



Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II

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Part of Hill and Wang's Critical Issues Series and well established on college reading lists, PRISONERS WITHOUT TRIAL presents a concise introduction to a shameful chapter in American history: the incarceration of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. With a revised final chapter and expanded recommended readings, Roger Daniels's updated edition examines a tragic event in our nation's past and thoughtfully asks if it could happen again.

Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II Details

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From Reader Review Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II for online ebook

Nicholas Vela says

A clear chronology of a blemish upon the history of America. Having read this in conjunction with other sources for a class on World War II in the Pacific, the events leading up to Executive Order 9066 are all shown here. A must read for anyone wanting to know about America's Internment Camps.

Frederick Danysh says

A brief evaluation of American internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. The author addresses the history of anti-Asian racism starting in the mid-1800s as well as reasons for the relocation of the Japanese-Americans. He discusses reasons for their release beginning in 1942 but ignores the 442nd "Go For Broke" Regiment when discussing Army participation and just focuses on the language school. He also address political aftermath. This was a superficial treatment of the internments and some of the data is incomplete.

Lauriann says

This book gives a clear chronology of the events that led up to internment to the final redress payments a couple of years ago. It also shows how racism and xenophobia from the 19th century caused the mass hysteria, and also examines if this could happen in the U.S. again. It was a quick, informative read, but I would have enjoyed more from the perspective of those who were interned.

Renee says

I think everyone has heard in passing about the Japanese Concentration camps that America set up after the bombings of Pearl Harbor but I for one was never taught about or really knew much about what these camps were or what happened to the people in the camps or anything really.

After reading this book I understand where these camps were, what life was like in the camps, the questions that the US government faced these Japanese Americans with and how they responded to all of this. How would you react when the country you live in no longer trusts you so they herd you like cattle into small rooms that you can now call home because the home country of your parents decided to attack in a time of war?

This book gives a clear chronological of the arrest of the Japanese people to what happened after the war and even in more modern times.

Sarah Crawford says

This is another book on the internment of the Japanese Americans during World War II. The book goes into the background leading up to the internment, the internment itself, and what happened afterwards.

As with my other reviews, I'll concentrate on things this book presents that I other books tend to miss entirely or gloss over. I'll put my comments on things in () to distinguish them from what the author actually said.

The history leading up to the internment is one basically of anti-Oriental prejudice, starting with the anti-Chinese prejudice in this country, particularly on the West Coast. This prejudice was basically transferred over to the Japanese after the Chinese were barred from immigrating, and it was a prejudice that was felt by many people. The author notes that, in California, the Republicans, the Democrats, and a third political party, the Populist, along with the American Federation of Labor were all against Japanese immigration in 1900. The San Francisco Chronicle paper began a series of virulent attacks on the Japanese in America in 1905, matching some of the worst tabloid trash-type journalism that anyone has ever seen.

The result was to further inflame public opinion which the politicians were then more than willing to use to further their own purposes. The author adds that Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, was elected President and was quite anti-Japanese.

A very interesting thing is a breakdown of the types of businesses persons of Japanese ancestry were involved in in the city of Seattle (which was probably fairly representative of the businesses they were involved in in other cities.)

They ran hotels, grocery stores, dry cleaners, market stands, produce houses, restaurants, barbershops, laundries or gardening services. A lot of them were also involved in farming in rural communities. (Note that none of these is in any way, shape or form involved with military things or would threaten the US in case of war.)

The author talks about the war in Europe and how fast Hitler's victories were. There was a belief in American government agencies that this happened because there was a vast "fifth column" of saboteurs and subversives that helped him, which was something that was totally untrue. (This same type of thinking, that the military of the "good" countries could not have lost so easily unless they were betrayed, was carried over into the attack on Pearl Harbor where, for a long while, the belief was that it was not our military's fault at all for not being ready; it was all due to a massive number of persons of Japanese ancestry living in Hawaii that aided the attacking planes. That, also, was totally disproven later, but was useful to the politicians for inflaming public opinion against the Japanese Americans.)

There was a proposal to let the Japanese Americans stay on the West Coast and just keep them away from any "sensitive" areas, but the politicians and hate-mongers were against such a limited program, wanting the "Jap problem" to be dealt with once and for all.

Soon after Pearl Harbor the draft boards began classifying Japanese Americans as 4-C, which is a category reserved for enemy aliens.

The author also points out that, if it was so necessary for military reasons to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast then that would have been even more true for the Japanese Americans in Hawaii where

they formed almost a third of the population. The persons of Japanese Ancestry in California, though, only formed 2% of the population. (So it should have been around 16 times as necessary to “deal” with the Japanese Americans in Hawaii than those on the West Coast if it was so powerfully militarily necessary.)

The author goes into the internment camp descriptions and breaks everything down into four phases (which I haven't seen anyone else do.)

Phase 1: Settling in (spring 1942-February 1943.)

Phase 2: Registration/segregation crisis (Feb. 1943-Jan. 1944)

Phase 3: Draft crisis (Jan. 1944-Nov. 1945)

Phase 4: Leaving camp (summer 1942-March 1946).

As far as students leaving the camps and going to college, the author points out that Princeton and MIT refused to admit Japanese Americans in 1942. Eventually around 4,300 students did find their way into colleges.

Some 600 of the evacuees eventually settled in Cincinnati with no trouble.

There's a very good chapter on whether or not such a thing could happen again, and the author points out relatively recent events in which people of one nationality or another were interrogated by the FBI or some preliminary moves to setting some kind of program or other were made.

There's also a section of some photos.

Jennifer Robinson says

I could not finish this book. I was looking for something with a little more story. Only gave it 4 stars because it is perfect for a history class or paper. Very informative, but little there to connect the reader to the issue.

Matt says

I read this book during my History of California class while in grad school...it was eye-opening, even (hell, especially) for someone who has lived in California for most of their lifetime. It speaks volumes about the mentality of the United States from the 1940s to present day...

Patrick says

This short, but very informative book is a great read. It illuminates the specific background, sequence of events, responsible people, and beliefs that surrounded the detainment of some 100,000+ Japanese Americans into concentration camps starting in 1942 and lasting until 1946. Daniels uses an authoritative and informed voice with plenty to say about all the people involved, both within and outside the camps. The

massive contradiction of Japanese American soldiers serving in the highly decorated 442nd Infantry Regiment while their family remained behind barbed wire in camps in the country they were "fighting for" is glaringly shown in this history.

Joshua Arnett says

Good information written with the liveliness of a wikipedia article.

Lauren says

I've had this book on my shelf for a while, since my undergraduate days of majoring in history. It came up when I randomized my "to read" list so I decided to give it a go.

It was relatively short and to the point, which I liked. My interest, as always in history, is the effect an event or time has on the people themselves. I would have liked more details about the camp and the experiences of the people who lived in them. Maybe the intent of this book was to be more of an overview, which I felt it definitely succeeded as.
