

2021

A Walk Through the Life of a Mother at the Internment Camps (Episode 6)

Raquel Velasquez

California State University, Monterey Bay, ravelasquez@csumb.edu

Leslie Ruvalcaba

California State University, Monterey Bay, lruvalcaba@csumb.edu

Samantha Orozco

California State University, Monterey Bay, saorozco@csumb.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/otterpod>

Recommended Citation

Velasquez, Raquel; Ruvalcaba, Leslie; and Orozco, Samantha, "A Walk Through the Life of a Mother at the Internment Camps (Episode 6)" (2021). *OtterPod*. 2.

<https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/otterpod/2>

This Podcast is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Behavioral and Global Studies at Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in OtterPod by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

Group Members: Raquel Velasquez, Leslie Ruvalcaba, Samantha Orozco

SBS364

11/12/2020

8 minutes

Podcasting Assignment #5

Rough Draft: Podcast Transcript

Raquel: Intro: A Walk Through of the Life of a Mother at the Internment Camps:

(Theme Song)... Gone- Your Friend, Ghost (5-10 second fade)

What did women's life look like inside Japanese Internment Camps? ..

Raquel: Hook: (Imagine being a first time mother and having to experience it first hand in an internment camp?) (Giving birth and or trying to raise children in unforeseen circumstances.)

-motherhood usually brings excitement and joy, but at the camps, it brought much fear. Fear that your baby wouldn't be provided with enough resources, and fear that your baby will have to grow up in an internment camp.

(25 seconds or so...)

A Walk Through of the Life of a Mother at the Internment Camps:

Body: Subtopics: Privacy, feeding their families, free time, hygiene, medical issues etc.

- Go into details of women bearing children in the internment camps and the lack of healthcare.

(R.V)

- In the internment camps there was the ongoing issue of Privacy concerns... A bathhouse illustration shows many women all having to shower together in groups with no divider of sorts in between them while showering as well as when using the restroom. The sense of relief or peace of showering or going into the bathroom was also taken away from women when that time is supposed to be time for yourself, to be in private without having to worry about being looked upon. ¹

¹ May P Hert and Yvonne, "Barrack Room Ballads," Densho (CSU Japanese American History Digitization Project, 2012).

- Many mothers washed their infants in the laundry barracks suspicious of the hygienic conditions in the washing rooms. Women's children were also stripped of their privacy since birth. Women had to accommodate their children and wash them where everybody else washed their laundry due to the lack of cleanliness and space in the shower houses that were packed with too many women at once.
- (53 seconds or so...)
- This definitely brings us to healthcare issues which continue to be a debate today ; Such as what is going on within detention centers and mothers and childrens who dont even have the basic nessisties, who lack even a basic blanket or anything to sleep on other than dirty floors.

(30 secs or so...)

<http://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-densho-1000-98-15/>

Audio Clip (Duration about 10Sec or so)

S.O: In the camps, privacy was not an option. Not only in the washrooms, but in all aspects of living in the camps. Toilets were not separated by walls, so using the restroom was not something that was done in private, instead it was an open room where everyone could see everyone. As for the living situations, each family was given only one room. Each barrack was divided into four to six rooms, each of which was given to one family, who were forced to share the living area with the rest of the families. If your family was too small, you would be put in a room with another family, which the majority if not all the time were complete strangers. The only way to get some privacy was by hanging blankets to function as walls. However these “walls” still did not provide full privacy, as for your neighbors could still hear everything you say or do. Not only did they not have any privacy (not even in their own room) but also had to deal with nosy neighbors ².

- -And to make matters worse, these structures were very poorly made. Consisting of very thin walls that offered very little protection from the harsh camp weathers. Temperatures ranged from 110 degrees in the summer to 25 degrees below zero in the winter. These were not the desired living conditions, especially for a newborn baby.

(1 min 20 sec)

(R.V)

- There were Lines for everything one needed such as hygiene issues, bathroom, food and so forth. The lines for all places were always full and you as a person stop and think to yourself of the times where you don't feel well or are on the verge of needing to use the bathroom but the despair of waiting wherever you turned was a hard reality faced for many women on a daily basis in these internment camps. Not only to use the restroom

² Densho, “Barracks Interior,” Densho Digital Repository, 1942.

but to feed your families and when one has children who are starving it is hard to juggle them and then have in the back of your mind the never ending fear of your children being malnourished was always on one's mind especially as a woman fending for her children. ³
(35 seconds or so...)

(R.V)

- Women had to Learn to get washed in freezing cold water after 5 minutes when there was no longer hot water. Another concern for women and their children was the idea of racing to the bathhouses to get the first few minutes of warm water instead of showering in freezing water no matter the weather conditions. As a mom that can also be a nightmare in regards to keeping their children from getting sick from such harsh weather conditions. In a mom's world as long as their kids are ok and do not have to suffer they will do anything but they were given no choice but to deal with what they had. Many babies did not make it due to cold severe weather. ⁴
(34 seconds or so...)

(R.V)

Audio Clip; <http://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-densho-1000-250-13/> (Duration 5-7sec)

- There were No disposable diapers. Babies had to reuse soiled diapers. Women Had to wait in a long line very early in the mornings to wash soiled diapers by hand washing on hand boards, which was new to many women. Last but not least is the issue of washing one's babies diapers in order for women to avoid their babies getting rashes from dirty diapers.⁵ The lack of hygiene for babies was undeniable; babies had to be in soiled diapers until their moms could wash another one but then have to wait for that diaper to dry out. That is one of the most inhumane things one could do to a kid especially when their babies and they're skin is so sensitive. There was no such thing as sterilization for bottles or formulas, which was even more concerning for these mothers.

(37 seconds or so...)

- Lack of heat and milk for children, and lack of food for pregnant women caused children to be born with very poor immune systems which couldn't fully be developed due to the malnutrition mothers would receive.

Medical issues:

(L.R)

To make matters worse women couldn't even turn to what would be considered medical “expertise” when being seen at these facilities.

³ Diary Reveals Reality of Living in a WWII Japanese Internment Camp, YouTube, 2020

⁴ Densho, “Shigeko Sese Uno Segment 15,” Densho Digital Repository, 1998.

⁵ Densho, “Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II Segment 13,” Densho Digital Repository, 2009.

Emi Somekawa Interview Segment 19; Densho
<https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-densho-1000-378-20/>
Short 5-10sec audio clip

Emi Somekawa, who first experienced working in the OB department for expecting mothers, had to cope with several medical mistakes from inexperienced nurses.⁶ She talks about a few of many sad stories from the cause of medical mistakes. These so-called “hospital facilities,” were not run by the right experienced doctors and nurses. They were not facilitated with the correct kinds of equipment to do the job. Things as simple as enough flashlights when electricity was not provided to perform crucial tasks such as surgeries were provided.
(1min or so...)

Outro:

S.O: The reason why this is so important today is not only to hold the government accountable for their actions, but to show how to this day, this is still occurring. An example of this is in the ICE detention center in which immigrant mothers are being held, and given little if not no resources for the care of their children. As women we need to fight for one another and not let mothers go through these hardships. Hopefully this podcast has served as a wakeup call that something needs to be done. We cannot keep allowing the government to treat women and their families this way. If you would like to be a part of this change below we have attached a few resources on different ways you can contribute. Thank you so much for tuning in, and we hope that you enjoyed our podcast!

(40 sec)

(Theme Song)... Gone- Your Friend, Ghost
(½ min)

Relief Funds/Petitions

⁶ Densho, “Emi Somekawa Interview Segment 20,” Densho Digital Repository, 2007.

https://worldrelief.org/families-together/?gclid=CjwKCAiAtK79BRAIEiwA4OskBh9rijidrJzdln cx0oMIFIdDvBGdhQLdpsXTG2GeAZg4EW662wRjvhoCmWkQAvD_BwE
<https://www.change.org/p/no-more-cages-for-children-in-ice-detention-centers>

https://www.ywca.org/blog/2018/06/20/families-belong-together-stop-traumatizing-children/?gclid=CjwKCAiAtK79BRAIEiwA4OskBmzxff8oYhfBSPDoPt-I0Ni5wjk4qAQbRGyy3sXkxVyCg hdwJlu0eBoCiXwQAvD_BwE