



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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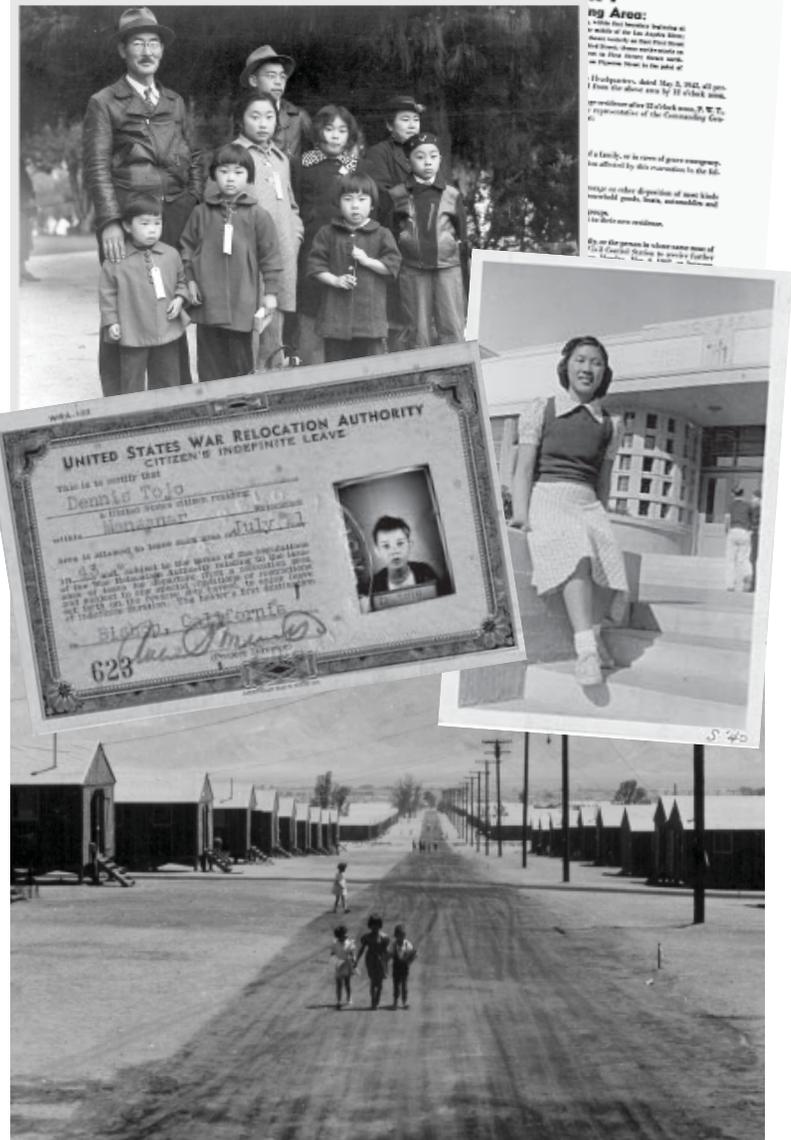
Manzanar



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.



MITSURU J. NAKAMURA

Family # 2689

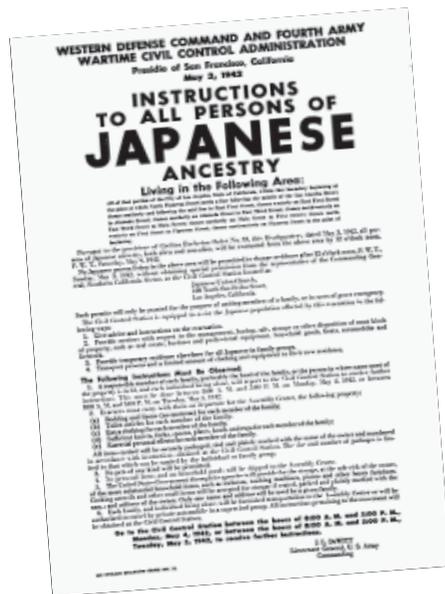
Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 33-4-2

Jingo Nakamura, my father came to America in 1918 at the age of 16. He worked on the railroad with his father and his brothers. After the Exclusion Act was passed my father returned to Japan to get a wife. My mother, Michie Inadomiu, age 16, came to America as a “picture bride”. They were both from Kurume, Fukuoka, Japan. I was born in December 1926 in Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles, CA. I studied Japanese language at Chuo Gakuen, as well as shuju, kendo, and kenbu. I attended Stevenson Junior High and Roosevelt High Schools. I attended Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, now the Japanese American National Museum.

I was 15 years old when the Pacific War started. On December 8, 1941, two FBI agents came to our home and confiscated our cameras, radios and kitchen knives. Curiously they did not take my kendo helmet or Japanese swords. During the next few weeks I felt

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bewildered and intimidated. Fortunately for us, Boyle Heights was made up of Mexican Americans and Jewish Americans, who were sympathetic and helped us in many ways. Roosevelt High School had many student body officers who were Nisei. So, after the evacuation the school had to have another election

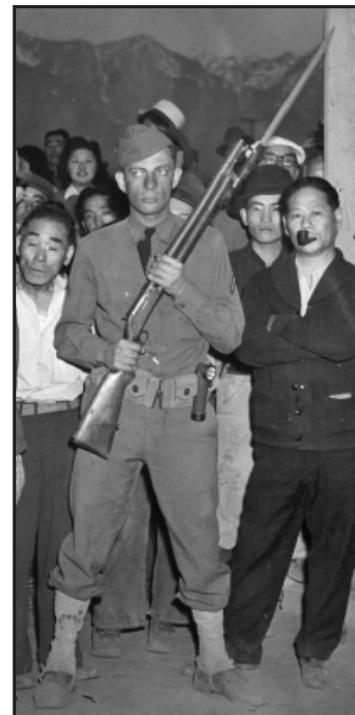
of officers. The official evacuation notice posted on telephone posts was dated May 3, 1942. We arrived at the Manzanar War Relocation Center on June 1, 1942. Our family number was 2689; we were assigned housing in 33-4-2.

My father had arrived in Manzanar two weeks earlier to work as a carpenter to construct the barracks that would house us. Our possessions, which were not sold, were stored in a friend's house. In these moments of trauma and uncertainty, our non-Japanese neighbors were very helpful.

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A makeshift school system was developed in camp. I belonged to the Judicial Committee, Science Club, and the Boy's League. Occasionally, I wrote short mystery stories. Soon, I acquired the nickname of "Dick Tracy." A few of our teachers were Quakers whose husbands were imprisoned in Conscientious Objector camps. I worked after school delivering heating oil to the barracks and also as a dishwasher in the Guayule Research Laboratory. For recreation, I helped my mother and

A few of our teachers were Quakers whose husbands were imprisoned in Conscientious Objector camps.



Militar Police at Manzanar, 1942

others build a clay tennis court. We did some shopping with the Sears catalogue. Our Mexican friends in Los Angeles often sent us food packages. Once there was a riot. The soldiers started to shoot. My father, an innocent bystander, was shot in the back. Fortunately he survived. After graduation from High School, at the age of 17, I obtained a Citizen's Indefinite Leave pass and left "camp" forever.