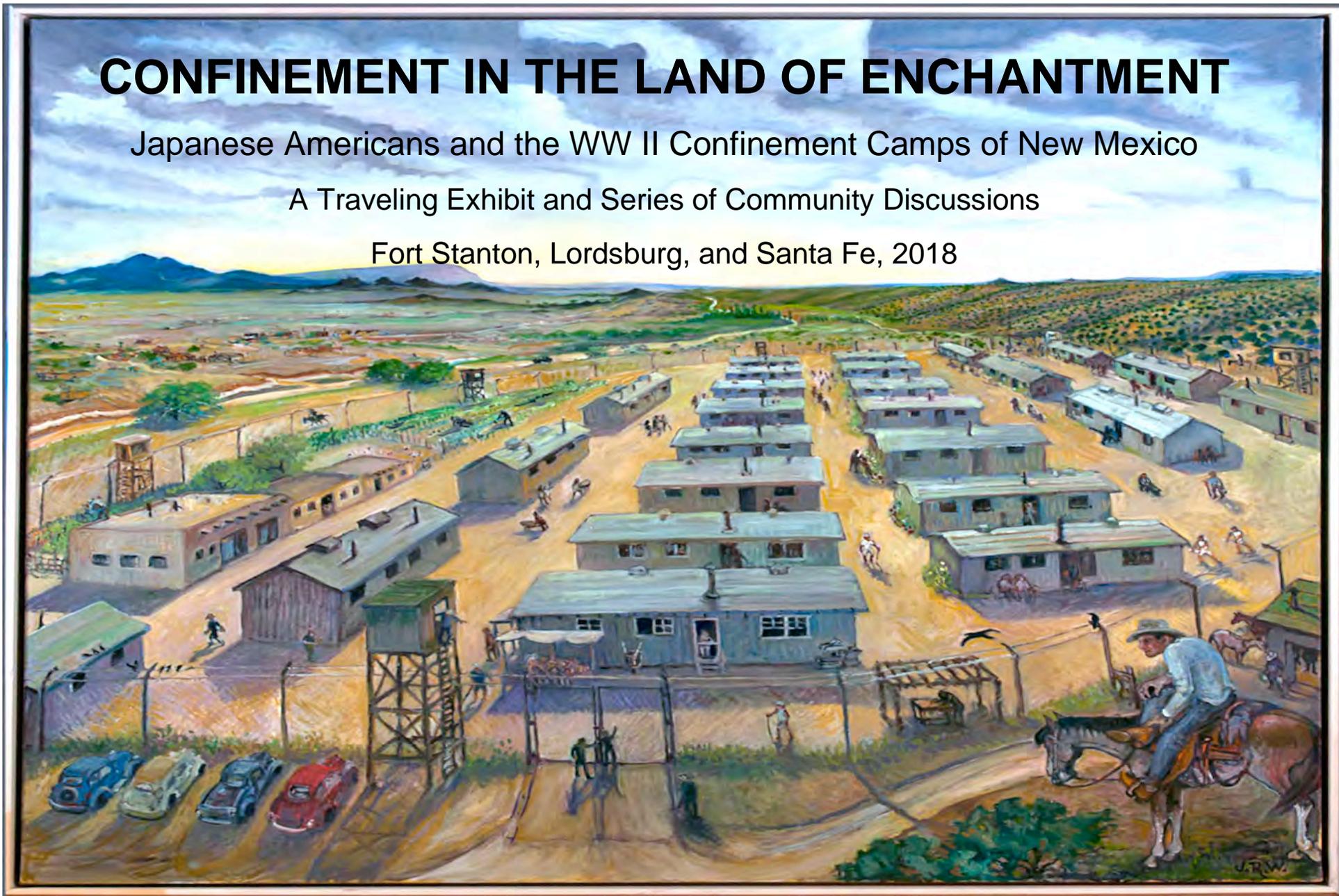


CONFINEMENT IN THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

Japanese Americans and the WW II Confinement Camps of New Mexico

A Traveling Exhibit and Series of Community Discussions

Fort Stanton, Lordsburg, and Santa Fe, 2018



The CLOE Project, Phase III, Presents A Traveling Exhibit with Community Forums

Developed, Crafted, and Funded by:

- **The New Mexico Japanese American Citizens League**
- **Grants from the National Park Service's Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) Program**
- **Select Faculty and Carpentry Students of Central New Mexico Community College**

The exhibit organizers also owe a tremendous debt to the visionaries, authors, volunteers, and institutional partners of **CLOE Phase I and Phase II**, who compiled the research, images, and core text used in this exhibit. The Nikkei community of New Mexico and the CLOE III Team especially wish to thank **Van Citters Historic Preservation** of Albuquerque and the **Public Lands History Center** at Colorado State University for supplying vital guidance in those earlier stages.

Unless otherwise indicated, all images appearing in this exhibit may also be found, with fuller attributions, in either the CLOE Publication of 2017, "**Confinement in the Land of Enchantment**" (identified as "**CP**" in captions), or on the "**CLOE Story Map**" website ("**CSM**" in captions).

Always Something More to Learn

The Land of Enchantment boasts beautiful landscapes, a diversity of peoples and cultures, and a rich history, but it's also a land of contested pasts. Here, remembering and telling stories is as political as it is personal. New Mexicans are no strangers to the power of history to tell us who we have been and who we are today.

The “Confinement in the Land of Enchantment” (CLOE) Project chronicles the experiences of people of Japanese descent who lived in New Mexico during World War II, mainly as prisoners in one of four confinement camps. Do not be surprised if you have heard little or nothing about the New Mexico camps or the “Nikkei” people (Japanese Americans) who lived here during the war.



Guard tower at Camp Lordsburg, New Mexico (CSM)

The “Forgotten” Camps of New Mexico

The bulk of this exhibit deals with the histories of four confinement sites that were located in the Land of Enchantment at Santa Fe, Lordsburg, Fort Stanton, and at a place called Old Raton Ranch, or Baca Camp. Most people are more familiar with the story of the mass removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast during World War II. Those victims were incarcerated by the **War Relocation Authority (WRA)** in large “relocation camps” such as Manzanar, Minidoka, or Heart Mountain. **No WRA camps were built in New Mexico.** Rather, agencies of the **Department of Justice (DOJ)**, including the **Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)**, ran the Santa Fe, Baca, and Fort Stanton camps, while the **US Army** managed Camp Lordsburg (1943 sketch below, CP).



The DOJ and Army **internment camps** and their **internees** were the focus of the CLOE Project, not the WRA camps. However, the larger story of **mass exclusion** and **mass relocation** does figure into the history told here. While unusual and largely overlooked by other studies, New Mexico’s four Japanese confinement camps cannot be left out of the complex but fascinating history of the Japanese Americans in WW II.

Navigating the CLOE Exhibit

Visitors through the exhibit are encouraged to follow the directional arrows to get the fullest story. That said, each of the four camp histories are marked (Baca, Lordsburg, Santa Fe or Fort Stanton) and can be viewed in any order.

The community historians of the **CLOE Project** sought to summarize the existing scholarship and present some fresh evidence concerning:

- The four internment and detention camps built in WW II New Mexico
- The federal government's actions and other circumstances that caused "Confinement in the Land of Enchantment"
- The differences and the connections between the official *internment camps* of New Mexico and larger Japanese American "internment camps" (officially called WRA "relocation centers")
- The way Japanese New Mexicans (residents) got along as the war started and progressed
- The attitudes of other New Mexicans regarding the Japanese internment camps and internees of New Mexico

The CLOE project has also sought to explore questions concerning ethnic and national identity, citizenship, civil liberties and how these can be influenced by war and intense racism. **The "CLOE Qs"** (questions) that appear in the exhibit ask you to think about those topics and others. We invite you to submit your thoughts about the exhibit in the Comments Box near the end of the displays.

“What Should We Call Them?”

German Americans, Italian Americans, Mexican Americans. “I’m Irish, Dutch, and Greek!” We use ethnicity labels rather loosely in America, without making too many assumptions about someone’s official citizenship status or birth place.

In Japanese American Studies, however, terms and labels are debated, even among the experts. Japanese immigrants were not permitted to become US citizens (official “Americans”) until after 1952. Moreover, unfair questions about the “loyalty” of all “Japanese” people in America led to grave injustices and hardships during WWII. The American-born US citizens among them were not given their due rights during the war; they were all called “Japs” instead, and the vast majority of the US Mainland population ended up in American camps. Technically, most of the people who were sent to the New Mexico camps were *Japanese* (legal immigrants but Japanese nationals, ineligible for US citizenship). And yet, they were also

“Japanese Americans” who had lived in America for decades, had brought wives over, raised American-born children, had built homes and businesses in America.



Japanese “picture brides” arriving in America, c. 1920 (CSM)

The Japanese immigrant generation is also known as the *Issei*. Their American-born children, the second generation, are the *Nisei*, and a smaller third generation called the *Sansei* was starting to be born as the war approached. A substitute term for Japanese Americans that avoids the citizenship questions is *Nikkei*, which means roughly “Japanese people in America.” Where it is important, the CLOE Project has sought to use the more exact and “official” labels to explain Nikkei history and wartime events associated with “internment” and “evacuation.” However, we use “American” and “Japanese Americans” somewhat broadly and invite visitors to think about the labels they prefer.

CLOE Qs.: What makes someone an “American”? A “Japanese person”? A “Japanese American”?



Nisei soldiers at Camp Shelby, WW II (CSM)

The Issei Arrive from Japan

Japanese immigration to US territory began around 1890, peaked just after the turn of the century, and ended completely in 1924. The Issei migrated mainly to Hawaii and the West Coast of United States due to hardships associated with the overcrowding, land reforms, and the rapid modernization of Japan. As with certain other groups, like the Chinese, Italians, and Greeks, the Issei viewed themselves as sojourners and planned to return home with riches from America. However, many ended up working in America for a lifetime and settling in the Islands or on the Mainland.

Japanese laborers around 1900 (Denver Public Library, Western History Collection)



Asian Immigrants Not Welcome

The Issei confronted intense racial prejudice and nativism as they planted themselves in America. Anti-Japanese sentiment was particularly harsh in California, where the vast majority on the Mainland lived. The Issei felt anti-Asian racism as the Chinese had, and Japanese's success in farming breed resentment, envy, and restrictive laws. Consider this timeline of legal restrictions to 1942:

- **1790 Naturalization Act:** Restricted US Citizenship to “any. . . free white person.”
- **1798 Alien Enemies Act:** Made aliens “liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed” during wars or conflicts with their home country.
- **1882 Chinese Exclusion Act:** Barred Chinese immigrants and demonstrated increasing animosity towards Asian people in the United States.
- **1908 The Gentlemen’s Agreement:** Informal agreement between the United States & Japan that severely curtailed further immigration to US territory.
- **1913 California Passes Alien Land Law:** Prohibited “aliens ineligible for citizenship” (the Japanese) from owning agricultural land in the state, or leasing land by the 1920s (but only partially effective).
- **1921 The Ladies’ Agreement:** Informal agreement between the United States and Japan that barred the emigration of picture brides.
- **1922 *Ozawa v. United States*:** Japanese immigrant Takao Ozawa unsuccessfully challenged federal laws against Japanese immigrants becoming US citizens by claiming Japanese individuals should be classified as “free white persons.”
- **1924 Immigration Act:** A provision of it barred aliens ineligible for citizenship from immigrating to the United States, closing off all immigration from Japan.
- **1940 Smith Act:** Required all aliens over the age of fourteen to be fingerprinted and register with the government.
- **1942 Executive Order 9066:** Issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, authorized the Secretary of War and any military commander designated by him “to prescribe military areas...from which any or all persons may be excluded,” paving the way for the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans that soon would follow.
- **1942 Executive Order 9102:** Issued by President Roosevelt that created the War Relocation Authority (WRA), which oversaw the removal of the majority of Japanese Americans from the West Coast.

Becoming Japanese American

Despite their troubles, the industrious Issei registered some remarkable accomplishments on American soil. They started at the bottom but advanced rapidly to better jobs. The Japanese played an instrumental role in the early 1900s building and maintaining the western railroads, processing fish and harvesting produce, cutting timber, and helping to mine coal and copper. Soon they were calling for wives from Japan (the famous “picture brides”), and starting families that changed the course of western agriculture. The Japanese-American “truck farmers” of vegetables and berry crops in California, Washington, Oregon would become world-famous. Issei men and women put down roots in America and invested in a better future for their American-born children, the Nisei. However, World War II would destroy those dreams of a better life.

Japanese family on their farm, c. 1920s,
courtesy of the Umeyo Sakagami Collection
(DENSHO Archive)



Japanese Americans After Pearl Harbor

Shortly before the United States entered into World War II, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began organizing lists of Japanese, German, and Italian nationals who were deemed “dangerous” and who would be arrested if the country declared war on the Axis Powers. Within hours of Japan attacking Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the government began rounding up these individuals on the Department of Justice (DOJ) and FBI’s so-called “ABC” lists, picking up a few thousand Issei men.

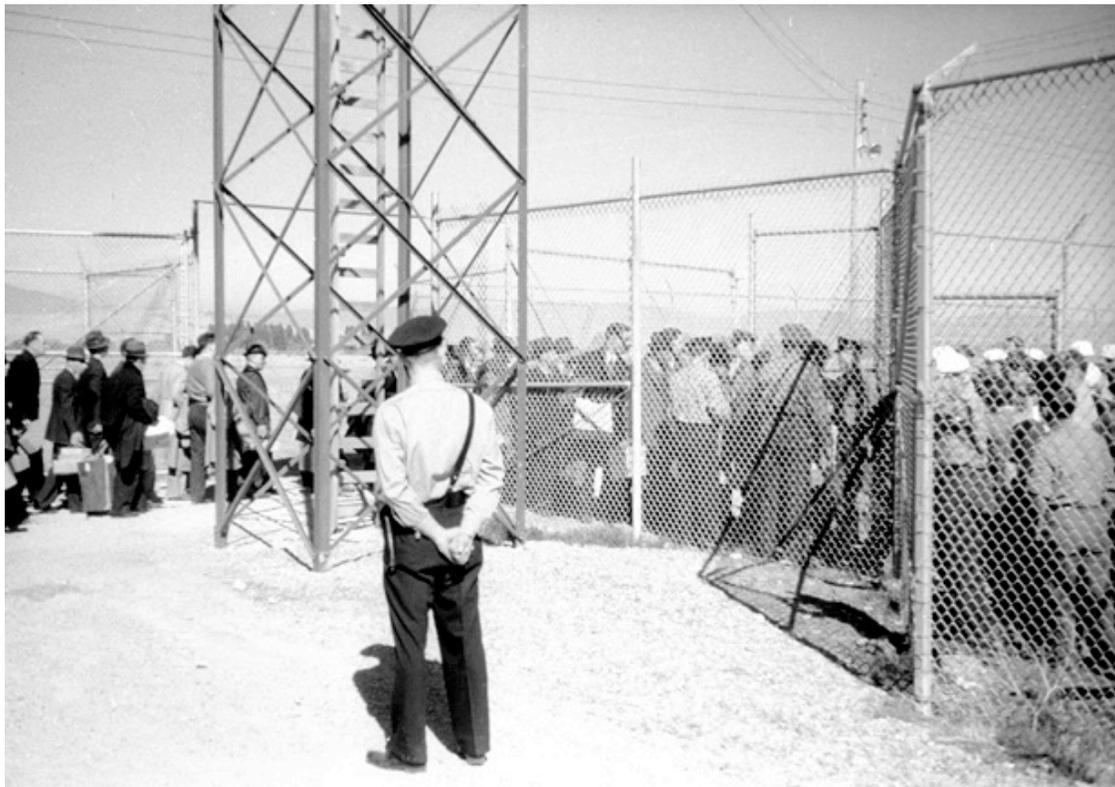
FBI agents ultimately searched many thousands of Japanese American homes in the weeks to come, sometimes confiscating short wave radios, cameras, and the occasional firearm if they had not been turned in as “contraband” that “enemy-alien” families could not possess.



Image of the Pearl Harbor bombing attack by Japan (CP)

Within seventy-two hours of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the FBI had arrested 3,846 Japanese, German, and Italian aliens. By November of 1942 more than twelve thousand “alien enemies” were being held in DOJ detention camps. Of those detainees, 44 percent were Issei even though the total Japanese immigrant population was very small compared to that of German and Italian immigrants.

The DOJ’s Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) partnered with the US Army to detain immigrants at two large camps in Bismarck, North Dakota, and Missoula, Montana, and later, in New Mexico, Texas, and elsewhere.



Aliens arriving at the Fort Missoula Internment Camp (CP)

Japanese Exclusion Orders

By February of 1942, pressures had grown to remove all Japanese Americans, aliens and US citizens alike, from the West Coast and away from “vital areas.” On February 19th President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. The Order authorized the Secretary of War “to prescribe military areas...from which any or all persons may be excluded.” The following month, Lt. General John L. DeWitt (pictured here) issued “Proclamation No. 1” that designated the western portions of Washington, Oregon and California and a southern stretch of Arizona as “Military Area No. 1,” from which all Japanese Americans would soon be ordered to “voluntarily evacuate” as a matter of “military necessity.”



Most of the Nikkei had nowhere to go, and no friends in the interior states. In some cases, gun-toting mobs and hate-filled proprietors of gas stations and motels greeted those who tried to cross into Nevada, Wyoming, or Arizona. A few thousand Nikkei did move to safer states, including a small number who came to New Mexico. However, over 100,000 Japanese Americans would ultimately face a “freeze” on “voluntary evacuation” in March, followed by the systematic round-up and confinement of the entire group in the crude “assembly centers” and America’s WRA concentration camps.

CLOE Q's: We know that “military necessity” was a false explanation, so what other factors led to the exclusion and mass incarceration of the Nikkei of the West Coast?

New Mexico's Internment Camps

There were no WRA camps constructed in New Mexico, but two large internment camps and two other, little-known Japanese American confinement camps did appear. The War Department built a large interment camp outside Lordsburg, and the DOJ and INS managed the three other camps. With the exception of Baca Camp (also known as Old Raton Ranch), which held a small number of Nikkei families removed from Clovis, the internment camps of New Mexico held male prisoners only, mostly Issei who had been arrested in other places in those early FBI raids.

Some of the Clovis Nikkei ended up in the WRA camps, but their story is also unique and peculiar compared to typical experiences. Nevertheless, moving on to look at Clovis and the Baca Camp will reveal more about the larger history of Japanese Americans and WW II.

Sketch of the "Baca Camp" that held the Clovis "evacuees" (CP)



Mass “Evacuation” from Clovis, New Mexico

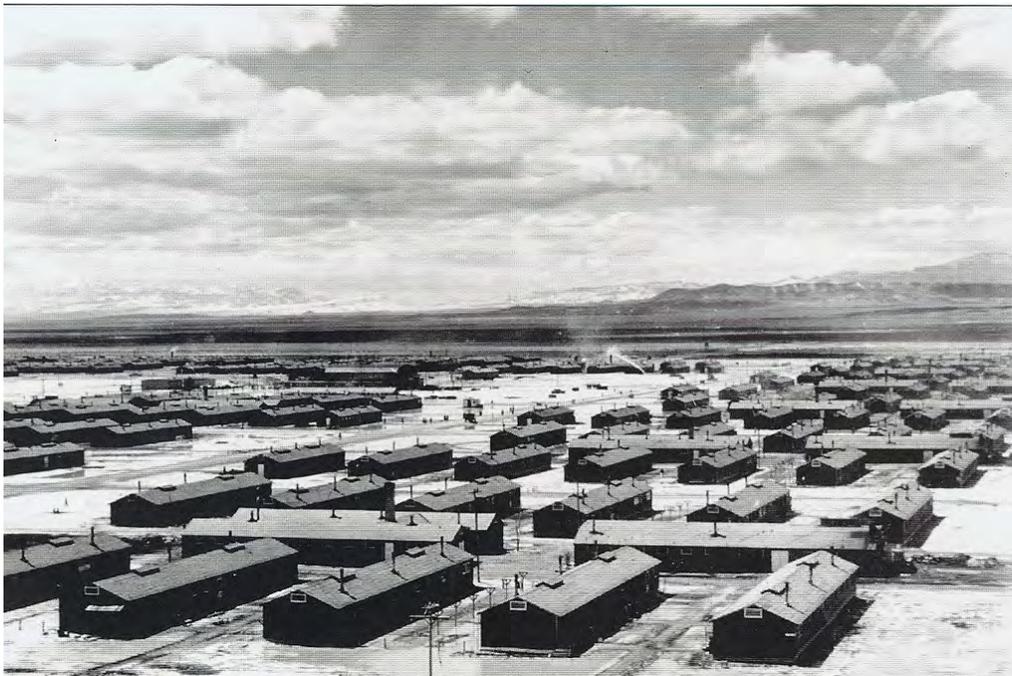
In January of 1942, the people living in Clovis, New Mexico, became some of the very first Japanese Americans to be forced from their homes and taken to camps by the US government during WWII. The Clovis case was highly unusual in some ways, but it foreshadowed the larger mass “evacuations” that would land roughly 120,000 people of Japanese heritage in America’s concentration camps.



The Poston Relocation Camp in Arizona, one of the 10 WRA camps (CSM)

The Clovis “evacuation” was odd because it occurred weeks before any other forced removal of Japanese Americans. In other parts of New Mexico, the Nikkei residents suffered few serious problems during the war. The peculiar Clovis case raises several **CLOE Qs**:

- **How does the Clovis case fit into the story of the New Mexico internment camps and the WRA camps?**
- **What caused the Clovis “evacuation?”**
- **Why were these Nikkei residents of New Mexico targeted—and not ones in other railroad towns?**



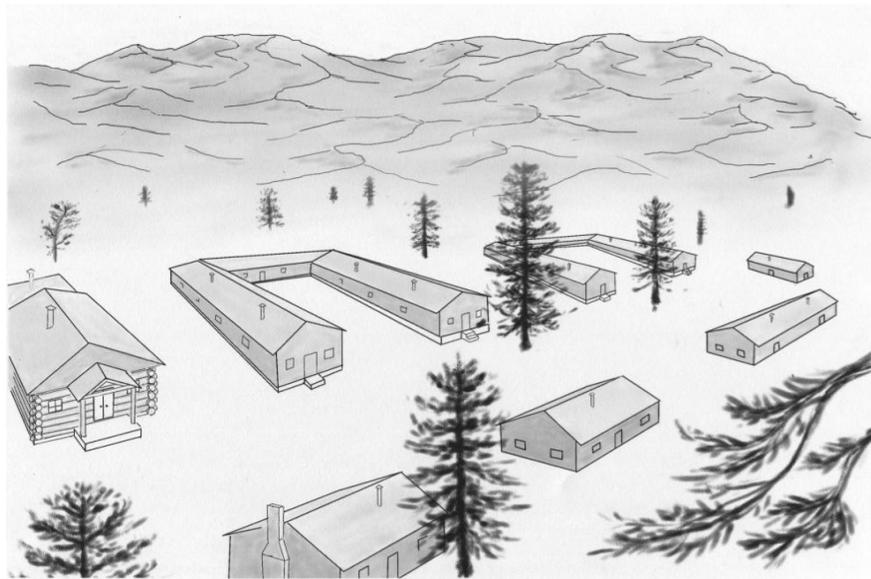
The Topaz WRA Camp in Utah housed some Clovis “evacuees” (CSM)

The CLOE Project found plausible explanations in historian John J. Culley’s study of the causes, and the Nisei of Clovis have added oral history interviews, written memoirs, photos, and drawings to tell us what their families experienced.

Similarities and Oddities

The mass, forced “relocation” of all persons of Japanese ancestry from Clovis resembles what happened in the West-Coast “Evacuation Zone” in some ways but not in other ways. Similarly, it involved a civilian group that posed no security threat, and the Clovis victims were ultimately sent to the large WRA camps, like the West Coast evacuees. We can see that the forces of *“racism, wartime hysteria, and failures of political leadership”* contributed to the Clovis disaster, just as they drove the larger disaster, according to the historians.

That said, this was a unique case where “evacuation” actually seemed to carry the real meaning of “rescuing victims” of an unfolding disaster. While the wartime experiences of these victims involved federal officials and actions, *local* history and *local* circumstances seemed to drive outcomes in Clovis. Furthermore, the Clovis Nikkei would be exiled for a year in one of the most unusual and least known of the Japanese-American confinement sites, a place known as Baca Camp.



Sketch of Baca Camp by Ben Ebihara (CSM)

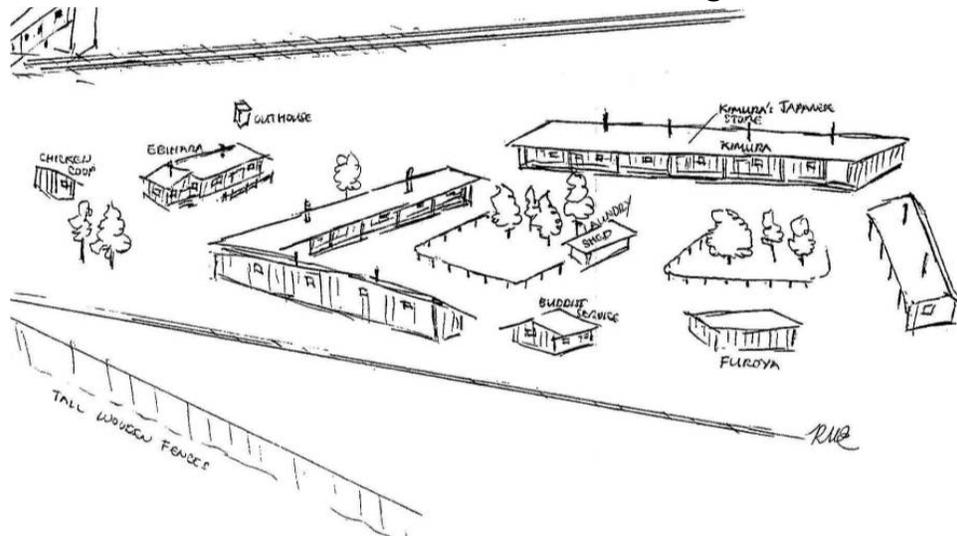
The Issei Railroad Shop Men of Clovis

Modern Clovis was founded in 1907 by the Santa Fe Railway, and in 1919, the railroad began to hire a fairly large group of skilled Japanese machinists in the local repair shop. Grateful to the company, these workers refused to join in a nationwide strike that occurred a few years later, which caused resentment among other workers during and after the strike.



Santa Fe Railroad Workers, Clovis, around 1920 (CP)

Animosity lingered because the company let Japanese workers and their growing families live rent-free on the rail yards in a semi-fenced compound of one-story buildings. The residents turned this into a semi-enclosed cluster of homes, trees, gardens, a traditional Japanese bath facility and Koi pond.



Sketch of the Japanese compound of Clovis (CP)

Race Relations in Clovis and “Little Texas”

The Clovis locals called the isolated compound where the Japanese lived “Jap Town,” the “Jap Camp,” or the “Jap Quarters.” As part of the “Little Texas” region of New Mexico, white prejudice toward all people of color and segregation customs ran strong in Clovis, prior to World War II.

The American-born children of the Ebihara and Kimura families attended the public schools, even though the schools did not welcome Black, Mexican, or Native American students. The Nisei got along fine in school, but things like segregated movie theaters, racial slurs, and occasional threats and assaults were part of the world of the Clovis Japanese.

The prewar years had done little to break down racial barriers, anti-Japanese sentiment, and social isolation in Clovis. That would contribute to the intense hysteria and racial hostility that broke out there, as the war began.



Ebihara children of Clovis on Easter, 1941, outside their home (CSM)

The Crisis in Clovis

A total of thirty-two Nikkei got caught up in the wartime drama that unfolded in Clovis, ten men and five women of the Issei generation and seventeen Nisei children. The Ebihara and the Kimura families made up the majority of the group, and about half of the railroad workers were single men, some with wives in Japan. None could have imagined what would unfold from early December 1941 to late January 1942.

On the day of the Pearl Harbor attack, a Santa Fe Railway boss came to Clovis from Amarillo, Texas, to confer with local company officials. He also called the Anglo shop workers together and reported to his superiors in Chicago that the workers had expressed anger and resentment toward the Japanese. He told the Issei “to lay off work and to stay close to their quarters.” The local situation would get worse over the coming weeks.



A military parade in Clovis during WW II (CSM)

The INS “Evacuation” of Clovis

When INS border patrol officers arrived in Clovis on January 19, 1942, they found the 32 Japanese residents “huddled in their compound” in “fear for their lives,”



according to an official report. The “talk around town was to the effect that [the Japanese] should be lynched.” The patrolmen had to set up a “protective guard” for the Japanese residents and ultimately decided to remove all the Japanese from Clovis for their protection around midnight on January 23rd.

Factual, the INS report rationalized government actions. It makes no mention of the larger, regional and national “Japanese problems” that were brewing in mid-January 1942. It also overstated the railroad’s concerns and confusion as to rules regarding employing the Japanese.

Taking everything into account, it seems that the danger of local mob action in Clovis was very real, but the company also wanted to be rid of its “Japanese problem,” and federal agents viewed “evacuation of Japanese people” as a viable option in late January. The rights, long-term interests, and the wishes of the Clovis Nikkei were not considered.

Shiro Ebihara of Clovis (CSM)

A Victim's View of the Evacuation

A chilling account of the midnight exodus from Clovis comes from Roy Ebihara, who turned eight years old that January. He describes a chaotic situation, with men in uniform telling the adults to bring only clothes and essential items and to hurry up, as a gun-toting mob could be seen gathering over by the railroad roundhouse. The Japanese families and their belongings were crammed into several dark, hump-backed sedans, most with State Police markings. With the headlights off until they got to the paved highway, the cars sped off to some unknown destination to the west.

At dawn on January 24, the convoy arrived at the Fort Stanton Military Reservation, in Lincoln County, New Mexico. The INS planned to put the Clovis Japanese there with a group of four hundred German POWs. However, seventeen-year-old Amy Ebihara

protested, saying the Germans might kill them or molest the women and girls. The INS officer in charge decided to find an alternate site that day, an abandoned camp built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the nearby mountains.

Photo of the former CCC camp when it was used as a New-Deal-era youth camp for girls in the late 1930s (CSM)

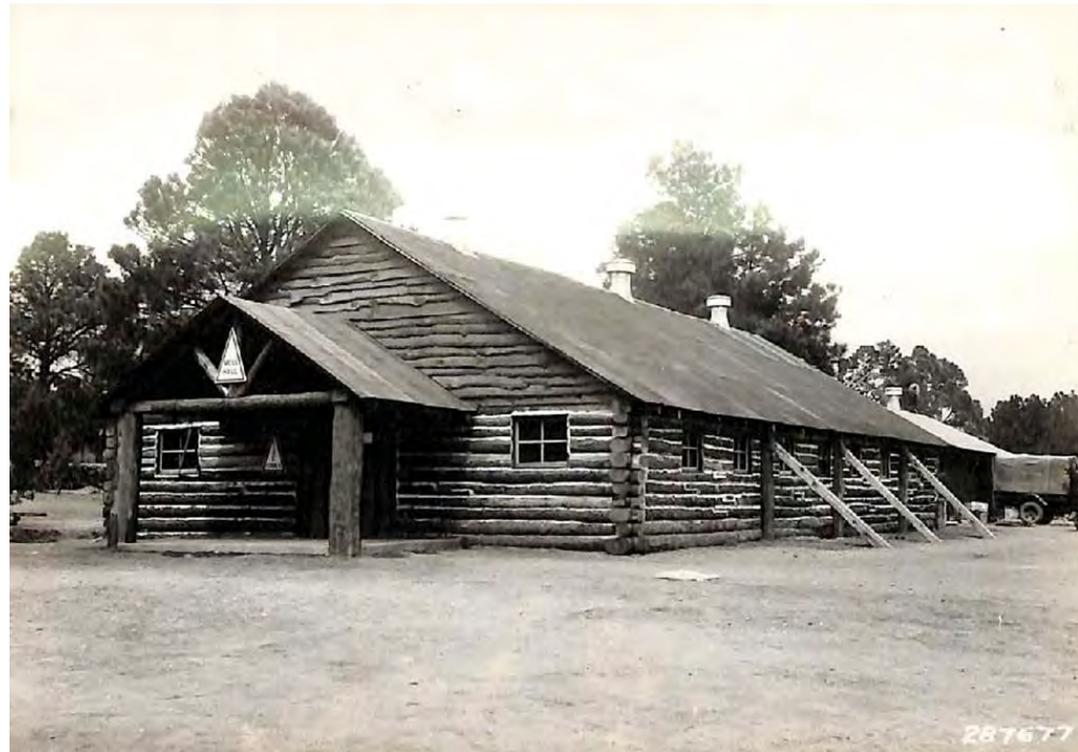


The Baca Camp Confinement Site

Called the “Baca Ranch Camp” under the CCC, the INS would call this makeshift camp for the Clovis refugees “Old Raton Ranch Camp” or simply **Baca Camp**. It was a safe spot, situated on US Forest Service land not too far from civilization.

Unlike the better-known “assembly centers” and “relocation camps,” no fences or guard towers decorated this little concentration camp. Under different circumstances, it may have been viewed as a better place to live, or vacation at, than the Japanese compound by the noisy Clovis train yards. But these were not normal times, and this confinement site lacked the resources to do its job, in the long run.

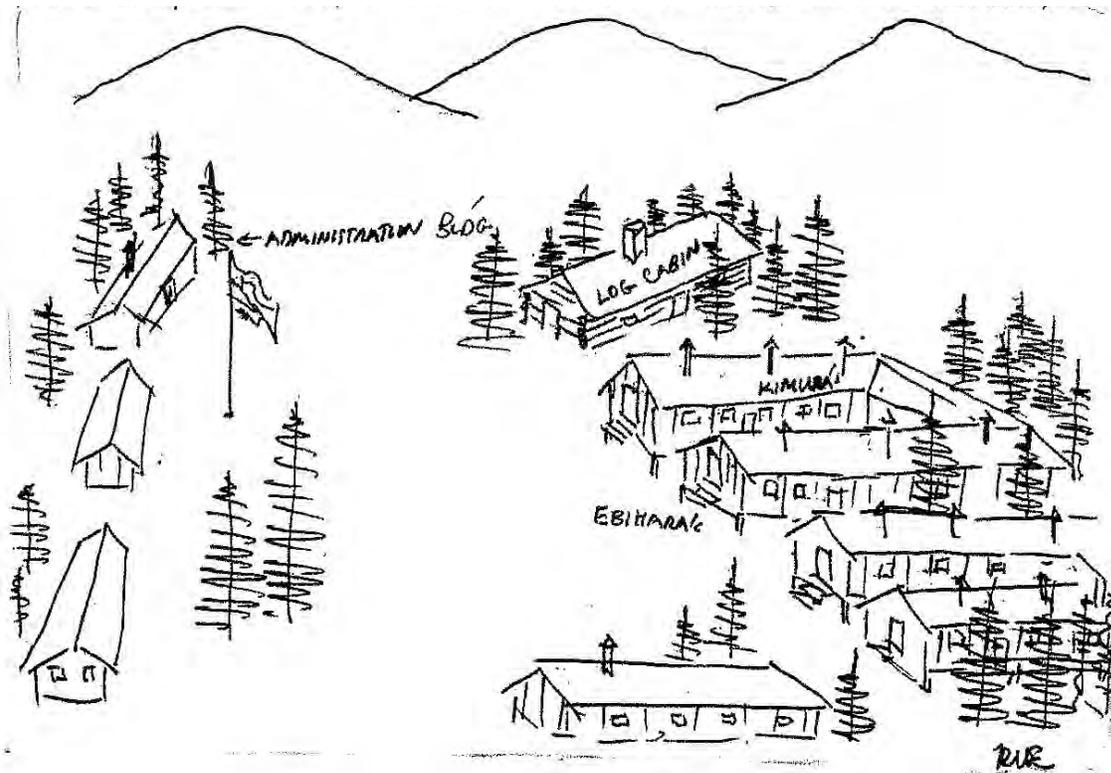
The camp kitchen and mess facilities, pictured here, were not used in 1942 (CSM)



Living Conditions, Baca Camp

Baca Camp had nine buildings, two electric generators, and abundant housing space and water to accommodate the needs of the guards and captives. The CCC-era mess facilities were not used, and the Clovis evacuees cooked rations that were supplied to them. They repaired their living spaces, using scrap supplies, old bedding, and what they had brought with them.

Several small but comfortable cabins dotted the grounds and were occupied by the Border Patrol guards and the camp supervisor. The Japanese American prisoners got to pick from the remaining cabins and barrack-type structures to fit their family or personal needs for living space and privacy.



Sketch of Baca Camp by Roy Ebihara

Some of the worst memories of Baca, or “Old Raton Ranch,” involved dealings with bed bugs and having to plug up holes in the interior walls during the first few weeks. The INS officer in charge seemed to be sympathetic but short of resources to improve the camp.

The sewage and waste-water disposal system was defective too, causing a foul odor if the wind blew wrong. The winter months were harsh, and the spring and summer brought flooding that sometimes made the road to the camp impassable and delayed food shipments.



Baca Camp location in 2011 (CP)

Mixed Memories of the Baca Camp

Baca Camp was intensely depressing for the adults. The INS officer in charge reported conditions of isolation and deprivation made more jarring after twenty years of living in a sizable town like Clovis. He said the experiences of the men and the women especially were “conducive to despondency and suicide.”

Conversely, the younger Ebihara and Kimura offspring remember those months as a wonderful wilderness adventure. Older brother Ben Ebihara dared Roy and Bill to “escape” for long hikes in the mountains. They saw all kinds of wildlife, and they trapped small fish and gathered watercress in the seasonal creek that flanked the camp. Roy Ebihara also recalls the pride and amazement they felt when the garden his father started in the rocky soil and intense mountain sunlight began to produce “humongous” cabbages, carrots and other “fruits of his labor.”

Foundation of unknown building
at Baca Camp (CP)



Education Denied, “Relocated” Again

When the Nisei children of Baca Camp were barred from attending school in Lincoln County, it forced the federal government to look for another confinement site location. Various people, including Opal Miles, the wife and secretary of New Mexico’s Governor John E. Miles, got drawn into this controversy.

At first, arrangements were made to send the children to the public schools in the town of Capitan, less than ten miles away. However, local hostility erupted, and by the third day, white adults with guns met and turned away the vehicles carrying the Nisei students. The local school board imposed a ban. Amy Ebihara, formerly a senior at Clovis High School, tried to teach the other children using a handful of old books, but it was an impossible job.

The federal government could not go on breaking its own education laws. In November of 1942 the War Relocation Authority agreed to move the Clovis people into the larger civilian WRA incarceration camps.

Most of the Clovis group petitioned to join relatives in WRA camps in Utah and Arizona known as Topaz, Poston, and Gila River. By December 18, the Baca Camp stood empty.

Gila River Relocation Camp,
Arizona (CP)



Camp Lordsburg: The Army's Troubled Camp in the Desert

The Lordsburg Permanent Internment Camp (Camp Lordsburg) was the only mass confinement center built and managed by the US Army. It held Japanese immigrants who were considered security risks, even though many had resided peacefully in the United States for decades before the war. None of the Lordsburg internees had been convicted or imprisoned because of crimes, yet they found themselves locked up because of what they *might* do to hurt the American war effort.

The Lordsburg prisoners suffered the typical hardships of incarceration and family separation but also from gross mismanagement of the camp. Add labor disputes, general



unrest, and the shooting deaths of two elderly internees, and it is no wonder that the Issei prisoners protested against the camp and were eventually transferred to better camps managed by the DOJ.

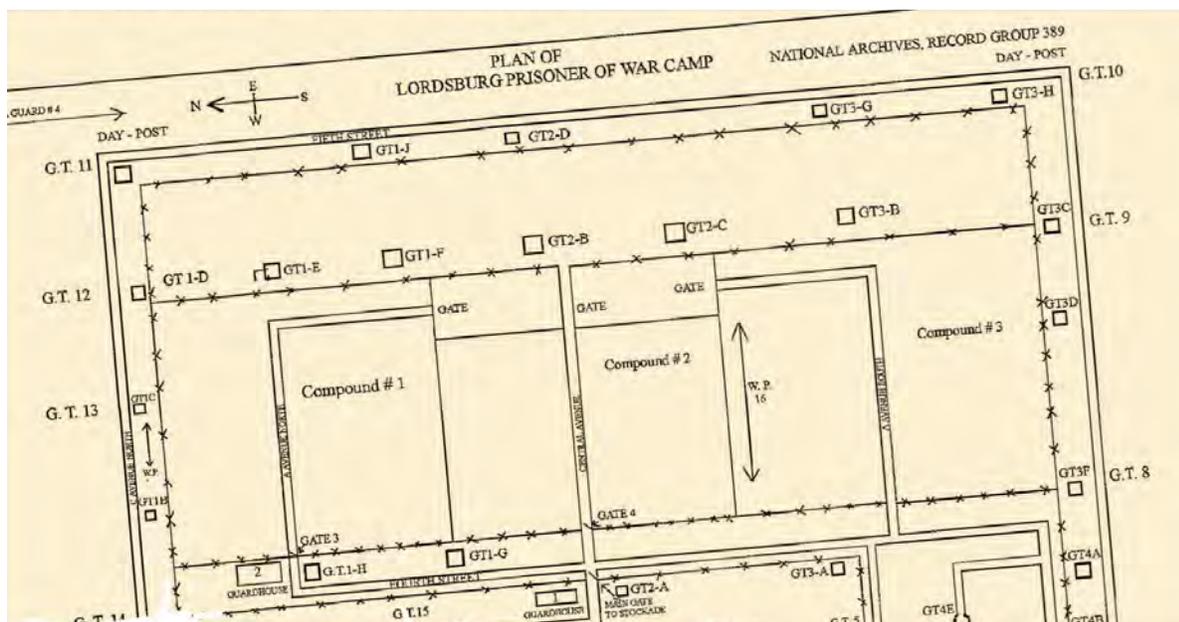
After the Issei left, Camp Lordsburg became a prisoner of war camp, holding POWs from Italy and Germany. The “permanent” Japanese internment camp actually lasted barely a year.

Guard Tower at Camp Lordsburg (CP)

Camp Lordsburg Goes Up

Construction of Camp Lordsburg began in February 1942, and the facility, located three miles from the town of Lordsburg, eventually covered two square miles. It was the first and only US Army camp built specifically to hold civilian Japanese detainees. The construction plans followed the design for an army POW camp.

The camp's structures included a main stockade with three compounds that were divided into four company areas. Each area contained eight barracks, a latrine, a recreation hall, a mess hall, and a kitchen. Standard barracks at Lordsburg were 20 x 110 foot wood framed buildings covered in tar-paper and situated in rows running east to west. Outside of the main stockade sat an outdoor recreation area and a hospital. The entire facility was surrounded with a double barbed-wire fence, watchtowers and floodlights.



Camp Lordsburg construction plans (CSM)

Who Was Imprisoned in Camp Lordsburg?

Camp Lordsburg held 1,523 Issei internees by November 1942, and from the start it operated much like a POW camp. Although the Army followed the Geneva Convention for humane conditions overall, they failed to take into account the differences between POWs and civilian internees. The men incarcerated in Camp Lordsburg were not the young, well-conditioned soldiers that the Geneva Convention had in mind. Most internees were middle-aged or elderly Issei civilians who had been gathered up from the West Coast, the territories of Hawaii and Alaska, and a few from elsewhere in the West.

They were business owners, teachers, Japanese American community leaders, and also farmers, gardeners, grocery clerks, and fishermen. Some had seen service in Japan's army decades before; most had not.



Men from California held in Camp Lordsburg (CSM)

Others were victims of mass arrests or early decisions to exclude the Issei from certain sensitive areas. This failure to consider the background of Lordsburg's internees, especially their age, contributed to the tensions and protests at Camp Lordsburg. The Army and the camp command didn't have the sensibilities and skills to deal with the Issei internees.

The “ABC List” of the FBI

The vast majority of the Japanese internees at Camp Lordsburg were simply engaged community leaders who had lived most of their lives on American soil, working to support their families. However, many of the internees had ended up on the FBI’s “ABC lists” of potentially dangerous alien enemies, earmarked for arrest if war broke out with the Axis countries.

The FBI and the Office of Naval Intelligence had identified officials of the Japanese Association, Japanese Consulate officers, Japanese language teachers, and Buddhist, Shinto, or Christian ministers in the community as potentially “dangerous.” Over 100 religious leaders passed through Lordsburg. Other detainees were California fishermen suspected of communicating with Japanese vessels in the Pacific. Few of the Issei internees posed any real threat to US interests, and very few had acted “pro-Japanese” after Pearl Harbor. Still, Japanese immigrants were targeted for “detention” and internment at a rate much higher than for German and Italian “alien enemies.”

Rev. Masahiko Wada in front of a Japanese Baptist Church prior to the outbreak of WWII (CSM)



Management and Mismanagement at Camp Lordsburg

The people who operated Camp Lordsburg included a mix of local residents and military guards and officers, mainly Euro-Americans and some Hispanics. Locals also worked as clerks, bookkeepers, typists, or in the camp's fire department.

Command of the internment camp belonged to Lt. Col. Clyde A. Lundy, who was helped by his adjutant, First Lt. Richard S. Dockum. A contingent of civilian and army guards and ten officers managed the prisoners. Troops did not consider Lordsburg to be a "choice assignment," and Lundy's leadership reportedly left much to be desired. Described as a "colorful character," Lundy seemed to enjoy the social benefits of being camp commander most of all. He regularly hosted parties for his officers and their wives, and Dockum remembered how the camp safe always contained liquor. Commander Lundy may have also mishandled profits from the camp's canteen (a store operated by and for the internees).



Camp employees in front of camp fire station (CSM)

Daily Life at Camp Lordsburg

The Issei imprisoned at Camp Lordsburg arrived by train and were dropped off at the Ulmorris train siding, where they had to hike the remaining two miles to the camp. The boredom and the daily routines were similar to those of a POW camp. Every man wore standard clothing with his identification number printed on his back. Saturday headcounts ensured all the men were present. A bugle woke internees at six o'clock in the morning; they cleaned their dormitories until breakfast at seven. By seven-thirty, the incarcerated men

engaged in some kind of morning work, hobby, or class, which lasted until the noon-hour lunch break. Then came three hours of afternoon work or other activity. Work was assigned on standards set by the Geneva Convention. Dinner was at five in the evening, and "lights out" came promptly at ten o'clock.



"Our Barracks," a sketch done by internee George Hoshida, 1942 (CSM)

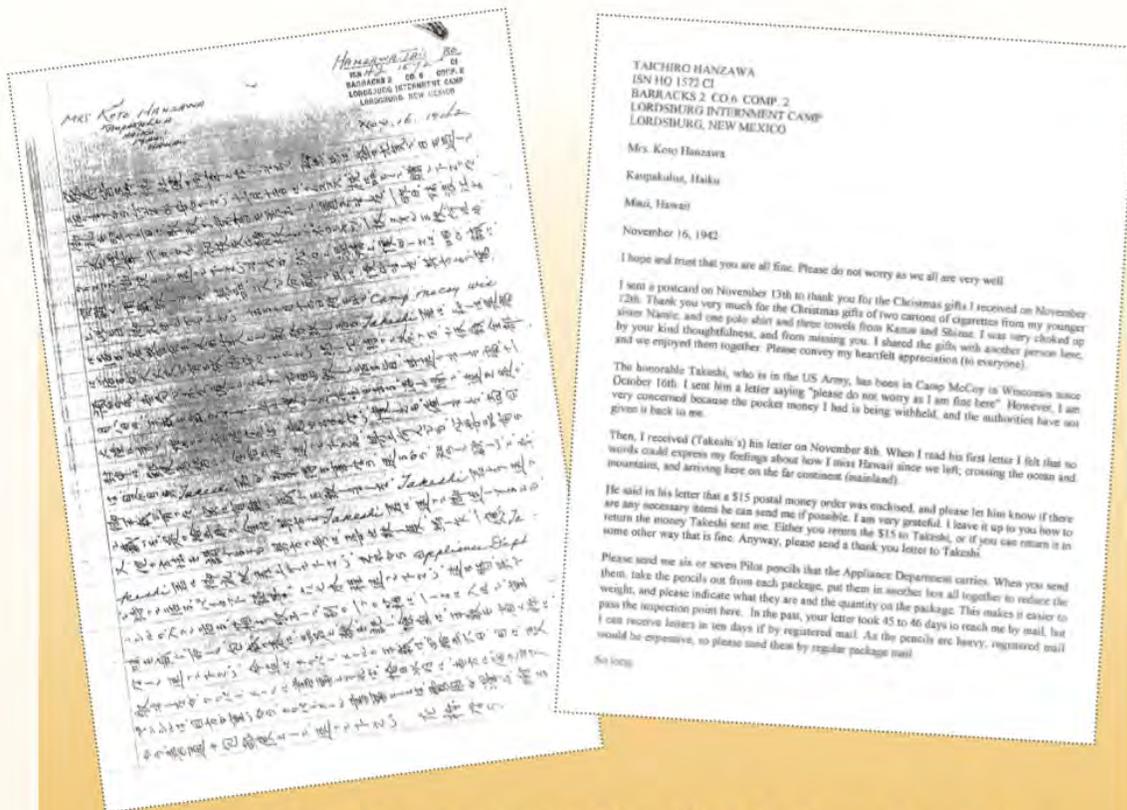
The Geneva Convention also dictated how the men were grouped and how issues were handled. The internees were divided into three battalions with four companies of 250 men. They elected their own leaders, including a governor. Each company elected a mayor, vice-mayor, and chief secretary, and every barrack elected a dormitory chief and vice-chief.



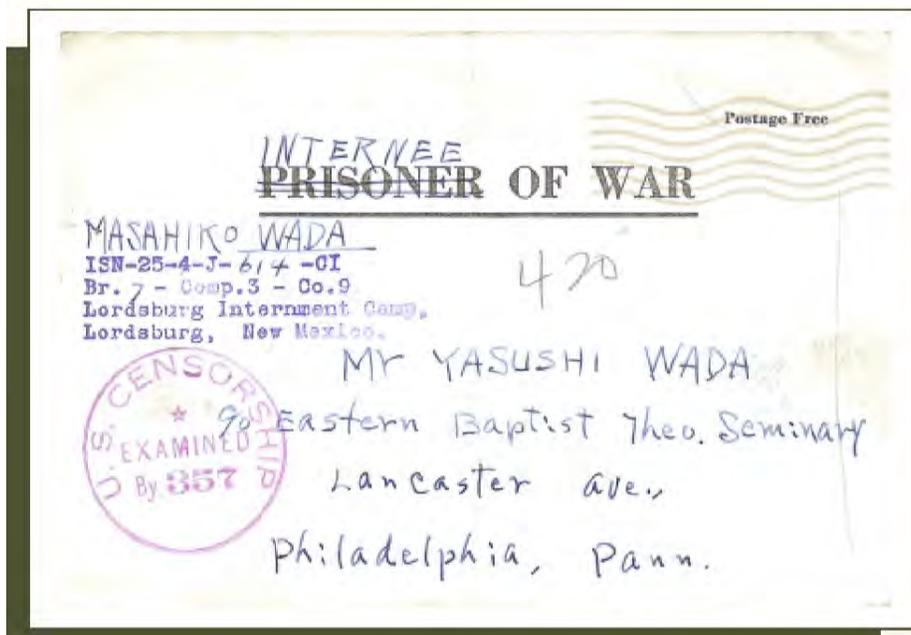
Japanese Internees being assembled to leave Camp Lordsburg (CSM)

For ten cents per hour, these men managed the work of the battalions and communicated between Japanese internees and the camp administration. These leaders also could present grievances to organizations like the International Red Cross, the State Department, and the Spanish Embassy, which was considered a protecting institution of a neutral nation.

For most internees, the worst part was the separation from their families, who were usually imprisoned in one of the WRA camps. Simply hearing from family was an eagerly awaited blessing. Prisoner Jitsuzo Nakamoto confided in his diary, “receiving news and letters from our families telling that they are all well is the greatest joy.”



Letter written by a prisoner in Lordsburg, to his wife in Hawaii (CSM)



Envelope for censored letter sent from Lordsburg (CSM)

Passing the Time

Between work assignments, the internees found themselves with idle time to organize numerous activities for themselves. The men played baseball, tennis, desert golf, and held sumo matches. They organized a Japanese literature group, a library, a watercolor and oil painting group, a musical instrument group, and a poetry society. Many were skilled artists and craftsmen who could turn scrap camp materials or natural items like tree roots, stones, and cacti into art or useful camp items. The Issei also held regular Christian, Buddhist, and Shinto religious services.



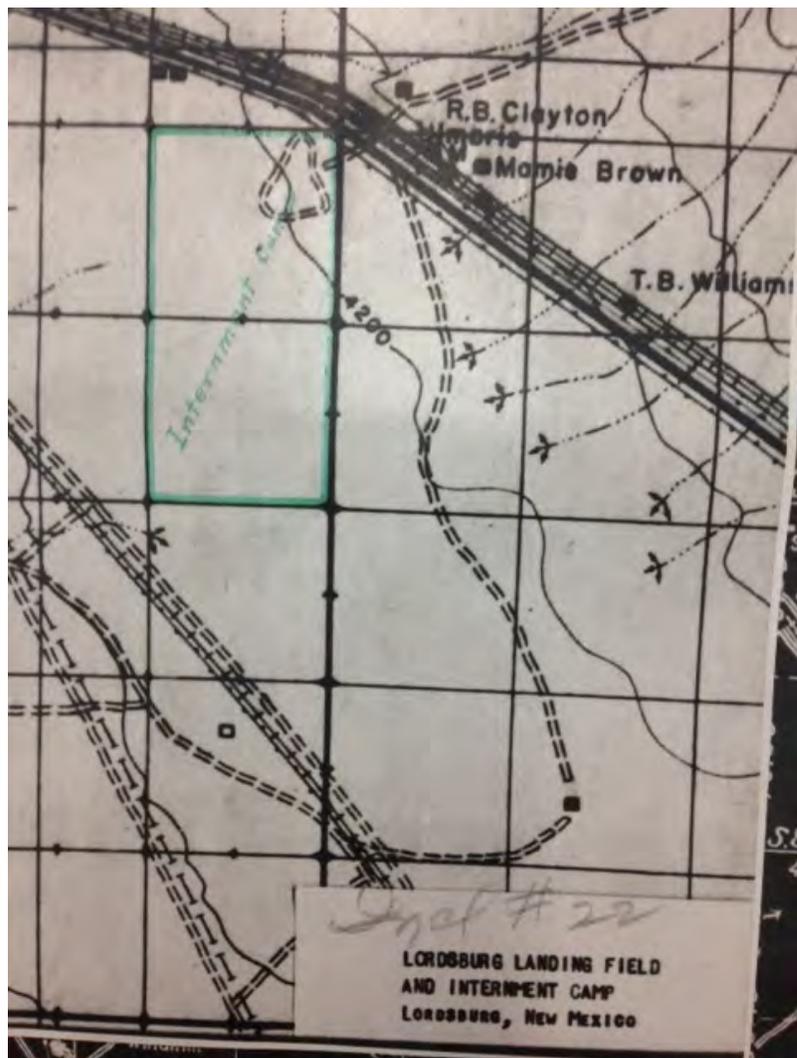
The internees worked hard to improve the camp's bleak landscape. They planted a vegetable garden and constructed a stone and cement roundabout and a surrounding cactus garden near the main camp headquarters. Adjacent to the main road leading into the camp, the internees created a pebble and cement mosaic of the U.S. seal including a proud bald eagle, pictured here in its decayed state (CP).

Labor Dispute at Lordsburg

One serious conflict between the Issei prisoners and Camp Commander Lundy stemmed from Lundy's efforts to maximize the labor he could get out of the internees. They worked both inside and outside the camp helping to construct a nearby army landing field, cleaning the horse stables, and cleaning the army mess and dance halls, in addition to maintaining their own barracks. They received no pay for any of this work, and they were expected to stick to their work schedule and assignments even as the desert heated up in the afternoon.

In time, the internees objected to some of the work as a violation of the rights afforded to them by the Geneva Convention. According to the agreement, internees could be asked to perform labor, but they must be paid for any labor beyond the maintenance of their own living quarters.

Map of landing field near Camp Lordsburg (CSM)



In June 1942, internees first voiced their concerns over the type of labor Lundy required of them and a lack of adequate food, work clothes, and shoes. Lundy ignored these complaints, isolated the three most vocal men, and closed the internee canteen as a punishment for what he considered a refusal to work.

Not to be deterred, the internee leaders sent telegrams to the Spanish Embassy, asking for an investigation of the labor situation. Meanwhile, they told camp administration that they would work in the morning but not in the afternoon heat. In response, Lundy placed all the Issei under barrack arrest, stopped mail service, and reportedly restricted the use of electric fans and halted the delivery of water to the barracks.

Finally, in December 1942, the internees learned from the Spanish Consul that the US government agreed that internees could not be forced to do certain work without compensation, but internees could not refuse to work during specific hours of the day or outside of the camp, so long as it somehow benefited the men in the camp. Overall, the dispute took half a year to resolve.

CLOE Qs: If you were a neutral Spanish Embassy observer, what would you have thought about the *root causes* of the Lordsburg labor dispute?

Two Men Shot and Killed

On July 27, 1942, a far more dramatic example of troubles at Lordsburg unfolded when a guard fatally shot two elderly Issei. Hirota Isomura and Toshiro Kobata were part of a group of 147 men arriving from a camp in Bismarck, North Dakota. They off-loaded at the train siding around 2:00 a.m., and since these two elderly men were in very poor health, they were marched to Lordsburg behind the main group by Pfc. Clarence A. Burleson.



Standing orders were to “allow none of [the internees] to escape... in the event any aliens attempted to escape, they should give them a command to ‘Halt’ and if [they disobeyed the command, we] were to shoot them.”

Possible site where shootings happened (CP)

Pfc. Burleson emphasized those orders when he gave his version of the night’s events as follows. Isomura and Kobata stopped to rest four to six times on their way to camp. As the three men

neared the camp’s entrance, Burleson claimed the two Issei ran off, toward a barbed wire fence. After shouting at them to halt, twice, Burleson fired his sawed-off shotgun. Other guards heard the shots and hurried to the scene. First Lt. Phillip Bond, a medical officer, testified that when he arrived he found Isomura near the fence, already dead. Kobata lived for a few more hours in the camp infirmary before eventually succumbing to his injuries. Each man had been hit multiple times by the shotgun blasts.

Fear, Testimony, Acquittal and a Promotion

By morning word had spread across the camp that Isomura and Kobata had been shot in a supposed “escape attempt.”

As internee Jitsuzo Nakamoto recalled, “All internees were [as] depressed as they were shocked, astonished, and in deep fear” after learning about the shooting.

Nakamoto stated that they “could not believe the two had attempted escape under such physical conditions.” Many who knew Isomura and Kobata came forward to make statements about the health and personalities of their friends, whom they remembered as honest, gentle, compassionate, and highly unlikely to attempt to escape. Isomura and Kobata were also in poor health. Isomura suffered a spinal injury which made moving difficult; he walked slowly and stooped. Kobata had reportedly suffered from tuberculosis for sixteen years and required frequent breaks from physical exertion to catch his breath. Clearly, attempting to escape in the middle of the night, into an unknown desert landscape, in the presence of an armed guard at the camp entrance seemed like a ridiculous thing to do.

The official investigation was superficial at best, and Burleson’s court martial trial for manslaughter lasted only one day, ending in his acquittal. The trial focused on whether Burleson had orders to shoot anyone trying to escape and whether he had told the men to halt, not whether they had actually tried to escape. Seven Japanese men testified to Isomura and Kobata’s character and physical issues. One Issei stated his belief was that Isomura and Kobata were shot to make an example for the other internees who had challenged camp commander’s labor rules. The court martial board ignored this accusation. Burleson was acquitted, and two weeks later, he received a promotion in rank.

More Trouble at Lordsburg

Other events bear mentioning, such as when approximately fifty Japanese naval prisoners of war were sent to Camp Lordsburg for a few days in November 1942, possibly by mistake. Although the Army kept the POWs separate from the civilian internees, a problem occurred. An FBI report claimed that



internees at Camp Lordsburg had raised a Japanese flag on November 3, but it was ultimately determined that the POWs had displayed the flag, not the internees.

"P.O.W. Road" outside Lordsburg (CP)

Another questionable decision by the Army was bringing in about twenty American soldiers who were under disciplinary confinement. These men were allowed to share a

compound area with the internees, to which the internees objected on the grounds of the Geneva Convention. Their concerns were justified. On Thanksgiving Day 1942, one of the American soldiers, for no apparent reason, attacked an internee named Dr. Uyehara with a knife. The soldier was apparently drunk, but as Dockum recalled, "We still don't know why...; the old boy just cracked." Dr. Uyehara recovered from his injuries, the assailant was court-martialed, and the soldiers were removed from the compound.

The End of the Lordsburg Internment Camp

Camp Lordsburg's days as an internment center were numbered. On December 17, 1942, Lundy was relieved of his position. His record of mishandling camp affairs came to include discrepancies in the books of the camp canteen and Lundy's decision to appropriate musical instruments, donated by the Red Cross to the internees, and instead used them for the military band. Col. Louis A. Ledbetter replaced Lundy, and under his leadership fewer irregularities seemed to occur. However, the atmosphere remained tense, and internees reported instances of guards firing unnecessary warning shots around them.



During the summer of 1943, the Issei of Lordsburg were moved to other DOJ internment camps. Some ended up in the internment camp at Santa Fe, New Mexico.

An internee's drawing of Camp Lordsburg (CP)

After the departure of the Issei, Camp Lordsburg served as a prison for Italian POWs until the summer of 1944. In the fall of that year, the military housed German POWs at Lordsburg. By June 1945, with the European war over, Camp Lordsburg was empty. Over the next few years, the military auctioned off the buildings that once made up Camp Lordsburg, and the land moved into private hands. Several of the camp's structures have been repurposed and can be seen on the desert landscape today. (Please respect private property if visiting the area.)

Although there is little physical evidence of the camp left, we know quite a bit about the lives of the internees as they passed through Camp Lordsburg. Clearly, they endured some of the most difficult, frightening, and contentious sets of circumstances of forced confinement by Japanese Americans. Historians and other writers have also captured some of the evidence of how internees survived and challenged the authorities at Lordsburg, even as the history of this confinement site invites further study.



A repurposed Camp Lordsburg structure, formally part of the hospital (CSM)

The Internment Camp at Santa Fe, New Mexico

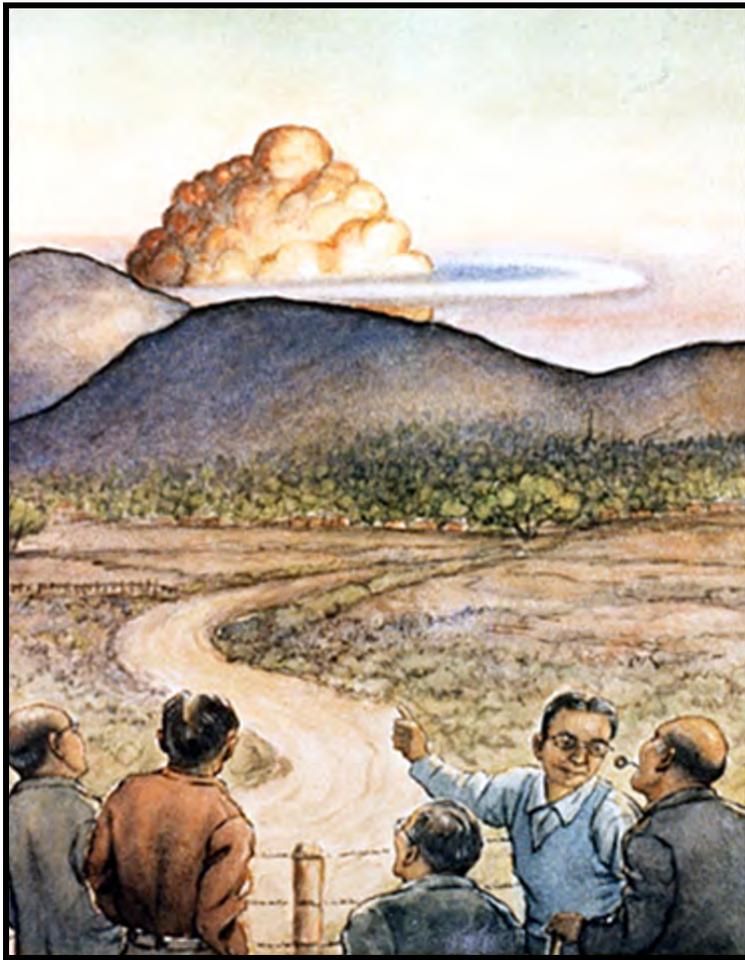
The Santa Fe Internment Camp opened in March of 1942 and would house Japanese internees, in shifting numbers, throughout most of the war. Managed by the Department of Justice, the camp would process and guard male Japanese residents of America, mainly Issei. Most of the internees were individuals who had come under government suspicion and were arrested following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Others had been picked up and detained in groups, such as some California-Pacific fishermen. The camp population shrank, grew, and changed over time. By June 30, 1943, for instance, the camp contained 1,894 Issei internees from California and other states, as well as contingents who had previously lived in Hawaii, Alaska, and various Latin American countries.



Panoramic composition of the Santa Fe Internment Camp (CSM)

Mountain Vistas Beyond the Barbed Wire

Twelve-foot-high barbed wire fences surrounded the Santa Fe Internment Camp, and ugly, tar-papered barracks functioned as the living and sleeping quarters, mess halls, hospital facilities, and headquarters of this temporary US prison. Yet just beyond the fence, piñon and juniper trees covered the foothills and attractive vistas could be seen in all



directions. The first Issei prisoners of the camp named their temporary home “San Te He,” or “many mountains surrounding.”

Painting by internee Kango Takamura, 1942 (CSM)

Other factors made this internment camp different than Camp Lordsburg. The DOJ administrators treated the prisoners better and with more respect than the Army did. Different daily routines and

dramatic events unfolded in this camp, and its location right next to the town of Santa Fe was also highly unusual among all of the mass relocation and internment camps.

Internment Hearings

The Santa Fe camp started as an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp on eighty acres that belonged to the New Mexico State Penitentiary by 1941. Within a few short weeks, helped along by 150 local laborers, the camp was soon ready to house several hundred Japanese detainees from California. The internment hearings in Santa Fe would involve members of the Alien Enemy Hearing Boards from various parts of California along with DOJ operatives. While the boards considered case-by-case evidence and heard testimony from the accused, much of the FBI evidence was superficial or based on hearsay or association. The hearings would happen as the hysteria and anti-Japanese racism was

intensifying in California and spreading eastward.

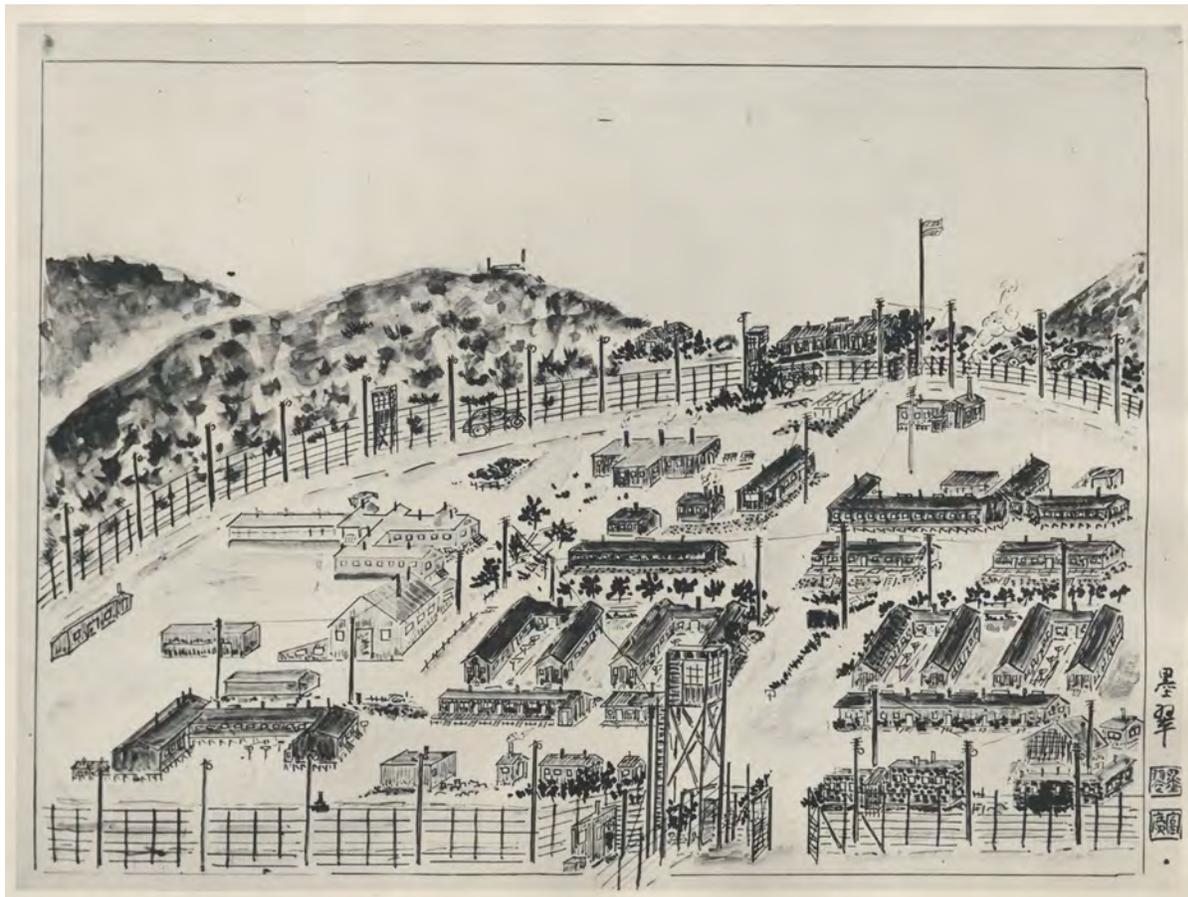
By March of 1942, the Santa Fe facility could hold over 800 men, who soon began arriving from California. The prisoners tended to be men of high standing in their communities, often with some strong cultural or commercial connection to Japan.



Detainees waiting for their luggage in the Santa Fe Camp (CP)

The hearings were usually brief, and the accused had no right to legal counsel. If any doubt existed, the boards were instructed to resolve in favor of the government and intern the person.

Despite the low threshold, only 302 of the Issei who passed through Santa Fe in 1942 were interned in Army custody. The remaining 523 were either released or paroled. They could not return to California, however, so most of these men joined their families in the WRA camps. The Santa Fe camp closed soon after the hearings, only to reopen later.



Sketch of the Santa Fe Camp by Dr. Benjamin Tanaka (CP and CSM)

Rebirth of the Santa Fe Internment Camp

In February 1943, the DOJ reopened the Santa Fe Internment Camp (SFIC) after the Army decided to transfer all its civilian internees into the custody of the INS. They modified Santa Fe to accommodate up to 2,000 Japanese prisoners from Lordsburg and elsewhere. By March 357 men had arrived, and 4,555 Nikkei internees would spend time in this camp during the war.



A group of Santa Fe Internees who came from Oregon (CSM)

The SFIC came to hold a much more diverse population than it had before. No women or children lived there, but the Issei prisoners now ranged in place of origin, occupation, and class. There were businessmen and intellectuals (teachers, writers, artists, Buddhist, Shino and Christian clergy) as well as farmers, fishermen, and industrial workers. Hundreds of Issei from Hawaii spent time in Santa Fe. Another contingent were Spanish-speaking Issei from Peru and other Latin American countries, brought here by the US State Department after the war started.

A Well-Run Internment Camp

Being trapped behind barbed wire, separated from family, subjected to boredom and uncertainty—those features of camp life were the same in Santa Fe as in the Lordsburg camp. However, the DOJ officers at Santa Fe knew how to deal with civilians better than the army camp officers, and relations between the Santa Fe internees and the guard staff were more peaceful.

The DOJ used the Geneva Convention as the basic camp rulebook, but they understood that these Japanese men were not POWs or enemies of the United States. As a spokesman named Atsuzi Okado stated in 1942, the camp commander at the time, Ivan Williams, “made this station comfortable both mentally and physically.” Internees enjoyed some self-government and elected officials such as a camp council and barracks captains.



They had various ways to air grievances and reach compromises with the administration. Rather than trying to control behavior by punishing people, Williams liked to grant extra privileges and then retract them in cases of bad behavior. Also, he did not assign much work to the Issei.

Two of the nursing staff assigned to the camp (CSM)

Labor and Leisure in the Santa Fe Camp

The industrious Issei prisoners of Santa Fe did a great deal of work to improve the operations and conditions of the internment camp in which they lived. Issei doctors and dentists provided health care; skilled tradesmen worked on maintaining camp structures; others provided free or cheap barber and tailor services, and large numbers worked the vegetable gardens that supplemented the food reserves of the camp mess halls.

Their expanding agricultural grounds on the edge of the camp came to provide much of the fresh eggs, vegetables, and meat they consumed. Some internees were allowed to hire out from the camp and earn modest wages as day laborers, but most worked within the camp, where about 400 jobs for internees paid 80 cents a day.



Internees assisting in camp construction project (CSM)

Meanwhile, the internees in Santa Fe sought creative ways to pass the time. They created poetry clubs, painting groups, sports teams, and four different “restaurants” within the mess hall. Their baseball league consisted of four different teams that played tournaments against each other. Several martial arts clubs and theater groups also formed. Border Patrol agents organized movie viewings in the recreation hall and brought in scholars to lecture on New Mexico history, but baseball and theatre were the favorite pastime of the internees.



Baseball Team with home-made bats at the Santa Fe Camp (CSM)

CLOE Qs: What was it about baseball that made it so popular among all generations of Japanese Americans in the camps?

The Arts, Crafts, Poetry, and Letters

With so many artists, intellectuals, and craftsmen confined in the desert camps of New Mexico, it is no wonder that artistic activities flourished. Emotions, camp experiences, and the natural and unnatural surroundings of the camp provided fodder for artistic expression. Internees collected and polished rocks and carved birds and other figures out of pieces of scrap lumber and wood that they had gathered during guarded hikes. Numerous men took up painting and sketching using watercolors, charcoal pencils and *sumi-e* (black ink paintings). The internees also organized theatre and ritualistic dramas. Some poetry and painting clubs compiled their works into a manuscript that they gave as gifts to fellow prisoners on special occasions. At least twice during the war, residents of Lordsburg and Santa Fe were invited to view the artwork or performances of the internees.



Artwork by prisoners of the Santa Fe camp (CP and CSM)

Public Confusion

Most Santa Fe residents thought that the camp housed Japanese POWs or immigrants convicted of crimes against America. They commonly referred to the camp as the “Jap Trap.” Anti-Japanese sentiment increased as newspapers in the United States began to report on the horrible, inhumane treatment of American POWs at the hands of the Japanese military.

Resentment grew worse after March 1945, when the first liberated survivors of the notorious Bataan Death March began arriving home to New Mexico. “You have to have lived through those days to realize how intense the anti-Japanese feelings were here,” as witness Abner Schreiber explained in a 1979 interview. “There were stories of the torture of American prisoners in Japanese camps. It was bad business.”

Most New Mexicans had no knowledge about the internees and their American roots. As one Hispanic witness adds: “we called them ‘los Japos’ [and not] until after the war did I realize that was a hell of a thing for us to do.”



Picture of the camp canteen, where internees could buy certain items (CSM)

Handling Conflicts and “Trouble-Makers”

While the relations between the internees, the guards, and the administrators of the Santa Fe Internment Camp were generally peaceful, troubles did surface at times. Personal feuds between inmates, sometimes involving physical fights, were not uncommon. These usually went unreported to camp officials, as it would have been seen as dishonorable to report. Informers were called “*inu*”—the Japanese word for dog.

In the summer of 1943, a mess hall fire destroyed several buildings and led to some camp tensions for a short time. Sub-standard meals were trucked in from the state penitentiary, but the mood improved once the food improved.



Photograph of the Santa Fe Camp kitchen crew (CSM)

A much bigger crisis occurred in 1945 when over 350 men identified as “pro-Japan agitators” were sent to Santa Fe from the WRA Segregation Camp at Tule Lake, California. That led to a riot, as described in the Fort Stanton section of this exhibit. The tough DOJ response to that incident shows that the commanders were willing and capable of dealing harshly with people accused of disobedience.

Nevertheless, no iron-fisted rule characterized this camp, and sensitivity to the human rights and cultural affinities of the internees was far more evident. Indeed, shortly after the riot, the camp commander authorized a day-long celebration of Emperor Hirohito’s birthday. Internees were also permitted to have visitors, with as many as forty-five visitors to the camp in one day.



Internees from Hawaii at the Santa Fe Camp, in winter (CSM)

Nisei Soldiers Included Sons of the Interned

Thousands of Japanese Americans of the second generation (the Nisei) fought for the United States in World War II, mainly on the battlefields of Europe, and some of them had “family ties” to Santa Fe. From Hawaii, the famed 100th Battalion of all-Nisei troops was later joined by the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit. Together, these were the most highly-decorated units in US history, based on size and length of service.

One of the great ironies of WWII is that many of the Nisei soldiers were recruited or drafted out of the WRA camps, and some had fathers in the DOJ camps of New Mexico. Nisei soldiers on leave often visited family members still locked up in the confinement camps. One Euro-American witness remembers how touched he was by the visit of a son of one of the Santa Fe internees. The Nisei soldier had just returned from fighting in Germany. “He had been pretty badly shot up, and it made quite an impression on me.”

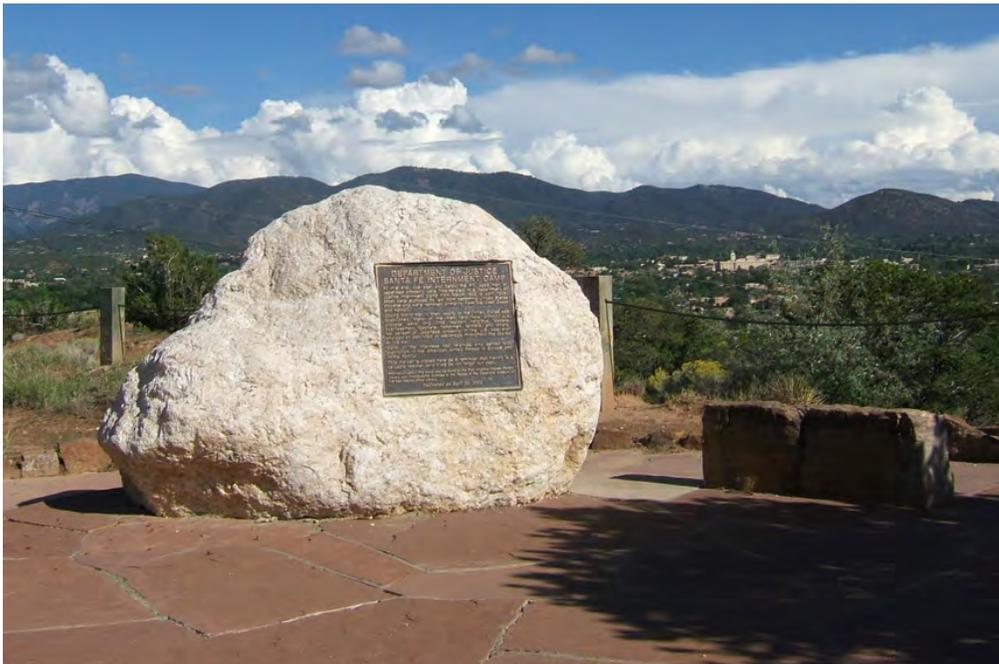


Nisei troops of the 442nd training at Camp Shelby (CSM)

One of the Last Camps to Close

Perhaps because it was so well managed, Santa Fe was one of the last DOJ internment camps to be shut down, and it served as a clearing house for other camps as the war ended. Roughly 2,000 men lived there when Japan surrendered in August 1945, and nearly half of that number remained in November. Even after the West Coast evacuation orders were lifted (December 1944), and after the war ended in 1945, Japanese-American resettlement in America and repatriation to Japan lasted into 1946.

After it closed, the federal government quickly dismantled the Santa Fe Camp, selling the materials, equipment, and entire buildings at rock-bottom prices. Any remaining foundations and such were erased by the construction of the Casa Solana Subdivision, but one or two old cottonwood trees and rich, black garden spots are said to remain as evidence of what was planted there during WW II.



This historic marker sits above where the Santa Fe Camp stood (CP)

A Unique Confinement Camp

“Japanese Segregation Camp No. 1” (JSC #1) at Fort Stanton was a secretive and short-lived isolation unit that was created to deal with a small number of pro-Japan “agitators.” These men were accused of causing trouble, first at one of the large WRA relocation camps and then at the Santa Fe Internment Camp.



Guard Tower at Fort Stanton, WW II (CSM)

In 1945 these unruly camp protesters were transferred from Santa Fe to a compound within Fort Stanton, where troublesome German prisoners were being segregated from the larger German internee group at the fort. Some camp guards called JSC # 1 “the stinker camp” because the internees were considered to be the most disruptive and “disloyal” of all of the Japanese Americans in the camps.

Not a typical camp or camp population, JSC #1 and its prisoners still figure large into the story of the Japanese in wartime New Mexico. By exploring this story, we also gain fresh insights into range of nationalistic sentiments that existed in the Nikkei community during the war, even if the “segregants” represented views of a very small group.

CLOE Qs.: How nationalistic, partisan, and potentially dangerous were these Fort Stanton prisoners? Did mass relocation, long-term confinement, and segregation moves harden their anti-American attitudes and intensify their sense of loyalty to Japan?

German Internees and POWs in Fort Stanton

Fort Stanton's colorful history started almost a century before WW II. Built by the US Army in 1855, the fort played a role in the Civil War, the Indian wars, and the famed Lincoln County War that involved Billy the Kid.

By 1899 Fort Stanton served as a tuberculosis sanatorium. Thousands of patients had been treated there by the 1930s, when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) came in to improve existing buildings and construct a large CCC camp complex.



CCC camp looking toward FT Stanton in 1939 (CSM/CP)

By 1941 the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had taken over the camp, and that year 400 men from the German luxury liner the *SS Columbus* were sent to live at the fort. They were housed at a former CCC complex as “distressed seamen” when their ship was purposely scuttled in US waters to avoid capture by the British Navy. After America entered WW II, the seamen were classified as “alien enemies” and were interned at Fort Stanton for the duration of the war, making this one of the first civilian internment camps to be established.

Germans helping construct Fort Stanton detention camp in Jan 1941; segregation camp map below (CSM)



Approximate Location of Japanese Segregation Camp No. 1 at Fort Stanton



By August 1943 Fort Stanton held over 652 German internees and POWs. A small, high-security segregation camp had been built next to the CCC complex for unruly German prisoners, and this is where JSC #1 would be as well. The whole prison camp was a bit smaller than a football field and included barracks, a dining room, a recreation hall, and bath facilities.

Fort Stanton Gets “Trouble-Makers”

In the spring of 1945, over 350 men identified as “pro-Japan agitators” were sent to the Santa Fe Internment Camp from the WRA camp at Tule Lake, California. According to government reports, the new arrivals tried to intimidate the peaceful Issei internees at Santa Fe. Some made open displays of their loyalty to Japan, such as wearing sweatshirts with the rising sun emblem and refusing to surrender this clothing to camp guards.

The young men from Tule Lake began staging protest demonstrations each morning at 5:00, marching around the parade grounds carrying homemade Japanese flags and blowing bugles.

Thirty additional border patrol officers were brought in to handle the growing tensions.



Even after camp officials placed some of the protest leaders in an isolation unit, the other militants refused to break up their demonstrations as ordered. Sixteen border patrol officers attacked the protesters with billy clubs and tear-gas grenades, while some of the internees threw rocks at the officers. In the ten-minute battle, four internees received injuries that required hospitalization. Seventeen men

identified as the leaders were transferred to Fort Stanton. They became the “segregants” of JSC #1, and a few dozen more were added over the following months. Few records seem to exist and little is known to date about this secretive camp and this most uncommon group of Nikkei internees. (Photo: Camp protestors being transferred from Tule Lake to Santa Fe, CP.)

Odd Displays of Japanese Nationalism

The vast majority of Japanese Americans of the Issei and Nisei generations cooperated with mass relocation as a way to prove their loyalty to the United States. Typically and naturally, Issei immigrants retained their Japanese identity and tended to take great pride in their Japanese “race” and national greatness. That pride and nationalism generally got tamped down by the Pearl Harbor attack. Most Nisei, on the other hand, felt “100 percent American” and retained that sense of loyalty even as so many from the West Coast and some from Hawaii and elsewhere were sent to the camps.



General camp population, Tule Lake WRA camp (CP)

The Japanese segregants who landed at Fort Stanton in 1945 showed an opposite pattern. Some were Issei, but most of them belonged to a segment of the Nisei generation known as Kibei (Nisei born in the United States but educated in Japan). Exposed to the fierce nationalism and pro-Japan propaganda of Japanese society in the 1930s, they tended to be as proudly Japanese, or more so perhaps, than their parents who had sent them “home” to be educated. They quickly became disillusioned by their treatment at the hands of the US government after Pearl Harbor.

In the WRA camps, this pro-Japan element formed into “resegregation” groups like the *Hoshi Dan* and the *Hokoku Dan*. They openly supported the Japanese cause, demanded the freedom to pursue a Japanese lifestyle in the camps, and sought to repatriate or to immigrate to Japan during or after the war.



Hoshi Dan at the WRA segregation camp at Tule Lake (CSM)

In July 1944, President Roosevelt signed the Denaturalization Bill, which allowed US citizens to renounce their citizenship. Prior to that, the WRA camp at Tule Lake was turned into a “segregation camp,” where individuals and families with “questionable loyalties” or desiring to repatriate could request to be transferred from the other WRA camps. The Denaturalization Act helps explain how some American-born people (Nisei) came to be classified as “alien enemies” and were eventually interned in Santa Fe or Fort Stanton.

“Victory Huts” for the Defeated Protesters

The Japanese Segregation Camp at Fort Stanton was a sub-camp adjacent to the German segregation camp, surrounded by a ten-to-twelve-foot tall barbed wire fence. The Japanese section of the compound included ten sixteen-foot-square “Victory Huts,” each housing two men. The Japanese prisoners shared a laundry, recreation room, kitchen, showers and a washroom with the German segregants.

The Nikkei at JSC #1 chose a roommate and settled into their new quarters. Inside the victory huts, they found two steel cots with mattresses, a table with two chairs, two shelves, a small coal burning stove, and a light bulb hanging from the ceiling.

The victory huts would have looked similar to these from the outside, probably in black tarpaper or wood siding (CP)



According to one account, with the windows and door closed the huts could be kept “relatively comfortable.” But sand storms were frequent, the amenities were few, and the guards were said to be “uncompromising” and generally suspicious of the prisoners.

Leaders Left in Limbo

Although the Nikkei at JSC #1 shared strong attachments to Japan and its traditions, differences also existed among them. Of the seventeen protest leaders transferred from Santa Fe, at least eight were Issei and the rest were Nisei.

These former leaders of the Hokoku Dan and Hoshi Dan had lost their followers but formed three distinct groups at Fort Stanton. The first group consisted entirely of Issei and included former Hoshi Dan members; a second group was made up mainly of American-born Kibei of the Hokoku Dan, and the third group included other Hokoku Dan members.

These sub-groups and the larger group tended to keep to themselves and deal as they could with the boredom, isolation,



hostility, and tensions of camp. Some passed the time in visits to the German side of the segregation compound, where those who spoke English talked and played games like cards and chess with the Germans. Meanwhile, they waited out the closing months of the war, trying to remain confident that Japan would win and one day they would return home.

German POWs enjoying the pool they helped to build at Fort Stanton (CSM)

Good News Brings Mixed Emotions

After the WRA announced in December 1944 that all its camps would be closed within a year, over 5,000 Japanese Americans gave up their American citizenship. Many families were uncertain as to their futures and had no homes to return to anywhere in America. Following the war, most who wished to reclaim their US citizenship were able to do so, but the Nisei prisoners at JSC #1 were not among them.



Notice posted during resettlement (CSM)

From the newspapers, the JSC prisoners learned Japan was losing the war, but this did not shake their desire to return to Japan.

Upon hearing the news of Japan’s surrender on August 15, 1945, the camp commander Merrill Scott notified the Japanese, adding that he respected the group’s devotion to their beliefs. One former prisoner recalled that their “hardened hearts melted in gratitude” at that point, “and we thanked him for his kind words.”

Later that day, the group listened to the Emperor’s Rescript on the radio and vowed to dedicate their lives to restoring peace and security to the world. A shared sense of deep sorrow melted any past divisions, and they united in their new commitment to help rebuild war-torn Japan.



Hiroshima in ruins (Harry S. Truman Library & Museum)

JSC #1, Epilogue and Reflections

The Japanese segregants of JSC #1 were sent to Terminal Island, California, to await deportation in September 1945.

Oddly, that same month Japanese volunteers from the Santa Fe Internment Camp arrived to help disassemble the confinement facilities at Fort Stanton. Today, very little remains to mark where the segregation camps stood.



Ruins of the German confinement camp at Fort Stanton (CSM)

The Nikkei who were confined at JSC #1 showed an unusual degree of Japanese patriotism. Their “unruly” behavior was probably generated, in part, by the treatment they had received.

Without denying that these men possessed a fervent Japanese nationalism, the experience of being excluded, rounded up, and imprisoned did nothing to foster any sense of loyalty to America. The government saw them and treated them as “troublemakers,” but they were also “resisters” of a sort, whose “militant” behavior needs to be viewed within a context.

Japanese Americans, Beyond the Camps

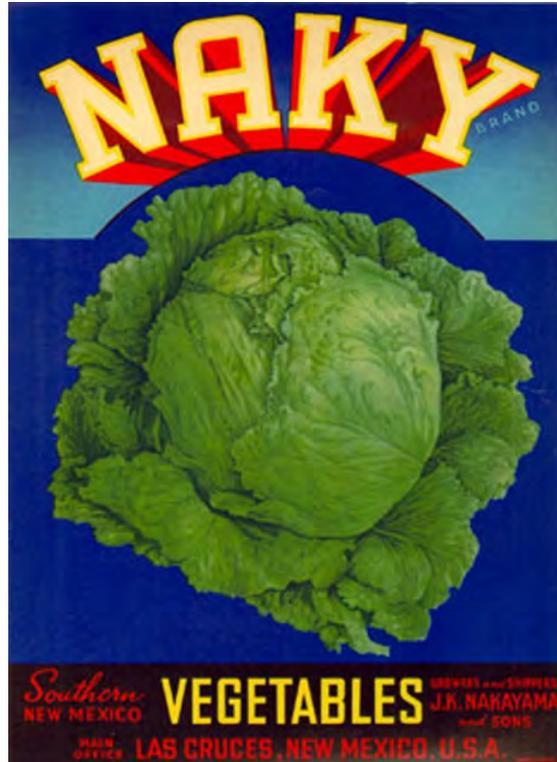
The “Resettlement Period” of Japanese American history started near the end of the war, and for the entire war, some Japanese New Mexicans had lived relatively free lives outside of the camps. In either case, life beyond the camps involved different realities and different challenges that this traveling exhibit cannot fully explore. Still, in this section we will sample what the war years were like for the “free-zone” Nikkei families of New Mexico.

This brief summary of landmark events of the resettlement and the redress periods (below) hints at what the postwar years would bring for the Nikkei of New Mexico and the nation.

- **1944 Public Proclamation Number 21:** Ended the mass imprisonment of Japanese and Japanese Americans.
- **1948 Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act:** Signed into law by President Harry S. Truman, it sought to provide a path to compensate Japanese Americans for losses incurred by the mass incarceration but was not so effective.
- **1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (a.k.a. the McCarran-Walter Act):** Formally ended Japanese exclusion in US immigration policy.
- **1976 Termination of Executive Order 9066:** Issued by President Gerald R. Ford to rescind the previous, destructive executive order.
- **1980 Establishment of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians:** A federal commission directed to review the history behind Executive Order 9066 and its impact, leading to the Civil Liberties Act.
- **1988 Civil Liberties Act:** Granted survivors of the mass incarceration a presidential apology, individual reparations of \$20,000 to survivors, and the establishment of a public education fund to further study and publicize this major mistake of the US Republic.
- **1998 Redress for Railroad and Mining Families:** Finally granted by the Office of Redress after families and historians working on Nikkei history of the interior states like Nevada and New Mexico effectively showed that “government intervention” led to the loss of jobs, company homes, and citizenship rights during WW II.

“Naky”: A New Mexico Brand

Kaichiro Nakayama came to Doña Ana County in the 1910s and rented land near Las Cruces, where his growing family began farming cantaloupe, cabbage, and other crops. New Mexico’s Alien Land Act prevented Nakayama from purchasing land so he acquired acreage in the name of his son, Carl, an American citizen by birth. By the 1930s, the family produced over three hundred acres of cantaloupe per year and tons of other produce, shipping it to distant American markets.



Nakayama shipping label (CSM)

Based on the 1940 US Census, only 186 Japanese lived in New Mexico right before the war started. The Nakayama family represents a farming segment, while other Nikkei families depended on railroad jobs in Clovis, Belen, Gallup and elsewhere. Other Issei operated small businesses or did wage work to support their Nisei offspring, who tended to be children or maturing into young adults by 1941.

The Japanese Americans of Gallup

While most of the Japanese who worked for the Santa Fe Railroad lost their jobs during the war, those who worked in Gallup may have been able to return to work after a short layoff, according to witnesses. This would fit a pattern for Gallup. It had the largest concentration of Japanese Americans in the state, yet the town treated its Nikkei residents kindly during the war, overall.

Jack Shinto remembers a man from the FBI coming to their house a few weeks into the war. He talked to the family, took his father's gun, and left. "That was the only really scary moment I remember after the bombing." He adds, "We knew everyone in the town, and I don't remember feeling unsafe or like people didn't want us there. I was the senior class president, and my brother was the sophomore class president," as Gallup High School yearbook pictures confirm (CP). Randolph Shibata, who also grew up in Gallup, remembers his grandfather telling him how lucky their family was to live in New Mexico, especially in Gallup where the community was so ethnically diverse. His Grandfather said that when the war began, his friend and neighbor Michael Mollica told the Shibata family: "You're Japanese, I'm Italian—nothing is going to happen to you here."



ok: Ruth Peterson, President
at: Clifford Carter, Secretary
Rosemary Jones, Reporter
Billy Shinto, Vice-president

Fewer “Loyalty Questions” in New Mexico

The trust that the community of Gallup put in its Nikkei residents paid off in many ways. Nearly every Nisei of age in Gallup, for instance, fought for America in the war, most with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Europe. That was the pattern wherever free Nikkei New Mexicans lived, but wartime threats and prejudice did surface at times.

The Nakayama family of the Mesilla Valley were troubled by fake stories that their barn supposedly pointed to Fort Bliss, the Army base in nearby El Paso, Texas. One family member recalled “scary times” at the start of the war, but the family persevered and learned that they had “some real good friends that would have helped us out in any situation.”

Trust during the war also paid dividends in the postwar period for the Japanese and other New Mexicans. In the Nakayama case, all nine siblings went to college and one brother, Dr. Roy Nakayama, became known as “Mr. Chile” after developing the popular NuMex Big Jim variety of chile.



CLOE Qs.: Do the actions and accomplishments of the “free Japanese Americans” of New Mexico shed light on what *may have happened*, further to the west, if the mass removal of the Nikkei had not been ordered?

Dr. Roy Nakayama, “Mr. Chile” (CSM)

The CLOE Project

Traveling Exhibit Team

Invite you to “take a chile ticket” and

Reflect on the Exhibit’s

Topics and Themes:

- **The History of the Confinement Camps of New Mexico**
 - **The “CLOE Qs” Raised in the Exhibit**
 - **Lessons of WW II for the Present and Future**
 - **Issues of Identity, Citizenship, and Civil Liberties**

Please write your “CLOE-Q Answers” and reflections on the chile response cards provided, and drop them in the comments box. **Thank You!**