

THE PASSING YEARS

DIARY OF

Ray Jerome Baker

For the years only of

1906 - 1944

"The Passing Years, Diary of Ray Jerome Baker for the years only of 1906-1944."

Entries of December 7 and 8, 1941

MS Group 16 Box 12.3

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7th, 1941

7.00 A.M. Arose.

7.30 Phone message from Connie. Stated that she was unable to go to the clubhouse

7.50 Phone message to Mrs Kensinger asking permission to go the the clubhouse in their car.

8.30 Went to yard of 1923. Found Mrs Hammond washing. Visited with her in regard to the condition of Mrs Grossman who went to the hospital on Friday. Mrs H. remarked about the sound of shooting heard in the distance. Mrs H. Discussed condition of Mrs Hendershot and Mrs Clancy later talked of her sister Mrs Grossman.

8.45 Returned to house. Phone call from Kensinger that war was on and the island of Oahu was under attack. Reported this fact to Herringtons, also to Hammond. Trip to country canceled. Radio music and later on announcements.

9.00 to 10.00 A.M. Frequent radio announcements. Cars ordered off the streets. All army and navy personnel ordered to report for duty. All disaster foremen ordered to report. Frequent announcements notifying auto drivers power boat men, ambulance men etc. notified to report at various posts of duty. Men who handle hardware told to report.

10.15-News announcement that some planes have been shot down. Planes bear the insignia of rising sun.

10.30 Long list of doctors notified to report at Tripler General Hospital to take care of casualties. Some injured people. Gov. Poindexter declares emergency.

10.35 Ammunition Dump workers notified to meet truck leaving pier 5, passing Queen, King, Dillingham Blvd. and report for duty.

10.45 Employees of Oahu Prison, Kawaihoa Training School, notified to report. Pearl Harbor employees, expect women ordered to report for duty. Previously notified to stay home.

10.50 Major Disaster Council committee chairmen notified to be on duty on 24 hr basis, 8hr shifts. Everybody notified to keep radios on all day and be prepared for a black out to-night.

11.10 All Navy yard workers notified to report at Oahu R.R. Station for entrainment to Pearl Harbor, all shifts, women excepted.

11.12 All Young Bros employees asked to report to Young Bros boat house, pier 21 All American Legion men told to report at the Legion clubhouse on McCully & Kapiolani blvd. Inter Island plane flights and boat sailings canceled. No boats to Hilo.

11.15 Announcements in Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, Korean ?

11.35 Women just in, much worried. Talk with them interrupted by cannonading. Outside saw smoke of bursting shells in the direction of harbor entrance. Smoke seen in the direction of Washington Intermediate school. A couple of boys stated that they had seen a plane fall. Smoke continues.

11.40 KGMB ordered off the air. Rumor that runways at Pearl Harbor were bombed and about half of the planes out of commission. Radio order for concrete workers to report for duty. Streets seem cleared of all cars except emergency cars ~~and~~ motorcycles and trucks, some army and some civilian.

12.10 Report that smoke near King street was an incendiary bomb. Not a plane as previously stated.

1.45 PM. Just returned from the Ena Road store where I went for bread. Saw three boys who paused and were joined by others men and boys. One boy had an extra paper, the Bulletin. From the paper and from the conversation heard that about fifty planes attack Hickam Field. Asked for permission to land, radio, and before any body knew what plane it was the waves of planes came down and bombed the runways and machine gunned the area. Six persons were killed, ~~the~~ and about twenty injured. One Japanese plane was reported downed. Two oil tanks were hit with bombs and bombs were dropped many places in the city. Several buildings were set fire to. The attack on Hickam took place about 8.05 this morning. Report that a Japanese destroyer came near the entrance of Pearl Harbor, but was soon driven off by gun fire. Rumor that planes are expected from the coast to-night. Most of Hickam Field planes grounded. Some say many are damaged. No radio since 11.40

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Continued. Sunday, December 7th, 1941

3.00 PM Just returned from a walk. Left at two and went over to King street. Found the Lunalilo School was one source of fire this morning. The central portion of the building was wrecked. Tables, radios, desks, books and kitchen utensils were piled out on the lawn. There was an emergency red cross unit set up on the lawn when I first passed, but it had folded up before I returned.

At the King street site, the corner of King and McCully, the Makai, Ewa corner the drug store was completely burned. Several other buildings facing King street and formerly occupied as places of business were burned. The burned block extended about half a block toward town from the corner of McCully. A fireman lifted up a gas pipe, flaming from escaping gas, others were spraying water on the still smoldering ruins. The street makai and parallel with King was lined with house hold goods belonging to people who had moved out when the fire endangered their homes. The danger over they were gradually replacing their belongings.

A part Hawaiian woman stated that the plane was extremely low and very fast. Said that she saw the bomb drop. A young man stated that there were about four planes. Said also that they flew very low. As I arrived home met some of the women. Said that the Japanese neighbors had white sheets at their windows and that the kids were grinning, implying that they were enjoying the progress Japan was making in its attack. Suck nonsense.

My ridicule of such remarks were not well received. There is a rumor that a Japanese plane carrier with 250 planes has been sunk. No confirmation.

3.50 PM. Connie, Betty, her sister, another girl and Bill who is Betty's brother in law just left. Came tearing in all excited and full of rumors. Bill told of the damage inflicted on Bellows Field and speculated on the possibilities. Bill is usually employed at Bellows Field, but for some reason was not called today. -- Mary Gibbs came in and remained a few minutes. Wanted to know if the South Seas was Japanese owned. Said that she was afraid of being poisoned in a Japanese restaurant. The girls told of bombs falling near where they lived and of some who picked up fragments. Very little definite information, but a lot of excited remarks and silly speculation.

4.10 PM one girl just came in and said that Manoa water was reported poisoned. Said report came from an American Legion man.

5.00 PM. Army announcements are all that come over the radio. Special extra paper out stating Japan has declared war. Rumors that Guam, Manila and Panama have been attacked.

6.00 Darkness. No lights. much fast driving on the streets, mostly cars, but some trucks. At 5.30 some boys came to get Benny Neves to return to work. Women huddled around the front steps and waited - I went to the darkroom, put on a light after closing the door and read until about eight. Two others came in and sat for a while. -- Went to bed but got little sleep. There was no local disturbance during the night.

MONDAY DECEMBER 8th, 1941

7.30AM Up at six-thirty. Strong wind and slight showers which keep the street moist. Mary Gibbs and Mrs White went to work at their defense jobs. No news except report that Ford Island is wrecked and that a vessel has been sunk between here and San Francisco. No details. No radio news except army announcements. Must buy no extra food, patronize only regular dealers and dealers must not sell more than regular amount. President made a brief talk, declaring war on Japan.

8.00AM Just visited the neighborhood store, on Ewa Road. No bread, many there buying. A mad scramble to get food. The little store was quite obviously being cleaned out. Hawaiian woman addressed me by name and said I better hurry or nothing would be left.

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Monday, December 8th, continued.

9.30 AM. Just returned from town. Left about an hour ago in the car. Went to the Post Office to cash a money order as I found ourselves short of cash. No parking allowed on King street so attempted to park in the Palace grounds. The grounds were closed. A sentry at the gate stopped me and said only persons with permits from the Armory could enter. So I parked for a few minutes on King Street opposite the Post Office, while I went to cash the money order which I did without difficulty. - - - From the Post Office I went to Rosenstein's by way of Beretania, Lunalilo and Pensacola streets. They were getting ready to go in town with Jeanette Reisbord who presently came. For a few minutes we discussed the situation at Pearl Harbor. We all agreed that the negligence and incompetence shown by the naval and army authorities was shocking. Yesterday morning the forces on Oahu were taken completely by surprise. Waves of bombers swept over Pearl Harbor so low that they could not use the anti-aircraft guns and the bombing was over before anything could be organized. According to Jeanette nine war vessels were destroyed, this included battle ships and cruisers. The destruction on Ford Island and Hickam Field was devastating. There has been no information given out about the loss of life among the the navy personnel, but it must be extremely serious.

Attempts were made at landing at Bellows Field near Waimanalo and at Kailua, but these attempts were repulsed. Further attempts at bombing have been made, but the anti aircraft guns are on the alert now and they have been kept off. There have been a number of naval engagements, but no one knows any details. Many of the vessels at P.H. were out when the bombing occurred.

10.00 Connie just returned from the corner store where she bought a couple of lbs of meat. Unable to obtain bread and was told that as soon as the meat was exhausted, there would be no more. Patrons are restricted to purchases of \$3.00 per person, she was told.

EVENING. Nothing over the radio except army notices. Notice regarding food and the closing of stores on the morrow for taking inventory. All stores will hereafter be licensed and the food sold will be rationed. Letter from Miss Coats at the Waimanalo Clubhouse who apparently did not hear of the attack until Monday morning. - - - - Near dark I pinned black cloth over front room windows and attempted to use light. About 6.15 warned that light showed a little and must be extinguished. While the light was on Mary Gibbs and Mrs Logan came in and sat down. Mary said that the battle ships Oklahoma, Nevada and Arizona were destroyed, the fate of the Calif. was unknown and that numerous smaller vessels were destroyed. The floating dry dock was bombed and sunk. Work was going forward of retrieving the bodies of which there must have been thousands. Ford Island, the navy air station and Hickam Field, the Army air port were shambles. The bombers came so low that they were unable to use the anti air craft guns. The quarters of the men at Hickam were bombed and when other men ran out they were machine gunned. Ninety percent of the planes on Oahu, she said it was estimated, were destroyed. Said that ~~it~~ three pocket submarines slipped into Pearl Harbor and torpedoed battle ships at the same time bombing took place. These subs, she said, were small ones, manned by three men only, and were themselves destroyed. - - - - Paper came out as usual and carried news of attack on other regions, Wake Island, Guam, HongKong, Manila, and other places. Mary said an officer in uniform told a taxi man to take him a certain place and the man, Japanese, was immediately shot. - - - - Later I went to the dark room and tried to read, but one of the women soon came and said that a red ~~it~~ light showed faintly, so I came in and went to bed at 7.30 but did not sleep until late. At about nine an army announcement stated that gasoline was being rationed. At ten I looked out into the street for about ten minutes. and saw only one car without lights pass. No other movement was visible except the palms which swayed in the wind.

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