



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.



The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn more about your national parks, visit the National Park Service website at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov). To learn more about Manzanar National Historic Site, please visit our website at [www.nps.gov/manz](http://www.nps.gov/manz).

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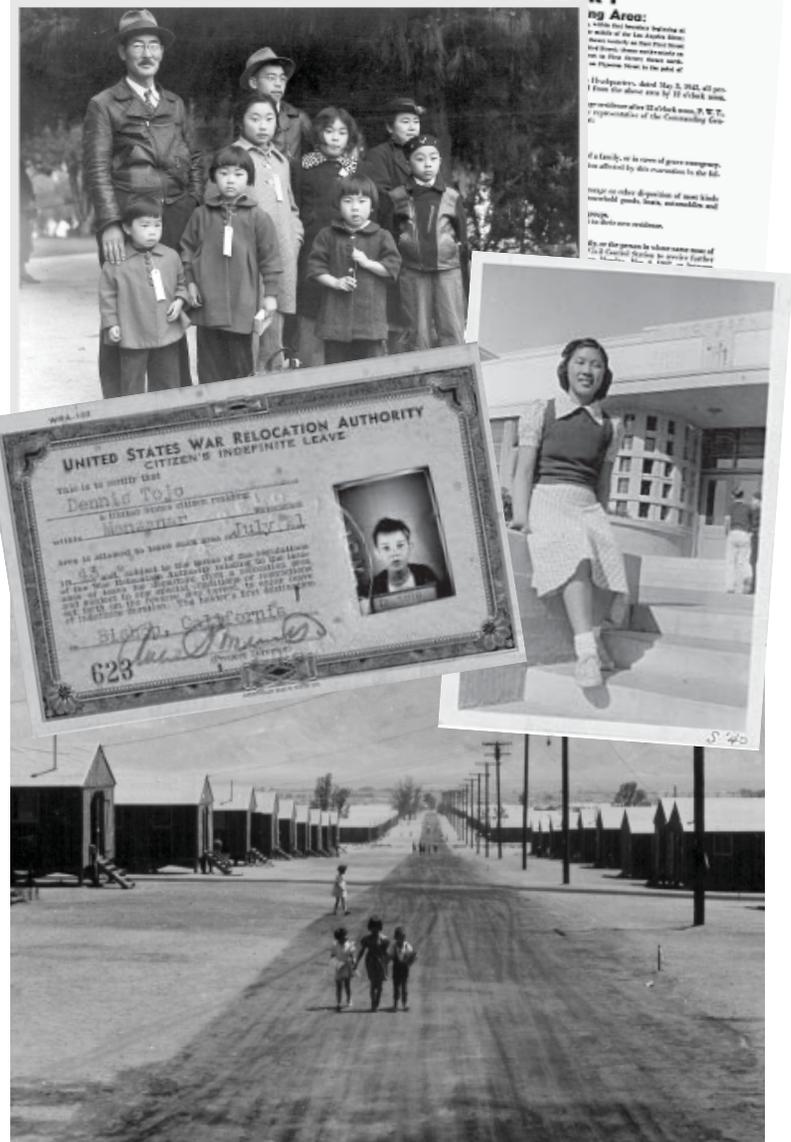
# Manzanar



## 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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## **SABURO SASAKI**

**Family # 3831**

**Camp: Manzanar, CA**

**Address: 36-7-1**

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My father came to Hawaii as a labor hand at the age of 17 in 1896. Later he moved to the mainland in 1904. My father returned to Japan to marry my mother and returned to the United States in 1923. They lived in Venice, California, and found work as farm hands for a friend. My two older brothers were born in 1924 and 1926. And I was born in 1934. By now my father was on his own working as a tenant farmer since he could not legally own any land.

After December 7, 1941, things changed drastically. I could not attend school and my parents prepared to evacuate

as directed by the United States Government by disposing of all material considered illegal such as photographs, letters and fire arms. The Christmas

of 1941 was probably the worst holiday that I ever had in my life. We were afraid to go out to

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**After December 7, 1941, things changed drastically. I could not attend school...**

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*Baby Saburo poses with his mother Hiro, his father Matsujiro, and his brothers Hitosbi (left) and Takeshi (right) for a family portrait taken in San Fernando, California, 1935.*



Saburo with students at Manzanar National Historic Site for the February 2007 Electronic Field Trip MANZANAR: Desert Diamonds Behind Barbed Wire:



buy a Christmas tree or gifts for our family. Our New Years celebration was especially sad for my parents. Traditionally, it would have been a big celebration with a lot of traditional food, wine and friends. New Years of 1942 was somber and bare.

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**...we were escorted by military police to board Los Angeles City Transit buses to a place called Manzanar.**

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Our very good neighbor, a retired Police Detective from the Los Angeles Police, offered to store our belongings since we could only take what we could carry with us.

April 28, 1942, we were escorted by military police to board Los Angeles City Transit buses

to a place called Manzanar. At Manzanar, we shared a 20'x20' room with another family till more rooms were available. The buildings were bare with tarpaper on the outside and knotholes in the floor that fell out to let the snakes and other varmint into the room. The winters were very



*Arriving at Manzanar, 1942*



*Saburo (middle row, second from left) and his fellow fourth graders from Miss Whitcare's class in their Manzanar class picture, Spring 1945*

cold and during storms we strung clotheslines to guide us to the bathrooms and the mess halls. The summers were hot and we had to use the same clothes lines system during dust storms. Our dear friend, the retired Police Detective, shipped to us our stored items and visited us in camp to make sure that we had received our shipment. He was the only outside visitor that we ever had during our internment.

October 15, 1945, we traveled by bus to the Los Angeles Union Terminal to catch a Southern Pacific train for Cleveland via Chicago. My dad and I stood for the entire trip from Los Angeles to Chicago. My older brother met us at Chicago and traveled with us to Cleveland in seats that

were available. Cleveland was very good to me. I graduated from high school and with the help of a counselor, I was able to attend and graduate from a cooperative engineering school. I met my wife in Cleveland and our best man was a friend that I first met in elementary school in the

early days of adjusting to the life after Manzanar. I have volunteered with the local Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) chapter to tell the story of Manzanar in our locale. This enlightenment will help to prevent such harsh treatment ever again.

My wife Ann and I have volunteered for the National Park Service at Manzanar National Historic Site for several weeks each year. I lead school programs and talk to visitors. In 2007, I participated in a special Electronic Field Trip called MANZANAR: Desert Diamonds Behind Barbed Wire. It was an great opportunity to share my childhood memories at Manzanar with students today.

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**I met my wife in Cleveland and our best man was a friend that I first met in elementary school in the early days of adjusting to the life after Manzanar.**

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