

## They Were Americans

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### Before Reading Poll

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During World War II, the U.S. government forced thousands of Japanese Americans from their homes and made them live in internment camps. This was done because some Japanese Americans were considered to be security risks. Many people thought that this policy was a violation of civil liberties. Statesman and scientist Benjamin Franklin once made the following statement. Do you agree or disagree with what he said?

**"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."**

Agree

Disagree

Explain why you voted the way you did.

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### Article

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#### New School Brings Back Old Times

**ST. LOUIS, Missouri** (Achieve3000, September 23, 2009). When 88-year-old Yoshio Matsumoto visited Washington University (WU) in St. Louis, where his grandson Andy had begun his freshman year, he had mixed feelings. Matsumoto, who is Japanese-American, remembered how the university had extended an invitation for him to study there during World War II—a time when much of the U. S. was hostile toward Japanese Americans.

Matsumoto was attending the University of California at Berkeley on December 7, 1941, when Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The attack triggered an array of emotions for Matsumoto.

"There was some fear and anger, and some feeling of shame that the nation of my parents would attack me. I would be walking to class with that feeling that everybody was looking at me like I was the enemy."

The Pearl Harbor attack thrust the U.S. into World War II and changed Matsumoto's life. By February 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt had issued an executive order calling for Americans of Japanese heritage—mainly those living along the West Coast—to be moved to



Americans of Japanese heritage—mainly those living along the west coast—to be moved to relocation centers, commonly known as internment camps. Among the 110,000 Japanese Americans bound for internment camps were Matsumoto's parents and siblings. His family was sent from their home in San Diego, California, to an assembly center, which was a temporary staging area where people were detained before their transfer to an internment camp. Matsumoto, who was still living in Berkeley, was sent to a different assembly center in the state.

"Barbed wire, guard towers," Matsumoto remembered. "You're confined inside. There was no communication with family."

Matsumoto was slated for relocation to an internment camp in Utah, but fate—and the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC)—soon stepped in.

The NJASRC, which consisted of religious, academic, and civic leaders, was formed to help Japanese Americans who were detained in internment camps resume their



Photo credit: National Archives

*Japanese heads of family and persons living alone form a line outside the Civil Control Station, located in San Francisco, California. They are appearing for "processing" on April 25, 1942, in response to Civilian Exclusion Order Number 20.*

educational pursuits. This was a difficult endeavor that involved requesting government permission and making various financial and other logistical arrangements. Still, the NJASRC succeeded in liberating about 4,000 students from the camps.

The council found 680 colleges and universities, all situated away from the West Coast, that were amenable to accepting Japanese-American students. One of those schools was WU. George Throop, the school's chief administrative officer, issued a letter. It made the university's policy on accepting students with Japanese heritage clear:

"The attitude of the university is that these students, if American citizens, have exactly the same rights as other students who desire to register in the university."

WU agreed to sponsor Matsumoto, and once again, his life changed in a big way. The young man who had never before ventured away from the West Coast arrived in St. Louis in October 1942, and within weeks, he saw snow fall for the first time in his life.

At the university, Matsumoto recounted, he and other Japanese-American students were made to feel welcome by their new schoolmates and others in the community. Someone—

Matsumoto wasn't sure who—helped pay his tuition, and the administrators and staff of the campus YMCA helped the students get settled.

"We were very happy and grateful to be able to [be there]," Matsumoto said. "There were a number of schools that didn't want to take Japanese Americans, but there also were educators who got together and said, 'We want to get these college kids back to school.'"

Matsumoto graduated from WU in 1944 and soon reunited with his family. The engineer went on to spend time in the military and eventually ended up in Minnesota, where for 26 years he worked at 3M (the company famous for manufacturing Post-it Notes).

For the first time since his graduation 65 years ago, Matsumoto, along with his son Joe, visited WU, where his grandson was matriculated. Matsumoto is pleased that his grandson is attending his alma mater.

"I'm proud of him," Matsumoto said. "[Attending WU is] kind of a family tradition."

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*

## **Dictionary**

**alma mater** (*noun*) the school one has attended

**amenable** (*adjective*) open to an idea

**logistical** (*adjective*) having to do with planning for supplies or operations

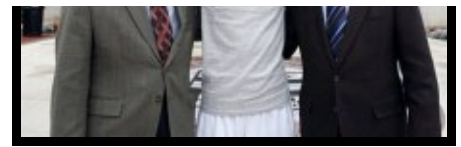


Photo credit: Tom Gannam, AP

*Yoshio Matsumoto, right, his son Joe Matsumoto, left, and his grandson Andy are shown on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis. Yoshio Matsumoto, an 88-year-old retired engineer, was one of a number of students who were relocated to universities across the country instead of being sent to an internment camp in 1941.*

**matriculate** (*verb*) to be enrolled

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## Court Case

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Supreme Court Case: Korematsu v. United States

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. The order authorized officials to designate parts of the country as "military areas" from which persons might be excluded and in which travel restrictions might be imposed. A few weeks later, the entire Pacific coast was designated a military area.

Tens of thousands of Japanese Americans—including Yashio Matsumoto—were designated for internment camps. The justification was that, since Japan was an enemy of the U.S., people who could be linked to Japan—even simply by heritage—could be considered a security risk. Many call it the most serious invasion of individual rights by the government in the nation's history.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard three cases that tested the constitutionality of the Executive Order. In *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), the majority of the court sided with the U.S. government. Read an excerpt of the majority opinion below.

### Supreme Court Case: KOREMATSU V. UNITED STATES (1944)

#### Excerpt of Majority Opinion Delivered by Justice Black

It should be noted...that all legal restrictions which curtail the civil rights of a single racial group are immediately suspect. That [doesn't mean that these] restrictions are [always] unconstitutional.... Courts must subject them to...scrutiny. Pressing public necessity may sometimes justify the existence of such restrictions; racial antagonism never can....

Exclusion of those of Japanese origin was deemed necessary because of the presence of an unascertained number of disloyal members of the group, most of whom...were [likely] loyal to this country. [However,...]it was impossible to bring about an immediate [separation] of the disloyal from the loyal. [So] we sustained the validity of the curfew order as applying to the whole group.... The judgment that exclusion of the whole group was for the same reason as a military imperative answers the [argument] that the exclusion was...based on [hatred] to those of Japanese origin. That there were members of the group who retained loyalties in Japan has been confirmed...subsequent to the exclusion. Approximately [5,000 Japanese Americans] refused to swear [loyalty] to the United States..., and several thousand evacuees requested repatriation to Japan.

Adapted from: U.S. Department of State and Supreme Court Case 323 U.S. 214 (1944)

## Dictionary

**antagonism** (*noun*) the act of being openly against a person or group

**curtail** (*verb*) to limit

**deem** (*verb*) to judge or consider

**designate** (*verb*) to indicate or name

**exclude** (*verb*) to leave out

**imperative** (*noun*) something that is necessary

**repatriation** (*noun*) the act of sending something or someone back to the country or community of origin

**repatriation** (*noun*) the act of sending something or someone back to the country or community of origin

**scrutiny** (*noun*) close examination

**subsequent** (*adjective*) coming after an event

**unascertained** (*adjective*) undetermined

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## Primary Source

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Civil Liberties Act of 1988

World War II ended in 1945. Interned Japanese Americans left the camps. They had no property or jobs. They had been treated as potential traitors by their own government. But they had done nothing wrong. In 1948, President Harry Truman signed a law. It allowed interned people to make claims against the government for their suffering. However, many claims never made it through the complex system that it took to process them.

After decades of activism, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act in 1988. The bill served as an official apology by the United States government. It also authorized more than one billion dollars in reparations to those who had been interned. Read the text of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 below.

### **Enacted by the United States Congress August 10, 1988**

"The Congress recognizes that...a grave injustice was done to [Japanese Americans] by evacuation, relocation, and internment...during World War II.

These actions were carried out without [good] reasons. And without any acts of [spying] or sabotage documented. And [they] were motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.

The excluded individuals of Japanese ancestry suffered enormous damages, both material and intangible. And there were incalculable losses in education and job training, all of which resulted in significant human suffering....

For these fundamental violations of the basic civil liberties and constitutional rights of these individuals of Japanese ancestry, the Congress apologizes on behalf of the Nation."

The purposes of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988...included the following:

- 1) To acknowledge the fundamental injustice of the evacuation, relocation, and internment of citizens...of Japanese ancestry during World War II;
- 2) To apologize on behalf of the people of the United States for the evacuation, internment, and relocations of such citizens...;
- 3) To provide for a public education fund to finance efforts to inform the public about the internment so as to prevent...any similar event;
- 4) To make restitution to those individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned;
- 5) To make more credible and sincere...concern [expressed] by the United States over violations of human rights.

Source: U.S. Public Law 100-383

## **Dictionary**

**activism** (*noun*) action for a cause

**credible** (*adjective*) trustworthy or believable

**incalculable** (*adjective*) not able to be measured

**intangible** (*adjective*) unable to be touched or seen

**reparation** (*noun*) money paid for damages

**restitution** (*noun*) the act of paying someone back for losses, damages, or injuries

**sabotage** (*noun*) the act of damaging, destroying, or interrupting something, especially during a war

**violation** (*noun*) a failure to follow a law or rule

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## Activity

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### PAGE 1

1. Take a look at the article entitled "New School Brings Back Old Times." According to Yoshio Matsumoto, why did he feel shame when war broke out between Japan and the United States?

- Ⓐ The nation of his birth, the United States, had attacked the nation of his heritage, Japan, sparking a war.
- Ⓑ His parents were born in Japan, which had attacked the United States and become an enemy of his country.
- Ⓒ He was of the age when he was eligible to serve in the United States armed forces, but he did not want to enlist.
- Ⓓ He felt a connection to the culture of Japan, despite the fact that he did not agree with or support the Japanese government.

2. Review the article entitled "New School Brings Back Old Times." What was the purpose of the NJASRC?

- Ⓐ To provide support to Japanese Americans who were challenging the constitutionality of internment camps
- Ⓑ To help Japanese-American students who were detained in internment camps to resume their educational pursuits
- Ⓒ To advocate for the release of Japanese-American families that had been detained in internment camps
- Ⓓ To open schools that would provide education to young people who were confined in internment camps

3. Take a look at the following excerpt from "New School Brings Back Old Times." Click on the two sentences that show how the NJASRC was able to assist thousands of Japanese Americans.

Matsumoto was slated for relocation to an internment camp in Utah, but fate—and the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC)—soon intervened.



The NJASRC, which consisted of religious, academic, and civic leaders, was formed to help Japanese-American students who were being detained in internment camps resume their educational pursuits. Through an oporose endeavor that involved requesting government permission and making various financial and logistical arrangements, the NJASRC succeeded in liberating about 4,000 students from the camps.

The council found 680 colleges and universities, all situated away from the West Coast, that were amenable to accepting Japanese-American students. One of those schools was WU, where George Throop, the school's chief administrative officer, issued a letter that made unequivocal the university's policy on accepting students with Japanese heritage:

"The attitude of the university is that these students, if American citizens, have exactly the same rights as other students who desire to register in the university."

WU agreed to sponsor Matsumoto, and once again, his life changed dramatically. the young man who had

4. Identify the claims asserted in Justice Black's majority opinion in "Supreme Court Case: Korematsu v. United States." Drag the two correct answers to the box below.

- Restrictions that curtail the civil rights of a racial group can be justified by a public necessity.
- No one can be certain how many Japanese Americans were disloyal.
- The restrictions were not imposed due to racial antagonism.
- Hardships are a part of war. All citizens must take on hardships when necessary.

Claims  
Made by  
Justice  
Black

5. Review "Supreme Court Case: Korematsu v. United States." How did Justice Black support his claim that the restrictions placed on Japanese Americans in 1942 had to do with security rather than race?

- ☒

A Japanese Americans living on the West Coast (the military zone) were thought to be in danger, so their removal from the area was necessary. In this way, the exclusion was a security issue.
- ☐

B Some citizens who were not of Japanese descent were also sent to internment camps. This negates the idea that the plan singled out Japanese Americans.
- ☐

C An unascertained number of Japanese Americans were found to be disloyal to the U.S., but it was impossible to discern how many, so all had to be excluded. This made the exclusion a security issue.
- ☐

D Some Japanese Americans worked with the federal government to outline the exclusion program. This negates the idea that the plan was solely the work of people who are not of Japanese descent.

6. Review "Civil Liberties Act of 1988." Where does the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 place the blame for the internment of U.S. citizens and resident aliens?

- ☐ A With the United States as a whole
- ☐ B With select members of Congress
- ☐ C With the Japanese government
- ☐ D With President Harry Truman

## PAGE 2

7. Take a look at the article entitled "New School Brings Back Old Times." How did the administration of Washington University help Yoshio Matsumoto get through difficult times? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

8. According to the article "New School Brings Back Old Times," why would revisiting the campus of Washington University have been a poignant experience for Yoshio Matsumoto?

9. Take a look at "Civil Liberties Act of 1988." How did the Civil Liberties Act offer restitution to those who suffered during the Japanese internment? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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## After Reading Poll

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Now that you have learned more about this topic, indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

**"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."**

Agree

Disagree

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## Thought Question

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Do you think that those who give up liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve either one? Support your answer with reasons and evidence from this lesson.

Type your answer in the text box below.

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## Poll Results

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OPINION STATEMENT: **"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."**

BEFORE READING	AFTER READING
HOW YOU VOTED	
Agree	Agree

Disagree			Disagree		
NATIONAL RESULTS					
Agree	<div><div></div></div>	58%	Agree	<div><div></div></div>	55%
Disagree	<div><div></div></div>	42%	Disagree	<div><div></div></div>	45%

19% changed their opinion after reading the article.

Math

PAGE 1

1. An airplane and an automobile leave Oakland, California, at the same time from the same location. Both vehicles plan to make a 1,729-mile trip to St. Louis, Missouri. The auto drives at a fixed speed of 65 miles per hour. The plane flies at a fixed speed of 500 miles per hour. When the airplane reaches St. Louis, how far will the automobile be from Oakland? Choose the closest answer. Ignore acceleration. Assume that each vehicle travels along a straight path from city to city.
- A 425 miles
  - B 525 miles
  - C 325 miles
  - D 225 miles