



NOTICE

Headquarters
Western Defense Command
and Fourth Army

Civilian Control

Western Defense Command and Fourth Army
Wartime Civil Control Administration

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL JAPANESE

Living on Bainbridge Island

Office of the Anderson Dock Store in Washine
8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. on March 25 1942.
to receive further instructions.

PROLOGUE

INTRODUCTION

Prefaced by more than eighty years of race hatred promulgated by white Americans at the individual, group, and institutional levels (most blatantly institutionalized in the Oriental Exclusion Acts of the 1920's), the history of the Japanese in America during World War II--more specifically the evacuation and the internment of the Japanese, both alien and native citizens of the United States, during the period between March 1942 and October 1945--is the history of the victimization of the politically powerless in a nation historically devoted to the subjugation of non-white minorities.

On the 31st anniversary of the Evacuation of the Japanese from the West Coast and their mass incarceration in the interior of the United States, the Asian American Alliance, in an attempt to fill the void of the availability of educational materials on the Evacuation has undertaken a compilation of brief summary analyses and excerpted portions of books and manuscripts dealing with this stunning historical period. This summary of the available literature has been compiled in order to supplement the forum events to be held at Asia House on the weekend of March 9 and 10 which will deal with more specific issues concerning the Evacuation.

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INTRODUCTION

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"All in all, the internment of the West Coast Japanese is the worst blow our liberties have sustained in many years. Over 100,000 men, women and children were imprisoned, some 70,000 of them citizens of the United States, without indictment or the proffer of charges, pending inquiry into their "loyalty". They were taken into custody as a military measure on the ground that espionage and sabotage were especially to be feared from persons of Japanese blood. They were removed from the West Coast area because the military thought it would take too long to conduct individual loyalty investigations on the ground."¹

"They were arrested in an area where the courts were open and freely functioning. They were held under prison conditions in uncomfortable camps, far from their homes, and for lengthy periods--several years in many cases. If found "disloyal" in administrative proceedings they were confined indefinitely, although no statute makes "disloyalty" a crime."²

"In the course of relocation citizens suffered severe property losses, despite some custodial assistance by the government. The course of action which we undertook was in no way required or justified by the circumstances of the war. It was calculated to produce both individual injustice and deep-seated social maladjustments of a cumulative and sinister kind."³

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BACKGROUND TO THE EVACUATION:

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ALIEN CONTROL AND THE WEST COAST

"The opening of the war found Lieutenant General John Lesene Dewitt, commanding officer of the Western Defense Command (the West Coastal area of the continental U.S.), charged with "the defense of the Pacific Coast...against attacks by land, sea, and air; and the local protection of establishments and communications vital to the National Defense for which adequate defense cannot be provide by local civilian authorities." Among the millions under the protection of the genral's forces were the 112,000 persons of Japanese ancestry. Some forty thousand of these were aliens--men and women averaging approximately fifty-five years in age--born in Japan and debarred by American law from American citizenship. Most of these had entered the United States before immigration from the Orient was prohibited in 1924. Their seventy thousand descendants, American citizens by virtue of their birth, were of an average age of about twenty."⁵

"Presidential proclamations issued on December 7 and 8, 1941 declared all nationals subjects of Japan, Germany, Italy who were not actually naturalized, to be 'alien enemies' and prescribed their conduct. They might be excluded from any area, they were subject to various travel and living restrictions, and they were not to have in their possession any of a long list of contraband articles. Those "deemed dangerous to the public peace or safety of the United States" were subject to "'summary apprehension."⁶

"Various other federal and state governmental agencies placed restrictions on the econmic activities of alien enemies, some extending their restraints and prohibitions to the Japanese of American citizenship. The federal Treasury clamped down hard on the Japanese aliens in business...On April 2, 1942, the California State Personnel Board dismissed all Japanese employed in the state's civil service--inspite of a ruling by Attorney General Earl Warren that such discrimination was unlawful."⁷

INITIATION OF STRONGER CONTROLS

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"In mid-December, DeWitt became dissatisfied with the manner in which the Department of Justice was moving to enforce the enemy-alien travel and contraband provisions of the presidential proclamations, and especially with the fact that it had not established prohibited zones around strategic West Coast installations. He requested that representative of the War and Justice departments meet with him in San Francisco, "to crystallize a program of forthright action to deal with subversive segments of the populations."8

SEARCH RAIDS: ALIEN OR CITIZEN

"The conferences on the coast were held from January 2-5. The general urged that a broad control program be immediately undertaken by the Department of Justice which would include "spot raids" on every house in a specified locality, whether inhabited by aliens or citizens, to search for and seize contraband, and the setting up of prohibited zones around coastal installations from which enemy aliens were to be barred."9

Immediately following the talks, so-called strategic military areas were designated along the San Francisco waterfront and the immediate vicinity of the Los Angeles municipal airport from which military designated subversives namely Japanese Americans and aliens were to be excluded. DeWitt followed his initial recommendation with broader definitions of strategic military areas from which subversives were to be excluded. So began the proliferation of a series of exclusionary proclamations issued by the government, counseled by the military judgment, in order to protect the National Defense from unidentified subversive segments of the population.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

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"The early controls were imposed only upon alien enemies, but later controls were enforced against citizens as well, and eventually came to be confined to Japanese American citizens and aliens. These steps toward controls over citizens began with DeWitt's request for extensive authority in mid-February (1942), proceeded through its modification by the War Department in Washington, and culminated in its embodiment in Executive Order 9066 and subsequent ratification by Congress in Public Law 503."10

"In his (DeWitt) 'Final Recommendation' he asked that the Secretary of War 'procure from the President direction and authority to designate military areas in the Western Theater of Operations' from which he might 'exclude all Japanese, all alien enemies, and all other persons suspected for any reason by the administering military authorities of being actual or potential saboteurs, espionage agents, or fifth columnists.' He recommended that 'mass internment be considered as largely a temporary expedient pending selective resettlement, to be accomplished by the various Security Agencies of the Federal and State Governments.'"11

"The Japanese along the coast were held likely to acts of espionage and sabotage:

"In the war in which we are now engaged racial affinities are not severed by migration. The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generations Japanese born on U.S. soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become Americanized the racial strains are diluted...It therefore follows that along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies of Japanese extraction are at large today."12

"In the period immediately after Pearl Harbor there was no sabotage on the part of persons of Japanese ancestry, either in Hawaii or on the West Coast. Although many white persons were arrested and convicted as Japanese agents, no resident Japanese American was convicted of sabotage or espionage as an agent of Japan."13

RACISM AND THE EVACUATION

"DeWitt did not state that acts of sabotage or espionage had occurred; only that 'there are indications that these (Japanese) are organized and ready for concerted action at a favorable opportunity. 'The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.'"14

The dominant factor in the development of this policy (evacuation and relocation) was not a military estimate of a military problem, familiar West Coast attitudes of race prejudice. The program of excluding all person of Japanese ancestry from the coastal area was conceived and put through by the organized minority whose business it has been for over forty-five years to increase and exploit racial tensions on the West Coast--the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West. As events happened, he (DeWitt) became the chief policy-maker in the situation, and he caused more damage even than General Burnside, whose blunderings with Vallandigham, the Ohio Copperhead, in 1863, were the previous high in American military officiousness."15

MILITARY PRE-EMINENCE

In consultation with heads of the Justice Department and the Secretary of State the military was in effect given the ultimate authority in the decision-making concerning the Evacuation. While the Justice Department generally viewed the Evacuation as both unnecessary and beyond its resources to administer, it acquiesced to the military decision, dominated by the opinions and the crackpot logic of the ranking military authority, DeWitt.

"...in the early evening of that day (February 19, '42) the order (to evacuate) was presented to President Roosevelt and received his signature. The President did not ask for a justification of the program nor was the subject considered by the Cabinet."16

THE ORDER TO EVACUATE

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"Executive Order 9066 declared that 'the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national defense material, national defense premises, and national defense utilities.' In pursuit of this goal, the Secretary of War, or the military commander whom he might designate, was authorized 'to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he...may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary or the Military Commander may impose in his discretion.'"17

DEWITT AS BIG CHEESE

"Executive Order 9066 and the grant of power to DeWitt were made public on February 20, 1942. Immediately various federal officials and the press pointed out that the measure was directed against American citizens of Japanese ancestry. There was widespread speculation about the forthcoming program, but DeWitt revealed nothing of his plans. The absence of official statements added greatly to the confusion and concern among the Japanese...many of whom felt (erroneously) that the prohibited zone requirements had been cancelled. It was some time before it was made clear that the original Department of Justice program was still in force and that the deadlines for removal had to be met. The Japanese suffered not only from the official and unofficial restrictions placed on their commercial and agricultural activities, but from uncertainty as to their future."18

THE EVACUATION

In the weeks that followed the issuance of Executive Order 9066, numerous proclamations were issued from DeWitt's office, specifying evacuation procedures leading to the internment process and the relocation of all coastal Japanese.