

Background Essay on Executive Order 9066 and Japanese Relocation Camps during WWII



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With the Japanese-initiated attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States was plunged into the midst of World War II. Nearly two months after the attack, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066.

In an effort to curb potential Japanese espionage, Executive Order 9066 approved the relocation of Japanese-Americans into internment camps. At first, the relocations were completed on a voluntary basis. Volunteers to relocate were minimal, so the executive order paved the way for forced relocation of Japanese-Americans living on the west coast. During the six months following the issue of EO 9066, over 100,000 Japanese-Americans found themselves placed into concentration camps within the United States. These concentration camps were called “relocation camps”.

Japanese-Americans were referred to by their generation within the United States. The first generation of Japanese immigrants were called Issei. The second generation of American born Japanese-Americans were called Nisei. This executive order affected over 117,000 Japanese-Americans from both generations. Thousands of people lost their homes and businesses due to “failure to pay taxes”.

EO 9066 was widely controversial. This order stayed in place until President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9742 on June 25, 1946. EO 9742 ordered the liquidation of the War Relocation Authority and allowed Japanese-Americans to return to their homes. Many of the newly released Japanese-Americans returned home to find their belongings stolen or their property sold.

Japanese-Americans who were returning home faced discrimination and prejudice from the civilian population. President Harry S. Truman, who was ashamed of these acts, paid tribute to the Japanese-American soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

In 1988, President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act. The remaining survivors of the relocation camps were sent formal letters of apology and were awarded \$20,000 in restitutions from the United States Government.

Despite the actions taken by various presidents after the liquidation of the War Relocation Authority, many Japanese-Americans never felt closure. The American-created internment camps are rarely discussed in history. Royals bench coach Don Wakamatsu said, “Any time you can talk about it, it immortalizes it a little bit more,” he said. “There’s always in history a learning curve. Or so we can hope... if we seek to stay true to the promise of the Declaration of Independence and our Nation’s creed of liberty.”

Read more about what Don Wakamatsu says here: <http://www.kansascity.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/vahe-gregorian/article26505454.html#storylink=cpy>

Source 1

Source Information: Formative Assessment #1

Report, Japanese-Americans in Relocation Centers, March 1943. Papers of Philleo Nash., ca. March

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Washington, D. C.

JAPANESE-AMERICANS IN RELOCATION CENTERS



Of the 127,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States, approximately 107,000 are in ten relocation centers under supervision of the War Relocation Authority. Roughly two-thirds are American citizens, almost all of whom are under 40 years of age, and the remainder are aliens, most of whom have been in the United States since 1924, when the Exclusion Act went into effect. The population includes about 19,000 citizen men between the ages of 18 and 37.

The people now living in relocation centers were residents of strategic military areas on the West Coast, which were evacuated last spring and summer, by order of the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command. The evacuated area includes the entire state of California, the western half of Washington and Oregon, and the southern third of Arizona. The evacuation was announced and at first was placed on a voluntary basis. People of Japanese ancestry were instructed to move out of the region, but might go anywhere they liked. With Japanese invasion not unlikely and infiltration of Japanese agents always a threat, their presence in the coastal and border areas constituted a danger to the national security, but away from those areas it was considered that the evacuees need not be restricted. Several thousand moved out but many of them encountered difficulties of many kinds growing out of suspicion and general public antagonism. When it became evident that voluntary movement would not be sufficiently rapid, voluntary evacuation was halted, on March 29, 1942, and after that date, evacuation was carried out by military authorities on a planned and ordered basis, area by area.

The War Relocation Authority was established by Presidential Executive Order 9102 on March 18, 1942, to aid the military authorities in evacuation of any persons or groups from any designated areas and to relocate evacuated persons. Its immediate task was the relocation of the people of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast areas.

Using Source 1

Sourcing Questions	Identify the author's position on the subject of the camps.
Contextualization Questions	How does this source make you feel about the camps and why? What was said that leads you to that conclusion?
Corroboration Tasks	How does Source 1 and 2 compare to each other?
Close Reading Questions	What details does this document use to explain the condition of the camps?

Source 2

Source Information: Formative Assessment #1

Memorandum, Milton. S. Eisenhower to Members of Congress, April 20, 1942; forwarding Informal Report of the War Relocation Authority. Papers of Harry S. Truman: Papers as U.S. Senator and Vice President of the United States, April 20, 1942.

Following the Salt Lake conference, the Authority announced that the minimum requirements for reception centers were as follows:

1. All relocation centers must be located on public land where improvement at public expense will become public, not private, assets. Any land acquired for relocation centers will remain in public ownership.
2. Because of man-power needs of the armed services and because minimum guard units can protect 5,000 persons as easily as smaller groups, first attention will be given to sites for large projects.
3. Each relocation center must provide work opportunities 12 months of the year for the evacuees to be located there. The work will be of these types: (1) Public works, (2) food production, (3) manufacture of goods required by the military establishment.
4. All centers must be located at a safe distance from strategic points.
5. Transportation and power facilities, water supply, soil, climate, and similar factors must be satisfactory.
6. Each reception center will be a military reservation under military police protection.

Using Source 2

Sourcing Questions	Why was this document written? Who is the audience it is written to?
Contextualization Questions	When was this document written? Why now?
Corroboration Tasks	What differences are there in source 1 and 2? Does source 1 show that the minimum requirements were being used? How?
Close Reading Questions	Explain how the details of the document explain either that the camps were set up for the protection of the Japanese-Americans or to contain them due to lack of trust?

Source 3

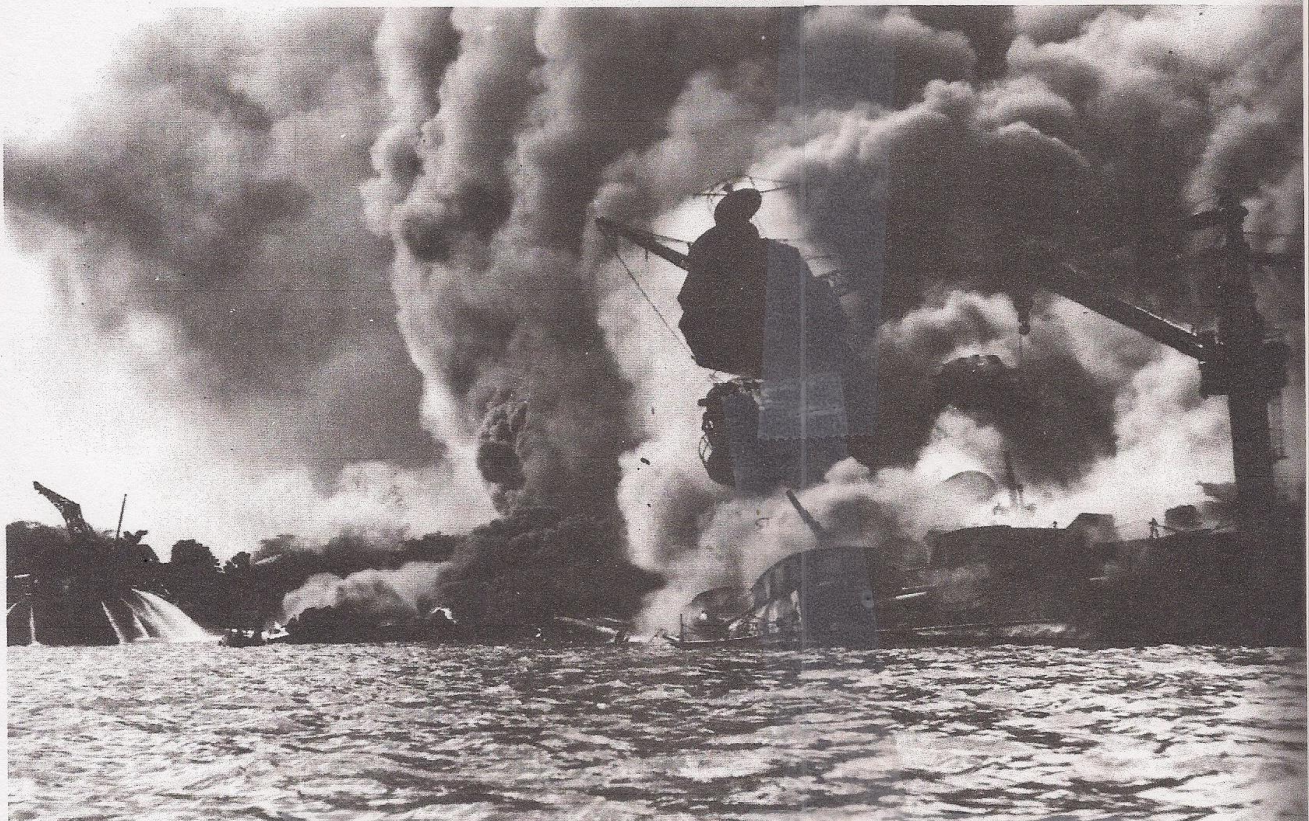
Source Information: Formative Assessment #1

Newspaper article, December 8, 1945, *Chronicles of World War II*.

https://www.trumanlibrary.org/dbq/docs/bomb/BombDecision_DocumentSet.pdf

DECEMBER 1941

Japanese planes destroy US fleet at Pearl Harbor



The "Arizona" goes down in a pall of smoke after her magazine exploded: 2,403 American servicemen lost their lives in the devastation at Pearl Harbor.

Honolulu, 8 December

The message was simple and stark: "AIR RAID, PEARL HARBOR. THIS IS NO DRILL."

Japan's devastating opening blow of the Pacific war against the United States came plunging out of a sunny Hawaiian sky yesterday when 184 aircraft from six Japanese aircraft carriers of Vice-Admiral Chuichi Nagumo's Strike Force caught the American defenders completely unawares at Pearl Harbor, Oahu, at 7:55am [local time].

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Using Source 3

Sourcing Questions	What was the purpose of this article?
Contextualization Questions	How is the date of this document relevant to the event it is discussing?
Corroboration Tasks	Do you feel that this is a reliable source? Why or why not?
Close Reading Questions	What details do you identify as showing the destruction of the island?

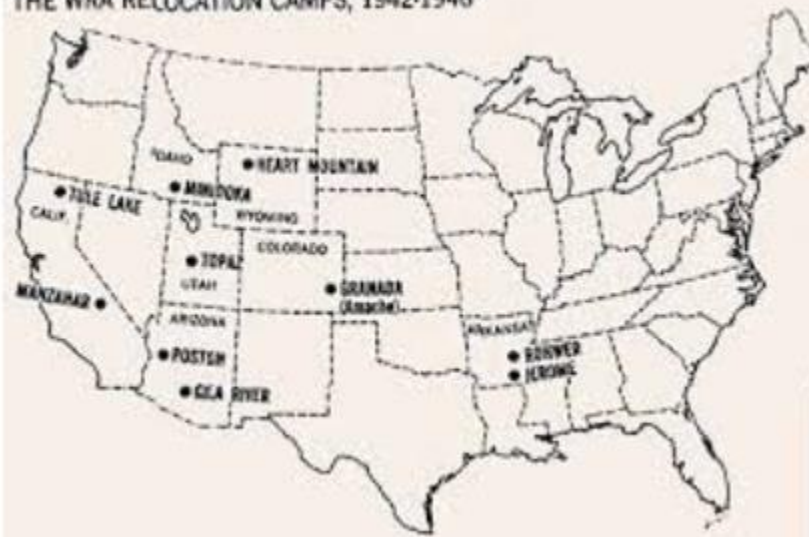
Source 4

Source Information: Formative Assessment #1

Report, Japanese-Americans in Relocation Centers, March 1943. Papers of Philleo Nash., ca. March 1943.

<u>Center</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Population</u>
Manzanar	California	10,000
Tule Lake	California	15,000
Colorado River	Arizona	17,000
Gila River	Arizona	14,000
Central Utah	Utah	8,000
Minidoka	Idaho	9,000
Heart Mountain	Wyoming	11,000
Granada	Colorado	7,000
Rohwer	Arkansas	8,000
Jerome	Arkansas	8,000
		<u>107,000</u>

THE WRA RELOCATION CAMPS, 1942-1946



Using Source 4

Sourcing Questions	Who was this information meant for?
Contextualization Questions	Why do you think these two documents were created?
Corroboration Tasks	What two camps seem to be the outliers of the locations? Why do you think they are there?
Close Reading Questions	What does the number of people in the camps compared to where they are located tell you?

Source 5

Source Information: Formative Assessment #2

Various photos and comics. Feb 13, 1942

<https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb5222708w>



Courtesy of National Japanese American Historical Society



"Waiting for the Signal from Home by Dr. Suess on February 14, 1942



First box: Out of all of Superman's mighty feats in defense of democracy, I think the latest exploit ranks at the top!

It will have served of inestimable value if only to point out to the public the importance of not belittling the Jap menace in the south pacific

Second Box: It should be remembered that most Japanese-Americans are loyal citizens. Many are in combat units of our Armed Forces, and others are working in war factories according to government statements. Not one act of sabatage was perpetrated in Hawaii, or territorial U.S. by a Japanese-American.

Using Source 5

Sourcing Questions	Who were these pictures and cartoon meant to convince?
Contextualization Questions	What was the purpose of each picture or cartoon? Where do you think they were published?
Corroboration Tasks	How are these 3 documents related?
Close Reading Questions	What opinion does each picture and cartoon trying to convey?

Source 6

Source Information: Formative Assessment #2

Box (5) Incarceration of Japanese Americans. Box # 1 of 2. Set # Orange. Folder 2. Letter from Mrs. Shipman to President Harry S. Truman.

February 11, 1943

My Dear Sir:

Many people in my community have expressed deep resentment toward the teaching of music and either fine arts to the Japanese in our internment camps when our own public school options have been denied this advantage.

I am a teacher in a public school system which among many cannot afford to employ a teacher of public school music, but on the other hand, a portion of the taxpayer's money of this community is paying for a luxury which our own schools cannot afford.

Too why shouldn't the public resent such a "set up" of education in internment camps when we taxpayers have relatives "across" who are making sacrifices that our public school children should have these advantages.

If the government has money to spend, why not improve our own curriculum of fine arts first and let the "devil" take the hindmost?

Yours very truly,

Mrs. L. H. Shipman

Illinois, Missouri
February 11, 1943

Senator Harry Truman
The United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

My dear Sir:

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I am a teacher in a public school system which, among many, cannot afford to employ a teacher of public school music, but, on the other hand, a portion of the taxpayer's money of this community is paying for a luxury which our own schools cannot afford!!

Too why shouldn't the public resent such a "set up" of education in internment

camps when our taxpayers have relatives "across" who are making sacrifices that our public school children should have these advantages.

If the government has money to spend, why not improve our own curriculum of fine arts first and let the "devil" take the hindmost?

Yours very truly,
Mrs. L. H. Shipman

Using Source 6

Sourcing Questions	What is the author's opinion on the school system in both the camps and outside the camps?
Contextualization Questions	Why do you think the author sent this directly to President Truman? Why not to someone else?
Corroboration Tasks	Do all the documents agree? Why or why not?
Close Reading Questions	What were some details about what was being taught both in and out of the camps?

Source 7

Source Information: Formative Assessment #2

Japanese Internment Camp

Daniel Shelton's response to Sept. 11, 2001 was creating this storyline featuring Nicholas's paternal grandfather George Tokoname.

<http://www.bencomicstrip.com/japanese-internment-camp/>



Using Source 7

Sourcing Questions	Where do you think this story was published and why?
Contextualization Questions	Why do you think Shelton told this story?
Corroboration Tasks	How does this document compare to others you have looked at? Was this document created to gain sympathy or just tell a story?
Close Reading Questions	What details about camp life did the Grandfather tell the child?

Source 8

Source Information: Formative Assessment #2

Japanese American Responses to Incarceration - Densho.org

<https://densho.org/japanese-american-responses-to-incarceration/>



<https://densho.org/japanese-american-responses-to-incarceration/>

Using Source 8

Sourcing Questions	Why was this video created?
Contextualization Questions	When was this created and why was it not created earlier?
Corroboration Tasks	Do you feel this video is a reliable source? Why or why not?
Close Reading Questions	What details does this video use to show you the thoughts and feelings of the Japanese-Americans at this time?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____

Opinions of the Internment Camps - *Formative Assessment #2*

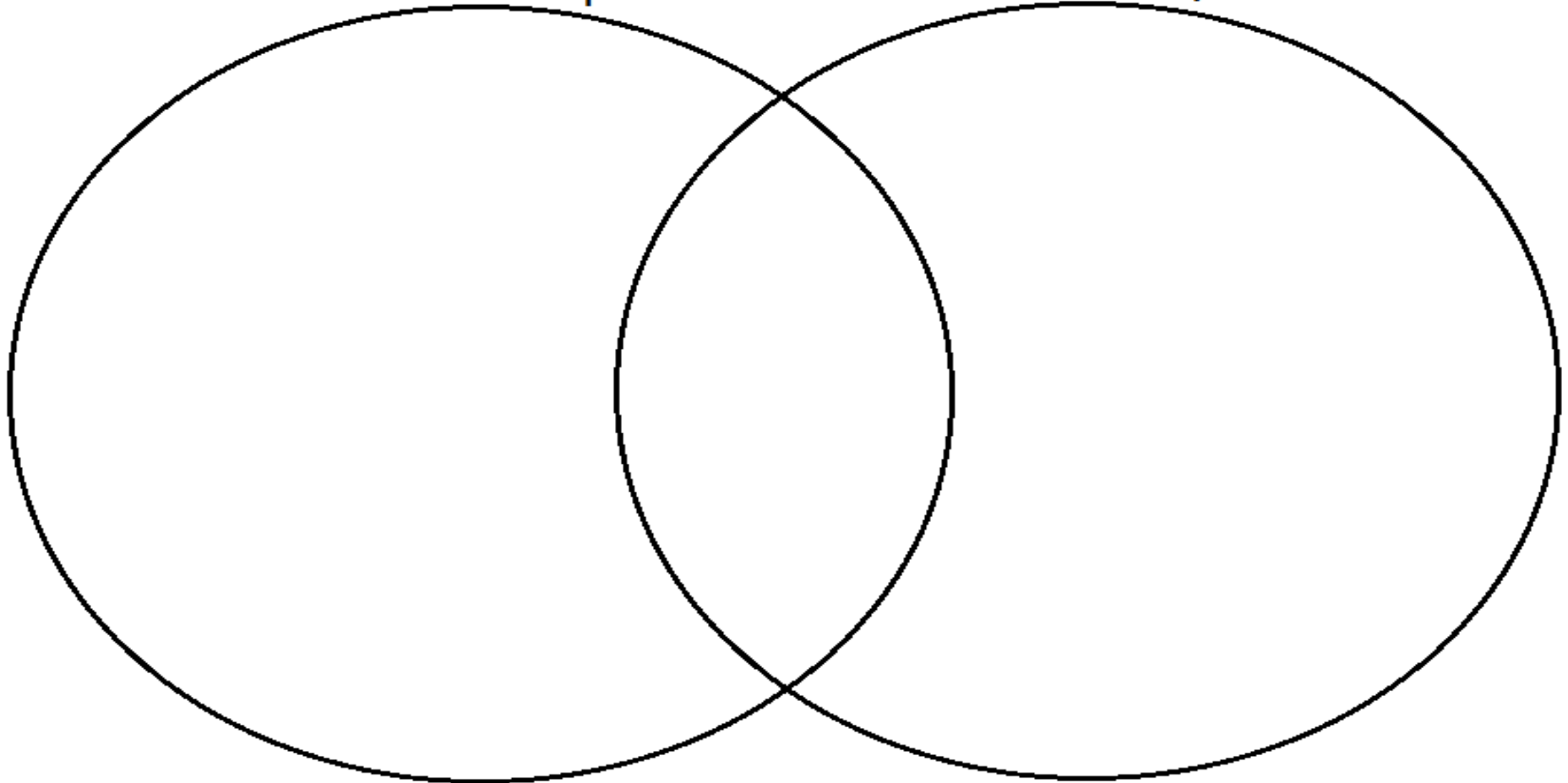
DIRECTIONS: Use the documents from Formative Assessment #2 Document Set. Sort the documents into the appropriate categories based on the information provided regarding the opinions of the internment camps.



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**Public sentiments
towards the camps**

**Japanese sentiments
towards the camps**



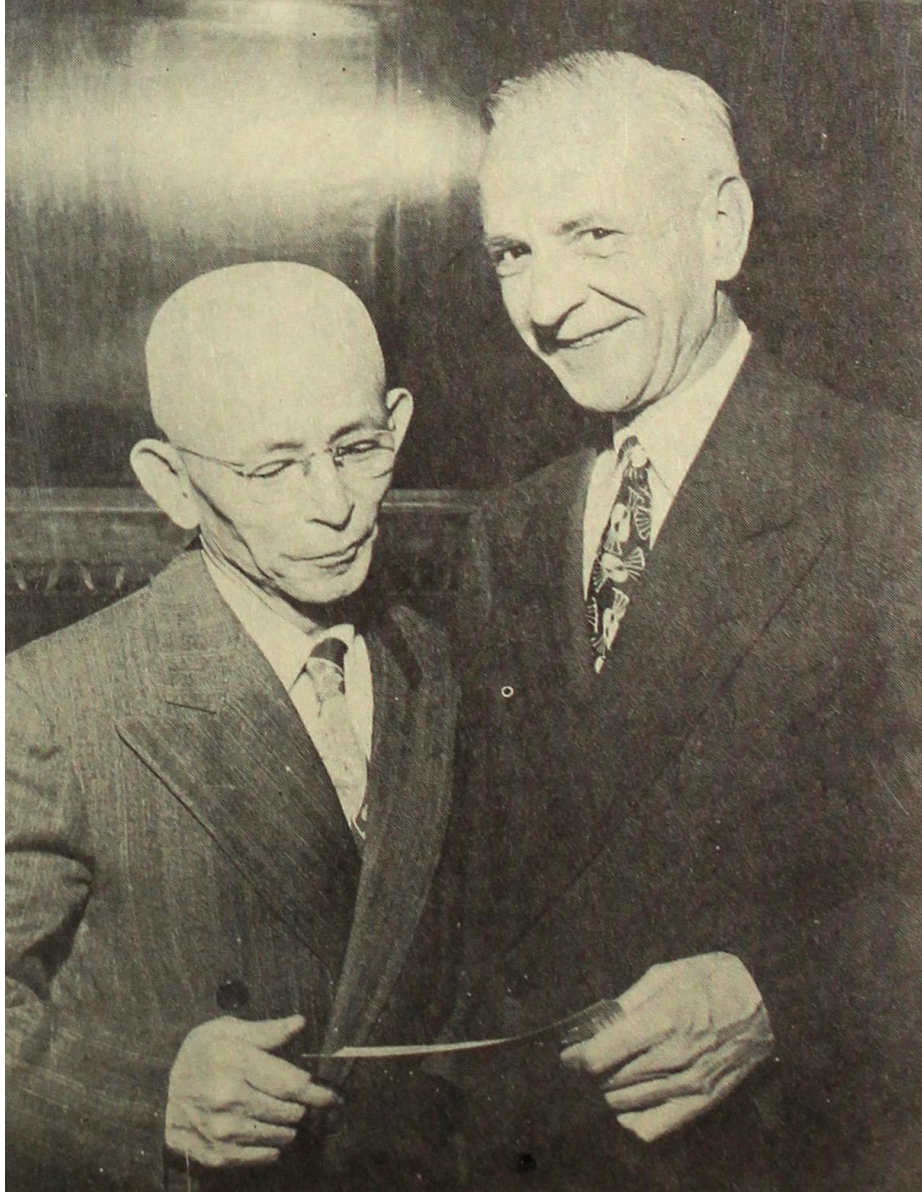
Source 9

Source Information: Formative Assessment #3

Courtesy of the Japanese American National Museum

<http://encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-ddr-densho-266-15-11-1/>

The first evacuation claims check in the amount of \$303.36 presented to Tokuji Tokimasa by Claims Agent William H. Jacobs. Photographer Jack Iwata. From Scene the Pictorial Magazine Vol. 1 No. 10, February 1950, p. 11.



Using Source 9

Sourcing Questions	Why was this picture taken and circulated?
Contextualization Questions	When did this picture take place? Why did it happen then and not sooner?
Corroboration Tasks	Does this document agree with others you have looked at? Why or why not?
Close Reading Questions	What details from the picture can you use to show how Tokuji Tokimasa felt about the check?

Source 10

Source Information: Formative Assessment #3

Public Papers Harry S. Truman, 1945-1953.

170. Remarks Upon Presenting a Citation to a Nisei Regiment. *Provided courtesy of [The American Presidency Project](#). John Woolley and Gerhard Peters. University of California, Santa Barbara.*
<https://www.trumanlibrary.org/photographs/view.php?id=33645>

Statement made by President Harry S. Truman while reviewing the 442nd Regiment.
July 15, 1946

IT IS a very great pleasure to me today to be able to put the seventh regimental citation on your banners.

You are to be congratulated on what you have done for this great country of ours. I think it was my predecessor who said that Americanism is not a matter of race or creed, it is a matter of the heart.

You fought for the free nations of the world along with the rest of us. I congratulate you on that, and I can't tell you how very much I appreciate the privilege of being able to show you just how much the United States of America thinks of what you have done.

You are now on your way home. You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice--and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win--to make this great Republic stand for just what the Constitution says it stands for: the welfare of all the people all the time. Bring forward the colors.

NOTE: The President reviewed the 442d Regimental Combat Team and made the presentation in a ceremony on the Ellipse south of the White House grounds at 2:45 p.m.



President Harry S. Truman (center) decorating the colors of the Nisei (Japanese-American) 442nd Regimental Combat Team, as other dignitaries look on

Using Source 10

Sourcing Questions	When did the speech take place compared to when the camps were created?
Contextualization Questions	What was the purpose of the document specifically saying exactly where this ceremony took place?
Corroboration Tasks	Are there any other sources you have looked at the give you the same impression of the Japanese-Americans?
Close Reading Questions	What details of the speech President Truman gave tell you his thoughts of the Japanese - Americans?

Source 11

Source Information: Formative Assessment #3

Public Papers Harry S. Truman, 1945-1953.

Executive Order 9742.

<https://www.trumanlibrary.org/executiveorders/index.php?pid=672&st=9742&st1=>

Termination and Liquidation of the War Relocation Authority 3

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes, including Title I of the First War Powers Act, 1941 (55 Stat. 838), and as President of the United States, it is hereby order as follows:

The War Relocation authority, established by Executive Order No 9102 of March 18, 1942,¹ and transferred to the Department of the Interior by Executive Order 9423 of February 16, 1944,² is terminated as an organizational entity within the Department of the Interior, and the office of the Director of the War Relocation Authority is abolished.

The Secretary of the Interior, acting through such agency or agencies of the Department of the Interior as he shall designate, is authorized and directed to wind up the affairs of the Authority, and to utilize for such purpose so much of the personnel, records, property, and funds of the Authority as may be necessary. The powers conferred upon the Secretary of the Interior by Executive Order No. 9102 as modified by Executive Order No. 9423 may be exercised by the Secretary of the Interior to the extent necessary for the effective liquidation of the affairs of the authority.

All provisions of prior Executive orders which are in conflict with this order are amended accordingly.

This order shall become effective at the close of business June 30, 1946.

Noted in Chapter I of Title 32

HARRY S. TRUMAN
THE WHITE HOUSE,
June 25, 1946

Using Source 11

Sourcing Questions	What is significant about the date of the order?
Contextualization Questions	When was this document created?
Corroboration Tasks	What information would you have to have in order to understand exactly what this order is doing?
Close Reading Questions	What did this order really do for the Japanese-Americans?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____

Timeline of Japanese-American Internment Camps - *Formative Assessment #3*



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DIRECTIONS: Use the documents from Formative Assessment #3 Document Set and place the events in the proper location on the timeline. Draw a line to connect the event to a place on the timeline.

February 19, 1942
Executive Order 9066 allows for relocation of Japanese-Americans into internment camps.

February 11, 1943
Mrs. Shipman writes to President Truman and expresses her disdain towards the War Relocation Authority's effort to educate Japanese-Americans.

December 7, 1941
Attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese.

Events to be placed on the timeline
-First Evacuation Claims Check
Feb, 1950
-Truman addressed the 442nd Regiment
July 15, 1946
-Executive Order 9742
June 25, 1946

1940 1942 1944 1946 1948 1950