

farewell to manzanar historical context

farewell to manzanar historical context provides an essential lens through which readers can better understand the significant events and societal impacts depicted in the memoir "Farewell to Manzanar." This article explores the historical backdrop of Japanese American internment during World War II, the legal and social circumstances that led to the establishment of Manzanar, and the broader implications for civil liberties in the United States. By delving into the political climate of the 1940s, wartime hysteria, and racial prejudice, the historical context enriches comprehension of the personal and collective experiences described in the book. Additionally, this discussion highlights the legacy of internment camps and the ongoing efforts for recognition and reparations. The following sections will cover key aspects such as the origins of Japanese American incarceration, life at Manzanar, and the post-war consequences for internees.

- Origins of Japanese American Internment
- The Establishment of Manzanar Relocation Center
- Life Inside Manzanar
- Legal and Political Context
- Aftermath and Legacy of Internment

Origins of Japanese American Internment

Pre-War Anti-Japanese Sentiment

Before the outbreak of World War II, Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans faced widespread discrimination and hostility on the West Coast of the United States. This animosity stemmed from economic competition, cultural differences, and longstanding racial prejudice. Laws such as the Alien Land Laws prevented Japanese immigrants from owning land, and social segregation limited their opportunities. These factors contributed to an environment of suspicion and marginalization, setting the stage for harsher measures during wartime.

Impact of Pearl Harbor Attack

The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan on December 7, 1941, intensified fears of espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans. Government officials, military leaders, and the general public grew increasingly concerned about the loyalty of citizens of Japanese descent. This fear was fueled by wartime hysteria, propaganda, and racial stereotypes, which ultimately led to calls for the removal of Japanese Americans from strategic coastal areas.

Executive Order 9066

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War to designate military areas and exclude any persons from them. Although the order did not specify any ethnic group, it resulted in the forced removal and incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans, most of whom were U.S. citizens. This order marked the legal foundation for the internment policy that would define the experiences depicted in "Farewell to Manzanar."

The Establishment of Manzanar Relocation Center

Selection of Manzanar Site

Manzanar Relocation Center was one of ten camps established by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) to house Japanese Americans. Located in the Owens Valley of California, Manzanar was chosen for its remote, arid location and proximity to transportation routes. The camp was constructed rapidly in 1942, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed military personnel, transforming a barren landscape into a confined community for thousands of internees.

Camp Infrastructure and Layout

Manzanar consisted of approximately 500 barracks buildings arranged in a grid pattern. Facilities included communal mess halls, schools, hospitals, and recreational areas, though living conditions were often cramped and uncomfortable. The camp's infrastructure reflected both the military nature of the incarceration and the attempt to create a semblance of normalcy for the internees.

Demographics of Manzanar Population

The population of Manzanar was diverse, including Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrants), Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans), and some Kibei (Japanese Americans educated in Japan). The internees came from various socioeconomic backgrounds, but all shared the experience of forced removal and confinement. Manzanar housed families, single adults, and elderly individuals, creating a complex social environment within the camp.

Life Inside Manzanar

Daily Routine and Challenges

Life inside Manzanar was characterized by strict schedules and limited freedoms. Internees attended

school, worked in camp jobs, and participated in recreational activities, but were continuously under surveillance. Harsh weather conditions, inadequate privacy, and substandard facilities contributed to physical discomfort and psychological stress.

Social and Cultural Adaptations

Despite adversity, internees sought to maintain cultural traditions and build community cohesion. They organized cultural events, religious services, and educational programs. The camp also became a site of cultural negotiation, as younger generations balanced their Japanese heritage with American identity amid the circumstances of incarceration.

Resistance and Compliance

The internees' responses to incarceration varied widely. Some complied with camp rules and sought to make the best of their situation, while others resisted through protests, petitions, and legal challenges. The tensions within Manzanar reflected broader debates about loyalty, identity, and civil rights during the internment period.

Legal and Political Context

Supreme Court Cases

The internment policy faced legal challenges, most notably *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943), and *Ex parte Endo* (1944). These cases addressed the constitutionality of curfews, exclusion orders, and detention of loyal citizens. The Supreme Court upheld the government's actions in *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi*, citing military necessity, but ruled in *Ex parte Endo* that loyal citizens could not be detained indefinitely.

Government Justifications and Criticism

The U.S. government justified internment as a military necessity to prevent espionage and sabotage. However, critics argued that racial prejudice, economic motives, and political pressure played significant roles. Subsequent investigations, such as the 1983 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, concluded that the internment was largely unjustified and driven by racism rather than security concerns.

Impact on Civil Liberties

The internment of Japanese Americans represented one of the most significant violations of civil liberties in U.S. history. It raised questions about constitutional rights during wartime and the balance between national security and individual freedoms. The legacy of internment continues to inform contemporary discussions about race, immigration, and government authority.

Aftermath and Legacy of Internment

Post-War Resettlement

After the closure of Manzanar in 1945, internees faced the challenges of rebuilding their lives. Many returned to communities on the West Coast, only to encounter continued discrimination and economic hardship. The disruption of families, education, and careers had lasting effects on Japanese American communities.

Redress Movement

Decades after internment, Japanese Americans and allies organized to seek official government apology and reparations. The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 formally apologized for the internment and

provided monetary compensation to surviving internees. This act symbolized recognition of the injustice and affirmed the importance of protecting civil rights.

Cultural and Educational Significance

Works such as "Farewell to Manzanar" have played a vital role in preserving the memory of internment and educating new generations. Museums, memorials, and curricula incorporate the history of Manzanar and the broader internment experience. This ongoing remembrance serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of prejudice and the fragility of constitutional protections.

Key Points on the Historical Context of Farewell to Manzanar

- Rooted in the wartime hysteria and racial prejudice against Japanese Americans
- Enabled by Executive Order 9066 and military directives
- Manzanar functioned as a symbol of forced displacement and confinement
- Daily life was marked by adaptation, resilience, and complex social dynamics
- Legal challenges highlighted tensions between security and civil liberties
- Post-war consequences included social reintegration challenges and activism for redress
- The legacy informs contemporary understanding of American history and rights

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the historical context of 'Farewell to Manzanar'?

The historical context of 'Farewell to Manzanar' is the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, following Executive Order 9066 signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, which led to the forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in camps like Manzanar.

Why were Japanese Americans interned during World War II?

Japanese Americans were interned during World War II due to fears of espionage and sabotage after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Racism, wartime hysteria, and political pressure contributed to the decision to forcibly relocate and incarcerate them in camps.

Where was Manzanar located and what was its significance?

Manzanar was located in California's Owens Valley and was one of ten War Relocation Authority camps where Japanese Americans were imprisoned during World War II. It serves as a symbol of the injustices faced by Japanese Americans during this period.

How does 'Farewell to Manzanar' reflect the experiences of Japanese American internees?

'Farewell to Manzanar' is a memoir that provides a personal and detailed account of life in the Manzanar internment camp, highlighting the struggles, resilience, and identity challenges faced by Japanese American internees during and after their incarceration.

What was Executive Order 9066 and how did it impact Japanese Americans?

Executive Order 9066, signed in 1942, authorized the U.S. military to designate exclusion zones and remove people considered a threat to national security. This order led to the forced relocation and

internment of over 110,000 Japanese Americans, including those living on the West Coast.

How does understanding the historical context enhance the reading of 'Farewell to Manzanar'?

Understanding the historical context of Japanese American internment during World War II provides readers with a deeper appreciation of the memoir's themes of injustice, identity, family, and resilience, and highlights the broader impact of wartime policies on civil liberties.

What lessons does the historical context of 'Farewell to Manzanar' offer for contemporary society?

The historical context of 'Farewell to Manzanar' reminds contemporary society of the dangers of racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and the violation of civil rights, emphasizing the importance of vigilance to protect individual freedoms and prevent similar injustices in the future.

Additional Resources

1. *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston

This memoir recounts the experiences of Jeanne Wakatsuki and her family during their internment at the Manzanar War Relocation Center during World War II. It provides a personal and poignant perspective on the Japanese American experience, exploring themes of identity, resilience, and the impact of incarceration on families. The book is a seminal work in understanding the emotional and historical context of Japanese American internment.

2. *When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka

This novel tells the story of a Japanese American family forced into an internment camp during World War II. Through sparse and poetic prose, Otsuka captures the fear, uncertainty, and resilience of those affected by the internment. The book offers a powerful exploration of loss, displacement, and the struggle to maintain dignity under oppression.

3. *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson

Set in the aftermath of World War II, this novel explores the lingering racial tensions and injustices faced by Japanese Americans in the Pacific Northwest. Through a courtroom drama involving a Japanese American man accused of murder, the book delves into themes of prejudice, memory, and reconciliation. It provides historical context related to Japanese American internment and its lasting effects.

4. *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience* by Lawson Fusao Inada

This collection of poetry and prose offers diverse perspectives on the internment experience. Inada, a former internee, captures the emotional and cultural impact of incarceration through vivid imagery and personal reflection. The book serves as an important literary companion to understand the historical and emotional nuances of the internment camps.

5. *Conscience and the Constitution: The Japanese American Internment and the Fight for Justice* by Michi Nishiura Weglyn

This historical account documents the legal and civil rights battles faced by Japanese Americans interned during WWII. Weglyn provides detailed research on the government policies, personal stories, and efforts to seek redress and acknowledgement of injustice. The book is crucial for understanding the political and legal context surrounding the internment.

6. *Manzanar: An American Story* by Michael S. Williamson and Deann Borshay Liem

Combining narrative and photography, this book offers a comprehensive history of the Manzanar internment camp. It includes personal stories from internees alongside archival images, providing a vivid portrayal of daily life in the camp. The work serves as both a historical document and a tribute to those who lived through this chapter in American history.

7. *Living in Infamy: The Internment of Japanese Americans During World War II* by Greg Robinson

Robinson provides a thorough historical analysis of the internment, examining the political, social, and military factors that led to the forced relocation. The book highlights the experiences of internees and the broader implications for civil liberties in America. It is an essential resource for understanding the

full scope of the internment's impact.

8. *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* by Michi Nishiura Weglyn

This groundbreaking work was one of the first to expose the harsh realities of Japanese American internment camps. Weglyn challenges the sanitized narratives by revealing conditions, injustices, and government deception. The book played a key role in raising awareness and prompting historical reassessment of the internment.

9. *The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida

A children's book that tells the story of a young Japanese American girl's experience during the internment. Through simple yet impactful storytelling, it introduces younger readers to the history and emotional challenges faced by Japanese American families. The book is a valuable educational tool for teaching about tolerance and civil rights.

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Lan Dong, 2019-03-22 This book provides detailed and engaging narratives about 25 pivotal events in Asian American history, celebrates Asian Americans' contributions to U.S. history, and examines the ways their experiences have shaped American culture. Asian Americans have made significant contributions to American history, society, and culture. This book presents key events in the Asian American experience through 25 well-developed, accessible essays; detailed timelines; biographies of notable figures; excerpts of primary source documents; and sidebars and images that provide narrative and visual information on high-interest topics. Arranged chronologically, the 25 essays showcase the ways in which Asian Americans have contributed to U.S. history and culture and bear witness to their struggles, activism, and accomplishments. The book offers a unique look at the Asian American experience, from the California Gold Rush in the mid-nineteenth century to the 2017 travel ban. Highlighting events with national and international significance, such as the Central Pacific Railroad Construction, Korean War, and 9/11, it documents the Asian American experience and demonstrates Asian Americans' impact on American life.

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Stephanie Morrill, 2020-05-26 Within These Lines Educator's Guide is a companion to Within These Lines by Stephanie Morrill. This guide can be utilized in the classroom, in a home school setting, or by parents seeking additional resources. Ideal for grades 7-12.

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Jesús Benito, Ana María Manzanás, 2002 This volume stems from the idea that the notion of borders and borderlines as clear-cut frontiers separating not only political and geographical areas, but also cultural, linguistic and semiotic spaces, does not fully address the complexity of contemporary cultural encounters. Centering on a whole range of literary works from the United States and the Caribbean, the contributors suggest and discuss different theoretical and methodological grounds to address the literary production taking place across the lines in North American and Caribbean culture. The volume represents a pioneering attempt at proposing the concept of the border as a useful paradigm not only for the study of Chicano literature but also for the other American literatures. The works presented in the volume illustrate various aspects and manifestations of the textual border(lands), and explore the double-voiced discourse of border texts by writers like Harriet E. Wilson, Rudolfo Anaya, Toni Morrison, Cormac McCarthy, Louise Erdrich, Helena Viramontes, Paule Marshall and Monica Sone, among others. This book is of interest for scholars and researchers in the field of comparative American studies and ethnic studies.

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"farewell", , "all the best",
Farewell Farewell Msg
Farewell5
farewell,so longtake care - farewell So long

70good bye god be with you. The Farewell 2019
 - Dear Colleagues Today is my last working day in XXX. It is my great honor to work with you, to know you. I really cherish the time that we spend together. Thank
 farewell letter? - 1.farewell letter,2.
I bid you all a very fond farewell. bid a farewell "I"bid you all
 all you a very fond farewell very fond, fond farewell
 - farewell 6 1,785
 Spiritfarer - 2020 8 18
 Thunder Lotus Games
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