

Then They Came for Me

Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties

**ALPHAWOOD GALLERY, CHICAGO
JUNE 29 TO NOVEMBER 19, 2017**

ALPHAWOOD FOUNDATION STATEMENT

Alphawood Foundation is the proud sponsor of the exhibition *Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties*. Why did we feel it was important to share this story with the Chicago community?

Alphawood exists to help create a more equitable, just and humane society for all of us. A difficult but essential part of that mission is to shine a light on great injustice, great inhumanity and great failure to live up to the core principles underlying our society. *Then They Came for Me* presents the shameful story of the United States government's imprisonment of 120,000 people, most of them American citizens, solely based on their ethnic background. Think about that. Then think about what is occurring in our country right now, and what might be just around the corner. George Santayana wrote "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

The Japanese American incarceration represents a moment when we collectively turned our backs on the great promise and responsibility of our Constitution. We denied equal protection under the law to our fellow Americans and legal residents because of their ancestry alone. We tell this story because we love our country. We care deeply about its past, present and future. We know that America is better than the racism and xenophobia that triggered the events depicted in this exhibition. Proof of America's greatness is the very fact that we *can* examine this dark past. We must try to understand how and why it happened in order to prevent it from happening again. This is what our common citizenship demands of us: to be better Americans, to be fairer, more just and more humane.

Thank you for coming to experience *Then They Came for Me*. Take your time and look deeply into the past. It is not so long ago, really. Much of what you see here was created with the help of Chicagoans who lived in the camps. They and we hope you will be inspired to respond decisively to this simple question:

What will YOU do when they come for your neighbor?

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and the Demise of Civil Liberties is organized by Alphawood Gallery in collaboration with the Japanese American Service Committee.

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Michael Williams, Photo historian and Co-author of the book *Un-American: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II*

Ryan Masaaki Yokota, Legacy Center Manager, Japanese American Service Committee

In preparing the exhibition, the organizers benefited from the extensive body of literature that has addressed aspects of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II. We made extensive use of the book *Un-American: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II* by Richard Cahan and Michael Williams. We also wish to acknowledge the importance of *Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project*, a nonprofit organization based in Seattle that collects oral histories and documents about the Japanese American incarceration during World War II. More information is available at Densho.org. Much of the exhibition text and videos were adapted from these sources with permission.

Unless noted, all original objects in the exhibition are lent by the Legacy Center Collection of the Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) in Chicago. The organizers are grateful to them and to all the lenders for their generosity in sharing treasured materials, many never before exhibited, with our visitors.

Photographs by Dorothea Lange and the staff of the War Relocation Authority were made available by the National Archives and Records Administration. Photographs by Russell Lee of the Office of War Information and those by Ansel Adams were made available by the Library of Congress.

Intro Gallery:

THEN THEY CAME FOR ME: INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WWII AND THE DEMISE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

Seventy-five years ago, in the name of national security, the U.S. government incarcerated 120,000 American citizens and legal residents without due process and absent the constitutional protection to which they were entitled. Following Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, the U.S. entered World War II. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 declaring certain West Coast areas to be military zones, setting in motion the forced removal and imprisonment of all people of Japanese ancestry (citizens and non-citizens alike) living on the West Coast. Though Pearl Harbor instigated this process, its swift acceptance and implementation followed many years of anti-Asian sentiment and racist immigration laws. Due to fear, hysteria and racism, and despite evidence to the contrary, the loyalties of all Japanese Americans and their families were questioned, and they were punished simply for looking like the enemy. From 1942 to 1946, incarceration camps located in desert and swamp areas in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming, with armed guards, watch towers and barbed wire, served as "home" for thousands.

Alphawood Gallery has partnered with the Japanese American community in Chicago to share this important and painful episode in America's past to honor those that endured this humiliation. We pay tribute to their strength and continued commitment to the democratic ideals of the United States. Chicago's Japanese American population grew from less than 400 before World War II to more than 20,000 in the years following the closure of the camps. Many who lived through the experience of the camps, as well as their families, remain determined to share their stories in order to educate the public and ensure that nothing of this sort can ever happen again.

THE DEMISE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

The actions of the United States government depicted in this exhibition constitute one of the most egregious denials of fundamental, constitutionally-guaranteed rights and liberties to American citizens in our history.

The **First Amendment** guarantees of Freedom of Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly were denied as Buddhism was severely restricted, Shintoism forbidden and Christianity actively promoted by camp administrators. Japanese language was prohibited at meetings, and camp newspapers were censored. Large gatherings were banned.

Fourth Amendment prohibitions on Unreasonable Search and Seizure were utterly abrogated as Japanese Americans' homes were searched without warrants and "contraband," such as short-wave radios, was confiscated.

The **Fifth Amendment** guarantee of due process to protect Americans' life, liberty and property was violated by the forced removal of Japanese American citizens from their homes and their incarceration in prison camps without any judicial proceedings.

The **Sixth Amendment** promise of a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury, at which one can face one's accuser, was similarly breached by the incarceration.

We could go on, and unfortunately, this abuse continues. We see the promise of our Constitution broken today in the form of the attempted Muslim Ban, mass incarceration of African American men, Guantanamo Bay and other racist and xenophobic policies promoted in the name of national security or crime prevention.

WORDS MATTER: THE POWER OF LANGUAGE TO SHAPE HISTORY

ORIGINAL TERM(S):

EXCLUSION ORDERS
EVACUEE/INTERNEE
EVACUATION/MIGRATION
ASSEMBLY CENTER
INTERNMENT
RELOCATION CENTER
INTERNMENT CAMP

PREFERRED TERM(S):

EVICITION ORDERS
INMATE, DETAINEE, PRISONER
FORCED REMOVAL
TEMPORARY DETENTION CENTER
INCARCERATION, IMPRISONMENT
ILLEGAL DETENTION CENTER
INCARCERATION CAMP*

How could American citizens be taken from their homes and incarcerated without being charged with a crime or granted due process? The U.S. government adopted misleading language that aimed to skirt constitutional rights and to control public perception of the process and motivations behind it. Even though Japanese Americans were held against their will in compounds with guards and barbed wire, the government used terms like “evacuation” and “relocation” rather than imprisonment.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066, the 1942 governmental dictum that set up military areas “from which any or all persons may be excluded” was expressly designed to mobilize the forced removal of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast. Japanese American organizations and scholars have since developed terminology that more accurately reflects this historical injustice, and we have adopted this new language for the exhibition. The table above draws upon the work of the Japanese American Citizens’ League’s *Power of Words Handbook* and the “Resolution on Terminology” adopted by the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund.

*Other accurate terms include “American concentration camp,” “detention center” and “prison camp.” Although “concentration camp” was used at the time even by government officials, we have chosen to use “incarceration camp” to avoid confusion with the Nazi death camps.

For evidence of the danger euphemistic language poses today, one need only look to President Trump’s Islamophobic “travel ban” that implicitly conflates “foreign nationals” from majority-Muslim countries with “terrorists.”

Prologue Gallery:

IMMIGRATION

The roots of large-scale Japanese emigration began with the 1868 migration of recruited contract-laborers to the Kingdom of Hawaii. The primitive conditions on the sugar plantations proved challenging, spurring many migrants to seek other work.

Japanese migration to the U.S. mainland began in 1869 with agricultural community experiments, followed by student-laborers and political exiles. Thousands arrived to work on railroads, in lumber mills, in canneries and on farms. Between 1885 and 1924, 200,000 Japanese immigrated to Hawaii with 180,000 going to the U.S. mainland.

On the mainland, Japanese Americans became the target of racial discrimination. Organized labor, newspaper editors and politicians described the Japanese as “unassimilable,” drawing on pre-existing anti-Chinese sentiments. By 1907, the federal government, bowing to anti-Japanese agitation, negotiated the Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan, drastically reducing Japanese immigration. By exploiting a loophole, however, tens of thousands of immigrant women arrived over the next decade, many of them so-called “picture brides,” which caused the population to increase.

In 1922, the Supreme Court decision in *Takao Ozawa v. United States* prohibited Japanese immigrants from naturalizing, cementing their precarious position as “aliens ineligible for citizenship.”

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Honolulu, c. 1918

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, immigrants from Japan filled the growing need for sugar plantation laborers in Hawaii. Work was harsh, with low pay, long hours and poor living conditions. Many Japanese left the plantations for other labor or started small businesses or farms to build new lives for themselves. This family lived in the McCully neighborhood, where they owned a general store that catered to the area’s large Japanese population.

Saito family at Parade, Medford, Oregon, c. 1917

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Soon after sailing to the United States, Kinko and Kinai Saito demonstrate their allegiance to Japan and America by waving flags at an Independence Day parade. By 1940, approximately 4,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry lived in Oregon, while 94,000 lived in California and 15,000 in Washington.

Tintic Union Pacific Roadmaster with His Section Foremen, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1934

Courtesy Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah

By 1906, more than 13,000 Japanese immigrants worked for the railroads. Many were young single men who had first gone to Hawaii but then headed to the mainland for better job opportunities. Working on the section gangs was a harsh life, especially for those who now had families. Once they settled into communities, many left their railroad jobs to work at other trades like farming or started their own businesses. Japantowns began to emerge in cities like Salt Lake City, where railroad stations were located.

Portrait of Kojiro and Chiyo Uyesugi, 1914

Portrait of Kojiro, Chiyo and Newton Uyesugi, 1918

Courtesy Lee Wesley, Sandra Wesley and Roy Wesley

Kojiro Uyesugi returned to Japan in 1912 for an arranged marriage after working twelve years on the railroads and at salmon fisheries and lumberyards in the United States. He married Chiyo Hata in 1914, and immigrated with her to Westport, Oregon, the following year. In the U.S., Kojiro went by the name Harry. Photos of the 1914 wedding and with infant son Newton a few years later show how differently the couple presented themselves once in America.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Japanese "Picture Brides" arriving at the Quarantine Station at Angel Island, San Francisco Bay, c. 1911

After 1910, most Japanese immigrants came through the Angel Island Immigration Station. Holding official documents, they were interviewed and released within two to three days, in contrast to Chinese immigrants who stayed two to three weeks. Many of the 60,000 Japanese at Angel Island were "picture brides." As Japanese men in the U.S. often lacked the money to travel to Japan to get married, they asked friends and relatives to find them prospective brides that they only saw through photographs until they arrived from Japan.

Japanese Emigration Inspection Cards, 1917

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Kinko Saito and her husband, Kinai Saito, left Japan and settled in Medford, Oregon.

Japanese Passport for Kinko Saito, 1917

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Photographs, Clockwise from Top Right:

[All Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Portrait of Kinai and Kinko Saito, c. 1917

The couple is shown in a studio portrait after their arrival in the United States.

Portrait of Kinai Saito, 1915

Saito first arrived in the United States in 1906. He worked for a decade before returning to Japan to marry Kinko.

Kinai Saito and Daughters Akiko and Naoko, c. 1923

Kinai and Kinko Saito with Daughters Naoko and Akiko, c. 1940

Tamura Hotel Transportation Ledgers, 1910-1940

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Agents at the Tamura Hotel brokered passenger ship tickets for Japanese travelers returning to Japan from the United States.

Japanese American Citizens League Membership Cards for Fred and Yoshiye Yamane

JASC, Yamane Family Collection

Japanese Exclusion League of California Position Paper, 1921

Courtesy of Stanley Oda

V.S. McClatchy formed the Exclusion League to stop Japanese immigration. He argued that Japanese immigrants planned to colonize the United States.

Letter from Los Angeles County Sheriff, 1941

Courtesy of Stanley Oda

Sheriff Eugene W. Biscailuz was known for his public stance against Japanese Americans. Later in the war, he was the first signer of a petition sponsored by the Japanese Exclusion Association of Los Angeles.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Dorothea Lange

Centerville, California, April 7, 1942

A wall at the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) headquarters demonstrates a mix of old and new values. Established in 1929 to foster good citizenship and civic participation, the JACL urged members to cooperate with the government before and during the war.

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 20, 1942

Students at the Raphael Weill Elementary School began the day by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Second-generation Japanese American children in San Francisco lived bicultural lives. They were tied to Japan through their immigrant parents and connected to the American culture around them.

Clem Albers

San Francisco, California, April 1942

The Fuji Hotel in San Francisco's Japantown was a haven for laborers and domestic workers, many of them first-generation unmarried Issei men, known as bachelors. The hotel business was a sector in which Japanese Americans found success before the war.

FARMING

Early farm laborer organizing emerged as a place where important worker alliances could cross ethnic and racial lines. A notable 1903 example occurred in Oxnard, California, when a joint labor union, the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association, went on strike and won higher wage concessions.

Those who were able to transition into owning their own farms applied themselves to the reclamation of often undesirable patches of land such as swamps, scrubland and deserts. Almost half of the Japanese American community was engaged in agriculture before the war. Their growing success made them targets of jealous neighbors and agricultural rivals.

To limit Japanese American farmers' growth in agriculture, legislators in several states passed "Alien Land Laws" to prevent first generation Issei from owning land or entering into long-term leases. Japanese families were able to circumvent these laws by purchasing land in the names of their U.S.-born children, who were citizens. In response, legislators tightened these laws to prohibit such arrangements.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1923 that laws restricting the rights of immigrants were not a violation of their rights to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. But after World War II, the court ruled that alien land laws were unconstitutional.

Dorothea Lange

Near Florin, California, May 11, 1942

This first-generation Japanese immigrant came to the United States when he was a boy. The photographer noted that he had seven children, ran a successful wholesale grocery business in Los Angeles and moved east with his family to the farming town of Florin. Soon after, he was forced off his newly acquired land and incarcerated.

Dorothea Lange

Centerville, California, March 27, 1942

Japanese Americans made up a tiny portion of California's population but produced 40% of the state's vegetable crop, including nearly all of the tomatoes, strawberries, celery and peppers. The government warned farmers they would be charged with sabotage if they left their fields in early 1942. Yet they were forced to leave long before the fall harvest.

Dorothea Lange

Near Mission San Jose, California, April 5, 1942

LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

The impact of the 1907-08 Gentlemen's Agreement and Alien Land Laws in the 1910s and 1920s caused a gradual shift from rural to urban life, with the bachelor society of the early migration period shifting towards an emphasis on family and community formation.

On the West Coast a number of ethnic enclaves began to form in cities like Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. In these "Little Tokyos," "Japantowns," and "Nihonmachi," a unique Japanese American social space soon emerged, including temples, churches, prefectural associations and a range of cultural and business organizations.

Generational conflicts also emerged among the second-generation Nisei, who were caught between their parents' attachment to their ancestral homeland and their own growing identity as American citizens. Some youth retained a greater sense of cultural connection by attending Japanese language schools or even by living in Japan. Others strove to work towards greater integration in the broader American society.

However, Nisei continued to face discrimination in hiring and in other areas. Even for those who spoke English fluently and who were able to access higher education, racial prejudice often barred their way to success.

Dorothea Lange

Mountain View, California, March 30, 1942

The Mitarai family sits for a portrait on the steps of their ranch home. Henry Mitarai, the father, was a prosperous large-scale farm operator. The success of Japanese American farmers like Mitarai contributed to anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States.

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 20, 1942

Eleven-year-old Rachel Kuruma was photographed in her school playground. "When school let out, I went home and had my glass of milk and then went to Japanese school for an hour," she said. "I did quite well. My mother was so proud."

Dorothea Lange

Mountain View, California, April 18, 1942

"We lost so much during the war," recalled Maremaro Shibuya (the boy in overalls), who joined his family in front of their home. Before the war, Maremaro's father, Ryohitsu Shibuya (back row, left), was a major producer of the Homecoming mum, a traditional fall favorite.

GENERATIONS

In 1940, Curtis P. Munson received a State Department commission to investigate the loyalty of Japanese Americans. Submitted to the White House on November 7, 1941, his report concluded that the Japanese community was not a threat to national security. His analysis, summarized below, would be ignored after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Issei: First-generation immigrants who came to the United States prior to the Immigration Act of 1924. Middle-aged or older by the time World War II began, they were loyal to the United States, because they had chosen to make their home here.

Nisei: Born as American citizens, Nisei were children or young adults during World War II. Speaking English as a first language, most Nisei were loyal because they were born and raised in the United States.

Kibei: Nisei born in the United States who were sent to Japan as youths for their formal education. Munson wrote that the *Kibei* who were raised in Japan at a young age were considered the most dangerous element by the U.S. government, while those who went to Japan at an older age often come back more loyal to the United States than ever.

Dorothea Lange

Oakland, California, April 5, 1942

Easter 1942 was the last day of services at the Japanese Independent Congregational Church. "Most Nisei had never been to Japan," wrote author Yoshiko Uchida, a member of the congregation. "The United States of America was our only country and we were totally loyal to it."

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 20, 1942

Sam Mihara, a schoolmate of the children saluting the flag here, recalled, "These months [after Pearl Harbor] were very difficult. There was a lot of hysteria. Newspaper headlines urged us to move. A full-size billboard in the neighborhood, which said 'Bye-Bye Japs,' told us to get out. We saw lots of political cartoons accusing us of being spies. We lived with strict curfew hours and experienced FBI searches for contraband without search warrants."

Following Pearl Harbor, Japanese men and women in the West were not permitted to possess firearms, cameras or shortwave radios.

WARTIME HYSTERIA

The 1940 Alien Registration Act set up registration procedures for all resident aliens over the age of fourteen. With the onset of war, the information gathered under this act was used when President Roosevelt declared all Japanese nationals “enemy aliens.”

Roosevelt quickly issued Presidential Proclamation 2525 allowing for their summary arrest as “dangerous enemy aliens,” which stirred up further prejudice and hysteria. Newspapers sensationalized these raids by the FBI and police.

Politicians also twisted these facts to make a lurid case against Japanese Americans. California Attorney General Earl Warren, who later served as California governor and chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, fed this fury by appearing before a House committee with a map that suggested the threat posed by the wide presence of those of Japanese ancestry near numerous defense and strategic installations. “Such a distribution of the Japanese population appears to manifest something more than coincidence,” he told the panel. They were poised, he said, for sabotage, collaboration and spying.

Asked why there were no verified reports of such activity, Warren testified, “I believe that we are just being lulled into a false sense of security.”

ON WALL:

Miné Okubo

4 Pages from the book *Citizen 13660*, published 1946

Throughout the exhibition we have included select pages from Japanese American author and artist Miné Okubo’s illustrated memoir, *Citizen 13660*, which was published in 1946. A candid and poignant account of her own incarceration experience, Okubo’s graphic novel tells a story that the WRA photography cannot.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

“*How to Spot a Jap*” Comic, 1942

Courtesy Jane and Jerry Morishige

This several-page comic strip was published in the booklet *Pocket Guide to China*, produced by the U.S. War Department. The art is by Milton Caniff, who created the Steve Canyon and Terry and the Pirates comic strips.

LIFE Magazine, December 22, 1941

JASC, Jane and Jerry Morishige Papers

LA Police Department Report of Impounded Weapons for Vicky Konman, 1942
JASC, Konman-Matsukawa Family Papers
Guns and ammunition were confiscated by the police following Pearl Harbor.

Japanese American Citizens League Oath of Allegiance, 1942
Courtesy Stanley Oda

The Japanese American Citizens League voted in January 1942 to require every member to sign and notarize this oath in order to be a member.

LIFE Magazine, March 9, 1942
Courtesy Stanley Oda

Japanese American Boy Scouts Posting a "Notice to Aliens of Enemy Nationalities," 1942
Courtesy Stanley Oda
Boy Scouts post notices in Los Angeles that inform aliens from Axis countries that they must register. These notices were put up in eight western states.

Two Anti-Japanese Postcards
Top: Courtesy Joyce Morishita
Bottom: Courtesy Chicago Japanese American Historical Society

Two Small "Jap Hunting" Licenses
Courtesy Stanley Oda

Large "Hunting License"
Courtesy Joyce Morishita
Xenophobic material like these cards were issued after Pearl Harbor in many formats—as pin back buttons, postcards and even as greeting cards.

License for Kinai Saito to Operate Camelo Cleaners, 1941
[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

One week after Pearl Harbor, Kinai Saito applied as a Japanese alien to continue operating his ten-year-old cleaning business in Medford, Oregon.

Alien Registration ID for Kiyotsugu Tsuchiya, 1942
Courtesy Lourdes Nicholls and Fumi Knox

Alien Registration Identification Cards for Hisako and Tadaaki Okubo, 1942
JASC, Okubo Family Papers
The U.S. government required aliens from World War II enemy countries—Japan, Germany and Italy—to register in 1942.

Notice to Aliens of Enemy Nationalities, 1942

Courtesy Stanley Oda

This poster provides registration instructions in four languages (English, Japanese, German and Italian) to reach foreign nationals of Axis countries.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced removal and incarceration of all people of Japanese descent living on the West Coast. Deliberately worded to not mention the Japanese by name, the order permitted the Secretary of War and military commanders that he designates to prescribe military areas “from which any or all persons may be excluded.”

As a result, 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were forced from their homes to detention centers. Roughly two-thirds of the total were U.S.-born citizens. No charges were filed. No trials were held. Most were held for up to three years or more.

Seventy-five years later, it seems shocking that a president would cede such executive powers to military control. The task of defending the civil liberties of the Japanese Americans was left to Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, who considered it to be impossible to determine their loyalty. “A Jap is a Jap,” he famously said.

Faced with limited options, only a few Americans of Japanese ancestry challenged Executive Order 9066. Almost all complied with the government’s plan to prove their loyalty and to make sacrifices as part of the war effort.

ON WALL:

Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry Poster, 1942

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 6 Poster, 1942

Courtesy Stanley Oda

Exclusion Order posters were hung all over towns to communicate instructions regarding the eviction process. These two posters specify restricted areas of Los Angeles and announce that Japanese alien and non-alien residents had one week to leave.

Atrium Gallery:

EVICTON AND FORCED REMOVAL

Japanese Americans were given less than a week to register with authorities and receive instructions on where they should go. In this short time, possessions were sold or stored, and businesses and churches were closed. Crops were left in fields, and laundry was left hanging. To help the war effort, the Census Bureau illegally provided confidential demographic information to pinpoint where Japanese Americans lived. Four western states—California and parts of Washington, Oregon and Arizona—were divided into 108 zones as Japanese Americans were picked up neighborhood by neighborhood.

Notices were posted on buildings, billboards and telephone poles. Each notice gave detailed instructions. A member of every family was to register immediately at the designated “civil control station” (usually a school or other public facility), and each family was given a number. For the day of removal, men and women were instructed to bring only what they could carry. On that day, their bags were tagged, and they were sent to temporary camps. This started the odyssey of mass incarceration.

The process began on March 30, 1942, less than six weeks after Executive Order 9066 had been signed. By August 18, 1942, the forced removal was complete.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 11, 1942

General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command (WDC), issued a series of orders directing the exclusion of "all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens" from designated areas on the West Coast. All of the 108 orders commanded Japanese Americans to bring bedding, linens, toilet articles, clothing, knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups sufficient for each member of the family. “The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group,” the orders declared.

WRA PHOTOGRAPHY & DOROTHEA LANGE

In March 1942, the government established the War Relocation Authority (WRA), an agency to oversee the removal of all individuals of Japanese heritage from the western states. Within weeks, the WRA hired a group of photographers to document the forced removal and incarceration.

WRA officials intended to create a photographic record for propaganda purposes. They wanted to assure the public, official international observers and history that Japanese Americans were well treated. And they aimed to control the visual imagery of the incarceration.

One of the WRA's first hires was Dorothea Lange, already famous for her 1936 photograph, known as *Migrant Mother*, of a destitute woman huddled with her children during the Dust Bowl era. After Pearl Harbor, Lange sought to document the "normal life" of Japanese Americans and show what she called the "performance" of rounding them up. It soon became clear that Lange had more empathy for the incarcerated individuals than for the government. The thousands of photographs that she and others left behind are now stored at the National Archives, presenting compelling evidence of the ways Americans responded to a hysteria that infected the country.

Dorothea Lange

Oakland, California, March 13, 1942

This sign declaring, "I AM AN AMERICAN" was hung in the front window of the Wanto Company grocery store. Storeowner Tatsuro Masuda commissioned it the day after Pearl Harbor, anticipating a backlash against Japanese Americans. Tatsuro and his wife never returned to the store after their incarceration.

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 4, 1942

Dave Tatsuno and his father Shojiro pose in front of the family's department store, opened by Shojiro in 1902, one day before it was closed. Dave, a devoted amateur filmmaker, smuggled a movie camera into the Topaz Relocation Center in Utah and took the only known color movies of life in an incarceration camp.

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 1, 1942

This letter to customers, posted in the front window of the Pacific Dry Goods Company in Chinatown, displays grace and optimism in the face of injustice.

Clem Albers

Los Angeles, California, April 11, 1942

Owners of the Asahi Dye Works reminded customers that unclaimed items would not be taken to the detention center in Owens Valley, California.

Dorothea Lange

Byron, California, April 28, 1942

This group of field workers gathered after registering for pickup in five days. A white landowner for whom they worked insisted they continue to tend the fields. According to photographer Dorothea Lange, they were arguing about whether they should return to the farm or spend time preparing for the journey ahead.

Russell Lee

Los Angeles, California, April 1942

Many farmers and business owners had to face the devastating humiliation of selling off part or all of their property and businesses for pennies on the dollar during their last days of freedom.

Clem Albers

Los Angeles, California, April 11, 1942

The Burlington Hotel promoted its new ownership after residents of Little Tokyo were forced to leave for incarceration camps. The area soon changed to an African American neighborhood known as Bronzeville.

Russell Lee

Los Angeles, California, April 1942

Japanese American resident Yasuko Ito said, "It is difficult to describe the feeling of despair and humiliation experienced by all of us as we watched the Caucasians coming to look over our possessions and offering such nominal amounts knowing we had no recourse but to accept whatever they were offering because we did not know what the future held for us."

Dorothea Lange

San Lorenzo, California, May 5, 1942

Forty-eight hours after these clothes were hung to dry, their owners were forced off their family farm. Japanese Americans lost their jobs, and many lost their farms. For most, there was nothing to return to at the end of the war.

Dorothea Lange

Woodland, California, May 20, 1942

Photographer Dorothea Lange captured the psychic weight that the prospect of forced removal and incarceration had on Japanese Americans. With everything packed for the next day's expulsion, a California tenant farmer contemplates his future the day before pickup.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Kobayashi Family Identification Tag, 1942

JASC, Ryoko Rickie Kobayashi Papers and Photograph Collection

Kaneko Family Identification Tag, 1942

JASC, Dorothy and Hiroshi Kaneko Papers

Saito Family Identification Tag, 1942
[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

These tags were worn by every man, woman and child who was picked up and removed from the West Coast and placed in incarceration camps.

Suitcases ON VIEW:

Watanabe Suitcase

Courtesy Gwen Kato

This family suitcase was taken to Manzanar. "We believe the handiwork was by my grandmother, Michiko Watanabe," said Gwen Kato. "She was amazing with sewing and knitting and she never wasted."

Ikkanda Suitcase

JASC, Harry S. Ikkanda Artifact Collection

Harry S. Ikkanda carried this suitcase from Los Angeles to Manzanar.

Fukuhara Suitcase

Courtesy Jane and Jerry Morishige

This valise was carried by the Mitsuo and Sachi Fukuhara family to Puyallup, Tule Lake and to Chicago. The initials don't match because the family borrowed the suitcase from a neighbor. Betty Fukuhara Yoshioka now lives in Arlington Heights.

Yoshimura Suitcase

JASC, Kiyo Yoshimura Artifact Collection

This suitcase was carried by Temeji Yoshimura and his wife Chiyo to Tanforan and Topaz.

Kawano Basket

JASC, Harue Ozaki Artifact Collection

Harue Kawano carried this straw container from her home in Tacoma, Washington, to Pinedale, Tule Lake and Heart Mountain.

Hattori Trunk

JASC, Yoshiko Murakami Artifact Collection

Frank S. Hattori and his wife Myrtle took this trunk to Santa Anita and Rohwer.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 25, 1942

Twenty-five-year-old Shizuko Ina looks ahead in line to register. It was the start of a four-year ordeal for Shizuko and her husband, Itaru. She was four months pregnant when they were sent to the Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno, California, where the couple was forced to live in a former horse stall.

Dorothea Lange

San Francisco, California, April 25, 1942

Armed soldiers guarded the registration stations. Upon entry, each family was assigned a number written on tags to attach to clothes and luggage. The act of reducing a family to an identification number was dehumanizing.

Dorothea Lange

Centerville, California, May 9, 1942

The Mochida family's name and an identifying symbol were painted on each of their bags, so the children could keep track of their possessions. "Dad was never the same," said daughter Kayoko (front row, second from right). "His confidence was really shaken. He could not provide for his family."

Dorothea Lange

Hayward, California, May 9, 1942

Families like the Takeuchis stood curbside awaiting their removal with whatever they could carry. Many sold or left all but their clothes.

Dorothea Lange

Hayward, California, May 8, 1942

Ibuki Hibi clutches her doll as she and her mother wait for a bus to take them to the Tanforan Assembly Center near San Francisco. Her parents, Hisako and George Matsusaburo, were artists. In a farewell gesture, George donated fifty paintings and prints to the community. Most have since been lost.

Dorothea Lange

Hayward, California, May 8, 1942

Having sold his long-running laundry business, seventy-year-old Sakutaro Aso awaited pickup. "When people look at Grandfather's face, they see a lot of dignity," said Jerry Aso. "I see a lot of other things, like pain."

Dorothea Lange

Centerville, California, May 9, 1942

Five-year-old Mamoru “Mamo” Takeuchi reported for pickup in uniform. Months earlier, his father, Jingo, was picked up by the FBI as a “dangerous” alien. Jingo’s crimes: teaching at a Japanese-language school and running a school that offered instruction in Japanese sword fighting.

Clem Albers

San Pedro, California, April 5, 1942

A crowd watches a convoy of Japanese Americans in vehicles as they head under military watch to the Santa Anita Assembly Center, about forty miles north. San Pedro resident Yuri Kochiyama later recalled that some onlookers carried signs that used racial epithets and jingoistic language as they watched their neighbors being taken away.

Clem Albers

Los Angeles, California, April 1, 1942

Los Angeles residents shoved their belongings onto trains bound for the Manzanar Relocation Center in California. The packed trains were hot and stuffy. Each car was guarded by military police with rifles and bayonets. People were not allowed to lift the blinds on the windows. The army said it was for the protection of the passengers.

ON SCREEN ABOVE:

The Day of Forced Removal

Photographers Dorothea Lange and Russell Lee trained their cameras on residents as they left their homes in California. Lange woke early to photograph the Otsu family stepping off their front porch in Centerville. She showed baggage-only what they could carry-piled high. Then she drove to pick up points in Byron, Hayward, San Francisco, Oakland and Woodland. Russell Lee watched as people arrived at the Southern Pacific Railroad Yards in Los Angeles.

Just before the trains pulled out of Woodland, Lange suffered a nervous breakdown. “I went down to the lobby to type a letter,” wrote her assistant, Christina Gardner. “When I came back she was just in a paroxysm of worry about what was going to happen to these people. What was going to happen? Our government was doing this. She saw the greater fabric in a way very few people did at the time.”

2nd FLOOR

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Dorothea Lange

Woodland, California, May 20, 1942

It took two days to move out almost all of Yolo County's nine hundred Japanese Americans. Each day, nine coaches were used to transport them to the Merced Assembly Center.

Clem Albers

San Pedro, California, April 5, 1942

Trucks jammed with suitcases, blankets, household items, garden tools and people were part of the convoy leaving San Pedro. At first, Japanese Americans were allowed to drive their own vehicles to the temporary detention centers, but that option was soon rescinded. Even after the convoy departed, no one was told the final destination.

THE CAMPS (WITH MAP)

This map indicates many of the major facilities in which Japanese Americans and Japanese nationals evicted from the western states were imprisoned.

In the immediate days after Pearl Harbor, Japanese non-citizens and a small number of citizens were arrested and eventually transferred to eight major Internment Camps run by the Department of Justice to imprison foreign nationals from Japan, Germany and Italy. Many of these facilities were former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) facilities, primarily holding male leaders from the Japanese American community but also holding some Japanese Latin American families.

Following Executive Order 9066, the Western Defense Command established the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA) to set up seventeen Temporary Detention Centers to house both citizens and non-citizens of Japanese ancestry. Many were located at former fairgrounds and racetracks, with living quarters that had been hastily constructed.

Soon after, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) built ten permanent Incarceration Camps in far-off deserts, forests and swamps, and sometimes on Native American reservations. These facilities housed the great majority of the incarcerated Japanese American population for the duration of the war and were largely built from scratch.

TEMPORARY DETENTION CENTERS

Euphemistically called “Assembly Centers,” these makeshift facilities provided temporary housing for approximately 92,000 people of Japanese ancestry. Each camp had features in common: guard towers, barbed wire fences and armed soldiers, as well as a total lack of privacy for inmates.

Men, women and children spent an average of three months in the camps before being transferred to permanent incarceration camps. Large fairgrounds or horse tracks were selected for most of the temporary sites to minimize the need for construction. At the Portland Assembly Center, for example, more than 3,800 prisoners were housed under one roof in a livestock pavilion subdivided into apartments.

Fifteen miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles, the famed horse track known as Santa Anita Park became the largest of the temporary camps, with a peak population of more than 18,000 prisoners. The horses were removed just days before the stables were converted into tiny living quarters. Army-type barracks were built in the massive parking lot; the clubhouse was used for offices; and the grandstand became a mess hall where army rations were served to more than 3,000 people an hour.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Clem Albers

Arcadia, California, April 5, 1942

Arriving at Santa Anita was a bewildering experience. The sight of barbed wire and armed guards shocked many Japanese Americans, who had no idea what to expect or how long they would be incarcerated. From the moment of arrival, they were under surveillance and considered dangerous. We have recently identified the following individuals in this photograph: Mary Kochi, Loretta Kochi, Lily Kochi, Kiyo Takashima, Margaret Takashima, Masako Takashima and Matsuko Takashima.

Clem Albers

Arcadia, California, April 5, 1942

Everyone’s baggage was inspected. The government began searching the homes of Japanese immigrants after Pearl Harbor, looking for shortwave radios, cameras, firearms, explosives and signaling devices. At Santa Anita, prisoners were forced to look on as every one of their few possessions was treated with suspicion.

Clem Albers

Arcadia, California, April 5, 1942

Medical workers screened each person entering Santa Anita for infectious diseases. Almost everyone was vaccinated against smallpox and typhoid, and children were immunized against diphtheria and whooping cough. Japanese American prisoners provided most of the medical care in the camps.

Clem Albers

Arcadia, California, April 5, 1942

The hands of 54-year-old Niichi Tanaka are examined at the Santa Anita Assembly Center. Examinations were devoid of conventional medical privacy and were done in an assembly-line fashion.

Dorothea Lange

San Bruno, California, June 16, 1942

Barracks used to house Japanese Americans at the Tanforan Assembly Center were originally built to house horses. The army painted the floors and walls of the stables, but the odor of horse urine and manure remained.

Clem Albers

Salinas, California, April 1942

Baggage followed Japanese Americans to their temporary detention camps and later to their permanent camps. In addition to what they brought with them, people purchased clothes and household items at camp co-ops and from mail-order companies, usually Sears, Roebuck.

Dorothea Lange

Turlock, California, May 2, 1942

“These people came with all their luggage and their best clothes, and their children dressed as though they were going to an important event,” wrote photographer Dorothea Lange.

Dorothea Lange

Turlock, California, May 2, 1942

At the Turlock Assembly Center, the incarcerated were expected to walk a mile from the train station to the camp, a former fairground, carrying their possessions with them.

Dorothea Lange

San Bruno, California, June 16, 1942

The Tanforan Assembly Center and the other temporary camps were not set up to provide much more than housing and food. Long lines formed around mealtime. The incarcerated were expected to bring their own dishes and cutlery and to wash their dishes themselves.

Clem Albers

Salinas, California, April 1942

Akira Toya rests on his standard steel army cot at the Salinas Assembly Center with his mother, Aki, standing behind him. Soon after being assigned a place to stay, inmates started making their rooms more livable by building furniture and installing such things as hooks and shelves.

Clem Albers

Arcadia, California, April 6, 1942

Military police patrol the fence around Santa Anita. Inmates were not free to come and go, but they were allowed visitors. Military police guarded the perimeters of the camps. Interior security was provided by a small staff of Japanese Americans under the supervision of a police officer.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Santa Anita Detention Center Pacemaker Newspaper, 1942

JASC, Michiko Frances Chikahisa Papers

Fifteen of the temporary detention centers and all of the ten permanent centers operated newspapers. Camp inmates produced each of the publications, but the papers were run under strict government guidelines.

Graduation Photo from Salinas Detention Center, 1942

JASC, Misao Shiratsuki Papers

Salinas Union High School held its graduation ceremony at the Salinas Assembly Center in California. Most graduates were sent to Heart Mountain.

Gift Given at Santa Anita Detention Center, 1942

JASC, Ryoko Rickie Kobayashi Papers and Photograph Collection

This handcrafted figure mimics the head covering of a camouflage factory worker. It was made from material used at the factory. Santa Anita was the only temporary camp that built nets for the war effort.

Arm Bands for Kitchen Workers, Santa Anita Detention Center, 1942

JASC, Ryoko Rickie Kobayashi Papers and Photograph Collection

Notice to Report to Work, Tanforan Detention Center, 1942

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Shizue Tamura

Two Watercolors from Tanforan, 1942

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Diary, 1942

JASC, Konman-Matsukawa Family Papers

Eiko "Vicky" Konman created a day-by-day record of her family's forced removal from the Los Angeles area to the horse stables at Santa Anita and then to Rohwer.

READING LOUNGE:

ROGER SHIMOMURA

American Infamy #4, c. 2010

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of Carl & Marilyn Thoma

Influenced by Pop Art, Japanese woodblock prints and his own experience as a Japanese American, Roger Shimomura (b. 1939) creates powerful, dynamic and often political imagery. This painting reflects his experience in the Minidoka War Relocation Center, emphasizing the ominous eye of the guards overlooking a bustling scene of camp life. During the war, Shimomura and his family were able to secure leave from the camp to move to Chicago, where they would stay until the war's end.

PLASTIC JESUS

Donald Trump Internment Camps Sign and Documentation, 2017

Courtesy the artist, Los Angeles

Street artist Plastic Jesus creates political, guerrilla-style installations that challenge, skewer and provoke. In response to Donald Trump's racist immigration policies, Plastic Jesus organized a national project that placed "Future Internment Camp" signs on empty lots around the country. Also including the United States' Seal and the text "Executive Order 9066," the signs draw a damning parallel between Trump's proposed Muslim bans and the WWII incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry. @plasticjesus

SHINKICHI TAJIRI

Warrior, 1955

Welded iron

Courtesy Fred Eychaner

A child of Issei immigrants, Shinkichi Tajiri (1923-2009) was incarcerated at the Poston War Relocation Center before joining the 442nd Regimental Combat Team as a machine gunner on the Western Front. Upon returning from war due to injury, Tajiri and his family relocated to Chicago. He attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1946 to 1948, and helped form Gaka Art Guild, a cooperative of Nisei and white artists. Inspired to become an artist after what he had seen and experienced in the war, Tajiri's work often employs militaristic metals and twisted, barbed-wire shapes. Tajiri left the United States permanently in 1948, and settled in The Netherlands in 1956.

SHINKICHI TAJIRI

Untitled, c. 1959

Welded iron

Courtesy Fred Eychaner

Shinkichi Tajiri's abstract, erotic and turbulent sculptures are informed by the violence of World War II and its aftermath. Tajiri (1923-2009), a child of first-generation Japanese immigrants, spent his childhood in Los Angeles and San Diego, and was incarcerated with his family at the Poston War Relocation Center in Arizona. After relocating to Chicago, and attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for two years, Tajiri was still embittered by the U.S. government's treatment of his family and the anti-Japanese prejudice he encountered. He left the United States for Paris in 1948, and ultimately settled in The Netherlands in 1956.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) CAMPS

Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, more than 5,500 Japanese immigrants were arrested by the FBI. Primarily leaders in the Japanese community, these men were held in jails, private homes, hotels and even cafes.

These arrests were facilitated by the 1940 Smith Act, which had required all adult non-citizens to register. The separation of these men from their families and their imprisonment in distant locations around the country left the Japanese community bereft of its traditional leadership. Eventually, more than 17,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were interned in DOJ Camps, along with a much smaller number of German and Italian “enemy aliens.”

In Chicago, a residence at 4800 South Ellis Avenue housed many Japanese nationals, including Shoji Osato, former caretaker of the Japanese tea garden in Jackson Park. As recalled by his daughter Sono Osato, “An armed guard sat with us at a card table in a bleak, empty room, adding a painful strain to our conversation with his silence...Each time we left, I was filled with terrible sadness. Father always smiled as he said goodbye, but the smile was hollow and forced...The hurt and bewilderment that lay in his eyes haunted me for months.”

IN CASE:

Kaiji Ikeya Journal, Santa Fe Internment Camp, New Mexico, 1942-43

JASC, Junko Mizuta Collection

Kaiji Ikeya (1890-1944) came to the United States in 1915 to operate a tea house and ultimately settled in Portland, Oregon. The night of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Kaiji, who was involved with charitable work and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, was taken into FBI custody. For close to a month, his wife Sae and their two daughters Haruye and Junko were unable to locate him.

Kaiji was shuffled from one Department of Justice facility to the next: Fort Missoula in Montana, Fort Sill in Oklahoma, Camp Livingston in Louisiana and the Santa Fe Detention Center in New Mexico. This page in his journal follows up a previous petition for reunification with his family, who were incarcerated at Minidoka, given his poor health. In January 1944, Kaiji was “paroled” and transferred to Minidoka, where he died six months later due to a heart ailment.

Transcription of Letter:

Mr. Willard F. Kelly
Asst. Commissioner of Alien Control Units
U. S. Dept of Justice
Philadelphia, Penn.

Kaiji Ikeya
Barrack 54
Santa Fe Detention Station
Santa Fe, N.M.
September 8

Sir,

I, Kaiji Ikeya, the undersigned, hereby respectfully request that my petition previously filed with your office for reuniting family in the family internment camp be given your especial consideration at this time.

I am now interned at the detention station here, and my family including my wife Sae Ikeya and daughters, Haruye and Junko, is located at Block 39-7-17, Minidoka W.R.A., Hunt, Idaho. The particular reason that I now ask you for your especially kind attention to this matter is because of my illness together with embarrassing condition brought on my family by constant worries over my life. I have always been in poor health with heart trouble and have had to be in the hospital many times. First in Fort Missoula, Mont., then in Camp Livingston, La. and again in the present camp. My wife and children have been in fear that my conditions may take worse turn at any time and are longing for my return to them as early possible.

It is my earnest wish that under said circumstances, I may be allowed to join my family in the family internment camp at an earliest opportunity to enable me to be with my wife and daughters so that I can be taken care of by them.

Therefore, I shall very much appreciate to have you kindly consider my case so that I shall be reunited with said my family within shortest time possible.

Very respectfully yours,

Kaiji Ikeya

JAPANESE LATIN AMERICANS

Often forgotten are the roughly 2,264 Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs) that endured forced rendition to the United States for wartime prisoner exchanges. While the majority were sent from Peru, twelve other Latin American countries also cooperated with the U.S., including Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

The JLAs were concentrated in DOJ camps in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Kenedy, Seagoville and Crystal City, Texas. Many of the JLAs were incarcerated as families.

Though many were repatriated to Japan, several hundred tried to remain in the U.S. after the war. They soon found themselves designated as "illegal aliens" and scheduled for deportation, despite the fact that the U.S. government itself had brought them here. Legal intervention eventually helped them gain residency and naturalization rights. Though excluded from the original redress and reparations settlement, by 1999, the *Mochizuki et al v. U.S.* class action lawsuit provided living JLAs with a letter of apology and \$5,000 in reparations. Some felt that this was not adequate compensation, and efforts for an equitable, just redress continue.

ON WALL:

Letters Written by Kiyoko Matsuura from Crystal City Internment Camp, Texas, 1945

Top (closed): Courtesy Stanley Oda

Bottom (open): Courtesy The Wilson Legacy Collection at The Legacy Project

South American internee Kiyoko Matsuura wrote these letters to her mother in Lima, Peru. The letters state that Matsuura and her children are doing well and report on her baby Kuniko's weight (17 lbs) and the progress of her son Yoshihiko at school.

Crystal City Internment Camp was created by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to hold "enemy aliens," many of whom had been deported from Latin America. By the end of 1945, the camp held 3,374 internees, out of which 2,371 were of Japanese descent, 997 of German descent, and 6 of Italian descent. INS officials referred to Crystal City as the "family internment camp" and boasted about features such as a makeshift "swimming pool." Yet life within the camp was restricted in many respects, including mail censorship, as is demonstrated by the EXAMINED and U.S. Censor stamps on these letters.

INCARCERATION CAMPS

From the Temporary Detention Centers, inmates were transferred to ten long-term facilities, starting with the Manzanar “War Relocation Center,” which opened in March 1942.

Shock, fear and worry were common reactions as inmates dealt with the stress of enforced dislocation and the loss of their homes, possessions and businesses. They had no information about where they were being taken, how they would be treated or how long they would be gone.

Within the camps, Japanese Americans endured dehumanizing conditions—including poor housing and food, a lack of privacy, inadequate medical care and substandard education. Inevitably, feelings of helplessness, anger and resentment emerged. Enforced idleness and harsh living conditions aggravated tensions.

Issei men lost their traditional leadership role in their families and in the community. Communal camp conditions further diminished Issei authority at home. Children often ate with peers rather than family members in the mess halls, choosing to socialize with friends. Unlike their parents, most Nisei children were in their adolescence and twenties when incarcerated. As emerging adults, they struggled with the impacts of incarceration on their identity.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

When the Manzanar Relocation Center opened, the camp was far from finished. The food, not in keeping with the traditional Japanese diet, gave people “the Manzanar runs” and the latrines were unsanitary. Permanent camps were supposed to be a step up from the temporary detention centers

Fred Clark

Poston, Arizona, April 2, 1942

Some inmates were issued cotton mattresses; others were told to find straw and had to stuff their own sacks. Everyone slept on standard steel army cots.

Clem Albers

Owens Valley, California, April 2, 1942

“It seems comical, looking back; we were a band of Charlie Chaplins marooned in the California desert,” wrote Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston in *Farewell to Manzanar*.

ON VIEW:

Yellow Dresser Made from Food Crates
JASC, Sakie Kawahara Artifact Collection

Shinishi Nishimoto

Wooden Deck Chair, Jerome

JASC, Irene and George Suyeoka Artifact Collection

Irene Suyeoka, Nishimoto's daughter, likely fabricated the chair strapping after she moved to Chicago.

MINÉ OKUBO AND *CITIZEN 13660*

Miné Okubo's drawings and paintings of her camp experiences offer among the most personal accounts of what happened to Japanese Americans on the West Coast during World War II. Okubo was taken to the Tanforan Assembly Center near San Francisco and then moved to Topaz, a permanent camp in Utah. Because Japanese Americans were not permitted to bring cameras into camp, Okubo resolved to document the confinement experience through drawings. She produced more than 1,000 sketches of life in camp, some of which she then transformed into formal drawings and paintings.

Okubo left Topaz in 1944 and settled in New York. There she arranged her sketches into a narrative sequence, wrote text and published her memoir *Citizen 13660*. It recounts Okubo's life in the camps—the dust storms, lack of privacy, converted horse stalls where inmates were housed, loyalty exams, even the gangs of radical inmates who beat up suspected informers. The book has remained in print much of the time since its initial publication in 1946, and is considered a classic of Asian American literature.

PHOTOS ON WALL:**Dorothea Lange**

Owens Valley, California, July 1, 1942

Informal school classes began at the temporary centers and continued through the first months at permanent camps, taught mostly by college-educated inmates. Formal classes started in the fall of 1942 and continued for the duration of the war.

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

More than one hundred Japanese American children from orphanages and foster homes around the West Coast were moved to Manzanar in June 1942 to spend the war years at a facility called the Children's Village. The end of the war was traumatic, for many of the children had no guardians to claim or speak for them.

Clem Albers

Lone Pine, California, April 1, 1942

This elderly blind man was one of the two thousand people older than 65 and one thousand seriously disabled or bedridden persons who were imprisoned.

WORK ASSIGNMENTS

To battle boredom and earn spending money, about 30% of the inmates held jobs. They raised fruit and vegetables, chickens, hogs and cattle, delivered mail, stoked coal furnaces and served as doctors and nurses. They also labored in camp factories, making mattresses, furniture and clothes for the centers.

The government employed inmates to lower the costs of running the camps. No one was required to work, but those assigned to jobs sometimes worked forty-four hours a week. The public demanded that salaries be kept below the \$21 paid monthly to Army privates.

Inmates in temporary and permanent camps were hired to manufacture camouflage nets for the War Department. The labor was monotonous and tiresome, and rumors floated through camp that the weaving of fibers could cause serious lung irritation and perhaps even tuberculosis. In June 1942, a worker at Santa Anita walked off the job, telling bosses he was hungry. When he was ordered back to work, his coworkers joined him in a spontaneous strike. They complained about the food, the dust, the fumes and the long hours. It was the first mass act of resistance against the incarceration.

Dorothea Lange

Owens Valley, California, June 30, 1942

The War Relocation Authority cast camp life as an adventure. "Be prepared for the Relocation Center, which is a pioneer community," a WRA brochure advised. "So bring clothes suited to pioneer life and in keeping with the climate or climates likely to be involved." The reality was that many inmates worked in the camps, performing tasks like clearing brush.

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

Many prisoners at Manzanar labored in the fields on the outskirts of the camp. In 1943, nearly fourteen tons of tomatoes were harvested and sent to a cannery in Anaheim, California. Each of the ten permanent camps was surrounded by fields that were farmed by inmates.

Dorothea Lange

Owens Valley, California, July 1, 1942

Japanese Americans fabricated camouflage nets at Manzanar. Because it was a defense project, first-generation Issei were not allowed to make the nets. The Geneva Conventions stipulates that foreign nationals cannot do war work, so young Nisei filled the ranks. They were told that working in the net factories was their patriotic duty.

Toyo Miyatake

Manzanar Watch Tower, 1944

Courtesy Toyo Miyatake Studio

Although government photographers were not allowed to include guard towers in their photographs of the incarceration camps, Manzanar inmate Toyo Miyatake was able to publish this photograph in the camp's 1943-44 school yearbook.

ON VIEW:

Dresser with a Secret Drawer, Gila River
JASC, Anonymous Collection

Wood Ironing Board, Manzanar

Courtesy Chicago Japanese American Historical Society

The ironing board cover was fashioned from two re-used rice sacks pinned together. Note the faded red ink block printing “100 LBS. NET WHEN PACKED” on one. The second, a 50 lb. sack with a floral design, was used inside out.

ANSEL ADAMS' VIEW

In 1943, celebrated landscape photographer Ansel Adams was invited by Ralph Merritt, director of Manzanar, to photograph the camp. Adams agreed and intended to document the people and the landscape. At Manzanar, he visited photographer and inmate Toyo Miyatake and recorded “the realities of the individual and his environment.”

In 1944, Adams published his Manzanar photographs in the book *Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese-Americans* and presented the work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He and the museum were criticized for the sympathetic portrayal of Japanese Americans they offered. Fellow photographer Dorothea Lange and later critics and scholars, on the other hand, critiqued his work for failing to show the struggles faced by the prisoners. This debate continues today. Adams stood by the work and claimed his photographs provided a testament to the strength and determination he had observed. He viewed these images as the most important of his career.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Fusaichi “Frank” Hyosaka

Handcrafted Box, Minidoka, 1943

JASC, Fusaichi Frank Hyosaka Artifact Collection

The inside cover of this wooden box has drawings of Minidoka and Tule Lake, where Hyosaka was imprisoned.

Bilingual Camp Directory, Granada

JASC, Jack H. Oda Collection

The Granada Relocation Center in Colorado was the smallest permanent camp, with a population of just over 7,000 inmates.

“Welcome to Topaz” Booklet, 1943

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Inmate Yuri Sugihara drew the cover illustration for this guidebook to the Utah detention center.

"Welcome to Topaz" Booklet, 1943
Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection

Cafeteria-Style Dinner, Heart Mountain
Courtesy The Wilson Legacy Collection at The Legacy Project

Work Assignment Form, Manzanar, 1943
Mess Hall Identification Card, Manzanar, 1942
JASC, Shizuko Sue Lofton Papers

Physician's Letter About "Ideal Vacation Spot," 1942
Courtesy of Lourdes Nicholls and Fumi Knox

ART IN THE CAMPS

"Confined to an area of one square mile, the internees used art to lift their spirits, reaffirm their humanity and claim ownership of their imagination. The process of creating—however humble—was a means of surviving the dehumanizing effect of incarceration. It provided mental stimulation, emotional nourishment and a way to express their own individuality," writes Delphine Hirasuna, author of *The Art of Gaman*. *Gaman* is a Japanese term that means "enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity."

"In the camps, virtually nothing was thrown away without first examining it for its craft-making possibilities," Hirasuna writes. "Packing crates and cardboard boxes were dismantled and turned into backing for artwork. Wrapping papers were saved for use like origami and floral bouquets. Gunnysacks and burlap were unraveled and rewoven into rugs. String from onion sacks, twine, and wire were converted into decorative baskets and tiny objects. Toothbrush handles were scraped down and shaped into tiny pendants and trinkets."

Denied their rights and forced to survive in harsh conditions, the inmates engaged in artistic activity to make their days tolerable and to improve their surroundings. The inventive objects that resulted remain poignant reminders of their experience.

ON WALL:

Two Watercolors Painted by Children at Granada
JASC, Donated by Kate Mieko Kuzuhara and Reverend Chiaki Kuzuhara
The teacher, Kate Mieko Kuzuhara, saved these pictures after the war.

George Morishige

Bas-relief Wood Carving

Courtesy Jane and Jerry Morishige

George Morishige learned about carving at Manzanar. He was later sent to Rohwer and moved after the war to Chicago, where he worked as a carpenter and custom boat builder.

IN CASE:

Painted Wood, Rohwer

JASC, Ryoko Rickie Kobayashi Papers and Photograph Collection
The words on this wood carving mean “One Heaven, Four Seas.”

Slate Inkwell for Japanese Calligraphy, 1944

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Mikisaburo Izui

Painted Rocks, 1942

JASC, Izui Family Papers and Photographs

Seattle pharmacist Mikisaburo Izui was arrested by government officials as a “dangerous enemy alien,” because he belonged to a Japanese immigrant social club. While interned at a Department of Justice camp in Fort Missoula, Montana, he produced these botanical paintings on rocks he found at the camp.

Wood Carving, Heart Mountain

Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, Donated by Susumu Mukushina

Mikisaburo Izui

Two Painted Envelopes, 1944

Courtesy Izui Family

After two years at Fort Missoula, Mikisaburo Izui was transferred to Minidoka and reunited with his family. Soon after, his son George was able to leave the camp for a job in Chicago. Izui painted scenes of Minidoka on envelopes that he sent to his son.

Mikisaburo Izui

“Garden of Eden” Botanical Scrapbook Page, Minidoka, 1944

JASC, Izui Family Papers and Photographs

Handcrafted Birds, Poston

JASC, Grace Torii Collection

Wood carved birds were common at each of the permanent camps. Magazine photographs and Audubon drawings inspired them.

Shizue Tamura

Hand-constructed Wooden Goose Pin, Topaz

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Gift, Poston

JASC, Michiko Frances Chikahisa Collection

This wooden dachshund pin was made for Michiko Frances Chikahisa by an inmate at Poston.

Shizue Tamura

Hand-painted Pinecone Birds, Topaz

JASC, Okubo Family Collection

Shell Pin

Courtesy Lourdes Nicholls and Fumi Knox

Tsugimi Ishii

Small Loom and Bracelet

Courtesy Alice Murata

Camp inmates had to build their own tools and equipment for art and crafts. Tsugimi Ishii devised this tiny box loom to fashion beads.

Sae Ikeya

Camp Sweater, Minidoka

JASC, Ikeya Family Artifact Collection

Sae Ikeya knit this cardigan for her daughter, Junko Ikeya Mizuta, while they were incarcerated in Idaho. The FBI arrested Sae's husband on Pearl Harbor Day. He returned to the family in 1944, but died in camp six months later.

A SEMBLANCE OF NORMAL LIFE

Permanent camps were constructed in blocks containing twelve or twenty-four barracks. For every twelve barracks, there was usually one mess hall and one primitive bath, toilet and laundry facility.

Barracks were generally divided into six small rooms. Each contained military cots, a coal-fired stove or desert cooler, and one bare light bulb. Inmates fashioned curtains, pieced together shelves and furniture from scrap lumber and added wallboards in order to make their quarters more livable.

Aiming to create nearly self-sufficient "towns" in the camps, the WRA added co-op stores and canteens, churches and movie theaters, beauty parlors and barbershops. Under its direction, inmates constructed an ice rink at Heart Mountain, a swimming pool at Poston and golf courses at Manzanar and Topaz.

The ten permanent camps provided education from nursery school through high school, but classes were large and the credentials of many teachers were limited. In early 1942, an outside organization was created to help thousands of incarcerated college students continue their education on campuses east of the Exclusion Zone. Considered "ambassadors of good will," these students were among the first to be released from camps.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

The majority of first-generation Issei were Buddhists; most Nisei were Christians. The military encouraged the practice of both religions, but it prohibited the use of the Japanese language at religious ceremonies and banned the practice of Shinto, the state religion of Japan, fearing that its reverence for the Japanese emperor would encourage disloyalty.

Tom Parker

Cody, Wyoming, September 18, 1942

Shizuko and Kenichi Tanaka were the first bride and groom at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center. They were driven to a minister's house in Cody, Wyoming under military guard for their ceremony. They met at the Santa Anita Assembly Center.

Toyo Miyatake

Shiba Family, July 1944

Courtesy Toyo Miyatake Studio

Miyatake captured intimate moments that only an inmate could. Here he documented the Shiba family visiting the Hashimotos' newborn baby. A total of 5,981 births were recorded at the camps.

Toyo Miyatake

Toy Loan Center, c. 1944

Courtesy Toyo Miyatake Studio

Few toys found space among the limited necessities people were allowed to bring with them to the camps. This toy lending facility was coordinated by the Religious Society of Friends (also known as the Quakers), which spoke out against the incarceration and sent volunteers to make camp life less hostile.

Tom Parker

Cody, Wyoming, September 18, 1942

Here, inmates at Heart Mountain Relocation Center gather for the funeral of Yoichi George Ochiai, 60, who died of a heart attack. He left a 12-year-old daughter, Lillian, who stood directly behind the casket. The rate of mortality in the camps was about the same as the rate among U.S. civilians.

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

Every family at camp contributed 15 cents to purchase cement to build the memorial marker for the Manzanar cemetery. Fifty boys in the camp helped construct the obelisk, which was dedicated in August 1943.

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

At Manzanar, wide-open firebreaks were built between blocks. Manzanar is 225 miles northwest of Los Angeles in a valley of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

In print for more than three years, the *Manzanar Free Press* was the longest running incarceration camp newspaper. Inmates at all ten permanent camps (and almost all temporary camps) published English- and Japanese-language papers. Their work was overseen and occasionally censored by government officials.

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, January 29, 1944

Aya and Henry Tsurutani and their son Bruce made their home at Manzanar as livable as possible. Later Aya recalled the cracked wood sealed with tarpaper and the dust that swept into the rooms.

Dorothea Lange

Owens Valley, California, July 3, 1943

Dust storms occurred with great frequency at Manzanar. Photographer Dorothea Lange later wrote, "Well, they had the meanest dust storms there and not a blade of grass. And the springs are so cruel. When those people arrived there they couldn't keep the tarpaper on the shacks. Oh my, there were some pretty terrible chapters in that history."

MATERIALS IN CASE:**Itashiro Fujiura**

Portable Buddhist Altar, 1945

Courtesy Glenn Fujiura

Itashiro Fujiura constructed this personal shrine, or *butsudan*, at Poston so that his son could carry it on his Army tour of duty. Henry Fujiura was drafted and served in the Counter Intelligence Corps during the occupation of Japan.

Left to Right:

[All Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Akiko and Naoko Saito at Tule Lake

Akiko Saito with Best Friend Lucille Tanaka-Tokuno at Tule Lake

Personal photos inside Tule Lake were rare in the early part of the war. These were taken by a family friend, a Nisei soldier who was visiting camp.

Saito Family in Tule Lake

From left are father Kinai, daughter Naoko, mother Kinko and daughter Akiko.

Camp Friends at Tule Lake

Akiko Saito (left) and sister Naoko (front) are joined by neighbors outside the barracks.

Tule Lake Party Invitation, 1943

JASC, Dorothy and Hiroshi Kaneko Papers

Girl Scout Member List, Heart Mountain

JASC, Nagaishi-Miyata Family Papers

Traditional American institutions like the Girl Scouts reached into the ten permanent camps.

Birth Certificate, 1945

Courtesy Lourdes Nicholls and Fumi Knox

Lil Dan'l: One Year in a Relocation Center, 1943

JASC, Michiko Frances Chikahisa Papers

Cartoonist George Akimoto created Lil Dan'l, the Rohwer camp mascot.

Tulean Dispatch Magazines, 1943

JASC, Yuri and Masru Sori Collection

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Gila Bulletin, 1945

JASC, Barbara Finn Papers

Tule Lake Magazine, 1943

JASC, Yuri and Masaru Sori Collection

Topaz High School Yearbook, 1943

JASC, Okubo Family Papers

Minidoka High School Yearbook, 1943

JASC, Ryoko Rickie Kobayashi Papers and Photograph Collection

Rohwer Center High School Yearbook, 1944

JASC, Konman-Matsukawa Family Papers

Tule Lake Temporary Leave Buttons
JASC, Nagaishi-Miyata Family Papers

Pages from The Tulean Dispatch, 1943
[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Heart Mountain Police Badge
Manzanar Police Badge
Topaz Police Badge

"I Am an American" Pin
This pin was worn in silent protest.
All Courtesy Stanley Oda

Football Program, 1943
JASC, Ryoko Rickie Kobayashi Papers and Photograph Collection
Denson was the high school at Jerome. Monroe was a Louisiana public high school. Its team visited the camp for a game.

Tule Lake Sports Patch
JASC, Kumamoto Family Papers

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Hana Playing Cards
Courtesy Chicago Japanese American Historical Society
"Flower cards" were used for the Japanese game of Hanafuda.

Fumi and Kakuji Takada

Wood Carving, Granada Detention Center
Courtesy Takada Family

Fumi Takada created the charcoal drawing on one side, while husband Kakuji Takada made the relief carving on the other.

Minoru Franklin Kawano

Carved Chess Set, 1942

Courtesy Linda Suzu Kawano

Minoru Franklin Kawano built this chess set from scrap lumber at the Puyallup detention center. He used shoe polish to stain it. Kawano was later sent to Minidoka, and his son became a ranked chess player.

TOYO MIYATAKE'S VIEW

Against government orders, professional photographer Toyo Miyatake smuggled into Manzanar the tools of his trade: a camera lens, a shutter and film holders. He said to his young son Archie, "As a photographer, I have a responsibility to record the camp life so this kind of thing will never happen again." He found a carpenter in camp to construct a box to house the lens and took his early images with a makeshift camera very quietly.

Manzanar director Ralph Merritt eventually permitted Miyatake to establish a small darkroom and studio, although at first he was required to have a white assistant snap the shutter. In time, that restriction was lifted, and Miyatake was designated official camp photographer. He took images of the imprisoned residents' daily lives, and some of his most notable photographs reveal details of the camps that were prohibited in WRA photography, including barbed wire fences and guard towers.

PHOTO ON WALL:

Toyo Miyatake

Three Boys Behind Barbed Wire, c. 1944

Courtesy Toyo Miyatake Studio

Miyatake captured the uncertainties and lack of freedom characteristic of life in camp in this well-known photograph.

WAYS TO LEAVE

The WRA began to formulate an "indefinite leave" program in 1942. In order to relocate, "loyal" inmates had to secure an outside sponsor, employment or education and submit themselves to FBI surveillance. Qualified applicants could only move east of the Exclusion Zone.

By 1943, the WRA established six regional field offices to help inmates find housing and jobs. By the end of 1944, nearly 35,000 primarily young, educated Nisei had left the camps, mostly for the Midwest.

The WRA officials saw cultural factors and the existence of ethnic enclaves as the root of anti-Japanese prejudice, instead of racism and war hysteria. In the leave clearance interview questions listed below, WRA authorities stressed assimilation and discouraged communal gathering:

"Will you assist in the general resettlement program by staying away from large groups of Japanese?"

"Will you avoid the use of the Japanese language except when necessary?"

"Will you for the duration of the war, avoid the organization of any typically Japanese clubs, associations, etc.?"

"Will you try to develop such American habits which will cause you to be accepted readily into American social groups?"

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

The WRA posted signs at Manzanar advertising available jobs back east. Leaving camp was not easy. Starting in March 1943, only people who had answered yes to questions 27 and 28 on the loyalty questionnaire were allowed to move and live elsewhere. The decision was left up to camp directors. About 16,000 were able to leave in 1943, and another 18,500 left the following year.

Hikaru Carl Iwasaki

Excelsior Springs, Missouri, September 22, 1944

Employment opportunities were plentiful throughout the country because so many men and women were off at war. Ben Matsunaga, his brother Tom, Bob Nishimura and Frank Sugiura all received leaves from the Poston Relocation Center to work as bellhops in Missouri.

Hikaru Carl Iwasaki

Wrentham, Massachusetts, August 1944

Brothers Ted and Hiroshi Kusudo were chicken sexers, experts in instantly determining the sex of newborn chicks. Separating chicks by gender was vital to the poultry industry. By the 1940s, Japanese Americans dominated the profession to such an extent that hatchery owners demanded the release of sexers from the camps.

LOYALTY OATHS

In 1943, the WRA created a test to assess the loyalty of those it had incarcerated. Adults were asked to answer questions on a form informally known as the “loyalty questionnaire.” Question 27 asked Nisei men if they would serve in combat duty and asked women if they would serve in other ways. Question 28 asked all inmates to swear unqualified allegiance to the United States and forswear any form of allegiance to the Emperor of Japan.

Both questions caused unrest. Nisei men worried that declaring their willingness to serve in combat units was akin to volunteering. Issei, barred from becoming U.S. citizens on the basis of race, worried that forswearing allegiance to Japan would leave them stateless.

Thousands in the camps used this questionnaire to express their frustrations and anger with the U.S. government by refusing to answer the questions, qualifying answers or answering one or both of the questions with a “No.” For many, it was their first act of resistance. Many suffered serious consequences. Those who answered “no” to both questions were deemed “disloyal” by the U.S. government and became known as “No-No Boys” or “No-Nos.”

A CALL TO SERVICE

Japanese Americans on the mainland were prohibited from joining the military after Pearl Harbor. But when American military officials discovered a need for skilled Japanese linguists, they recruited Nisei to attend the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) Language School. The MIS served as the eyes and ears of American and Allied forces. Japanese Americans served as interrogators, code breakers, interpreters and translators. "Six thousand Nisei in the war in the Pacific saved over a million American lives and shortened the war by over two years," wrote Major General Charles A. Willoughby.

From 1943, Nisei in the camps were recruited to serve as fighting soldiers in the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team on the European front. Whether to join the military was a difficult decision for camp prisoners. About 1,000 volunteered. Thousands later were drafted.

Bolstered by the combat-hardened 100th Infantry Battalion comprised of Japanese American draftees from Hawaii, the 442nd became the most decorated unit in U.S. history for its size and length of service. About 800 Japanese Americans were killed in action. They won seven Distinguished Unit Citations, including one awarded by President Harry Truman, who said, "You fought the enemy abroad and prejudice at home and you won."

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Toyo Miyatake

Memorial Service, July 1944

Courtesy of Toyo Miyatake Studio

Toyo Miyatake photographed Teru Arikawa at the memorial service for her son, Private First Class Frank Nobuo Arikawa, who was killed in action on the Italian front. "Manzanar has its first gold star mother," wrote the *Manzanar Free Press*. "We had dreaded the day when some family in Manzanar would receive the fateful telegram."

Ansel Adams

Owens Valley, California, 1943

This still life shows the importance that God and country held for many Japanese American families. The picture, taken of items atop a radio console at the Manzanar Relocation Center, shows a portrait Robert Yonemitsu in uniform next to letters he sent to his sister.

Tom Parker

Amache, Colorado, February 9, 1943

Recruiting volunteers for the army, Captain William S. Fairchild addressed Japanese Americans at the Granada Relocation Center. He later handed out a questionnaire designed to determine their loyalty. About 12,000 inmates refused to respond or answered "No" to one or both of the loyalty questions. Some Nisei felt the questions were inappropriate for U.S. citizens. Others could no longer affirm their allegiance to the United States.

Uncredited photographer

Poston, Arizona, 1944

Charlie S. Fujiki posed for his brother Tom, who was assigned to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Charlie later enlisted, and he died while serving in Italy.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Nisei in Uniform Booklet, 1944

JASC, James Michio Mayeda Papers

This magazine was issued by the War Relocation Authority.

442nd Combat Team Album

JASC, James Michio Mayeda Photographic Collection

James Michio Mayeda left Gila River to join the army. He served in Italy, France and Germany, and witnessed the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany.

Eisenhower Military Jacket

JASC, Fred Sats Tanakatsubo Artifact Collection

This short coat was worn by Fred Sats Tanakatsubo, who joined the army just months before the Pearl Harbor attack. Stationed in Australia, Tanakatsubo's father passed away while incarcerated at Topaz. Sats was not able to return and was deeply shaken by the event.

Dog Tags

Courtesy Stanley Oda

These dog tags were worn by Albert K. Kariya, who served in the 442nd Regiment after the war and was stationed at Military Intelligence Service Language School at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

Chicago Nisei News, 1946

JASC, Lily and Tom Teraji Papers

Pages from a Military Translation Dictionary

Courtesy Ross Harano

These translation pages were Issued by the Military Intelligence Service Language School to Ben Mayewaki, who served in New Guinea in 1944 and Occupied Japan in 1945.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Farewell Issue of Tulean Dispatch, 1943

JASC, Misao Shiratsuki Papers

The camp newspaper was disbanded after the reopening of the camp as the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Tule Lake Autograph Book, 1944

JASC, Yamane Family Collection

This book contains farewell messages to Iwao Fred Yamane before he left Tule Lake.

LIFE Magazine, March 20, 1944

Courtesy Stanley Oda

The Rohwer Outpost, August 4, 1943

Courtesy The Wilson Legacy Collection at The Legacy Project

Loyalty Questionnaire, 1943

Courtesy Stanley Oda

This is a rare, original copy of the loyalty questionnaire meant to assess the loyalty of Japanese Americans. The wording of questions 27 and 28 were slightly changed in several versions—but the answers were fateful for many.

Tokiwo Uyeda's Indefinite Leave Card, 1943

JASC, Tokiwo Uyeda Papers

Fred Yamane's Indefinite Leave Card, 1944

JASC, Yamane Family Collection

Akiko Saito's Leave Clearance Identification, 1943

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Letter from The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1943

Note About School Acceptance, 1943

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

The School of the Art Institute enrolled Akiko Saito as a student.

Job Application Letter, 1943

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

Tule Lake inmate Hiroshi "Gary" Yasutake seeks work as an orderly at an Ann Arbor, Michigan, hospital.

Travel Permit for Hiroshi "Gary" Yasutake, 1943

[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

DRAFT RESISTANCE

In 1944, the U.S. government began drafting inmates to fill the ranks of the 442nd. Nearly 300 refused induction. One group of resisters, the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee, refused to report to induction unless their constitutional rights were restored, stating, "We feel that the present program of drafting us from this concentration camp is unjust, unconstitutional and against all principles of civilized usage." Their trial of sixty-three inmates was the largest mass trial of draft resisters in U.S. history.

Many resisters were found guilty and sentenced to six months to thirty-nine months in federal penitentiaries. In 1944, Judge Louis E. Goodman was alarmed to hear the case of twenty-seven Tule Lake resisters. After a brief trial, he concluded that it was "shocking to the conscience" to incarcerate an American citizen on suspicion of disloyalty, try to conscript him into the military, and then prosecute him for refusing. He dismissed the charges.

In 1946, President Harry S. Truman pardoned all of the Nisei draft resisters. For decades, they bore the stigma of their wartime choices in the Japanese American community. Today, however, these draft-refusing Nisei have been recognized as "resisters of conscience."

TULE LAKE

Inmates at the ten camps who refused to give "yes" responses to questions 27 and 28 of the "loyalty questionnaire" were labeled as "disloyal" and sent to Tule Lake. The camp became militarized. More guard towers were built, more barbed wire and fences were installed, and 1,000 military police with armored cars and tanks were brought to maintain security.

Tule Lake became a repressive prison camp as it swelled in size to more than 18,000 inmates. Once the "disloyal" arrived, Tule Lake initiated a prisoner curfew, barrack-to-barrack searches and a near complete end to normal daily activities. When inmates protested, more than 200 were imprisoned without hearings or trials in a primitive and overcrowded army stockade. A declaration of martial law initiated months of repression and hardship, which fostered widespread hostility toward the occupying army, the WRA and any person or group that cooperated with them.

Military control of Tule Lake ended in 1944, but the experience of martial law led to a loss of faith in America. Most Tule Lake inmates wondered about their future in a country that showed little regard for them. Many went so far as to renounce their citizenship.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Robert H. Ross

Newell, California, January 26, 1945

The militarization of the Tule Lake Segregation Center provoked a similar response from inmates. Fanatical pro-Japanese groups marched every morning in military style to protest the incarceration and the treatment of inmates. They encouraged second-generation Nisei to renounce their U.S. citizenship.

Robert H. Ross

Newell, California, June 24, 1945

Itaru Ina, in the foreground, was among those who gave up their citizenship. A member of a group formed to resist the government and promote allegiance to Japan, he was taken to the Tule Lake stockade—a jail within a jail—after protesting camp conditions. “Anybody who protested was characterized as part of the radical element,” said Ina’s daughter, Satsuki Ina.

RESISTANCE

Resistance to incarceration was uneven. The Japanese American Citizens League, a largely Nisei-led organization, encouraged cooperation. Others did not. Journalist James Omura questioned a House Committee, asking, “Has the Gestapo come to America?” Four Japanese Americans also became famous for their resistance, taking their cases to the Supreme Court.

Gordon Hirabayashi refused to follow curfew orders or register for the incarceration. He entered a plea of “not guilty,” saying that the curfew and exclusion laws were racially prejudicial and unconstitutional. He lost in court, and the Supreme Court later upheld his curfew conviction.

Fred Korematsu refused to report to the camp. He challenged the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066, but was found guilty in court of violating military orders. The Supreme Court agreed.

Minoru “Min” Yasui demanded to be arrested for breaking curfew. He was convicted and lost his appeal before the Supreme Court.

Mitsuye Endo filed a lawsuit that led to the closing of the camps. In December 1944, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Ex Parte Mitsuye Endo* that “citizens who are concededly loyal” could not be imprisoned. She moved to Chicago after the war.

PHOTO ON WALL:

Toyo Miyatake

Hand and Barbed Wire, c. 1944

Courtesy Toyo Miyatake Studio

CLOSING OF THE CAMPS

In December 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was notified that the *Ex Parte Mitsuye Endo* Supreme Court decision would rule that the government had no authority to imprison “concededly loyal” citizens. The following day, he issued Public Proclamation No. 21, rescinding the exclusion order.

It took more than a year to shut down the camps. Some inmates were eager to leave; others were apprehensive. Outside reports were bleak: thirty-six domestic terrorism incidents—shootings, arson attempts, threatening visits, even an attempted dynamiting—were reported against Japanese Americans returning to California in 1945. Upon leaving, each inmate received \$25, a train ticket and modest travel expenses.

For those who returned to the West Coast, many found the remains of their pre-war lives in ruins. Homes or farms left behind were often stolen, swindled away or claimed by squatters. Even if their titles remained firm, properties had been ransacked and farm equipment or machinery was often missing. Occasionally, well-meaning friends had maintained or looked after their properties while they were away, but in areas such as agriculture, only 25% of the pre-war farm operators recovered possession of their land.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Hikaru Carl Iwasaki

Poston, Arizona, September 1945

Before they left the camp, inmates received money and a ticket home. Eight of the ten camps closed in 1945. The Jerome Relocation Center closed in 1944. The Tule Lake Segregation Center closed in 1946.

Hikaru Carl Iwasaki

Rivers, Arizona, September 1945

Many camp inmates were afraid to return to California. Threats had been made against their return, and even the War Relocation Authority discouraged them, so many headed east.

Charles Mace

Denson, Arkansas, June 22, 1944

High school students from the Jerome Relocation Center bid farewell. “We must convince all with whom we come in personal contact that we are true Americans by our speech, thought and actions,” valedictorian Betty Kagawa told the graduating class.

Tom Parker

Burbank, California, November 1945

After three years in the camps, thousands of Japanese Americans returned to the Los Angeles area with no money and no jobs. To provide them affordable housing, the War Relocation Authority erected temporary living quarters. This converted army barracks, the Magnolia Housing Project, must have looked familiar to the residents.

Tom Parker

Burbank, California, November 1945

Trailer homes at the Winona Housing Project had no electricity, gas or plumbing. As they had been at the camps, toilet and shower facilities were shared. Unlike at the camps, there were no mess halls. The newly returned also faced another problem: they were often refused service at restaurants and stores.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

WRA's "When You Leave the Relocation Center" Booklet, 1943

JASC, Misao Shiratsuki Papers

Camp Closing Message from WRA Director Dillon Myer, December 1944

Courtesy Stanley Oda

RESETTLEMENT IN CHICAGO

By January 1943, the WRA opened its first regional field offices in Chicago and worked closely with sixteen religious and civic organizations, most notably the Church of the Brethren, the American Friends Service Committee and the Japanese Mutual Aid Society. Many of these organizations operated a range of hostels to provide housing for arriving resettlers. In addition, the Advisory Committee for Evacuees, the Chicago Church Federation's United Ministry to Resettlers, YMCAs, YWCAs and Chicago's parks and recreation centers all helped to provide recreational and social programs to help the newly arrived.

Favorable reports from early settlers in Chicago touted the availability of jobs and the relative lack of discrimination as compared to other parts of the country. Once the camps closed, large waves of resettlers migrated to Chicago as a temporary transit point or permanent home. The Japanese American population in Chicago grew rapidly from a pre-war figure of roughly 400 residents to more than 20,000 Japanese Americans in the immediate postwar period.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

"Relocation of Japanese Americans" Booklet, 1943

JASC, Yuri and Masaru Sori Collection

"When You Leave the Relocation Center" Booklet, 1943
JASC, Frank Manabu Saito Papers

"Uprooted Americans in Your Community" Booklet, 1945
JASC, Lily and Tom Teraji Papers

*70,000 American Refugees Booklet Published by the Citizens Committee for Resettlement of the
Congregational Christian Committee*
Courtesy Stanley Oda

Chicago Oriental Council List of Cemeteries, 1947-1949
JASC, UIC-JASC Papers

Discrimination in the cemeteries continued to be a significant problem in Chicago, with numerous local cemeteries refusing to take the burial remains of Japanese Americans. This list names the numerous facilities in Chicago that refused to allow for the interment of Japanese Americans.

Fan from J. Toguri Company, Chicago
JASC, J. Toguri Artifact Collection

Plate from J. Toguri Mercantile Company, Chicago
JASC
Brethren Relocation Hostel Brochure
Courtesy Stanley Oda

Shotaro Hikida Reports on Housing, Business in Chicago
JASC, Barbara Finn Papers

DISCRIMINATION

Japanese Americans encountered a number of difficulties in trying to rebuild a sense of home. Chicago remained a segregated city with racially discriminatory housing covenants that barred many minorities from living in different parts of the city. In 1941, the Chicago Public Housing Authority estimated that 80% of the city's properties were subject to these discriminatory measures. Japanese Americans often found themselves living in transition areas between white and black communities.

As one Japanese American stated:

"There were some flats open but the landlords just didn't want me in there. A few places told me that they could not take in any Japanese . . . other landlords told me that the vacant flats were already taken, but I noticed that the signs were still up when I passed by a few days later. Other landlords told us that there were no openings in a very awkward way and we just felt that they didn't want us around."

Beyond these issues, daily acts of discrimination at restaurants, dance halls, movie theaters and hospitals persisted. Even cemeteries in Chicago often refused to allow the interring of Japanese American remains on their grounds.

ON WALL:

Charles E. Mace

House Hunting in Chicago, August 15, 1943

Courtesy War Relocation Authority Photographs, Brethren Historical Library and Archives
As described by photographer Charles Mace, "Here, Mr. and Mrs. Hoshiro Oshima, from the Manzanar Center, are shown questioning a landlady regarding vacancies. Oshima works for a Chicago hotel company. In his spare time, he hunts for a decent home for his wife and three small children. To date, the search has been futile." Housing shortages in the postwar period were compounded by a range of discriminatory housing covenants in Chicago that barred minorities, including Japanese Americans, from living in many city neighborhoods.

Map of Japanese Americans Residences, 1947

Courtesy Lisa Doi

Map of Japanese American Commercial Business

Oakland/Kenwood, 1940s-1950s

Courtesy Erik Matsunaga

In the immediate postwar period, Japanese Americans tended to settle in two residential neighborhoods—the Near North neighborhood near the intersection of Clark and Division Streets and the South Side Oakland and Kenwood neighborhoods near 43rd Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. Eventually urban renewal projects pushed the North Side community further north to the Lakeview neighborhood by the 1960s. Today, many of the markers of these Japanese American ethnic communities have been erased.

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

In the initial years of wartime resettlement, Japanese Americans often found employment in defense-related industries such as munitions factories. Other areas of opportunity were in the service sector as domestic workers, in clerical fields or in manufacturing. A number of large businesses became well known as recruiters of Japanese American workers, including Curtiss Candy, McClurg Publishing, Stevens Hotel and the Edgewater Beach Hotel.

Though Japanese Americans welcomed the range of opportunities in the city, work conditions varied. Many chafed at the precarious position in which they often found themselves, particularly in areas such as domestic labor or when they faced racially discriminatory treatment and glass ceilings. When complaining about unequal pay scales for equal work, one Japanese American worker was told by his boss, “You ought to feel fortunate. After all, with your nationality, you won’t find it easy to get a job.”

As the communities became more settled, a number of Japanese Americans moved into entrepreneurial activities, operating businesses such as hotels, dry cleaners, grocery stores or beauty salons, while others moved into technical trades running electronics repair stores, working as auto mechanics or contracting as chick sexers.

JAMES NUMATA

National Chick Sexing Association School, 1949

JASC, Mary and James Numata Collection

Chick sexing involves differentiating between male and female chicks immediately after being hatched, as female chicks were more valuable to egg producing farms. Specific methods of chick sexing had been developed in Japan as a specialized skill and were introduced to the U.S. through the work of Japan-trained experts.

In postwar Chicago, the opening of chick sexing schools offered Japanese Americans the opportunity to learn the trade and earn a high wage as contractors to local farms. In the face of employment discrimination, this skill allowed many to succeed.

JAMES NUMATA

Dane Cleaners, 1949

Co-ed Beauty Salon, 1949

Personal Radio Television Store, 1951

JASC, Mary and James Numata Collection

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Chicago Resettlers Committee Minutes, April 27, 1945

JASC, UIC-JASC Papers

These meeting notes reveal the psychology of some early resettlers, who expressed reservations about drawing attention to themselves by joining Japanese American organizations. They also voiced concerns about how the formation of the Chicago Resettlers Committee would be perceived by the FBI, with whom resettlers still needed to report.

Three Nisei Women Registering to Vote in Chicago, 1946

Courtesy Stanley Oda

In the postwar resettlement process, Japanese Americans continued to exercise their citizenship rights by participating in electoral processes.

Scene Magazines, 1949

JASC, Jack Oda Collection

For Japanese American resettlers, young adult targeted magazines such as *Scene Magazine* and *Nisei Vue* provided coverage in English of local and national community-related news. They served as important sources of information along with local newspapers such as the *Chicago Shimpo*, which offered coverage in both Japanese and English.

Chicago Resettlers Committee Minutes, December 19, 1946

JASC, UIC-JASC Papers

These minutes of an early CRC meeting record grave concerns expressed by community leaders over youth and housing issues. In particular, youth delinquency, violence and crime proved to be a significant impetus for the creation of co-ethnic organizations and diversionary activities in postwar Chicago.

Eastern Young Buddhist League Dance, 1950

JASC, Fred Yamaguchi Photograph Collection

Japanese American Buddhist temples and Christian churches served as sponsors of youth dances, which provided an outlet for Japanese American youth to socialize and meet. In a city where intermingling of races was still often shunned, co-ethnic dances provided an important community space.

Hyde Park Girls Walking Home in the 1951 Pictorial Yearbook, 1951

JASC Reference Library

The Cosmos Club at the Chicago Resettlers Committee, 1950
JASC, Record Group 10

The Cosmos Club, here shown with the first CRC Executive Director Nakane, served as an important social group for Japanese war brides. The passage of the 1945 War Brides Act allowed for the first major group of new Japanese immigrants to the U.S. since the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act had essentially banned Japanese from further immigration.

Aki Saito and Hiroshi "Gary" Yasutake in Chicago, 1948
[Yasutake-Yahiro Family Collection](#)

YOUTH ISSUES

With large numbers of families resettling in Chicago, issues of youth delinquency, as symbolized by the figure of the Japanese American zoot suiter, signaled the urgent need for youth diversion programs. Rising rates of drinking, gambling and casual sex among the youth concerned community leaders and threatened the good image that community members were trying to cultivate in their new home.

Rejecting the WRA emphasis on non-congregation, Japanese American community leaders developed organizations to respond to these needs. The Chicago Resettlers Committee was formed in September 1945 to help provide assistance related to healthcare, business, employment, housing and youth diversion needs. In 1954 this organization changed its name to the Japanese American Service Committee, which continues to provide services and cultural and historical programming to this day.

Co-ethnic dances and events were sponsored; church, temple and cultural groups formed; and a range of social clubs for young men and women began to dominate the postwar social scene. Organizations such as the Chicago Nisei Athletic Association formed sports leagues, providing a range of alternative social pursuits to occupy local youth.

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION REFORM

Changes to the 1924 Immigration Act national origins quota system during the war had already granted concessions for Chinese, Indians, and Filipinos, whose countries had participated in the allied war effort. One of the first major postwar changes for Japanese immigration involved the 1945 War Brides Act, which allowed Japanese brides of U.S. servicemen, including Japanese American servicemen, to immigrate to the U.S. as non-quota immigrants.

The 1952 McCarran- Walter Act allowed larger numbers of Japanese to immigrate, and most importantly, permitted Japanese to naturalize as U.S. citizens. The local Chicago chapter of the JACL and other local residents joined national efforts to support the passage of this legislation. At the time of passage, 90% of the aliens made eligible for citizenship were Issei, many of whom had already been in the country for decades. Between 1952 and 1965, roughly 40,000 first generation Japanese became citizens and were finally able to vote for the first time.

ON WALL:

Street Demonstration to Promote Naturalization Rights for Issei, 1948

Courtesy JACL – Chicago Chapter

Ever since the 1922 *Ozawa v. United States* Supreme Court decision, first generation Issei in the U.S. had been denied the right of naturalization. After the war, significant momentum began to build for a bill to allow Issei to naturalize. In this picture Japanese Americans, including a number of veterans, participate in a march to push for naturalization rights.

Issei Voting for First Time, 1954

Courtesy JACL – Chicago Chapter

Two years after the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act, these Japanese American elders had passed citizenship requirements and voted for the first time.

Issei: The Final Say, 1975

Video, 7:43 minutes

JASC, Record Group 10

Newly digitized after not having been seen for 40 years, this JASC-produced film captures the humble voices of the Issei generation that had lived through the difficulties of migration, incarceration and resettlement. Representing a generation that is now gone, they pass on their thoughts to a younger generation.

MATERIALS IN CASE:

Eighty-one Japanese Being Sworn in as U.S. Citizens, 1954

Courtesy Stanley Oda

With the passage of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, Japanese finally obtained the right to naturalize, many after many decades living and working in the U.S.

Cho Yamamoto Certificate of Naturalization, 1954

JASC, Yamamoto Family Papers

Originally from Shiga Prefecture, Cho Yamamoto (née Tanabe) originally immigrated to the U.S. in 1917 when she accepted a marriage offer from Jinzo “Joe” Yamamoto. Though she and her family lived just outside of the exclusion zone in Washington state, the wartime experience greatly impacted their sense of well-being and ability to make a living. They eventually moved from the west coast to Chicago.

“Iva Toguri: Victim of a Legend” Information Brochure, 1975

“Pardon Me, Iva” Button

Article in *Nisei Vue*, Fall 1949

JASC, Yamasaki Family Papers

During the 1970s, interest developed among groups like the JACL to clear the name of Iva Toguri D’Aquino, a second generation Japanese American Nisei who had found herself stuck in Japan during the war. Accused and convicted of treason for allegedly being the voice of “Tokyo Rose,” a figure on a Japanese radio propaganda program, she was falsely convicted in 1949. Released in 1956, she settled in Chicago. The JACL took up her cause and eventually, through publicity and lobbying efforts, she received a full and unconditional pardon from President Gerald Ford in 1977.

“The Japanese American Incarceration: A Case for Redress” Booklet, 1978

JASC, Yuri and Masaru Sori Collection

NCJAR Appeal Letter and Button, 1979

JASC, Yamasaki Family Papers

Writ of Certiorari, US vs Hohri, June 1, 1987

JASC, Merry and John Omori Papers and Photograph Collection

Though a legislative approach to obtaining redress and reparations for living survivors of the incarceration process was successful in 1988, a separate judicial approach was pursued by the National Coalition for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR). Through a class action lawsuit, NCJAR took its appeals for redress all the way to the Supreme Court, though it was eventually sent back down to the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, where it was dismissed.

George H. W. Bush Redress Apology Letter, 1990

Courtesy Ross Harano

Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony Program, 2011

JASC, Howard Hieshima Collection

Replica of Congressional Gold Medal and Presentation Box, 2011

JASC, Chicago Nisei Post #1183 Collection

In 2011, in recognition of the remarkable contributions made to the U.S. war effort, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service were presented with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor in the U.S. This belated recognition followed an earlier review of military records that resulted in bestowing the Medal of Honor, the highest military award in the U.S., on twenty additional Japanese Americans, bringing the total of Japanese Americans to receive the Medal of Honor for service in World War II to twenty-one.

Lily Teraji Honorary Associate Degree, Compton Junior College (CA), 2010

JASC, Lily and Tom Teraji Papers

As part of the California Nisei College Diploma Project, started by legislation introduced by California State Assembly member Warren Furutani, efforts by colleges throughout California began to identify those Japanese Americans whose postsecondary educational efforts had been derailed due to the wartime incarceration. Lily Teraji (née Ozaki) and her family had been living in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo at the outbreak of World War II, where she was attending Compton Junior College. Her studies interrupted, she was sent to the Santa Anita Temporary Detention Center and then the Jerome Incarceration Camp. Teraji received an honorary diploma in 2010.

Day of Remembrance Programs, 2015-2017

JASC

THE *CORAM NOBIS* CASES

In the early 1980s, legal scholar Peter Irons found evidence that the U.S. government had knowingly presented false evidence of Japanese American disloyalty and espionage in the Hirabayashi, Korematsu and Yasui Supreme Court cases, which had tested the constitutionality of wartime exclusion, incarceration and curfews. As Irons stated in relation to a memo to the solicitor general:

“[Justice Department lawyer Edward] Ennis said, ‘We are in possession of information that shows that the War Department's report on the internment is a lie. And we have an ethical obligation not to tell a lie to the Supreme Court, and we must decide whether to correct that record.’ And looking at that document, I still remember vividly thinking, ‘Oh, my God. This is amazing. This is like a smoking gun.’ Here's a lawyer for the government about to be in a case before the Supreme Court saying, “We are telling lies to the Supreme Court.”

Through the use of a *coram nobis* procedure, designed to correct errors in legal proceedings, Irons and a team of lawyers argued for these three Supreme Court cases to be overturned. In all three cases, the verdicts were successfully vacated, though the decisions still remain to be overturned.

REDRESS AND REPARATIONS

Discussions regarding redress—the pursuit of an apology and financial compensation for those who were incarcerated—began as soon as the war ended. However, it wasn't until the 1970s when redress began to look possible. Bolstered by a new community consciousness that had expanded with the Civil Rights Movement, the Asian American Movement, the anti-war movement and the push for ethnic studies on college campuses, Japanese American community members, politicians and organizations rallied around this initiative.

Groups such as the JACL were instrumental in pushing forward the creation of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) in 1981, which provided an opportunity for community members to discuss openly the impacts of incarceration, often for the first time.

Eventually, the JACL and the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) took a legislative approach towards obtaining redress. An alternate organization, the National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR), with its main office in Chicago, pursued a judicial approach through a class action lawsuit. The legislative approach achieved success with the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided an apology and \$20,000 in compensation for living former prisoners.

ON WALL:

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Hearings in Chicago, 1981
Video, 64:18 minutes

Courtesy Northeastern Illinois University Library and JACL - Chicago Chapter

Responding to the redress movement, Congress appointed a Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) in 1980, and held public hearings throughout the country in 1981. More than 750 people testified, with many Japanese Americans sharing their stories for the first time. This commission and the 1983 report that they developed, *Personal Justice Denied*, advanced the redress movement and led to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided an apology and \$20,000 in compensation to living survivors of the incarceration process.

REMEMBERING THE PAST: ACTING TODAY

Group pilgrimages to the incarceration camps by former inmates and their families began as early as 1969 with the first Manzanar pilgrimage. These served as precursors to the first Day of Remembrance commemoration in Seattle in 1978, which would grow into a national movement.

The first Day of Remembrance in Chicago was held in February of 1992, on the 50th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066. These commemorations still occur annually. Particularly after the attacks of 9/11, the need to remember the story of Japanese American wartime incarceration has taken on a new sense of urgency. It is crucial to relay the story of how racism, war hysteria, anti-immigrant sentiment and the failure of political leadership impacted an entire community. The Japanese American community continues to make new linkages, particularly with Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities, in telling this story to ensure that such a violation of civil and human rights never happens again.

PHOTOS ON WALL:

Jon Yamashiro

Amache Ceremony, Memorial Touch, 2008

Courtesy the artist

During the summer of 2008, Yamashiro was taking photographs at the Amache camp in Colorado at the same time that there was a National Conference in Denver called "Enduring Communities: The Japanese American Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Utah." He was surprised and moved to see busloads of people visiting the camp and taking part in a memorial ceremony. He said, "I was able to feel the warmth and hear the voices of so many people that had a real connection and commitment to this historical place, and in contrast, photograph quietly alone, imagining the life that once occupied this site."

Jon Yamashiro

Tule Lake Memorial, 2009

Courtesy the artist

In 2008 and 2009, Japanese American photographer Jon Yamashiro photographed the sites of all ten incarceration camps. Though his family in Hawaii did not experience the camps themselves, he feels a part of this collective history. After his mixed-race daughter experienced racist remarks, Yamashiro embarked on this photographic journey, with kids in tow. His goal was to learn more about this "hidden" history and introduce it to the younger generation. His daughter's concerned gaze seems appropriate next to the powerful language of the Tule Lake Memorial plaque.

TAKE ACTION ROOM

Alphawood Gallery is more than a place to share art with visitors. We seek to engage people who might never have learned or thought about what you've seen in the gallery today. We want to provoke questions about our collective past and present. We want these questions to lead to conversations, some of them difficult, that might not have happened otherwise. And we want these conversations to motivate us all to take responsibility for the future of our community and our country.

The TAKE ACTION space at Alphawood Gallery is dedicated to activism. The resources and materials available in this room encourage visitors to reflect and TAKE ACTION toward creating change. Here you will find information and services related to legal aid, refugee and immigration services, voting rights, healthcare access, employment rights and more. Throughout the exhibition's run, partner organizations will offer a variety of activities including "Know Your Rights" trainings, educational workshops and organizing toolkits. For more information on the schedule of events, please visit our website at alphawoodgallery.org or inquire at the Front Desk.

BEYOND RESISTANCE: RECLAIMING DEMOCRACY

"It is our duty to fight for our freedom.

It is our duty to win.

We must love each other and support each other.

We have nothing to lose but our chains."

--Assata Shakur

The unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the subsequent fight for reparations serve as reminders of the importance of civic activism in defense of American democracy. **We cannot rely on our government or "someone else" to speak out and take action**, especially in the era of Trump. Ordinary people must activate and reclaim American democracy in order to create change.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION:

How do we move democracy forward? What do you fight for? What are you doing to make "liberty and justice for all" a reality? Using the materials provided, please share your ideas for how to be a civic activist, move beyond resistance and build a just society.