



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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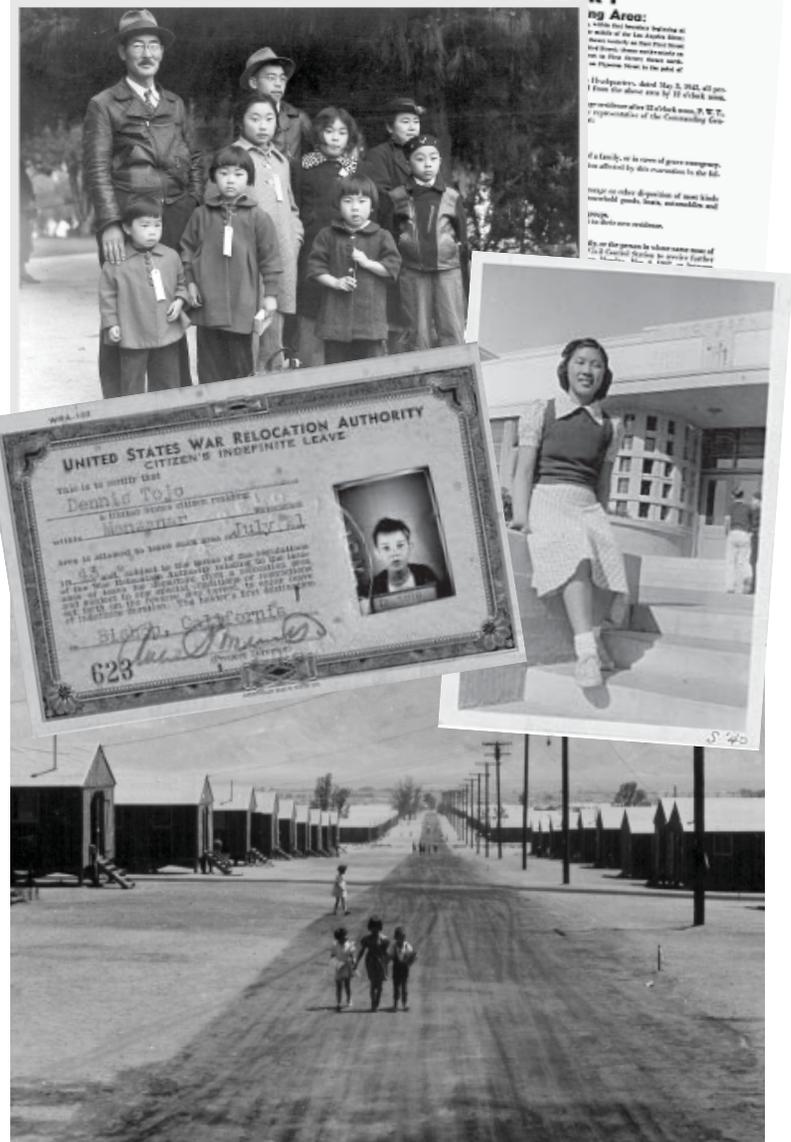
Manzanar



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)

bombed Pearl Harbor. All members of the armed forces were immediately called back to their post.

It gave me an uneasy feeling to see signs on storefronts . . . “No Jap Trade Wanted”

It gave me an uneasy feeling to see signs on storefronts around Fowler, stating “No Jap Trade Wanted.” We saw other oriental groups trying to distinguish themselves from Japanese Americans by wearing buttons stating, “I Am a Chinese-American.”

We obeyed the government’s orders to stay within the five-mile restricted area and observe an 8 P.M. to 6 A.M. curfew.

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When we learned we were to be evacuated, the Feavers family that my dad worked for stored our possessions. Another lady friend took care of my pet Persian cat. But within one week after evacuation, I received a letter from her saying my pet died from a broken heart.

borrowed money from my parents to open up his first bakery. We’ve had an exciting life with a lot of great adventures.

I was not miserable or bitter about my camp experience. I tried to make the best of whatever situation I encountered. Before World War II, I lived a rather passive life in a small community. The experience of going to camp was puzzling at first, but recalling those anti-Japanese storefront posters I came to the conclusion that going to the relocation center was for our own safety.

After settling down to my daily camp life, working in the hospital, meeting new friends and relocating to Chicago, I saw my life in a much broader sense with an open mind. My favorite song was “*Que Será, Será*.”



Grace and George Izumi, 2002



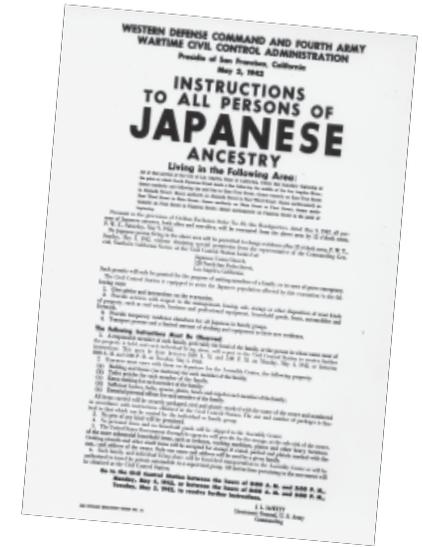
Jerome War Relocation Center

A younger brother also served in the military stateside.

We returned to Fowler after we left camp. We were happy to return to familiar surroundings, but I still missed my friends I met in camp. The friends who stored our belongings welcomed us with open arms, and father went back to work for them until he bought his own grape ranch.

Coming from a small, tightly knit community and returning was a relief, but eventually it was rather confining. Most of my hometown friends relocated to Los Angeles, where they worked as housekeepers and I soon followed. I got a job taking care of the children of a Hollywood producer, and eventually met my husband George, who was working in Beverly Hills as a baker. We

During spring, 1942, our family of six was sent to the Fresno Assembly Center, located at the Fresno County Fairground, where we lived in a barrack room. Two months later, we were transferred by train to the relocation center in Jerome, Arkansas.



That was my first train ride, and what an adventure it was. The furthest I'd ever traveled was to Los Angeles or San Francisco.

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The camp was located in a desolate part of Arkansas, but through the efforts of the internees the place was made livable. When we arrived, I was surprised to find the latrine facilities were not completed. There were no partitions between the showers. No privacy whatsoever. Later, they installed partitions to create a sense of semi-privacy.

The pesky chigger bug bites stand out in my mind.

I worked in the hospital as a diet aide, and met Japanese Americans who had come to Jerome from different areas of the West Coast.

I got the opportunity to meet new people who became life long friends.

I enjoyed the positive aspects of camp; being with friends at social gatherings, and attending and participating in various sporting events. I got the opportunity to meet new people who became life long friends. I was able to leave

camp on day trips to the neighboring towns, and also take a trip to Little Rock.

I believe camp gave my parents their first opportunity to relax and make use of their long lost manual skill in handicrafts such as crocheting, knitting and making flowers with paper and wires, and mounting them on a picture frame. In camp, the ladies got together with their circle of friends, which was quite a change from their pre-war lifestyle.

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Normally they were so busy working side by side with their husbands they hardly had time for socializing.

I left camp with a girlfriend in 1943 and relocated to Chicago, where I worked in a candy factory for six months with other Japanese Americans. Traveling from Arkansas to Chicago was a memorable experience. I remember seeing separate drinking fountains and rest rooms for blacks and whites, and blacks having to sit in the back of the bus. That is what I call injustice.

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I returned to my family at Jerome, and a short time later they closed Jerome and we moved to the Rohwer camp. Two of my brothers were in the U.S. Army. Roy was stationed in the U.S. and George served in the Military Intelligence Service in the Philippines, Australia and finally in occupied Japan. He went to Hiroshima just a short time after the atomic bombing, and found an uncle who had radiation sickness. Our grandmother was killed in the blast.