Life in japanese internment camps

Parts of the World, Asia

On December 17, 1941 Japan delivered a devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared a day that would live in infamy. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor there were hundreds of thousands Japanese Americans in the United States. Though they were Americans the attack on Pearl Harbor launched a rash of fear about national security, especially in the West. Just hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the FBI rounded-up 1, 291 Japanese community and religious leaders, arresting them without evidence and freezing their assets. Freezing the asset violated their rights to their property, invaded people's privacy. Those whose assets weren't frozen weren't given long to sell their businesses and property. Belongings were let go at a fraction of their worth, if they could be sold at all. The FBI searched the private homes of thousands of Japanese residents along the west coast, seizing items considered contraband.

US citizens had feared another attack, and war hysteria seized the country. State representatives put pressure on President Roosevelt to act against those of Japanese descent in the US. In February 1942, two months after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which relocated all persons of Japanese ancestry, both citizens and aliens, inland, outside of the Pacific military zone. The goal of the order was to prevent espionage and to protect persons of Japanese descent from harm at the hands of Americans who had strong anti-Japanese attitudes. The first step of removal was the registration of all Japanese Americans, both resident aliens, and citizens. All were ordered to the assembly centers near their homes, young or old, rich or poor. General John L. De Witt, military commander of the Western Defense Command, issued more than 100 military " Exclusion

Orders” that were directed at civilian of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast. These exclusion orders were based solely on race and ancestry. Anyone who was at least 1/16th Japanese was evacuated, including 17, 000 children under 10, as well as thousands of elderly and handicapped. In some cases, family members were separated and put in different camps. A Jap’s a Jap. It makes no difference whether the Jap is a citizen or not. – General John L. Dewitt, Commander, Western Defense Command, 1942I am determined that if they have one drop of Japanese blood in them, they must go to camp. – Colonel Karl Bendetsen, Administrator, Wartime Civil Control Administration, 1942.

Dewitt original plan included Italians and Germans, however the idea of rounding-up European-descent Americans was not as popular. In March Army-directed evacuations began; people had six-day notice to dispose of their belongings other than what they could carry. Those who live in Hawaii were sent to camps in the mainland. They first had to report to centers near their homes. A person of Japanese ancestry in western Washington State was removed to the assembly center at the Puyallup Fairgrounds near Tacoma. Those who went from Puyallup to Pomona, internees found that cowshed at a fairground or a horse stall at a racetrack and open areas surrounded by barbed wire was home for several months before they were transported to a permanent wartime residence. Many of the temporary units didn’t have roofs overhead. The quality of health care food and general cleanliness were disgustingly a low-quality. There were ten permanent wartime residences that were run by War Relocation Authority. These camps were in Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Arkansas, California, Idaho, and Arkansas. These

locations were in isolated areas that no one else wanted to live which included deserts or swamps. They were in a form of barracks, with several families housed together. The families slept in barracks that were six room apartments. Each family only got one apartment with a wood burning oven, a light that hanged from the ceiling and a cot for each person. There was no plumbing in the barracks. They experienced little to no privacy while living in the camps. The camps were overcrowded and were in poor conditions. Living in close quarters and sharing so much, with the terrible conditions made it more susceptible to illnesses. The proper medical care was hard to get. Some died from great suffering for the lack of the necessary medical treatment. The apartments had no closets, cupboards or any furniture at all. They had to use communal areas for washing, laundry, and eating.

Life in the camps was hard for all those who lived there. The summers were extremely hot and had cold winters. Each camp had an administration building, school, hospital, store, and post office. There were jobs available for most adults. These jobs included camp preparing, growing food, teaching, or being nurses. There was some temporary work outside of the camps. Most of the work was helping farmers. There was only one mess hall or food court that held 200-300 Japanese Americans. It was common for the camps to experience food shortages. It was necessary to start raising their own animals and grow their own vegetation. Doctors and nurses were given special treatment in the food courts, they were given larger portions and healthier foods. Some of the Japanese did not want to be in the camps, and often sought out joining the military. About 1, 200 chose to do this. However, some wanted to stay because they had no home to return to.

Despite how hard it was for them, they tried to make the best of the situation. They started schools and churches. They would watch or play sports. They even had dances and talent shows. Sometimes they had some fun when they had a little freedom. Children played hide and seek, but never got too close to the fences or searchlights. If they got too close there were shot and guards would say they were trying to escape. Search lights swept the grounds, they were guarded by eight towers with machine guns. Searches were done twice a day to ensure that there was no contraband such as cameras and radios. Any attempt to escape, resisting orders, and treason were all punishable by death; and guards face little to no consequences for killing without just cause. There was a case of a mentally ill man in his mid-forties, who was shot trying to escape in 1942. He attempted suicide twice since coming to the camp, and the guards aware of his mental illness. Two Californians were killed during an alleged escape attempt from a camp in New Mexico. It was found later they were very weak upon their arrival and were not able to walk, much less escape. Only a handful of guards went to court for their heinous actions, but it resulted in disappointing results. A private was acquitted for the murder but was fined for the unauthorized use of government property. The amount of one dollar, the cost of the bullet that was used to kill the victim. They were told that the reason for the internment was to protect them from the American public hostile and violence toward them. One internee said, “ If we were put there for our own protection why were the guns at the guard tower pointed inward, instead of outward?”

During War world II, ten Americans were convicted of spying for Japan, but not one was of Japanese ancestry. In 1944 about two years after signing Executive Order 9066, President D. Roosevelt ordered the closure of the internment camps. As the war was coming to an end the camps were closing, and they were free to go home. The last camp was closed in 1945. Some saw the camps as concentration camps and violation of the writ of Habeas Corpus, others, though, some saw it necessary result of Pearl Harbor. After the Japanese Americans got out of the camps, over 5, 000 ultimately renounced their American citizenship. The physical and emotional trauma from the camps became a permanent part of the people's lives and they couldn't forgive the country that did this to them. Those who chose to return home for their assets were beaten and even killed. They found in the neighborhoods signs that said " Japs" weren't welcomed, a warning to keep them away. They couldn't rebuild the lives they once knew. It took over forty years later in 1987 for those who suffered in the camps to get a formal apology. It was President Gerald Ford that said the evacuation and internment camps was the wrong thing to do. They also provided 1. 2 billion dollars in compensation, however money can never buy back what they went through those two years. They Japanese internment camps were not the only time the country had a fear or hysteria toward those we go to war with. After 9/11 there was a wave of fear and intolerance toward those who were Muslim. Many of their businesses were attacked and they themselves were attacked for their religion association.

The Muslim ban was put into effect on January 27, 2017, this ban those from certain countries access to the United States. The U. S. in the last few years

refused refugees from Syria despite the devastations that is happening there. Most recently immigrants coming from South America seeking asylum, families were separated and put into camps. The dreamers who are under the DACA program are looking at being deported to a country they have never been in. It seems that history not only repeats itself, but so does ignorance.