Manzanar, located in the Mojave Desert, California, is a typical Japanese community. Here the inhabitants line up for chow at one of the cafeterias

Opportunity is here for anyone who wants to work. This young surveyor is a nisei—second-generation Japanese—with a college degree

The Problem People

By Jim Marshall THE PROBLEM PEOPLE by AL OYAMA

In a dozen new communities in the West, 100,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans wait out the war and, unwillingly, promote some heavy thinking among their new neighbors

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR COLLIER'S BY GEORGE DE ZAYAS

IN THE past few months a dozen new war-born communities have risen almost magically in the open spaces of the Far West. They range from hamlets of a few hundred people to cities of 10,000 and more. Altogether, their population is about 115,000—but only a few hundred of these are whites. The others are Japanese and Americans of Japanese ancestry. Although peopled and largely operated by members of an Asian race, these communities are as American as San Francisco or Topeka. They hold elections, go to the movies, have traffic problems, read newspapers, stage fund drives and proceed with life much as any other town. Some of them even have war industries.

These new communities are the result of an Army order excluding all Japanese and their American descendants from a coastal zone that takes in the western halves of Washington, Oregon and California, and the southern half of Arizona. The Army incidentally could order you or us or the ninth-generation scion of a Mayflower family out of the zone. The Army has power over everyone in the zone; it could tomorrow order out all Italians and Germans and their descendants, in the interest of national security.

After the order was issued, the Army could have moved more than a hundred thousand men, women and kids of Japanese blood out of the zone overnight. It was prepared to do it, if necessary. Instead, it took nearly two months, doing the job patiently and fairly, saving the evacuees what heartbreak it could, restraining crooks who tried to take advantage of the situation by offering ridiculous prices for Japanese property.

The Army insisted on fairness and justice; its leaders, from Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt down, realized that thousands of the migrants were loyal Americans, victims of a war situation for which they were not responsible. It asked for—and got—the co-operation of the Japanese in moving themselves wholesale to new environments. You may speculate, if you like, just how you would have fared in Japan last winter and this spring.

In just about twenty-eight days, Army engineers built shelters for 100,000 persons—together with community kitchens, hospitals, laundries, bathhouses and offices. Then it moved the 100,000 almost without incident, using only a handful of officers and men, without interfering with the war effort at all. In less than two months, the Western war zone was practically clear of Japanese, except for those in assembly and relocation centers.

Along with the dozen new communities, a dozen new problems are asking a solution. The problems really boil down to one: After the war, what is going to happen to these new cities and farm groups—islands of Asia in white America?

Maybe there's an answer to this; maybe there isn't. First, let's go look at a new Japanese-American city in the West; then let's go talk to the old settlers near by and find out what they think of it all. We may as well start at Manzanar in California.

Manzanar means apple grove, and a few weeks ago that's what it was—an abandoned pear and apple orchard, victim of a long and bitter war over water rights, between the Owens Valley ranchers and the city of Los Angeles. It belongs to Los Angeles, like thousands of acres in the valley. The city leased a strip, about seven miles long and from half a mile to a mile wide, to the government for taxes. On these 6,020 acres, the new city of Manzanar sprang up: long orderly rows of wooden buildings—apartments, mess hall, washrooms, offices.

You roll along U. S. Highway 6 toward Manzanar, with the white peaks of the Sierra Nevada and Mount Whitney to the westward; to the east are the gray and purple flanks of the Coso and Panamint ranges, and beyond them, Death Valley. North of Lone Pine, a dust cloud drifts on the desert gale as the tractors drag plows across the desert soil. Put water on this soil and the land turns green and lush. Today the melting snows of the high Sierras are flowing across Manzanar's acres, and busy little yellow men are directing it down tiny runnels between the rows of radishes and corn and beans and potatoes and apples and pears and onions.

You drive past the neat buildings of a Military Police battalion and halt at a guard post. The sentry's teeth grin whitely across his bronzed, dust-grimed face. There aren't many sentries. Even if a Japanese walked out of the community, there'd be nowhere for him to go. It's harder to get in than it is out.

Manzanar Run by Civilians

Inside the community, there is nothing military at all. Everything is under civilian control—a handful of whites from the War Relocation Authority, hundreds of *issei* and *nisei* and a few *sansei*—as the first, second and third generations of Japanese are called among themselves. Between them, they operate what is now the biggest city in Inyo County; it contains half the county's population.

You wander around, up and down the streets, noting what you see, and suddenly you realize there is almost nothing very unusual here. It's just another typical American city—the sort of boom town with which the West has been familiar for decades. They're laying out a cemetery, building a hospital addition. A couple of *nisei* cops are arresting a truck driver for speeding. A Catholic priest is marrying Mary Uyesato and Arthur Hiraga, who tell you they were school sweethearts. There's an election going on for block leaders. Eagle Scout Philip Nagao is busy drilling a squad of kids, and the Girl Scouts are around, too.

In the library—given by the Los Angeles Board of Education—Miss Taka Saito is handing out It Can't Happen Here to young Tadao Kimura. Barber and beauty shops, a canteen and a co-op store are doing business. People are buying War Stamps and Bonds. Art classes are running. Mrs. Miya Kikuchi is teaching traffic safety to a class of young'uns. There's a card game going in the firehouse. In the maternity ward of the hospital Dr. Masako Kusayanagi is delivering a baby for Mr. and Mrs. Torushige Kawaguchi: "I guess we call him Robert," says the baby's daddy. At one apartment, Sergeant Oseki of the police force is threatening to raid late poker games. There is even a small zoo, with the kids studying kangaroo mice, jackrabbits, baby owls and other specimens of Sierra wild life.

Over in the city room of the Manzanar Free Press, Sam Hohri and his reporters and desk men are getting out the community newspaper. Miss Chiye Mori is working on plans for a monthly magazine. You chat with these boys and girls, all of them graduates of Coast schools and colleges, and ask what the people in Manzanar think about it all.

Well, the boys and girls tell you, they're all a little bewildered but they're making the best of it. The war can't last forever and when it's over maybe the *issei* and the *nisei* and the *sansei* can go back to their old homes and live normal lives again.

"It's hard to understand," says a young editor. "We have Japanese-Americans in camp here whose brothers are interned in Japan. We are here because we have Japanese blood; they are imprisoned in Japan because they have American citizenship. But things like

Manzanar was formerly an abandoned apple and pear orchard. Now Japanese-Americans labor to bring back the fields with irrigation, as the melting snows of the Sierra Nevada flow in man-built channels across acres of cropland

Nisei gather around the bulletin board for information. Manzanar, a community of 10,000, also has its own newspaper, the Free Press

Nisei girls in one of the Manzanar apartments. The women to great effort to make their homes as attractive as po