

Manzanar



ID Card

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
May 3, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY



Living Area:

A person that becomes temporary at a camp of the War Relocation Authority must be in the First Class Hotel Room. Those who are not in the First Class Hotel Room must be in the First Class Hotel Room. Those who are not in the First Class Hotel Room must be in the First Class Hotel Room.

It is required, dated May 3, 1942, all persons from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, go to the camp after 12 o'clock noon, P. M. T., representative of the Commanding General.

If a family, or in case of grave emergency, is affected by this evacuation to the following:

except for other disposition of new kinds of household goods, books, automobiles and property.

In the new residence:

On, or the person in whose name must of "Civil Control Authority" to receive further on Monday, May 3, 1942, or before.





In 1942 the United States Government ordered over 110,000 men, women, and children to leave their homes and detained them in remote, military-style camps. Two-thirds of them were born in America. Not one was convicted of espionage or sabotage.

In this booklet, you will read the story of a person who lived this history, in his or her own words.

SHIG YABU

Camp: Heart Mountain, WY

Address: 14-2-C



Shig Yabu

My mother, Hanako (Hana) Horishige, was born in Seattle in 1907 to parents who had come there from Japan. She was a pre-med student at the University of Washington for two years, then married another student there, my father, Frank Yabu. They moved to San Francisco, where I was born in 1932. Shortly after, the three of us moved to Kobe, Japan.

Six months later, my mother and I came back alone to America. We were both detained at Angel Island because my mother did not bring her birth certificate with her. My mother got a job as a domestic worker in San Francisco, while I was placed with baby sitters.

About three years later, my mother met and married Benzo Okada. He had shoveled coal on a ship, and decided to jump ship at San Francisco, which made him an illegal alien. He was employed as a domestic for the family of George Fuller, who was in charge of Bethlehem Steel Company.

One of my stepfather's hobbies was Bonsai, the art of growing miniature trees. He belonged to the Bonsai Club at Golden Gate Park and won many awards for his work.

canary and dog were given away. We were allowed to take only what personal items we could carry.

The most difficult thing to leave behind was my electric train set, which was a gift from where my stepdad had worked. Probably the most important items my stepdad left behind were the Bonsai trees he had grown. Another was an old wind-up phonograph with classical music and marching bands.

We were given tags, and met in front of the Buchanan YMCA. We took a bus to the train station, and ended up at Pomona Assembly Center. Our parents were concerned that they were separated from their close friends, who went to other camps.

While in Pomona, we shared our room with another family of four, so we had a total of eight people in our room. People were not accustomed to the hot weather.

We kids enjoyed getting close to the MPs so that we could see their guns, dogs, and uniforms.

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The train trip from Pomona to Heart Mountain Relocation Camp, Wyoming, was slow and extremely long. It must have taken three or four days. I remember going through some long tunnels, which not only smelled like rotten eggs, but also darkened our faces with coal ashes.

By the time we got to Wyoming, it was not a big thing to see the MPs.

The most difficult thing to leave behind was my electric train set...



My first impression of camp was similar to what I have seen in those cowboy movies. On our very first day, we found our first scorpion. We never heard of ticks before, and we were all given shots for Rocky Mountain Fever.

We were warned about those deadly rattlesnakes. Later, we did see a few snakes while hiking.

When we first arrived, we were taken in an open truck, and issued army blankets. There was one dim electrical light in the center of the room, with four beds, one potbelly stove, and no running water. There was no furniture, no shelves and paper-thin walls through which you could hear your next door neighbor. We slept on hay-filled mattresses.

Most of the older folks complained about the cold weather. I remember going to church once with a friend by the name of Masaji, now Sam Yamoto. We traveled less than 30 yards, and he got frostbite on his face.

We often talked about the good old days in San Francisco: Going to the Golden Gate Park, zoo, Coit Tower, Fisherman's Wharf; and all the great things we ate, such as milk shakes, root beer floats, banana splits, hamburgers, etc. We talked about the great movie

theaters we used to attend, not the barracks we used as our movie house.

There were discomforts in camp, but I was only ten when I arrived in camp, so I also remember many positive and fun things.

We had a Caucasian lady by the name of Estelle Ishigo in Block 14. My mother enjoyed talking with Estelle, and she often sat and ate at our mess hall table. Estelle was an artist. She played the violin and mandolin, performing with a band in camp, and her husband was the boiler man for our block. Arthur had a long beard, and went shirtless even when there was a blizzard. I went fishing and bottle hunting with him.

My friend Aki Yoshimura's mother died in camp, and our family went to her funeral. Aki recently told me that the best Christmas gift he had ever received was in camp, when a group of church ladies from Powell gave him a Domino set.

There was no comparison between my former school in San Francisco and camp school, because there were far too many students. By the time we were in eighth grade, the classrooms were back to normal. When I was in San Francisco, I was an excellent student. In camp, my grades fell, and I did not consider myself a bad kid. Perhaps a bit "happy go lucky."

I once stayed overnight at the Heart Mountain Hospital because I wanted to play hooky from school. I pretended that I had a serious stomachache, but the nurse and doctors saw that I was faking it. I am thankful that they did not operate on me.

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We enjoyed playing sports, especially during the summer. I got into hiking and later fishing, but I enjoyed swimming the most.

Once we were given a day pass to visit Yellowstone National Park. A Japanese man with a vehicle charged \$10 a person to take us to the park. I believe my parents paid for this trip. They told us that if a grizzly bear bothers you, just give them a rice ball, and they would leave you alone because they would be so busy getting the rice off their paws. Old Faithful and the large waterfall were spectacular.

I had a pet magpie at Heart Mountain that I captured by knocking down its nest with a slingshot. Its mother had rejected it, so I took it in and cared for it. The bird died in 1945, before we left camp. In 1998, I wrote a story about the magpie for an issue of the Heart Mountain newsletter. In 2007, I wrote the children's book *"Hello Maggie!"* which is illustrated by cartoonist Willie Ito. Willie was interned at the Topaz, Utah camp.

One day, the sirens in camp went off for a long time, and because this was the first time we had ever heard them, we assumed correctly that the war was over. It was our happiest moment, and we were remembering only the life we had before. Leaving camp lifted our spirits, and we rarely talked about our past until just a few years ago, when I became a board member for the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

Upon release, we first went to San Mateo, and lived in a church. Then, my parents worked as domestics for



Shig's book, published in 2007

a wealthy family in Burlingame, so we all lived in a mansion. When my parents returned to San Francisco, they decided I needed more freedom, and sent me to live in a shack with my aunt and uncle in Pinole, a town across the bay from San Francisco. My stepfather became a citizen in 1952, when a law was passed granting Japanese nationals that right.

Later, I was in the Navy as a corpsman. I eventually attended San Diego State College, where I played basketball and pursued a career in public health. I had participated with the Boy Scouts, YMCA, and recreation programs while growing up, so it was not too surprising that I ended up working 28 years for Boys' Clubs. I later worked with seniors. I believe the camp experience allowed me to participate with people of all ages.

My advice to our younger generation is very simple:



Shig Yabu, Sept. 2002

**Participate,
whether you
win or lose.**

**Enjoy your life
to the fullest,
taking care of
your health.**

**Study hard and
make learning
interesting.**

**It is not how
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but the quality
of life you live.**

Participate, whether you win or lose. Enjoy your life to the fullest, taking care of your health. Study hard and make learning interesting. It is not how long you live, but the quality of life you live. Getting involved with things you enjoy is very important, and I like being an optimist.

HEART MOUNTAIN SENTINEL



HEART MOUNTAIN

Location: Park County, Wyoming

Environmental Conditions: Located on the terrace of the Shoshone River at an elevation of 4,700 feet. The terrain was open sagebrush desert.

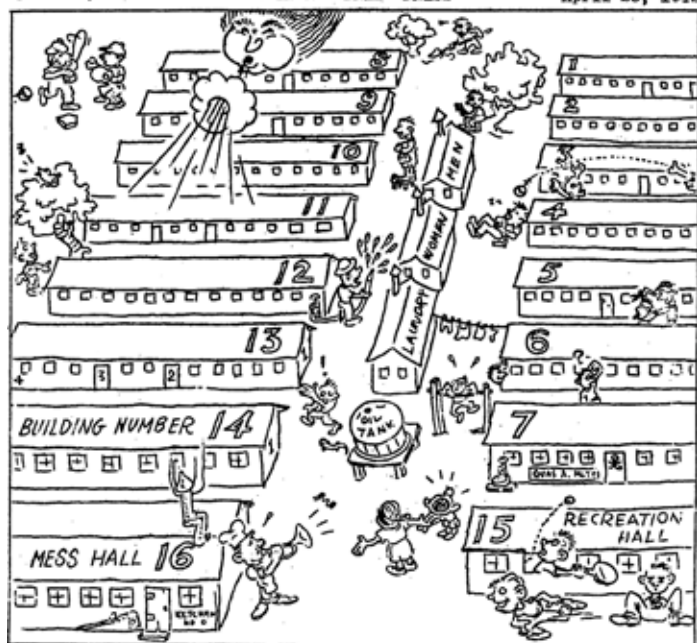
Acreage: 20,000

Opened: August 11, 1942

Closed: November 10, 1945

Max. Population: 10,767 (January 1, 1943)

Demographics: Most people were from Los Angeles, Santa Clara, and San Francisco counties in California and Yakima and Washington counties in Washington. Most came to Heart Mountain via the Santa Anita and Pomona assembly centers.



LIFE IN A MANZANAR BLOCK

Wind and Dust

This wind and dust I have to bear
 How hard it blows I do not care.
 But when the wind begins to blow --
 My morale is pretty low.

I know that I can see it through
 Because others have to bear it too.

So I will bear it with the rest
 And hope the outcome is the best.

-- George Nishimura, age 16 (1943)



Manzanar Cemetery, Winter 2002.

This booklet was developed by the park rangers at Manzanar National Historic Site in partnership with the individuals profiled and their families.



The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn more about your national parks, visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov. To learn more about Manzanar National Historic Site, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/manz.

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