

RW-1, Getting Japanese-Americans Jobs”

Transcript: pp.6-8

Text portions for pop-up/audio alternative

Time-Line: Decade V, National Events, “1941-45: More than 10,000 Japanese-Americans are interned in U.S. concentration camps...”

Of course during the war the Japanese relocation became a very interesting thing, you remember the Japanese were all removed from their homes just torn out from their homes and put in what I call "concentration camps" and then it was opened up so they could be relocated and one of my dear friends in the National Home Missions Society got involved in this and he got me to go to Cleveland to organize a committee there that ultimately relocated over 500 Japanese Americans in Cleveland. Well, coming back here people heard about that? So I became involved in the relocation of Japanese Americans here...

I spoke at Rotary and there was a man named John Ives who owned and operated the arcade and the Ives' Staples Company was right there...on Main Street. And I ended my talk with the Rotary saying this has consequences; I need jobs. And John Ives came up and said, 'I'll give ya three right now. Give me three men I want to work in my Arcade Hotel as a night clerk and I need two carpenters to work in my construction work...”

And with that John became deeply involved, not only there but he actually got involved in, he was a Congregationalist as I learned later. He got active in their National Social Action Committee, about all sorts of things. Well, the most fascinating story about that of the, Steinkraus was President of executive of Remington Arms or was it Sikor- no, Remington Arms I think. [Bridgeport Brass] Anyway here was a big full page ad saying you don't, we don't need to tell you what a great job we're doing for the war work and blah, blah, blah, but what we need are people to work for us. So in those days there was a Jewish fellow who was head, he was the owner of the Bridgeport paper that was sort of the weekend one, sort of the Rag, it wasn't “The Post,” but....the “Bridgeport Herald.” I forget his name, but he was a great guy and he got into this with us...

Anyway we decided we'd go see Herman Steinkraus because we had people to work. So he went (clears his throat), he went with me and a couple of other guys and we went in to see Steinkraus he said 'what can I do for ya?' And they had said that I should be the spokesman so I said, 'Mr. Steinkraus it's not what you can do for us, but we hope we have something we can do for you. We read your article and we have people that need employment. 'Oh great!,' he says, 'tell me about it.' So I told him this story about this and he looked as if I'd kicked him in his stomach at first, but then he settled down and he listened and he said, 'Well, I'm going to call my personnel man in and he buzzed for Joe Blow, the personnel man and the guy came in the door stood there a minute looking at this and Steinkraus said, Barney Stasky says, "Joe, how would ya like to hire some damn Japs?" (laughter) So he says you tell the story over again. Oh and before that when

Steinkraus was sort of wondering whether to call him in or not I guess my Jewish friends said to him, 'Herman, do you remember what it was like being a German Jew in the first World War here?' 'Oh!' he said, 'that's what it's all about?' And the editor said 'Yes Herman, that's what it's all about.' Well the result was that they did hire, I don't remember how many, but they began hiring and we began to put people in there.

I Okay, now just let me back up for a second so we understand this. These were Japanese Americans I guess primarily from the West Coast...

RW Yeah, they were all American citizens...

I Who were put into these "concentration camps" essentially and now if you could find them jobs they could relocate