



*Manzanar Cemetery, Winter 2002.*

This booklet was developed by the park rangers at Manzanar National Historic Site in partnership with the individuals profiled and their families.



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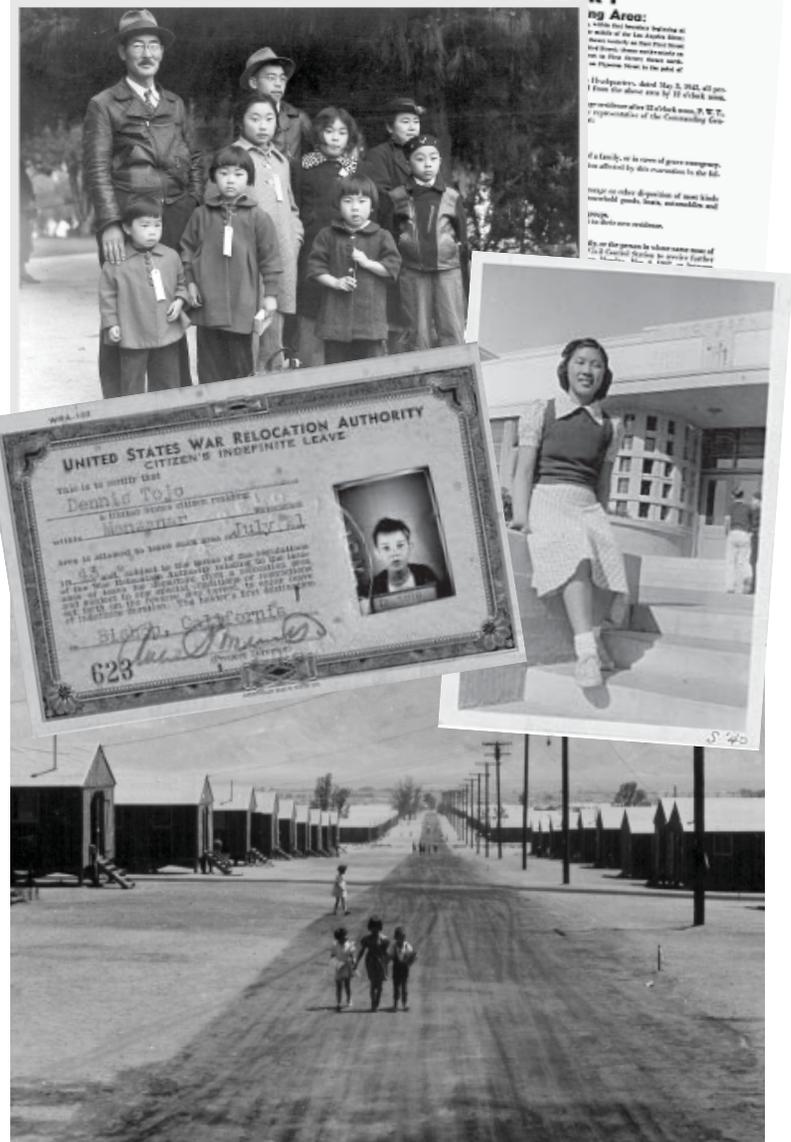
# Manzanar



## ID Card

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY  
 WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION  
 Presidio of San Francisco, California  
 May 3, 1942

**INSTRUCTIONS  
 TO ALL PERSONS OF  
 JAPANESE  
 ANCESTRY**





In 1942 the United States Government ordered over 110,000 men, women, and children to leave their homes and detained them in remote, military-style camps. Two-thirds of them were born in America. Not one was convicted of espionage or sabotage.

In this booklet, you will read the story of a person who lived this history, in his or her own words.



## LIFE IN A MANZANAR BLOCK

### Wind and Dust

This wind and dust I have to bear  
 How hard it blows I do not care.  
 But when the wind begins to blow --  
 My morale is pretty low.  
 I know that I can see it through  
 Because others have to bear it too.  
 So I will bear it with the rest  
 And hope the outcome is the best.

-- George Nishimura, age 16 (1943)

# MANZANAR Free Press

## MANZANAR

**Location:** Inyo County, California, at the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada.

### **Environmental**

**Conditions:** Temperatures can be over 100 degrees in summer and below freezing in winter. Strong winds & dust storms are frequent.

**Acreage:** 6,000

**Opened:** March 21, 1942 as a Reception Center and June 1, 1942 as a War Relocation Center.

**Closed:** November 21, 1945

**Max. Population:** 10,046 (September 1942)

**Demographics:** Most internees were from the Los Angeles area, Terminal Island, and the San Fernando Valley. Others came from the San Joaquin Valley and Bainbridge Island.



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## **YAYOI OKUNO HIRASHIKI**

**Family # 4604**

**Camp: Manzanar, CA**

**Address: 10-6-1**

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My parents were married in Japan and came to San Francisco in 1905. They had seven girls and a son, all born on Terminal Island, located between San Pedro and Long Beach.

Father and a brother owned a commercial fishing boat and fished Southern California, Mexico and Panama waters. Mother and two oldest daughters worked in a fish cannery. The rest of us were attending San Pedro Schools. I was in the 8th grade.

On Dec. 7, 1941, we were shocked. My Dad was taken by the FBI. and his boat was confiscated. Monday we did not want to go to school. People stared at us and we felt guilty, for we looked like the enemy.

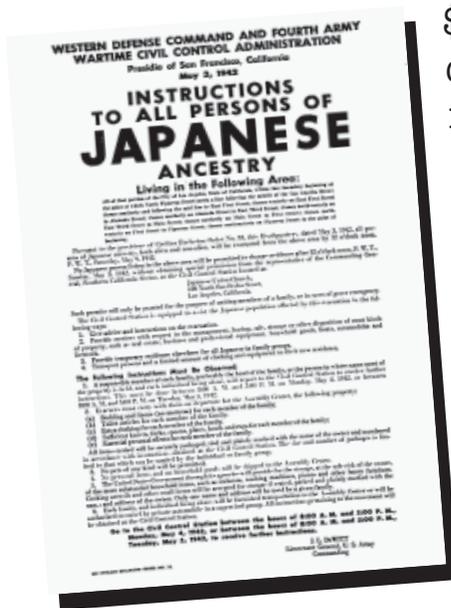
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**People stared at us and we felt guilty, for we looked like the enemy.**

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Our roots were cut from under us. Fear of "What's going to happen? Where are we going?" Take only what we can carry (one suit case or duffle bag).

Mother heard how the American Indians were treated by the U.S. Army so she gave each of us



\$25 to pin to our undies for emergency, food or shelter, if separated. Used furniture people converged on Terminal Island and bought household furnishings, some almost new, for \$.10 on the dollar or less. Our neighbor lady, childless, her husband also taken by the FBI. had to dispose of

her furnishings. I helped her deal with the “gruff” buyers, who intimidated and scared her to sell for almost nothing.

Bused to Manzanar Concentration Camp from West Los Angeles, soldiers with guns and bayonets guarded us all the way. But for whose protection?

We were miserable, with dust blowing everywhere—in our eyes, mouth, hair and in our room.

First, we didn’t know that there were so many American Japanese.

Second, we, (rich or poor) were all in the same situation: eat, shower together with no privacy, and families lived in one room.

One time, there was a protest by a group and a young man was killed by a “nervous” M.P.

Being incarcerated, my parents were able to rest from daily responsibility of providing for the family.

My parents, oldest sister and her husband and baby, my brother and youngest sister went to Japan. The remaining sisters stayed in the U.S., as my Mom told us that, “If Japan is good, we will help you. But if things are better in America, you help us.” They left in 1946.

We came to Los Angeles and stayed with our Uncle, Mom’s brother. My youngest sister and I worked as “house girls” (cleaning, cooking and baby sitting). Monthly we sent money to our parents. I was able to attend a Beautician School while working, and passed my California state license test. I quit my job and worked full time as a beautician.

The low point was when I was spit on by an old man who said, “Jap. Go back where you came from!” I was 19 years old.

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**“Jap. Go back where you came from!”**

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In spite of my experiences, I matured fast and still think this is a good country. In 1950 Mom and Dad passed away in Japan.