

Eddie Owada

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Eddie Owada's parents divorced before coming to the island and his mother moved to Montana shortly after the rest of the family came to Vashon<sup>3</sup>. Before his family was interned Eddie Toshio Owada lived in Burton, on Vashon island<sup>1</sup>. He was born in Tacoma on December 22, 1925<sup>2</sup> but moved to the island in 1931 with his father Frank and his two brothers Johnny and Sabra<sup>1</sup>. The family moved to the island for his father's opportunity to cultivate farmland<sup>3</sup> as many other Japanese Americans were doing at the time. Eddie didn't attend school but rather stayed home and helped his father with the farm<sup>3</sup>.

Eddie Owada's dad was taken away from his home around 1942 before the mass Japanese exclusion. FBI agents came into the house and did a search without any form of search warrant. Once they were finished searching the house and barnyard Eddie's dad was taken to an internment camp by a couple of FBI agents<sup>2</sup>. Eddie Owada himself was taken just a few months later by another crew of military officials. They came up to the house and told Eddie to get in the back of the truck<sup>2</sup>. He was taken to Pinedale, California. Eddie mentioned how the weather was very hot and almost unbearable sometimes<sup>5</sup>. Being from the Northwest, the weather was a lot more unique. The facility was newly built so systems like healthcare and education were very sparseable. Eddie mentioned how he'd mostly just go around talking to people and playing games in the camp. Days were just taken upon another until he was removed from Pinedale and taken to Tule Lake concentration camp in California, where he'd stay for about a year and a half<sup>2</sup>. The weather here was very similar to Pinedale, so hot and musty. Tule Lake had a prison-like atmosphere, 28 guard towers, and a very strong military presence. His days were about the same

as they were at Pinedale's Assembly center, boring and repetitive<sup>6</sup>. He was later drafted into the army while in Minidoka concentration camp in Idaho<sup>6</sup>.

The first summer after Eddie was discharged from the military he moved down to Layton, Utah where he would stay with his dad, helping out around the farm. He would help farm and haul tomatoes with his father for the next couple of years. Eddie and his father moved up to Roy, Utah, where they would continue farming<sup>3</sup>. Once Eddie's father died he moved away to Murray, Utah. He stayed with some friends in Murray for a while. Eventually Eddie moved to Denver, Colorado where he married his second wife Irlene Zimmerman<sup>3</sup>. In Colorado he worked for the United States Forest Service for over 20 years before retiring at the age of 62<sup>3</sup>. During this time he had one son, Trenton, who was born on December 3rd 1974<sup>4</sup>. Eddie died on March 4th, 2020 and is buried at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado<sup>2</sup>.

1: "The Japanese Presence Project." Japanese Presence Project. Accessed February 8, 2022.

[https://www.vashonhistory.com/japanese\\_presence\\_main\\_2.html#](https://www.vashonhistory.com/japanese_presence_main_2.html#).

2: "Eddie Toshio Owada (1925-2020) - Find a Grave..." Find a Grave. Accessed February 8,

2022. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/210774470/eddie-toshio-owada>.

3: "Eddie Owada Interview." Densho Digital Archive - Eddie owada interview. Accessed

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4: Ancestry.com. Colorado, U.S., State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1868-1990 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.

5: “Pinedale (Detention Facility).” Pinedale (detention facility) | Densho Encyclopedia. Accessed February 9, 2022. [https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Pinedale\\_\(detention\\_facility\)/](https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Pinedale_(detention_facility)/).

6: “Tule Lake (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior. Accessed February 9, 2022. <https://www.nps.gov/places/tule-lake.htm>.