



The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

THE CONSTITUTION ON TRIAL: THE INTERNMENT OF THE JAPANESE DURING WORLD WAR II



Grade 11
United States History and Geography

I. Introduction

President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 issued on February 19, 1942, resulted in the confinement of over 117,000 Japanese in detention camps remote from their homes. Although there was no evidence of espionage Japanese residents, most of whom were U.S. citizens by birth, were ordered to leave their homes in areas that the military had designated as sensitive areas of the West Coast. Anti-Japanese hysteria in the United States since the beginning of the century fueled calls for removal. California Attorney General Earl Warren, General John DeWitt, Western Defense Commander, and nativist organizations such as the Sons of the Golden West were among those who actively sought the expulsion of Japanese from California. Some voices, however, were raised in opposition arguing that internment of a people because of their race was foreign to the United States Constitution. Miss Edythe Backus, a Pasadena area teacher who had a number of Japanese Americans in her classes before the war, was one of many who objected to government policy. She corresponded with her former students and gave up her teaching position in Southern California to teach at the Colorado River Relocation Camp at Poston, Arizona. After the war, she turned over her collection of memorabilia including correspondence, photographs, school year-books, and watercolor sketches by students at Poston to The Huntington Library. The collection provides a rare look into everyday life at one of the War Relocation Authority's internment camps.

II. Objectives

- ◆ To analyze a variety of primary source materials.
- ◆ To explain citizenship and property restrictions as they applied to Japanese immigrants.
- ◆ To understand the experiences of Japanese aliens and American citizens confined at the Colorado River Relocation Center, Poston, Arizona.
- ◆ To assess the constitutionality of restricting civil liberties during wartime.

III. History-Social Science Standards Addressed

Content Standard

11.7 (5) Discuss the constitutional issues and impact of events on the U.S. home front, including the internment of Japanese Americans. . . .

Analysis Skill Standards

- Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned. (Chronological and Spatial Thinking)
- Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations. (Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View)
- Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions. (Historical Interpretation)

IV. Background Information

Japanese immigration to the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century had been minimal with only small numbers of laborers migrating to the West coast. In 1868 the first group of Japanese workers migrated to Hawaii seeking employment as farm laborers. When they arrived they found only three Japanese living in Honolulu. These newly arrived immigrant laborers were required to sign long labor contracts. When their contracts finally expired, Hawaii has become a territory of the United States and a number of Japanese-born farm laborers left the Islands for California, Washington, and Oregon where they faced growing public opposition.

After the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, tensions between the United States and Japan had increased. Although President Theodore Roosevelt had tried to maintain cordial relations with Japan, western state governors and their legislatures began to enact measures that threatened good relations. Japanese, like other Asian immigrants, had long been denied citizenship in the United States and western

states began to pass alien land laws forbidding land ownership of any persons not eligible for citizenship. California's Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920 and anti-Japanese land laws in other western states aroused indignation in Japan. The passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 prohibiting Asian immigration virtually ruptured U.S. foreign relations with Japan. In addition to overt acts taken by western states and the denial of further immigration, the governments of Japan and the United States, with conflicting territorial and trade interests in Asia, appeared on a collision course. Vladimir Lenin recognized the confrontations between Japan and the United States would end in war. On November 26, 1920, Lenin wrote, "That war is brewing, that war is inevitable, is beyond doubt."

As Japan began to expand interests in Asia in the 1930s, the United States became more concerned about the Philippines and trading interests in China. Working through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. began to compile lists of names persons that were members of Japanese political or social associations including organizers of martial arts leagues and religious leaders active in local Buddhist Temples. When the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the FBI sent agents to arrest suspected Japanese aliens in the United States. Within days, hundreds of Japanese were arrested and held without trial. Although there was no evidence of espionage, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942 directing the War Department to "... prescribe military areas. . . from which any or all persons may be excluded." Within months over 110,000 Japanese, two-thirds of whom were native born citizens of the United States, were forced to move from the west coast to "relocation" camps.

V. Materials Needed

Class set copies of the following primary documents:

- Document A:** Restrictions on Immigration and Citizenship
- Document B:** The Alien Land Law
- Document C:** Ainosuke Esaki
- Document D:** Ruth Watanabe's Story of Evacuation
- Document E:** Memories of 1943
- Document F:** Camp Calendar
- Document G:** Release from Incarceration

VI. Lesson Activities

1. Before beginning the lesson, have students review the "Gentlemen's Agreement" and U.S. diplomatic relations with Japan during the Theodore Roosevelt administration. Assign **Document A**, "Restrictions on Immigration and Citizenship" and **Document B**, "The Alien Land Law." Discuss the readings as a class activity and ask students to draw inferences from the

readings and make connections to their previous study of the pre-World War II era. You may wish to use the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Why do you think that citizenship before the Civil War was restricted to “free white persons?”
 - What was the motive of the Alien Land Laws?
 - How did Western states use citizenship as a justification for denying persons the right to own property? Evaluate the legitimacy of the arguments used to justify the policy.
 - On the eve of World War II, what were popular perceptions of Japanese in the western United States.
2. Prepare a short lecture or have students read text accounts of the events leading to the war and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Discuss how popular anti-Japanese sentiments in the decades before the war reinforced suspicion of Issei, immigrants who had been born in Japan, and their children (Nisei) who were native-born citizens. Read to the class Franklin Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066. The Executive Order is available online at <<http://www.library.arizona.edu/images/jpamer/execordr.html>>. A Southern California American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorney, A. L. Wirin warned, “Treating persons, because they are members of a race, constitutes illegal discrimination, which is forbidden by the Fourteenth Amendment whether we are at war or peace.”
- Why do you think that the Executive Order did not single out Japanese residents by name?
 - Read the Fourteenth Amendment. Assume the role of an advisor to President Roosevelt and support or reject Wirin’s argument.
3. Assign **Document C**, “Ainosuke Esaki.” The reading, based on an interview with a member of the Esaki family, describes in human terms the difficulty in coping with California’s Alien Land Law. You may wish to assign students an oral history project and have students interview Nisei who were held in the camps during the war or invite a speaker to explain how their family responded to relocation.
4. Ruth Watanabe was a graduate student in music at the University of Southern California in 1942 when she, along with her family, reported to an assembly area for transport to the Santa Anita Race Track. Families from all over Southern California were temporarily housed in whitewashed horse stables, or in the case of the Watanabe family in newly constructed barracks. They were provided with cots and straw mattresses. While at Santa Anita, Watanabe corresponded with a former teacher, Edythe Backus. Read **Document D**, Ruth Watanabe’s first letter to her former teacher from Santa Anita, dated May 17, 1942.

- What is the tone of Watanabe's letter?
 - How does she describe the experience in the period before receiving the order to evacuate?
 - Why do you think she included so little about living conditions at Santa Anita?
 - What does the letter reveal about the family's determination to make the best of the situation they face?
 - How do you think families were able to cope with the situation?
5. Inform students that virtually all of the letters written by internees to Caucasian friends were positive. Many of the Nisei in interviews during and immediately after the war would refer to camp experiences by simply saying, "We had plenty to eat and a roof over our heads." They will often refer to the valor of young Japanese Americans who enlisted in the armed services despite the fact that their parents were confined to camps. The majority kept to themselves any feelings of resentment at the shame of being uprooted and sent to desolate camps in the interior.

Extend the lesson by having students research and prepare an oral report or audio-visual presentation for the class on different ways in which Japanese Americans responded to internment (e.g., the 442nd Regimental Combat Team; the "No, Nos" who refused to take an oath swearing unfettered allegiance; or those who volunteered to relinquish citizenship). You may wish to discuss the use of the terms "relocation camp" and "concentration camp" in describing the internment. Discuss why many Japanese Americans today choose to refer to their parents and grandparents as having been incarcerated in concentration camps.

6. The Colorado River Relocation Center at Poston, Arizona, consisted of three distinct "camps" and was the largest of the 10 centers established by the War Relocation Authority. Construction on Camp I began in March and opened in May, 1942. The remaining two camps were opened in July and August. An elementary and secondary school was established. The principal and some of the teachers volunteered to work at Poston while other staff members were recruited from high school graduates that were interred in the camps. Edythe Buckus, a teacher from the Pasadena area, was one of the volunteers who taught high school at Poston. Students whose senior year had been interrupted by internment published a mimeographed high school yearbook at the end of their first school year at Poston. Assign **Document E**, the introduction to the *Mojave Memo*.
- What is the tone of the introduction to the yearbook?
 - How does the essay reflect the same determination illustrated in Ruth Watanabe's letter to Edythe Buckus?

7. Have the class examine **Document F**, an illustration on the student drawn calendar.
 - What message do you think the artist intended by drawing the camp in the background and a bird on a limb in the foreground?
 - Was the artist using this as an illustration to represent spring in the Arizona desert or is there a subliminal message?
8. Ask students to reexamine the illustration as you read aloud “That Damned Fence,” an anonymous poem of the internment experience widely circulated at Poston < <http://www.library.arizona.edu/images/jpamer/poem.html> > .
 - To what extent might the poem, or similar feelings, have influenced the student artist to draw this illustration for the calendar.
9. In February 1943 the War Department and Military Chief of Staff George C. Marshall convinced President Roosevelt to create a military unit composed exclusively of Japanese Americans. A number of young men who had been sent to camps enlisted joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team to demonstrate their patriotism despite incarceration. During the course of the war, others held in the ten War Relocation Authority camps were permitted to leave for work in war-related industries outside the Western United States. Others in the camps could arrange to leave by 1945 provided they relocated outside the Western United States. Those who remained until the end of the war could return to their former homes in California, Oregon, and Washington. Discuss **Document G**, “Release from Incarceration,” a letter from Rui Kameo to Edythe Backus who had recently left her teaching job at Poston. Discuss the challenges families faced at the end of the war when they returned to their former homes.
 - What concerns did Rui Kameo express regarding the family’s possible return to Watsonville?
 - What can you discern from this letter regarding the hostility the family faced at the time of relocation?
10. As a culminating activity, divide the class into groups representing differing viewpoints on issues involving the restriction of civil liberties during wartime or in cases of national emergency. Instruct each group to examine Article I, Section 8, Clause 15, granting Congress the power to “suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions” and Section 9, Clause 2, “The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.” Recommend that students read the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court in *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943).

Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone, speaking for the unanimous court, wrote:

“ . . . Distinctions between citizens solely because of their ancestry are by their very nature odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality. . . . [However] the adoption by government, in the crisis of war and of threatened invasion, of measures for the public safety, based upon the recognition of facts and circumstances which indicate that a group of one national extraction may menace that safety more than others, is not wholly beyond the limits of the Constitution and is not to be condemned. . . . ”

For the complete text of Justice Stone's decisions see < <http://www.mit.edu/afs/athena/course/17/17.245/www/Hirabayashi.htm> > .

Organize a Socratic seminar exploring varying shades of the propriety of placing restrictions on personal liberties in our constitutional democracy. Direct students to focus both on the restrictions on Japanese Americans during World War II and current issues revolving around threats to our national security. Students should be able to support their opinions on constitutional principles. As an alternative assignment, have students conduct a mock congressional hearing in which they present testimony relating to the constitutionality of restricting civil liberties in times of emergency.

Extension Activities

1. Read Richard Lawrence Miller's "Confiscations from Japanese-Americans during World War II" < <http://www.fear.org/RMillerJ-A.html> > on "Forfeiture Endangers American Rights" website. Write a position paper citing constitutional issues that arose from wartime confiscations.
2. As a class exercise, research the issues involved in the arrest of Fred Korematsu in 1942, three weeks after the effective date of the evacuation order. Korematsu, found guilty of violating the exclusion order, appealed the decision. On appeal his case was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. Divide the class into groups and read excerpts from the majority and minority opinions in the Court's 6-3 decision in *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) < <http://www.tourolaw.edu/patch/Korematsu/> > . Debate the verdict of the Court. Conclude the activity by informing the class that Fred Korematsu reopened his case and in 1983 was successful in reversing his conviction. President William Clinton presented Korematsu with the Medal of Freedom for his long and ultimately successful fight to force the nation to adhere to the principles of the Bill of Rights.

3. Immediately after the war, Japanese who had lost property were permitted to seek compensation from the government; however, failure to produce records that the government required was punishable by a \$10,000 fine and up to five years imprisonment. Discuss how this policy may have suppressed appeals for compensation. Conduct an interview of a Japanese American inquiring about early attempts to receive compensation and the ultimate decision of the government in 1988 to compensate each living survivor of relocation camps. Was the government's formal apology and compensation of \$20,000 appropriate?

Restrictions on Immigration and Citizenship

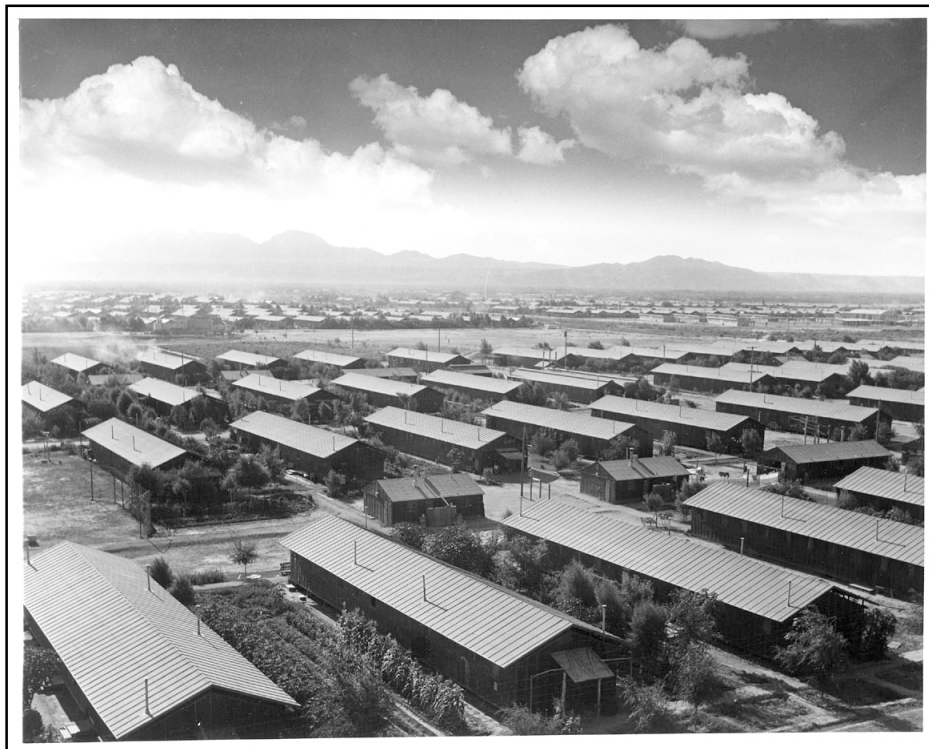
Citizenship in the United States was not clearly defined until the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. The Articles of Confederation recognized a national citizenship but left requirements for naturalization up to the states. However, there was no national immigration policy specified in the Articles of Confederation or the United States Constitution. The Constitution also did not establish national control over immigration except in reference to the slave trade (Article I, Section 9). By the mid-nineteenth century the Supreme Court recognized that Congress, and “Congress alone,” had the right to regulate immigration under the commerce clause of the Constitution.

Citizenship in the United States is determined either by the place of birth (*jus solis*) or by naturalization. The Framers of the Constitution specified that a president be a “natural born” citizen while requiring that members of the House and Senate to be natural born or naturalized citizens. Congress, in 1790, adopted the first federal law on naturalization. The law restricted naturalization to “any alien, being a free white person.” This restriction remained in effect until the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. The first sentence of Section I of the Amendment definitely defined citizenship as “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” In 1875 a federal statute on naturalization specified that citizenship could be conferred to “...aliens being free white persons, and to aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent.”

In the 1870s persons of “low moral character” and criminals were prohibited from immigrating to the United States; however, the first sweeping restriction on immigration was against the Chinese by the Exclusion Act of 1882 and subsequent extensions of the act. Although few Japanese had migrated to the United States in the 1880s anti-Japanese sentiment was present. In 1892 the Irish immigrant Dennis Kearney, who had orchestrated anti-Chinese demonstrations before the passage of the Exclusion Act, turned his attention on the Japanese “menace” in San Francisco.

The first group of Japanese laborers arrived in Hawaii in 1868. When their labor contracts expired 25 years later, many traveled to California seeking employment. With the annexation of Hawaii, more Japanese farm workers left the islands for the United States. In 1905 the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League was formed with the expressed purpose of pressuring the government to extend the exclusion of Asian immigrants. The actions by the San Francisco School Board in 1906 segregating Chinese, Korean, and Japanese students from its public schools affected U.S. diplomatic relations with Japan. The Theodore Roosevelt administration worked out a compromise known as the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” whereby Japan would restrict immigration and the San Francisco School Board rescinded its policy of segregating Japanese children in the city’s public schools.

The U.S. Immigration Act of 1921 established a quota system limiting immigration to three percent of the number of persons of each nationality already in the United States as determined by the census of 1910. California's delegation to Congress had failed to have a prohibition of Japanese immigration included in the legislation. Congress changed the quota by the Immigration Act of 1924 reducing the number to two percent of the 1890 census and, this time, excluded all Asian immigration. The total exclusion of Japanese immigration did not lessen hostility towards resident Japanese aliens in western states. Western states began to enact laws prohibiting aliens from holding land in their respective states.



Photograph of a section of the Poston camp

California's Alien Land Laws

In 1907, the California legislature attempted to secure the passage of a bill that would deprive Japanese living in the state from owning land. President Theodore Roosevelt put pressure on California's Republican legislators and prevented passage of the bill. In 1913, despite attempts by the Wilson administration, the California legislature passed the Alien Land Law of 1913. In 1920, a new Alien Land Law placed further restrictions on the sale and lease of lands by resident aliens.

In 1913 the California legislature debated several bills that would prohibit Japanese from owning land in the state. President Woodrow Wilson contacted Governor Hiram Johnson and the leaders of the legislature urging them not to pass legislation and sent Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan to California to negotiate directly with the governor and legislature. While Bryan was traveling to California, Ulysses S. Webb, California Attorney General, and Francis J. Heney, a noted California Progressive, drafted a substitute bill, the Webb-Heney Bill, with the governor's approval. The bill removed a direct reference to the Japanese replacing it with "aliens ineligible to citizenship." The revised bill passed the legislature and was signed into law.

The Alien Act of 1913, in addition to prohibiting non-citizens from owning land, limited rights to lease land to three years and banned corporations in which a majority of the stock was owned by restricted aliens from acquiring land. Webb admitted that the purpose of the legislation was race-based, ". . . The simple and single question is, is the race desirable. . . ." According to Webb, passage of the bill would limit the number of Japanese in the state by ". . . curtailing their privileges which they may enjoy here; for they will not come in large numbers and long abide with us if they may not acquire land."

In 1920, California passed a new alien land law described by one legislator as a means to insure that no Japanese may ever own "one inch" of land in the state. The 1920 law removed the provision from the 1913 law that permitted leasing land for up to three years and prohibited the purchase of land in the name of their children who were citizens by nature of their birth. It also declared that it was unlawful for any "alien ineligible to citizenship" from acquiring stock in companies that held real property in the state.

There were a number of court challenges to the 1920 California law and similar laws passed in other western states. *Terrace v. Thompson* (1923) involving the Washington state alien land law was the first case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court upheld a Washington law limiting the right of Japanese aliens to own or rent land. According to the Court, alien land laws did not violate treaty provisions with Japan nor were they in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. In support of their ruling, the Court quoted from the lower court's decision:

It is obvious that one who is not a citizen and cannot become one lacks an interest in, and the power to effectually work for the welfare of, the state,

and, so lacking, the state may rightfully deny him the right to own and lease real estate within its boundaries. If one incapable of citizenship may lease or own real estate, it is within the realm of possibility that very foot of land within the state might pass to ownership or possession of non-citizens.

Through the end of World War II, California seized lands held in violation of the 1920 Alien Land Law. In 1952, the California Supreme Court found the Alien Land Law of 1913 unconstitutional in *Fujii Sei v. State of California*. In 1956, all Alien Land Laws were repealed in California by popular vote.

Oral History

Ainosuke Esaki

As a young man of 16, Ainosuke Esaki left Japan for Hawaii to avoid conscription in the military. He worked in Hawaii for a short time saving his wages in order to buy passage to California.

Ainosuke Esaki made his home in California's Central Valley and worked as a "fruit tramp," a migrant who moved from place to place to find work harvesting fruit. Determined to learn English he moved to San Francisco and worked during the day while attending an English-language school in the evenings. Esaki migrated south and settled in San Diego where he worked for a Caucasian family part time as a "house boy" while taking other available jobs. He began working at a nursery business in San Diego and saved his wages with the intent of establishing his own business. In 1920, before the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 that prohibited Japanese immigration, Esaki returned to Japan to marry and brought his wife back to San Diego. Although he desired to become a citizen, he was ineligible because he was Japanese by birth.

After years of work, Esaki managed to save enough money to put a down payment on a small plot of land. Forbidden by the 1920 California Alien Land Law, he had to purchase land for his nursery in a friend's name. The friend for whom he worked as a "house boy" when he first came to San Diego was named as guardian for Esaki's eldest daughter, a native-born citizen, who would acquire the land from her guardian when she became of age. The business prospered.

Throughout 1941 rumors circulated that Japanese aliens would be apprehended if war broke out between the United States and the Empire of Japan. On the evening of December 7, 1941, only hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a number of Japanese resident aliens were apprehended by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and held at local jails until they could be transported to camps under the direction of the Immigration Service. Ainosuke Esaki had not taken an active role in the Japanese community in San Diego and was not apprehended during the first of several raids after Pearl Harbor. Realizing that it would only be a matter of time before all native-born Japanese would be taken into custody; he purchased warm clothes and a suitcase in preparation for what was assumed to be inevitable. In February 1942, at breakfast, government agents came to the Esaki home and took him into custody. He was held at the city jail before being sent to Tujunga, California. While at Tujunga, the family visited asking his advice on what to do with the nursery business he had worked so hard to establish. Rumors were rampant that all Japanese living in coastal areas would soon be required to move. On one visit, his daughter told him that one of the customers offered to purchase the nursery stock, buildings, and land for only a fraction of its worth. Esaki advised his daughter to work through an attorney and lease the land rather than sell the property.

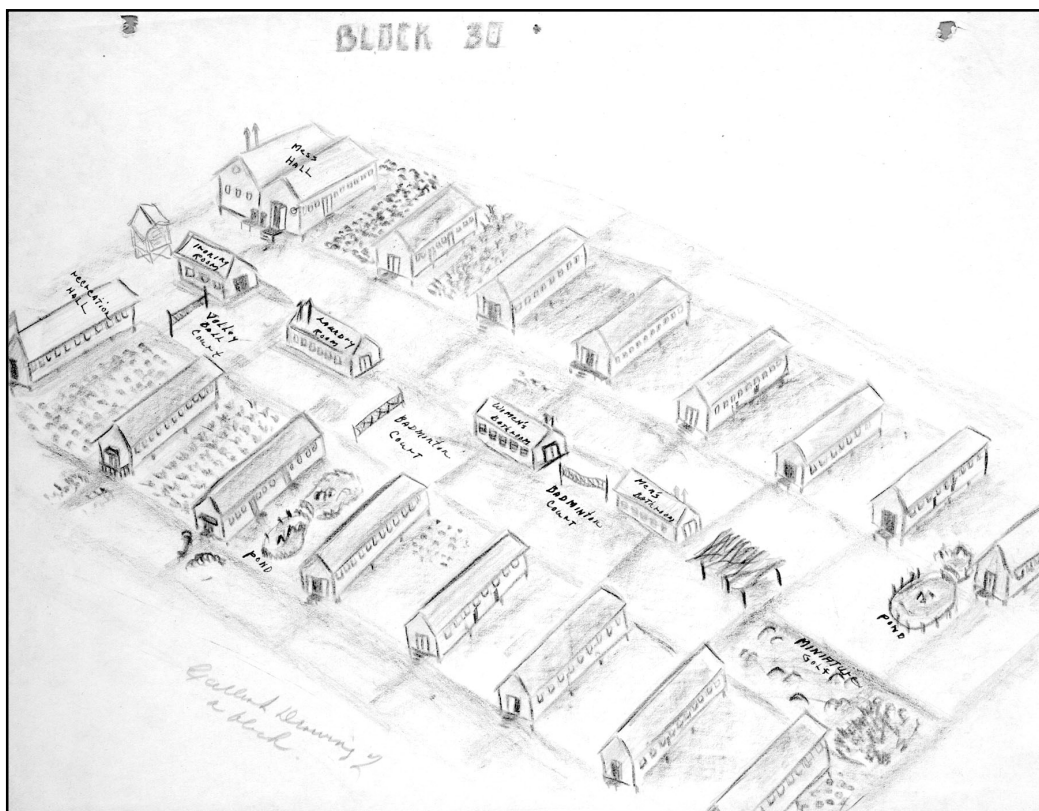
On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt by Executive Order 9066 directed the military to designate areas in the Western United States in which persons may be excluded.

In March the Wartime Civil Control Administration was established to handle the evacuation of Japanese from the West Coast. In April the Esaki family had to report to a central location where they were transported to Santa Anita Assembly Center (a converted horse race track) in Arcadia, California. Ainosuke Esaki, had previously been sent from Tujunga to Santa Fe, New Mexico and held at an Immigration Service facility. In May 1942, he was released from Santa Fe and sent to join his family at Santa Anita. In August the family was relocated to the Colorado River Relocation Center in the desert near Poston, Arizona.

Mr. and Mrs. Esaki remained at Poston until the summer of 1945 when they were given permission to visit their daughter in Connecticut who had married and left Poston the previous year with her husband who was teaching Japanese to American officers at Yale. After spending a few months on the East Coast, Ainosuke Esaki and his wife returned to San Diego in October 1945 and regained the property but only after hiring an attorney and threatening to evict the tenant.

Ainosuke Esaki was one of the first in San Diego to register to become a United States citizen, in the 1950s, when native-born Japanese were permitted to become citizens.

—Interview, January 21, 2003.



Student drawn sketch of Poston, ca. 1943

The Evacuation

Ruth Watanabe wrote the following letter to her former teacher, Edythe N. Backus, from Santa Anita Racetrack before being sent to the Colorado River Relocation Center.

May 17, 1942.

Dear Miss Backus:

Possibly by this time I imagine, you've begun to think that I just simply vanished, not to be heard from again! However, I'm very much alive and, as you've already probably noticed, I'm at the Santa Anita Center. Really, I'm ashamed of myself for not having written much sooner. It's just that so many things have happened that I've hardly been able to catch up with myself.

As I remember, when I last talked to you, I was going to leave for Owens Valley with a volunteer evacuation group.

We didn't go, since voluntary evacuation was stopped almost immediately after that, and the area was being evacuated by districts. For awhile I just helped people getting ready to be moved — and what an experience

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As I remember, when I last talked to you, I was going to leave for Owens Valley with a volunteer evacuation group. We didn't go, since voluntary evacuation was stopped almost immediately after that, and the area was being evacuated by districts. For awhile I just helped people getting ready to be moved—and what an experience that was!—then, since the orders for leaving didn't come to our district, I returned to school for about three weeks to try to get as much of my work done as possible. Then on the 30th of April we came here to Santa Anita. It was quite a hectic sort of existence that we lived through for about a month before we came here. All our furniture was stored, my books were with friends, my pianos boarded out, and the house had absolutely no vestige of normal living left in it. It seems almost eerie to think about it now—it's the sort of thing that one can remember afterwards as a unique experience.

This center at Santa Anita is certainly some place—a veritable town in itself. You, no doubt, have seen some of the barracks from the street. We are housed in a tiny cubby-hole of a family unit in one of the newer barracks. My poor mother finds it quite a chore to keep house in a single small room. However, in our district, we've all decided that since everyone is having to put up with inconveniences, we might as well make a game of 'em,—and grumbling and complaining are absolutely taboo. The spirit is generally quite admirable.

We do no cooking on our own—we have all our meals at the mess hall, shades of the old bread-lines! One of the most trying things about our life here has been the change in diet from the salads and light foods we used to have at home to the heavier noodles, rice, and beans. The rice problem is awful for our family, since we are not accustomed to having rice so much—it's very heavy stuff. Then I got sick once on the noodles and once on the beans, and everyone said I "couldn't take it." Well, anyway, I more than redeemed myself when it came to typhoid shots. Everyone else in our block had to sleep off the effects of the shots, but all I did was to develop an elegant-looking sore spot on my arm. I'm really quite proud of myself for that!

For awhile our principal occupation seemed to be walking-and-eating, walking-and-eating, and walking-some-more-and-eating-some-more. It was quite a calling, and we all lost a few pounds. Now, however, I have something better to do, since I have a teaching assignment in the new so-called music school here. It's a full-time job—44 hours each week—and I'm to have charge of all the theory classes, & music appreciation series, and teach an advanced piano class. The theory classes are coming along much better

than I thought, but the piano department is struggling along with only four pianos and over fifty pupils. We will all heartily bless the day when some kind-hearted soul donates a carload or two of usable pianos.

. . . It's very lonely here. There's a girl from S.C. [University of Southern California], a couple of my former pupils, and one family we know—and these are the only ones I know well enough to say any more than “good morning” to. Even after more than two weeks, everything seems strange and unreal; there is such a transient quality that it's rather disconcerting. The younger folks are having the time of their lives, although it seems too bad that they must simply waste their time. The whole place seems intellectually very sterile—and it bothers me a lot. I've been trying to read and study, and, when the piano is unoccupied, to practice.

The people at school were very kind. I'm to get my M. Mus. [Master of Music degree] in June—which makes me feel very good and very grateful. My poor Ph.D. must, I supposed, repose in a state of suspended animation until the war is over. I'm trying to get my studying done for the language exams and I'm also reviewing my Eng. Lit. in hopes that it will help me in my work when I get back. My friends at home have been sending me books. My mother keeps saying she's going to make me toe the mark—evacuation or no evacuation!

My word! This has certainly been a dreary recital! Do forgive it, won't you? It's taken me some effort and some time to become adjusted to this new life—and my world has changed so. However, won't you hold a good thought for me and hope that my next epistle will be better?

Sincerely,
Ruth (Watanabe)

Source: Box I, Correspondence, Colorado River Relocation Center Collection, Watanabe, Ruth to Edythe N. Buckus. The Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens.

Memories of 1943

The following essay, written by a member of the staff of the Poston high school yearbook, *Mojave Memo*, provides an overview of the first year at the Colorado River Relocation Center. The makeshift 1943 high school yearbook was mimeographed and included student drawn sketches rather than photographs.

YESTERDAY life was swell. There were parties, picnics, high school fun galore. Neither color nor creed separated us from our American friends. Then came the warm, beautiful Sunday when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Need I repeat what happened the following days? Some of our friends turned their backs on us while others showed us deepest sympathy and understanding. Evacuation came like a storm. The heavy clouds of fear and excitement enveloped us. The sharp words and nasty orders inflicted on us cut us like a 60 mile gale. But every storm has its end, and ours came to a calm too. Evacuation and all its headaches that came with it passed as we sat excitedly, anxiously, and even a little expectantly in the trains rolling over mountain and dale, across the Colorado River and arriving at a small town, Parker. At our journey's end we saw Poston, a city of little block barracks, with dust hanging low over it and wrapping itself around the barracks until the houses looked like gray tissue wrapped packages.

TODAY, one year after that memorable first day, we can hardly recognize this town as the one we came to that day. Although dust is still clinging everywhere, a year of living in the barracks has somehow given them a home-like appearance. Our love for order and beauty has found expression in spite of circumstances. Our whole lives have suffered sharp twists; and most people have become either better or worse from their experience here. Our schools are poor in every sense of the word, when we compare them to the ones we loved and hold so dear, back on Main street, but this school of ours, in the heart and dust of Poston, is building character. Tomorrow's toil, heartaches, bitter experiences, and disappointments that all Japanese and Japanese-Americans have gone through during this first year of evacuation, we've come through, almost victoriously but the battles are not over yet, for who knows what yet may happen?

TOMORROW, we will flip back the pages of our memories and think about the years spent at Poston. To many, the thought of Poston will bring nothing but unpleasant memories, but some of us will think our evacuation as a field in which the seeds of real character were sown. Tomorrow, we shall see the harvest of the recent year. Tomorrow!

Source: Box III, Colorado River Relocation Center Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens.

Camp Calendar

Noboru Yamakoshi, a high school student at Poston, compiled a camp calendar and drew sketches for each of the months. The calendar page for March is reproduced here. A statement about the Poston camp is incorporated at the bottom of each calendar page.



MARCH 1944						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
FLOWERS FOR MARCH <small>Jonquils or Daffodils (A Breath of Spring)</small>		BIRTHSTONE FOR MARCH <small>Bloodstone (Courage)</small>		1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Construction on Poston I began March 21, 1942. The first evacuees arrived May 10. Poston II opened July 3, Poston III on August 3.

Source: Box III, Poston Chronicle Calendar, Colorado River Relocation Center Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens.

Release from Incarceration at Poston

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by an internee at the Colorado River Relocation Center to Edythe Backus, a former teacher at Poston. The letter, dated August 9, 1945, expresses concerns regarding her family's return to California.

. . . People here in Poston are busier than ever, packing and making plans for relocation. It was announced in yesterday's paper that there will be special trains to take people back to California to their former place of residence during September; this is for people in Camp II and III. Camp I will be moved during October. So back to California we go, just where we started from! Of course, anyone who wishes to relocate elsewhere may do so, but there are many people who haven't a place to go so they will probably go back to California. Many have no homes, and I don't know what they are going to do about housing, as it is scarce anywhere. I'm not sure where we will relocate yet. I hope not to Watsonville as sentiment is not very good there, and besides; we have no home. Also we sold our car before we came to camp, and Watsonville being a more or less rural town, we couldn't get about without one. I hope something good will turn up for us so we can go to a city and my daughters can get jobs in offices. Well, I am really lost right now, but will trust to luck and my God to take care of us. . . .

With love,

Rui Kameo

Source: Box I, Correspondence, Colorado River Relocation Center Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens.

Vocabulary

alien	foreign; one who resides in a country without holding citizenship
Issei	Japanese born, first generation Japanese in America
<i>Jus solis</i>	Latin term meaning “right of land”; a belief that a person automatically becomes a citizen of a country by being born in that country; opposite of <i>jus sanguinis</i> , a belief held by Japan that citizenship is passed down through the “blood” of the parents, regardless of the child’s country of birth
naturalize	to confer rights of citizenship
Nisei	second generation Japanese, native-born children of Issei parents
relocation camp	area established outside declared military zones; place of incarceration; concentration camp

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Print Resources

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A collection of personal accounts of the evacuation and experiences at several of the detention camps.

Internet Resources

Colorado State Archives. *The Granada Relocation Center*. < <http://www.archives.state.co.us/wwcod/granada.htm> >

A collection of photographs with accompanying text of the Granada Relocation Center near Amache, Colorado. The website has links to other "relocation" centers.

Japanese American National Museum. < <http://www.janm.org/main.htm> >

The Japanese American National Museum, 369 East First Street, Los Angeles, is in the heart of "Little Tokyo." The museum features a permanent exhibit on World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans including an original barracks from the Heart Mount concentration camp in Wyoming. The website also includes two digital exhibits, "Dear Mrs. Breed: Letters from Camp" and "The Life and Work of George Hoshida," on the incarceration of Japanese during World War II.

Library of Congress. *American Memory*, "'Suffering under a Great Injustice': Ansel Adams's Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar." < <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aamhtml/aamhome.html> >

Ansel Adams's photographs of the Manzanar War Relocation Center are online at this Library of Congress website. The online collection over 200 of Adams' photographic prints of Manazar. The website also includes the full text of Adams's *Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese Americans, Manzanar Relocation Center, Inyo County, California*.

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The website includes documents, oral histories, photographs, a chronology, and a link to three lesson plans at the UCLA Institute on Primary Sources website. (or start from the Truman Library homepage: < <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/photos/av-photo.htm> > .)