

Prisoner in My Homeland Timeline

Prologue

1882—U.S. passed the Chinese-Exclusion Act, stopping the flow of Chinese laborers to the West Coast, and increasing the immigration of Japanese workers.

1880s—The first mass Japanese immigration to the United States began. Japanese arrived on Bainbridge Island in the 1880s and worked with European immigrants at the Port Blakely sawmill. Japanese workers gradually brought wives from Japan, and established the Yama Village settlement, near the mill.

1890s-1920s—Economic hardships in Japan spurred Japanese peasants and workers to emigrate to the United States to find jobs in mining, logging, agricultural, railroad, and canning industries.

1908—U.S. and Japan signed the so-called "Gentleman's Agreement:" under which Japan stopped the immigration of laborers to U.S.; Japanese began to establish strawberry farms on Bainbridge Island.

1913—California passed the Alien Land Law which prohibited aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning land, or from possessing long-term leases.

1919—Anti-Japanese League formed by Seattle businessmen.

1921—California and Washington passed additional laws prohibiting Asians from owning land.

1922—In *Takao Ozawa v. United States*, the Supreme Court upheld the ban on Japanese immigrants from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens. This ban lasted until 1952.

1924—The Asian Exclusion Act (included in the Immigration Act of 1924) banned all immigration from China and Japan.

November 7, 1941—Roosevelt administration received an intelligence report written by Carl Munson, which concluded that people of Japanese ancestry living in the U.S. were loyal Americans and did not pose a threat to national security.

December 7, 1941—Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor

December 1941—Actions taken on Bainbridge Island to restrict the activities of Japanese American residents: FBI agents confiscated "contraband" goods (radios, dynamite, cameras, binoculars, etc.); Issei restricted from leaving the island, Nisei required to show proof of citizenship to take the ferry, Issei bank accounts frozen.

December 8, 1941—The United States declared war on Japan.

February 4, 1942—FBI raids occurred on Bainbridge Island -- 34 islanders arrested. The FBI, state and county police conducted a surprise search of all Japanese homes and businesses.

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Japanese Americans with leadership roles and/or membership in Japanese cultural and business associations were targeted. But no arrests were made on the basis of actual disloyal or criminal activities.

February 19, 1942—President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the military to exclude civilians from any area designated as sensitive by the military; the order led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. The order did not mention Japanese Americans by name, but they were the only group to be forcibly removed and incarcerated as a result of this order.

March 24, 1942—John DeWitt, Western Defense Commander, issued an exclusion order against Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island (citing close proximity to the Puget Sound Navy Yard). Residents are informed that they had to register and prepare for removal from the island in six days

March 30, 1942—Japanese Americans, including citizens, were boarded on to army trucks and marched at bayonet point onto the ferry, *Kehloken*, embarking on a 1,000 mile journey to Manzanar, California.

Part 1

April 1, 1942—Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island arrived in Manzanar in early April before construction was completed on the barracks and other buildings. JACL members were placed in control of the camp newspaper, the *Manzanar Free Press*, and published articles in “appreciation” of how the government handled their “situation.”

Part 2:

May 1, 1942—Incarcerees began to be transferred to permanent WRA incarceration facilities or “camps.”

May 1942—“Americanization” Program began at Manzanar: internees taught classes for adults on English language, democracy, and U.S. History. Around the same time, Japanese Americans organized classes in judo and flower arranging to maintain their culture.

May 28, 1942—Gordon Hirabayashi refused to follow curfew, and continued living as a law-abiding citizen. When it came time to register for “relocation,” he turned himself in to the FBI with the intention of creating a test case of the government’s right to incarcerate Japanese Americans without due process of law. He lost his case before the Supreme Court of the U.S. in June 1943.

May 29, 1942—The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC) was created to help resettle inmates from WRA incarceration facilities into colleges in the Midwest and East. The Quaker sponsored group eventually enrolled 4,300 students in more than 600 higher education institutions.

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May 30, 1942—Fred Korematsu refused to comply with the military orders for removal and was arrested. His case would go to the Supreme Court in 1944.

June 1942—The 100th Infantry Battalion was formed and initially was made up almost entirely of Japanese Americans who already belonged to the Hawai'i Army National Guard. The 100th represented the first group of Japanese Americans to see combat during World War II.

July 1942—Lawyers filed a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of a Mitsuye Endo, a Japanese American incarcerated at Tule Lake - a favorable verdict in her case in December 1944 helped bring an end to the incarceration camps;

July 1942—Two Japanese incarcerated in New Mexico were shot to death by camp guards for allegedly trying to escape.

September 15, 1942—Nursery schools, elementary schools, and a high school opened in Manzanar, with classes held in barracks. The government hired qualified incarcerated as teacher's aides.

December 6, 1942—Manzanar "Riot" occurred when a representative from the JACL was beaten up and camp officials arrested Harry Ueno, a leader of the Mess Hall Workers Union. The next day incarcerated protested his arrest and military police opened fire on the crowd. Nine were shot and two killed. Martial law was imposed at Manzanar.

Part 3

January 1943—Internees were given a loyalty questionnaire to determine their eligibility for the military draft of clearance to leave the campus. The War Department began recruiting volunteers from the camps, and Hawai'i, to serve in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, made up entirely of Japanese Americans.

February 1943—About 12,000 out of the 78,000 people over the age of 17 who received the questionnaire refused to answer, gave qualified answers, or answered negatively.

March 1943—10,000 Japanese American men volunteered for the armed services from Hawai'i (where Japanese Americans were not incarcerated). 1,200 volunteered out of the camps, about 20% of the 23,600 who were eligible.

Epilogue

February 26, 1943—Most Bainbridge Island families were transferred from Manzanar to Minidoka

September 13, 1943—Tule Lake is designated as a "segregation center" for "dissenters" or "No-Nos" who were called "disloyal" based on their objections to answering the Loyalty questionnaire.

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January, 1944—U.S. government announced that Japanese Americans were eligible for the draft.

December 17, 1944—West Coast exclusion order rescinded -- Japanese and Japanese Americans were allowed to return to west coast areas; the government also announced that camps would close in one year.

December 18, 1944—The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Korematsu v. United States*, with a 6-3 decision upholding the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066; also in December, the court ruled in favor of Mitsuye Endo.

August 6, 1945—The U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima; three days later, it bombed Nagasaki.

May 7, 1945—Germany surrendered, ending the war in Europe.

August 1, 1945—Around 44,000 Japanese Americans remained in camps, unable to leave because of anti-Japanese hostility and without homes or jobs to which they could return.

December 23, 1946—President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9814, which pardoned 284 Nisei draft resisters, including 36 from Minidoka. Later evidence identified additional draft resisters from Heart Mountain who were omitted from this list. The actual number is now estimated as 315 draft resisters (not all of whom were officially pardoned).

June, 1952—The Senate and House overrode President Truman's veto and voted the McCarran-Walter Act into law. Among other effects, this bill allowed a token number of immigrants to enter the U.S. from Japan each year and allowed Japanese immigrants to become naturalized U.S. citizens.

1980—The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians was established to investigate the detention program and the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066.

1983—The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians issued its report, *Personal Justice Denied*, on February 24 and its Recommendations, on June 16. The Commission recommended a presidential apology and a \$20,000 payment to each of the approximately 60,000 surviving persons excluded from their places of residence pursuant to Executive Order 9066.

August 10, 1988—President Ronald Reagan signed HR 442 into law. It acknowledged that the incarceration of more than 110,000 individuals of Japanese descent was unjust, and offered an apology and reparation payments of \$20,000 to each person incarcerated.

March 3, 1992— Public Law 102-248 established the Manzanar National Historic Site, making Manzanar the first former Japanese American concentration camp site to become a National Park Service Unit. Subsequently, Minidoka (2001), Tule Lake (2008), and Honouliuli (2015) became NPS units.

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Timeline Sources:

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