

# Acts of Ownership Interview

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## Packing an Electric Train

**Elmer (b. 1933) recalls when his family was uprooted in 1942 and his mother told him to take what he would like and not worry about clothing. He packed his electric train and other toys.**

**Excerpt from Landscapes of Injustice oral history interview with Elmer Hara.**

ELMER HARA

And that I remember very well and still brings tears to my eyes. So we, my father was a well-established Japanese Canadian business man so though he had applied for his Canadian citizenship, he had not obtained it yet. The RCMP they let us stay in our house until we were to be moved and that happened in I think oh in February, January/February. We were ordered to pack our things and get ready to travel by train to a place there where we will go and stay before we get onto the diplomatic exchange ship *Gripsholm*, which was leaving from New Jersey Harbor across from New York Harbor.

We only had about 24 hours' notice to pack. And my mother gave me one suitcase and said "put all your things that you want to take; don't worry about the clothes." So I put my electric train, my line electric train, and that's what I had and some other toys. So I had one suitcase, my sister had [one] suitcase and my older brother had a bigger suitcase.

So we gathered at the Canadian National Railway station down at Main Street in Vancouver and we boarded the train the next day and left for Montreal. And as a child I was so curious about seeing the Rocky Mountains. I tried to stay up all night to see the Rocky Mountains – I never succeeded, I was a wreck for the rest of the trip. It took one week to get to Montreal.