

hat and an oversized dark suit. He appeared to be Japanese. But why did I think he was Japanese? How do you tell the Japanese from the Chinese? I asked myself. We were at war with Japan but not China, so how do we know who is friend or enemy? Like most caucasians I had always held the unthoughtful opinion that all Orientals looked alike. If friends look like foes and foes look like friends how can we determine which is which?

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No answer was forthcoming, only more questions. If features do not identify enemies what does? What kind of measurement can you use to gauge loyalty? How is this country going to be able to determine the patriotism or allegiance of all the Japanese parented residents we have? The news media for weeks had been saturated with questions of their loyalty and demands for their removal from the west coast by legislators from the west and local and state political figures of California, Oregon, and Washington. Even editorial writers, union officials, and leaders of many civic associations had added their voices to the demands that "something be done".

This kind of sentiment, nurtured by national anger and desire for retaliation had spread throughout the country in epidemic proportions. Now most Japanese Americans both young and old were becoming fearful for themselves and their property.

I left the engine running and sat there in the car while I listened to the news still flowing from the radio. Most of it concerned with war related events but they managed to insert a few local items and predictions for a moderately warm day before switching to music. With the completion of the news broadcast I turned the ignition key and the engine was muted.

While the news was on, I now realized, I had been subconsciously expecting some mention of the undertaking I was soon to become part of. I guess that was why I had left the radion on until the news was over.