



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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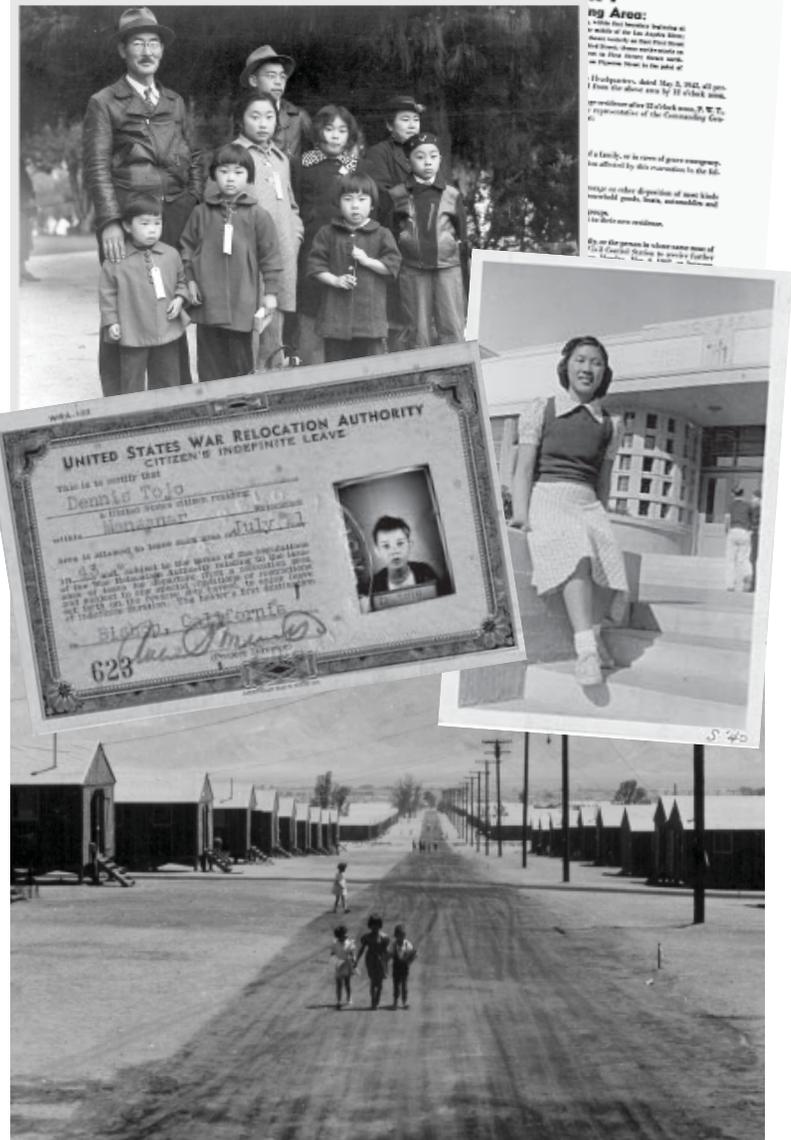
Manzanar



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.



RAYMOND E. MURAOKA

Family # 3654

Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 14-4-1

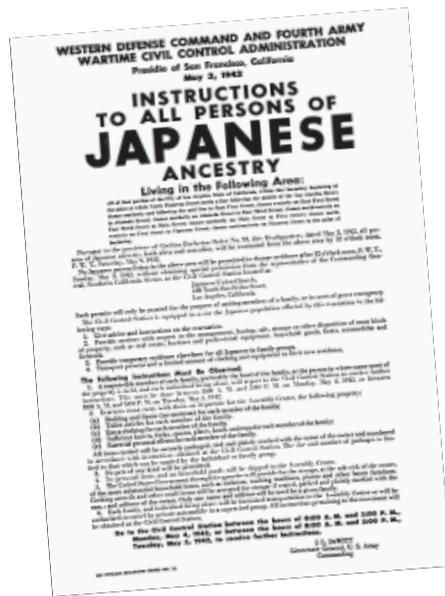
My parents are American citizens; father was born in Hawaii and mother in Gardena, California. Father was a farmer. At the time of Pearl Harbor there were six children: boy, 11; boy, 9; boy, 8; boy, 6; girl, 4 and girl, 2. One child was stillborn after we got to camp. A brother and sister were born in camp. I was in the 1st grade. I did not finish. I was pulled out of school about 3 months after Pearl Harbor when the evacuation order came out.

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Many things happened after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. We burned most of our keepsakes that came from Japan. We turned in weapons, radios and cameras to police. We relocated to San Fernando Valley to be with grandparents. We were treated differently. There was a song "You're a Sap Mr. Jap". We were treated as enemies.

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Los Angeles had blackouts and air raid warnings. This was a new routine for all families.



As a child, this was both frightening and a time for spooky games. We had a very short time since we moved quickly after the evacuation order. My father sold our new Plymouth. Our next door neighbor offered to store our belongings. The neighbor later disappeared. We took mostly clothes. Pets

were the most difficult things to leave behind. I remember the fireplace when we burned our Japanese items.



Arriving at Manzanar, 1942

eight kids. I always felt I had to do my share and always worked at being a better person. Being in camp, we made life long friendships. My best man was in Manzanar and another was an usher. Our backgrounds were similar but we learned to like each for the people that we were. This attitude has made my life rewarding with friends that I made in school, college, the army, work and now with my local community members.





Camp was a positive experience in that we were a homogenous group. Race was not a factor and we learned to judge and react to others for who they were. I learned early the value of strong family bonds. Alone, I was a shy, timid individual. With my brothers, we could conquer the world.

As individuals, each of us will experience many good and bad things. The more we experience, the

As individuals, each of us will experience many good and bad things. The more we experience, the more we grow.

more we grow. I feel that at 12 I was more mature than 21 year olds. After camp at 11, I sold and delivered newspapers and worked on farms. At 16, I got a job as a union produce clerk in a market. We worked to support our family now with

The bus was crowded and slow. The trip was strange in that we were going into the unknown and not having a home to go home to.

First impression of camp was that it was a very strange place: Barracks in a desolate place, camp was still being built. Everything was the same but different. It was getting dark; we assembled in a big group (waiting for barrack assignments). I remember waiting in line for vaccinations and crying when shot.



Vaccinations for New Arrivals at Manzanar, 1942

I missed the remainder of 1st grade (arrived in April 1942). 2nd grade was not much. 3rd grade was an academic disaster. In 4th grade I was the 3rd best student in class.

There were many family friends and relatives in camp. We played marbles,

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tag games with many kids in our block. Eventually we had a small swimming pool, gym bars, and basketball court. We learned early to play chess. I remember playing a game called War. I was told that the game was patented and someone changed it to "Stratego". The original was much better and gave us many hours of enjoyment.

I learned to be Japanese. Everything and everyone was homogenous.



Third Grade Students at Manzanar, 1942

I was a good student in the 4th grade. When I finished fourth, I didn't start the fifth until November since the camp closed in 11/45.

As I look back our culture was full of introverts, yet most kids were typically mean. Church, school and family gave me happy memories.

I used to watch the train in the distant hills and know someday that I would be going to distant places like the scenes in the movies.



We left when camp was closing on 11/15/45. We were there 3 ½ years. We were sent to a trailer camp across the street from Lockheed Aircraft that was still camouflaged to protect from Japanese air attack. It was humbling. We had chow lines, little money and a very bleak future. When we talked about camp we mentioned camp as a common denominator. Camp was not the "experience". Camp meant we were all Japanese and had to work together to be accepted back as Americans. In school most kids thought we came from Japan so we were a curiosity. Later we witnessed a lot of discrimination.