

Primary Source Deep Dive: Japanese Internment

Objective

Is there one American experience?

Directions: Below is a timeline of Japanese American history from 1865 - 1988. Review the timeline and then answer the questions that follow to prepare for an in-depth exploration of Japanese internment during World War 2.

Historical Context: Japanese American History - Timeline

- 1885** Japanese Americans arrive in Hawaii to work as laborers on sugar plantations
- 1891** Japanese immigrants began to settle in California
- Early 1900's** Japanese Americans begin to lease land and sharecrop
- 1906** San Francisco School Board passes a regulation to segregate children of Asian descent (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) from Caucasian-American school children
- 1913** California passes the Alien Land Law, forbidding "all aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land, banning Japanese Americans from owning land
- 1924** Immigration Act of 1924 passed by Congress which ends all Japanese Immigration to the USA
- 1941** Munson Report, an investigation into the loyalty of Japanese Americans, is released, indicating that Japanese Americans are not a threat
- Dec 7 1941** Japan bombs the US Naval Base at Oahu, Hawaii - Pearl Harbor
- Feb. 19 1942** President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the military to relocate civilians of Japanese descent from any area without trial or hearing. As a result, relocation camps are established, and Japanese Americans are forced to leave their homes and jobs to live in the relocation camps until the federal government released them
- 1944** Korematsu v. United States - Fred Korematsu, a US Citizen and Japanese descendant who refused to relocate to a military camp. As such, he was arrested and convicted in the case Korematsu v United States. The Supreme Court ruled that the need to protect the nation from espionage and sabotage outweighed the civil liberties of Fred Korematsu
- March 1946** Last War Relocation Authority facility (relocation camp) was closed
- 1983** Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians released its report stating that a grave injustice had been done to Japanese Americans during World War II
- August 1988** President Ronald Reagan signs HR 442 stating that the relocation camps were unjust. The law offered an apology and reparation payments of \$20,000 to each individual who was incarcerated

Source: Stanford History Education Group, [Japanese Internment](#).

Farewell to Manzanar

Farewell to Manzanar is a memoir written by Jeanne Wakatsuki. Wakatsuki was 7 when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese in 1941. The following year, President Roosevelt signed executive order 9066. As a result of this executive order, her family along with approximately 120,000 other Japanese Americans was detained by the US military, and sent to internment camps. The US government was unable to explain how the Japanese had obtained surveillance of their Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, and as such suspected Japanese Americans of espionage and sabotage. The Wakatsuki family was sent to an internment camp in Manzanar, California.



[Linked here is an excerpt from the memoir, *Farewell to Manzanar*.](#) The excerpt details Jeanne Wakatsuki's experiences with Japanese Internment as well as the interview that took place when her father was detained and held at Fort Lincoln. ***Read the excerpt and answer the analysis questions below.***

Chapter 1:

1. Why does Mr. Wakatsuki burn the Japanese flag?

2. On page 7, the author writes: *"To the FBI, every radio owner was a potential saboteur [person who engages in sabotage]"*. What does this tell you about how fearful the Americans were during this time period?

3. On page 8, the author writes: *"He had become a man without a country. The land of his birth was at war with America; yet after thirty-five years here he was still prevented by law from becoming an American citizen. He was suddenly a man with no rights who looked exactly like the enemy."* What does this mean for Mr. Wakatsuki and other Japanese or Japanese Americans like him?

Chapter 2:

1. Why does the author and the author's brothers and sisters feel a certain amount of relief in being sent to the internment camp at Manzanar?

2. Describe the internment camp at Manzanar.

3. According to chapter two, how are some of the prisoners used to help the war effort?

Chapter 3

1. Was the camp completed before the Japanese prisoners arrived? Cite textual evidence to support your claim.

2. The narrator's sibling remarks: "*Woody, we can't live like this. Animals live like this.*" What does this tell you about how the Japanese prisoners felt when they were sent to internment camps?

Chapter 7

1. What is the interrogator trying to find out about Mr. Wakatsuki?

2. Why does Mr. Wakatsuki ask how old the interrogator is? What point do you think he is trying to make?

3. What does the last sentence uttered by Mr. Wakatsuki in the interview tell you about his feelings?

4. Mr. Wakatsuki was arrested and detained without a warrant, which amendment does this violate?

Patriot Act - 2001

The Patriot Act was passed in 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. The law had two parts that were especially controversial - section 215, and section 1881a. Section 215 allowed for government agencies, such as the FBI to collect data from telecommunications companies on phone calls made by the customers of those companies. The data collected from this can be used as evidence to detain, interrogate, or investigate American citizens without their knowledge. Section 1881a gave the president and agencies under his authority the right to conduct warrantless electronic surveillance including phone calls, emails, videos, voice chats, photos, voice over IP calls (Skype) and social networking information. Many opponents of these acts claim that they violate the 4th amendment rights of all American citizens.



[This is an excerpt from *Patriot Acts: Narratives of Post 9/11 Injustice*](#). The excerpt details a student's experiences with the FBI. She was interrogated after 9/11 as a result of her Muslim worship. **Read the excerpt & answer the analysis questions that follow.**

1. Were Adama Bah's civil liberties violated? If so, which ones? Why? If not, why? Refer to the [Bill of Rights](#) for a quick overview of the civil liberties granted to all citizens.

2. After 9/11, why do you think racial profiling of Muslims, interrogating people of Muslim or Arab descent, and violence against people of Arab or Muslim cultures rose?

3. Compare and contrast the violations of civil liberties against Japanese Americans with that of Arabs and Muslims in today's world. What is similar? What is different?

4. What is your opinion of heightened airport security (body scans, searches, etc)? Is it a necessary precaution or a violation of an individual's civil liberties? Why?

Japanese Internment

Directions: Using information from the documents above , you will now write a response to the task below.

Task: Using the information from the documents above, and your knowledge of US History complete the following writing prompt:

During times of war, the government of the United States has at times suspended civil liberties of specific groups of citizens; this is often justified by the need to protect the greater body of American citizens. After the bombing at Pearl Harbor, Americans and immigrants of Japanese descent were discriminated against; after the attack on September 11th, similar discrimination took place against Americans and immigrants of Arab or Muslim descent.

In a 2-3 page paper analyze:

- Is there one American experience?
 - Use examples from the documents above & examples of events in US History to support your analysis / response

- analyze means “to determine the nature and relationship of the component elements”