

The prejudice and discrimination endured by Hispanics in jobs, housing, and recreational facilities caused bitter resentment. Relations grew particularly hostile in Los Angeles. Mexican American youths had adopted the fad of wearing zoot suits—long, wide-shouldered jackets, trousers pegged at the ankle, and wide-brimmed hats. In June 1943, U.S. sailors roamed the city attacking zoot-suit-clad Mexican American youths in what became known as the **zoot-suit riots**. The government eventually clamped down on the sailors, but not before they had viciously beaten many Mexican Americans.

A citizens' committee later determined that the attacks were motivated by racial prejudice. The committee assigned partial responsibility to the Los Angeles police, who had responded to the riots by arresting Mexican Americans. The committee also blamed biased newspaper reports.

READING CHECK: Analyzing Information How did World War II affect patterns of migration?

Japanese American Relocation

In general, World War II did not produce the same level of home-front intolerance as did World War I. A tragic exception was the **internment**, or forced relocation and

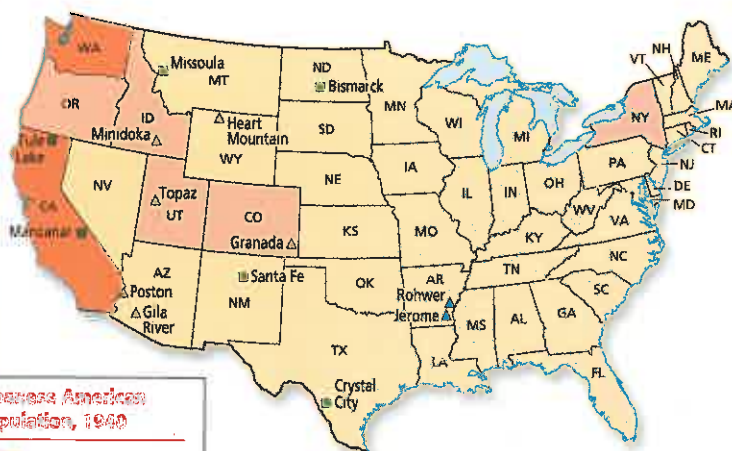
imprisonment, of Japanese Americans living on the Pacific Coast. U.S. State Department adviser Eugene Rostow called relocation “a tragic and dangerous mistake.” In 1941 about 119,000 people of Japanese ancestry lived in California, Oregon, and Washington. About one third of these people—the *issei* (ee-SAY)—had been born in Japan and were regarded by the U.S. government as aliens ineligible for U.S. citizenship. The rest—the *nisei* (nee-SAY)—had been born in the United States and thus were U.S. citizens.

No evidence of disloyalty on the part of any *issei* or *nisei* existed. Nevertheless, because of strong anti-Japanese feelings among some politicians and residents of western states, the federal government decided to remove people of Japanese descent from the West Coast. In February 1942, Japanese Americans were ordered to detention camps in Wyoming, Utah, and other states. Because Hawaii's Japanese population was too large to relocate, the islands were placed under martial law for the duration of the war.

Japanese American Relocation, 1942–1945

Interpreting Maps By September 1942 more than 110,000 Japanese Americans were interned in 10 camps located in relatively isolated, underdeveloped areas.

HUMAN SYSTEMS Why was the Japanese American population located primarily on the West Coast?

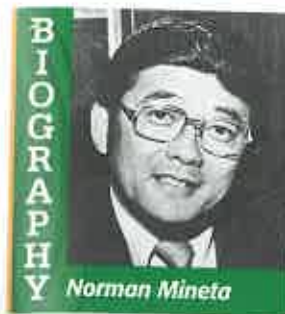


Japanese American Population, 1940

- More than 10,000
- 1,000 to 10,000
- Less than 1,000
- Relocation center
- Internment camp

U.S. Citizenship

About two thirds of the 127,000 people of Japanese ancestry living in the continental United States were American born and thus U.S. citizens.



Norman Mineta

One imprisoned Japanese American was **Norman Mineta**, a *nisei* from San Jose, California. On the day of the Pearl Harbor bombing, the young Mineta fearfully watched his neighbors being taken away for questioning by the FBI. He recalled bitterly that “they had done nothing; the only thing that they had done was to be born of Japanese ancestry.”

Just 10 years old when his family was uprooted, Mineta wore his Cub Scout uniform on the train. He hoped that it would show his loyalty to the United States. Mineta's family was interned with some 10,000 others at a camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming. “These camps were all barbed wire, guard towers, searchlights,” recalled Mineta.

After the war Mineta attended college and became an insurance agent. He later went into local politics in San Jose. In 1974 he was elected to the House of Representatives. Mineta introduced legislation seeking reparations for Japanese American internees. He retired from the House in 1995. He later served as Secretary of Commerce under President Bill Clinton and as Secretary of Transportation under President George W. Bush.

Patriotism and the desire to disprove accusations of disloyalty inspired many young men in the camps to volunteer for military duty, even though they served in segregated units. One *nisei* combat team, the 442nd, fought in Europe and became one of the most decorated units in the armed services. Several thousand Japanese Americans also served in the Military Intelligence Service as interpreters and translators in the Pacific. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld internment in 1944, and many Japanese Americans remained imprisoned until 1945.

READING CHECK: Identifying Points of View Why were Japanese Americans interned and relocated during the war?

SECTION 2 REVIEW

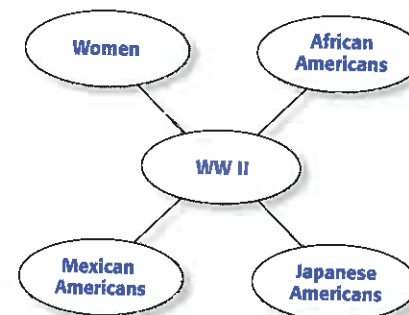
1. Define and explain:

braceros
zoot-suit riots
internment

2. Identify and explain:

Office of War Information
Rosie the Riveter
A. Philip Randolph
Fair Employment Practices Committee
Carlos E. Castañeda
Norman Mineta

3. Analyzing Information Copy the web below. Use it to describe how various groups experienced greater opportunities and/or discrimination as a result of the war.



4. Finding the Main Idea

- How did the U.S. government seek to keep morale high and to control the flow of information during World War II?
- What long-term effects do you think women's experiences in World War II had on their lives after the war?
- What were the economic effects of World War II on the home front?

5. Writing and Critical Thinking

Summarizing Imagine that you are living on the home front during World War II. Write a journal entry describing your daily routine.

Consider:

- changes in popular culture
- changes in daily life, such as rationing
- the war's effects on job opportunities and racial issues

Research on the ROM

Free Find:

Norman Mineta

After reading about Norman Mineta on the **Holt Researcher CD-ROM**, create a campaign poster that illustrates Mineta's service during the war.

Homework Practice Online
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