

**National Park Service
US Department of the Interior**

**Manzanar National Historic Site
California**

August 2015

Draft Foundation Document

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MISSION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The NPS core values are a framework in which the National Park Service accomplishes its mission. They express the manner in which, both individually and collectively, the National Park Service pursues its mission. The NPS core values are:

- **Shared stewardship:** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.
- **Excellence:** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Integrity:** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition:** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.
- **Respect:** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous national park system units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The national park system continues to grow and comprises more than 400 park units covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Every unit of the national park system will have a foundational document to provide basic guidance for planning and management decisions—a foundation for planning and management. The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park as well as the park’s purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, and interpretive themes.

A primary benefit of developing a foundation document is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park. The process of developing a foundation document begins with gathering and integrating information about the park. Next, this information is refined and focused to determine what the most important attributes of the park are. The process of preparing a foundation document aids park managers, staff, and the public in identifying and clearly stating in one document the essential information that is necessary for park management to consider when determining future planning efforts, outlining key planning issues, and protecting resources and values that are integral to park purpose and identity.

CORE COMPONENTS

The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park, park purpose, significance statements, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, and interpretive themes. These components are core because they typically do not change over time. Core components are expected to be used in future planning and management efforts.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PARK

Manzanar National Historic Site was established by Congress (PL 102-248) on March 3, 1992, to “provide for protection and interpretation of historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II.” While Manzanar is best known for its wartime history, its layers of the past echo the larger themes of American history, including displacement of native peoples, the settlement of ranchers and farmers, water wars, and the consequences of prejudice.

It was—and is—a place of significance for the Paiute and Shoshone peoples who have lived in this valley for centuries. After 1860, the US Army killed some Paiutes and drove many others out of the valley. Some Paiutes eventually returned, and their descendants maintain traditional affiliation and uses in the Owens Valley.

In the early 1900s, farmers planted thousands of apple and other fruit trees in the town of Manzanar (Spanish for “apple orchard”), just as the city of Los Angeles was building an aqueduct to carry the valley’s water 200 miles south. In the mid-1920s, Los Angeles bought out Manzanar’s farmers, and in 1941, Inyo County declared the town abandoned.

No one could foresee how quickly and dramatically Manzanar would change in the aftermath of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Newspapers, politicians, and labor leaders lobbied for action against people of Japanese ancestry, intensifying long-standing anti-Japanese prejudice on the West Coast. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, authorizing the military to forcibly exclude “any or all persons” from the West Coast. Under the direction of Lt. General John L. Dewitt, the army applied the order to everyone of Japanese ancestry, including more than 70,000 US citizens. Half were under the age of 18. Ultimately, the government deprived 120,000 people of their freedom by forcing them to relocate.

Those exiled to Manzanar were largely from the Los Angeles area and ranged in age from newborns to an 86-year-old widower. They were from cities and farms, young and old, rich and poor. Most had never been to Japan. They had only days or weeks to

prepare. Businesses closed, classrooms emptied, friends separated. The US government incarcerated a total of 11,070 people at Manzanar between March 21, 1942, and November 21, 1945. They lived within a 540-acre housing section, divided into 36 blocks. Military police manned eight guard towers and patrolled the camp's barbed wire perimeter fence. People crowded into barracks apartments, ate in communal mess halls, washed their clothes in public laundry rooms, and shared latrines and showers that afforded almost no privacy. Within these exposed and cramped conditions, 188 couples married, 541 babies were born, and 150 people died.

The camp closed in November 1945, three months after World War II ended. The government sold most of the structures and equipment as surplus. Concrete and rock site features such as gardens and basements were buried. Manzanar's prewar orchards, revived by Japanese Americans, again were abandoned. Time passed and much of Manzanar was further buried, both in sand and in memory. Many people chose not to talk about it.

Buddhist and Christian ministers returned each year to the Manzanar cemetery to remember the dead. They gathered around the stark white obelisk that had been constructed in 1943, inscribed with characters meaning "Soul consoling tower." In 1969, a group of college students came to the cemetery on their own pilgrimage of healing and remembrance. With the formation of the Manzanar Committee, this pilgrimage grew into an annual event attended by thousands. In 1972, the committee successfully lobbied to have Manzanar recognized as a California State Landmark. Later efforts resulted in the site's 1976 listing on the National Register of Historic Places and its 1985 designation as a National Historic Landmark. The advocacy of the committee ultimately resulted in the establishment of Manzanar National Historic Site in 1992.

In 1983, nearly 40 years after the confinement ended, the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded: "Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity. . . . The broad historical causes that shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."

Today, the National Park Service preserves 814 of the 5,415 acres that comprised the Manzanar War Relocation Center. The historic site includes the housing area, the administrative area where War Relocation Authority (WRA) staff lived and worked, the military police compound, the chicken ranch, the hospital site, and the cemetery. Most of the buildings are gone, but many features remain, including historic orchards and numerous Japanese gardens and ponds.

Other features are buried, yet come to life through historic photos, artwork, archives, and hundreds of oral history interviews. The National Park Service restored the former camp auditorium to serve as a visitor center and park headquarters. A restored World War II-era mess hall and two reconstructed barracks in Block 14 (adjacent to the auditorium) feature exhibits on daily life and the many changes and challenges

people faced at Manzanar. The National Park Service has also reconstructed one of the eight guard towers, along with the barbed wire fence that surrounded the living area. An average of 80,000 people visits the national historic site each year.

Manzanar became a national historic site because people whose lives had been touched by it vowed that such an injustice should never happen again, to any group in this country. A visit to Manzanar is an invitation to consider our Constitution and the protections it promises at a place where—not so long ago—they were largely forgotten.

Terminology [This will be a sidebar located at the beginning of the document.]

As visitors cross the threshold into the Manzanar Visitor Center’s main exhibit area, they encounter a large photo panel that reads:

Ever since the U.S. Army enclosed this one-square mile with barbed wire in 1942, people have debated how to accurately describe Manzanar. During World War II, it was officially called a “War Relocation Center,” while newspapers and some locals referred to it simply as the “Jap Camp.” President Roosevelt and other officials on occasion referred to it as a “concentration camp.” Every person whose life was affected by Manzanar has their own story, in their own words. We invite you to discover some of these stories, and to ask yourself:

“What does Manzanar mean to history?”
“What does Manzanar mean to me?”

Controversy over terminology at Manzanar existed decades before the National Park Service was involved with the site. The 1972 California State Landmark plaque calls Manzanar a concentration camp, eliciting passionate responses—then and now, pro and con—from many people. In oral history interviews, Japanese Americans use various words to describe themselves, including evacuee, internee, prisoner, and incarcerated. Words used to describe places and actions are equally diverse.

Intense feelings and diverse perspectives about what occurred during World War II illustrate the importance of interpreting these sites and their stories. Discussions about terminology offer unique opportunities to help visitors make their own connections.

If you wish to learn about and promote understanding of the way language has been used to represent, or misrepresent, the wartime experience of Japanese Americans, please visit this website on the topic:
<http://www.nps.gov/tule/forteachers/suggestedreading.htm>.

PARK PURPOSE

The purpose statement identifies the specific reason(s) for establishment of a particular park. The purpose statement for Manzanar National Historic Site was drafted through a careful analysis of its enabling legislation and the legislative history that influenced its development. The park was established when the enabling legislation adopted by Congress was signed into law on March 3, 1992 (see appendix A). The purpose statement lays the foundation for understanding what is most important about the park.

The purpose of Manzanar National Historic Site is to preserve Manzanar's cultural and natural resources and interpret the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants during World War II.

PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements express why a park's resources and values are important enough to merit designation as a unit of the national park system. These statements are linked to the purpose of Manzanar National Historic Site, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Statements of significance describe the distinctive nature of the park and why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. They focus on the most important resources and values that will assist in park planning and management.

The following significance statements have been identified for Manzanar National Historic Site. (Please note that the sequence of the statements does not reflect the level of significance.)

1. **Injustice:** Manzanar was the first camp the US government built to confine Japanese Americans during World War II. It represents the injustice of uprooting and imprisoning 120,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants. This violation of civil rights was the result of racism, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership and demonstrates the fragility of democracy in times of crisis.
2. **Cultural Resources:** Manzanar National Historic Site is one of the best-preserved World War II incarceration camps and protects highly intact cultural landscape resources, including an extensive collection of remnant Japanese gardens. In addition, Manzanar preserves layers of history and artifacts that reveal thousands of years of human life in the Owens Valley.
3. **Landscape and Scenery:** Located in the Owens Valley between the towering Sierra Nevada and Inyo Mountains, the dramatic landscape surrounding Manzanar is remarkably unspoiled. As a result, it powerfully communicates the

visual and environmental conditions experienced by Japanese Americans imprisoned at Manzanar during World War II.

4. **Stories and Perspectives:** Manzanar’s national significance is reflected in thousands of personal stories that illustrate the diverse experiences and multiple perspectives of individuals and communities, both inside and outside the barbed wire fence. The government’s actions profoundly affected the lives of individuals and families during the war and continue to impact subsequent generations.
5. **Children’s Village:** Manzanar was the only incarceration camp to operate an orphanage, called the Children’s Village. The government removed some of these children from adoptive homes and placed them in an orphanage behind barbed wire, powerfully illustrating that the incarceration of Japanese Americans was driven not by military necessity but by racism.
6. **Manzanar “Riot”:** Manzanar was the site of the first use of deadly force by military police against incarcerated Japanese Americans. The confrontation sparked national headlines and prompted a harsh response by the US government, including temporarily heightened security at Manzanar, the creation of isolation centers, and an increased push for segregating individuals deemed “disloyal.” The resulting segregation tore some families and friends apart and created divisions in communities that exist to this day.
7. **Advocacy:** Manzanar catalyzed the earliest grassroots efforts by Japanese Americans to raise national awareness about their incarceration in the context of civil rights, proclaim that these sites of conscience merited designation, and ensure that the legacy of incarceration would not be forgotten. The Manzanar Committee and Manzanar Pilgrimage inspired others to keep the story alive, petition for redress, and protect other confinement sites throughout the United States.
8. **Relevance:** Manzanar National Historic Site provides a compelling venue for discussing the history of incarceration during World War II, contemplating injustice experienced by individuals and communities today and throughout history, and applying these lessons to the protection of constitutional and human rights.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Fundamental resources and values (FRVs) are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a park’s purpose and are more specific than significance statements.

Fundamental resources and values help focus planning and management efforts on what is truly significant about the park. One of the most important responsibilities of NPS managers is to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of those qualities that are essential (fundamental) to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. If fundamental resources and values are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for Manzanar National Historic Site:

- **Historic Resources:** Manzanar National Historic Site protects thousands of remnant features that provide visitors with a tangible connection to the wartime incarceration. Historic structures include an auditorium, two sentry posts, and a cemetery monument. Historic features include, but are not limited to, Japanese gardens and ponds, building foundations, inscriptions in concrete, and orchards and other historic vegetation. Buried historic resources include basements and trash dumps.
- **Stories and Collections:** Museum collections, oral histories, and archives record the incarceration of Japanese Americans and subsequent efforts to recognize and remember Manzanar. These collections document the diversity and complexity of people’s experiences and perspectives, past and present.
- **Environmental Setting:** Defined by two prominent mountain ranges and expansive viewsheds, the dramatic setting of Manzanar National Historic Site and adjacent areas is largely intact. Historic and contemporary water use and land ownership by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) have significantly influenced the landscape and environmental setting, resulting in the incidental preservation of the wide open spaces and undeveloped land that characterize the Owens Valley.
- **Cultural Traditions:** A spectrum of cultural values, practices, and identities influenced the way Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants experienced incarceration under the US government during World War II. Some values helped people to persevere and endure, while others moved people to protest and resist. In many instances, American and Japanese cultural values and identities blurred and melded into new and distinct cultural values and identities. At Manzanar, both American and Japanese cultural practices, like baseball and *judo* and the creation of Japanese gardens, left lasting remnants on the landscape. New cultural practices, like the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, have developed as a result of the World War II incarceration.

- **Public Engagement:** Learning opportunities raise public awareness about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and keep the story of Manzanar alive and relevant. Interpretive and volunteer programs provided by the National Park Service, along with partner efforts such as those of the Manzanar Committee and the Eastern California Museum, motivate visitors to become stewards and foster a constantly expanding circle of interest in preserving Manzanar’s resources and lessons.

OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND VALUES

Manzanar National Historic Site contains other resources and values that are not fundamental to the purpose of the park and may be unrelated to its significance, but are important to consider in planning processes. These are referred to as “other important resources and values” (OIRV). These resources and values have been selected because they are important in the operation and management of the park and warrant special consideration in park planning.

The following other important resources and values have been identified for Manzanar National Historic Site:

- **Pre-World War II History:** Archeological resources, cultural landscapes, documents, and oral histories reveal thousands of years of human life at Manzanar. Owens Valley Paiute lived here for centuries. Many of the natural resources and landscape features that sustained them remain, along with other traces of their lives. For decades in the late 1800s, the Shepherd Ranch encompassed much of the Manzanar site, leaving building foundations and other structural elements. In the early 1900s, farmers came in search of “Fortunes in Apples.” Numerous town-era features remain, and dozens of trees survive in remnant orchards.
- **Natural Resources:** Although impacted by human use, the natural resources of Manzanar National Historic Site provide habitat for wildlife, such as resident and migrating birds, reptiles, and mammals. Riparian areas such as Bairs Creek were important throughout history and were sought out by Japanese Americans in camp for respite from the harsh environment. Japanese Americans used certain natural resources, such as native vegetation and rocks, to construct gardens and art.

RELATED RESOURCES

Related resources are not owned by the park. They may be part of the broader context or setting in which park resources exist; represent a thematic connection that would enhance the experience of visitors; or have close associations with park fundamental resources and the purpose of the park. The related resource

represents a connection with the park that often reflects an area of mutual benefit or interest, and collaboration, between the park and owner/stakeholder.

Manzanar National Historic Site's associated resources outside the boundary include World War II-era inscriptions in concrete, a reservoir, a hog farm, a sewage treatment plan, and farm fields.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all park significance statements and fundamental and other important resources and values.

Interpretive themes are an organizational tool that reveal and clarify meaning, concepts, contexts, and values represented by park resources. Sound themes are accurate and reflect current scholarship and science. They encourage exploration of the context in which events or natural processes occurred and the effects of those events and processes. Interpretive themes go beyond a mere description of the event or process to foster multiple opportunities to experience and consider the park and its resources. These themes help explain why a park story is relevant to people who may otherwise be unaware of connections they have to an event, time, or place associated with the park. Appendix A includes potential topics to be explored for each interpretive theme.

The following interpretive themes have been identified for Manzanar National Historic Site:

- **Injustice:** The mass incarceration of Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants by the US government during World War II resulted from a complex mix of political, social, and economic factors and was fueled by war hysteria, a failure of political leadership, and long-standing racial prejudice. This failure of constitutional protections was so flagrant that the US government later apologized and paid redress.
- **Stories, Perspectives, and Communities:** Manzanar's World War II history is not a single story, but a diverse mosaic of individual and collective experiences of Japanese Americans, WRA staff and families, military police, residents of neighboring towns and tribal communities, and many others whose lives were often influenced by forces far beyond their control.

- **Physical Setting:** Though mostly vacant today, during World War II Manzanar was densely crowded, with over 800 structures and more than 10,000 people confined in a 540-acre area, surrounded by armed military police and a barbed-wire fence. Within months, the army constructed eight guard towers. The stark mountain and desert landscape and the environmental conditions of the Owens Valley evoked strong and varied reactions in individuals, including feelings of isolation and forlornness, as well as consolation and hope.
- **Clashing Views:** Differences of opinion and ideology in Manzanar significantly affected daily life within the camp. While these differences were sometimes rooted in people’s prewar experiences and associations, they often stemmed from reactions to loss of constitutional rights, confinement, and continued impositions by the WRA. Clashing views and interpersonal conflicts culminated in tragedies like the Manzanar “Riot,” the consequences of which reverberated throughout all of the WRA facilities and impacted those incarcerated in them.
- **Pre-WWII Owens Valley History:** Manzanar’s prewar history echoes broad themes in US history, including displacement of native peoples, land and water wars, clashing views on immigration, and the question of who is considered “American.”
- **Advocacy:** Growing out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Manzanar Pilgrimage became the focal point of efforts to learn about, reflect on, remember, and preserve this site. Both the annual pilgrimage and grassroots efforts to gain recognition for Manzanar helped to inspire and strengthen later efforts to preserve other camps. Manzanar is increasingly relevant to diverse constituencies who see their own struggles reflected in its history.
- **Owens Valley Water:** Water use, exportation, and management in the Owens Valley—especially by the LADWP—influenced major aspects of Manzanar’s history, including the camp’s location in the abandoned orchard town of Manzanar, its operation, the daily activities of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar, and the survival of historic orchards and vegetation following the camp’s closure. The City of Los Angeles still imports water from the Owens Valley.

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APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL TOPICS TO BE EXPLORED FOR INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The following interpretive themes and potential topics have been identified for Manzanar National Historic Site:

- **Injustice:** The mass incarceration of Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants by the US government during World War II resulted from a complex mix of political, social, and economic factors and was fueled by war hysteria, a failure of political leadership, and long-standing racial prejudice. This failure of constitutional protections was so flagrant that the US government later apologized and paid redress.
- *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - The history of racism and prejudice in the United States provides a larger context for the injustices Japanese Americans faced prior to and during World War II.
 - Long-standing anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast resulted in immigration and naturalization laws, alien land laws, housing discrimination/segregation acts, and anti-miscegenation laws.
 - While the US government arrested only select Germans and Italians, it subjected Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants to restrictions after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. The government ultimately incarcerated those living on the West Coast.
 - Many people failed to distinguish between Japanese Americans and the Japanese with whom the United States was at war. Some people still have trouble understanding that distinction.
 - Some politicians, media, organizations, and individuals actively and increasingly fueled war hysteria through newspapers, newsreels, speeches, rallies, and rumors. Government officials at all levels—federal, state, county, and city—failed to protect the constitutional and civil rights of Japanese Americans, often for political gain.
 - Even at the time, some in the public, media, and government spoke out in support of Japanese Americans and against the injustice of incarceration. There were debates, including at the cabinet level, on the appropriateness and necessity of removal and incarceration.
 - Most Japanese Americans suffered a range of economic losses from forced removal, often due to intentional exploitation by those who took advantage

of their dire situations. Some were able to preserve property and possessions.

- Japanese Americans rebuilt their lives after their wartime incarceration, yet many still struggled with a range of negative impacts, from loss of cultural traditions and identities to long-lasting psychological trauma and family separation.
- Debates about individual rights versus perceived group security recur throughout US history, especially in times of crisis.
- Despite the government’s apology and redress to Japanese Americans, opinions about the injustice of incarceration are not and have never been static.
- **Stories, Perspectives, and Communities:** Manzanar’s World War II history is not a single story, but a diverse mosaic of individual and collective experiences of Japanese Americans, WRA staff and families, military police, residents of neighboring towns and tribal communities, and many others whose lives were often influenced by forces far beyond their control.
- *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - Owens Valley residents witnessed and experienced the repercussions of 10,000 people (widely portrayed as “enemies”) moving into the valley during the spring and summer of 1942. Still, some local residents benefitted economically from the camp’s presence.
 - Some local residents had direct experiences with Manzanar during World War II through working for the WRA, interacting with camp staff and military police in nearby towns, and interacting with Japanese Americans in Manzanar through business relationships, clubs, churches, and sports. Even local people with no direct connection to the camp had a range of opinions about it.
 - Despite public misconceptions, Japanese Americans in Manzanar were a diverse group of 10,000 people. They were from cities and farms, were young and old, rich and poor, and included extended families as well as single people. Most had never been to Japan, yet others spoke only Japanese. They came from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. These differences often influenced how people in Manzanar viewed the conditions of incarceration.
 - Japanese Americans from different prewar communities had different experiences, especially in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. Terminal Island, California, and Bainbridge Island, Washington, offer powerful contrasts.

- During a brief period in February 1942, the army allowed nearly 5,000 Japanese Americans to relocate east of the Exclusion Zone “voluntarily.” While some turned back due to hostility and discrimination, others resettled successfully.
- In spite of their confinement, Japanese Americans at Manzanar created many of the trappings of a “typical” American community. People played on sports teams, attended churches, shopped in a system of cooperative stores, and took enrichment classes like flower arranging (*ikebana*) or painting. Entertainment abounded, with clubs, dances, movies, theatrical and musical performances, museum exhibits, art shows, and, for a time, a petting zoo of locally captured creatures.
- People in Manzanar also dealt with challenges of “city” life, including petty theft, gambling, alcohol, domestic violence, and prostitution.
- Fifty percent of US citizens confined in Manzanar were 18 and under. For many, the forced removal had interrupted their education. In Manzanar, they attended preschool through high school. Older people could take adult education classes or enroll in junior college. Those of college age often looked to groups like the Quakers or the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council to help place them into schools in the Midwest or East Coast.
- Manzanar’s Children’s Village was the only orphanage in all 10 camps, and home to 101 Japanese American children. Many were orphans before the war. During the war, some were orphaned because of circumstances spawned by incarceration, such as forced or voluntary separations or parent deaths.
- Even though life in camp offered little privacy, 541 babies were born in the three and a half years Manzanar was in operation. One hundred fifty people died in Manzanar, and 188 couples married.
- Manzanar had its own newspaper, the *Manzanar Free Press*. Though Japanese Americans who worked for the paper recall censorship, some early administrative reports suggested it wasn’t censored enough. As time went on, the *Free Press* was allowed to live up to its name to a greater degree. The newspaper also included a Japanese language section which evolved from WRA directives to its own editorial force.
- Daily life in Manzanar sometimes created or widened cracks in family structure. The military structure and layout of the camp required people to live in cramped conditions with shared facilities that afforded little privacy. Communal dining in mess halls meant that children often sat with their friends, and families no longer ate meals together. Some parents had

difficulty maintaining control over their children. Many worried that their young children would grow up believing that life in the camp was “normal.”

- Some people incarcerated in the camps persevered by calling upon the Japanese phrase *shikata ga nai* (“it cannot be helped”) or the Japanese concept of *gaman* (“to endure something that is unbearable with patience and dignity”). Some others endured incarceration by following, and sometimes advocating, a type of unquestioning “patriotism” to the United States that accepted the wartime decisions of the country’s leaders.
- A range of cultural values moved people to protest and resist incarceration. Some invoked the Japanese concept of abiding by *Yamato Damashii* (“Japanese spirit”) or *bushido* (a complex code of ethics, applicable to both military and civilian life, often translated as “the way of the warrior”). The American concepts of individual freedom, civil rights, and democratic responsibility compelled others to protest the US government’s actions. For some, resistance arose out of a combination of both Japanese and American cultural values.
- Some Japanese Americans in Manzanar supported the US war effort in a variety of ways, large and small. Some made camouflage nets for the military, while scientists and farmers worked to extract natural rubber from the guayule plant. People supported savings bond drives, some rolled bandages for the Red Cross, or collected grease—used to make munitions—from laundry rooms and mess halls.
- More than 200 WRA staff—and often their families—lived and worked in Manzanar, trying to reconcile directives from Washington, DC, with the realities of managing an incarcerated community.
- WRA employees came to Manzanar with their own motivations and perspectives. Some came to support Japanese Americans. Others came for a paycheck. They had a broad range of professional and personal interactions with Japanese Americans incarcerated in Manzanar.
- The men who came to Manzanar as military police had limited contact with Japanese Americans in the camp. The interactions and perspectives of the Japanese Americans and the military police are part of Manzanar’s story.
- Outside visitors, including friends, clergy, reporters, and professional photographers, connected Japanese Americans in Manzanar with life outside of the camp.
- People in the ten camps had varying experiences and different levels of freedom based on the camp’s administration, geographic location—whether it was inside or outside of the Exclusion Zone—and prevailing attitudes in surrounding communities.

- According to WRA statistics, the government confined 219 non-Japanese Americans who “voluntarily” went into the 10 camps. Most were motivated by family ties.
 - Tribal communities had interactions with Japanese Americans, and some Owens Valley Paiute worked in Manzanar.
 - Thousands of Japanese Americans left Manzanar before the end of the war to resettle in the Midwest or East. While most faced challenges economically and socially, some experienced less prejudice than they had on the West Coast.
 - Life after the war was equally or more difficult for some due to lost homes and businesses and ongoing prejudices.
 - Some people choose not to discuss camp, or to minimize its impacts, often “for the sake of the children.”
 - The repercussions of the World War II incarceration have echoed through generations of Japanese American families.
- **Physical Setting:** Though mostly vacant today, during World War II Manzanar was densely crowded, with over 800 structures and more than 10,000 people confined in a 540-acre area, surrounded by armed military police and a barbed-wire fence. Within months, the army constructed eight guard towers. The stark mountain and desert landscape and the environmental conditions of the Owens Valley evoked strong and varied reactions in individuals, including feelings of isolation and forlornness, as well as consolation and hope.
 - *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - The US government selected Manzanar as an incarceration site for numerous reasons, including its geographic isolation, land ownership by a single entity, agricultural potential, and abundant water. While some actively lobbied for the camp’s placement in the Owens Valley, others including Manzanar’s landowner—the LADWP—opposed it.
 - The contrast of environment and climate between the Owens Valley and Japanese Americans’ prewar homes, like Los Angeles and Florin, California, and Bainbridge Island, Washington, proved in many instances a difficult adjustment for those incarcerated in Manzanar.
 - Manzanar grew to be the largest “city” between Los Angeles and Reno during World War II. The camp’s scale and population dwarfed the surrounding communities.

- Manzanar’s security features, including eight guard towers and the barbed wire fence, had both physical and psychological impacts. Because Manzanar was within the Military Exclusion Zone, people could not freely leave, although they were permitted passes outside the fence for work, to visit the cemetery, or eventually for leisure activities. Restrictions varied throughout the war.
 - While many people remember Manzanar as desolate, others recall connecting to the landscape, stargazing, and appreciating the mountains and water. Some were drawn to the mountains as symbols of freedom, solace, peace, and recreation.
 - Manzanar was arranged into 36 blocks. In most blocks, up to 300 people crowded into 14 barracks. Each barrack initially had four rooms with eight people per room. Everyone ate in a mess hall, washed clothes in a public laundry room, and shared latrines and showers with little privacy. The ironing room and recreation hall offered spaces for classes, shops, and churches. Over time, people personalized their barracks, and the blocks evolved into distinct communities.
 - Japanese Americans built gardens and other landscape features to beautify Manzanar. Many of these features remain as important elements of Manzanar’s cultural landscape today.
 - Artists and writers uniquely captured the landscape and their feelings about it.
 - From the beginning, one of the government’s goals was Manzanar’s self-sufficiency, which would save the government money and convert unused land into agricultural fields. As a result, Japanese Americans and WRA staff planted victory gardens and hundreds of acres of farm fields; raised chickens, hogs, and cattle; and made tofu and soy sauce.
- **Clashing Views:** Differences of opinion and ideology in Manzanar significantly affected daily life within the camp. While these differences were sometimes rooted in people’s prewar experiences and associations, they often stemmed from reactions to loss of constitutional rights, confinement, and continued impositions by the WRA. Clashing views and interpersonal conflicts culminated in tragedies like the Manzanar “Riot,” the consequences of which reverberated throughout all of the WRA facilities and impacted those incarcerated in them.
 - *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - Because 90% of those who came to Manzanar came from the Los Angeles area, many had preexisting relationships. Not all conflicts started in Manzanar, but they were often compounded under camp conditions.

- The spectrum of ages within families was skewed by the 1924 Immigration and Naturalization Act and other laws, resulting in a distinct generational gap and stark divisions within communities and families. Many Issei spouses had significant age differences. Some Issei men became fathers at the time when others their age were becoming grandfathers.
- Conflicts between Issei, Nisei, and Kibei were often rooted in differing citizenship statuses and levels of familiarity with, and connections to, Japanese culture.
- People confined together in Manzanar had very different ideas of how best to make their way in this country. People of similar ages and backgrounds often had very different responses to incarceration.
- People had differing perspectives on military service and the army’s draft of incarcerated Japanese Americans. These conflicting opinions often led to tension, public disagreement, exertion of pressure, and sometimes violence.
- One hundred and seventy-four Japanese Americans from Manzanar served in the US military (100th, 442nd, MIS, WAC) during World War II. Forty-two volunteered, 132 were drafted. In all, 3,600 men and women were inducted directly from the ten WRA camps, including 805 who volunteered and 2,795 who were drafted.
- For its size and length of service, the 100th Battalion / 442nd Regimental Combat Team is the most decorated unit in US military history.
- Especially during the first year, those incarcerated in Manzanar struggled with leadership problems—within the administration, as well as among Japanese Americans—including inconsistent rules and a lack of clarity about who was in charge.
- The Manzanar “Riot” involved a complex mix of factors, including clashes among differing factions of Japanese Americans, as well as between some Japanese Americans and the WRA. Administrators sometimes disagreed with each other. The “Riot” ultimately served as a catalyst for a more decisive push toward segregating individuals deemed disloyal by the government.
- The government issued a controversial “loyalty questionnaire” requiring all people in the camps who were 17 years and older to make difficult decisions about their future and their loyalty to the United States. The loyalty questionnaire had far-reaching and long-term consequences. Complex factors and cultural dynamics, including citizenship status, family ties, religious and cultural ties, and pressure exerted by others, influenced individuals in how they answered the loyalty questionnaire.

- A spectrum of impacts resulted from the WRA’s segregation of more than 20% of Manzanar’s population to Tule Lake Segregation Center in Northern California. Families and friends separated by their answers to the loyalty questionnaire sometimes found their differences irreconcilable. Still, some of those who remained at Manzanar experienced positive consequences, including more living space and less conflict.
- **Pre-WWII Owens Valley History:** Manzanar’s prewar history echoes broad themes in US history, including displacement of native peoples, land and water wars, clashing views on immigration, and the question of who is considered “American.”
- *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - Manzanar’s human history dates back thousands of years to the ancestors of today’s Owens Valley Paiute. A recurring theme of forced displacement and resilience has echoed across Manzanar for the past 150 years.
 - Nearly a century before the US government imprisoned Japanese Americans at Manzanar, the US Army forced the Paiutes out of the valley so that ranchers and farmers could claim the land. Some of the Paiutes were able to return, but others had died or had been killed.
 - In the early 20th century, controversial land and water rights acquisitions by the City of Los Angeles pushed out ranchers and farmers and transformed the orchard community of Manzanar into thousands of acres of abandoned farms—making way for the World War II incarceration camp.
- **Advocacy:** Growing out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Manzanar Pilgrimage became the focal point of efforts to learn about, reflect on, remember, and preserve this site. Both the annual pilgrimage and grassroots efforts to gain recognition for Manzanar helped to inspire and strengthen later efforts to preserve other camps. Manzanar is increasingly relevant to diverse constituencies who see their own struggles reflected in its history.
- *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - Over the years, the Manzanar Committee has advocated for the preservation of other confinement sites and played an early role in lobbying for Japanese American redress through the formation of EO9066, Inc.
 - From its earliest days, key figures in the Manzanar Committee actively supported civil rights causes, including women’s rights; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer rights; and workers’ rights.

- In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, some Japanese Americans spoke out in support of Muslim American communities, using the example of the World War II incarceration to protest racial discrimination and infringement on civil liberties in times of crisis. The response to these events highlights Manzanar’s relevance to current issues of discrimination.
- In recent years, Japanese Americans and local tribal leaders have worked together to preserve scenic resources and the landscape in the Owens Valley because of deep personal and ancestral ties. Some see a pattern of injustice.
- **Owens Valley Water:** Water use, exportation, and management in the Owens Valley—especially by the LADWP—influenced major aspects of Manzanar’s history, including the camp’s location in the abandoned orchard town of Manzanar, its operation, the daily activities of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar, and the survival of historic orchards and vegetation following the camp’s closure. The City of Los Angeles still imports water from the Owens Valley.
- *Potential topics to be explored within this theme:*
 - The history of the Owens Valley water wars, including President Theodore Roosevelt’s support of the City of Los Angeles’ land and water acquisition, has impacted local perspectives on government control of land and resources. The government’s decision in 1942 to establish a camp at Manzanar in the Owens Valley was another example (to some) of government imposing itself on people’s lives.
 - When Congress authorized Manzanar National Historic Site in 1992, some locals opposed the designation, citing that it was further governmental control over Owens Valley land.
 - LADWP opposed the placement of the camp at Manzanar primarily because of perceived threats to its water supply with the camp’s close proximity to the Los Angeles Aqueduct.
 - While in operation during World War II, the quality and availability of water at Manzanar provided opportunities for agriculture, gardens, fishing, swimming, etc.
 - LADWP water management practices in the postwar years had and still have major impacts on the Manzanar site and remaining resources, including the historic orchards and vegetation and archeological features like concrete foundations and Japanese ponds.