

Making a Living

Part 1

Part 2

Part 1

Internees came from the West Coast and Hawaii. In our block alone, we had people from communities up and down California. Farmers from Fresno, fishermen from San Pedro, professionals from Los Angeles, and shopkeepers from Stockton. We were old and young, immigrant and American-born. We were diverse. We were different from each other. But we were all interned together. My father became the manager for Block 6 to represent our group with the camp administration and to settle disputes among internees. He was well suited to this role because he was fluent in both Japanese and English. And, at thirty-nine years old, he bridged the age gap. The older immigrant, Issei, and the younger, American-born, Nisei all trusted him.

Many internees didn't know what to do with their time now that they were taken away from their homes and jobs. There were few jobs in the camp and working outside the camp required special permission. Some internees worked at jobs similar to those they had before the internment—Allan Hagio was an artist in California who worked in the sign shop. Mrs. Sadako Yasui was a Home Economics teacher who taught sewing for adult education classes. George Baba was a mechanic who worked in the motor pool. Sam Takada and George Yoshihara were butchers before being sent to Rohwer. Many internees had been farmers in California so they grew the food that we all ate.

Part 2

My father was a block manager. He related to the Administration representing the interests of the block, as well as settled disputes and sometimes even served as a marriage counselor. As a kid, we resented the fact that he had to be away so often. And sometimes suddenly there would be a crisis that would happen and daddy had to leave. What I remember most about my father being block manager was he was always making announcements at meal times, whether it was breakfast, lunch, or dinner. And I was kind of proud of that because my daddy was the boss of our block.

One of my best friends was Eddy Takahashi who lived in the barrack behind us. And he didn't have a daddy there. It was only his mother and his two sisters. And he said his father is a Buddhist Minister and he was taken away immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. They didn't know where their daddy was. After the war Eddy's father was reunited with the family.

Revision #1

Created 2026-05-15 15:59:23 UTC by Michael Guthrey

Updated 2026-05-15 16:01:27 UTC by Michael Guthrey