

A Look Back in Time

Narrator: George Takei

This is your last stop on the walking tour. Just in front of you, on the other side of the gravel road, I was interned with my family. Block 6, Barrack 2, Unit F—a black tar-paper barrack behind barbed wire and armed guards.

Memories are our most precious possessions. They link us to our past. My Rohwer remembrances may be only a child's fragments of history—incomplete, disjointed, and simplistically intense. But I treasure every piece and broken shard, every brief and incomplete wisp of memory I have.

After eight months at Rohwer, our family was sent to the Tule Lake camp in Northern California. The rows of barracks that seemed so stark in their uniformity when we first arrived now had identities. They had become homes of friends. The guard towers were no longer so ominous but simply a part of the landscape. Even the barbed wire fence had become just my familiar playground enclosure.

At the train by the main gate, my father shook hands somberly with everybody lined up to see us off. The train lurched as it started moving. As the train picked up speed, I saw the crowds of people who had gathered to see us off get smaller and smaller. Soon, our friends who were lined up at the railroad siding became nothing but a dark line on the horizon. The tall guard towers were the only structures I could see in the distance. As they got smaller, our crying faded into soft sniffles. I kept watching until a fly buzzing on the window glass looked bigger than the towers. Then the train turned a bend and the guard towers disappeared. It was gone. Rohwer became a collection of memories.

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