

humanities WASHINGTON

The Pine and the Cherry

Review plus related Harrington History by Marge Womach

Sunday afternoon (Nov. 18, 2018) at 2 p.m. a group of about forty assembled to hear Mayumi Tsutakawa present "The Pine and The Cherry", a part of Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau program. Billie Herron opened the afternoon session by describing Tsutakawa as an independent writer and curator who has focused on Asian/Pacific American history. She received her master's degree in communications and her bachelor's degree in East Asian studies at the University of Washington. Her graduate thesis is one of the few documents to research pre-war Japanese American newspapers. "This event is sponsored by Humanities Washington, a non-profit organization dedicated to sparking conversation and critical thinking, and it provides many other cultural programs to hundreds of thousands of people throughout Washington each year. Thanks to support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Boeing Company, the Washington Secretary of State, and many private donors, Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau presenters visit all corners of the state."

Mayumi Tsutakawa, of Seattle, began to engage the audience with a few brief comments and stirring questions, followed by a few words in Japanese and a kind interpretation of the same: "How Are You?" and "Good day". She defined "Pine" as longevity and youth and "Cherry" as spring and renewal. She interspersed personal details while building the larger, complex story of her family and their relatives in pre-war and post-war situations. She personally was born in the United States, raised in Japan, and returned to the US. Much like many of her relatives, since her Dad was born in Seattle in 1910, sent to Japan to be raised for seven years, and then disowned by his family as he wanted to be an artist, which was not what his parents had planned for him. Her Dad joined the US Army, was an interpreter and obtained a college degree. He did not suffer the fate of many of their friends and relatives.

Early Japanese immigrants came to work on railroads, in the fishing industry, in the lumber market and as contractors. Women did not tend to come, but eventually became "picture brides". There became an international district in Seattle known as Japan town. In 1900 six Japanese owned hotels, by 1930 they owned 125 hotels and in 1940 it was about 7,000 while they were only 2 per cent of the population. The Japanese were a highly literate community. The older Japanese tended to be Buddhist while many of the younger were attending Christian churches. Prior to 1922 the Japanese could purchase property, but a Washington state law in 1921 prevented the Japanese from buying land or entering into a three year lease. In 1922 the federal law stated that the Japanese could no longer own property. Over a period of time the Japanese became severely restricted and were restricted in their fishing licenses and prevented from interracial marriages.

Following Pearl Harbor 120,000 people were rounded up, half of which were children and were US citizens. Tsutakawa showed before and after photos of the Seattle business district called Japan town, and following Pearl Harbor, the Japanese stores were boarded up, leaving an appearance of desertion. When the people were rounded up and taken to encampments, the children were given tags on their jackets, and each was allowed "one suitcase only". Some were

carried off to the Puyallup Fairgrounds for months, only to later be shipped to Camp Minidoka, in Idaho, all in accord with Executive Order 9066. "They were arrested without charges", Tsutakawa stated, and one could hear the pain and disgust in her voice. An imaginary line had been drawn through the Yakima area, running north and south, and those that were west of the line were rounded up and those east of the line were left alone. There were some fine Japanese gardens in Tacoma and Wapato, some politicians befriended a few of the owners while others lost everything and were sent to encampments. Any Japanese who held a leadership position in their communities was arrested without charge and sent to remote camps in central US. It is estimated that about 17,000 were so offended.

She concluded her program with a question and answer session in which she received numerous questions which denoted how attentive the audience had been to her presentation. An "Audience Evaluation Form" was provided by Humanities Washington. 1. I learned something from today's presentation. 2. I considered a new idea or perspective as a result of this presentation. 3. This presentation sparked meaningful conversation. 4. How did you hear about today's event? The first three questions were to be answered by rating strongly disagree to strongly agree.

[RESOURCE PAGE from Mayumi Tsutakawa's presentation](#)

Related Harrington History as Researched by Marge Womach

Harrington on the 1900 census showed twelve Japanese and two Chinese living in Harrington. The twelve Japanese were all railroad laborers and both of the Chinese were laundrymen. In 1910 there were two Japanese in Harrington. In 1920 the Murakami family of four ran the local laundry. The Sekiya family of three managed a cafe on Glover Street and three other Japanese worked and lived with them; totaling ten Japanese in Harrington in 1920. In 1930 the Kinoshita family of three owned the restaurant, the Kubota family of five ran the laundry on Main Street, and the Watanabe family of five were employed by the RR. In 1940 the Kinoshita family of four continued with the restaurant and the Watanabe family of five were still employed by the RR. The Kubota family of five owned the laundry and added dry cleaning.

Of these families it was known locally that Mrs Joe Kinoshita's sister, and her husband, Mr and Mrs Fred Okazaki died at Manganore, California, a "relocation" center for California Japanese. The local Harrington paper reported, "Mr Okazaki, 42 years old, came to the States in 1918. Evidently depressed by world conditions, Mr Okazaki took his wife's life, and then his own. The two little daughters, 4 and 6 years old, are left with no relatives nearby, and the Harrington relatives have been contacted to help decide about their future. Mr Okazaki was an uncle of the Tagami boys, Tokeo and Takegi, making the two little orphaned girls their cousins, as well as nieces of Mrs Joe Kinoshita's." (Citizen: 10-02-1942)

Much like Mayumi Tsutakawa's father, George, who served in the military, Harrington's Tommy Kubota served during WW II. He was attributed the distinction of serving with the famed 442 Regimental Combat Team and participated in numerous battles, including the Battle of the Bulge and the Lost Battalion Rescue.