

Mary Fujioka

By Danny Boyle, Amelia Krouse, and Jaleigh Stubblefield-Jacobs

On August 1st, 1926¹, Mary was born into the Fujioka family. Her mother, Lonne, did previous work on the family farm and raised their six children. Her father, Sadaji, worked as a laborer and an unpaid family worker. There were eight people total in the family, including their eldest brother, Tashio, as the head of their household. Shizue was the youngest child. The family lived in the Fujioka Farm, where they primarily grew various types of berries, including strawberries.

In May of 1942, when Mary was around 16, after Executive Order 9066 was issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt³, the Fujioka family were relocated off of the island. The Fujioka family, as well as 120 other Japanese and Japanese American residents, were soon sent to the Pinedale Assembly Center and the Tule Lake relocation center. Afterwards, they transferred to Heart Mountain, Wyoming⁴ later in said year.

Tule Lake⁵ was the biggest internment camp and was guarded by martial law and the army. It was created as a “Segregation Center” after the loyalty questionnaire that imprisoned over 12,000 Japanese Americans. It had become an armed camp and there were many restrictions similar to how people were treated in prison. Martial law, the suspension of ordinary law, was enabled in 1943 and left very little normal activities for the people to do. There were shortages of basic necessities like food, water, and heat fuel. At Heart Mountain, families were crowded and

had little privacy. The locations of the camps were primarily in isolated previous farming areas, and there was very little communication with the outside world, with the exception of letters.

George Fujioka, the eldest sibling of Mary and Shizue, took on many roles during the camp, including the Vice President of the Honor Society, a Boy Scout leader, and was on the traffic squad⁶. George also played baseball and basketball during his time at Heart Mountain⁶.

After internment, Mary graduated from Heart Mountain Highschool in 1944 and went to Minneapolis MN to attend Minneapolis business college, then lived in Cleveland, Ohio for a short time, before returning to Seattle where she went to YMCA technical school.⁷ Mary worked as a secretary at the VA hospital until 1955. After that she began her long career at The Polyclinic. During this time she handled many aspects of the office including office manager, supply coordinator, and medical transcript clerk, among more, and retired after 36 years with only 10 sick days, and retired in 1991.⁸

On June 14th, 1953, Mary Fujioka married Takeo Katayama in the Seattle buddhist church, at 4PM⁷ and were married until September 26, 2012, when Takeo passed away.⁹ Later on, Mary and Shizue moved to the Madrona House together, They stayed there for the rest of their lives until they both passed away.¹⁰ Shizue died first on January 29, 2017 due to natural causes.¹¹ Then, on June 9th of 2021, Mary passed away also from natural causes.¹²

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