

# Japanese people in the usa during world war ii research papers examples

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Before the imperial Japan assault on Pearl Harbor on December 7th - " Day which will live in infamy" - the Japanese immigrants constituted a significant and quite a prosperous national minority among those existing in the United States in the period of inter-bellum. Despite the presence of some discrimination on the part of the white-skinned natives which consisted in not-employment of the Japanese for white-collar work and such other things " many Japanese and Japanese-Americans found relative success as entrepreneurs and business owners, particularly as farmers and hotel owners and managers" (Speidel). All of this taken in aggregate points out to the fact that the life of Japanese-Americans was quite okay right before the war and probably resembled the life of any other national minority living at that time in the United States.

However this all drastically changed after the assault carried out by the Japanese naval and air forces on Pearl Harbor. Within quite a very short period of time - in the middle of February - the first measures as to the Japanese immigrants in the United States were undertaken. It all started with Executive Order 9066 according to which all the people of Japanese ancestry had to be forcefully removed from the area of California and from the most of the area of Washington and Oregon, which were now designated as military zones (" Japanese American Internment").

It is namely mid-February 1942 that we can talk about the start of explicit discrimination against people of Japanese origin. On the one hand it was a necessity of war to secure the United States security by eliminating any possibility of existence of a Japanese spies' network operating near the Pacific front of the warfare. But on the other hand there were many illogical

things which point out to the fact that steps taken against the Japanese Americans were rather hatred evolving into discrimination rather than a grain of rationality. For instance, it is known that in 1941 Japanese constituted about 40 percent of the population of the Hawaiian Islands. However, notwithstanding the fact that these spot on the map was the very epicenter of the happening that dragged the United States into the war, only several thousands of people of Japanese origin are known to have been detained. This raises the question whether there really was a war necessity to make that great relocation of the Japanese people from the West Coast. Another dubious thing consists in the fact that Italian and German minorities living in the United States were not even remotely subjected to such pressure and discrimination as the Japanese. Of course, this can partially be explained by the fact that these were namely the Japanese and neither Hitler not Mussolini who attacked the US, but still that does not seem like enough pretext to relocate hundreds of thousands people who, in addition to everything else, have to be told apart from the people and ideas of their countries of origin (" Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives"). Yet another thing to consider is that Executive Order 1966 does not contain a single word about Japanese people, it includes only general terms without reference to any specific nationality. So why only these became the ones so cruelly affected by the Order (" The Transcript of Executive Order 9066")? The mentioned executive order was the mainspring for further discrimination of the Japanese. The document signed by the then-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt de-facto deprived representatives of this national minority of quite a host of rights. First of all, people of Japanese origin that were notified that

they were going to be replaced were given only a few days to sell all of their property, because on the day of the removal they could have with them only those things they could carry, nothing more. Of course, it was virtually impossible to sell not only one's residence, but all the business and other property within such a short period, which means that homes had to be left behind for a very unsure future. Almost in each case during the period of 1942-1946, when the replaced Japanese returned home Japanese property was subject to theft and destruction. Also, yet before the very replacement the Japanese were restricted very significantly in their movement, obviously in order to keep them from running. This restriction said that the soon-to-be-relocated could not leave the military zone on their own and that their range of movement had to be only 5 miles from their homes ("Enemy Alien Curfew Friday"). In addition to the fact that we know that freedom of movement is one of the basic human rights (so what happened back then in the US was obviously a violation) the restriction of this freedom led also to other repercussions, the main of which was the loss of jobs connected with trespassing the 5 mile radius (of which there were host) (Hirai).

Upon returning home the Japanese faced not only the absence of anything to start a new life on. The attitude of the American society to them changed drastically. In fact, for instance, in Seattle several organizations were established - Remember the Pearl Harbor League and Japanese Exclusion League - that persisted in their efforts not to admit repatriation of the Japanese and their resuming their rights (Speidel).

Beyond that, even after internment and relocation of the Japanese were over the latter still were deprived of many rights. For instance, the so-called alien

land laws prohibited the newly-freed Japanese from resuming their homes and other property they had left behind back in 1942. It was literally a tragedy for many of them as a significant part of the national minority had been involved in farming before the United States entered the war. Another severe blow on the Japanese rights was that until 1952 no Japanese could become a naturalized American and get American citizenship. Given the fact that in the pre-war times not so many Issei (immigrants, not their children, born in the US as compare to Nisei, the first generation of descendants born in the US) wanted to give up their Japanese citizenship and usually adjusted to American life without this change, this constituted a significant problem now.

But in these camps a very interesting thing happened. The Japanese began organizing their lives very neatly. Probably, one of the reasons was the fact that Japanese have always had a very keen sense of community. This explains why educational centers within such camps emerged very quickly. The residents of these camps figured out what jobs had to be carried out in order to support it operating like it should, though no internee was asked to do so! There emerged not only self-governing bodies, but also mass media, religious institutions, musical groups, sports teams and events and even artists and writers! All of that behind barbed wires!

I think all of the above contributed the most possible to the fact that the Japanese felt themselves in the post-war America very deserted and given up on. They had nowhere to seek for support but within their own community as the rest of the American society was the most hostile possible. Therefore, the Issei and Nisei had to come together closely to survive the new stance in

the American society as well as the new set of rights, a very abridged one, and an array of new challenges they faced.

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