

# JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT DURING WORLD WAR II

Question: What is one thing you would like everyone to know about Japanese American internment?

Answer: First, I would want everyone to know that all of us, the American citizens born in this country as well as our grandparents and parents who originally came from Japan, were innocent of any wrong. We were loyal Americans. The FBI and military investigated all persons of Japanese ancestry and found we were loyal Americans. There was no single incident of any hint of treason or wrong.

~ Interview with Marielle Tsukamoto:

A First-hand Account of Japanese Internment

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/fear/index.html>



First graders...pledging allegiance to the United States flag.

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705948/>

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### A Date Which Will Live in Infamy...

"Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan," declared President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his address to a joint session of Congress.

The repercussions of this event in the U.S. were immediate. In cities and towns up and down the West Coast, prominent Japanese Americans were arrested, while friends and neighbors of Japanese Americans viewed them with distrust. Within a short time, Japanese Americans were forced out of their jobs and many experienced public abuse, even attacks.

When the president issued Executive Order 9066 in February 1942, he authorized the evacuation and relocation of "any and all persons" from "military areas." Within months, all of California and much of Washington and Oregon had been declared military areas. The process of relocating thousands of Japanese Americans began.

### Relocating

The relocation process was confusing, frustrating, and frightening. Japanese Americans were required to "register" and received identification numbers. They had to be inoculated against communicable diseases. They were given just days to divest themselves of all that they owned, including businesses and family homes. Bringing only what they could

carry, they were told to report to assembly centers, large facilities like racetracks and fairgrounds.

These centers became temporary housing for thousands of men, women and children. Stables and livestock stalls often served as living and sleeping quarters. There was no privacy for individuals – all their daily needs were accommodated in public facilities. Internees waited, for weeks that sometimes became months, to be moved from the assembly centers to their assigned internment camps.



Hog farm  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/manz/item/2002695989/>

### Life in the Camps

The nightmare continued when internees reached their internment camp. Located in remote, desolate, inhospitable areas, the camps were prison-like, with barbed wire borders and guards in watchtowers. Many people, not always family members, shared small living spaces and, again, public areas served internees' personal needs.

Eventually, life in the camps settled into routines. Adults did what they could to make living quarters more accommodating. Schools were established for the educational needs of the young. Residents performed the jobs necessary to run the camps. Self-governing bodies emerged, as did opportunities for gainful employment and for adult teaching and learning of new skills. Evidence of normal community living appeared as newspapers, churches, gardening, musical groups, sports teams, and enclaves of writers and artists emerged. Yet, throughout the years of internment, the specter of barbed wire and sharpshooters in watchtowers permeated daily life.

### Showing Their Loyalty

Japanese Americans did their best to get through this experience and remained surprisingly loyal to a nation that treated them so unfairly. More than 300,000 Japanese American men enlisted in the armed forces. The all Japanese American 442nd Regiment became the most decorated unit of its size in U.S. history!

### After the War

For first-generation immigrants, the Issei, the years of internment, were disastrous. They lost everything – homes, businesses, farms, respect, status and sense of achievement. The children and grandchildren of the Issei also experienced huge disruptions to their lives but they emerged after the war with lives that, while changed, were not destroyed. These second- and third-generation Japanese American citizens began to shoulder responsibility for leadership in the Japanese American community.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

These Library of Congress primary source materials support teaching about the U.S. internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. This primary source set documents evidence of the cause and effect of this event in American history through images and legal and news documents. These materials can help students understand, as mere words cannot, what Japanese Americans, the majority of whom were U.S. citizens, experienced during World War II.

The materials might be used in any number of ways. They could help trace a chronology of events. They might be used to consider political issues such as why the Japanese American population was affected so severely, while German and Italian Americans suffered much less or why the Japanese Americans cooperated with this extreme and unfair treatment. Did they have choice in this matter? Why or why not? Comparisons of the relocation experience of Japanese Americans and of Jewish citizens of European nations could be made. How were the experiences similar? How were they different?

Considering the author, purpose style, and intended audience of the images in this set can help students to see photographic evidence from this period in history. Use of the provided analysis tools can help students become more astute observers. For instance, challenge students to note and discuss the differences in the “staged” images (such as those from the Manzanar relocation center) and the unstaged images in this primary source set.



Girl and volley ball  
[http://www.loc.gov/pictures/  
item/2001704618/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001704618/)

This primary source set can set the stage for further research. Students will have many unanswered questions after using these materials. Where were the relocation camps? How were they selected, and how did their geographical characteristics affect the residents? How were Japanese Americans living on the East Coast treated during World War II? What happened to Japanese American families and individuals after the war? Did the American government ever recognize that this was a mistake? Did the government apologize or compensate Japanese Americans for their treatment during World War II?

This primary source set also provides an opportunity to help students understand that different times shape different cultural values and mores. The set may also provide impetus for discussions that compare and contrast the unfair treatment of other segments of the U.S. population, in America's past and today.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



### **American Memory Timeline: Great Depression and World War II - Japanese American Internment**

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/depwwii/wwarii/japanam.html>



### **Immigration Presentation – Japanese Immigrants: Behind the Wire**

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/japanese4.html>



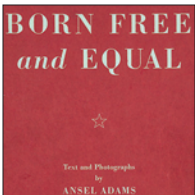
### **Ansel Adams's Manzanar Photographs: About This Collection**

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/manz/>



### **Ansel Adams's Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/anseladams/index.html>



### **Born Free and Equal This special presentation reproduces the book Born Free and Equal, which was published in 1944**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/anseladams/aamborn.html>



### **“Suffering Under a Great Injustice”: Ansel Adams Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar (Collection Connections)**

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/manzanar/index.html>



### **Japanese American Internment**

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/fear/index.html>

## PRIMARY SOURCES WITH CITATIONS



[Children pledging allegiance to U.S. flag at Weill public school, San Fran., prior to relocation]  
Photograph. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705948/>



*Naval dispatch from the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) announcing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.* Document. December 7, 1941. From Library of Congress, *Words and Deed in American History: Selected Documents Celebrating the manuscript Division's First 100 Years. John Balantine Papers.*  
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mcc/002\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(mcc/002)))



Office of War Information. "President Roosevelt signing the declaration of war against Japan." Photograph. December 1941. From the Library of Congress, *By Popular Demand: Portraits of the Presidents and First Ladies, 1789-Present.*  
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/presp:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(cph+3a17434\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/presp:@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a17434)))



Lange, Dorothea. "Oakland, Calif., Feb. 1942." Photograph. February 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705924/>



Lange, Dorothea. "Civilian exclusion order #5, posted at First and Front streets, directing removal by April 7 of persons of Japanese ancestry." Photograph. April 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705937/>



Lee, Russell. "Los Angeles, California. A store in Little Tokyo." Photograph. April 1942. From Library of Congress, *American from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWL 1935-1945.*  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000049194/PP/>



Lange, Dorothea. "Oakland, Calif. Apr. 1942. Members of the Japanese Independent congregational church attending Easter services prior to evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry from certain West Coast areas." Photograph. April 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705944/>



Lange, Dorothea. "Japanese residents at Civil Control station for registration, San Francisco." Photograph. April 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705934/>



Lange, Dorothea. "San Francisco, Calif., Apr. 1942 - evacuees of Japanese descent being inoculated as they registered for evacuation, and assignment, later, to war relocation authority centers for the duration of the war." Photograph. April 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719511/>



Lee, Russell. "Santa Anita reception center, Los Angeles, California. The evacuation of Japanese and Japanese-Americans from West Coast areas under U.S. Army war emergency order." Photograph. April 1942. From the Library of Congress, *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998003578/PP/>



Lange, Dorothea. "Residents of Japanese ancestry awaiting the bus at the Wartime Civil Control sta., San Francisco, Apr. 1942." Photograph. April, 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a25601>



Lee, Russell. "Los Angeles, California. Japanese-American evacuation from West Coast areas under U.S. Army war emergency order. Japanese-American child who will go with his parents to Owens Valley." Photograph. April 1942. From the Library of Congress, *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705933/>



Adams, Ansel. "Entrance to Manzanar, Manzanar Relocation Center." Photograph. 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695960/>



Lee, Russell. "Japanese-American camp, war emergency relocation, Tule Lake Relocation Center, Newell, Calif." Photograph. 1942 or 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.  
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1992001467/PP/>



Lee, Russell. "Nyssa, Oregon. FSA (Farm Security Administration) mobile camp. Ordinarily electricity is not supplied to the tents of migrant families living in the FSA camps..." Photograph. July 1942. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000050214/PP/>



Lee, Russell. "Santa Anita reception center, Los Angeles County, California. The evacuation of Japanese and Japanese-Americans from West coast areas under United States Army war emergency order..." Photograph. April 1942. From the Library of Congress, *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000049168/PP/>



Adams, Ansel. "School children, Manzanar Relocation Center, California." Photograph. 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002697874/>



Adams, Ansel. "Baseball game, Manzanar Relocation Center, Calif." Photograph. 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695992/>



Adams, Ansel. "Roy Takeno reading paper in front of office." Photograph. 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002696030/>



Adams, Ansel. "Nurse Aiko Hamaguchi and patient Toyoko Ioki, Manzanar Relocation Center, California." Photograph. 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002697853/>



Adams, Ansel. "Sumiko Shigematsu, foreman of power sewing machine girls, Manzanar Relocation Center, California." Photograph. 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695109/>



Lee, Russell. "Japanese-American camp, war emergency evacuation, [Tule Lake Relocation Center, Newell, Calif.]" Photograph. 1942 or 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1992001464/PP/>



Lee, Russell. "Rupert, Idaho. Former CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camp now under FSA (Farm Security Administration) management. Japanese-Americans taking down their flag in the evening." Photograph. July 1942. From the Library of Congress, *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000050805/PP/>



U.S. Army Signal Corps. "Japanese enlistment. These Americans of Japanese ancestry are about to enter their draft board at Waipahu, Territory of Hawaii..." Photograph. March 1943. From the Library of Congress, *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002007566/PP/>



U.S. Army Corps. "Kauai District, Territory of Hawaii. Major Charles V. McManus administering the oath to four AJA volunteers." Photograph. March 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2001046268/PP/>



U.S. Army Corps. "Kauai District, Territory of Hawaii. Herbert Kondo, an AJA volunteer, with his father and mother. The elder Kondo is a veteran of World War I." Photograph. March 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2001046276/PP/>



U.S. Army Signal Corps. "Japanese-American volunteers." Photograph. March 1943. From the Library of Congress, *America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945*.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002008607/PP/>