



SIX WEDDINGS & “The Wedding Dress”

Chiyomi looked stunning in her beautiful wedding dress as she and Kaz Ogawa said their nuptials in the shadow of the majestic Sierra Nevada mountains on March 26, 1944. Like so many other young Americans who would take part in launching the start of the “baby boom” that followed World War II, the Ogawa’s had found love and were ready to settle down. What should have been one of the happiest days of their lives must have been dampened by the barbed wire that surrounded their wedding location. They were married while at Manzanar, one of 10 “War Relocation Camps” established in the U.S. to house American citizens of Japanese descent and Japanese immigrants who lived along the Pacific Coast of the country under Executive Order 9066.



Chiyomi’s Auntie Nui, a professional seamstress, designed and made the wedding dress for the bride’s special day. They sent away for the material to Montgomery Ward, her flowers were silk and Chiyomi borrowed the veil. After the war ended and Japanese Americans worked to reclaim and rebuild their lives, Chiyomi’s wedding dress was eventually worn by five other women on their special days. This garment weaved a common thread through the lives of Chickie Hino, Hara Fujihara, Hasie Ogawa, Kay Fujikawa and Nattie Koyama. Just like Chiyomi, all of them made their homes and raised their families in Pasadena, CA.

Chiyomi never imagined that her wedding dress would inspire interest 68 years after she said “I do,” nor did she ever fathom the photo of her and Kaz would generate such intrigue as a unique record of American history. This photo along with some of the other brides who wore the dress photos were captured by legendary photographer Toyo Miyatake, who was also incarcerated at Manzanar. Committed to continuing his craft, he smuggled a lens into the camp and build a camera using a wooden box. His photos provide some of the few first-person perspectives of life inside Manzanar. Some of his work from this experience is documented in a book produced in collaboration with Ansel Adams, *Two Views of Manzanar*. After WWII, Toyo Miyatake was the Wedding Photographer for brides Haru Fujihara and Chickie Hino.



Photo of wedding dress next to the guard tower and barbed wire fence at Manzanar (Credits: Kevin Kuromi, Pixel Graphic Design & Steve Nagano)

Six Weddings & A Dress – a documentary film by Steve Nagano

This film was show in 2014 at the LA Asian Pacific Film Festival through Visual Communication (VC) at the CGV Cinemas Theatre 2 in Los Angeles.

The film was shown at the White Satin Wedding Show in September, 2014 at Santa Anita Racetrack

The film was also shown in January, 2015 at Pasadena High School for the Fred Korematsu Day Pasadena

8 Minute Documentary by Steve Nagano

<https://vimeo.com/96036609>

BRIDES in “The Wedding Dress”

Chiyomi & Kaz Ogawa 3/26/47 – Harumi & Tad Fujihara 4/6/47 – Chiyeko & Yukio Hino 11/15/47
Hasie & Yukio Ogawa 4/4/48 – Nattie & Nob Koyama 8/17/48 – Kay & George Fujikawa 3/25/50



Chiyomi & Kaz Ogawa 3/26/47



Harumi & Tadashi Fujihara 4/5/47



Chiyeko & Yukio Hino 11/15/47



Hasie & Yukio Ogawa 4/4/48



Nattie & Nob Koyama 8/17/48



Kay & George Fujikawa 3/25/50





Hasie Miyamoto
Yukio Ogawa 1948



Nattie Nishizawa
Nobu Koyama 1948





Chiyomi Ogawa
Kaz Ogawa
1947