

PBS: "Conscience and the Constitution" Timeline

http://www.pbs.org/itvs/conscience/the_story/timeline/index.html

1868

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution makes citizens of anyone born in the U.S.

1870

Congress makes "persons of African descent" eligible for naturalized citizenship, but Asians remain "aliens ineligible for citizenship." This forms the basis for statutory discrimination against the Issei, first-generation Japanese immigrants, at both the federal and state levels until 1952.

1890

The first Japanese immigrants arrive in the U.S.

1924

The Immigration Act of 1924 bars entry to any person "ineligible to citizenship," thereby stopping further immigration from Japan to the U.S. The last boat from Japan carries **Guntaro Kubota** to America.

1930

August

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) holds first national convention in Seattle, Washington. Only the Nisei, second-generation Japanese Americans born in the U.S. as citizens, can belong.

1940

Congress enacts the Selective Service Act, creating America's first peacetime draft. 3,500 Nisei are drafted in the first year.

1941

August

JACL appoints **Mike Masaoka** as its national spokesman.

December 7

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor draws the United States into World War II. Mike Masaoka is picked up by the FBI in North Platte, Nebraska speaking to a group of Japanese Americans that includes **Ben Kuroki** of Hershey, Nebraska. Masaoka is released the next day, but on the West Coast, the FBI arrests 1,300 Issei leaders identified as potentially dangerous enemy aliens. Some JACL leaders boast of turning in the names of Issei as proof of their loyalty to America.

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1942

January 5

All Nisei draft registrants are reclassified from draft-eligible 1-A to 4-C, or aliens ineligible for the draft. Most Nisei already in the Army are discharged or assigned menial duties.

February 19

President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, allowing the forced exclusion of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast solely on the basis of race.

February 23

Tolan Committee congressional hearing in San Francisco: Mike Masaoka and **James Omura** both appear on the same day. Masaoka speaks in favor of evacuation if deemed a military necessity; Omura opposes any expulsion and challenges the leadership of the JACL.

March 10

JACL holds emergency council meeting in San Francisco. The group makes the decision to cooperate with the government in the forced removal.

March through August

On the West Coast, more than 110,000 Japanese Americans are expelled from their homes and businesses and moved to temporary detention centers, most no more than horse stalls at the local racetrack. Japanese Americans lose an estimated \$6-10 billion in property and lost income. In Los Angeles, **Frank Emi** sells the family grocery for six-cents on the dollar.

March 30

The War Department stops inducting Nisei into the armed services.

April 6

Mike Masaoka writes **memo to Milton Eisenhower**, head of War Relocation Authority (WRA) urging policies to use the camps as indoctrination centers for promoting Americanism and assimilation.

April 7

Mike Masaoka issues **JACL Bulletin #142** opposing all test cases and calling Min Yasui and, by extension, Gordon Hirabayashi and Fred Korematsu, "self-styled martyrs."

June 6

The Battle of Midway: the U.S. Navy sinks four of the aircraft carriers that attacked Pearl Harbor. The tide of war turns in the Pacific, making a Japanese invasion of the West Coast more remote.

Mid-summer through fall

Heart Mountain, Wyoming and 9 other American-style concentration camps enclosed with barbed wire and armed guards are built and opened.

November 17-24

As the first anniversary of Pearl Harbor approaches, Mike Masaoka calls for an emergency meeting of the JACL in Salt Lake City. The government allows two JACL leaders from each camp to attend.

December 6

Rioters at Manzanar seek out JACL leaders and others they believe are "inu" or dogs. Military police under siege at the camp police station shoot into the crowd, killing two and wounding nine.

1943

January 28

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson restores Nisei privilege to volunteer for service.

February 1

The War Department changes the Nisei's 4-C draft classification to 1-A, in order to create a segregated Army unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which is later joined with the 100th Battalion from Hawaii.

February 3

Application for Leave Clearance Questionnaire hits Heart Mountain. Even as the Army recruits volunteers, the civilian agency running the camps takes the same Army questionnaire, and compels every man and woman in camp to answer it.

June 1

Pvt. Mike Masaoka is inducted into the U.S. Army

August 1

Sgt. Ben Kuroki flies on bombing of oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania.

August 21

The 100th Battalion from Hawaii, the first group of Nisei soldiers to complete basic training, quietly sails for active duty in Europe.

November

Kiyoshi Okamoto forms "Fair Play Committee of One" at camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, to call for a test of the legality of forced incarceration.

1944

January 20

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson re-institutes the draft for all Nisei, including those in camp.

January 26

The Fair Play Committee (FPC) formally organizes and elects seven steering committee leaders: Kiyoshi Okamoto, Paul Nakadate, Ben Wakaye, Frank Emi, Min Tamesa, Sam Horino, and Guntaro Kubota

February 23

In Denver, James Omura publishes "**Let Us Not Be Rash**," his first editorial in support of the growing draft resistance.

February 27

The first draftees leave Heart Mountain for their pre-induction physicals at nearby Fort Warren, Wyoming.

March 1

400 attend FPC public rally, **Bulletin #3** is passed that crosses the line from protest to resistance.

April 12

JACL releases letter from ACLU rejecting legal aid to Kiyoshi Okamoto and the FPC.

April 22

James Omura is ousted from the **Rocky Shimpo**, under pressure from the government.

April 24

Sgt. Ben Kuroki starts **week-long visit** to Heart Mountain to boost recruitment and discourage draft resistance. On the day he leaves six more fail to report for induction.

April 28

On behalf of the JACL, former protester Min Yasui visits some of the resisters in Wyoming jails, but fails to dissuade them. He writes confidential report to the FBI.

May 10

Sixty-three resisters are indicted by the grand jury in Cheyenne, Wyoming for draft evasion. The grand jury also secretly indicts the 7 leaders of the Fair Play Committee and journalist James Omura for conspiracy to counsel draft evasion.

June 6

D-Day: Allied Forces land at Normandy to begin the liberation of Europe.

June 12

Sixty-three Nisei stand trial for draft evasion in Federal Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It is the largest **mass trial** in Wyoming history.

June 26

The Nisei soldiers of the 442nd RCT and 100th Battalion first engage the enemy in Italy.

June 26

The 63 resisters are convicted and sentenced to three years in a federal penitentiary. Twenty-two more are later convicted, bringing the total number of resisters from Heart Mountain to 85.

October 23

Conspiracy trial starts for FPC and Omura in the same Federal Courthouse in Cheyenne, Wyoming where the first group of 63 was tried.

November 1

Jury convicts FPC leaders of conspiracy, acquits Omura on the First Amendment and freedom of the press.

November 2

FPC leaders sentenced to two to four years, and removed to federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

December 17

After his re-election to a fourth term, and anticipating the Supreme Court ruling on habeas corpus in *Endo*, President Roosevelt ends the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast, thus allowing Japanese America to go home.

December 18

U.S. Supreme Court rules in the *Endo* case that loyal citizens cannot be detained against their will. In *Korematsu* it upholds Executive Order 9066 and the army's eviction of Japanese Americans.

1945**May 28, 1945**

U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear the appeal from **Min Tamesa** on behalf of the mass group of 63.

August 11

V-J Day. Japan surrenders.

September 2

World War II formally ends.

November

Heart Mountain camp is formally closed.

December 26

Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver reverses convictions of the seven FPC leaders. It rules the jury should have been allowed to consider the defense of civil disobedience.

1946**July 14**

Nearly all the resisters at the McNeil Island, Washington federal penitentiary are released with time off for good behavior, except for **Mits Koshiyama** who must serve extra days.

1947

December 24

President Harry S. Truman pardons all wartime draft resisters, including the Nisei resisters from Heart Mountain and other camps.

1952

Congress enacts the Cold War-era McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, which was criticized for continuing racial quotas and enabling easier deportation and/or internment of political dissidents. JACL's Mike Masaoka supports the bill after attaching a section that allows for naturalized citizenship for the Issei.

1988

August 10

President Ronald Reagan signs into law the Civil Liberties Act, which provides for a formal apology by the government and redress of \$20,000 to each survivor of incarceration under Executive Order 9066. By this time nearly half of those who had been imprisoned had died.

1999

August 29

JACL's Central California District votes against an apology to the resisters, thereby killing a national apology resolution that required ratification by all 8 JACL regional councils.

2000

July 1

JACL votes at its national convention at Monterey, California, to **formally apologize** for its suppression of wartime resistance. Several JACL old-timers walk out in protest.

November 9

Controversial quote from Mike Masaoka's 1941 "JACL Creed" is unveiled at dedication of National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II in Washington, D.C.

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