

## Chapter 4, Part IV Racist Landscapes: Japanese Internment Camps

### War-Time Hysteria and Racism

The Japanese Imperial Navy attacked Pearl Harbor on the Island of O'ahu, Hawaii, which was then only a territory of the United States, on 7 December 1941. On 19 February 1942 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 that authorized the U.S. government to forcibly roundup 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in California and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona and several hundred Italians and German Americans as well. All of them were placed in 10 internment camps (Krammer 1997 and Fox 1990). Executive Order No. 9066 states that

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* [italics added] 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 there from, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary . . . to accomplish the purpose of this order.

No racial or cultural ethnic group is mention in this order, yet everybody knew it was only intended to round up Japanese Americans. The 120,000 Japanese Americans who were interned represented more than the population of the **Five Civilized Indian Tribes** who were forcibly moved to the Oklahoma Indian Territory in the nineteenth century by the U.S. government. The Canadian government similarly reacted to their Japanese population.

### Japanese Internment in Canada

When the Canadian government declared war on Japan in December 1941, provincial and municipal governments called for the removal of the “Japanese menace,” particularly in West Coast British

Columbia (B.C.) with its large concentration of Japanese Canadians. Prior to World War II, about 23,000 Japanese Canadians, or *Nikkei*, lived mostly in British Columbia, primarily in Vancouver; three quarters of them were naturalized or native-born Canadians. The *Nikkei*, overseas Japanese persons, were foresters, fishermen, miners, and merchants. Except for the industrialists who profited from cheap Asian labor, much of white British Columbia regarded the Japanese Canadians with suspicion, rabid hostility, or overt racism (Sunahara 1981).

In early 1942 the Ottawa government bowed to West Coast pressure and began the forced relocation of Japanese nationals and Canadian citizens of Japanese origin. While this forced resettlement mirrored the wartime policy of the U.S. government, in Canada male evacuees were sent to road camps in the B.C. interior, sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba, or a POW camp in northern Ontario, while women and children were moved to inland B.C. settlements. In the United States, families were generally kept together. Living conditions were so poor in the Canadian camps that people from Japan sent supplemental food shipments through the Red Cross. On average, the Canadian government spent only one-third per capita on their internees as the U.S. spent on its Japanese American internees.

By October 1942, the Canadian government had moved the “evacuees” more than 99 miles inland to eight internment camps in the interior of British Columbia at Kaslo, New Denver, Tashme, Roseberry, Slocan City, Lemon Creek, Sandon, and Greenwood. Unlike prisoners of war who were protected by the Geneva Convention, Japanese Canadians internees were forced to pay for their internment and in 1943 the Canadian “Custodian of Aliens” seized and auctioned off all their property and possessions: autos, cameras, radios, and firearms, and 1,137 fishing vessels.

Although the Canadian deportation orders were contested, the Supreme Court of British Columbia dismissed the case on a technicality. At the end of the war in 1945, the Canadian government gave the internees initially only two choices: return to Japan or resettle east of the Rocky Mountains. About 4,000 of the internees were stripped of their Canadian citizenship and after WWII, 6,000 were deported to Japan. The rights of Japanese Canadians were gradually restored. In 1947, they could again purchase property; in 1948, they could vote in federal elections; and in 1949, they were allowed to vote in British Columbia again (Kobayashi 1987).

In 1988, 111 years after the first Japanese entered Canada and 46 years after internment began, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney formally

apologized to Japanese Canadians and authorized the payment of \$21,000 (Canadian dollars) to each of the survivors of wartime detention. A total of 12 million Canadian dollars were paid out (*University of Washington Libraries 2006*). As of 2001, September 22 of each year is Nikkei Heritage Day in Ontario, Canada.



*Figure 4-IV-* Japanese Canadian Internment Camp in the interior of British Columbia. Photo: Jack Long 1945.

### Japanese Internment in the United States

During the 1880s, U.S. companies wanted cheap labor so the U.S. government allowed Asians, mainly Chinese but also Japanese, immigrate and work in agriculture, railroad construction, and factories. But by 1907 the U.S. Oriental Exclusion Proclamation limited Japanese immigration; by 1908, 135,000 Japanese had settled mainly in two states: Hawaii and California. In 1913, California passed the Alien Land Law which prohibited the ownership of agricultural land by "aliens ineligible to citizenship." In 1920, a stronger Alien Land Act prohibited leasing land and sharecropping

as well. Both laws singled out foreign-born Asians because they were ineligible for citizenship, which stemmed from a narrow interpretation of the naturalization statute. By 1924, the U.S. government prohibited Japanese immigration and barred those that had entered from becoming U.S. citizens. This ban was not lifted by Congress until 1952!

By the 1920s, the Japanese in California were concentrated in only a few cities and specialized in several occupations: fishing and agriculture. They cleared, drained, and irrigated interior counties in California to produce labor-intensive crops (Figure 4-IV- ). Japanese communities were easily identified and located because of their unique Japanese culture and Asian biological features and their distinctive rural and urban locations and occupations.

Racist views were widely held in the United States (Daniels 1977). Even the U.S. Supreme Court argued that the internment camps were legal and justified for military and security reasons; even though nobody was accused of specific treasonous crimes and voted 7 to 2 to legalize the internment. The U.S. Bureau of the Census also helped to intern the Japanese-Americans by providing names and addresses to the Secret Service, known as secret police in enemy countries. Racist attitudes were also expressed by guards who called the internees "Japs." In many of the towns near the internment centers, people were overtly racist: in Parker, AZ, a barber shop sign read: "Jap, keep out, you rat." The Chief of Police of Los Angeles, where 33 percent of Japanese-Americans lived at the time, said: "You have racial characteristics that of being a Mongolian, which cannot be obliterated from these persons, regardless of how many generations are born in the U.S."

Despite government and popular claims that Japanese Americans represented a "threat to national security" and they needed to be relocated out of "military necessity," only Japanese Americans in California, not in Hawaii where the Japanese attack had occurred, were forcibly put in concentration camps. Unsupported allegations of disloyalty were used to intern them, 66 percent were U.S. citizens (*Nisei*, born in the United States) and 33 percent were Japanese-born (*Issei*), who were prevented from becoming U.S. citizens by U.S. law until 1952.

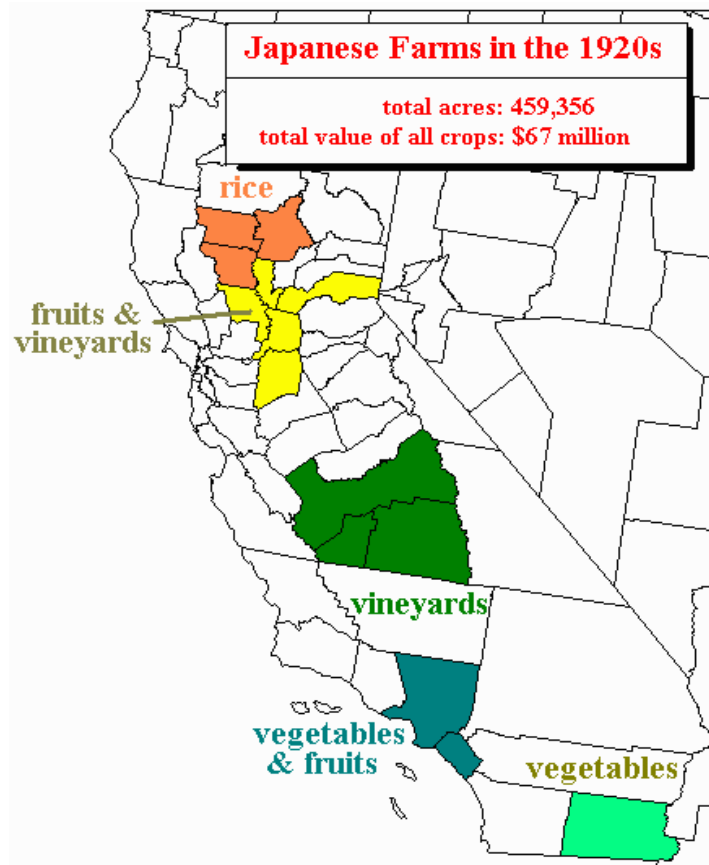


Figure 4-IV- . Japanese American farms in California during the 1920s.  
Source: Ingolf Vogeler, based on various sources.

The internment of Japanese Americans is best known; but German Americans and Italian Americans, as well as their respective nationals who were often married to native or naturalized U.S. citizens, were also interned in camps (Muller 2001). Yet Japanese Americans were particularly singled out for racial reasons. Many private and public organizations within the United States held anti-Japanese sentiments which in California were expressed by the Joint Immigration Committee which consisted of the

- 1) **American Legion**, a veterans group with “patriotism” as its justification;
- 2) **California State Federation of Labor**, a labor organization which

wanted to eliminate Japanese competition for jobs, particularly in fishing;

- 3) **California Grange**, a farmers’ organization which wanted to eliminate competition from Japanese fruit and vegetable farmers, and
- 4) **Native Sons of the Golden West**, a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) xenophobic group.

#### Assemble and Relocation Centers

The U.S. military decided it was necessary to find temporary “assembly centers” to house the “evacuees” until relocation centers could be constructed. Within 28 days, the Wartime Civilian Control Administration (WCCA) had collected the Japanese Americans into 17 **assemble centers**. Nine were at fairgrounds, two were at horse racetracks (Santa Anita and Tanforan, California), two were at migrant-worker camps (Marysville and Sacramento, California), one was at a livestock exposition hall (Portland, Oregon), one was at a mill site (Pinedale, California), and one was at an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps camp (Mayer, Arizona). In addition, the “reception centers” under construction near Parker Dam in Arizona (Poston) and in the Owens Valley of eastern California (Manzanar), originally set up to expedite the voluntary evacuation, were also employed as assembly centers. Both would later be designated relocation centers as well. Internees did not have time to store or sell their household goods at a fair price. They suffered enormous personal and economic damages and losses. Starting on 26 May 1942, some 500 evacuees a day were transferred from the assembly centers to relocation centers. Slowed by construction delays at the relocation centers and the lack of supplies (DeWitt 1943), transfers dragged on over a five-month period and were not completed until 30 October 1942. Almost no material evidence of these assembly centers have survived, although a few have historic markers, such as the one at the Merced County Fairgrounds which housed 4,669 people in 11 barracks.

The War Relocation Authority (WRA) was responsible for the **relocation centers**, as they were officially called. But were they really “relocation centers” or were they “concentration camps”? According to Webster’s Dictionary, “a concentration camp is a prison camp in which political dissidents, members of minority ethnic group, etc. are confined.” Euphemism will not do; they were indeed **concentration camps**, albeit not like those of Nazi Germany. The later-to-be-found unconstitutional and illegal proclamations and actions of the governments, businesses, organizations, and civil society were clearly racist in their intent and consequences. The permanent “relocation centers” were bleak barrack

camps mostly in desolate areas of the West (National Park Service, Manzanar 2006A).

Although some officials from the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) ran some of the centers and many camps were built on Indian reservation lands, only the Poston Relocation Center was actually administered by the OIA (until late 1943) rather than by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Where were these camps located? (Figure 4-IV- ). Manzanar is the most well-known camp (Table 4-IV\_ ). Manzanar and Gila River illustrate the spatial layout and resulting cultural landscapes of the internment centers.

Table 4-IV- . Japanese American Relocation Centers, 1942-1945. Newell operated until 1946 and Manzanar from 1941.

Name	Location	Internees
Newell	Tule Lake, CA	18,789
Manzanar	Manzanar, CA	10,046
Poston	Poston, AZ	17,814
Gila	Gila Rivers, AZ	13,348
Topaz	Topaz, UT	8,130
Minidoka	Hunt, ID	9,397
Heart Mountain	Heart Mountain, WY	10,767
Amache	Granada, CO	7,318
Rohwer	Rohwer, AR	8,475
Jerome	Denson, AR	8,497

Source: Information from the Original 1949 WRA report published in Spicer, Hansen, Luomala, and Opler 1969.

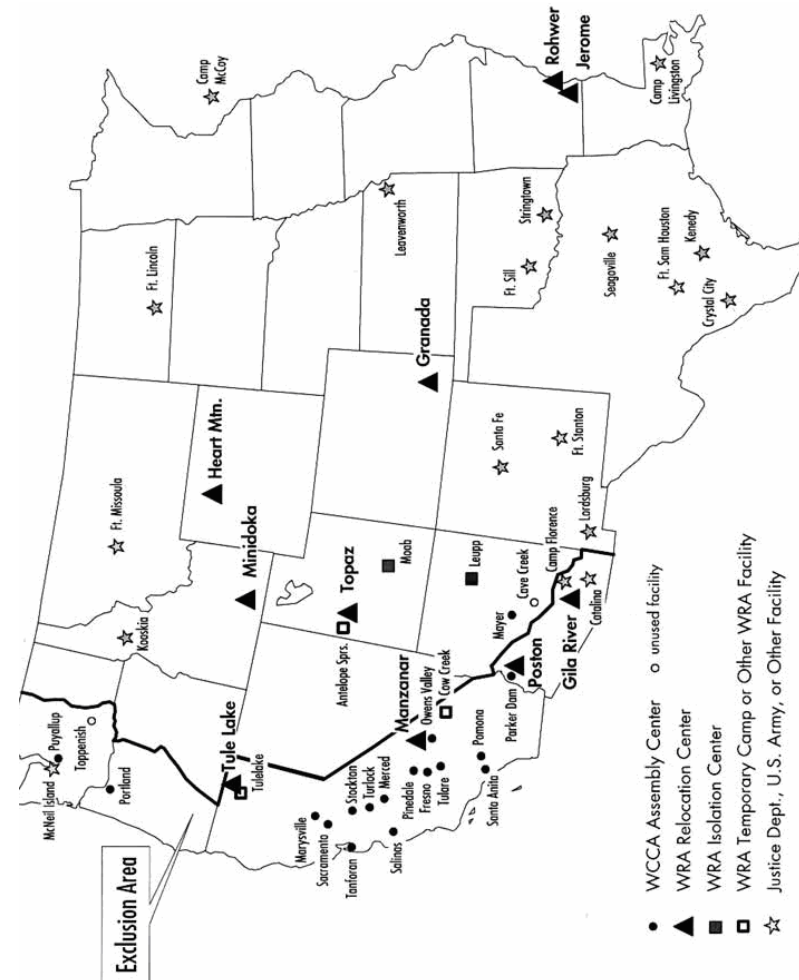


Figure 4-IV- . Five types of U.S. facilities related to the internment of Japanese Americans in the 1940s. Source: Burton, Farrell, Lord, and Lord 2006.

### Manzanar Relocation Center

The Manzanar Relocation Center, 180 miles northeast of Bakersfield, CA, was located at the base of the Sierra Nevada in the Owens

Valley in eastern California. By August 1942, the 540-acres center had eight watchtowers and a five-strand barbed wire fence around it (Figure 4-IV- ). A military police compound with 13 buildings was located beyond the southeast quarter of the relocation center.

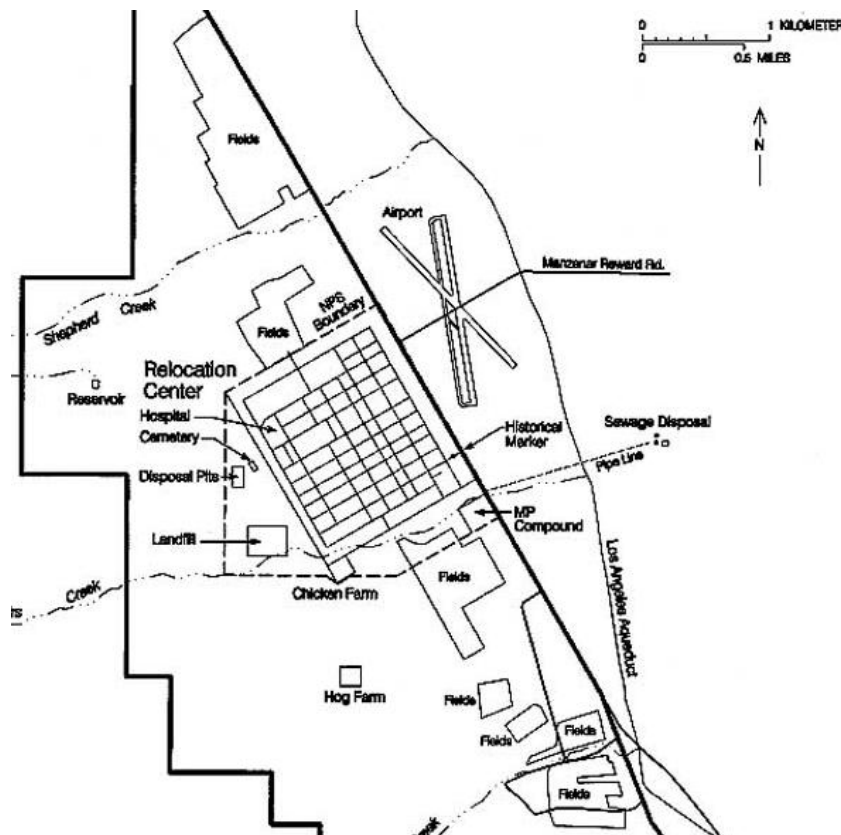


Figure 4-IV- . Original plan for the Manzanar Relocation Center. Source: Burton, Farrell, Lord, and Lord 2006A. This source provides a map for each of the camps.

In 1943 Ansel Adams photographically documented the people, their daily lives, sports and leisure activities, and agricultural activities at

Manzanar. His collection, *Suffering under a Great Injustice: Ansel Adams's Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar*, is now housed in the Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress (2006).



Figure 4-IV- . The Manzanar Relocation Center viewed from a guard tower with the Sierra Nevada in the background. Photo: Adams 2006.



Figure 4-IV- . Sign and entrance guard house to Manzanar. Photo: Adams 2006.



While school children recited the Pledge of Allegiance facing a U.S. flag, saying "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," the U.S. flag flew over the internment camps which denied liberty particularly to Japanese Americans but also to German and Italian Americans without legal cause (Figure 4-IV- ).



Figure 4-IV- . Manzanar with Mount Williamson in the background. The U.S. flag, which stands for justice to all, dominates injustice. Source: Lange 2006.

The camps were layout in military fashion. From a world of distinctive Japanese culture and individual choices and conveniences, the internees found themselves forced into standardized settlements and minimal residential quarters. The camps were laid out in grids with each "dwelling" block holding about 14 individual barracks (Figure 4-IV- ). Each barrack housed about four families: three units of 20 by 24 feet and one unit of 20 by 28 feet (Figure 4-IV- ). About 250 persons lived in one block and ate in a common mess hall and used the same recreational hall. Each block had shared facilities such as toilets for men and women, laundries, and ironing sheds. Other blocks had canteens, recreation facilities, churches, schools, post office, stores, hospital, warehouses, and administration buildings.

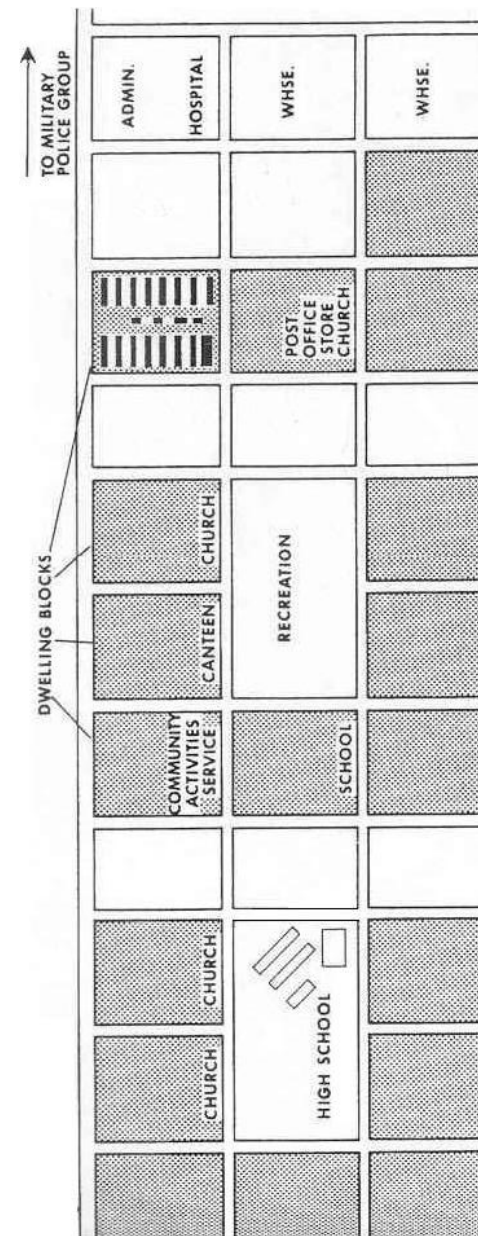


Figure 4-IV- . Layout of the Gila River Relocation Center. Source: Original 1949 WRA report published as Spicer, Hansen, Luomala, and Opler 1969.

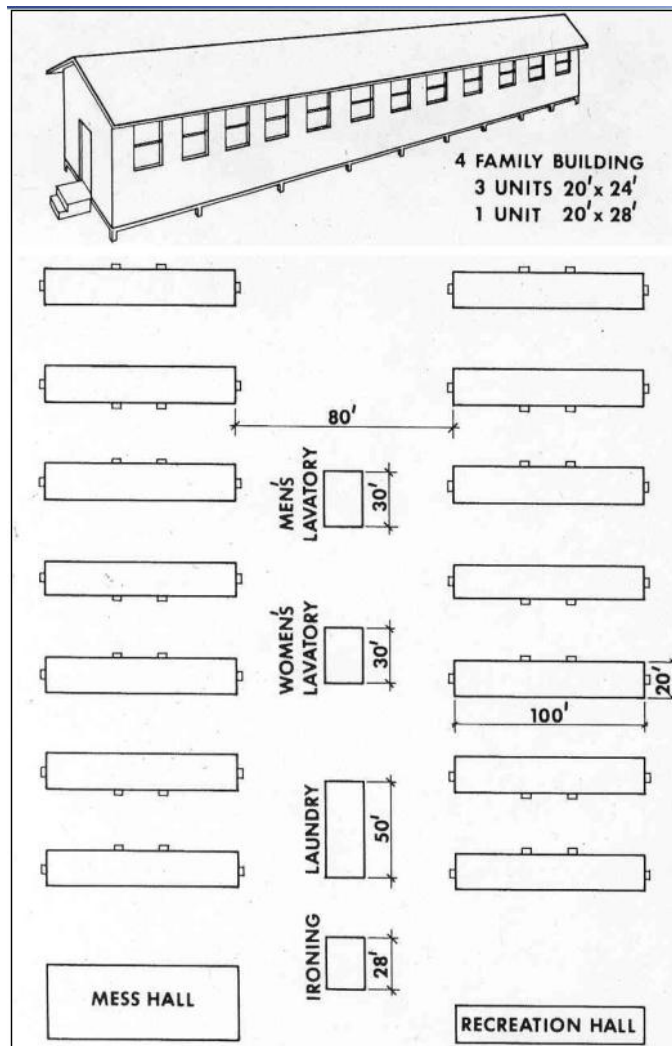


Figure 4-IV- . A typical spatial arrangement of barracks and facilities in one residential block of a relocation camp. Source: Original 1949 WRA report published as Spicer, Hansen, Luomala, and Opler 1969.



Figure 4-IV- . The Catholic Church at the Manzanar Relocation Center. Photo: Adams 2006.



Figure 4-IV- . The living quarters of a Japanese American family in a barrack. Photo: Original 1949 WRA report published as Spicer, Hansen, Luomala, and Opler 1969.

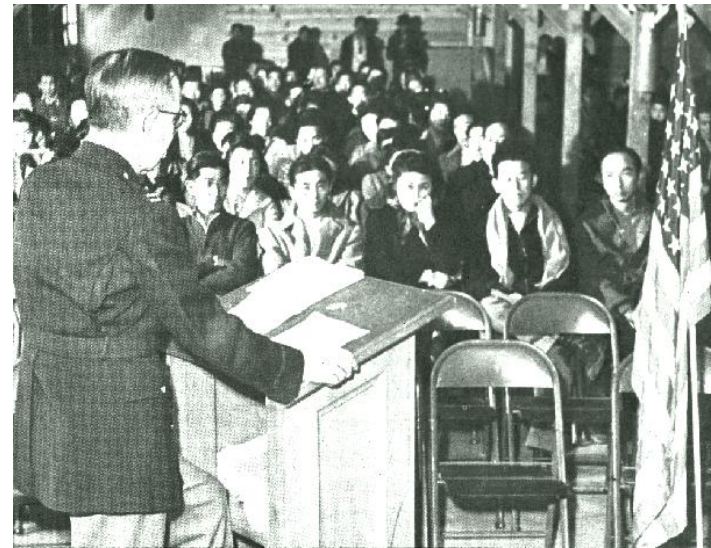


Internees built many of the civil and religious buildings (Figure 4-IV- ) in the camps and cleared and cultivated nearby fields ((Figure 4-IV- ).



*Figure 4-IV- . Internees working in the fields at the Manzanar Relocation Center with Mt. Williamson in the background. Photo: Adams 2006.*

Perversely, the U.S. Army even tried to recruit young Japanese in the camps to fight in Europe for freedoms that they and their families were denied at home (Figure 4-IV- )! By 1944 only 1,500 men had volunteered for military service (Spicer 1969). In addition, Japanese American soldiers were essential for the U.S. military to break the Japanese secret codes, which were written in Japanese. In Europe, although Japanese Americans soldiers were segregated into separate units, they fought gallantly and consequently had very high casualty rates, as military cemeteries (Figure 4-IV- ) document and were the most highly decorated units in U.S. military history.



*Figure 4-IV- . The U.S. military tried to recruit young Japanese Americans in the camps to fight for freedom abroad! Photo: Original 1949 WRA report published as Spicer, Hansen, Luomala, and Opler 1969.*



*Figure 4-IV- . A military cemetery in Hawaii. Photo: Ingolf Vogeler.*



### Gila River Relocation Center

Although most of the built features in the camps have vanished, topographic maps still show the outlines of roads and some of the facilities. For example, the topographic map of the former Gila River Relocation Center, 20 miles south of Phoenix, AZ, shows that the water tower was on a hill, the sewage disposal ponds were away from the camp itself, and a grid of dirt roads outlined where the buildings were located (Figure 4-IV- ).

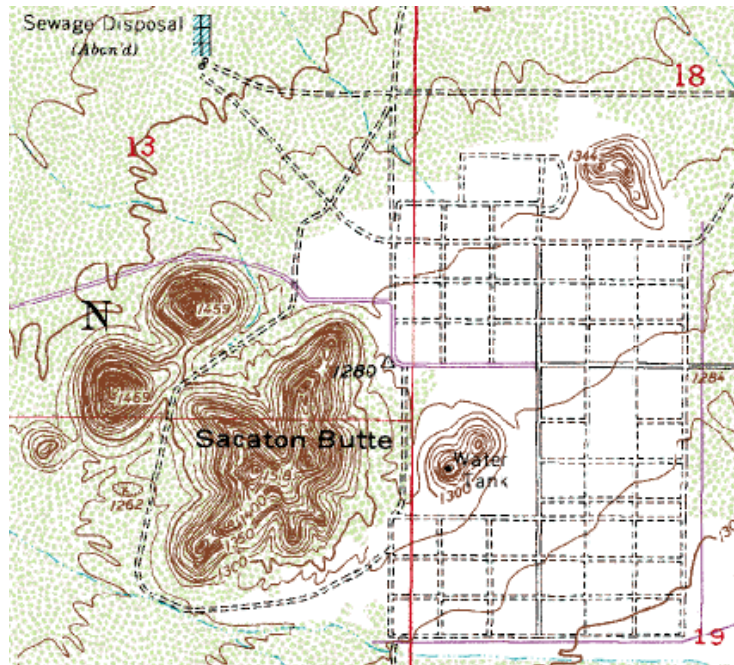


Figure 4-IV- . The former Butte Camp at the Gila River Relocation Center. Source: Sacaton Butte Quad, 1:50,000.

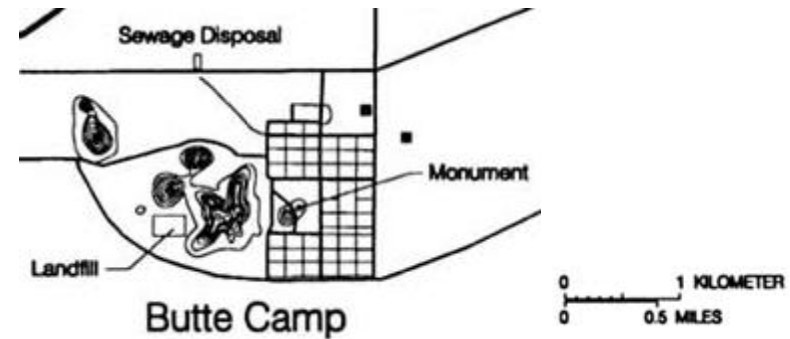


Figure 4-IV- . Close-up of the Butte Camp at the Gila River Relocation Center. Source: Burton, Farrell, Lord, and Lord 2006B.

What is left of the cultural landscape of racial oppression concerning the Japanese American concentration camps during World War II? Burton, Farrell, Lord, and Lord (2000) did field work at all relocation centers to determine the tangible, material remains currently left at these sites. Table 4-IV- shows the degree to which five categories of buildings and land uses have survived since their original construction.

### Responses to Internment

The responses to internment took many forms: resistance, remembrance, and restitution.

#### 1. Resistance

Oppression of any kind is sooner or later resisted by the people who are oppressed and by people who identify with the oppressed. About 6,000 young Japanese Americans, who had been born in the USA, renounced their citizenship and 5,000-8,000 returned to Japan after the war (Muller 2001).

Several groups supported Japanese American rights and fought against their internment: Socialist Party, especially its leader, Norman Thomas; American Friends Service Committee; Workers Defense League; Post War World Council; and Northern California Branch of the American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU). Although the national ACLU was dedicated to defending the civil rights of the U.S. Constitution, it actively tried to prevent the California chapter from legally representing Fred Korematsu, a Japanese American, who insisted on his constitutional rights not be interned because of his race.

	Central Area												Security			Agriculture					Support Facilities							Interpretation									
	Administration/Staff	Warehouse/Factory/Carage	Hospital	Barracks	Police Station/Jail	Fire Station	High School	Other Schools	Churches	Sports Fields and Facilities	Ponds and Gardens	Victory Gardens	Trees and other Vegetation	Sentry Post/Entrance	Perimeter Fence	Military Police Compound	Farm Kitchen	Chicken Farm	Turkey Farm	Hog Farm	Cattle Ranch/Dairy	Agricultural Fields	Irrigation Canals	Outlying Warehouse/Depot	Water Tank/Reservoir	Wells/Pumping Plant	Sewage Disposal	Landfill	Disposal Pits	Cemetery (on site)	Monument (historic)	Monument (recent)	Local Museum Exhibit	Directional Signs (highway)	Cemetery (relocated)		
Gila River - Butte Camp	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	×	●	●	○	×	×	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	×	●	●	●	○	●	
Gila River - Canal Camp	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	×	●	●	○	○	×	×	×	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	
Granada	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	×	×	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	
Heart Mountain	●	●	●	×	×	×	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	×	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Jerome	○	○	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Manzanar	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Minidoka	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	●	●	○	×	×	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Poston 1	●	○	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	○	○	×	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Poston 2	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	
Poston 3	×	×	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	
Rohwer	○	○	●	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Topaz	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tule Lake	●	●	○	○	●	○	×	×	×	○	×	×	×	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

● = substantial remains (standing buildings, foundations, and other features); ○ = minor remains (foundations and other features); X = no remains (destroyed or buried); shaded box = not applicable; empty box = no information.

Table 4-IV- . Comparison of landscape features remaining at former Relocation Camps. Source: Burton, Farrell, Lord, and Lord 2006C.

## 2. Remembrance

A) On 2 January 1945 the U.S. **Supreme Court** ruled that the relocation camps were indeed unconstitutional, contrary to its earlier decision that had been constitutional, yet in Hood River, OR, the American Legion erased the names from the town's Honor Roll of the Nisei who had served in the armed forces.

B) By 1973, a **plaque** had been erected in the Manzanar Relocation Center which captured the feelings associated with these camps. The plaque on the gate house cited hysteria, racism, and economic exploitation of Japanese Americans, despite that many of them were born in the United States and therefore were citizens. The rest had been prohibited becoming citizens by U.S. law.

C) In 1992 a **National Park Service Historic Site** was created at **Manzanar**, the best preserved of the camps, located in the desert of the Owen Valley, California. The camp held 10,000 internees, 80 percent had come from southern California. The Manzanar site today has a small cemetery with a monument, two stone guard houses built by internees, and an auditorium -- everything else is gone in this one-square-mile camp with 36 blocks of barracks.



Figure 4-IV-1 . Only a few small structures remain at the Manzanar



*Relocation Center, such as the stone guard house. Photo: Brady Foust, personal correspondence.*

The Park Service justifies the site with these bland words:

... America as a nation made up of diverse ethnic and racial groups. All of these groups, not just a chosen few, should be included in the story of our national heritage.

An interpretive center was added to the Manzanar National Historic Site in 2004 as well as an auto tour (Figure 4-IV), ranger-guided tours, and self explorations of the gardens in block 22, chicken farm, and orchards.

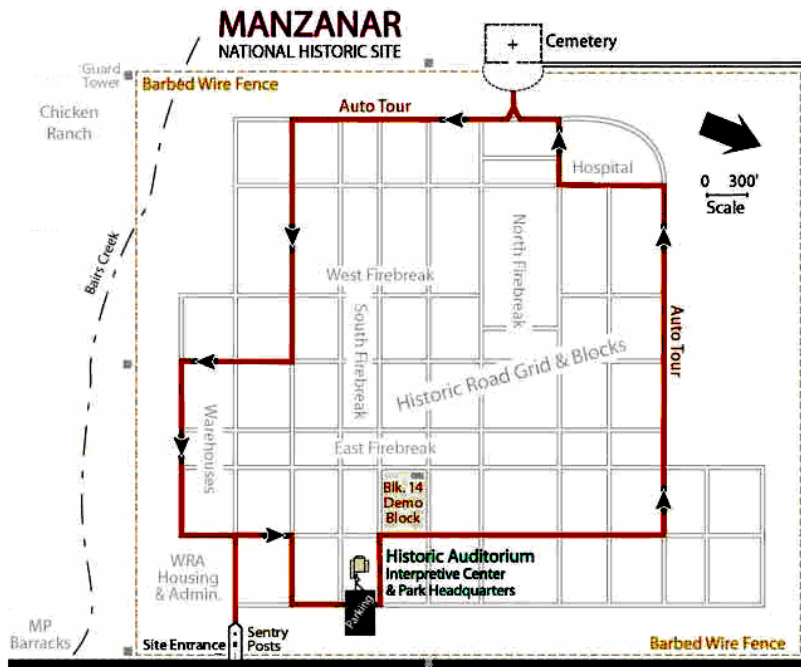


Figure 4-IV- . The 3.2 mile auto tour at the Manzanar National Historic Site includes the few remaining landscape features. Source: National Park Service, Manzanar 2006B.

**D) Annual pilgrimages** to the monument at Manzanar (Figure 4-IV- ) are made by former internees, their families, and others to remember this injustice with the hope of avoiding such persecutions in the future. A particularly large gathering was at the 50th anniversary of Manzanar in 1992.



Figure 4-IV- . Manzanar memorial to injustice appropriately with Japanese writing. Photo: Brady Foust, personal correspondence.

After the camps were closed, some former internees remained in the areas in which they had been interned (Figure 4-IV- ).

**E) A war memorial** was established in 2001 in Washington, DC, for the Japanese American soldiers who had served in World War II while their parents were interned.

### 3. Restitution

**A)** In 1948 President Truman signed the **Japanese Evacuation Claims Act** which allocated \$131 million for compensations to internees; only \$38 million was paid.

**B)** In 1980, the **Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians** was established by Congress. This commission



reviewed the impact of Executive Order 9066 on Japanese Americans and determined that they were the victims of discrimination by the federal



Figure 4-IV- . A former Japanese internee now specializes in flowers outside of Phoenix, AZ. Photo: Ingolf Vogeler.

government. On 10 August 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the **Civil Liberties Act** which was passed by Congress to provide a presidential apology and symbolic payment of \$20,000 (not taxed) to each internees, evacuees, and persons of Japanese ancestry who had lost liberty or property because of discriminatory action by the federal government during World War II. In the following year President George Bush issued a formal apology for the U.S. government. About 80,000 former internees were entitled for compensation. Although \$1.6 billion was paid out, the estimated total lost in property and incomes based on 1942 prices was \$2 billion without annual interest. In 1999 values, Japanese Americans had lost homes and businesses estimated to be worth between \$4 to 5 billions.

The Act also created the **Civil Liberties Public Education Fund** to help teach children and the public about the internment period. This was the first and only time in U.S. history that an official apology was made to any of the many U.S. groups wrongfully treated since the founding of the country.

### Lessons from Racial Profiling and Discrimination

Even though President Roosevelt authorized the internment of persons from military areas, the U.S. government could not have believed

that the Japanese Americans posed a threat to U. S. military security for a number of reasons. First, no Japanese Americans were interned from or on Hawaii -- where the greatest threat from espionage existed after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Second, three relocation centers were located within the "Exclusionary Zone" designated by the government itself in which Japanese Americans were to be removed. Third, only foreign-born adult men were officially interned, not foreign-born adult women or U.S.-born children. The former were registered with internee numbers; the latter two groups were registered as "voluntary." Fourth, most of the watch towers in the relocation centers were regularly only partially staffed by armed guards. Fifth, only simple barbwire fencing surrounded the relocation centers and the barbwire was even removed in some centers after several years. Sixth, internees worked on farms outside the camps. Seventh, internees even assembled war-time equipment, such as parachutes. Nevertheless, the U.S. President, his civil and military advisers, the Supreme Court, many mainstream organizations, and the general public supported violating the constitutional guaranteed rights of Japanese Americans. Not until 1952 did the U.S. Congress lift the ban on prohibiting foreign-born Japanese Americans from becoming citizens.

The U.S. legal system is supposed to guarantee, yet consistently has not applied, three principles regarding individuals:

- **innocence:** until proven guilty,
- **due process:** accused must have broken a law before being charged with a crime, and
- **equal protection:** regardless of characteristics, i.e. ethnic, racial, religious, gender, age, martial-status, income, etc.

Even after the U.S. government remembered, apologized, and partially compensated the surviving interned Japanese Americans, the President and Congress have not learned from this historical injustice and other previous discriminatory and racist laws and actions. After the attacks on the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, President George W. Bush introduced the over 500-page Patriot Act which the U.S. Senate promptly passed, except for one dissenting vote by Senator Russ Feingold. Almost none of the Senators had read the Act, let alone understood its full implications for civil and constitutional rights. Yet this Act was reauthorized in 2005 by Congress with few modifications. And in the Fall of 2006, the U.S. Senate passed the Military Commissions Act which allows the President to label anyone, including U.S. citizens, as

enemy combatants and thus deriving them of habeas corpus -- the corner stone of Western and the U.S. legal system.

This “attack” on the United States was used by the Bush administration to invoke national security measures which were similar to those used against the Japanese Americans after the Pearl Harbor attack. More than 1,200 Arabic and Islamic immigrants throughout the U.S. were arrested simply because they had “suspicious” ethnic and religious attributes that were similar to the 9/11 hijackers. Half of these detainees had lived in the USA for at least six years and had close family relationships here. Similarly, after World War I, the Attorney General ordered thousands of immigrants to be rounded up and detained without due process as well. Furthermore, President Bush declared that the 9/11 prisoners would be tried by secret military courts. But in 1995 when Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, both ex-army men, blew up the Oklahoma Federal Building, which destroyed half of the nine-story building, killed 168 people, and injured hundreds more, ex-U.S. military young men were *not rounded up* and imprisoned, even though McVeigh and Nichols were convicted of terrorism, murder, and conspiracy. In this case, the bombing was treated as an internal crime rather than as a foreign attack. How differently the Oklahoma and 9/11 bombings were responded to reflect the importance of ideas, in this case the political mind set or ideology, that governments, institutions, and individuals hold which in turn results in their behaviors. Our conceptualization of events and issues is the most critical to our reactive actions and the built cultural landscapes that result.

In 2005 farther violations of civil rights were revealed by the media that President George W. Bush had signed a secret agreement with the approval of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice that allowed the National Security Administration (NSA) to conduct secret domestic spying on U.S. citizens for the first time. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) stipulates that the NSA is required to get warrants from the FISA courts before wiretaps can begin, except for the first 15 days of an emergency or the first 72 hours of an exigent search, after which the Administration is required to apply retroactively for warrants. The FISA courts have hardly been an obstacle to domestic spying, having turned down less than one percent of all NSA eavesdropping requests. Historically, the NSA could legally eavesdrop on foreigners abroad and within the United States, but not U.S. citizens. Yet, President Bush said this new warrantless domestic spying was “designed to protect civil liberties.” This is an excellent example of double talk common to authoritarian governments

regardless of time and place. James Risen (2006) documents the full extent of the Bush administration’s violation of the U.S. constitution.

Regardless of the circumstances, every “military” or “national security” threat has been used by the U.S. government to ignore or suspend the U.S. Constitution and the legal principles which supposedly make the United States such a special place, the envy of the rest of the world, and the justification for “bringing” democracy and freedom to Europe and Japan after World War II and numerous other countries since then, such as Grenada, Panama, Cuba, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq. As Mark Twain said tongue-in-cheek, “It is by the goodness of God that in our country [USA] we have three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either.” Will the U.S. government, its institutions, and its diverse people ever learn to really and fully honor its constitution and its noble experiment? Or will the United States, like so many other past and present governments elsewhere, proclaim the noble but act meanly?

### Differences and Similarities of Racist Landscapes of North America

The racist cultural landscapes discussed in this chapter resulted from the race-based attitudes, policies, and actions of the various colonial and national governments of Canada and the United States over the last five hundred years.

Native peoples had continuously occupied continental North America in one form or another from hunting and gathering to permanent agriculture to fishing, even though for European agriculturalists much of the continent did seem empty and unused. With the Age of Discovery in the end of the fifteenth century, European explorers and their royal representatives first encountered **native peoples** whose wealth, first gold and then land and labor, they wanted. In both Canada and the United States treaties were forced upon Indian tribes to “cede” their lands which they controlled to foreign governments in return for guarantees of other lands and certain rights, such as hunting, fishing, and gathering wild foods. National governments continued the imperial policies and functions of their respective colonial governments. As European family settlers were occupying and expanding across the “empty” continent, the Indian frontier was retreated, until only scattered **reservations in the West** were left of their vast former homelands.

By 1700, British North America, principally what would later become the United States, was importing **African slaves**, ushering in another era of racial exploitation and cultural landscape formation. Large-

scale forced labor was organized on **plantations** to produce export crops for European markets. Slavery relocated African slaves, who had occupied villages throughout West and Central Africa, to the continuous belt of plantations and urban slave-based settlements in the **Deep South**. As slavery and plantation agriculture spread from Virginia to Texas, a unique cultural landscape emerged, similar to other plantation economies particularly in the Caribbean Islands and Brazil.

The northward reach of the Spanish Empire in North America and the later land claims of the independent country of Mexico collided with the national ambitions and arrogance of the newly-formed country of the United States. The unilateral annexation of the northern half of Mexico by the United States assured that yet other distinctive culture groups, **Mexicans and Hispanos**, and their cultural landscapes would for ever exist in the **U.S. Borderlands**. These borderland people had spatially occupied the southern part of North America and their extensive cultural landscapes were simply incorporated into the United States.

The most recent and shortest-lived racist landscape concerns the **Japanese** in both Canada and the United States when during World War II both governments interned these residents and citizens in **concentration camps** from 1941 to 1946. Although Japanese Americans had been concentrated along the West Coast of North America before the war, they were forcibly relocated in concentration camps throughout the **West**.

On the one hand, governments forcibly rounded up and moved Indians, Blacks, and Japanese to new locations from their original homelands. Indians and Japanese were relocated within North America and African slaves were relocated from one side of the Atlantic Ocean to the other. On the other hand, the Spanish- and Indian-origin peoples of the Borderlands were not forcibly relocated, except during the Depression, but rather they were incorporated into a new and foreign nation-state, the United States of America.

At one level, each of the racial and cultural group discussed here has its own distinctive historical encounter with the national governments of North America yet at another level, they all share the same race-based discriminatory policies and actions which robbed them of their wealth (in the form of labor, land, and personal wealth), destroyed their communities and cultures, and/or even killed them. The **different ways** that racism destroys people and their culture should not distract us from the **common persecution** which underlay all forms of racism. The singularity of oppression was/is expressed in a plurality of forms, both behavioral and material.