

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

Residential Area:

1. Write the address hereafter at a station on the San Antonio River. House numbers on East First Street and house numbers on West First Street, house numbers on East Second Street, house numbers on East Third Street, house numbers on East Fourth Street in the area of

Manzanar, dated May 3, 1942, all persons from the above area by 12 o'clock noon or earlier after 12 o'clock noon, P. M. T., representative of the Commanding General.

If a family, or in case of grave emergency, is affected by this evacuation to the

major or other disposition of area lands, including public lands, minerals and

properties.

Do not take any action.

Do, on the person to whom name must of Civil Control Administration, Manzanar, New Mexico, or elsewhere.





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.

PAUL TAKEO BANNAI

Family # 1107

Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 5-5-1



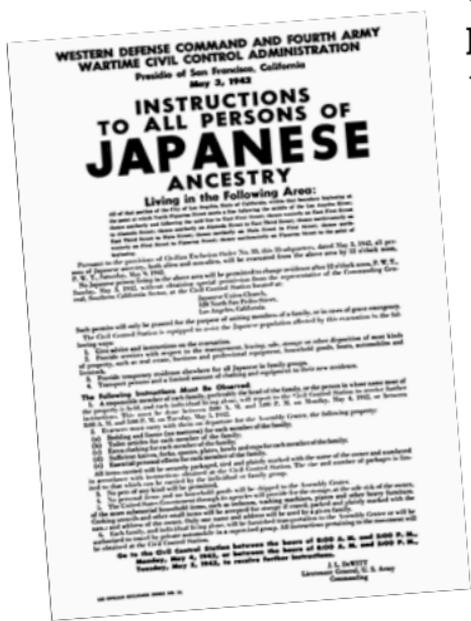
I was born on July 4, 1920 in Delta, Colorado to Sakui and Shino Bannai. They were from Aizu-Wakamatsu in Fukushima-ken in Japan. I attended grammar schools in Colorado, Utah and Arizona and Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles.

I worked in banking and attended the American Institute of Banking in Los Angeles and the University of California Extension School in Real Estate before World War II.

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We were told to take only what we could carry and therefore, the primary items were things to wear each day. Valuables such as jewelry, cameras, etc. were hard to take or to leave behind. Most of these



were left in a safe deposit box with the bank where I worked.

Although we were able to sell everything at “give away” prices I had bought a car a few months prior to the order to evacuate and the people, knowing that we had to leave, offered ridiculous prices for everything. I was so

disgusted that I locked the car up and threw the key away when I left. Some friends of mine came by and saw the car, called a locksmith and sold it for me and sent me the proceeds, even though it was a fraction of what it was worth.

I did not go to an assembly center because when my parents heard they would have to go to camp they volunteered to go to Manzanar with the first contingent. I received permission from WRA to remain behind because I worked for a bank and

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many of the evacuees were worried about their money so I stayed and left with the last group. My inclination was to challenge the executive order and remain, but my parents would be worried and so rather than go

to prison, I decided at the last minute to join them in Manzanar.

We situated in 5-10-5 in Manzanar and I was given the title of Property Manager and that meant \$19 per month in pay. Mother, father, 3 sisters and a brother and I shared the one room given to us.

The trip to camp was uneventful. We who boarded one of the last busses to leave the Los Angeles area



Manzanar under construction, 1942

were looking forward to joining all who preceded us. There was very little conversation and only a sad feeling over the entire group. Arriving during the daylight hours, my own feelings in seeing the barb wire and guard towers really broke my heart, but seeing my family after some absence made up for the sadness.



Manzanar War Relocation Center, 1942

Sharing a small room with a family consisting of 7 of us, going to a common mess hall, common shower and bath room, all of these things were something we had to get used to. I was through school but the rest of my family, three sisters and brother, were enrolled and although it was not up to the standards of the schools, which I attended, it was necessary and helped pass the time for the family.

My contacts with the administration were more than the normal. In the Property Management department, my job entailed handling much of the

govt. equipment that came into camp for use or distribution among the evacuees. To the administration, they had a job to do and they were mostly sympathetic to our situation and therefore tried to be as accommodating as possible. My contacts with the MPs were only after I had left camp and came back to visit my folks in the uniform of the U.S. Army prior to my overseas trip. The MPs were, of course, suspicious of me in an Army uniform with sergeant stripes and they asked for more information than under normal circumstances.

During my stay in camp I took part in some sports activities in order to break up the boredom of camp life and even went to a dance or two.



My main thought was to leave camp life as soon as possible. When they announced that if we volunteered for a farm labor camp (because there was a

shortage of hands to harvest crops) that we would be considered for leave from Manzanar, I immediately volunteered to join the first group.

I left camp with a group of 10 others and went to work the sugar beets and potatoes in Rexburg, Idaho for a German family. The family gave us comfortable quarters and treated us as human beings. The work was very hard, harder than any labor that I had ever done in my life but we survived. The feeling of being outside without facing the barb wire and guard towers was in itself a good feeling each day of waking up.

When my tour with the labor group was over I did not want to return to camp and with the assistance of the Student Relocation group I was able to enter the University of Nebraska as my grades

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in high school were very good. Upon reaching the University they would not admit me because they had a quota on Japanese American students and my name was unusual and they made a mistake. Because it was their fault they found other

schools in the Midwest that would admit me and I chose Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

Prior to the next semester I had to seek employment and therefore went to work at the Tangney-Maginn chain of hotels as a steward. I heard about the formation of the 442nd Regimental (all Japanese American Army unit) and volunteered. I was inducted at Fort Dodge and went to Camp Shelby Mississippi to train with the unit.



442nd Troops Training at Camp Shelby

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.

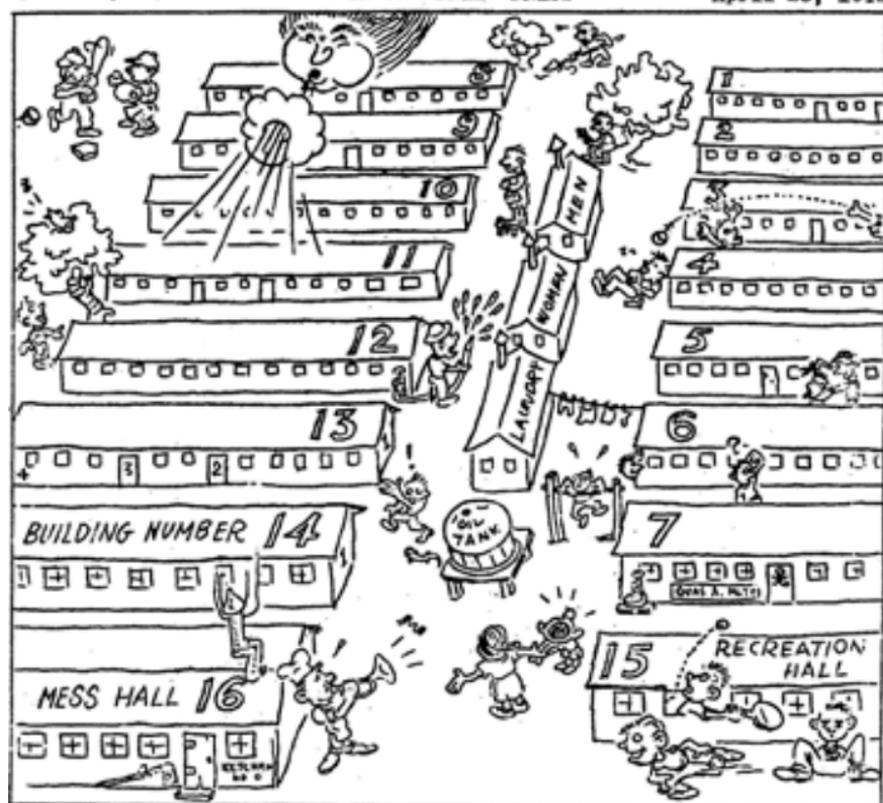
Acreage: 6,000

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.



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 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. To learn more about Manzanar National Historic Site, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/manz.

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