

Arthur Jacobs:

In November of '44, they went to his work and arrested him unbeknownst to my mother or any of us. They took him away from his work and took him out to Ellis Island. Now, why did that arrest take place? You know, the war is almost over, but what we were looking for—we the United States were looking for—what I call—and have called—exchange bait. We had expatriated and repatriated and deported several German Americans to Europe. And so the government was running low of people to exchange. So they said, Oh, well, let's go get Jacobs. So they went and had gotten my father and they arrested him.

Audrey Moonyeen Thornton:

Oh, there was no doubt about it. I knew we were incarcerated. There were guards with guns and we were behind, behind barbed wire fences. And every now and then there were guard stations with guns. I remember my, my grandmother in Germany died and I still have a snippet. We were, my father and I, were standing under a guard station and that was the first time I ever saw my father cry. And I can remember the barbed wire I was hanging on to.

Heidi Donald:

The only thing that I can remember of that a couple of episodes. One is I could remember the lights from the fence because the lights apparently were ten feet tall, barbed wire, and there were klieg lights or any of the big, big huge. I remember them shining through the curtains in the bedroom that my mother made. I have a recollection that I didn't verify with my mother, so I can't be positive, that we lived just across the dirt road from the fence. And then I remember once looking out and this was sometime later—my father had put a swing for us out in the dirt, and my sister was out there swinging, and a little dust devil came around and swallowed her up, and she came in the house screaming, wet her pants. I was thrilled at the time. (laughs) Those are the memories.

Seiji Aizawa:

We had just come back from church and we had the radio on and we knew that something bad had happened. And so after the news of Pearl Harbor attack came on the radio, my father lectured to us, oh, about half an hour telling us what the implication of the war would be on our lives. Oh, yeah. He was a, you might say, very well-informed person about current events, and he sort of predicted the Japanese [strategy], you might say, a two-prong attack [after Pearl Harbor:] one north in Alaska and the other toward Midway. And he said, “Just remember, the Japanese are not going to win the war, and you must also remember you are Americans first of all.” So that was the thrust of his talk. I don’t remember quite well what the perception of the classmate or the neighborhood; however, it was something that existed even before the war about the prejudice against the Japanese. The prejudice against the Japanese on the West Coast was somewhat similar to the prejudice faced by the Jewish people on the East Coast and by the blacks in the South.