

I am a Topaz descendant. My parents met while incarcerated at Topaz and they married in 1947 after my father completed two years in the U.S. Army.

I heard about "camp" while I was growing up, but my parents didn't talk about what it was like or how it felt to be there. In 1991 I attended a panel discussion by Japanese American women who spoke of their experience of wartime incarceration. As I listened I found myself crying in public as the realization hit me of what it must have been like to be uprooted and incarcerated.

In 2022 at a dinner in Delta with local Topaz Museum board members and docents, we sat around a table and spoke about our individual relationships to Topaz. By the time the second person spoke I could no longer suppress my tears. One woman described her father's anger with the injustice of incarceration and about her admiration for her high school teacher, Jane Beckwith. One after another, a local person spoke. I could not stop my tears. These were tears of, I don't know. Amazement? Recognition? A sudden realization that, yes, these strangers who did not look like my parents, who did not have the experience of incarceration, were indeed people who cared deeply about learning and feeling and telling our story.

I look forward to a continued relationship with the Topaz Museum and the people of Delta.

Kay Yatabe