



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.

SUE KUNITOMI EMBREY

Family # 2614

Camp: Manzanar, CA

Address: 20-3-1



My mother had been in the United States since

before World War I but there was a law that would not allow Asian immigrants to become American citizens. She was a widow and always wanted to be self sufficient and she was trying to raise all of us at the same time. My mother had owned her store

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only one year. It must have been heartbreaking for her to have to give up that business. When the Little Tokyo area was chosen to be evacuated in a series of evacuation notices, we were told to send the head of the household to a particular location, where everybody

was to be registered, and that was the number that was given to my oldest brother as our family number. My mother was 2614A as a parent and the rest of us were B, C, D and down the line. There were eight of us. My oldest brother was married and had a six week old son. His family had another family number.

EVACUEE IDENTIFICATION CARD
 War Relocation Authority
 Manzanar Relocation Center
 Manzanar, California

Date 7/6/43

Name KUNITANI, SUEKO

Address 20-3

Identification Number 2058-E

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 LONE PINE, CALIF.
 OM 6-23-43

P. Merritt
 Project Director

We took the train from the old Union Station in Los Angeles. The trains were brought out of storage; they still had gas lights on them, and we were all told to meet there at 8:00 in the morning on May 9th, which was a Saturday and bring our luggage with us. We got on the train. It took us all day to get to Lone Pine. At Lone Pine we got off the train and waited for the busses. The big Greyhound buses came and picked us up at the train station and



Boarding the Bus to Manzanar, Lone Pine, CA 1942



brought us to Manzanar. By then it was dark and we really couldn't see anything.

The day after we got there, it was a Sunday morning. I think it was Mother's Day. We went to get our luggage that was being unlocked in the center firebreak and the wind began to blow. We could not see anything. We got dust in our eyes and grit in our teeth and mouth, and it seemed like it was one of the worst things that could happen to people who had come from the city and never experienced such wind. It was almost impossible to find your bag because you couldn't see very far. That was my first experience with the wind and we saw all kind of things flying around because there was really nothing beside barracks to

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keep things from going. I remember one of the roofs of the barracks blew off. Most of us usually lost our way in the dust storm. Everything stopped.

We had a lot of what we called “slop suey,” which was vegetables mixed together and cooked. We had the army folded-handle type utensils, which would come apart. They would fold up and the food would spill on the floor or the servers would put a spoonful of Jell-O on top of the hot rice and you would have a real mess.



Manzanar under construction, 1942

My best friend, Cherry, and I used to spend every night, after supper, walking the perimeter of the camp, because that was the only time we got any privacy to talk to each other. We knew that if we did it anywhere else, there would always be somebody

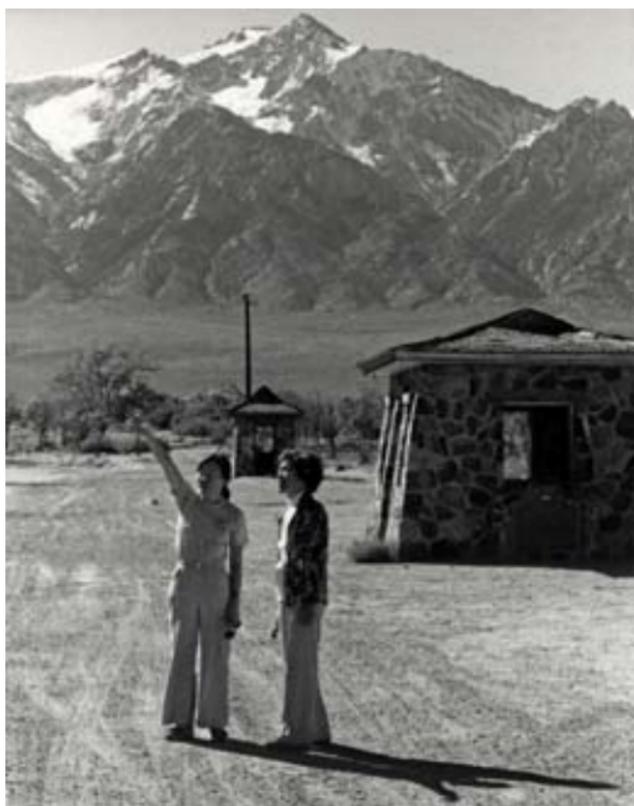


Manzanar War Relocation Center

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listening. The guard tower, I think, most everyone remembers at night when the searchlights were on. The minute you left your apartment and started walking anywhere, the searchlights followed you.

I think the most indelible memory, and I think it still holds, is that people got together and even though many of our leaders had been arrested and were no longer in the community, people got together collectively and really tried to make things better for everybody else. This was a barren place when we came in May. There was nothing growing. They had bulldozed everything to build the barracks. Gradually people ordered fish and built the fish ponds. We used the Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs quite a bit.



Sue Embrey Revisiting Manzanar, 1970

I think I was more disillusioned than anything else, that my own country would do this, not only to me, but to a group of people just because we looked like the enemy. There were a lot of restrictions in the '40's and even before that, against different minorities. I think we've reached a point in America where we have to look on ourselves as more of a diverse nation and that all of us bring strength to the country and government.

I think Manzanar should stand as a symbol of something that happened in America; had happened before and could happen again.

I think Manzanar should stand as a symbol of something that happened in America; had happened before and could happen again. It takes people who are aware of the past to make sure that it doesn't get repeated in the future.

But also, it's a strength of the American government and American democracy that we were given an apology and we were told that it was a mistake; that we were loyal citizens and law abiding parents and that it was not good for the government and American democracy to do this. We should all be vigilant. Liberty is something very precious we all need to work for and to strengthen. Telling the world that the government is willing to apologize, I think, indicates the strength of our democracy.



Sue Embrey (right) Marching for Equality and Human Rights, 1948

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.

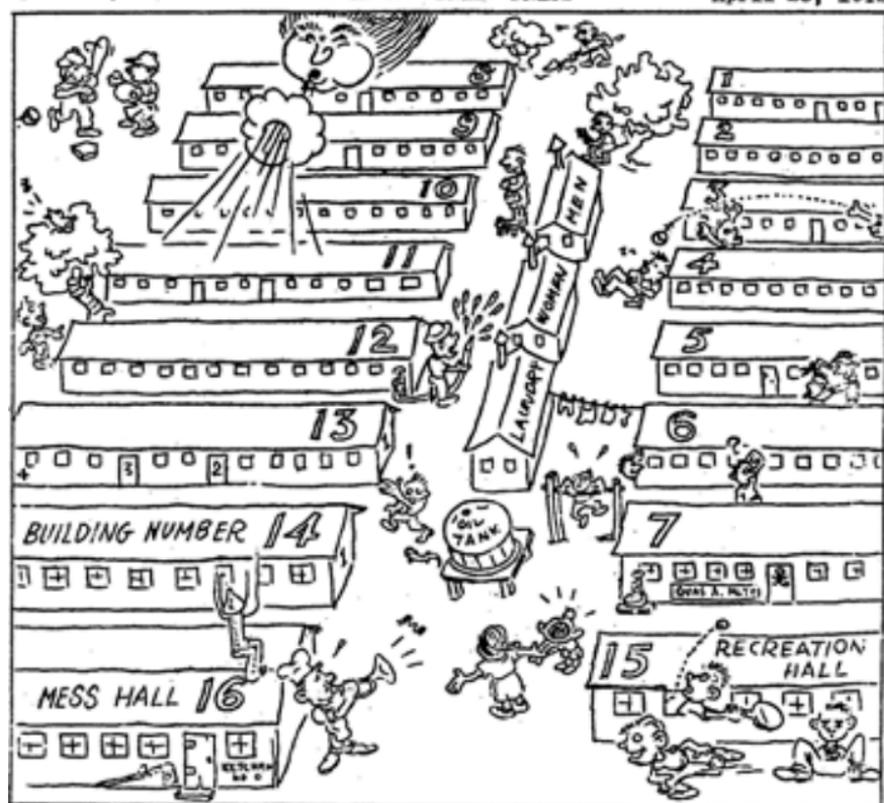
Acreage: 6,000

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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