On December 7th 1942, in California, Ava woke up bright eyed and bushytailed ready to take on a beautiful day. She pinned back her jet-black hair and got ready for church. The first-print Japanese mural in her room seemed to glow extra bright that morning.\(^1\) She hurried downstairs to her parents and quickly jumped in the car. Ava loved to attend Sunday school at First Baptist Church of San Francisco. Today she loved that her best friend Allison’s bright blue sundress matched her eyes in the morning sun. They grabbed hands and ran off to play with all their friends. It was a normal Sunday, until an unthinkable tragedy would not only shake the life of Ava Sato, but the lives of thousands of Japanese-Americans all over the nation.

Ava, and her parents hastily drove home to find that Japanese suicide bombers killed more than two thousand men and destroyed sixteen of the most valuable ships in the American Armed forces at the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor.\(^2\) They gathered around the radio the next day to hear the voice of President Franklin D. Roosevelt saying, "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."\(^3\) Despite being eleven years old Ava had seen the racism against her culture firsthand, although her parents tried to shield her from its burden.\(^4\) Hitoshi Sato, Ava’s father, owned a general store and had a very large following of other Japanese-American consumers who enjoyed his inventory of rare Japanese goods. As for Mrs. Ray Sato, she was a nurse at Saint Francis Memorial Hospital. Both Ray and Hitoshi were born in San Francisco and lived the American dream that began when their parents migrated to the US. Therefore, Mr. and Mrs. Sato were determined to provide a happy life for Ava.

\(^{1}\) Appendix A
\(^{3}\) Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Day of Infamy" (speech, The White House, Washington, December 8, 1942).
News of Pearl Harbor shook the Satos deeply because, although they were very disconnected from Japan, propaganda and advertisement against Japanese people took a toll on them and certainly affected the way others viewed them.\(^5\) Ava never allowed this kind of prejudice to get in her way, but she never really faced hostility due to her ethnicity. As news of Pearl Harbor spread, Americans began to panic and speculate about the danger to their nation. Some questioned whether it was still safe to live among those of Japanese heritage. Pearl Harbor would force the United States of America in to World War II.\(^6\) The months that followed the attack looked different for Ava and her family. At school the next day some children began to call attention to familiar traits in Ava that they had seen in the newspapers associated with the Pearl Harbor bombing. Ava knew she was Japanese, and she knew she looked slightly different than everyone else. However, she would’ve never imagined that her classmates, who knew her well, would be scared of her because of the poisonous comments the media had been making about Japanese culture.\(^7\) Day after day, Ava began to wear the shame she felt for being compared to the enemy. Her father began to lose customers due to this irrational fear. Even at the hospital, Mrs. Sato was asked not to return because people did not want a Japanese nurse. In a matter of two months, the lives of the Sato’s were flipped upside down. They went from living normal lives just as ever other American family to being outcasts in society, viewed as dangerous and shamed in a country that was supposed to be a refuge for oppressed and welcoming to all.

\(^5\) Appendix B
\(^6\) "Japanese Relocation during WII," National Archives.
\(^7\) U.S. Office of War Information, "Japanese Relocation," video file, 1942
Relocation

February 19th, 1942 just over two months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. This order stated that all American citizens of Japanese descent in the West Coast must move to relocation camps in order to ensure the safety of the American people. The order “prescribed regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies.” When Ava and her family learned of the order, confusion, anger, and sadness filled their hearts and minds. How could their lives ever be the same? Ava was very puzzled and began to cry. She asked her parents, “why do we have to leave? What about Allison and my friend at school and our house and daddy’s store and your job?”

Although the small child asked very poignant questions, her parents had the same questions and no answers. They began to pack their things, anxiously awaiting the day they would move into the temporary relocation camps and then shortly after, the permanent internment camps. Mr. Sato began selling things in the store at discounted prices. Mrs. Sato quit her job and began to find someone to look after their house while they were gone. The unknown was the only future for Ava and her family. Not everyone was fearful of Japanese-Americans. Allison’s family had been incredible friends to the Sato family, so they offered to keep watch over their house and continued payments until they were able to come back. Ava began packing all of her favorite toys and little knickknacks she planned to take with her to her new, unknown home. But when her mother came and saw her suitcase filled with trinkets, she began to laugh. The laughter turned into tears when she looked at her precious daughter’s face and said, “Oh, honey you can only take what you absolutely need. We’re going to a very different place it’s not going to be like it is here, so you won’t need those.”

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Not really understanding her mother, Ava began to unpack some of the unnecessary things and started packing clothing instead. She was a smart and empathetic girl, so she knew her mother was deeply stressed, but she never dared ask her what she really knew about the future of their lives. Ava was afraid of that question, as if the unknown were almost more peaceful than knowing the sadness that awaited her future. Days later, the Sato’s were ordered to report to the Tanforan Race Track where they would end up living for three months before their permanent camps were completely prepared. The race tracks horse stables had been transformed into temporary living quarters and thin sacks stuffed with straw were used for mattresses. Every day was a struggle against the unknown tragedy that would face them in the next camp. Ava tried to continue to do all the activities she normally did, but life had become very different. Every day, she wrote a letter to Allison saying what had happened that day or how she was feeling. Her parents said they would mail them, but they were never able to reach Alison’s door. After months of struggling in the temporary camps with thousands of other Japanese-Americans, news came that a permanent camp was almost ready for inhabitants. Ava hope that this camp might be better than the last, but fear was much stronger than the hope in her heart that this new “home” might be even less habitable.

*Topaz Internment Camp*

Ava and her family were shipped off in trains along with thousands of other Japanese Americans from San Francisco. Once arriving in Utah, their new home, Topaz, sat in the middle of nowhere. Not everything was completed in the camp when the Sato’s arrived. Barbwire fences

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10 “The Tanforan Race Track and Assembly Center,” Center For Asian American Media.
surrounded the barracks where the family of three would now sleep. Ava watched her father and mother night after night try to make the barren barracks feel like a home. Camp Topaz was 42 blocks worth of barracks, education buildings, a hospital, government buildings, and sleeping quarters for the soldiers. Inside the Sato’s barrack was a coal stove, and few cots with thin mattresses on them.\textsuperscript{13} The dust from the desert land surrounding them covered the floors of every building. Ava could never get it all off of her.\textsuperscript{14} Her family was forced to make a new normal out of this new place. Ava began going to school and finding new friends that understood exactly what she was feeling. Mr. and Mrs. Sato began working jobs in order to make a little money inside the camp. Mrs. Sato was highly sought after because she was a nurse. She began to work tirelessly at the hospital due to the great need of medical personnel for all those who were suffering from the harsh and unsanitary conditions of the camp.\textsuperscript{15} Although life was not good, it was manageable.

As time went on, conditions became increasingly more treacherous in the camp. Winter was approaching, and temperatures were expected to dip below zero. The barracks had very little heat and the winter was absolutely excruciating. Ava began to sleep with her parents, so they could provide warmth to each other.\textsuperscript{16} Ava became very sick with a cold and she could barely breathe. Ava was rushed to the camp hospital and was diagnosed with pneumonia. Ava remained sick for three weeks due to lack of supplies and medication along with frequent dust storms that further polluted her already inhibited lungs.\textsuperscript{17} Ava returned home from the hospital just in time for Christmas. It was the first holiday they would celebrate inside the camps and everyone was determined to spread light on a very dismal situation.

\textsuperscript{13} “Topaz Camps,” Topaz Museum Foundation.
\textsuperscript{14} Emiko Ota testimony in FOX13 News Utah.
\textsuperscript{15} Megumi Corley, "Health in Japanese Internment Camps."
\textsuperscript{16} “The Salt Lake Tribune,” video file.
\textsuperscript{17} Corley, "Health in Japanese."
After Christmas came birthdays and other events that made for many bittersweet days. Days faded into months and months faded into years of horrible and harsh conditions. Lack of nutrition became normal. Ava, who weighed 84 pounds when she entered Topaz, was now 69 pounds of skin and bones. Many people also experienced this change while inside camps due to the lack of caloric intake because of non-nutritional meals. Not only did health problems worsen, but so did conflicts between people. Many began to grow tired of the mistreatment from soldiers and began to rebel. Some even tried to escape. Those who have lost their sanity in the camps were immediately shot down and never lived to see another day. They woke up each morning hoping that news of liberation would be near.

Freedom

After three years of trials and tribulations, October of 1945 came, and WWII had ended. All people living in the Topaz Internment camp were released and were able to resume life as American citizens. Ava and her family were thrilled and ecstatic that they were finally able to leave this dreaded place, but once again the fear of the unknown remained their most dominant emotion. They were sent off with some food coupons and $100 and were expected pickup their lives like “normal”. The Sato were able to travel back to San Francisco where they found their house just as they had left it. However, many families weren’t as fortunate. Some never returned to their hometowns but resettled near the camp, so they could obtain financial stability quickly. Although they had their house back, Mr. Sato’s shop had been vandalized and foreclosed. It would

20 “Topaz Camps,” Topaz Museum Foundation.
22 Toru Saito testimony in FOX13 News Utah.
be a long road to full recovery for all who had been locked up in relocation camps. Mrs. Sato began to work at a clinic and Mr. Sato began to work as a janitor because it was the only job he could find. As Ava returned to school, many things had changed, but Allison and Ava were reunited, and their friendship was just as how they left it. School was difficult for Ava because she had been absent from normal society for such a long period of time. It would take Ava a while before she was ever ready to account for what had happened in the camp, and even longer to regain pride in a country that betrayed her. The Sato’s would struggle with financial problems for years to follow and never regain the luxuries they once possessed.

Ava was able to finish high school and college and became a very successful doctor. She had a new appreciation for her life and used this to heal sick children every day. Ava worked with many foundations to preserve the history of internment camps and devoted her life to preserving the truth.\(^{23}\) On August 10, 1988, Ronald Reagan stood in front of the public eye and asked for forgiveness from the Japanese-Americans:

> We gather here today to right a grave wrong... after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were forcibly removed from their homes and placed into… internment camps. This action was taken without trial, … It was based solely on race.\(^{24}\)

The Japanese finally won their battle over the camps that held them hostage so many years ago. Ava and the Sato’s were given $20,000 under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.\(^{25}\) Although no money could ever account for their lost time and lack of freedom.

> The tragedy of Japanese internment camps eventually led future Japanese-Americans like Ava to fight for their rights leading to increased Asian-American awareness across the nation.

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\(^{23}\) Masao Yamashita testimony in Ibid.  
small triumphs of money and the president’s apology would never fully cover the tragedy of internment. However, there was triumph. The controversy over Internment was one of the first times Americans were forced to confront the problem of whether they would be a home for all peoples or prioritize the protection the country’s present inhabitants. Ava has seen this controversy arise again in her nation for African Americans, women as well as Immigrants looking for refuge. She knows triumphs in these situations depends on remembering the forgotten tragedy of Japanese-Americans. Ava went on to teach her children and grandchildren about this forgotten piece of American history hoping that one day they could make an impact and stand up for Japanese-Americans or any race who faced such trials.
Appendix A

Appendix B

Bibliography

**Primary Sources**


This is a primary source interview with actor Pat Morita who was imprisoned in the camps as a child. He tells about his struggles in the camps and how they impacted him. It helps me further understand the impact that the camps had on the Japanese-Americans that were inside.


This is a primary source document the official Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which gave all Japanese-Americans effected by internment camps 20,000 dollars as an apology for the being put into relocation camps. President Ronald Regan stood in front of the public eye and apologized for the tragedy of Internment camps. This is a key source in understanding the triumph that the Japanese-Americans were able to achieve.


This source is a primary source of letters written to and from Clara Breed while children were inside internment camps. Clara Breed was instrumental in giving children supplies to keep reading while inside the camps. It gave me great detail about the progress of the camps and how conditions changed over time according to those inside the camps.


This is a primary source document of the official Executive Order FDR wrote in order to initiate Japanese internment camps where he states his reasoning for the relocation of all Japanese-Americans after the loss if thousands of troops in the pacific. I used it my paper to understand why the U.S felt the need to create internment camps.


This is a primary source of 4 people sharing their experience in the Topaz camp at the grand opening of the Topaz museum. The testimony of these survivors is where I gathered tons of detail about where they went to before the camp, the Tanforan race track. Also, the life inside Topaz such as the dust they constantly lived with. One lady was pregnant inside the camp and she talk about the medical treatment she wasn't able to receive due to the lack of medication in the camps. This source was an instrumental tool in understanding not just only internment camps but more specifically Topaz.
This is a primary source of an interview of actor George Takei. He lived in the camps as a child and this provides me with firsthand information on life for a child and the memories he has from that dark time.

This is a Primary source newspaper article that was published in Arizona. It talks about the racism in the states and how Internment isn’t fair. It gives me perspective on what Americans were able to read in the West about internment. This source helped me in my paper to identify not only the point of view in the camps but also what information an everyday average American was exposed to in relation to the relocation camps.

This is a primary source of a political cartoon that was created by the U.S. Government Printing Office. It is a cartoon that states all the reasons the Japanese were “plotting against” the Americans. It shows the other side of things from the Americans point of view after what the Japanese did to the troops and Naval base at Pearl Harbor. It provides me with a greater understanding of how this racist propaganda had an influence on the Japanese-Americans who didn’t have anything to do with Japan at the time.

This is a primary source photograph of people who were living inside the camps. It gives and insight into how people were reacting, and this picture shows some Nikki (another term for Japanese-Americans) unloading into camps in a wagon like car.

This is a Japanese Mural that was created by Ogata Kōrin who was a very popular piece in Japan and is considered a national treasure. It’s a beautiful piece of art that represents the Japanese culture. I used it in my story to help give some context into the characters Japanese background and to show she was connected to her Japanese heritage although she was an American citizen.

This is a primary source of a transcript of the speech Ronald Reagan made in order to apologize to the Japanese Americans. It helped me understand the triumph that came for
the Japanese people.

This is PDF of Franklin Roosevelt speech that followed the Bombing of Pearl Harbor. This give insight on how the president dealt with this horrible catastrophe. It also provides me with a primary source for contextualization of the time period and are the Presidents direct words as he stood in front of the public eye and mourned the loss of the thousands of troops that had passed.

This is an amazing Primary source of a man named Dave Tatsuno who smuggled a video camera into the Japanese internment camp while he was staying in Topaz. It is real live footage of life inside the camps and helped me understand conditions inside the camps including harsh winters and daily life and activities.

This is a primary source account from a man named Samuel Mihara who lived in an internment camp for 3 years in Heart Mountain Wyoming. He describes the great fear he felt upon entering the camp with all the barb wire fences and the armed guards. He describes life inside the camp as a prison and it helped me gain perspective inside the different camps.

This is a primary source of a propaganda video the Americans created to inform the other Americans what was happening inside the camps and why the process of "relocation" was necessary. This source is key to understanding the lack of knowledge the Americans were given about what was really happening in the internment camps and how the government sugar coated what was really going on inside the camps.

This is a primary source photograph that show us a picture of a little child waiting with her things to leave for internment camps. It gives means ideas of what the emotions were like of small children who probably didn't know everyone that was happening. This picture helped me visualize the emotions of the young children going into the camps and I used it to formulate my main character in the story Ava.
Secondary Sources

This source is a summary of the course of Japanese internment. It gives a good presentation of what the Americans thought the relocation camps were like verses what it actually was. I used it to show the other points of view and how deceived the American people were about what was going on.

This is a secondary source that talks about the medical conditions in relocation camps. This source describes the lack of medical attention the people in the camps were able to find. It helped me understand how and why conditions effected the people so harshly.

This is a source that tells all about Pearl Harbor and gives specifics to help me understand the events leading up to Japanese Internment. I will use it as helpful insight in my contextualization to shoe the buildup to Japanese internment.

This source is an article from a data base it helped me understand what happened within the Internment camps and what they were like providing many good details and statistics. It also helped me understand the aftermath of the camps and the resettlement of the Japanese American people.

This source is from a journal article and it covered what life was life inside of the internment camps. I used it to farther understand the everyday life in the camps as well as using it to get approximate number of people in the camps.

This source is an article that explained how the bombing at Pearl Harbor provoked the internment camps. It also explained life in the camps and after WWII ended how the Japanese-Americans went on and lived life despite very little help they were given after
they were released from the internment camps.

"Japanese Relocation during WWII." National Archives. Accessed September 5, 2018. https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation. This source is from the National Archives and is a secondary source. It gives a great background on the events that made FDR initiate the camps. This source helps me understand the overview of Japanese Internment as well as providing some great facts that I used to support my research.

Miles, Hannah. "WWII Propaganda: The Influence of Racism." University of Missouri Artifacts. Last modified March 2012. Accessed September 17, 2018. https://artifactsjournal.missouri.edu/2012/03/wwii-propaganda-the-influence-of-racism/. This is a secondary source about the propaganda against the Japanese people in America. It provides evidence of why the Americans were threatened by the Japanese-Americans based on the political cartoons that floated around the United States after Pearl Harbor. This source will help me identify the other point of views and what the American people were exposed to.

"Nutrition In Japanese Internment Camps." The British Medical Journal 2, no. 4375 (1944): 635-36. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20346896. This source is an article from a British medical journal that explained the risks within the Internment camps. It helped me understand the conditions in the camps and how in the camps the Japanese were being denied their needed chloric intake daily causing malnourishment in many people.

Ono, David. "A Soldier's Diary." Video file. Vimeo. Accessed September 6, 2018. https://vimeo.com/119509771. This is a video that shows a diary of a child inside the camps. It helps me gain a real perspective on someone who was actually inside the camp. It is very helpful explain the feeling of those on the younger side inside the camps.

Sowards, Adam M. "Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians." In American History. https://americanhistory.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/253788?webSiteCode=SLN_AMHIST&returnToPage=%2fSearch%2fDisplay%2f253788&token=8D6C5579F2C3B2408DEF239BEE25AD6D&casError=False. This source is an article that helped me understand how the CWRIC was created and what the government did to ensure the Japanese people were able to regain justice. It gave me a deeper understanding of the steps taken and what the CWRIC suggested the US do.

This is a source that helps me understand the initial relocation and how the government the race track horse stalls to shelter the Japanese-Americans before the camps were completed. I used this to show the transition into relocation camps.

"Topaz Camps." Topaz Museum Foundation. Accessed October 21, 2018. http://www.topazmuseum.org/history. This source gives a very detailed account of the specific camp Topaz such as how big the camps was and the conditions in Utah. It was a very helpful source in my paper because Topaz is the internment camp to where the main character and her family were sent.