



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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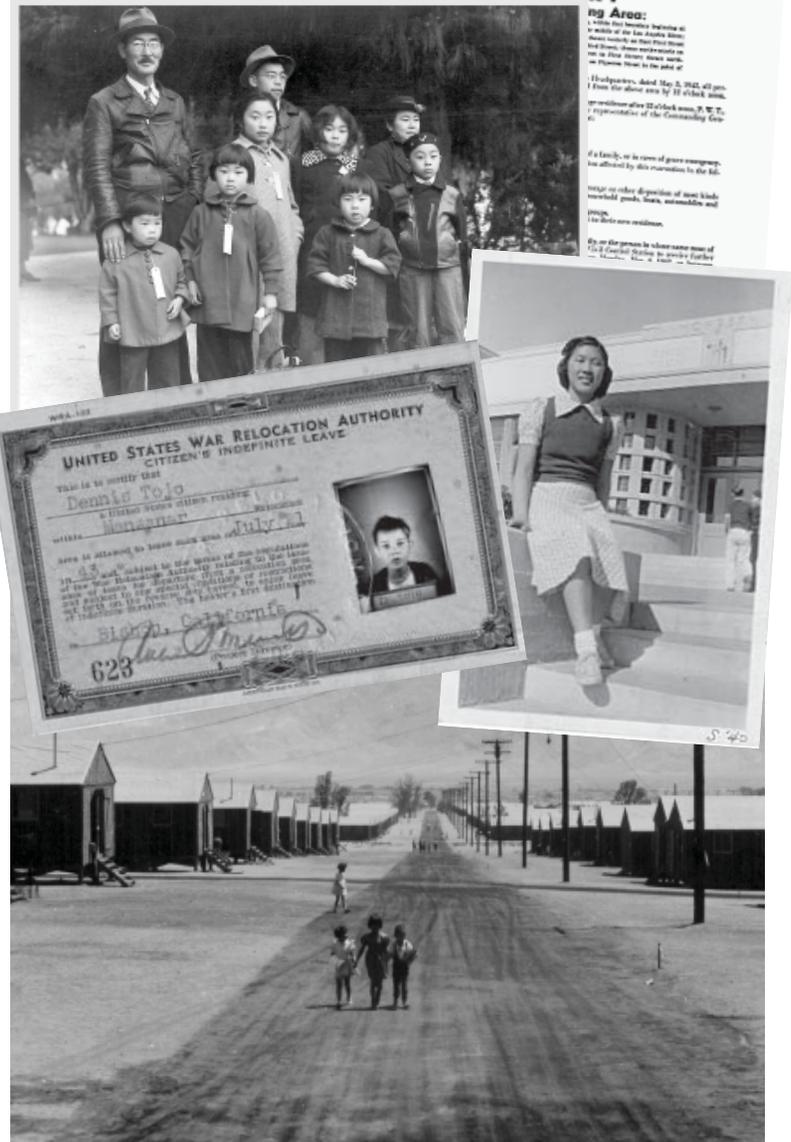
Manzanar



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.



ROSIE MARUKI KAKUUCHI

Family # 9126

Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 21-8-3



We were a family of five before Pearl Harbor: father, mother, sister, brother and me. Father worked in the produce market. Mother worked as a seamstress in a dry cleaning shop owned by my cousin.

I was a 16 year old, naïve, immature and insecure 10th grader. For a 10th grader, high school and its surroundings were new and exciting. My friends and I went places as a group and enjoyed attending movies, miniature golf and going to football games.

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, we were afraid to go anywhere. We remained close to home and listened to the radio, read newspaper headlines and waited for news of our next movement. When war was declared, and we were notified that we would be relocated to a camp, the principle at Roosevelt High School called a special assembly of the whole student body. He announced that the present situation is uncertain and grim to

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many students; however the Japanese American students are welcome to remain in school as long as they are able to. I felt that the students and teachers at our school were the most loving, understanding, patriotic and compassionate people. Their support was very comforting.

We had less than three weeks to sell furniture, etc, which my parents worked so hard to get. We were told to pack warm clothes, personal things, sturdy shoes, long johns etc. as we were not sure of the weather we would encounter. All our families and relatives used one address so we could remain together.

The train ride to Manzanar was like we were being transported like criminals. The shades were drawn as we left the city. The train was rickety, the seats were hard. I felt sorry for my older sister who was pregnant.

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After the train ride, we were bussed into Manzanar Camp behind barbed wire and sentry guards with machine guns. It was windy, dusty, and miserable. Each family lined up to receive their army ration and straw filled mattress and we were marched to assigned living quarters.



Two words I would like to teach you as a mentor: GAMBARE—(pronounced “ga-m-ba-le”) Push yourself, go for it, don’t stop until you reach your goal. You can do it.

GAMAN—(pronounced “ga-ma-n”) To endure—GAMAN carried us through the trying years before and after camp.

So stick it out no matter what the odds—make the most of what you have. “HANG IN THERE.”



Grace Maruki and the "Calico Cats" at Manzanar, June 1944

One of the things I missed in camp was ice cream sundaes. My sister and I would meet after work (I worked for the L.A. County Public Library, and sister for the L.A. Unified School District), and we would stop at Newberry's Five and Ten Store before catching our bus home, to snack on ice cream. Unfortunately the waitress ignored us and refused to serve us. This was our first encounter with prejudice.

I was married on March 20, 1949, had three children, worked 7 years with L.A. Unified School District, then moved to Montebello. In June 1991, I retired from Montebello Unified School District after 28 years. Finally, I moved to Las Vegas in 1992.

If I were a mentor for a student my advice would be—try not to be shy; don't sit back, but ask questions; because this was one of my mistakes and faults.

We shared our room with two other families who were strangers.

We shared our room with two other families who were strangers. There was no privacy, only sheets hanging, separating each family. There was a stove to heat the room and one drop light. As a teenager, one of the hardest things to endure was the communal latrines, with no partitions; and showers with no stalls. This situation was embarrassing, humiliating and degrading.

School started in Sept. 1942. No chairs, no desks, no books, no normal equipment. We sat on the cold linoleum floors. Eventually we got our chairs, desks, books and equipment. Bless the dedicated teachers! Our classes were held and we learned.



Rosie and Grace Maruki at Manzanar, 1945

Being among studious students was very difficult for me. I preferred playing ball or spending time with my girlfriends. We had our student government (I was Student Body Secretary one semester, Class Secretary the other semester), pep rallies, school plays (I appeared in a couple of plays), entered a waltz contest (my partner and I came in first place). On Senior Prom night, the surprise dinner was rabbit. We thought it was fried chicken. I was chosen one of the Senior Prom princesses.

The fad was bobby socks and saddle shoes and pompadour hairdos. It was fun borrowing brother's pullover sweaters or his letterman's sweaters to wear to dances.

I shall always remember Louis Frizzell, Jr., our music teacher. He brought music, produced an operetta, and always had positive thoughts. The other person I shall remember is Ralph Lazo, a 16 year old Mexican American classmate, who left his family to join his classmates who were being incarcerated. Because of the injustice, he wanted to experience this journey with his friends.

My parents adjusted to the new way of life, my mother no longer had to cook and was able to learn flower making, flower arrangements, sewing, and attend adult education classes to learn English—things she could not do before.



Rosie Maruki and Friends at Manzanar

The only personal tragedy for our family in camp was due to inadequate hospital facilities. I lost my oldest sister, who was only 23 years old. She hemorrhaged to death giving birth to twin girls. The twins died the following morning.

After graduation, I worked in the Personnel Office as a clerk and earned \$12 per month.

Before camp closed in September, 1945, my sister and I left camp to establish a place for our parents to live. Remember, we lost everything. We had to start from scratch. We retrieved from our friend, items which she kept for us during our time in camp. We found a custodial job, for a live-in couple to care for hotel rooms. Our parents worked there for a few years, moved to a rented house and eventually bought a home in Boyle Heights.