

MINIDOKA TIMELINE

TEACHER

Below is a timeline reference for the educator that reviews the topics covering the Japanese American experience. Use these timeline entries to provide more context for the students. A student timeline is also available.

MARCH 26, 1790 Congress establishes the Naturalization Act determining who is eligible to become a US citizen, which states that “any alien, being a free white person who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for a term of two years, may be admitted to become a citizen thereof.”

JULY 8, 1853 American Commodore Matthew Perry sails into Tokyo Bay and by threat of attack, the US becomes the first western nation to establish relations with Japan in over two centuries.

LATE 1800s Japanese immigration begins to increase in the Kingdom of Hawaii and the United States. Many come as laborers seeking opportunities out West. As early as 1869, Japanese American families establish farms, businesses, and communities in the West.

MAY 6, 1882 The Chinese Exclusion Act is signed into law. The act bans Chinese laborers from entering the US and excluded Chinese immigrants from American citizenship.

FEBRUARY 15, 1907 Gentleman’s Agreement is signed, Japan agreed not to issue passports to emigrants to the United States, except for professional men and their wives. In return, the US agrees that cities in California would not segregate Japanese students in schools.

MAY 3, 1913 California passes the Alien Land Law, forbidding “all aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning land. Other states adopt similar laws, preventing both leasing and owning of land by people ineligible for citizenship.

NOVEMBER 13, 1922 The United States Supreme Court reaffirms the ban on Japanese immigrants from becoming naturalized US citizens. This ban will last until 1952.

MAY 26, 1924 Congress passes the Immigration Act of 1924, which effectively ends all Japanese immigration into the US.

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NOVEMBER 7, 1941 The Munson Report, a US Intelligence report commissioned by President Roosevelt, concludes that the majority of Japanese Americans are loyal to the US and will not pose a threat to national security in the event of war with Japan.

DECEMBER 7, 1941 US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor is attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy, prompting the US entry into WWII.

DECEMBER 8, 1941 The United States declares war on the Empire of Japan.

DECEMBER 11, 1941 The Western Defense Command is established, and Lt. General John L. Dewitt is named commander.

JANUARY 5, 1942 All Japanese American selective service registrants are reclassified as 4-C Enemy Aliens and prohibited from serving in the US military.

FEBRUARY 19, 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 authorizing the forced removal of specific persons from the west coast. This resulted in the exclusion and forced removal of over 110,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast.

MARCH 28, 1942 Minoru Yasui presents himself for arrest at a Portland, Oregon police station to begin a test case against the curfew law.

MARCH 30, 1942 All Japanese Americans are forcibly removed from Bainbridge Island, Washington, the first Japanese American community to be exiled from their homes and put into confinement sites.

SPRING - SUMMER 1942 Fifteen temporary detention centers are established in fairgrounds, racetracks, and livestock yards.

APRIL 28, 1942 Puyallup Detention Center euphemistically called “Camp Harmony” opened. Located at the Western Washington Fairgrounds in the city of Puyallup, Washington. Closed September 12, 1942.

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MAY 1, 1942 Portland Detention Center opened. Formerly the Pacific International Livestock and Exposition Center. Closed September 10, 1942.

JUNE 10, 1942 The 100th Battalion, an all-Nisei infantry battalion, is activated in Hawaii.

JUNE 12, 1942 An action is filed against Fred Korematsu in the US District Court for northern California. Korematsu is charged with violating the exclusion orders.

JULY 13, 1942 Mitsuye Endo's attorney files a writ of habeas corpus on her behalf. The case would not be decided upon until December 1944, but its ruling would signal the end of the incarceration.

AUGUST 10, 1942 Incarceration of Japanese Americans at Minidoka begins. Eventually over 13,000 Japanese Americans will be held in this concentration camp.

OCTOBER 20, 1942 The trial of Gordon Hirabayashi begins in Seattle. Hirabayashi is charged with violating the exclusion orders and curfew.

FEBRUARY 3, 1943 The War Relocation Authority (WRA) begins administering a loyalty questionnaire to all incarcerated over 17 years of age to create a bureaucratic means to assess the loyalty of Japanese Americans in the WRA centers.

MARCH 23, 1943 The formation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Over 33,000 Japanese American soldiers had served in the US military. Because of Japanese American soldiers' bravery and accomplishments, the 442nd RCT became the most highly decorated regiment in the history of the US military for its size and length of service.

JUNE 21, 1943 The Supreme Court rules on Hirabayashi and Yasui cases, upholding the constitutionality of the curfew and against the two Japanese Americans.

JULY 22, 1943 The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) begins accepting Japanese Americans.

JULY 31, 1943 Tule Lake Relocation Center is designated a maximum-security segregation center for "disloyal" incarcerated.

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JANUARY 1944 The US government reinstates the draft for Japanese Americans, requiring men from 18 to 45 to register for the draft and, if selected, serve in the military. Nearly 300 Japanese Americans, 38 from Minidoka, refuse to comply with the draft, in protest of the incarceration of their families and other Japanese Americans.

DECEMBER 18, 1944 The Supreme Court hands down its decision on Korematsu and Endo cases. The decision in the Endo Case finds that the government cannot detain “concededly loyal” persons against their will.

MAY 7, 1945 End of WWII in Europe.

AUGUST 6, 1945 An atomic bomb is dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. Over 100,000 people, mostly civilians, die. Three days later, a second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1945 End of the WWII in the Pacific.

OCTOBER 28, 1945 Minidoka Relocation Center is officially closed.

JULY 15, 1946 The 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team is honored with the Presidential Unit Citation, presented by President Harry S. Truman.

JULY 27, 1952 The Immigration Act of 1952 (McCarran-Walter Act) formally ended Asian exclusion as part of US immigration policy. It eliminated race as a basis for naturalization, making first generation Japanese and other Asian immigrants eligible to become American citizens for the first time.

NOVEMBER 25, 1978 The first Day of Remembrance is held in Seattle, WA.

AUGUST 18, 1979 Minidoka is added to the National Registry of Historic Places.

1980 – 1983 The bipartisan Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians finds that there was no military necessity for the incarceration of Japanese Americans. They find that the causes for the incarceration were “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership.”

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NOVEMBER 10, 1983 Wartime convictions of Hirabayashi, Yasui, and Korematsu are overturned.

AUGUST 10, 1988 The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 is signed by President Reagan, offering redress and reparations for the injustice of the incarceration. Each incarceration survivor received an apology letter and a payment of \$20,000.

MARCH 13, 1998 The American Jewish Committee and Japanese American National Museum holds a discussion at Ellis Island about the use of “concentration camp” to describe the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans.

JANUARY 17, 2001 Minidoka Internment National Monument is established as the 385th unit of the National Park Service.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 On Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001, the United States comes under attack when four airplanes are hijacked by terrorists, killing nearly 3,000 people. Two planes are flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third plane hits the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane, intended for the US Capitol, crashes in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Discrimination against Arab Americans, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asian Americans, and other people perceived to be of Middle Eastern ancestry rise in response to these attacks carried out by terrorists associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda. Japanese American groups speak out against the discrimination that Arab Americans and Muslims face in response to the 9/11 attacks.

JUNE 27, 2003 Following the first pilgrimage to Minidoka in 1985 organized by the Japanese American Citizens League, an annual Minidoka pilgrimage is organized by the Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee, the Friends of Minidoka, and the National Park Service.

MAY 8, 2008 Minidoka is expanded and renamed Minidoka National Historic Site. Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial in Washington State is added to the national park unit.

JUNE 22, 2019 Japanese American incarceration survivors, descendants, and allies protest the incarceration of asylum-seeking migrant children at Fort Sill, OK.