

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

Topic 2 Content: Japanese American Internment Notes

Introduction

Japanese American Internment

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The Japanese strategy for war was to make sure the United States could not have a major impact. Known for its brutal tactics, the Japanese army created fear and paranoia in the United States. The United States responded by forcing many Japanese Americans into internment camps along the West Coast. In this interactivity, learn about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Click **NEXT** to begin.



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American Fear

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Americans were angry at the Japanese people for the attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent attacks on other American bases. American citizens living on the West Coast of the United States were also fearful of an invasion by Japanese forces. On the West Coast, the anger and fear felt by many Americans were expressed as prejudice against Japanese Americans living in their communities. Furthermore, the United States government felt concerned that some Japanese Americans were supporting the enemy through actions like spying.



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Internment Camps

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In February of 1942, President Roosevelt issued an order that allowed the relocation and internment of Japanese Americans living on the West Coast of the United States. Internment means confining or impressing people in a large group without trial. Japanese Americans living on the West Coast were forced to move to internment camps located away from the coast. Japanese Americans not living on the West Coast did not have to move, and only some of the Japanese American population on Hawaii was moved into internment camps.



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Investigation

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In 1944, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the government had the right to act against Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. However, in 1980 the United States Government began an investigation into the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The investigation found little evidence existed of Japanese Americans supporting the enemy.



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Apologies

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In 1988, the American Civil Liberties Act was signed into law. This act made a public apology from the United States Government to all Japanese Americans impacted by the internment, and required the government to pay each living internment camp survivor twenty thousand dollars. The United States Government ended up spending more than a billion dollars in payments to camp survivors.



In 1988, the United States government recognized that the internment of Japanese Americans was a mistake when the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was signed into law. This act provided a presidential apology and symbolic payments to Japanese Americans who were interned, those that had been evacuated from the coast, and other persons of Japanese ancestry who had lost liberty or property because of discriminatory actions taken by the federal government during World War II. The act required the government to pay each living internment camp survivor twenty thousand dollars. The United States Government ended up spending more than a billion dollars in payments to camp survivors.