

## **These aren't the first signs about immigrants that have been posted in Hood River.**

Allow us to set the stage. Bombs drop. Navy personnel are killed. It's Pearl Harbor, 1941. Our little town of Hood River becomes a whirlwind of chaos. More than 400 Japanese Americans are rounded up at the Hood River train station and shipped to internment camps. They are viewed as Enemy Aliens.

After the war, signs hung in many store windows: "No Japs Allowed." "Please notice: No Jap Trade."

Full page ads with headlines, "Japs are Not Wanted in Hood River," appeared in our local newspaper, signed by 1,800 residents opposed the return of Japanese Americans to Hood River. Yes, this is absolutely true... in our hometown.

Japanese American soldiers returned to Hood River only to find their names removed from the courthouse honor roll. These were U.S. soldiers—fighting and dying for the country—even as their families were being imprisoned by it. Yes, this is absolutely true – in our hometown.

During the war, The **Yasui Brothers' Store**, a central hub for the local community, was forced to shut down. The store was located on Oak Street in downtown Hood River, which is now home to "Ground Coffee." The Yasui father, Masuo, immigrated from Japan and was a respected community leader and fruit farmer. He was arrested under suspicion of being an enemy alien and spent four years in various detention camps.

His son, **Minoru Yasui**, was born on American soil right here in Hood River. An attorney focused on challenging the constitution, he purposefully violated a wartime curfew targeted exclusively at Japanese Americans. He was arrested in Portland and spent nine months in solitary confinement. In 2015, years after he passed away, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his courageous work with civil and human rights.

Yet, in these dark times, a light still found a way to shine through.

About 50 Hood River residents stood up for those who couldn't speak for themselves. They sent welcome letters and provided support to those returning home. They shined a light... a yellow flicker of hope.

What does this have to with us – today?

This is a very uncertain time for immigrants in the United States. Like the Japanese-Americans who faced discrimination, many of our immigrant neighbors are, once again, living in fear.

**"We are Immigrants – Somos Inmigrantes"** signs are appearing in homes and businesses in our community. They are bringing a sense of support to those who need it. Like those who advocated long ago, will you be courageous enough to display a

yellow sign? After all, most of us have all come to America from someplace else. Unless we are Native American, or we were forced to come here from Africa as slaves, we are all immigrants.

We invite you to join us, and hundreds of other residents and business owners in this campaign of solidarity. Contact the Riverside Community Church via [office@riversideucc.com](mailto:office@riversideucc.com) for a window or yard sign.