



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.

HELEN MISHIMA

Camp: Gila River, AZ

My mother and father were born in Hilo, Hawaii. Dad was taken out of school when he completed the eighth grade, and went to work in the sugar cane fields to help support the family. He became a mechanic at 18. Mom completed only the third grade, and started domestic work. She had learned to read sufficiently to follow recipes.

My two older brothers and sister were born in Hilo. My younger brother and I were born in Calexico, California, near San Diego, where my father moved in 1928 to take a job as a mechanic. With three small children in tow, mother sailed to join Dad after he found a place to live. Mom found a job as a seamstress in a mattress factory.

Dad lost his position in Calexico as a result of the Depression. In the summer, after I completed kindergarten, we moved to Guadalupe, California, south of Santa Maria, where Dad's friend offered him a job. Once school began in the fall, Mom was hired as the cafeteria manager and chief cook at the Guadalupe Union Elementary School.

We were in church on Sunday, December 7, 1941. As soon as the service was over, we learned that Japan had bombed a place called Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. How unbelievable! We hurried home to listen to the radio reports. Mom and Dad were glued to the radio. Silence prevailed in the living room as we all listened to the news.

Our neighbor had been whisked away on the night of December 7. We wondered if Dad would be taken away by the FBI too. But fortunately, he was an American citizen by birth, as was Mom.

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As soon as we learned that we would be placed in some sort of camp, Mom began to sew large duffel bags to carry as much as we could. We were

told to pack clothing, bedding, and even some tin plates and eating utensils. What remained was sold for whatever we could get; even my youngest brother's new bicycle that he had received for Christmas, and the new stove and refrigerator Dad had bought the summer before. The one thing I would not part with was my violin. My sister kept her typewriter.

**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**

Living in the Following Area:

All of that section of the City of Los Angeles, State of California, within that boundary beginning at the point at which South Figueroa Street meets a line following the middle of the Los Angeles River; thence northwesterly and following the said line to East First Street; thence westerly on East First Street to Alameda Street; thence northwesterly on Alameda Street to East Third Street; thence northwesterly on East Third Street to Main Street; thence northwesterly on Main Street to First Street; thence northwesterly on First Street to Figueroa Street; thence northwesterly on Figueroa Street to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 33, this Headquarters, dated May 3, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. M. T., Saturday, May 9, 1942.
No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. M. T., Sunday, May 3, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Southern California Section, at the Civil Control Station located at:

Japanese Union Church,
126 North Sun Pedro Street,
Los Angeles, California

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of visiting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency, leaving work.

- The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:
1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
 2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
 3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
 4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Monday, May 4, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Tuesday, May 5, 1942.
2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:
 - (a) Bedding and linens (no mattresses) for each member of the family;
 - (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
 - (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
 - (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;
 - (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered so that which can be readily obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited as follows:

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.
5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the most substantial household items, such as irons, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.
6. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Monday, May 4, 1942, or between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Tuesday, May 5, 1942, to receive further instructions.

J. L. DeWITT
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

100 (REVISED) REGULATIONS FORM NO. 10

The day of evacuation, I remember the American Legion Auxiliary women served donuts and coffee for the adults and cocoa for the children. There were soldiers armed with rifles as we boarded the Greyhound buses that would take us to the Tulare Assembly Center. I remember walking to the end of the bus and looking out the back window. I

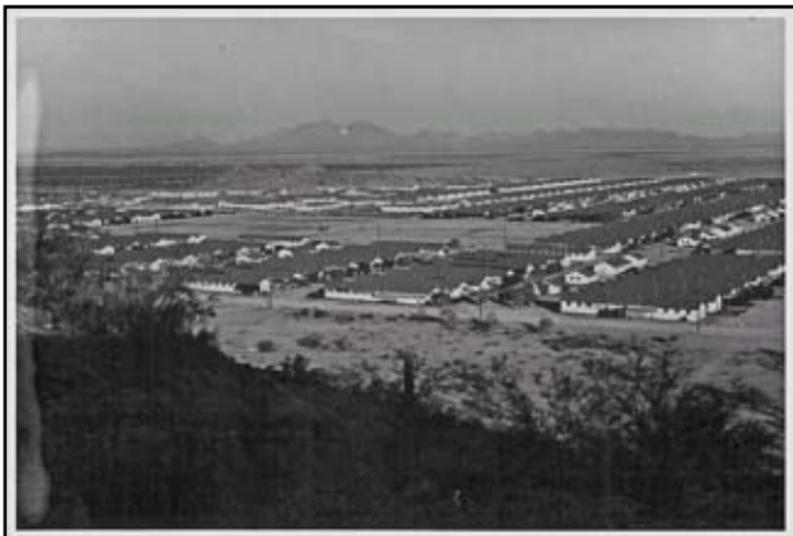
In camp, I corresponded with one of my former Caucasian classmates. Then, in her last letter, she stated that her father forbade her to write to that 'Jap' girl.

watched Guadalupe recede into the distance, trying to retain the image and wondering if we would ever return.

In camp, I corresponded with one of my former Caucasian classmates. Then, in her last letter, she stated that her father forbade her to write to that 'Jap' girl. Oh, how that hurt.

In the summer of 1942, we were herded into buses, and transferred onto a train that took us from California to the Gila River Indian Reservation in Arizona. The camp became known as the Gila River War Relocation Center, and was composed of two separate units, Butte and Canal.

Gila was hot, dusty, dry and full of desert critters such as rattlesnakes, Gila monsters, and scorpions. The camps were unfinished, with open trenches where water pipes were to be set. In each block, there were several barracks that all looked the same, a mess hall, a men's and women's shower/restroom, a laundry room and an "ironing room" (later used to store food products). There was one socket for a lightbulb



Gila River War Relocation Center

in each barracks room, and army cots for beds. Sheets were hung up as room dividers.

Dad first worked collecting garbage from the mess halls, and then as a mechanic at the motor pool. Mom was hired, even before we moved into a barracks, as a mess hall supervisor. She was the only woman supervisor that I am aware of in all the ten centers. Later she became supervisor of the special diet mess hall.

The evacuees did not wallow in self-pity. They made the camp come to life. The youth

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wanted to continue their education. The older folks, who now had time on their hands to be creative, started learning various crafts. They planted gardens, built fishponds and stocked them with koi, learned ranching and grew produce and flowers to beautify the camp. Much of this helped in preparation for life beyond the barbed wire

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fence when it became necessary to leave the camp and relocate throughout the United States. Many young men and some women went into the military service, both in Europe and in the Pacific.

A friend who had moved to Detroit beckoned Dad to join him. There was an opening for a mechanic. Dad left camp before the rest of us to find a job and a place where we could live. I was anxious to return to school in order not to fall behind in class. So in September 1945, the rest of our family traveled to Detroit by train. Each was allotted \$25 and free passage.

Dad left camp before the rest of us to find a job and a place where we could live.

Living behind barbed wire was an experience never to be forgotten. However, one cannot live in the past, and in my personal opinion, the experience opened up new horizons for most of us. We were scattered to destinations beyond our wildest dreams that opened up new avenues to pursue.

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Gila River War Relocation Center, Arizona

GILA RIVER

Location: Southern Arizona

Environmental Conditions:

Located in the desert, temperatures reached 125 degrees, with summer temperatures consistently over 100 degrees. Dust storms were also a frequent problem.



Opened: July 10, 1942

Closed: Canal Camp: September 28, 1945

Butte Camp: November 10, 1945

Max. Population: 13,348 (November 1942)

Demographics: Internees primarily came from Fresno, Santa Barbara, San Joaquin, Solano, Contra Costa, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties via Turlock, Tulare, and Santa Anita Assembly Centers. 3,000 individuals came directly to Gila River.

Interesting/unusual facts

*The Gila River Indian Community objected to the selection and use of their land for a Relocation Center.

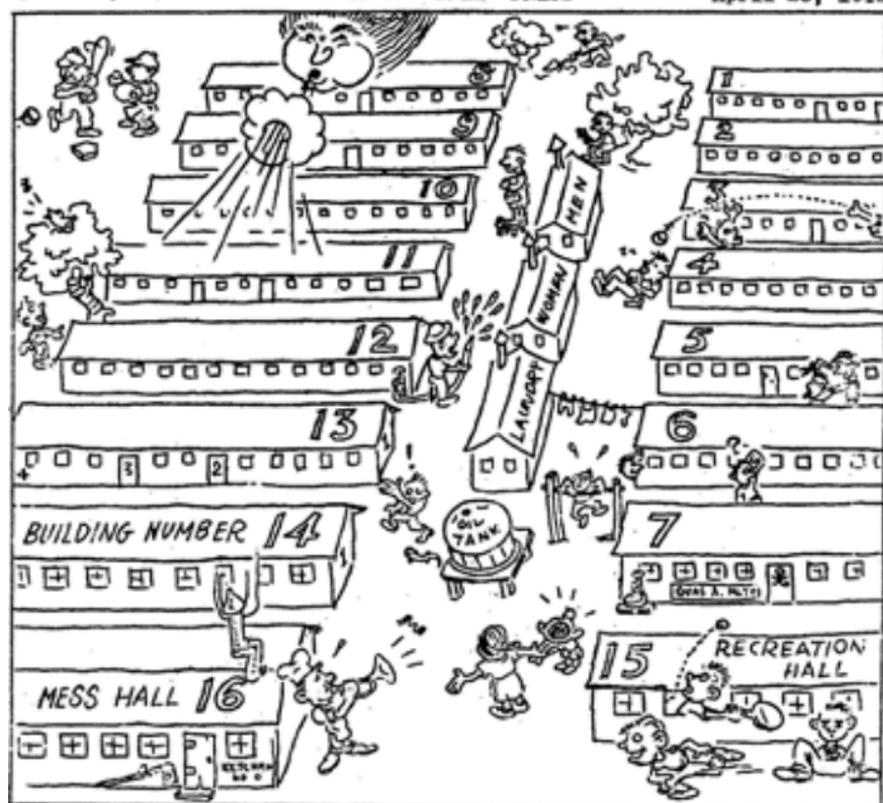
*The center was divided into two camps, Butte and Canal. The two camps were about 3.5 miles apart and included a total of 1,181 buildings.

*Gila River was so hot that the barracks had to have two roofs to protect people from the heat!

*Only one guard tower was erected at the Gila River Camp and it was torn down because of staffing limitations. Within six months, the perimeter barbed wire fence around each camp was removed.

*Japanese Americans at Canal Camp built model ships for the U.S. Navy to use in military training.

*Butte Camp featured a baseball diamond designed by professional baseball player Kenichi Zenimura. It included dugouts, bleachers, and other features and could accommodate up to 6,000 spectators.



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.

Manzanar National Historic Site
P.O. Box 426, Independence, CA 93526
Tel. 760-878-2194
E-mail: manz_superintendent@nps.gov

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