

Documents Relating to the Decision to Intern the Japanese-Americans

Readings:

“Home Was A Horse Stall” reading (on the website)

Additional web resources:

http://landmarkcases.org/en/landmark/cases/korematsu_v_united_states
<http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/>

Document A: *“The Fifth Column on the Coast,” Walter Lippman, February 12, 1942 (excerpt)*

Historical Context: Lippmann was a widely-read newspaper columnist. This article argued for the internment of Japanese-Americans one week before President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066.

THE FIFTH COLUMN ON THE COAST

The enemy alien problem on the Pacific Coast... is very serious. . . The peculiar danger of the Pacific Coast is in a Japanese raid accompanied by enemy action inside American territory. . . the fact is that the Japanese navy has been [watching] the Pacific Coast more or less continually and for a considerable period of time, testing and feeling out the American defenses. It is the fact that communication takes place between the enemy at sea and enemy agents on land... It is a fact that since the outbreak of the Japanese war there has been no important sabotage on the Pacific Coast. From what we know about Hawaii,...this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect. . . The Pacific Coast is officially a combat zone; some part of it may at any moment be a battlefield. Nobody's constitutional rights include the right to reside and do business on a battlefield. And nobody ought to be on a battlefield who has no good reason for being there.

Document B: *Excerpt from Executive Order No. 9066, signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942*

WHEREAS the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage, . . . I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War . . . to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with such respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary . . . to accomplish the purpose of this order.

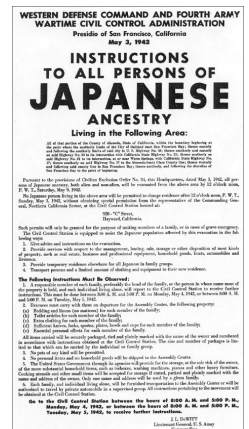
Document C: *Notice to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry, May 3, 1942*

Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry Living in the Following Area: . . .

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 34... all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Sunday, May 9, 1942.

No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Sunday, May 3, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Northern California Sector, at the Civil Control Station. Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:



1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions.
2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:
 - (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;
 - (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
 - (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
 - (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;
 - (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner... The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.
5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.
6. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center.

J. L. DeWITT, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army

Document D: *“Evacuation Was a Mistake”: Anger at Being Interned*

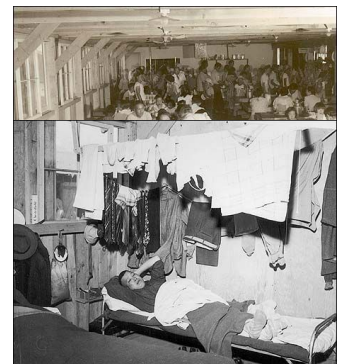
Historical Context: The federal government, as part of its interment policy of Japanese-Americans, tried to monitor conditions inside the relocation camps and keep tabs on the feelings and attitudes of the internees. An interview conducted in the Manzanar, California, camp in July 1943 by a U.S. government employee with a man identified only as “an Older Nisei” (an American-born person whose parents were born in Japan) revealed the anger many internees felt toward the United States.

If this country doesn’t want me they can throw me out. What do they know about loyalty? I’m as loyal as anyone in this country. Maybe I’m as loyal as President Roosevelt. What business did they have asking me a question like that?

I was born in Hawaii. I worked most of my life on the West Coast. I have never been to Japan. We would have done anything to show our loyalty. All we wanted to do was to be left alone on the coast. . . . My wife and I lost \$10,000 in that evacuation. She had a beauty parlor and had to give that up. I had a good position worked up as a gardener, and was taken away from that. We had a little home and that’s gone now. . . .

What kind of Americanism do you call that? That’s not democracy. That’s not the American way, taking everything away from people. . . . Where are the Germans? Where are the Italians? Do they ask them questions about loyalty? . . .

Nobody had to ask us about our loyalty when we lived on the coast. You didn’t find us on relief. . . . We were first when there was any civic drive. We were first with the money for the Red Cross and the Community Chest or whatever it was. Why didn’t that kind of loyalty count? Now they’re trying to push us to the East. Its always “further inland, further inland.” I say, “To hell with it!” Either they let me go to the coast and prove my



loyalty there or they can do what they want with me. If they don't want me in this country, they can throw me out. . . .

Evacuation was a mistake, there was no need for it. The government knows this, Why don't they have enough courage to come out and say so, so that these people won't be pushed around? . . .

I've tried to cooperate. Last year I went out on furlough and worked on the best fields in Idaho. There was a contract which said that we would be brought back here at the end of the work. Instead we just sat there. . . . We had to spend our own money. The farmers won't do anything for you. They treat you all right while you're working hard for them but as soon as your time is up, you can starve. . . . When I got back to [Camp] Manzanar, nearly all my money that I had earned was gone. . . .

Document E: Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

Austin Anson, the managing secretary of the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association, a farm organization, is quoted as saying: "We're charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons. We might as well be honest. We do. It's a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown men. They came to this valley to work, and they stayed to take over. They offer higher land prices and higher rents than the white man can pay for land. They undersell the white man in the markets. They can do this because they raise their own labor. They work their women and children while the white farmer has to pay wages for his help. If all the Japs were removed tomorrow, we'd never miss them in two weeks, because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows. And we don't want them back when the war ends, either."

Document F: This is a portion of Lt. Gen. J.L. DeWitt's letter of transmittal to the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, June 5, 1943, of his Final Report; Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast 1942.

1. I transmit herewith my final report on the evacuation of Japanese from the Pacific Coast.
2. The evacuation was impelled by military necessity. The security of the Pacific Coast continues to require the exclusion of Japanese from the area now prohibited to them and will so continue as long as that military necessity exists. The surprise attack at Pearl Harbor by the enemy crippled a major portion of the Pacific Fleet and exposed the West Coast to an attack which could not have been substantially impeded by defensive fleet operations. More than 115,000 persons of Japanese ancestry resided along the coast and were significantly concentrated near many highly sensitive installations essential to the war effort. . . . The continued presence of a large, unassimilated, tightly knit and racial group, bound to an enemy nation by strong ties of race, culture, custom and religion along a frontier vulnerable to attack constituted a menace which had to be dealt with. Their loyalties were unknown and time was of the essence. . . . It is better to have had this protection and not to have needed it than to have needed it and not to have had it – as we have learned to our sorrow.
3. On February 14, 1942, I recommended to the War Department that the military security of the Pacific Coast required the establishment of broad civil control, anti-sabotage and counter-espionage measures, including the evacuation, therefrom of all persons of Japanese ancestry. In recognition of this situation, the President issued Executive Order No. 9066 on February 19, 1942, authorizing the accomplishment of these and any other necessary security measures. . . . Among the steps taken was the evacuation of Japanese from western Washington and Oregon, California and southern Arizona. . . .
4. There was neither pattern nor precedent for an undertaking of this magnitude and character; and yet over a period of less than ninety operating days, 110,442 persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the West Coast. This compulsory organized mass migration was conducted under complete military supervision. It was effected without major incident. . . . The task was, nevertheless, completed without any appreciable divergence of military personnel. Comparatively few were used, and there was no interruption in a training program.
5. In the orderly accomplishment of the program, emphasis was placed upon the making of due provision against social and economic dislocation. Agricultural production was not reduced by the evacuation. Over ninety-nine

percent of all agricultural acreage in the affected area owned or operated by evacuees was successfully kept in production...

6. So far as could be foreseen, everything essential was provided to minimize the impact of evacuation upon evacuees, as well as upon economy. Notwithstanding, exclusive of the costs of construction of facilities, the purchase of evacuee motor vehicles, the aggregate of agricultural crop loans made and the purchase of office equipment now in use for other government purposes, the entire cost was \$1.46 per evacuee day for the period of evacuation, Assembly Center residence and transfer operations...

Document G: *“Manzanar Nice Place — It Better Than Hollywood”*

Historical Context: This dispatch, passed by military authorities, is the first close-up report from a newspaperman who has visited one of the Japanese concentration centers in California.—The Editor. BY HARRY FERGUSON United Press Staff Correspondent MANZANAR, Cal., April 21.

This is the youngest, strangest city in the world—inhabited by Japanese who hoist American Flags, put up pictures of George Washington and pray to the Christian God for the defeat of Japan’s armed forces. It is a settlement that grew—in the magic time of three weeks—out of the sagebrush of the Mojave Desert. This is one of the places where the 118,000 Japanese who are being moved out of the strategic area of the Pacific Coast are being resettled.

Three weeks ago this was empty land between two mountain ranges.

Today it is a city of 3,303 population with a fire department, a hospital, a police force, an English-language newspaper, baseball teams and community recreation centers.

It probably is the fastest growing town in the world because soon its population will be doubled and eventually quadrupled.

Most of the inhabitants are Japanese who have tasted American democracy and found it good. Probably 95 per cent at least of the Japanese here are loyal to the United States. They are the ones like S. Akamatsu, who moved into Building No. 6 and immediately put up pictures of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and President Roosevelt.

Many of the loyal ones came here with fear and doubt in their hearts, expecting a Nazitype concentration camp. Instead they found comfortable wooden buildings covered with tar paper, bathhouses and showers and plenty of wholesome food.

There is no fence around Manzanar now and while U.S. soldiers guard the main gate, there is nothing to prevent a Japanese from slipping away at night except the knowledge that he undoubtedly would be caught. Nobody has tried it. Emon Tatsui who was brought here from Los Angeles, looked around the camp a few days ago and decided to write a letter to his former employer, Murphy McHenry, Hollywood motion picture executive:

“Dear Sir: Kindly send my money to new address by U.S. Post Office money order. It may be too much trouble for you but we do not have bank open yet here. I like to tell you about this camp. Nice place to live. It better than Hollywood. Snow on mountains. Fresh air. Snow is bright. Every day is 80 to 85. “No blackout in here. There are liberty, safe and build up new life. Hundreds of carpenter, hundreds plumber, Hundreds so and so working hard to build up. One thousand Japanese coming to this camp almost every day now. Good ball ground. Baseball field. Swimming pool. School building. Danceroom is about start building then movie is next. “Yours truly, “EMON TATSUI. “P.S. Over 300 miles away from your city but still in Los Angeles city limit.”

No attempts have been made to separate the loyal from the disloyal. Those whose sympathies lie with Japan are keeping quiet about it. Eventually there will be a police force of 75 Japanese and the camp management believes the loyal will maintain surveillance over the disloyal.

There are all types of Japanese here—rich, poor, old, young; issei, mostly old persons born in Japan; nisei, the younger group born in this country, and kibeï, born in this country but sent back to Japan to be educated.

Democracy is at work among them. An election has been held to choose block leaders. Eventually from these block leaders will be chosen an advisory committee of five to work with the camp management in

preserving order and arranging for the planting of crops. Manzanar hopes to become a self-sufficient community when irrigation is brought to the rich but arid land.

The lives of the inhabitants have fallen quickly into the normal pattern of living. The Japanese firemen play solitaire while waiting for an alarm. A baby has been born and named Kenji Ogawa. Howard Kumagai, a mechanical engineer, has fallen in love with Kimiki Wakamura, former beauty shop operator, has proposed and been accepted. Boys and girls make dates for dances and for the movies where James Cagney is extremely popular.

Some volunteered to evacuate their homes and come here. Among them is Miss Chiye Mori of Los Angeles, news editor of The Manzanar Free Press, the settlement's mimeographed newspaper. She was asked if she could write a brief statement explaining the feelings of the Japanese who were loyal to the United States.

She turned to her portable typewriter and tapped this out on a sheet of paper:

"If Japan wins this war we have the most to lose. We hope America wins and quickly. We voluntarily evacuated as the only means by which we could demonstrate our loyalty. We want to share in the war effort. We want to share the gloom of temporary defeats and the joys of ultimate victory. We are deeply concerned with our American citizenship, which we prize above all else."

San Francisco News April 21, 1942