

Terminal Island History – by Tom Enomoto

In putting together this paper, there were a few questions that came to me.

1. The story of Oji-san Ryono coming to the U.S. via whaling ship and simply getting off in Seattle, working in a lumber yard and taking enough pieces of wood to build his own small skiff; then with the skiff, he caught and sold the salmon he caught in Puget Sound. Is that a true story?
2. Did Oji-san Ryono ever become a U.S. citizen or did he stay as a Japanese immigrant (legal or illegal)? How about Oba-chan Ryono?
3. Does anyone have a time-line of when Oji-san came to the U.S., moved to Terminal Island, married, built the "Patriotic". etc.
4. Why was Uncle John and my Mom sent back to Japan during their childhood? Heard that it was a Japanese custom of the time but I don't know of other Japanese families that did the same.
5. I heard once that Oji-san Ryono had a smaller "Ken-Ken Bure" jig boat at Terminal Island before he built the "Patriotic". Does anyone know if this is true. If so, did he actually own the smaller jig boat or merely leased it from one of the canneries?
6. A boat like the "Patriotic" would cost a couple of million dollars to build today. Back in 1928, when the "Patriotic" was built, how did Oji-san Ryono afford to build such a boat. In relative dollars, it would still require the equivalent of a couple of million dollars in those days. I know he was a good fisherman but that's a lot of money for anyone much less a poor immigrant. Does anyone know how he managed to get this done?
7. Understand that Oji-san Ryono was arrested by the FBI immediately after Pearl Harbor. I understand he eventually was sent to Tule Lake but he died of a heart attack at Manzanar. Does anyone know what happened to him after his FBI arrest, where he was sent to and how he eventually ended up at Tule Lake and Manzanar?
8. My Mom was married to my dad Harry Enomoto at the time of relocation to Manzanar. I assume at Manzanar, she and Harry had their own household and did not live with the Ryono family (Oba-chan Ryono, Uncle John, Aunt Mary, Uncle Kats, Aunt Mitsuko, and Aunt Chiz). After my dad died of cancer, did my Mom keep her own household or did she move in with the rest of the Ryono's (or Enomoto's)?
9. How did my Mom manage to end up at Tule Lake after spending most of her time at Manzanar? It may have had something to do with the infamous "Yes-Yes" document everyone was asked to sign. I understand she came back to Manzanar in 1945 with the assistance of Uncle Bob before moving on to Philadelphia with the rest of the Ryonos.
10. What happened to the "Patriotic" during the war? I heard a "friend" took care of the boat. How did Uncle John manage to get the boat back after the war?
11. How did my Mom and my step-dad, Henry Enomoto, manage to build Henry's Market in late 1948? It certainly must have cost some money. Did the Ryono family help or maybe it was the Enomoto family?

12. Last Question. Did the homes in Terminal Island have their own bathrooms and toilets? How about at Manzanar and Tule Lake. On my visit to the Manzanar historical site, I don't remember seeing any running water or sink in the living facilities. I know meals were served in a community kitchen. Did everyone have to go outside to a community toilet facility?

Please send any answers/comments/questions to Tom's email: enomototy@gmail.com