



General George C. Marshall appeared regularly on magazine covers nationwide, such as these examples from 1943. The small version of *Newsweek* was a “Battle Baby” edition produced exclusively for the military.

HHC Collections. Photo by Liz Simpson.

**Uniontown’s General George C. Marshall was, according to Harry S. Truman, “the greatest military man America ever produced.”**



## BEING JAPANESE AMERICAN ON DECEMBER 7, 1941

By Frank Inouye, introduced by Brian Butko

*An unpublished memoir by Frank Inouye recalls growing up in Los Angeles in the 1930s as a typical American teen: playing baseball, attending Catholic school, watching cowboy movies, and lettering in tennis at college. Having Japanese parents, however, made the 1940s less than typical. His daughter Cookie, a Pittsburgh resident, shared her father’s experiences after Pearl Harbor.*

**W**hen I heard on the radio the president’s message to Congress and to the American people and later saw the dramatic scene on newsreel broadcasts in the theatres, I was incredulous and heartsick. I simply didn’t want to believe my ears or my eyes, even as the newspaper headlines confirmed the truth—Japan and the U.S. were at war. My worst fears and those of all Japanese living on the West Coast were now realized.

The true significance of the Pearl Harbor attack did not strike home to us immediately, especially those of us attending colleges and universities. There, we were effectively insulated among well-educated young people of our own age and interests, young adults with whom we shared classes, sports, and a common loyalty to our schools. The professors continued their class lectures, gave exams,


and rarely, if ever, referred to the Japanese attack or its aftermath...

Outside the protected walls of school there was a noticeable change in the community’s behavior toward the Japanese. As the Japanese military forces actually fought against American troops in the Philippines and on some Pacific islands, with initial victories going to the Japanese, public opinion, fed by the media, turned against us. The many years of depicting the Japanese as ugly, bandy-legged, eyeglass-wearing, grinning yellow dwarfs in ill-fitting uniforms made it a simple matter to convert Americans’ fears and ridicule of the Japanese into open hatred. And the media, especially the newspapers on the West Coast, made no attempt to distinguish between the Japanese armed forces and the Japanese immigrants and their children living in America. In the public’s mind, the perception was allowed to grow that we were the same people responsible for the military actions and atrocities committed overseas.

*After being sent to Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming, Frank returned to a normal life, marrying a girl he met at college who had also been in a camp. Frank earned a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in 1951, and later was the founding director of the University of Hawai’i-Hilo.*

Even Pittsburgh itself would eventually be remade. The massive industrial effort spurred by defense manufacturing had benefitted many, but the long-term future of that same industrial base was in doubt. It also reinforced concerns about air quality and smoke control. Images taken of Pittsburgh by 1940 showed city streets and hills shrouded in dark fog, even in the middle of the day.<sup>34</sup> One national news service later described Pittsburgh as a “smoke-begrimed old girl” who looked like “she’ll die of dirt and old-age.”<sup>35</sup> The city actually passed a smoke ordinance in 1941, but critical war needs delayed its implementation. In 1946, following much debate, the new

regulation finally went into effect—enabled by a compromise that staggered enforcement for industrial and home use.<sup>36</sup> The group that brokered the deal was a new player in town. The Allegheny Conference on Community Development was incorporated in 1944 by a small circle of business and education leaders concerned about the city’s image and long-term economic prospects. Pittsburgh, they feared, would be a “dying city” unless proactive measures were taken to rewrite its future in the postwar world.<sup>37</sup> Their foresight created a model that would one day be studied by civic leaders across the country. The Allegheny Conference laid the foundation for

Pittsburgh’s Renaissance—for the creation of Gateway Center, Point State Park, a thriving Cultural District, clean rivers, and a downtown that is now the envy of many mid-size cities. Once again, it was one collective effort born of another, an innovation that allowed the “industrial arsenal” of World War II to weather dark days ahead and emerge as the vibrant 21st century community we know today. 

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. L (no full name), “Nations Today Are Certain of Nothing,” Letter to the Editor, *The Pittsburgh Press*, October 6, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Stanson, (Morgan, Pa.), “Urges Retaining Loyalty to Peace at All Times,” Letter to the Editor, *The Pittsburgh Press*, October 2, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> Jen (no last name), “Agrees We Should Forget War,” Letters to the Editor, *The Pittsburgh Press*, April 7, 1940.

<sup>4</sup> The campaign started July 1933, see “Women Assist in Relief Drive” in “Organization Activities,” *The Jewish Criterion*, July 21, 1933, 14; and “Pittsburgh Ranks High in Relief Campaign,” *The Jewish Criterion*, August 11, 1933, both accessed via Carnegie Mellon University’s Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project: <http://digitalcollections.library.cmu.edu/pjn/index.jsp>; and also: 1933 — Timeline, A Tradition of Giving, website for the Rauh Jewish Archives, <http://www.jewishhistoryhmc.org/timeline.aspx#455ef6f1-cfca-40c3-b819-7fb9830d330b>.

<sup>5</sup> Dallas Wickerham (Donora, Pa.), “Need National Defense Unit,” Letter to the Editor, *The Pittsburgh Press*, March 12, 1938.

<sup>6</sup> JUST AN AMERICAN, “Naziism and All Isms Should Be Annihilated,” Letter to the Editor, *The Pittsburgh Press*, October 14, 1938.

<sup>7</sup> Edward J. Lally, Jr., “‘Oh, God, Save Our Poland,’ Herron Hill Women Wail,” *The Pittsburgh Press*, September 1, 1939. Wide scholarly consensus typically identifies Hitler’s invasion of Poland as the official start of World War II, since this act prompted both France and Great Britain to declare war on Germany.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Herman, *Freedom’s Forge, How American Business Produced Victory in World War II* (New York: Random House, 2012), 9-10.

<sup>9</sup> The number of planes produced per month in 1940 was 560, as cited in “Nation Looks to City for Industrial Needs,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 2, 1942.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> *Men and Women of Wartime Pittsburgh and Environs: A War Production Epic* (Pittsburgh: Frank C. Harper, 1945), 5. This comprehensive 1945 publication remains the primary source on Pittsburgh’s industrial and corporate involvement during World War II. Individual volumes also explore the contributions of many local companies, including David Oakes Woodbury, *Battlefronts of Industry, Westinghouse in World War II* (New York: J. Wiley, 1948) and William

