



We were judged, not on our own character . . . but simply because of our ethnicity.

Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga



We could only carry what we could carry, and my suitcase was full of diapers and children's clothes.

Fumiko Hayashida (right)



Kids played with toys like this small tank (right) in Manzanar's Children's Village (above), the only orphanage in all 10 camps. Many were orphans before the war, others as a result of the incarceration. All were confined because of their ancestry.

LILLIAN MATSUMOTO COLLECTION, NPS / MANZ

ONE CAMP • 10,000 LIVES ONE CAMP • 10,000 STORIES

In spring 1942, the US Army turned the abandoned townsite of Manzanar, California, into a camp that would confine over 10,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants. Margaret Ichino Stanicci later said, "I was put into a camp as an American citizen, which is against the Constitution because I had no due process. . . . It was only because of my ancestry."

For decades before World War II, politicians, newspapers, and labor leaders fueled anti-Asian sentiment in the western United States. Laws prevented immigrants from becoming citizens or owning land. Immigrants' children were born US citizens, yet they too faced prejudice. Japan's December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor intensified hostilities toward people of Japanese ancestry.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, authorizing the military to remove "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 over 70,000 US citizens. DeWitt said, "You just can't tell one Jap from another. . . . They all look the same. . . . A Jap's a Jap."

They were from cities and farms, young and old, rich and poor. They had only days or weeks to prepare. Businesses closed, classrooms emptied, families and friends separated. Ultimately, the government deprived over 120,000 people of their freedom. Half were children and young adults. Ten thousand were incarcerated at Manzanar. From this one camp came 10,000 stories.

PIECES FROM THE PAST
The photos above evoke life at Manzanar. Left to right: Jerry Fujikawa volunteered for the US Army while confined in Manzanar. • The Takemoto family was among the first to arrive. • Manzanar's stark landscape inspired artists and poets. • Men, women, and children endured the same living conditions. • Playing with marbles was a popular children's pastime. • Every person wore a numbered tag to camp. • Fumiko Hayashida carried her daughter Natalie during their forced removal to Manzanar. • Both Japanese and American sports, like judo and baseball, were popular at Manzanar.

COURTESY FUJIKAWA FAMILY; NATIONAL ARCHIVES / DOROTHY LANGE; NPS / MANZ; NATIONAL ARCHIVES / DOROTHY LANGE; NATIONAL ARCHIVES / FRANCIS STEWART; NPS / MANZ; COURTESY HIKOJI TAKEUCHI; MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND INDUSTRY, SEATTLE; NPS / MANZ; NATIONAL ARCHIVES / FRANCIS STEWART; TOYO MIYATAKE; COURTESY ALAN MIYATAKE

TWO FAMILIES • TWO STORIES

Before the war, the Miyatake and Maruki families lived near each other in Los Angeles. In Manzanar, they lived in neighboring blocks, yet their experiences were far apart. The Miyatakes' eldest son Archie met and fell in love with Takeko Maeda. They later married and spent over 70 years together.

The Maruki's eldest daughter Ruby came to Manzanar married and pregnant. She died in the camp hospital on August 15, 1942, along with the twin girls she was delivering. Decades later, Ruby's youngest sister Rosie said, "My mother never got over it. It just broke her heart."

Hundreds attended the Buddhist funeral of Ruby Maruki Watanabe and her twin girls, Diane and Sachiko.

NPS / MANZ, MARUKI FAMILY COLLECTION



Among the hardships of Manzanar, the wind and dust storms were some of the most unforgiving and unforgettable. Artist Kango Takamura captured this windy street scene in March 1943.

NPS / MANZ, TANAKA FAMILY COLLECTION

CONFLICT

Why didn't the government give us the chance to prove our loyalty instead of herding us into camps?

Joseph Kurihara

People's diverse reactions to incarceration and conditions in Manzanar often led to conflict, erupting on December 6, 1942. A large crowd gathered to protest the jailing of Harry Ueno. The confrontation escalated and military police fired into the crowd, killing two men and injuring nine others. Soon the consequences of what came to be known as the Manzanar "riot" reverberated through all ten camps. Government officials issued a controversial questionnaire to identify and segregate those they deemed "disloyal." Koo Sakamoto and her husband gave conflicting answers. She was 19 and pregnant with their second child when her husband was sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center. They never saw each other again.



Japanese Americans boarded trains for a 500-mile journey to the high-security Tule Lake Segregation Center in northern California. TOYO MIYATAKE / COURTESY ALAN MIYATAKE

REMEMBRANCE

It was shocking to your soul, to your spirit, and it took many years for people to talk about it.

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

The Manzanar camp closed on November 21, 1945, three months after the war ended. Despite having regained their freedom, some people found life equally difficult after the war. Most spent decades rebuilding their lives, but few spoke openly about their wartime experiences. Buddhist and Christian ministers returned to the cemetery each year to remember the dead. In 1969, a group of activists came on their own pilgrimage of healing and remembrance. With the formation of the Manzanar Committee, this pilgrimage grew into an annual event attended by over one thousand. Efforts to remember and preserve the camp led to the creation of Manzanar National Historic Site in 1992.



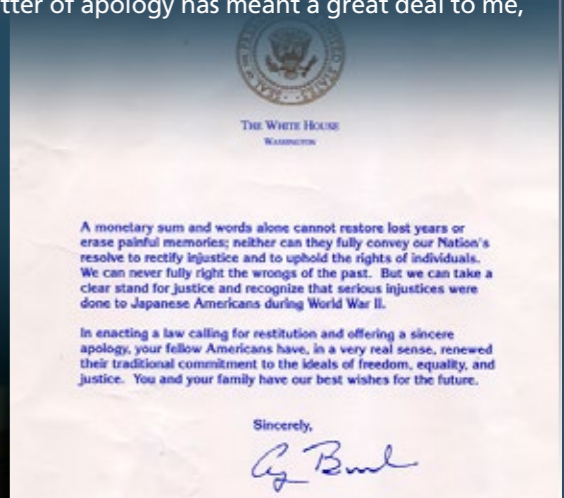
The annual pilgrimage is open to the public. It includes a procession of banners, which ends at Manzanar's iconic cemetery monument. GANN MATSUDA / MANZANAR COMMITTEE

APOLOGY

America is strong as it makes amends for the wrongs it has committed . . . we will always remember Manzanar because of that.

Sue Kunitomi Embrey

In the 1980s, a congressionally authorized commission concluded "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership" led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. It recommended a presidential apology and individual payments of \$20,000. After receiving her apology letter from President George H. W. Bush, Miho Sumi Shiroishi "felt as though the shame of all these years had been lifted and I was able to talk about the experience with much more ease. This letter of apology has meant a great deal to me, more than anyone can imagine."



The US government issued over 82,000 apology letters and redress payments to Japanese Americans in order of age, oldest to youngest, between 1990 and 1999. DENSHO; NPS / MANZ