

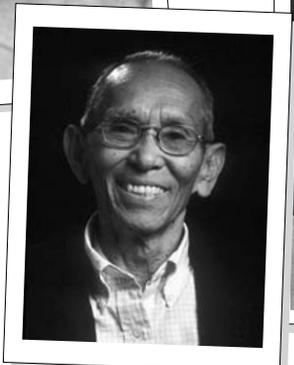
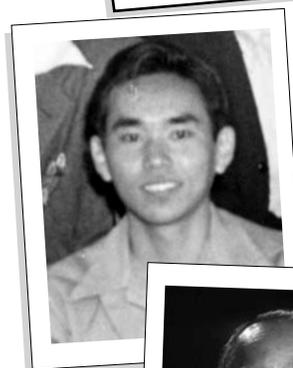
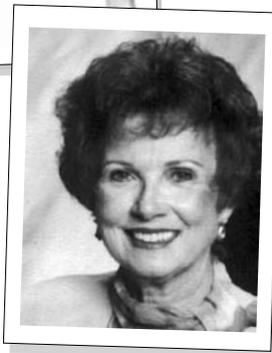
# Manzanar

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Oral History & ID Booklets

A Guide  
to Sharing  
Your Story



**Your story is important.**

Stories are as unique as the people who share them. While more than 120,000 people were excluded and confined during World War II, and thousands of others worked in or lived near the camps, no one else experienced that time exactly as you did, and no one else can offer your personal recollections or insights.

**Please consider sharing your story to help others learn about history and its lessons.**

## Overview

This workbook is intended to guide individuals and families who wish to preserve and share their stories through an oral history interview and/or by creating a brief biographical ID booklet. While most of this workbook focuses on developing an ID booklet, we also want to introduce you to our oral history programs.

As part of its mission, Manzanar National Historic Site has been collecting and preserving oral histories for the past ten years. In addition, the Manzanar rangers have created dozens of biographical booklets of former internees, camp staff, and others; they are shared with students and educators. You can become part of our ID card program by completing and returning this workbook.

Densho (a Japanese term meaning “to pass on to the next generation”) is an organization which conducts interviews, digitally preserves photos and documents, and has created a powerful digital archive to educate the American public. Nearly 500 oral histories have been collected by Manzanar NHS and Densho.

### *What is oral history?*

Oral history, or talking history, refers to historical information obtained through recorded interviews (in audio and/or video) with participants who have experienced significant events or times.

### *Who would interview me and where would it be done?*

Oral historians from Manzanar (or in some cases Densho) conduct interviews in two-person teams: generally one person asks questions and the other person handles the technical aspects of recording the interview. The interviewer would contact you in advance to select a convenient location such as a hotel, community building, or sound studio. Or, if you prefer, you can do your interview in the privacy of your own home.

### *Why do you want to interview me?*

Every person’s story is significant and unique. Your perspective is valuable and can help broaden others’ understanding of history. Your interview can also offer you a way to share your life experiences with your family and friends.

### *What do you do with the interviews?*

We won’t do anything until and unless we have your written permission. If you agree by signing the permission form, your interview will be used for historical and educational purposes. At Manzanar, oral history interviews have played a critically important role in developing the site’s exhibits, film, education materials, and other media. The theme of our exhibit is: “One Camp, Ten Thousand Lives; One Camp, Ten Thousand Stories.” Your interview will be transcribed into written format. You will receive copies of all materials generated as part of your interview. With your consent, the interview may be included in the Densho digital archive.

### *How will you record the interviews?*

Generally, we prefer to videotape interviews because expressions and gestures are such an important aspect of communication. However, we can record in audio format for those who prefer not to be filmed.

### *What kinds of questions will you be asking?*

There are no right or wrong answers during an oral history interview. It’s your story in your own words. You will be asked questions about your family background, life before the war, your experiences during the war, as well as your life since then. The questions on the following pages will give you an idea of the types of questions you may be asked during an interview.

Please contact us to learn more!

# Biographical Summary

First name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle name \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden name or nickname \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Current mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Street address (if different than your mailing address) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

If you were interned, employed, or otherwise involved with a camp, please answer the following questions.

Camp(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Family # \_\_\_\_\_ Block #(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Barracks #(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment #(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation during the camp era \_\_\_\_\_

Relocation Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when and where? \_\_\_\_\_

Military Service (branch/unit/rank) \_\_\_\_\_

When and where? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been interviewed about your recollections? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, when and with whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have personal photographs or artifacts from the World War II era? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please see the "Photos, Archives, and Artifacts" page in this workbook.

Occasionally we have requests from students, educators, researchers, or reporters who would like to speak to a former internee or camp staff. If you are willing to speak about your experiences, do we have your permission to share your contact information? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be on the Manzanar NHS contact list? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Before any of your information may be used, you must sign the permission form on the next page.



# Permission Form

We must have your written permission before we can preserve or share the information you provide in this booklet. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.



## PERMISSION FORM

I do hereby give to the National Park Service the non-exclusive right to use in perpetuity the information provided in this oral history workbook as well as any photographs and documents I am submitting with it.

I authorize the National Park Service to use this information in such a manner as may best serve their shared educational and historical objectives to preserve and share stories of the internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans and resident aliens during World War II.

Potential uses of the information include, but are not limited to, incorporation in the following: a biographical ID booklet, an archive to be made available over the internet, educational curriculum, film or video documentaries, online computer websites, publications, disc-based products and museum exhibits. In addition, the interviews may be made available to other entities with similar educational or historical purposes.

Would you prefer that any public material produced only refer to you by your first name and list initial only such as "John O." or "Kazuko S."? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are completing this booklet of behalf of someone else, please check here: \_\_\_\_\_

His/Her name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your contact information above.

# Creating Your ID Booklet: Family Background and Life Before the War

Father's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date/place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date/place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Where and when were they married? \_\_\_\_\_

If your parents were immigrants, what brought them to the United States?

Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space.

Where did they settle? What did they do for a living?

What values did your parents instill in you?

How many brothers and/or sisters do (or did) you have?

What kinds of religious observances, school activities, sports, and hobbies did you or your family participate in?

What schools did you attend? What was the ethnic makeup of your community and your school?

When and where did you graduate from high school? What were your career goals and future hopes?

What was your first job?

## After Pearl Harbor

Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space.

What do you remember about December 7, 1941? Where were you? How did you hear the news?

How did your life change? Did people treat you differently and/or did you see or treat others differently? If restrictions were placed on you or your family, what were they?

What emotions did you experience when you learned that you (or others) were being excluded from the West Coast?

If you were in a camp:

How did your family prepare for “Evacuation”? What did your family do with your property and possessions?

What did you take with you? What was the most difficult thing to leave behind?

Where were you sent? What do you remember about traveling there?

## Life in Camp (for internees)

Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space.

What was your first impression of the camp when you arrived?

Where did you live, and who did you live with?

Did you, your parents, or other family members work in camp? If so, what did you/they do?

Did you, your parents, or other family members attend school in camp? If so, what was it like?

What kinds of religious observances, school activities, sports, and hobbies did you or your family participate in?

Is there a particular person, event or memory that stands out in your mind?

What contact did you have with camp staff and/or military police?

Did you or your family experience major life changes in camp (i.e., births, marriages, deaths)?

How did your family respond to the “Loyalty Questionnaire”? What happened as a result of your answers?

## Life in Camp (for non-internees: WRA staff, Military Police, and others)

What circumstances brought you to a camp? For MPs, what unit were you assigned to?

Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space.

What job and/or military training did you receive?

What was your and/or your parents' job(s) in or association with a camp? How much did you/they earn? If you were a student, where did you attend school? What grade(s) were you in?

Where did you live during the camp period, and who did you live with?

What contact did you have with internees?

What contact did you have with people in the surrounding communities?

What was your opinion of Japanese Americans before you came to camp? Did it change over time? If so, how?

What was your social life like in and out of camp?

Is there a particular person, event or memory that stands out in your mind?

## Life After the War

How and when did you leave camp?

Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space.

Where did you go and what was it like?

If you served in the military, were you drafted or did you volunteer? Why or why not?

What happened to the rest of your family?

Were there people and/or organizations who assisted you before, during or after camp? If so, who were they and how did they help?

Did you and/or your family later talk about your camp experiences? Did you share them with your children?

# Today

Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space.

Looking back, how did your camp experiences shape the rest of your life?

What was your life like after camp (i.e., marriage, children, career)?

What did you think of the movement to obtain redress and reparations? Were you involved? If so, how?

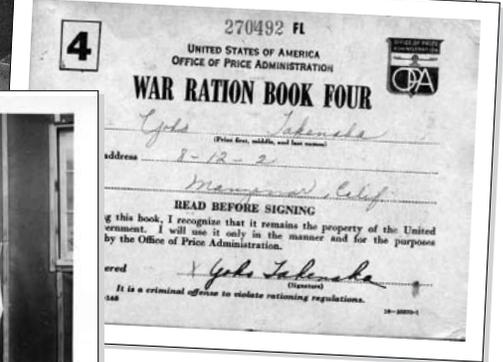
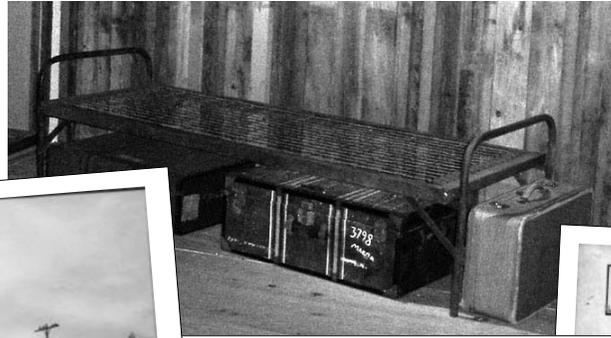
When (and if) you received the official apology and reparations check, how did you feel?  
For non-internees, what was your opinion on the question of redress and reparations?

Have you visited the former camp site, and/or attended reunions or pilgrimages? If so, what was it like?

What advice or insights would you like to share with young people today?

# Photos, Archives, and Artifacts

What's in your attic, basement or garage?



In addition to preserving your stories, the National Park Service, as well as many other institutions and organizations, preserves archival and museum collections. While we are not able to collect, preserve, and store all items related to the exclusion and confinement of Japanese Americans and others during World War II, we are interested in unique and personal items that will help illuminate history.

Manzanar National Historic Site has a museum collection from which artifacts are displayed in the site's interpretive center on a rotating basis and/or used for research purposes.

Densho focuses on the digital preservation of images and documents, scanning the materials and making them available for educators and others on their website at [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org).

Please let us know if you have camp-related materials such as those listed below which you might consider loaning or donating to the National Park Service.

Paper Documents	Letters, diaries, journals, post cards, greeting cards, stamps, stationery, personal papers, scrapbooks, programs, brochures, books and manuscripts, magazines, war bonds, ration books, etc.
Photographs	Photographic prints, negatives, albums, snapshots, etc.
Everyday items	Family life, school, work, medical care, recreation, and religious or entertainment items, furniture made or used in camp, luggage, etc.
Motion Pictures	Camp-related amateur and home movies, newsreels, commercial or government films.
Arts & Crafts	Paintings, drawings, sketchbooks, etc., as well as craft items made in camp.
Sports & Hobbies	Items used in camp such as sporting goods or uniform items, club memorabilia, etc.

If we are not able to accept your donation, we may be able to refer you to another group or institution that can.

Please contact Manzanar NHS for more information on the scope of our collections and the process for loaning or donating items.

## Next Steps

Please make a photocopy of this booklet before you send it to us.

If you are unable to, please let us know and we will send you one.

If it is convenient, you may use a computer to create your text and Email it to:  
MANZ\_Superintendent@nps.gov.

We will contact you to confirm that we have received your workbook or Email.



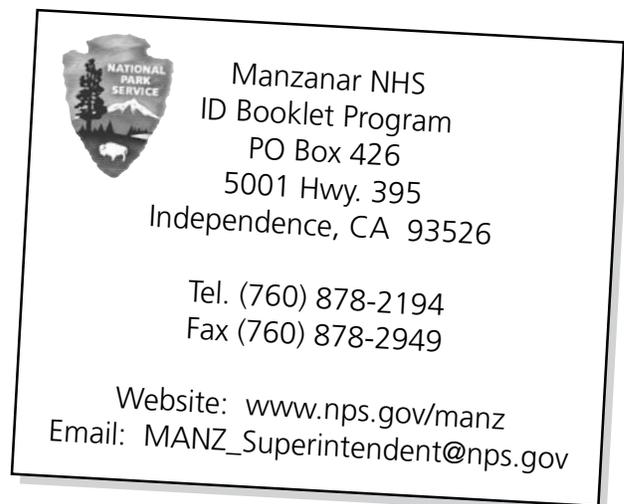
To participate in the ID booklet program, please mail or email us an image of you from the early 1940s as well as a recent photo. If possible, please send 2-3 pictures of you with your family and/or friends in the 1940s. Digital images should be at least 4" wide at a resolution of 300 dpi in .tif or .jpg format. Mailed images will be scanned and returned to you unless you specify otherwise. Please provide captions for your photos. These photos will be used to personalize your booklet.

If you don't have photos available, we can include generic images of your camp in the booklet.

The park rangers at Manzanar will complete a draft text and layout for your review. Once we receive your approval and/or make any changes you request, we will format your booklet for digital distribution to educators and students. We can also provide you with printouts of your booklet to share with others as you wish.



Please mail your completed workbook and photos to:



For more information on Densho, please contact: Densho, 1416 S. Jackson St., Seattle, Washington 98144.  
Tel. (206) 320-0095, Fax (206) 320-0098. Website: [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org).