



*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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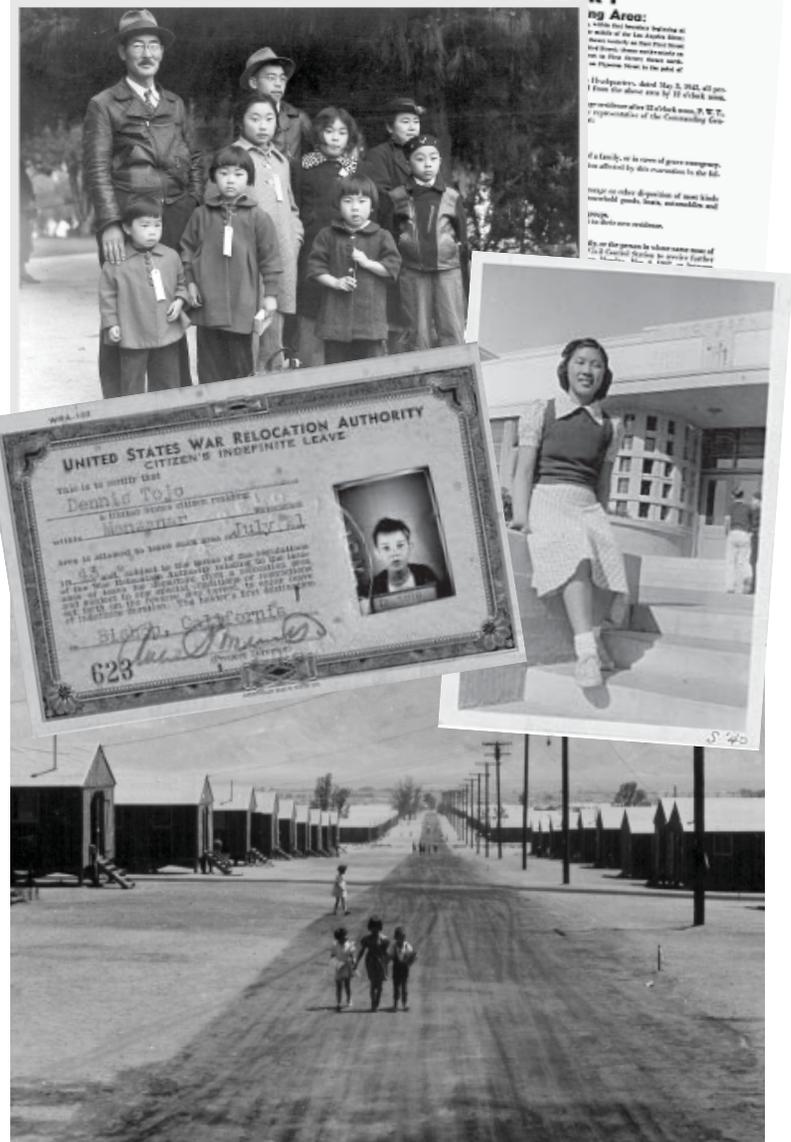
# Manzanar



## ID Card

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY  
 WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION  
 Presidio of San Francisco, California  
 May 3, 1942

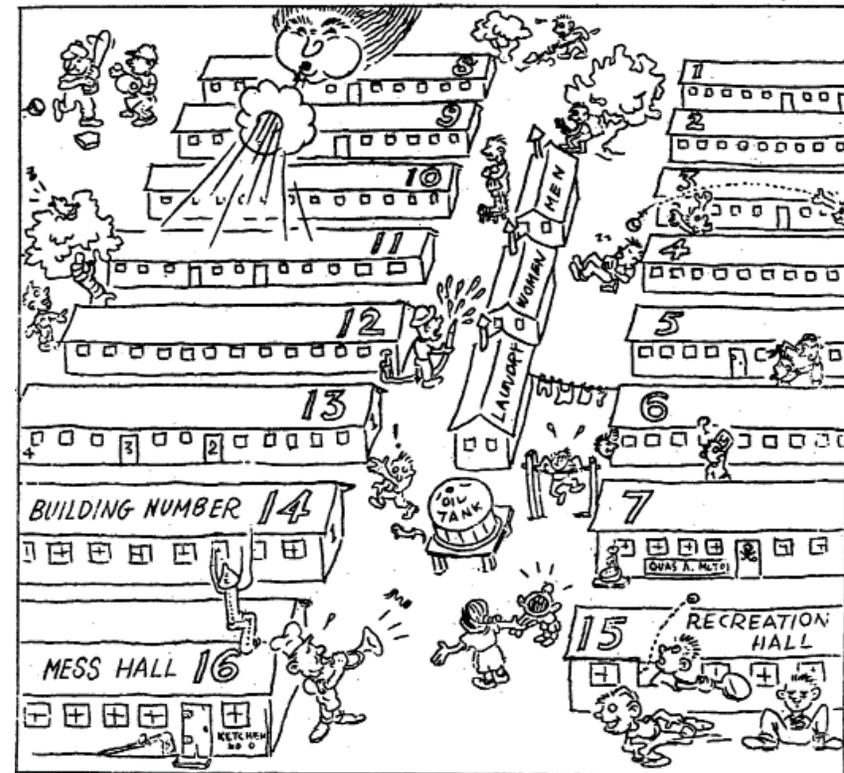
### INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY





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.



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## **AIJI NAGANO**

**Family # 1046**

**Camp: Manzanar, CA**

**Address: 6-11-5**

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Aiji's father, Kiro Nagano, came to the United States in 1918 from Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan, and returned there to marry his mother in 1920. They left Japan the day after the wedding. His father leased land in Los Angeles and, in his twenties, hired farmhands and sold his produce at the wholesale market. In 1933 he opened his own business. The night of Dec. 7, 1941, the day Pearl Harbor was bombed, the FBI took his father in custody as a "dangerous enemy alien" and he consequently lost his business.

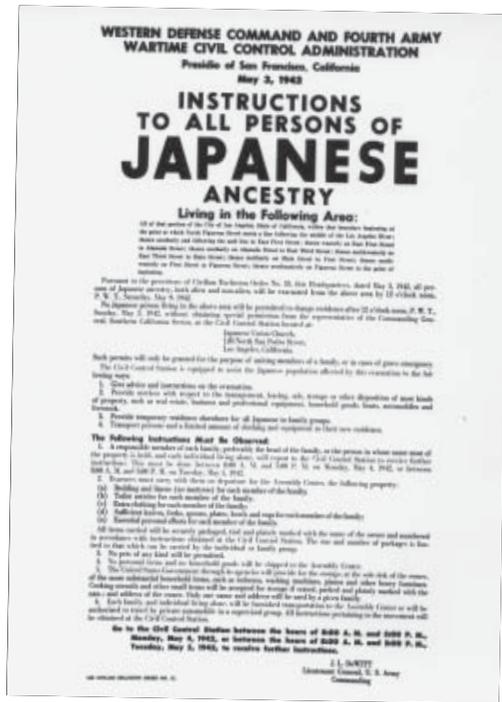
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**...the day Pearl Harbor was bombed, the FBI took his father in custody as a "dangerous enemy alien" and he consequently lost his business.**

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Aiji was 14 years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed, and the FBI took his father away. He was in junior high school, and eventually, when there were reports in the daily newspaper that the government would remove all those of Japanese descent from the West

Coast, he could not believe that could happen in America. When evacuation became inevitable, his mother decided to go to Manzanar with another family who were Catholics, as volunteers, under the auspices of the Maryknoll Catholic organization.



Aiji's father had begun building a new home for the family in October, 1941, designed by his brother, Dike, who was still an architecture student. Though his father was incarcerated, the family moved into the finished house in January, 1942, and lived there only two months before they had to leave for Manzanar. The family went by train and bus to Manzanar



Arriving at Manzanar, 1942

**Aiji was 17 when he finished high school and volunteered for the U. S. Army from Manzanar.**

mother and Momo in Manzanar. When eventually released from Manzanar in 1946, Aiji's parents were permitted to move to Denver, Colorado, which was not in the Western Defense Zone where the Japanese Americans were barred, and lived there for a year.

Aiji attended U.C.L.A. in Los Angeles and earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. He eventually became a Computer Programmer in the early days of the new technology, later becoming a Systems Analyst. He was a surrogate father to the four children of his older brother Dike who died in 1965 at the age of 44 and the four children of Momo who was divorced. Aiji died at the age of 54 in 1981, after a lifetime of doing what was right.

This card was written by Aiji's sister, Momo.



*442nd Troops Training at Fort Shelby, Mississippi*

Aiji was 17 when he finished high school and volunteered for the U. S. Army from Manzanar. The Army sent him to school for a military education until he turned 18, when he was inducted into the regular Army and shipped to Germany.

By the time Aiji returned from Germany to civilian life, the Nagano family was back in their home in Los Angeles. His father had been given a hearing and released from the Enemy Alien Detention Camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico and allowed to join the

on April 2, 1942. Since they were allowed to take only what they were able to carry, they mainly took clothing and had to leave everything else behind.



The family arrived at Manzanar as the sun was going down. They were registered and then given canvas-ticking bags, following someone who took them to a barrack filled with straw. They were told to fill the bags which were to be their mattresses on metal army cots. Then they were walked up to Block 6, Bldg. 9, Apt. 2, to be shared with another couple and their 2 year old son. They eventually devised some privacy by hanging some sheets to divide the two families. Aiji's mother had brought a metal

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**Aiji's mother had brought a metal bucket, which they filled at the one outdoor faucets... The water was used to wash up and to brush their teeth in the mornings.**

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bucket, which they filled at the one outdoor faucets in the block, still criss-crossed with trenches for the installation of the water system. The water was used to wash up

and to brush their teeth in the mornings. The latrine buildings were still not built and the restrooms were portable toilets. As the construction of the camp progressed, the family was able to move into an apt. of their own in the same block: Bldg. 11, Apt. 5.



*Manzanar War Relocation Center, 1942*

Aiji and his sister Momo spent their days walking around camp; looking out at the highway and watching the cars go by. Aiji eventually got a job as a messenger boy in one of the administration's

departments until school was finally established in October of 1942. The neighborhood friends with whom Aiji and Momo had grown up were sent to another camp, a disappointment for Aiji and Momo.

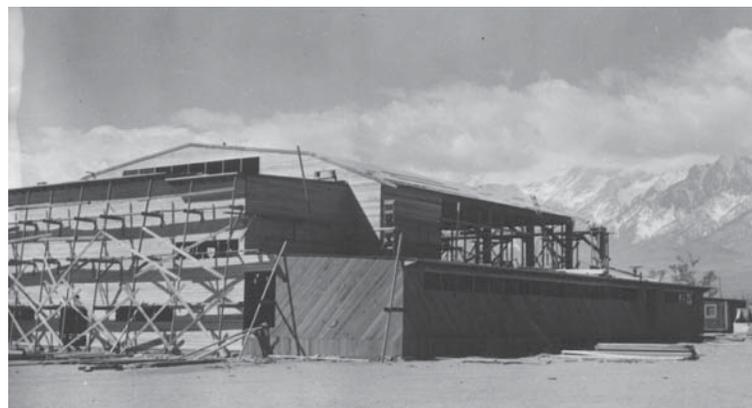
The classrooms were in a whole block set aside for the school. The students sat in the unheated rooms on the linoleum floor, with no furniture, textbooks or supplies. The teachers were recruited from Los

Angeles and did their best to make the school year as close to that at home as possible by organizing dances, a school newspaper, a yearbook and graduation ceremonies. Before Aiji's class was graduated in June of 1944, an auditorium was built and his class had a graduation ceremony indoors, rather than outside in a firebreak.

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**The students sat in the unheated rooms on the linoleum floor, with no furniture, textbooks or supplies.**

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*Manzanar Auditorium Under Construction 1944*