

OPINION

Letter to the Editor: Executive Order 9066: 'Lasting wartime trauma'

Valarie Kusuda

Feb. 18, 2022 at 2:00 pm Updated Feb. 18, 2022 at 2:00 pm

<https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/executive-order-9066-lasting-wartime-trauma/>

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 became law under President Ronald Reagan. It called Executive Order 9066, confining Japanese Americans to incarceration camps, a “grave injustice,” causing “incalculable” human suffering, and violating “basic civil liberties and constitutional rights.”

My Japanese American father and Japanese British mother suffered injustices simply for their ancestry.

My father, a U.S. citizen, was born in Hawaii and worked at Pearl Harbor as a mechanic when the harbor was bombed. He was interrogated and placed in the maximum-security incarceration camp Tule Lake for espionage.

Across the Pacific, my mother was born to a British father and Japanese mother. British

citizens were incarcerated in Japan during WWII. Her family escaped incarceration because her British father had died. As a medical doctor, she was hired by the U.S. Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission to analyze how the atomic bomb affected humans, using the Japanese Hiroshima victims as case studies. She ultimately died of residual radiation.

The atrocities of war experienced by my parents prompted me to write a book, “My Pledge to Hiroshima: Elizabeth’s Story,” in which my goal is to show that war can evoke the rise of racial hysteria, causing lasting wartime trauma for generations in families.

Valarie Kusuda, Issaquah