign and was vindicated by Congress and the National Coalition for Redress and Reparation when they finally granted their claims to be included in redress.¹⁰⁸ As I will later discuss in more detail, the involuntary nature of this “exchange” on the part of the Japanese Americans is also shown through the fact that those who tried to resist boarding the ship in New York were told if they refused they would be “tied and loaded on the ship with the baggage.”¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the Japanese Americans were escorted out of camp and onto the *Gripsholm* by armed military guards which also illustrates the involuntary nature of their participation.¹¹⁰

Moreover, Hayashi asserted, “any decisions made about whether people ‘volunteered’ to be part of these exchanges were made under severe duress. How can anyone call this voluntary? I really challenge that.”¹¹¹ Some sources indicate that male heads of household who were initially taken into custody before Executive Order 9066 may have been forced into “agreeing” to repatriate their family to Japan during their year of hostile interrogation by the FBI while held in captivity.¹¹²

105. “The 1924 act was what the Asia exclusion lobby had always wanted. It was statutory exclusion, not subject to diplomatic negotiation or judicial review. And it was comprehensive: It applied to all Asians [including the Japanese], all people considered “ineligible to citizenship,” which was a euphemism because the Supreme Court had ruled that Asians were not eligible for naturalization in the 1923 case *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*.” Theodore S. Gonzalves, *How a 1924 Immigration Act Laid the Groundwork for Japanese American Incarceration*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (Feb. 16, 2024), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-a-1924-immigration-act-laid-the-groundwork-for-japanese-american-incarceration-180983757/> [https://perma.cc/26D8-CLGB].

106. Miyamoto, *supra* note 70, at 28–29.

107. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 1.

108. See Letter from DeDe Greene, Adm’r for Redress, Off. of Redress Admin., Civ. Rts. Div., U.S. Dep’t of Just. (May 30, 1996) (Exhibit F) (on file with author).

109. See Letter from DeDe Greene, *supra* note 108.

110. See generally Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52; see MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1; see also Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

111. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

112. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

Because of the U.S. government's repeated refusal to release any records of those interrogations and incarcerations and the U.S. government's potential complete erasure of such records decades ago, there is very limited information about what happened during those interrogations to discern whether male heads of household were in fact forced to agree. Further, all three families—the Miyamotos, Rikimarus, and Yamanes—stated that they remember their fathers not extensively speaking about their year in custody.¹¹³ The Miyamoto family specifically remembers Shinichi remaining silent for months after he was released from custody, refusing to speak at all after that experience. Looking at this in retrospect with a modern understanding of trauma, this silence may have been a freeze-trauma response to the painful detention experience he suffered for over a year. This also means that, combined with the lack of documentation, the surviving families do not know extensive details about what exactly happened in those forced interrogations. It is unknown whether any torture tactics or other physical harms were inflicted on the detainees. Below I provide the Yamane family's and the Rikimaru family's accounts of how their families "agreed" to deportation. I note that the Miyamoto family, however, has no evidence that either of their parents were ever asked to relocate or that they ever agreed to such deportation. Sam Miyamoto affirmed through a variety of letters to Congressmen for redress and news publications, "We did not volunteer to go to Japan. No one had access to Washington or Tokyo. The list was prepared by U.S. [sic] and Japan and we must have been pawns in an 'exchange' program under the pretext of being 'Japanese.' Washington may have said, '[i]f he looks like a duck, walks like a duck, he is a duck.'"¹¹⁴

For the Yamane family, the coercive conditions and duress the U.S. government inflicted on both Hayashi's grandmother and grandfather in making their "voluntary choice" to relocate back to Japan evidence that this "decision" was clearly forced. While the male heads of household were detained, their wives were left to fend for themselves and care for their children.¹¹⁵ The U.S. government told Hayashi's grandmother that they could reunite the family with her husband if she agreed to go to a certain internment camp in Jerome, Arkansas.¹¹⁶ She hoped for reunification, so she agreed and she and her children went to that camp.¹¹⁷ Upon arrival, they were not reunited. Her husband was not in Jerome.¹¹⁸ She then wrote to the U.S. government asking what happened, and they "moved the goalpost, saying if you actually want to be reunited, you have to be willing to be sent to Japan, so she made the decision that it was better to be together."¹¹⁹ On the other end, separated from his family, Hayashi's grandfather was still detained.¹²⁰ At that point, he

113. See generally Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52; see MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1. See also Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87; see also Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

114. Miyamoto, *supra* note 16.

115. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 2.

116. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

117. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

118. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

119. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

120. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

had lost his business, all his financial assets were frozen, he lost his property, and he had no way to contact his family, know if they were imprisoned or what conditions they were imprisoned in, or know how long he would be detained for.¹²¹ Hayashi affirmed that his grandfather “*repeatedly* said over the course of many months that he did not want to go back to Japan, so you have to wonder what made him finally agree.”¹²² Hayashi notes “if he made a decision, he made that under extreme duress. Separating families is a tool the government uses to get people to ‘voluntarily’ agree to horrible things.”¹²³ Furthermore, Hayashi underscores, “another thing people forget is at that point, we really did not know how long the war was going to last and it was not a given that at the end of the war, people would be released from these concentration camps. People did not know that for sure. No!”¹²⁴ With the U.S. government destroying every vestige of the life they had worked so hard to build over the course of generations living in America and with Hayashi’s grandfather processing disconcerting unknowns about how his family members were doing, where they were incarcerated, and if they would ever get out, the Yamane family “accepted” moving back to Japan in order to be reunited.¹²⁵

Similarly, the Rikimaru family recounts, “[The U.S. government] told [Isamu] that the only way for him to be reunited with his family was to agree to deportation back to Japan. He was such a family man, so that was the only reason.” Reiko Rikimaru adds, “My father was also an insulin-dependent diabetic, so he was not very healthy and he figured he might die before he got to come back to his family.” Reiko and Kazu both affirmed that neither of them wanted to go to Japan.¹²⁶ Reiko recalled, “[m]y brother was 17, I was 15. We had no choice since we were minors. We didn’t want to go to Japan, but we couldn’t stay in America. We had to go with our parents.”¹²⁷ Kazu was a very vocal “hold-out” in staunchly asserting he did not want to go to Japan. Kazu opposed deportation so firmly that his teacher at the internment camp offered to formally adopt him as her son so that he could remain in America.

Finally, the kidnapping, detainment, and forced deportation of Japanese Latin Americans on the *Gripsholm* further indicates that the U.S. government was desperate to find bodies to trade with Japan fulfilling their “one for one” promise and wielded state power to force both interned Japanese Americans and kidnapped Japanese Latin Americans onto the *Gripsholm*. While the First “Exchange” mainly involved Japanese diplomats, journalists, and scholars, I found no evidence of coercion or duress on their part. This stands in stark contrast to the Second “Exchange” where the U.S. government did not similarly fill the ship with neither business-people nor Japanese citizens, but rather with interned Japanese Americans and kidnapped Japanese Latin Americans.

121. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

122. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

123. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

124. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

125. Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

126. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

127. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

B. *Family Reunification and Traveling to the Ship*

"Financial ruin and fear of an uncertain future for the family finally took its toll on my father. When Dad joined the family in July of 1943, all his hair had turned white, and suddenly he looked old, beaten, and withdrawn. He showed pain when I told him we lost everything: the farm, equipment, home, car, truck, and all of our personal belongings," Sam Miyamoto stated.¹²⁸ For the Rikimaru family, they later learned that while they were interned in the Amache prison camp their father was sent to several camps including Missoula, Montana; Camp Livingston, Louisiana; and eventually in Santa Fe, New Mexico where male detainees were given hearings. Reiko Rikimaru emphasized these "hearings" were not fair, formal processes but rather, "monkey court[s]."¹²⁹

In August 1943, the deportees were "quietly escorted out of the camp under armed guard."¹³⁰ As the deportees boarded the train bound for New York, a gun shot rang out.¹³¹ Shrieks and hushed tones conveyed fear that someone was shot while trying to escape, but it turned out to be a soldier who was so scared he accidentally discharged his rifle.¹³²

On September 1, 1943, upon arriving in New York Harbor, the families were ordered to board the *Gripsholm*. Some objected and refused to board the ship.¹³³ They were told that they would be "tied and loaded on the ship with the baggage."¹³⁴ As the deportees solemnly boarded the ship, rumor broke out that the ship had an engine problem. "You should have seen the happy faces when that rumor broke out," Miyamoto recalled.¹³⁵ Rumor was that if the ship was unable to leave New York by September 1, 1943, the deal would be called off.¹³⁶ Later that day, a tugboat pulled the SS *Gripsholm* away from the dock so technically it sailed, but it was essentially "dead" in the water.¹³⁷ The ship was fixed, and the SS *Gripsholm* set sail on September 2, 1943.¹³⁸

As the ship finally pulled away from the land, Sam had to accept the harsh truth—his own country was shipping him away and there was nothing he could do about it. The only country he knew and loved had betrayed him and his family. The America he believed in, the one of promise, freedom, and constitutional rights was "trading" him away. As he described, "scared and uncertain, [they were] tagged like baggage and used as pawns in a political war game."¹³⁹ The constitutional rights his white American teachers had taught him in school years ago seemed worthless. Sam looked up. There it was. The Statue of Liberty. Oh, the painful irony of it all.

128. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 2.

129. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

130. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 2.

131. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

132. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

133. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

134. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

135. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

136. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

137. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

138. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 4.

139. Miyamoto, *supra* note 25.

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SAILING LIST

JAPANESE EMBARKED FOR SECOND VOYAGE OF GRIPSHOLM

NEW YORK - SEPTEMBER 2, 1943

✓ 1. ABE, Saburo M 28	Peru
✓ 2. ABE, Shungo M 58 (a.o.)	United States
✓ 3. " , Chiyo (Mrs. Shungo) 40	"
✓ 4. ABEI, Torahachi (Torahashi) M 51	Peru
✓ 5. " , Teru (Mrs. Torahachi) 45	"
✓ 6. " , Toshiniko M 6	"
✓ 7. ADANIA, Yoho M 42	Peru
✓ 8. " , Antonio M 10	"
✓ 9. ADANIYA, Chuzo M 45	Peru
✓ 10. " , Setsu (Mrs. Chuzo) 38	"
✓ 11. " , Margarita Hiroko F 11	"
✓ 12. " , Isabel Fumiko F 7	"
✓ 13. " , Rufina Masako F 4	"
✓ 14. " , Pedro Kenji M 3	"
✓ 15. " , Antonia Kazuko F 1	"
✓ 16. ADANIYA, Kengei (ADANIA, Kengi) M 29	Peru
✓ 17. AIZUMI, Susumu M 29 (a.o.)	Mexico
✓ 18. AJISAKA, Aisuke M 61 (a.o.)	United States
✓ 19. AKAMA, Tasaburo M 21	Peru
✓ 20. AKAMINE, Shinki (Sinki) M 39	Peru
✓ 21. " , Hatsu (Mrs. Shinki) 25	"
✓ 22. " , Kyoko F 3	"
✓ 23. " , Arata M 1	"
✓ 24. AKEGARASU, Takeo M 43 (a.o.)	Hawaii
✓ 25. " , Sumie (Mrs. Takeo) 37	"
✓ 26. " , Wake F 7	"
✓ 27. " , Tome M 1	"
✓ 28. AKENA, Sanra (Sanryo) M 47 (a.o.)	Panama
✓ 29. AKENA, Tokuhel M 42 (a.o.)	Panama
30. AKIYAMA, Fujimoto M 41	Canada
31. " , Take (Mrs. Fujimoto) 40	"
✓ 32. AMEKU, Kiei (Hiei) M 25	Peru
✓ 33. AMEMIYA, Nobutoshi M 42	Peru
✓ 34. " , Chiyo (Mrs. Nobutoshi) 36	"
✓ 35. " , Hiroshi M 10	"
✓ 36. " , Teruo M 8	"
✓ 37. " , Minoru M 1	"

Exhibit D - The First Page of the Passenger Record of the Second Gripsholm Voyage

600. NAKAGAWA, John Yoshiye M 48 (201)	Hawaii
601. NIKAKI, John Yoshiye M 48 (201)	Panama
602. NINATO, Masami M 39	Peru
603. NISHIDA, Noboru M 23	Panama
604. NISHIDA, Shinichi M 35 (201)	Canada
605. NISHIDA, Sataro M 54	Mexico
606. NITUNAGA, Koro M 37	Panama
607. NIWA, Masaharu M 31 (201)	Panama
608. NIWA, Masamichi M 28 (201)	Hawaii
609. NIWA, Seigo M 45 (201)	Hawaii
610. NIYAGAWA, Shintaro M 56 (201)	Peru
611. NIYAGI, Kazunori M 23	Panama
612. NIYAGI, Yukio M 42	United States
613. NIYAHARA, Kiroku M 56 (201)	United States
614. NIYAHARA, Fujiko (Mrs. Kiroku) 40	Peru
615. NIYAHARA, Saitoku M 34	United States
616. NIYAKE, Masamichi M 21	Panama
617. NIYAKE, Shigeru M 37	Peru
618. NIYAKE, Takeshiro M 36	Panama
619. NIYAKA, Tadashi (Tautoma) M 34 (201)	Hawaii
620. NIYANOTO, Nihei M 44 (201)	United States
621. NIYANOTO, Shinichi M 53	"
622. " , Masu (Mrs. Shinichi) 43	"
623. " , Arita M 17	"
624. " , Shigeru M 15	"
625. " , Atsushi M 13	"
626. " , Ayako Lily F 11	"
627. NIYANOTO, Tsuneyoshi M 61 ?	United States
628. NIYASATO, Gentaro M 24	Peru
629. NIYASATO, Kurayu (Harayu) M 24	Peru
630. NIYASATO, Seikichi M 36	Peru
631. NIYASHIRO, Kenyu M 34	Peru
632. NIYASHIRO, Kana (José) M 41	Peru
633. NIYASHIRO, Kichizo (NIYAGI, Yoshizo) M 41	Peru
634. NIYASHIRO, Tatsusei M 35	Peru
635. NIYASHIRO, Tokuzi (Tokujii) M 64 (201)	Panama & Costa Rica
636. NIYASHITA, Yonekichi M 45	Peru
637. NIYAZAKI, Kingo M 33 (201)	Panama
638. NOCHIZAKA, Yoshitaka M 40	Peru
639. NOCHIZUKI, (NOCHIZUKI), Mikio M 32	Peru

Exhibit E - The Miyamoto Family recorded on the Second Gripsholm "Exchange"

- 22 -

850. OZASA, Toru (Toworu) M 58	United States
851. " " Michiko (Mrs. Toru) 45	"
852. " " Isamu M 12	"
853. " " Hideko F 16	"
854. OZEKI, Naoyuki M 55 (201)	Canada
855. RIKIMARU, Isamu M 45	United States
856. " " Kimi (Mrs. Isamu) 37	"
857. " " Kenichi M 17	"
858. " " Kazu M 15	"
859. " " Reiko F 13	"
860. " " Takashi M 11	United States
861. RIKIMARU, Mataji M 42	"
862. " " Hanako (Mrs. Mataji) 37	"
863. " " Yuriko Rose F 18	"
864. " " Masako Mary F 17	"
865. " " Albert Akira M 15	"
866. " " Arthur Satoshi M 13	"
867. " " Ronald Masayoshi M 3	"
868. SAITO, Hisato M 44	Peru
869. " " Fuyumi (Mrs. Hisato) 33	"
870. " " Shigeo F 8	"
871. " " Sakae F 7	"
872. " " Tamae F 2	"
873. SAITO, Motoi M 40 (201)	Panama
874. SAKAKI, Gocho (Gatyoo) M 37	Peru
875. " " Reiko (Mrs. Gocho) 31	"
876. " " Helena F 6	"
877. " " Olga F 3	"
878. " " Neilly F 1	"
879. SAKAKURA, Saichi M 37 (201)	Panama
880. SAKATA, Kotaro M 65	Peru
881. " " Saku Tanji (Mrs. Kotaro) 44	"
882. " " Fujie F 23	"
883. " " Yukito M 15	"
884. SAKIHARA, Chiyoji M 31	Peru
885. SAKO, Makota M 34	Peru
886. SAKO, Toshio M 36 (201)	Costa Rica
887. SAKUTA, (SAKUDA), Jinei M 41	Peru
888. SANO, Tsunetaro M 43 (201)	Mexico
889. SANPE, Choichi M 35	Peru
890. SASATA, Hisakazu	Mexico
891. SATO, Chihiro M 56 (201)	Panama & Costa Rica
892. SATO, Chosuke M 31 (201)	Panama
893. SATO, Hiroshi M 35 (201)	Panama
894. SATO, Hiroshi M 54	Peru

Exhibit F - The Rikimaru Family recorded on the Second Gripsholm "Exchange"

- 32 -

1279. YAMANE, Goichi M 55 (201)	Hawaii
1280. " , Sake (Mrs. Goichi) 43	"
1281. " , Maiko (Mrs. TANIGUCHI) 22	"
1282. TANIGUCHI, Noboru Abraham (Husband) 20	"
1283. YAMANE, Tsukie Florence F 20	"
1284. " , Takeshi George M 16	"
1285. " , Kazuko Mary F 15	"
1286. " , Fujiko Hilda F 14	"
1287. " , Osamu George M 13	"
1288. " , Yukio Benjamin M 11	"
1289. YAMANE, Mitsuomi M 27 (201)	Hawaii
1290. YAMANO, Tadakazu M 29	Peru
1291. YAMASHIRO, Takayasu M 32	Peru
1292. YAMASHITA, Hiroto M 28	Panama
1293. YAMASHITA, Kōichi M 42 (201)	United States
1294. YAMATANI, Kosaku H 44 (201)	United States
1295. " , Hatsu (Mrs. Kosaku) 25	"
1296. " , Kemichi M 1	"
1297. YAMAZAKI, Sho M 57	United States
1298. " , Kagiko (Kohagi) (Mrs. Sho) 55	"
1299. YAMAGATA, Teiji M 45	Canada
1300. YAMAGUIDA, Bunji M 37	Ecuador
1301. YAMAI, Kumakichi M 71 (P. 12-12)	United States
1302. YANO, Fujizo M 52	United States
1303. YANO, Sadayoshi M 43	Peru
1304. YARA, Chosei M 58 (201)	Panama
1305. YASAWA, Masao M 22	Peru
1306. YASHIRO, Itsuji Edwardo M 54	Honduras
1307. YATOH, Nobuo M	Peru & Bolivia
1308. YGUCHI, Sadahiko M 41	Peru
1309. " , Samuel Shinji M 10	"
1310. " , Rosalina Yoshiko F 6	"
1311. YODOKAWA, Senzaburo M 35	Mexico
1312. YOGI, Jikken M 28	Peru
1313. YOKOTA, Yasuji David M 44	Nicaragua
1314. " , Petronila (Mrs. Yasuji David) 33	"
1315. YONIZAWA, Yoshiro M 32 (201)	Costa Rica
1316. YOSHIDA, Shinya M 62	Canada
1317. " , Saura (Mrs. Shinya) 56	"
1318. YOSHIMOTO, Daihei M 57	United States
1319. " , Hatsue (Mrs. Daihei) 42	"
1320. " , Tsuyako F 5	"
1321. " , Seichi M 2	"

Exhibit G - The Yamane Family recorded on the Second Gripsholm "Exchange"

1. Aboard the Ship

They sailed south, arriving in Rio De Janeiro on September 17, passed Montevideo on September 23, reached Port Elizabeth in South Africa on October 4, then crossed the Indian Ocean to eventually dock in Mormugao, India on October 16, 1943.¹⁴⁰ Sam “looked out on the open ocean and felt hypnotized by the beauty and mystic calmness of the Indian Ocean.”¹⁴¹ It was rumored that the *Gripsholm* served very extravagant first class meals as a propaganda stunt to impress the passengers going from the U.S. to Japan; however, the Miyamotos do not remember such meals ever being served.¹⁴²

To be clear, neither the Miyamotos, Yamanes, Rikimarus, nor any other Japanese Americans they knew of renounced their American citizenship before, during, or after the *Gripsholm* “Exchange.”¹⁴³ No evidence has been found of any of the Japanese Americans onboard the *Gripsholm* renouncing their American citizenship. Therefore, likely all Japanese American deportees who had American citizenship prior to the “Exchange” retained their American citizenship throughout this process.

Moreover, no evidence has been found that any of the *Gripsholm* deportees were “No-No” Boys or other Japanese American political protesters challenging incarceration, evacuation, or detainment. No evidence indicates any of them sued, vocalized community resistance, or led mass mobilization campaigns against any of the injustices inflicted upon Japanese Americans at this time.¹⁴⁴ I simply note it is interesting to observe that the U.S. government did not forcibly detain and deport Japanese Americans who were actively politically resisting the government’s orders, but rather targeted general Japanese American families whom they dubitantly deemed to be “dangerous.”

140. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 21–22.

141. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

142. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 4.

143. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 2. See MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 27. See also Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87. See also Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

144. See MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 16, 30. See also Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87; Interview with Alden Hayashi, *supra* note 95.

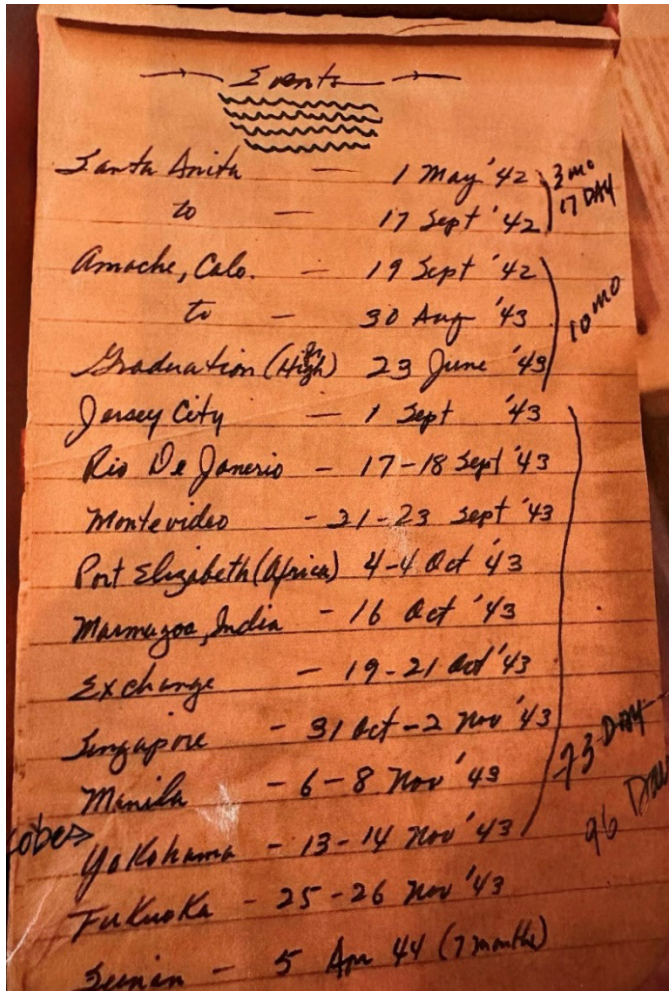


Exhibit D - Kazu Rikimaru's Handwritten Record of Their Gripsholm Voyage

The Second "Exchange" took place in India.¹⁴⁵ After the ship had docked and the deportees gathered on the ship's deck to prepare to disembark, Reiko Rikimaru remembered hearing a loud splash.¹⁴⁶ Reiko ran to the side to try to look over the edge to see what happened and saw something bobbing up and down in the water.¹⁴⁷ An empty wheelchair. Color drained from her face as she realized what happened—the older disabled deportee threw himself overboard.¹⁴⁸ She then remembered that the word on board was that the Indian Ocean was full of sharks.¹⁴⁹ Even decades

145. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 11.

146. See Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

147. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

148. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

149. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 87.

after the war ended, Sam Miyamoto, who also recalled this sight, remained haunted by this memory.¹⁵⁰ When he would see a beautiful sunset, he would think back to the sunset they saw on the Indian Ocean when they realized what that man had done.¹⁵¹ Was that man grieving? Did the ship’s doctors fail to give him a necessary medication? What was he thinking? Did he know something they did not?

On that haunting note, the deportees disembarked the SS *Gripsholm*. Their sadness and grief turned to shock, disgust, and anger when they saw who was boarding the *Gripsholm* going back to the United States—all white Americans. Sam recalled it was a “dark and ominous” moment of “racial tension . . . This proved to be an exchange of Asian Americans for White Americans.”¹⁵² He painfully quipped, “Thank God ethnic cleansing and blatant racism ended in America.”¹⁵³ Reiko Rikimaru stated, “It was racist. It got to me later. It would have been different if they let the Nisei come back. But only White Americans were allowed to come back.”¹⁵⁴

The Japanese American deportees set for Japan were escorted to another ship called the *Teia Maru* which was set to sail to Singapore, Manila, then to Yokohama, Japan.¹⁵⁵ The *Teia Maru* was much smaller than the *Gripsholm*, so it became necessary for many of the passengers to share an enclosed deck area with makeshift tiered bunks.¹⁵⁶ While on the ship, Miyamoto recalls hearing rice was very scarce in Japan and was being rationed. He stated, “It was true, we actually did go hungry and lived on a starvation diet during the war.”¹⁵⁷

C. In Japan

The Japanese Americans arrived in Yokohama, Japan in November 1943.¹⁵⁸ They were on their own. There was no one to advise them or guide them as to what to do. They were given no financial allowances, were prohibited from bringing any money with them on the *Gripsholm*, and with their U.S. bank accounts frozen, they disembarked with nothing.¹⁵⁹ They landed in a country they had never been to before and were left to fend for themselves by the country they called “home.” Miyamoto recalls being especially nervous because he had never been to Japan before and was barely able to speak the language.¹⁶⁰

150. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

151. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

152. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

153. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 3.

154. Nakayama, *supra* note 57 (see final paragraph).

155. Exhibit D - Kazu Rikimaru’s Handwritten Record of Their Gripsholm Voyage. *See also* MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 18–19.

156. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 4.

157. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 4.

158. Exhibit D - Kazu Rikimaru’s Handwritten Record of Their Gripsholm Voyage.

159. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

160. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

Some families apparently relocated to Manchuria where jobs were available, only to end up in Chinese concentration camps.¹⁶¹ Those families had two options: either starve to death slowly or die a quick death by trying to escape.¹⁶²

Miyamoto recounts: "Japan agreed graciously to accept us as guests for the duration of the war. We were *guests* because we were not Japanese citizens."¹⁶³ Until 1924, any child with a Japanese father was eligible for Japanese citizenship and dual citizenship was recognized by both Japan and the U.S.¹⁶⁴ However, after 1924, a child born overseas had to register with the Japanese consulate within three months of birth to claim Japanese citizenship.¹⁶⁵ Sam recalls, "my parents had no intention of taking us to live in Japan, so we were not registered and without registration at the time of my birth, it was impossible for me to become a Japanese citizen."¹⁶⁶

Sam described the issues they faced upon arriving in Japan:

We were considered foreign aliens by the Japanese government and forced to register with the police so they could monitor us. Since I was not a Japanese citizen, I was denied public education, access to public facilities including the public hospital and libraries, and public employment. We were viewed as enemies in our country and sent to Japan, where they also viewed us as the enemy... We were a security risk. I was fortunate that I did not look like the "enemy," but wartime Japan was no place for a Nisei to be, especially as a "foreigner" and an American at that.¹⁶⁷

Miyamoto describes that they were "shunned as foreigners in the big city" so his "father had no choice but to go to the village in Fukuoka where his parents grew up."¹⁶⁸ Miyamoto stated, "My Dad said we had no choice but to proceed to Kyushu to his family village and hope that someone he knew 40 years ago would help us."¹⁶⁹ Sam's brother, Frank, who was eighteen years old at the time, was able to get into Heshikan, a special school set up for Nisei bilinguals with free room and board allowance.¹⁷⁰ During this period, Sam said, "survival was our main goal. There was not enough food for our whole family to survive on in such a small village."¹⁷¹ So, after spending a few weeks in the countryside, Sam bought a one-way ticket to Tokyo and decided to "take [his] chances."¹⁷² He recalled he was able to appeal to a teacher at Tamagawa Gakuen, a private school in Tokyo, and enter the school under

161. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

162. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

163. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 6.

164. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 6. See also Cherstin M. Lyon, *Dual Citizenship*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Dual_citizenship [<https://perma.cc/3MWA-76JU>].

165. Lyon, *supra* note 164; see also Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 6.

166. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 6.

167. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

168. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

169. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

170. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

171. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

172. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

the premise that he would help teach conversational English.¹⁷³ At Tamagawa, it was difficult to study since Sam never had enough to eat.¹⁷⁴ He was able to stay alive day by day, eating mostly potatoes and rice gruel.¹⁷⁵ Sam recounts a memorable day which encapsulated his treatment at Tamagawa:

Captain Dobashi, who routinely came to bully us, asked me if I was Japanese. He would ask us if we would die for Japan and if we would do what he told us to. My friend looked him in the face and said, “I will not do anything that conflicts with the Bible.” I was certain he would kill us immediately for this defiance. The Captain pulled out his samurai sword and offered it to me and said, “People like you should say ‘Banzai’ and commit ‘hara-kiri’ (suicide). You would be doing a great service to Japan by being dead.”¹⁷⁶

While in Japan, the Nisei noticed the local Japanese people seemed “disenchanted with the war, but afraid to speak out in public. Everywhere people whispered against the war.”¹⁷⁷ They also heard roughly 20,000 Nisei and Kibei were stranded in Japan hoping to go back to America.¹⁷⁸ They wondered why none of these Japanese Americans were contacted by the American consulate to ask whether they wanted to return to the United States on the *Gripsholm*.¹⁷⁹ Why was the American consulate only offering passage back to the United States to white Americans?

Further, the Gripsholm families were subjected to the wrath of the American military once in Japan. Sam recounted: “during every air raid, I thought it was my turn to die. When the air raid sirens went off, we couldn’t hide inside the bomb shelters that were flooded with water. We had to run into the rice paddy fields. Most of us had only one set of clothing, and we were lucky if we had one pair of shoes. Most of the students walked around in straw zori (sandals). I had only one pair of wooden geta (clogs) that I had made in our woodshop class. I was so scared I held my breath so I couldn’t smell the dead bodies. Watching the American planes strafing us from overhead, crouching down in the fields, I would escape by dreaming about a more peaceful time. Only a few years before, my brothers and I would run through the crops in our family’s farm in Brawley, California pretending to be pilots.”¹⁸⁰ Like the atomic bombings, the firebombs were deliberately targeted towards civilians, and most civilian casualties were women, children, and elderly people.¹⁸¹ The death toll during the nine months of the U.S. bombing campaign exceeded the total casualties of Japanese combat soldiers during the war.¹⁸² Sam also recalled being in Japan during the atomic bomb: “In August of 1945, America dropped the atomic bomb. When you witness the aftermath of an atomic bomb, it

173. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

174. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

175. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

176. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

177. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

178. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 7.

179. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 120.

180. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 120.

181. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 120.

182. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 120.

is very difficult to find anything good or holy about war except its end. I heard the whispered rumors and wanted to see Hiroshima. I wanted to see if there was anything left. I arrived at the outskirts by train and walked into the city. There was total destruction of the city by the atomic blast as far as I could see. For some close to the blast, their bodies were burned and disfigured beyond any form of medical help. They survived only to suffer and die a few days later. Much later I would develop a large brain tumor the size of a baseball which doctors attributed to the radiation of the atomic bomb.”¹⁸³

It quickly became clear to the Japanese American Gripsholm “Exchange” survivors that the U.S. had inflicted immense hardships on them at both ends—the U.S. had forced them into concentration camps and then deported them from their own country to Japan. Then, in Japan, they were subjected to the brutality of American warfare where the United States was dropping firebombs and the atomic bomb on them, devastating Japan and subjecting people there to starvation, thirst, and daily danger. Sam Miyamoto describes, “we came out of imprisonment at Poston only to experience two hellish years of war in Japan with its hunger, devastation, and the sheer horror of the fire bomb attacks. The turning point in my life was when I faced daily choices of death and life in history’s bloodiest war.”¹⁸⁴

D. *Some Returning to America*

After the war ended, Sam, along with his two other brothers, worked for the U.S. Occupation Forces in Japan.¹⁸⁵ The three Miyamoto brothers remember receiving their U.S. passports “without problem.”¹⁸⁶ The brothers recount this with as much confusion and suspicion as the reader may have—why would America simply send them their passports to return home after treating them so horribly and quite literally deporting them away? What changed? Why did they not face any other immigration barriers to returning? These questions remain unanswered. After serving as an interpreter at Camp Zama, Sam Miyamoto decided to return to the United States and attend the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Sam reflects, “with the end of hostility, we had a difficult time returning to the West Coast because we had no American dollars. Why did we want to return to the West Coast where discrimination was still so rampant? We Nisei, who spent our teenage years making lifetime friendships, given our experience of going to school, playing basketball and baseball, and being incarcerated in camps, carried an emotional urgency to return home to the West Coast. Our teenage education and upbringing had an everlasting influence in our life.”¹⁸⁷

Sam recounts that “[his] brother, Frank, returned to Los Angeles in 1946 to attend UCLA, and joined the army as soon as the Korean War broke out.”¹⁸⁸ Sam arrived after his brother with a mere \$16 in his pocket.¹⁸⁹ Upon arriving back in Los

183. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 121.

184. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 119.

185. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 10.

186. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 10.

187. Miyamoto, *supra* note 71, at 28.

188. Miyamoto, *supra* note 71, at 28.

189. Miyamoto, *supra* note 71, at 28.

Angeles, he stayed at the Miyako Hotel in Little Tokyo, where a kind hotel employee arranged for her daughter to take Sam to the Minato Boarding House in Sawtelle where he could stay longer term. He lived in Sawtelle while attending UCLA.¹⁹⁰

Later, all three Miyamoto brothers were drafted into the U.S. Army during the Korean War, served in the military, and were honorably discharged. Sam’s younger brother, Archie Atsushi, won two Purple Hearts and served in the Army for most of his adult career, finally retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel.¹⁹¹

1. Japanese American Military Service

Shinichi Miyamoto, Sam’s father, served in the U.S. military in France during World War I. All three Miyamoto brothers also served the U.S. military during the Korean War, and Archie received over 34 military decorations.¹⁹² Sam Miyamoto also stayed in touch with some of the other teenage boys he became friends with on the *Gripsholm* and stated that eleven of the twenty-three of them served in the U.S. military during the Korean War.¹⁹³ Sam reflected, “Does it make sense? I cannot fathom how a government can order soldiers to ‘fight and die for the flag,’ then tell these same soldiers 40 years later that they are not worthy of protection under the Constitution.”¹⁹⁴ Sam asserted, “My brothers and I served this country with great pride. My youngest brother, Archie, even re-enlisted and was shot down twice in the Vietnam War, rescuing pilots who were shot down.”¹⁹⁵ When asked why they did not resist the draft, Sam reflected, “We emulated the African American leadership during the Civil War by joining the U.S. Army to be accepted as ‘Americans.’ It didn’t help the African Americans and it certainly didn’t help my family. But I refuse to compromise my belief that America is still the best country in the world. Sometimes, however, when I hear the Pledge of Allegiance, ‘with justice for all,’ I cry, not for my Issei Dad and Mom, not for my brother, but I cry for America—for the bigotry!”¹⁹⁶

IV. AFTERMATH

In this part, I describe how the *Gripsholm* survivors successfully organized and mobilized to receive redress through the 1980 Civil Liberties Act in response to their initial exclusion from the program.

A. *The Gripsholm and Redress*

1. Issues

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, massive Japanese American mobilization, both from state and national legislatures and from grassroots community organizing, culminated in the successful Redress movement, passing the 1988 Civil

190. Miyamoto, *supra* note 71, at 28.

191. Miyamoto, *supra* note 25; Miyamoto, *supra* note 71, at 28.

192. Miyamoto, *supra* note 25.

193. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 10.

194. Miyamoto, *supra* note 25.

195. Miyamoto, *supra* note 10, at 121.

196. Miyamoto, *supra* note 25.

Liberties Act which obtained the restitution of civil rights and individual payments of \$20,000 to each surviving incarcerated.¹⁹⁷ It also critically included an official apology by the U.S. government which specifically stated that after a congressional committee extensively studied Japanese American internment, the government concluded it was not in fact justified by their previously proffered basis of “national security” and was a result of prejudice:

The Congress recognizes that, as described by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, a grave injustice was done to both citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry by the evacuation, relocation, and internment of civilians during World War II. As the Commission documents, these actions were carried out without adequate security reasons and without any acts of espionage or sabotage documented by the Commission, and were motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership. The excluded individuals of Japanese ancestry suffered enormous damages, both material and intangible, and there were incalculable losses in education and job training, all of which resulted in significant human suffering for which appropriate compensation has not been made. For these fundamental violations of the basic civil liberties and constitutional rights of these individuals of Japanese ancestry, the Congress apologizes on behalf of the Nation.¹⁹⁸

While this was a massive win for the Japanese American community which cannot be understated, it is important to note that the original 1988 Civil Liberties Act excluded the Gripsholm deportees. When the Gripsholm detainees applied for redress like the other Japanese American internees, they were surprised to be denied because they “relocated to a country while the United States was at war with that country.”¹⁹⁹ Sam Miyamoto was shocked by the denial and decided to fight. He, along with other Gripsholm deportees, launched a legal and political campaign to receive the redress they were due.

2. Campaign and Success

On the legal front, the Asian Law Caucus, led by Gen Fujioka, represented more than twenty of the former deportees denied redress. In 1992, they, along with Morrison & Foerster, working pro bono, filed *Kanemoto v. Reno*, challenging the government’s denial of reparations for Gripsholm survivors.²⁰⁰ In a public statement about the case, Fujioka stated, “these Japanese Americans suffered an extraordinary injustice, interned, and then traded, without their consent, like prisoners of war . . . we were told we had no chance of changing the policy. But through the determination of our clients and the support of this community and pro bono counsel we now see justice about to be done.”²⁰¹

197. Alice Yang, *Redress Movement*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA (Sept. 6, 2024) <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Redress%20movement> [<https://perma.cc/ZYE6-LW47>].

198. Civil Liberties Act of 1988, H.R. 442, 100th Cong. (1988).

199. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

200. *Kanemoto v. Reno*, 41 F.3d 641 (Fed. Cir. 1994); Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

201. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

On the political front, the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR), organized and run by nonprofit volunteers, led the community campaign for redress to cover Gripsholm detainees.²⁰² The NCRR was massively effective—“NCRR activists sent more than 20,000 letters endorsing redress compensation.”²⁰³ Congressman Robert Matsui praised NCRR’s role in “keeping the community informed and building local support” while Congressman Norman Mineta celebrated how NCRR’s “grass roots action and advocacy have energized” Japanese Americans.²⁰⁴

Sam Miyamoto worked together with Reiko Rikimaru to write letters to national and state legislators, newspapers, and the Justice Department to clarify their position and tell their story.²⁰⁵ Reiko recalls Sam created their broad strategy, refined their narrative, and wrote each letter, and she handed out letters in-person, spread the word, and mailed the letters all across the country.²⁰⁶ Miyamoto collaborated with NCRR to bolster the campaign.²⁰⁷ Reiko reported Sam “single-handedly” wrote dozens of letters to the Office of Redress Administration and got people to sign hundreds of letters in support of them.²⁰⁸ It is important to note that Sam and Reiko’s campaign was for Gripsholm deportees who were minors when they were sent in the “Exchange.” For Sam, his parents never returned to America, despite him and his brothers urging their parents to return. It is unknown exactly why Sam restricted the campaign to only the minors. It could have been because his initial appeals were only on behalf of himself and his brothers, who were all minors. It could have been strategic in thinking that the Justice Department would be more likely to agree that the minors never consented to their own deportation because their young age per se prevented them from providing informed consent in the first place. Their campaign was on behalf of approximately 125 Japanese American minor Gripsholm deportees, and it involved years of organizing.²⁰⁹ One of their letters is below in Exhibit E:

202. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 21; *see also* Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 88.

203. Yang, *supra* note 200.

204. *Redress Movement*, DENSHO ENCYCLOPEDIA, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Redress_movement/ [<https://perma.cc/6D28-3CUW>].

205. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52; *see* MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1, at 21; Nakayama, *supra* note 57; *see also* Oda, *supra* note 88; Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

206. Interview with Kazu and Reiko Rikimaru, *supra* note 88.

207. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

208. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

209. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

The Honorable Congressman Robert T. Matsui
2419 RHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Matsui:

We strongly urge you to introduce a bill to amend the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 to include U.S. Citizen minors forced to go to Japan with their parents. The reasoning in support of eligibility of interned non-Japanese spouses, namely they had no choice, would apply even more compellingly to the situation of these minors.

All of these minors were interned in camps during the war, and in camps other than "Tule Lake." Forced to move to Japan, without choice, these minors kept their U.S. Citizenship. Under the Japanese law, they were treated as U.S. Citizens and were monitored by the police. They returned to America and, being U.S. Citizens, were subject to the draft. Most of these minors served with distinction in American uniforms during the Korean War. One of these minors later served in the Vietnam War, along with his sister's son. They are probably the two most decorated Japanese American soldiers of the Vietnam War. Together they were awarded an extraordinary total of over 60 combat war medals.

Their sacrifices exemplify the American ideal. However, by refusing their bid for Redress, America is suggesting that they are unloyal. The mothers, who sacrificed their sons for this country, are also called unloyal.

In 1942, the government declared Japanese Americans as "enemy aliens," and violated their Civil Rights by forcing them in camp. Ironically, they were declared U.S. Citizens and drafted in the army from the camps. While they were dying on the battlefield, their mothers and sisters continued to be branded as "enemy aliens" in camps.

Unfortunately, such bitter irony continues today, with the question of Redress for minors who were forced to move to Japan. These American born U.S. Citizens were also branded as "enemy aliens" while children. Then, as adults, they too were called "U.S. Citizens" to fight and die for the Flag during the Korean War. Now, the government has turned around again and branded these war heroes as "enemy aliens" with the question of Redress. Are we ready to condemn these war veterans as being unworthy and undeserving of justice under the Constitution?

Let us preserve the spirit of the Constitution. We urge you to support Redress for these U.S. Citizens who have sacrificed for their Country and have proven their loyalty.

Very truly yours,

Exhibit E - Sam's Letter to Congressman Matsui Asking for Gripsholm Minor Deportees to Be Included in Redress

On May 30, 1996, DeDe Greene, the Administrator for Redress for the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, replied to Sam acknowledging that he and the other Gripsholm deportees did not consent to their deportation, and the Department may likely give them redress. Her letter is below in Exhibit F:

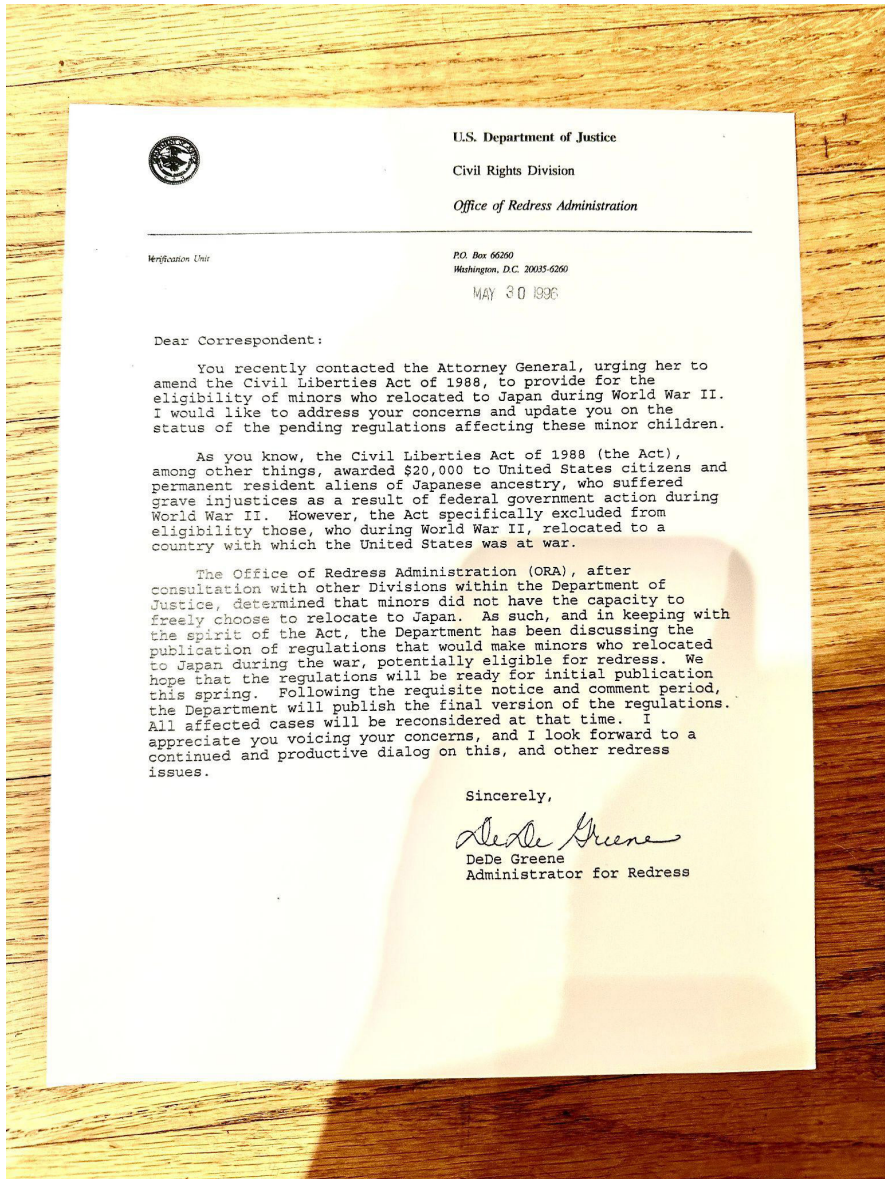


Exhibit F - DOJ's Reply to Sam

In an interview with the *Rafu Shimpo* newspaper, Sam Miyamoto stated that he was "pleased with the Justice Department's new position, but felt that they should not have struggled for so long to be considered for redress and reparations under the

Civil Liberties Act of 1988.”²¹⁰ “In my personal opinion, it was a lack of political leadership,” said Miyamoto. “We should have had it from the very beginning.”²¹¹

On July 11, 1996, the California State Assembly passed a resolution by vote of 93 to 0 asking the U.S. Department of Justice to give the minor Gripsholm deportees redress.²¹² The Assembly recognized the wrong in interning the Japanese Americans in prison camps and acknowledged that the Gripsholm deportees had no choice in their “relocation” to Japan during the war.²¹³

On October 7, 1996, the U.S. Department of Justice announced they would provide redress to the minor Gripsholm deportees, finding that “the children had been sent to Japan without valid consent as part of a little known prisoner exchange negotiation with the Japanese government in 1942 and 1943.”²¹⁴ Under the new ruling, Japanese Americans who were sent to Japan during the war while under the age of 21 were no longer disqualified from redress, and the Department of Justice stated payments could be sent out to those previously denied within a week.²¹⁵

In response to the changed ruling, Kay Ochi, the vice president of the NCCR Los Angeles, stated, “NCCR congratulates the ‘minor relocatees’ for this long overdue government apology and reparations. We especially thank Reiko Nimura and Sam Miyamoto for spearheading the local campaign for this group, and Gen Fujioka of the Asian Law Caucus for his efforts. We’re glad that they and others did not give up after the ORA denied them redress. The NCCR only regrets that the ‘adult deportees’ did not likewise receive the apology and redress. They did *not* go voluntarily to Japan as the government would still have people believe.”²¹⁶ She continued, “They won redress because they stuck with it after the government denied them. They were deprived of their basic constitutional rights and civil liberties and they pursued redress. It took courage to go up against the U.S. government.”²¹⁷

To the *Rafu Shimpo* newspaper, Sam Miyamoto stated, “I’m not surprised that we got redress. I knew we would, but I also knew it takes time and that we were not only entitled to it . . . it was a tough emotional struggle. We knew we were right, but no one wanted to listen to us.”²¹⁸ Point blank, Sam Miyamoto and Reiko Rikimaru took on the U.S. government—and won.

210. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

211. Hirahara, *supra* note 56.

212. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 11.

213. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 11.

214. *U.S. Agrees to Redress WWII Child Deportees*, *supra* note 4.

215. *U.S. Agrees to Redress WWII Child Deportees*, *supra* note 4.

216. *U.S. Agrees to Redress WWII Child Deportees*, *supra* note 4.

217. *U.S. Agrees to Redress WWII Child Deportees*, *supra* note 4.

218. Nakayama, *supra* note 57.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 16, 1996

More than fifty years ago, the United States Government unjustly interned, evacuated, relocated, or otherwise deprived you and many other Japanese Americans of your liberty. Today, on behalf of your fellow Americans, I offer my sincere apologies for the actions that unfairly denied Japanese Americans and their families fundamental liberties during World War II.

In passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, we acknowledged the wrongs of the past and offered redress to those who endured such grave injustice. In retrospect, we understand that the nation's actions were rooted deeply in racial prejudice and wartime hysteria. We must learn from the past and dedicate ourselves as a nation to renewing the spirit of equality and our love of freedom. Working together, we can make the most of our great diversity.

You and your family have my best wishes for the future.

Bill Clinton

Exhibit G - The Letter Received by Gripsholm Minor Deportees from the U.S. Government Once the Government Revised the Rule and Included Them in Redress



Exhibit H - *Rafu Shimpo* Article by Takeshi Nakayama Describing Their Win

B. Ongoing Effects & Conclusion

For the duration of his life, Sam Miyamoto shared his family's story on the *Gripsholm*, underscoring the importance of knowing and sharing history. His brother, Archie Miyamoto, wrote a 167-page manuscript documenting the Gripsholm "Exchanges," and Reiko and Kazu Rikimaru have given numerous interviews with museums, academics, and historical societies all in an effort to preserve this history.²¹⁹

Sam reflected, "my sister asked that I not write about her because she can not accept such injustice and continues to suffer in silence. My wish is that my Issei mom and dad, who went to their graves ostracized without redress, could have been vindicated. I wish they could have witnessed the tremendously exciting action by the California State Assembly on July 11, 1996, where they passed a resolution by a vote of 93 to 0 asking the Department of Justice to take action to give redress to us American minors who were incarcerated in camp. The Assembly recognized the wrong in the internment and that we had no choice in the relocation to Japan during the war."²²⁰

Although Sam Miyamoto and most of his siblings returned to America after the war, he clarified, "the sad tragedy is we never 'resettled' on the West Coast. We are only survivors. We are still 'branded' by some in the community as 'No-No Boys,' ostracized as a 'Kibei.'"²²¹ To be incarcerated, disowned, and thrown out by your own country is a grave injustice. To then be subject to that country's hellish fire and atomic bombing is a separate nightmare. And to return to that country only to be drafted into its army and denied redress even after it recognizes some of the wrongs it inflicted upon you and your community is additional and distinct trauma of its own. While any one of these experiences could easily devastate a life, these Gripsholm survivors time and time again exhibited unbelievable resilience and strength.

219. MIYAMOTO, *supra* note 1.

220. Miyamoto, *supra* note 70, at 29.

221. Miyamoto, *Japanese American Experience*, *supra* note 52, at 11.

Sam frequently concluded his writings and lectures with this quote: “Let us remind ourselves how easy it is to lose freedom and how dangerous it is to take our freedom for granted.”²²² As I write this paper in late November of 2024, this quote seems more timely than ever. As we move forward, my wish is this. Let us draw strength from our leaders of the past and the historic wins they secured in righting wrongs and facilitating reparations. Let us move forward with the knowledge that advocating for ourselves has been and always will be a critical part of how we help America live up to its founding promises. Let us believe in the better angels of our nature, even as our world becomes darker. Let us rewrite harmful narratives painting us as “disloyal,” “untrustworthy,” and “forever foreigners” and center our truths and our equal, inherent worth. Let us take pride in our cultural traditions and build our communities up, just as our forefathers did even in the face of majority resistance and hatred. Let us remind ourselves of who we are and where we come from as we carry forward the fight of our forefathers to secure our freedom. Let us remember that just as our histories are stained with blatant injustice, unfairness, and suffering, they are equally reminders of the ways in which we have overcome, resisted, and persisted. Just as retrenchment sometimes seems like it is woven into the very fabric of America, so too is resilience and reform.

222. Miyamoto, *supra* note 16.

