



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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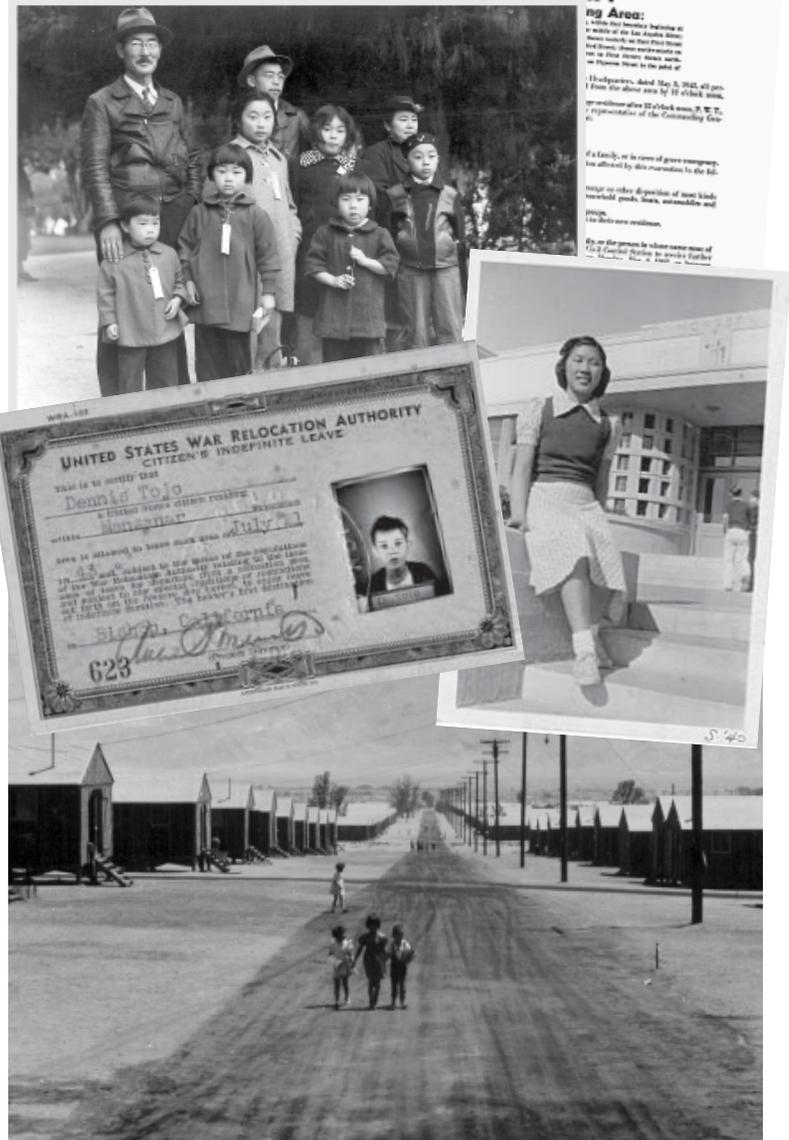
Printing was made possible by a grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program.

Manzanar



ID Card

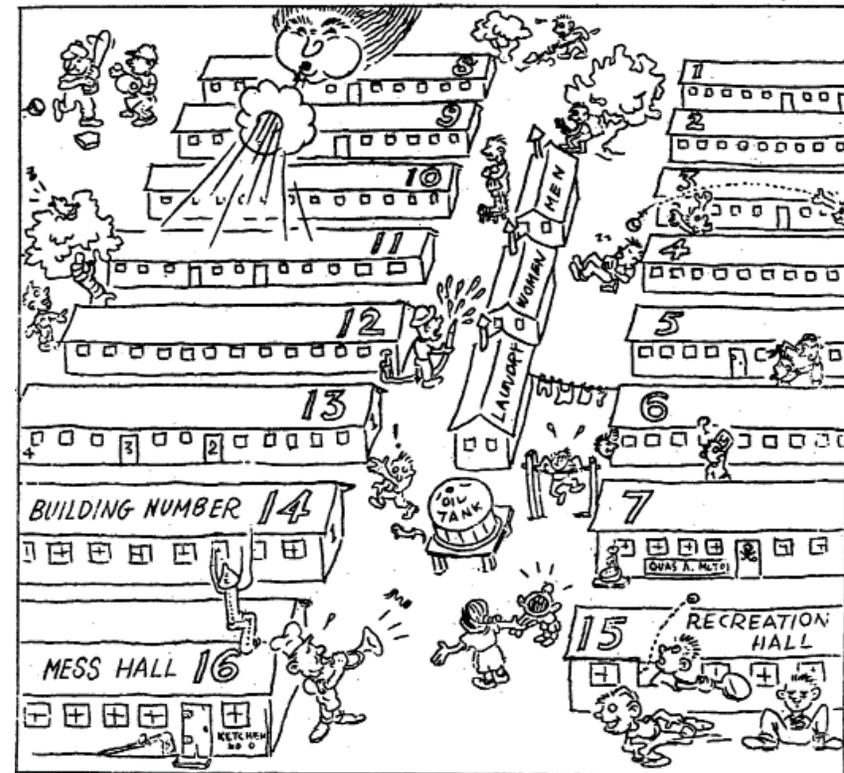
WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
 WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
 Presidio of San Francisco, California
 May 3, 1942
**INSTRUCTIONS
 TO ALL PERSONS OF
 JAPANESE
 ANCESTRY**





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.



ARCHIE MIYATAKE

Family # 9975

Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 20-12-4



Archie Miyatake, 1943

My grandfather Junryo Miyatake, came to the U.S. from Zentsuji, Japan around 1902, and started a confectionary store in Los Angeles. He was successful and retired to Japan around 1925.

My father Toyo was born in 1896, and came to the U.S. around 1915. My mother Hiro was born in 1904. They married in 1922. I was born in "Little Tokyo" Los Angeles in 1924. My brother Bob was born in 1930, Richard in 1936, and my sister Minnie in 1938.

My father was a professional photographer and won international awards for his artistic images. He photographed dancers, actors, and others. He opened his own photo studio in 1923.

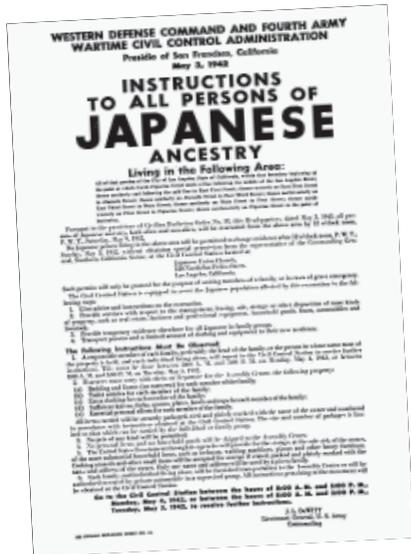
When I was 9, my grandfather became very ill, and my father sold his business to return to Japan to help manage the family's property. My grandfather died while we were on the ship to Japan. My father didn't like living in Japan so he returned to the U.S. within a year. My mother, brother and I stayed in Japan for two more years to help my grandmother.

I attended school in Japan. I knew Japanese from speaking it at home, but other students called me a “Yankee.” I made friends, but I was glad when we returned to the U.S. to rejoin my father. My mother helped my father in the studio, doing beautiful oil tinting on black and white pictures and portraits, and handling the business.

I couldn't believe the news of Pearl Harbor when I heard it on the radio on December 7, 1941.

I went to First Street School in Boyle Heights, Stevenson Junior High School in East Los Angeles and Roosevelt High School in Boyle Heights. My friends were Caucasians, Latinos, and Japanese.

I couldn't believe the news of Pearl Harbor when I heard it on the radio on December 7, 1941. I was disappointed because I thought Japan and the U.S. were friends. My father was taking pictures of a wedding that day, when the FBI came and arrested some people right at the reception. They were taken away in tuxedos. My father was not arrested.



When we had to evacuate, we went to Manzanar with the people from Little Tokyo. Our neighbors from Boyle Heights went to the camps in



Toyo Miyatake

true image of people, because of his interest in them. He passed away in 1979. My mother passed away in 1972.

One thing that amazes me is that my father's thinking was so far ahead of the rest of us. When he was packing to go into camp, when everybody else was worried about what was going to happen to us, he was thinking beyond that, sneaking in the lens and the film holder; knowing how important what he recorded was going to be in the future. I'm trying to continue what my father started. More than anything else I try to keep his work alive.

After the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001, there could have easily been round ups of Middle Eastern people, putting them into camps. Of course, some people were arrested, but not everybody, the way Japanese were. Maybe Manzanar National Historic Site will help prevent that sort of thing by teaching people about our experiences during World War II.



Archie & Take Miyatake, 2003

As the war wound down, I traveled to L.A. to look for work. I was there the day the war ended. I was walking on Broadway Street and all of a sudden I heard people start to scream and yell and kiss each other. It was quite a relief to hear that the war was really over, peace at last.

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As camp started to empty out, I wondered how some of the old people could start over. One of two old bachelors committed suicide because they had nowhere to go.

In September my father and I went to the Poston and Gila River Relocation Camps in Arizona, and spent two days taking pictures of people and their crafts for a book called "Beauty Behind Barbed Wire."

In November 1945, we moved back to L.A. We came to Manzanar with our limit of only two suitcases each. When we left, we had three truckloads of things to take back.

Rentals were very scarce, so we converted part of our garage into living quarters. After the doctor renting our house left, we moved back in and took in two or three other families. There were about 30 people living in that little house for a while! We used to eat in shifts. As people found their own places to live, they moved out.

My father never did talk too much about his work, but he was interested in people. He would spend hours talking with people and sometimes he'd forget to take their portrait. His work was outstanding because he got the

Arizona. When we left, we rented our house to a doctor. We left all the furniture and everything, and it was there when we returned.

We left for Manzanar on May 9, 1942. As soon as we got on the train we were told to pull the shades down. From Lone Pine we were taken by bus to Manzanar. I thought, "What a desolate place." Dust was blowing. We lined up to sign in and get our baggage inspected, and then were given our blankets and a big canvas bag that we filled up with hay for our mattress. Eventually we got a regular mattress. There were seven of us in the room, including my cousin Chizuko, a volunteer who had come early to help set up the camp.

School was basic at first. We sat on the floor. But it improved. I liked the teachers. I joined the carpentry class and made outdoor theater benches, shelves, stools and partitions for our apartment.



It was pretty hard for my mother and others because we all had to use central facilities for laundry, ironing, toilets, and showers. One day, I was outside



Arriving at Manzanar, 1942

with my friends when my father called me in and said, “As a photographer I have a responsibility to record camp life so that this kind of thing will never happen again. I snuck in a lens and some film holders and I’m gonna find a carpenter to make a box for me.” He was going to build a secret camera, even though it was illegal for Japanese to take photos during the war! I worried that if he got caught, he’d be arrested and taken away. But, he had the camera made and got up early to take pictures when people weren’t around. A Caucasian friend smuggled film into the camp for him.

As time went on people started wanting family pictures. Some of their children were going to relocate or go into the army, and they might never see them again. My father received permission from the camp director to open a photo studio in the Block 30 ironing room. Later, the studio moved to one of the mess halls. The studio employed about six people, including me and my mother. We didn’t charge much for photos.

I had a friend in camp who collected music and we became disc jockeys, playing music for dances and social



Archie (third from left) with his family at Manzanar, 1943



A mess hall dance, 1942

events. We made enough money to keep a supply of new records. “Don’t Fence Me In” was a popular song! I met my future wife, Take Maeda, at a dance. We were married in 1949 and later had two sons.

When the loyalty questionnaire came out, I was pretty bitter. I thought, “Gee, for us to be thrown into camp, and now they’re asking if we want to serve in the armed forces.” I said “I don’t think so.” My father was worried I would be separated from the rest of the family. So, I had a hearing with the camp director and I told him, “I’ll swear loyalty to the United States, foreswear allegiance to Japan, but I don’t want to join the army because I don’t believe in killing people.”

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