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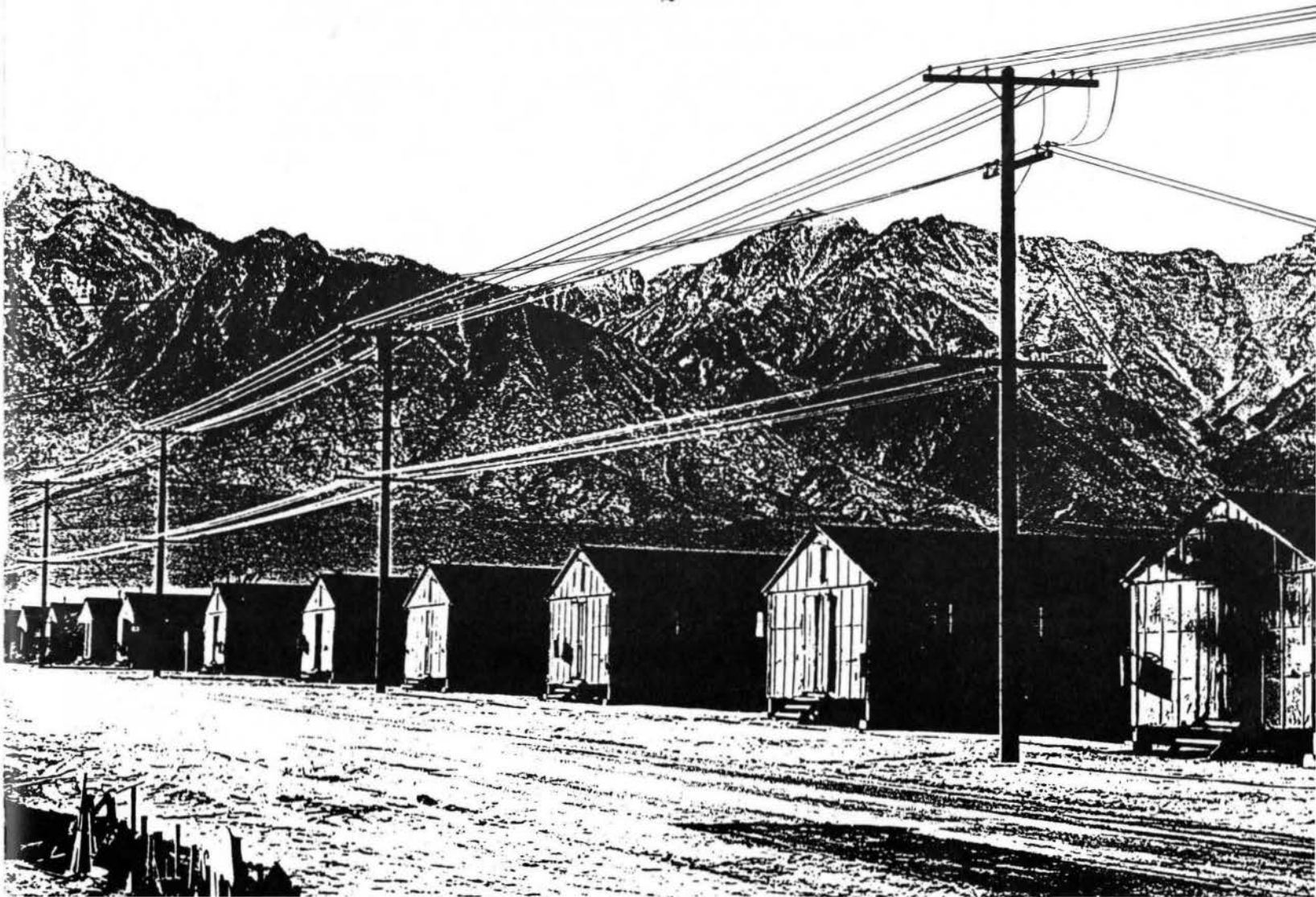
# REDRESS!

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THE AMERICAN PROMISE

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# THE AMERICAN PROMISE

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*By the President of the United States of America*

## **A Proclamation**

In this Bicentennial Year, we are commemorating the anniversary dates of many of the great events in American history. An honest reckoning, however, must include a recognition of our national mistakes as well as our national achievements. Learning from our mistakes is not pleasant, but as a great philosopher once admonished, we must do so if we want to avoid repeating them.

February 19th is the anniversary of a sad day in American history. It was on that date in 1942, in the midst of the response to the hostilities that began on December 7, 1941, that Executive Order No. 9066 was issued, subsequently enforced by the criminal penalties of a statute enacted March 21, 1942, resulting in the uprooting of loyal Americans. Over one hundred thousand persons of Japanese ancestry were removed from their homes, detained in special camps, and eventually relocated.

The tremendous effort by the War Relocation Authority and concerned Americans for the welfare of these Japanese-Americans may add perspective to that story, but it does not erase the setback to fundamental American principles. Fortunately, the Japanese-American community in Hawaii was spared the indignities suffered by those on our mainland.

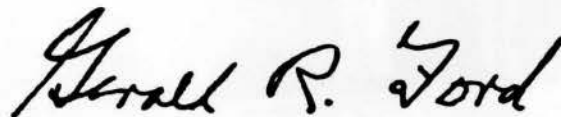
We now know what we should have known then—not only was that evacuation wrong, but Japanese-Americans were and are loyal Americans. On the battlefield and at home, Japanese-Americans—names like Hamada, Mitsumori, Marimoto, Noguchi, Yamasaki, Kido, Munemori and Miyamura—have been and continue to be written in our history for the sacrifices and the contributions they have made to the well-being and security of this, our common Nation.

The Executive order that was issued on February 19, 1942, was for the sole purpose of prosecuting the war with the Axis Powers, and ceased to be effective with the end of those hostilities. Because there was no formal statement of its termination, however, there is concern among many Japanese-Americans that there may yet be some life in that obsolete document. I think it appropriate, in this our Bicentennial Year, to remove all doubt on that matter, and to make clear our commitment in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim that all the authority conferred by Executive Order No. 9066 terminated upon the issuance of Proclamation No. 2714, which formally proclaimed the cessation of the hostilities of World War II on December 31, 1946.

I call upon the American people to affirm with me this American Promise—that we have learned from the tragedy of that long-ago experience forever to treasure liberty and justice for each individual American, and resolve that this kind of action shall never again be repeated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of February in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.





## THE CASE FOR REDRESS

This is a story of a tragic injustice incurred upon a group of people. It is a story of the government of the United States, urged on by men of prejudice, ignoring the Constitution of the nation and the Bill of Rights, ordering the mass removal of these people from the West Coast into detention camps during World War II. All accomplished without due process of law.

This is also a story about these people who were forcibly removed—the Japanese Americans. And their quest to right this wrong.

It is a case for redress.

To fully understand the Japanese American's quest for redress, it is important to know the history of the people. To say that more than 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were forcibly removed from the West Coast and imprisoned in detention camps scattered among the Western states of the nation would, by itself, justify the call for redress by the victims. But the story of the removal and detention is not complete without a historical review of the ebb and flow of events and forces which buffeted these people for a half-century and which finally led to the tragic removal and detention of the Japanese Americans and resident Japanese aliens in 1942.

The story of the Japanese in the United States is also a part of the history of the United States. In fact, the Japanese immigrants during the first half of this century played an important role in the growth and development of the West Coast. But coupled with this was the history of anti-Japanese agitation and legislation which flour-

ished among the West Coast states during the same period.

Amazingly, the exclusion, removal and detention of the 120,000 Japanese Americans and resident Japanese aliens during the early days of World War II were accomplished by the government of the United States despite the fact that not a single documented act of espionage, sabotage or fifth column activity was committed by those incarcerated. On the other hand, there was no mass removal and detention of American citizens of German and Italian descent.

Race prejudice? Of course. Deprived of the right to life, liberty, property and due process of law? Absolutely.

Why petition our government to redress the grievances of the Japanese Americans for those losses caused by the exclusion, removal and detention? Because the government, including Congress and the Supreme Court, failed to uphold the basic premise on which this nation was founded—a democracy whose foundation is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

This is why redress is not a Japanese American issue. It is an American issue.

"It is immoral to turn our faces away from protecting the foundations of our great democracy so that no other group of men will ever take our laws lightly and make decisions on government action based on ancestry. Redress is morally right and just," said Grayce Uyehara, the executive director of the Japanese American Citizen League's Education Committee.

Amen!

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Legislative Education Committee  
Pacific Southwest District Council  
Japanese American Citizens League  
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Shortage of workers in railroad, lumber and farm industries of Far West created demand for laborers from Japan.

## THE ROOT CAUSES

# **IMPORTED AS LABORERS, THEY BECAME FARMERS, SHOP OWNERS**

On June 19, 1868, a British vessel arrived in Honolulu with 149 Japanese aboard. They were not immigrants, but contract laborers and were the first major group of people to land in Hawaii from Japan.

Hawaii was by then a major supplier of sugar to the United States, and the sugar plantations were looking for cheap labor. More important, it was the beginning of the history of the Japanese in the United States.

The initial group which landed in Hawaii was recruited illegally by the plantations, because Japan prohibited laborers from leaving the nation. Eventually, the United States pressured Japan to allow laborers to emigrate in 1884, as the agricultural and lumber industries of the Western states were facing labor shortages.

By 1900, there were 24,000 Japanese working on the West Coast farms, forests and railroads. They represented the largest non-white ethnic group on the West Coast.

Since a large percentage of the immigrants came from rural areas of Japan, many of the workers left the railroads, sawmills, farms and the canneries after saving enough money to lease or purchase land and began farming.

They reclaimed unwanted land and developed it into rich agricultural areas. They began to outproduce the white farmers in California and began to alarm the farmers and labor unions.

In 1907, the United States, under pressure from California, signed a so-called Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan which barred immigration of laborers from Japan. This did not satisfy a

growing anti-Japanese movement.

In the meantime, thousands of Japanese women were arriving from Japan to join their husbands, or to marry men already here.

As families were started and children were born, the Japanese communities up and down the coast began to stabilize. Although forced to live in ghettoized areas, many opened small stores and shops in cities and towns to serve the farmers. Many of the children attended segregated schools or classes.

They were discriminated against in employment, forced to live in segregated areas, denied public accommodations, and in general, faced constant attacks from newspapers, politicians and organizations.

By 1909, about half of the Japanese population were working on the farms and three-quarters of the farm workers were in California.

The increasing success of the Japanese farmers was met with more hysterical outbursts by the anti-Japanese element. Organized groups began to clamor for more controls to hamper the Japanese competition, and they were joined by the politicians and newspapers, who took up the anti-Japanese chant.

Mob violence, including arson and forcible expulsion from farming areas, began to occur with increasing frequency as the media beat the drums and the politicians spewed anti-Japanese rhetoric.

In 1913, California passed the Alien Land Law, which prevented Asians from owning land.



Earning a living was tough enough, but ethnic Japanese faced many other barriers of discrimination (Hollywood-1920).

## IT TOOK 162 YEARS TO REMOVE RACE AS BAR FOR CITIZENSHIP

In 1790, Congress passed a law which restricted eligibility for naturalization to aliens who were "free white persons." The purpose of the law at that time was to prevent Negroes who had been brought in as slaves from becoming citizens. In 1870, however, after the end of the Civil War, it was amended to allow "persons of African nativity and descent" to become citizens.

Prevented from naturalization were Filipinos, who were considered "brown" and aliens from Japan, China, Korea and other Far East nations who were considered "yellow." The infamous alien land laws passed by many Western states in the early '20s preventing Asian aliens from owning land used the ineligibility of citizenship as the basis for their racial laws.

In 1943, as a gesture of friendship to China, who were allies during World War II, the Chinese were granted naturalization. Three years later, the Filipinos were off the black list.

It was not until 1952, when the Walter-McCarran Immigration and Naturalization Act was passed that the Japanese alien residents were able to become citizens. The 1952 Act not only eliminated race as a bar to naturalization, but also repealed the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924, which had barred immigration from Far East nations.

In 1920, a stricter and tougher Alien Land Law was passed.

Under tremendous pressure from the West Coast states, Congress knuckled under the passed the blockbuster 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act. Primarily aimed at the Japanese, the law halted immigration of Asians from other Far East nations. It was a national insult to Japan, since it was the United States which had originally insisted on Japanese immigration in 1884.

In spite of these discriminatory setbacks, the Japanese doggedly pushed on. In many cities and towns, they built temples and churches, which were also used as community centers. Their children were admonished not only to behave in schools, but to make sure that they achieved their "A's."

Unable to become citizens, they worked to create exemplary communities up and down the coast, particularly as far as public records were concerned. They generally took care of their own problems so that the public records showed that the Japanese had hardly a person on the public welfare list or police blotters.

Due to the constant threat of the anti-Japanese factions, the application of a rigid community code of conduct was applied to the individual, the family, and finally, the community. This code of conduct was a form of security for the harassed Japanese. They thought that by keeping out of trouble, trouble would keep away from them.

But they never counted on war between the United States and Japan.



Aboard the President Wilson liner, men leave for Japan to bring back wives or find brides before Oriental Exclusion Act becomes law in 1924.



Starting out as hired hands, many saved money to become farmers and contributed to growth of West Coast's agricultural industry.

## ALIEN LAND LAW WAS POPULAR IN MANY STATES

In order to drive the Japanese farmers out of business, the anti-Japanese faction came up with the ploy to deny the farmers the right to own land because they were ineligible for citizenship. Called the Alien Land Law, it was passed by the state legislators of California with only a few dissenting votes in 1913.

Not satisfied with the 1913 version due to some loopholes, the state placed an initiative on the ballot in 1920 with stricter restrictions. The voters made it official.

The anti-Japanese law, according to a state official at that time, was "to discourage the coming of the Japanese to California."

Other states with the same bent began passing their versions of the Alien Land Law. Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, Texas, Nebraska and even Delaware.

Even as late as 1948, the state of California was still filing escheat cases against the Japanese, who were returning from the detention camps.

Finally, in the *People vs. Oyama* case, the United States Supreme Court struck down the heart of the law in 1948 by declaring it unconstitutional. Other cases followed to cut the remaining portions of the law into shreds.

In 1949, the state of Oregon became the first state to repeal its alien land law. Others followed.

Since the California law was a state initiative, it took a state initiative to erase it from the books, even though it had been made inoperative due to the various court rulings. So the final chapter of the infamous Alien Land Law turned its last pages in 1956 when the state voters booted it out.



Like other Japanese, Mankichi Nakamura, a graduate of Univ. of Chicago, was not allowed to practice law because he was an alien ineligible for naturalization, so he served the community as a "legal advisor."



Boy Scout movement was popular in United States in '30s and Japanese communities were no different as they organized troops for their children. Troop 64 of Japanese M.E. Church of Los Angeles (1931).



Even though these youths lived in ghetto areas, it didn't stop them from organizing football teams to play against teams from other areas. The Oliver Club of Little Tokyo, Los Angeles (1933).



San Francisco police stack confiscated radios from Japanese who had to surrender radios and cameras after outbreak of war (1942).

## THE OUTBREAK OF WAR **BIGOTS IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT HAVE THEIR WAY WITH JAPANESE**

December 7, 1941. A day remembered by all Americans. On this day, Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor in Honolulu and triggered war between the United States and Japan. With a war already going full bore in Europe, the attack on Pearl Harbor expanded it to world-wide dimensions, flaming across continents and oceans.

Japanese communities from San Diego to Seattle went into a state of shock. Most did not know where Pearl Harbor was, and the eerie and surrealistic feeling that the war was not really happening evaporated as the newspaper headlines and radio broadcasts confirmed during the next few days that the unthinkable had happened.

The communities came to a virtual standstill as the FBI swooped in within 48 hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor and arrested hundreds of Japanese up and down the coast. Carrying with them a blanket "Presidential warrant," the FBI agents picked up men who were board members of various Japanese associations, chambers of commerce, Japanese language and martial arts schools, farmers' co-ops, and even Buddhist ministers. The resident Japanese aliens had now become "enemy aliens."

Although no specific charges were filed against these men, they were arrested because "the enemy aliens would be dangerous to the public peace and safety of the United States," according to government officials. Most of them did not know why they were arrested, and

neither did their families. Taken away without notice, the men were secretly shipped to one of 26 detention camps scattered in 16 states. Some of the families did not learn for years what happened to their husbands or fathers.

Stripped of their community leaders, the people had no one to provide them with the guidance and leadership they desperately needed during those troubled days. Their children, the Nisei, who were American citizens, were mostly in their teens.

In the meantime, the festering anti-Japanese element on the West Coast came out in full dress with flags flying. The war hysteria, together with rumors of espionage and sabotage by the Japanese in Hawaii, raised the level of anti-Japanese agitation to a higher pitch.

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox added more fuel to the volatile situation with a statement to the effect that there was sabotage and espionage by the Japanese in Hawaii. The government knew, however, that this was not true and yet, did nothing to rectify it. Thus the country was falsely led to believe that both American citizens of Japanese descent and their alien parents were disloyal and a threat to American security.

State-wide organizations such as the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, the Joint Immigration Committee, the American Legion, the State Grange, all of whom had been agitating against the Japanese since the '20s, joined the clamor. As the newspapers and the



The FBI rounded up schoolteachers, Buddhist ministers, leaders of farm associations and other organizations at outbreak of the war and placed them in special detention centers. This action stripped Japanese communities of advice and guidance as they faced numerous government edicts aside from constant threats by anti-Japanese groups.

radio stations began beating the drums to “do something with the local Japs,” many public officials took up the cry, including California’s Governor Culbert Olson, Attorney General Earl Warren and Mayor Fletcher Bowron of Los Angeles.

In the meantime, many of the Japanese families were facing difficulties since the breadwinners were hustled out by the FBI, others were fired from their jobs, many stores would not sell anything to them, and along with a curfew placed on all Japanese by the government, the community was in chaos.

Many of the families had sons already serving in the United States Army; but nobody cared. No Japanese American or resident alien was charged with any act of espionage or sabotage, but nobody listened. Most of the resident aliens had lived in the United States for more than 20 to 40 years, contributing to the growth and economy of the country, but nobody knew.

As the war entered the third month, sinister plans were being hatched against the Japanese people, citizens and aliens alike, on the West Coast. It was to shatter the lives of more than 120,000 persons.

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.



Model airplane enthusiast Kiyomi Eguchi, who had lived in the United States for 45 years, is questioned by FBI agents about airplane models found in his home. Terminal Island (1942)



San Francisco Examiner’s gleeful sounding headline of pending evacuation.





Detention camps were usually located in lonely and bleak areas. This is Heart Mountain, Wyoming, camp which held more than 10,000 persons.

## THE INCARCERATION **MORE THAN 120,000 PERSONS WERE FORCED INTO CAMPS IN '42**

When President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, it set into motion an event many now call an "American Tragedy." It affected the lives of more than 120,000 innocent people who were herded into detention camps ringed with barbed wires and guard towers.

Incarcerated were the elderly, the middle-aged, the teenagers, the young tots, aliens and citizens alike.

No one was charged with any crime. But they had one thing in common—they were all of Japanese ancestry.

Prior to the President signing the executive order, which was about two months after the war started, there was intense politicking by racists and the misinformed to "get rid of the Japs."

Congressman Leland Ford of California was demanding that "all Japanese, whether citizens or not, be placed in inland concentration camps." He also stated that if the Nisei were loyal, they could "contribute to the safety and welfare of this country" by going to camp.

Attorney General Earl Warren admitted that there were no acts of sabotage or fifth column acts in California, but added that the absence of such activities by the Japanese Americans was confirmation that such actions were planned for the future.

John Edgar Hoover, the FBI chief, stated to government officials that there was no sabotage committed in Hawaii, but it fell upon deaf ears.

Things started to get out of hand as Congress joined the act. Senator Tom Stewart of Tennes-

see declared that, "the Japanese are cowardly and immoral. They are different from Americans in every conceivable way, and no Japanese should have the right to claim American citizenship."

Congressman John Rankin of Mississippi went further. "This is a race war . . . I say it is of vital importance that we get rid of every Japanese whether in Hawaii or on the mainland. . . . Damn them! Let us get rid of them now!"

The coalition of the Southern members of Congress with those from the Western states was not the only group in the capital pushing the President to remove the Japanese from the West Coast.

There was also the War Department. The most vociferous was Lt. Gen. John DeWitt, the commanding general of the Western Defense Command. In recommending exclusion, he wrote that "the Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted . . . It, therefore, follows that along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies of Japanese extraction, are at large today."

The FBI and the Navy knew that the Army was overreacting to the issue and recommended that nothing more than careful watching of suspicious individuals were called for by existing conditions. They were, however, ignored.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson, without

insisting on a clear military justification for Gen. DeWitt's proposal to clear the West Coast of the Japanese, finally recommended that the exclusion measure be carried out and President Roosevelt signed the executive order.

Nobody seemed to care that martial law had not been declared on the West Coast. Executive Order 9066 gave broad powers to any military commander to exclude any person from any area. Although it did not specifically mention the Japanese Americans or aliens, the document was primarily prepared to remove and incarcerate them.

Very few voices were heard from others to protest this unconstitutional and unnecessary act of the government. The bewildered and helpless Japanese Americans and their alien parents were left alone to meet their fate.

The Constitution and the Bill of Rights were bent out of shape. Prejudice, ignorance, fear and greed had won.

Gen. DeWitt, who was one of the strongest advocates of the evacuation and detention order, did not, however, have a plan ready to implement it. Suddenly realizing the huge logistical problem and perhaps to lighten the load on the Army, he first urged the Japanese to "voluntarily" leave the military zone and move inland.

It never worked. Aside from the fact that only about 10,000 tried, many were met at the state borders by hostile vigilantes. It also didn't help to have the governors of the interior states complaining about their state becoming a "dumping ground" for the unwanted Japanese. Only about 2,000 persons moved out.

Gen. DeWitt quickly dumped his "voluntary" program and instead, placed all Japanese, both aliens and citizens, under curfew along with German and Italian aliens.

In March, 1942, Gen. DeWitt announced that all Japanese would be removed from the West Coast and interned in detention camps.

Soldiers in Jeeps appeared in various areas up and down the coast where there were concentrations of Japanese residents and began posting signs on utility poles. The signs defined the zones, usually covering an area with about 250 families, to be evacuated, the date of the evacuation and the place to assemble prior to being transported to temporary assembly camps. After the notices were put up, the people were given only about a week before evacuation.

This process went on week after week for months and created havoc with the communities.



While soldiers stand by, Japanese drug store in Los Angeles desperately tries to clear its shelves of goods before owner leaves for detention camp (1942).



Escorted by Army troops, Japanese residents of Bainbridge Island in Washington cross bridge to ferry on their way to confinement in detention camps. They were one of the first to be evacuated from their homes by Army evacuation orders.



Under guard towers looming around them, a group of evacuees enter Tule Lake, Calif., detention center. The Army built ten such camps scattered in seven Western states to confine 120,000 Japanese Americans and aliens.



Daily meals were served in mass "dining halls." With little privacy, family structure and discipline were strained.



With shoes neatly placed by Army cot, nursery school children take nap at Tule Lake, California, detention camp.

Since they were only allowed to take what the family could carry, including bedding and linen, change of clothes, toilet articles, eating utensils and other personal articles, it was an impossible situation for everyone.

Furniture and appliances had to be sold at giveaway prices or abandoned, farmers had to lease their land, cars had to be sold, businesses had to be disposed of, inventories had to be sold, stored or abandoned, and in effect, it was total chaos.

Buddhist and Christian churches, owned by the communities, stored many of the belongings of the members and then locked up. The irony of the situation was that no one knew if they would ever return.

Under the watchful eyes of soldiers with guns, the evacuees boarded buses or trains that took them to one of 15 temporary assembly centers or to two of the permanent detention centers under construction by the Army—Poston in Arizona and Manzanar in California.

Many of the temporary assembly centers were race tracks or fairgrounds and the whitewashed horse stalls were used to house the people.

All of the assembly centers held an average of about 5,000 Japanese with the exception of the Santa Anita racetrack camp near Los Angeles, which crammed in about 19,000 evacuees.

During the turmoil and panic the people faced in preparing for the actual evacuation ordered by the government of the United States, the people in most cases were confused and too busy to concern themselves with what the ominous evacuation and detention meant to them as individuals and also as a group. It was as though it was not really happening.

However, once the people were led to their small barracks room or the repainted horse stalls and sat down on the army cots with their families for the first time in the assembly centers, the reality of their situation hit them like a ton of bricks. Many cried and others were numb with disbelief.

A proud people, many of the elders had lived in the United States anywhere from 20 to 40 years, worked hard, stayed out of trouble, were good citizens although denied naturalization, and made their children toe the line to become good Americans. Now, it was all gone.

From these assembly centers, the Japanese were shipped in old trains, escorted by the military, to the ten detention camps built on government land. Most were located in desolate



Tar-papered wood barracks, where families lived in a single small room, were typical of all camps. This is Manzanar, California, detention center.

areas in the states of Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Arkansas and California.

The people lived in tar-papered barracks with families living in a single room. The only furniture was the Army cots. Eating was in a "mess hall" with hundreds of other evacuees. Bathroom facilities were all centered in a common area. Privacy was impossible.

It was cold in Heart Mountain, Wyoming; it was hot in Gila, Arizona; it was wet in Rohwer, Arkansas; it was dusty and hot in Poston, Arizona. But life went on in the detention camps.

Behind the barbed wire fence and the watch-towers, the various churches reorganized, mimeographed newspapers were published, and the schools were being staffed from the ranks of the evacuees. Nothing was normal, and there were a myriad of problems, but the people were determined to make the best of a tragic situation.

But they were still held captive inside the detention camps. And the world outside of the camps did not like them, did not care about them and did not trust them.



Although equipment and facilities of schools in camps were primitive in the early years of detention, it did not deter the enthusiasm of these students in a Rohwer, Arkansas, detention camp elementary school.



When the Army announced the formation of an all-Japanese American military unit, these young men volunteered from Heart Mountain, Wyoming, detention camp.

## RESPONSE TO PREJUDICE

# **NISEI IN CAMPS VOLUNTEER FOR MILITARY SERVICE BY HUNDREDS**

When the war in the Pacific broke out, Japanese Americans already in the Army were either discharged or transferred to other units doing less sensitive work. There were about 3,500 Japanese Americans in uniform at the time. Others who were registered for the draft were reclassified as not wanted by the Army.

In Hawaii, the Japanese American soldiers were discharged from the Territorial Guard. On the other hand, due to a shortage of troops for the defense of the islands, Japanese Americans with the 298th and 299th Infantry Regiment were kept in service. Such are the inconsistencies in policies during the war.

The discharging of the Nisei from the Territorial Guard in Hawaii had a catastrophic effect upon the Japanese community. They comprised 37 percent of the population in Hawaii, and although the Japanese on the islands were not removed and incarcerated like the Japanese on the mainland, they were now positive that the government did not trust the local Japanese population.

Hurt by the discharge, the young men decided that the only way they could show the loyalty of the Hawaiian Japanese community was to serve in the Army.

In early 1942, those discharged petitioned Lt. Gen. Delos Emmons, the military governor of Hawaii, to allow them to serve in the Army to prove their loyalty.

In the meantime, the Japanese American Citizens League, the only national organization representing the interests of the Japanese, met in Salt Lake City and passed a resolution to petition

the War Department to restore Selective Service for the Nisei.

Mike Masaoka, the Washington D.C. representative of the JAACL, reasoned that with Japanese in concentration camps, military service by the Japanese Americans would not only help blunt the anti-Japanese attitude which questioned the loyalty of the Japanese, but could possibly aid the return of the people back to normal life after the war's end.

While all this was going on, the War Department ordered the formation of a special battalion for combat purposes. From the 299th Infantry Regiment in Honolulu, 1,300 Japanese Americans were organized into the Hawaiian Provisional Infantry Battalion. This group was later redesignated as the 100th Infantry Battalion.

In February 1943, the War Department was asked by President Roosevelt to organize a combat team consisting of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent.

President Roosevelt, in ordering this proposal, wrote that "the principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed, is that Americanism is a matter of mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry."

Answering the call, more than 10,000 Nisei volunteered for service from Hawaii and, amazingly, 1,500 from the concentration camps on the mainland. The Army selected 2,700 from Hawaii and 1,500 Nisei from the camps. These volunteers were all sent to Camp Selby in Mississippi for training. It was designated the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.



Unmindful of the rain, President Harry Truman salutes color guards of the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit after awarding Presidential Unit Citation.

## THE SAGA OF THE NISEI SOLDIER **THEIR COURAGE, DEEDS MADE ALL EVACUEES PROUD**

Maj. Gen Charles Ryder, the commander of the 34th Division, strode into the command post of the 100th Infantry Battalion. It was June, 1943, and the Allied Army was pushing off from the Anzio beachhead in Italy after being stalled for months by the tough and stubborn German defense. In a coordinated attack, the Allied forces surprised the Germans and broke out from the beachhead.

Two regiments (about 6,000 men) had been attacking a pass for days without success, and the American forces had to capture the pass for the offense to continue.

"We need to take it by tomorrow. It is essential that we capture it," Gen. Ryder emphasized to the officers of the 100th, the all-Nisei outfit. "I know you men could do it, and I am asking you to do it."

The plans for the attack were formulated that evening, and the 100th Battalion, 1,000 men strong, went into action. By noon, the Nisei soldiers had captured the pass and were on their way up to take the mountain when artillery shells

from the American forces began falling among them and forced them to stop their advance.

The artillery command post could not believe that the 100th could in a half a day wipe out the German defenses that a larger unit could not after days of trying.

Called by many of the top officers of the Fifth Army as the "finest offensive combat unit" in the Italian theater of operations, the 100th had done it again.

The all volunteer 442nd Regimental Combat Team joined the 100th later the same year in Italy. Together, they compiled one of the outstanding military records of World War II. They fought in Italy, in France, and back to Italy where they helped end the war in Italy.

The 442nd was in France when Gen. Mark Clark of the Fifth Army in Italy requesting the all-Nisei unit for a critical mission. It was March, 1945, and the 442nd was shipped to Italy in secret. The 442nd was already well known among the German command as one of the top offensive combat teams, and their movement to

another sector would alert them to wonder, "Hey, something is coming up in Italy."

The Allied Army was stalled by strong fortifications the Germans had built in the rugged mountains of the Apennines, and they had stopped the Allied 92nd Division for five months.

The 442nd attacked the mountain in a frontal assault. Climbing a steep 3,000 foot mountain, the Nisei soldiers surprised the Germans and captured the position within 32 hours. This broke the back of the defense, and the Allied Army raced through the gap. The war in Italy ended a month later.

For their action and successful operation, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Chief of Staff of the Allied Armies, commended the Nisei outfit.

"The successful accomplishment of this mission turned a diversionary action into a full-scale and victorious offensive . . . an important part in the destruction of the German armies in Italy," said General Eisenhower.

Called the most decorated unit of its size in the



The 442nd's 2nd Battalion moves forward to the battle front in the winter mud of the Vosges Mountains in France.

**"THE U.S. OWES A DEBT TO THESE MEN ... WHICH IT CAN NEVER REPAY."**

U.S. Army, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team hauled in awards like it was going out of style. They received seven Presidential Unit Citations, a Congressional Medal of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 588 Silver Stars and 9,486 Purple Hearts.

The large number of Purple Hearts was due to many of the men being wounded more than once.

In the seven major campaigns fought by the unit, 680 men were killed in action.

The Japanese American soldiers were also serving in the Pacific campaign. There were 3,700 Nisei members in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) who served with the Allied forces in the Pacific until the cessation of the war in August, 1945.

They were at Guadalcanal, Attu, India, Burma, New Guinea, the Philippines, Okinawa, Iwo Jima, and at other far-flung places where the Allied forces were fighting the Japanese army and navy.

They translated captured documents, interrogated prisoners, monitored radio transmissions,



A Japanese American Army interrogator questions a wounded Japanese soldier in the South Pacific.

and helped break the Japanese military code.

Probably Col. Sidney Mashbir, who headed the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) said it best in tribute to the Nisei soldiers:

"I want to make an unequivocal statement in regard to the Americans of Japanese ancestry who fought by our side in the war. Had it not been for the Nisei, that part of the war in the Pacific which was dependent upon intelligence gleaned from captured documents and prisoners of war would have been a far more hazardous long drawn-out affair.

"The United States owes a debt to these men and to their families which it can never fully repay. At a highly conservative estimate, thousands of American lives were preserved and millions of dollars in materials were saved as a result of their contribution to the war effort."

On December 30, 1944, Sgt. Frank Hachiya parachuted behind the enemy lines in the Philip-

pines on an intelligence mission. As he was returning to the American lines, he was mistaken for a Japanese soldier and shot. He delivered the maps of the Japanese defenses he had captured. He died three days later.

In the meantime, the American Legion post of his home town, Hood River, Oregon, had the names of 14 Japanese Americans, including Hachiya's, removed from the town's honor roll.

When the Army announced that Hachiya was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously, it was an embarrassed town that restored the names.

The Japanese Americans went to war to fight for democracy and at the same time, to prove to their country that they were loyal Americans. Many were killed in action, and when their parents were notified of their death, many of the fathers and mothers were still in the detention camps.



An elderly patient from a camp hospital is lifted onto a train for his return to the West Coast.

## THE RETURN HOME

# INTERNEES ON LONG ROAD BACK TO PICK UP PIECES OF TORN LIFE

On December 18, 1944, the Supreme Court ruled that loyal American citizens could not be detained against their will. Anticipating this ruling, the government had earlier announced that restrictions against Japanese Americans were being lifted, including the West Coast.

It had been three long years since the Japanese Americans were exiled from the West Coast. They could have returned earlier, if government and military officials had the courage to make decisions based upon facts and hard opinions rather than political reasons.

For example, the officials of the War Department had known since May, 1943, that the exclusion of loyal Japanese from the West Coast no longer had any military justification, but they never made it public.

Some members of President Roosevelt's administration later learned the same thing, but no one took any action because of the strong and vocal opposition from the West Coast. The fear of political repercussions from the rabid anti-Japanese factions forced government officials to put their heads in the sand on this issue. And so the sham continued until the Supreme Court ruling a year and a half later.

When the exclusion order was finally rescinded, about half of the original 120,000 persons were still in the detention camps. Aside from the young men serving in the military, the others had left the camps under the relocation program of the War Relocation Authority, the agency

responsible for the administration of the camps.

Those who had relocated settled mostly in the Rocky Mountain and Midwestern states, since the West Coast was off limits at the time.

Those who remained in the camps when the Supreme Court decision was made were primarily the elderly and the very young. For some of the Issei, the Japanese aliens, the closing of the detention camps meant that they would have to leave the security of the camps and go out into a hostile world, which made them reluctant to leave camp.

It didn't help matters any when the West Coast agitators started to get active again as the Japanese began their long road back to the towns and cities in which they had lived most of their lives prior to their ouster.

As the returnees began to trickle back to the West Coast, some were met by their old neighbors with open arms of welcome and helped with their resettlement problems.

On the other hand, widespread violence met other returnees. There were bombings, nightrider shootings at farmhouses, assaults and other terrorism committed. And many merchants proudly had "We don't serve Japs" signs on their windows.

Many found the farms and orchards they had leased in ruins. The churches and temples where they had stored their belongings had been ransacked. It was a dismal return for many of the Japanese.

Mary Masuda had returned to Santa Ana





Takeo Miyama (arrow) recently returned evacuee, listens as San Francisco municipal bus mechanics protest his employment. Police join the discussion with other officials to mediate the situation.



The Takahashi family inspects a window broken by a thrown stone, missing flag showing a brother's war service. This Seattle incident in 1945 was one of many incidents which greeted returning evacuees.

from the Gila River, Arizona, detention camp and was threatened by local bullies to leave the area. Her brother, Sgt. Kazuo Masuda, had been killed in Italy. He deliberately sacrificed his own life so that his men could return safely from patrol. For this act of bravery, Masuda was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The presentation of the nation's second highest award was made to Mary a few weeks after she had been threatened. The ceremony was held in front of the Masuda home with Gen. "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell, one of the outstanding generals of the Pacific war, making the presentation.

Stillwell said, "The Nisei bought an awful big chunk of America with their blood. You're damn right those Nisei boys have a place in the American heart, now and forever. We cannot allow a single injury to be done them without defeating the purpose for which we fought."

After the strong statement from Gen. Stillwell, Mary Masuda was never bothered again.

Housing for families was almost impossible to arrange since many places refused to rent to Japanese. As a consequence, the Christian and Buddhist churches, which the returnees reclaimed, were used as temporary hostels for hundreds of families. Many white Christian churches also provided housing for the Japanese.

With all of these problems, the returnees had another hurdle to face. They had to start rebuilding their lives from scratch. After being exiled for more than three years and losing almost everything in the process, it was not easy to begin a new life. Especially when the average age of the Issei was about 50.

With characteristic determination, patience and hard work, the Japanese began their slow climb back to normalcy. Despite continued harassment and agitation from anti-Japanese factions, the former residents were just glad to be back.



After years of being denied naturalization, hundreds of Japanese aliens pledge the oath of allegiance at the Hollywood Bowl. Most in their sixties and seventies, they had lived most of their lives in the United States.

## JUSTICE OWED, BUT EARNED

# ISSEI GRANTED CITIZENSHIP AS RACIST LAWS FALL

The war was over. The people were back on the West Coast except those who had relocated to Midwestern and Eastern states from the detention camps and chose to remain there. And the young men who went to war were returning.

The Japanese Americans and their Issei parents continued their struggle to rebuild their lives. There was, however, other important work to be done as well.

There were still anti-Japanese laws, remnants of the '20s and '30s, that were in force on federal and state books. Thus, the major goal of the national Japanese American Citizens League in the immediate postwar period was to eliminate all of these racist laws.

For example, three years after the cessation of the war, California was still filing escheat cases against the Japanese under the 1920 Alien Land Law. Other states also had similar alien land laws, which were patterned after California's law.

It was finally wiped off the books in 1949 after a series of separate cases were filed in the courts to fight the racist law, which prevented Japanese aliens from owning land. The courts ruled it

unconstitutional.

The big job was to gain naturalization rights for the Japanese aliens. They were the only group denied the opportunity to become naturalized citizens under federal law.

The 1790 law specified that only "free white persons" were eligible for naturalization.

Determining eligibility by color such as "brown" and "yellow," many races had originally been denied the privilege of becoming citizens. Over the years, however, the law had been amended many times to allow aliens of different races to become naturalized.

Chinese aliens were finally granted rights in 1943, and the Filipinos were allowed to become naturalized in 1946. Only the Japanese aliens were left out.

After a few heartbreaking efforts by the Japanese American Citizens League, they finally achieved their goal when a number of bills were spliced together in Congress into the Walter-McCarran Immigration and Naturalization Act and passed.

The legislation primarily restructured the nation's immigration laws, which previously barred

immigration from Far East nations and gave them token quotas. But it also eliminated race as a bar to naturalization. It was 1952.

By then, most of the Japanese aliens were in their sixties and seventies, but they diligently went to American history and government classes organized by local churches and organizations. And by the hundreds, they took and passed the citizenship examination and finally stood before federal judges and took the oath of allegiance.

They were the newest citizens of the United States. They had immigrated from Japan 30 to 50 years earlier, suffered harassment and even violence continuously from organized hate groups. Their character and loyalty were questioned and attacked, and they were forcibly removed and confined in detention camps unjustifiably and unnecessarily for three years, losing in the process everything they had worked hard for.

Who else would, or even could, continue to have faith in a nation that had treated them so shabbily for so long? They would—and they did.

# FEDERAL COMMISSION FINDS EVACUATION NOT JUSTIFIED

In 1980 Congress passed an Act creating a Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), which was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter. Organized in February, 1981, the Commission conducted hearings in nine cities across the country, heard testimony from more than 750 witnesses and examined more than 10,000 documents.

In February, 1983, the Commission issued its report and found that military necessity did not exist in fact to justify the evacuation and exclusion of ethnic Japanese from the West Coast.

It also determined that the evacuation and exclusion was the result of "race prejudice, war

hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."

The Commission also confirmed that the excluded ethnic Japanese suffered enormous damages and losses, both material and intangible. In addition to disastrous loss of farms, homes and businesses, there was disruption of many years of careers and professional lives as well as the long-term loss of income, earnings and opportunity.

In areas where no compensation has been made, the Commission estimated the total loss of ethnic Japanese in 1983 dollars was between \$810 million and \$2 billion. Further analysis made by an independent firm has established the economic losses from \$2.5 million to \$6.2 million.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS OF FEDERAL COMMISSION

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[The remedies, which the commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians issued on June 16, 1983, are based upon their fact-finding report and economic impact study.]

Each measure acknowledges to some degree the wrongs inflicted during the war upon the ethnic Japanese. None can fully compensate or, indeed, make the group whole again.

The Commission makes the following recommendations for remedies as an act of national apology.

1. That Congress pass a joint resolution, to be signed by the President, which recognizes that a grave injustice was done and offers the apologies of the nation for the acts of exclusion, removal and detention.

2. That the President pardon those who were convicted of violating the statutes imposing a curfew on American citizens. The Commission further recommends that the Department of Justice review other wartime convictions of the ethnic Japanese and recommend to the President that he pardon those whose offenses were grounded in a refusal to accept treatment that discriminated among citizens on the basis of race or ethnicity.

3. That the Congress direct the Executive agencies to which Japanese Americans may apply for the restitution of positions, status or entitlements lost in whole or in part because of acts or events between December 1941

and 1945.

4. That the Congress demonstrate official recognition of the injustice done to American citizens of Japanese ancestry and Japanese resident aliens during the Second World War, and that it recognize the nation's need to make redress for these events, by appropriating monies to establish a special foundation.

The Commission believes a fund for educational and humanitarian purposes related to the wartime events is appropriate and addresses an injustice suffered by an entire ethnic group.

5. That Congress establish a fund which will provide personal redress to those who were excluded.

Appropriations of \$1.5 billion should be made to the fund over a reasonable period to be determined by Congress. This fund should be used, first, to provide a one-time per capita compensatory payment of \$20,000 to each of the approximately 60,000 surviving persons excluded from their places of residence pursuant to Executive Order 9066. The burden should be on the government to locate survivors, without requiring any application for payment, and payments should be made to the oldest survivors first. After per capita payments, the remainder of the fund should be used for the public educational purposes as discussed in Recommendation #4.

The fund should be administered by a Board, the majority of whose members are Americans of Japanese descent appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.



This monument stands today in Owens Valley, California, and marks the site of Manzanar Detention Center.

There were ten major detention camps built by the government for the purpose of detaining Japanese Americans and aliens expelled from the West Coast during World War II. The last center was closed in October, 1946.

There were also a number of smaller detention centers where hundreds of other Japanese were interned. Most of the persons in these camps were picked up by the FBI a few days after the Pearl Harbor attack. They were mostly leaders of Japanese chambers of commerce, farm associations, martial arts groups, prefecture associations, schoolteachers and Buddhist ministers.

## THE CAMPS

1. Amache, Colorado, camp. (7,318 persons)
2. Gila River, Arizona, camp. (13,348 persons)
3. Heart Mountain, Wyoming, camp. (10,767 persons)
4. Jerome, Arkansas, camp. (8,497 persons)
5. Manzanar, California, camp. (10,046 persons)
6. Minidoka, Idaho, camp. (9,397 persons)
7. Rohwer, Arkansas, camp. (8,475 persons)
8. Tule Lake, California, camp. (18,789 persons)
9. Topaz, Utah, camp. (8,130 persons)
10. Poston, Arizona, camp. (17,814 persons)

Henry Y. KEMOTO  
 8309 COMLETTE  
 Downey CA 90242  
 (310) 882 0574