



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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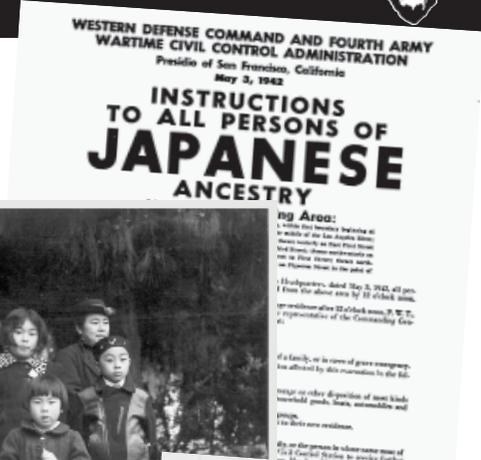
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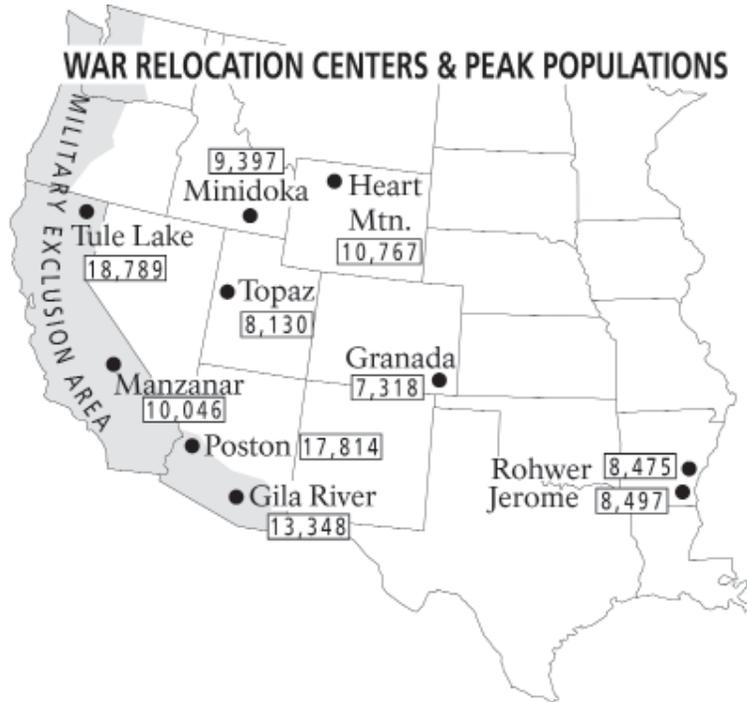
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Manzanar



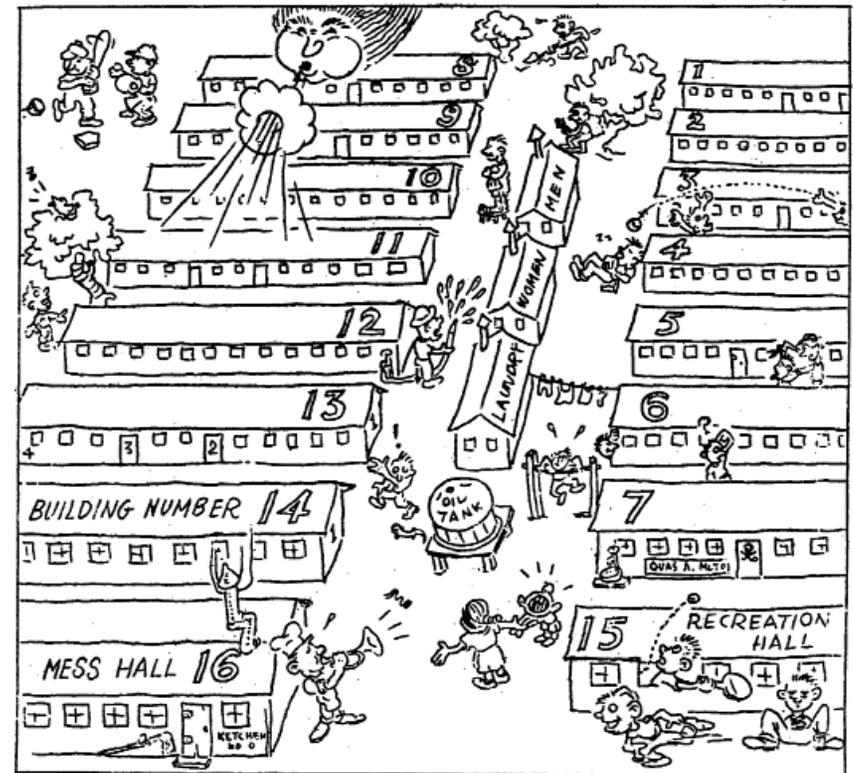
ID Card





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.



KAZUKO TOJI KATO

Family # 3692

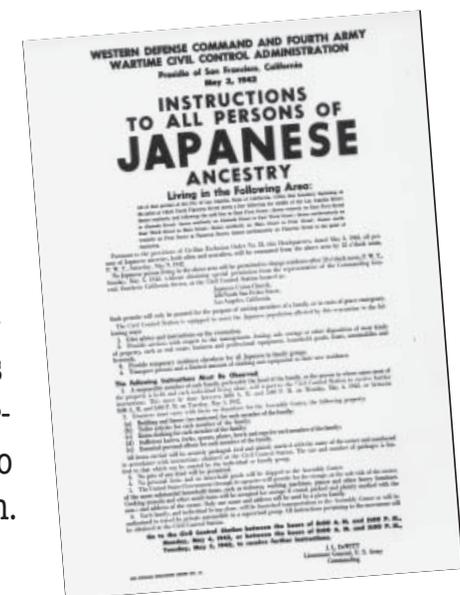
Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 22-11-4



In June of 1924, my mother met my dad for the first time, married him and came to America in search of a better life. They arrived in Los Angeles on the 4th of July. My mom saw the fireworks and thought this was a beautiful place to start a new life. They settled in Glendale. I was the fourth of five children. My mom was a laundress and my dad was a gardener. We attended Chevy Chase grammar school in Glendale. I believe I was in the third grade.

On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. A few days after turning nine in May, 1942, we were sent to Manzanar. My dad was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He was sent to Olive View Sanitarium.



My mother, alone with five children under the ages of twelve, went to camp without her husband.

My mother, alone with five children under the ages of twelve, went to camp without her husband. I do not remember too much about how the bombing affected us. I just remember my brothers saying they called us “Japs” at school. My parents did not lose their jobs.

We had a very short time to get ready for camp. I remember my mom staying up very late to sew blankets, duffle bags and long pants for my sister and I. We did not have any luggage in which to take our pos-

My dad had to sell his truck that he used for gardening and we sold our piano for ten dollars.

sessions nor did we have long pants to wear. Girls just did not wear pants. My mom heard it was going to be very cold and there were a lot of snakes. My dad had to sell his truck that he used for gardening and we sold



Arriving at Manzanar, 1942



“Remember who you are and where you came from.”

I would say to students now, “Remember who you are and where you came from.”





I was ashamed to tell people that I was in camp, so I did not want to talk about it. I just put all thoughts about it out of my mind.

I never talked about the experiences in camp until recently. My sons ask why I did not tell them anything while they were growing up. In a way, I feel like a rape victim. I was ashamed to tell people that I was in camp, so I did not want to talk about it. I just put all thoughts about it out of my mind.

our piano for ten dollars. Our landlord let us store some of our belongings in the garage, but when we returned to get them after the war, everything of value was gone.



Dusty Manzanar street, 1942

We boarded a bus and arrived at Manzanar. It was very dusty and I was very tired. I walked to school daily and it was either very hot or very windy and cold. During the three years that I attended school, I went from third grade to seventh grade. Of course I missed my old school but I adjusted to the new school. Actually I had a lot of fun. I joined a group of girls and we called ourselves the

I walked to school daily and it was either very hot or very windy and cold.



Manzanar majorettes, photo by Toyo Miyatake

Jolliets. We ordered batons from the Sears catalog and had lots of fun high stepping and twirling the throwing our batons in the air.

I was not aware of any of the politics that took place. My sister and brothers were too young and they did not have to fill out any questionnaires. I do



Manzanar Hospital, 1942

not recall being sick. Although, one day, they took me to the hospital and removed my tonsils. I was told they routinely removed the tonsils of many children. I still do not know the reason.



Manzanar War Relocation Center, 1942

We left camp in August of 1945 with very little money. My mother did not have a job, my father was still at Olive View and the four of us were still in school. My brothers went to work in a home to earn their keep and go to school. In those days, they were called “school boys and girls”. My brother and I stayed with our mom while she cooked and cleaned.

When I turned thirteen, I also went to be a school girl. Another reason for doing this is because we did not have enough money and many people would not rent to Japanese anyway. This was the most difficult period of my life.

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