



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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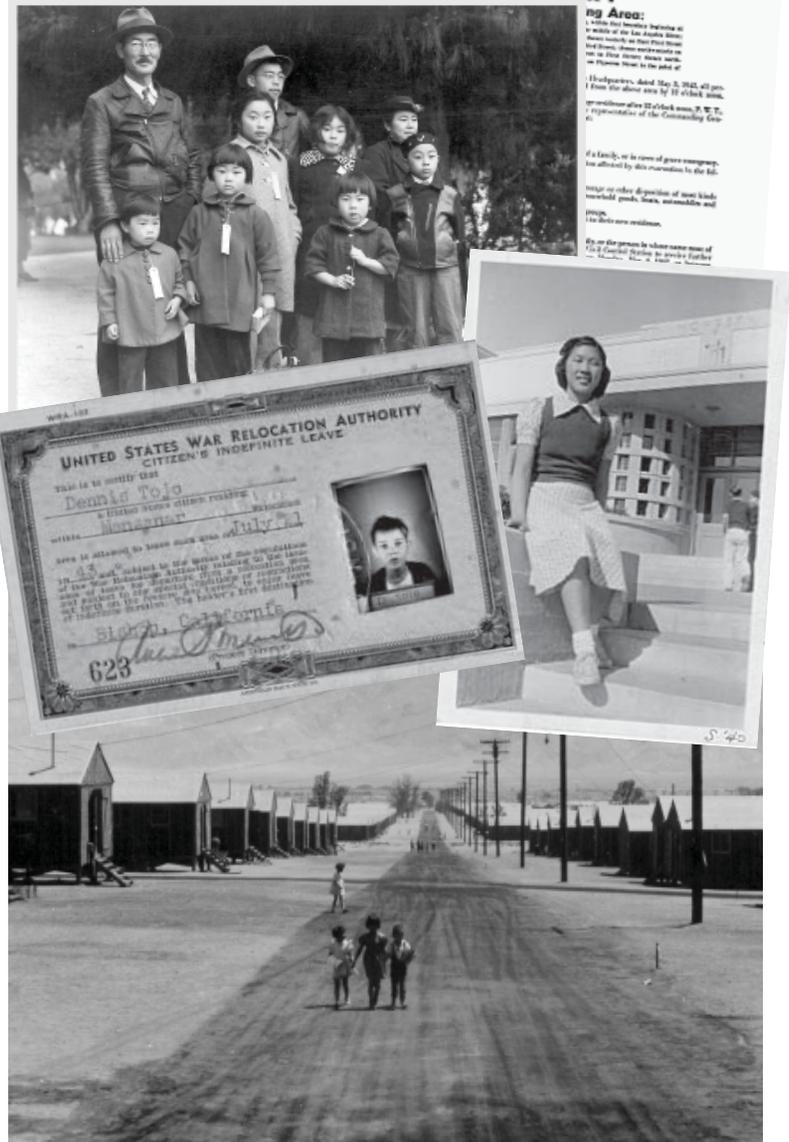
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Manzanar



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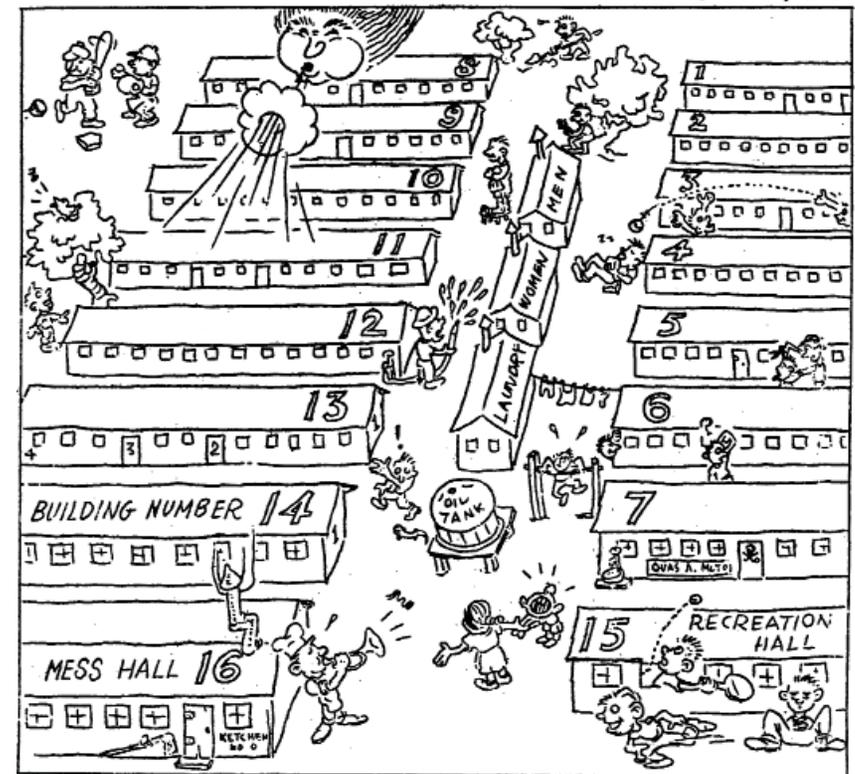
WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
 WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
 Presidio of San Francisco, California
 May 3, 1942
**INSTRUCTIONS
 TO ALL PERSONS OF
 JAPANESE
 ANCESTRY**





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)

GILA RIVER

Location: Southern Arizona

Environmental Conditions:

Located in the desert, temperatures reached 125 degrees, with summer temperatures consistently over 100 degrees. Dust storms were also a frequent problem.

Opened: July 10, 1942

Closed: Canal Camp: September 28, 1945
Butte Camp: November 10, 1945

Max. Population: 13,348 (November 1942)

Demographics: Internees primarily came from Fresno, Santa Barbara, San Joaquin, Solano, Contra Costa, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties via Turlock, Tulare, and Santa Anita Assembly Centers. 3,000 individuals came directly to Gila River.

Interesting/unusual facts

- *The Gila River Indian Community objected to the selection and use of their land for a Relocation Center.
- *The center was divided into two camps, Butte and Canal. The two camps were about 3.5 miles apart and included a total of 1,181 buildings.
- *Gila River was so hot that the barracks had to have two roofs to protect people from the heat!
- *Only one guard tower was erected at the Gila River Camp and it was torn down because of staffing limitations. Within six months, the perimeter barbed wire fence around each camp was removed.
- *Japanese Americans at Canal Camp built model ships for the U.S. Navy to use in military training.
- *Butte Camp featured a baseball diamond designed by professional baseball player Kenichi Zenimura. It included dugouts, bleachers, and other features and could accommodate up to 6,000 spectators.



FRANK MORI

Family #14145

Camp: Gila River, AZ

Address: 47-14-C



Frank Mori

I was born in 1920 and grew up in Santa Barbara, California. My father had emigrated from Japan in 1898. He worked for two years in Hawaii on a sugar plantation and then came to California. Eventually settling in Santa Barbara, he worked in landscape construction and other horticultural-related jobs.

Father found his bride through a procedure called a picture bride system, where letters and photographs were exchanged and a marriage was agreed by mutual consent.

Our family consisted of three boys and one girl. While I was growing up, Father had a profitable business growing freesia bulbs and selling them. I grew up in a Caucasian community, and spoke English since childhood. With my poor Japanese, I did not communicate too well with my parents.

After I graduated from high school, Father gave me a trip to the Orient. I spent the entire summer traveling through Japan, Korea, Manchuria, and China. Japan was still at war with China, and as we traveled we were treated with suspicion by the Japanese "KGB" in the occupied territories. In their eyes, we were not Japanese.

On the return voyage, as our ship approached the West Coast, someone shouted, "There's the Golden Gate Bridge." Far

away on the horizon, the small "gate" image appeared, and just the thought that I was home brought tears of joy. At that moment, I knew America, the land of my birth, was my country.

Eventually, I started working on my father's farm. On Sunday, December 7, 1941, my youngest brother, after hearing a special bulletin over the radio, brought the news to us at work that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was, and the gravity of the news had little effect at the time.

We went about our daily routine, but soon people were in a state of shock and panic. A Japanese submarine surfaced about 15 miles north of Santa Barbara, and fired shells at oil storage tanks on shore. I heard the distant booming as I was packing flowers.

Anti-Japanese hate groups, along with newspaper columnists, greedy businessmen and politicians came out of the closet to spread news that anyone of Japanese heritage was an enemy who could not be trusted. I hated my Japanese ethnicity, and burned anything that had a tie with Japan.

In February 1942, Executive Order 9066 went into effect, informing us that all Japanese and Japanese Americans were to be evacuated from the West Coast. I could not believe such a thing was happening to us. We

...America, the land of my birth, was my country.

...be prepared to face trials and suffering without fear, for you may not realize that you are tough and resilient and able to endure suffering and hardship, for every experience will make you tougher.

When I returned from Japan, my wife was out of camp and waiting for me near San Francisco, with our year and a half old daughter. The end of the war was also an end to the internment of Japanese in America, and the government, with an insensitive and stony heart, said: "Okay, the war is over, now you can go home." Home, what home? My parents chose to return to the Santa Barbara area, and stayed temporarily in a former church that was used as a hostel for returnees.

Life has been wonderful through the years, as we raised a family of four children, who have provided us with seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. This year will mark our 60th wedding anniversary.

So, to you who have a lifetime ahead of you, be prepared to face trials and suffering without fear, for you may not realize that you are tough and resilient and able to endure suffering and hardship, for every experience will make you tougher. At age 25, after incarceration and combat, I was ready to face life. What strengthened me further was coming to the knowledge of God, who has changed my heart and taught me forgiveness. I harbor no bitterness toward the injustice I experienced and have forgiven my country completely.

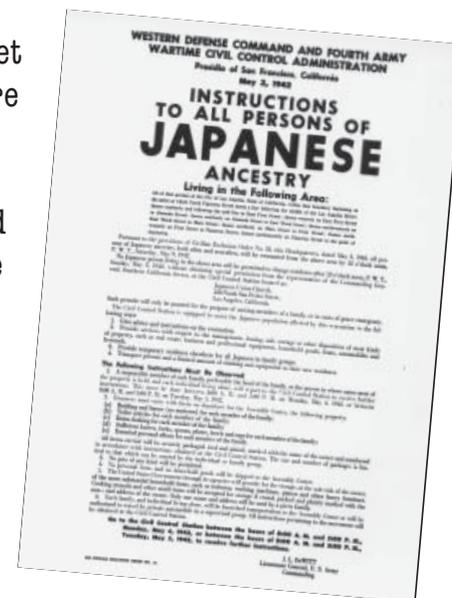


The first six months in the Army consisted of language school. During my first furlough, I married the girl I had left behind. Basic training followed at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. In December, I shipped out from this frigid country and joined the 77th Combat Infantry Division in Hawaii. We engaged the Japanese Imperial Army on Guam, the Philippines, and Okinawa. The division was back in the Philippines preparing for invasion of Japan when the Japanese Emperor announced the surrender.

My division had one more duty to perform, and that was occupation of the northernmost island of Hokkaido. It surprised me that the people we encountered on the streets thanked us for ending their nation's 14-year war. As I traveled from the north to Yokohama, the port of embarkation to the USA, I saw cities flattened to the ground.

had two months to get things in order before moving out.

We three boys all had Ford coupes, which we sold at the price a used bicycle is worth today. We sold the farm pickup. On the last day, Father practically gave away the remaining tomato crop.



One day in April, we were told to report to the train station in Santa Barbara. Army soldiers with rifles surrounded it. At that moment, we were enemies of America. There was an option that anyone desiring to drive his own vehicle could do so. My brother and I decided to drive, allowing us to take more personal items. We left under an armed military guard.

We drove to the Tulare Assembly Center, in the San Joaquin Valley of California. A county fairground had been converted to a prison, with high barbed wire fencing, tall towers with guards, and floodlights. I was a prisoner, without the protections of our Constitution.

Entering this prison, everything in our car was put on a table and inspected. Kitchen knives were confiscated. We were then taken to our living quarters, a room large enough to line up six Army cots. Some less fortunate families moved into horse stables.

In order for the camp to sustain itself, people volunteered for various jobs, such as in administration, health, food, school, etc.

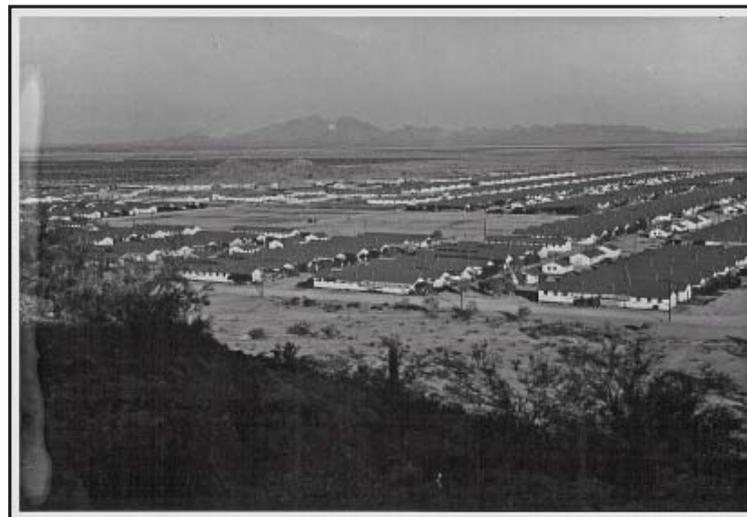
Surprisingly, we adjusted to the new life style quickly. In order for the camp to sustain itself, people volunteered for various jobs, such as in administration, health, food, school, etc. We had to make the most of the situation, and generally speaking, everyone was in good spirits. Some folks, who had worked hard without anything to show for their labors, felt it was a vacation. Some

housewives I spoke to thought it was wonderful not to have to cook three times a day, but to eat at the mess hall.

I volunteered to work in the mess hall. Soon we started to receive paychecks of \$13 a month. I remained at Tulare Assembly Center for five months. One experience that stands out was the Fourth of July celebration. There was quite a large audience. The participants were fellow prisoners who were ex-soldiers of World War I. Under the circumstances, the event bordered on the ridiculous.

While I was working as a waiter in the mess hall, a young lady, cheerful and friendly with a Hawaiian accent, caught my eye. She had come to California to train as a nurse only months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. This was the beginning of a friendship that carried over to our next home in Arizona.

We were transferred from Tulare to a large camp, Gila Relocation Center, in the lower Arizona desert. This camp was far less depressing, without the high barbed wire



Gila River War Relocation Center, Arizona

and guard towers. These were not necessary since no one would venture out into the vastness of the desert to escape. Where would one go? I started working at the mess hall again. An uncertain future made me very depressed.

One day I noticed an item on the bulletin board in the mess hall, to which I responded. Within two hours, my life took a dramatic change: One minute I was a prisoner, and the next, after taking an oath, I was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. I had volunteered for the Army Intelligence Service. It happened so quickly that there was no time to confer with my family or sweetheart since it was the last day that the recruitment team was in camp. Twenty-seven of us left the Gila camp after only two months there, in November 1942.

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