

Building Community Behind Barbed Wires



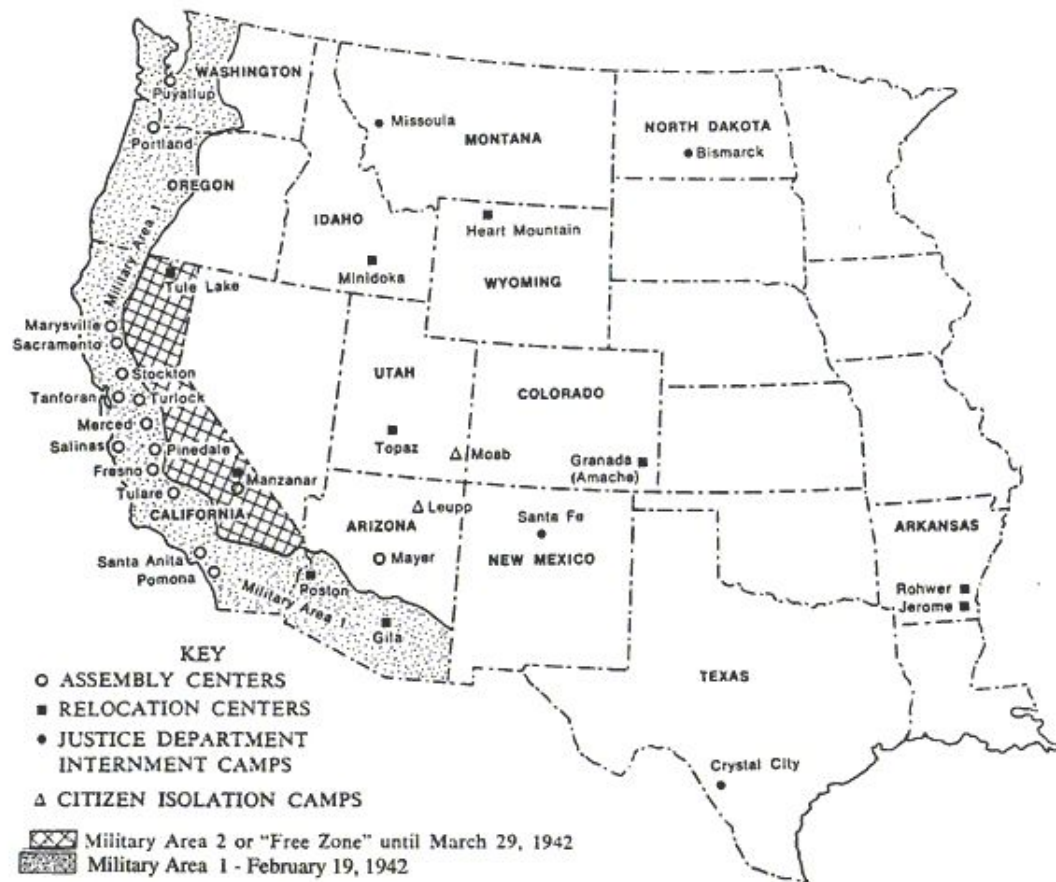
The 'Religious Life' of Japanese American
Youth In Internment Camps

Sydney Hamamoto

Executive Order 9066

- After Pearl Harbor - December 07, 1941
- Issued February 19, 1942
- Removal of Japanese Americans to military designated zones
- Hastily sell off their businesses and belongings





From Michi Wegryn's *Years of Infamy, the Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps*, Morrow, New York, 1976. p. 5.

Religious Life

- Some religious presence
- For most—not a top priority
 - Work
 - Children could have different religion
 - Americanization a large factor



Gardena, California, 1930-1939

Disrupted Family Dynamics

- Parents no longer heads of the household
- No longer family meals
- Religious services became optional
 - I went “because some of my friends went there.”
 - George Nakata



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

Manzanar, 1942

Cultural Activities

- Holds religious significance despite not being practiced
- Holidays blurred the lines
- Bon Odori - sponsored by the Buddhist church
- “...no reflection as to what religion or what background”
 - Eiichi Edward Sakauye



Granada, 1942-1945

Baseball

- Essential to mental and emotional survival
- Organized within a few weeks
- *Rohwer Outpost* - “potential to draw 2,000 - 4,000 for each game”



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

Manzanar 1943

- Tule Lake - 100 teams & 1000 participants
- 20 softball fields & 2 hardball diamonds
- Cleared the fields themselves



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

Tule Lake, 1944



“...Every block had their baseball team, basketball team and that was the big thing.”

-Masaru Kawaguchi