

Thus, the camera shots do not fathom the emotions hidden within the evacuees...the fear, the loneliness, the despair and the bitterness that we felt.

Despite these shortcomings, I hope my home movies share with you one aspect of the camp experience that we older folks would like to leave with the *sansei*...that is the spirit of the Japanese American community. Despite the loneliness and despair that enveloped us, we made the best we could with the situation. I hope when you will look at the scenes of *mochizuki*, pipe repairing, dining hall duty and church service, you look at the spirit of the people. You will see a people trying to reconstruct a community despite overwhelming obstacles. That, I feel, is the essence of these home movies. All in all, what were just some homemovie shots made as a hobby are now, with the passing of almost half a century, a movie of historical interest. I am glad that because of one chance remark made to a kindly and understanding WRA friend, these scenes are preserved for the sanseis and other generations to follow. Sometimes I wonder whether it was just sheer luck or not.

— Dave M. Tatsuno

Japanese Relocation

U.S.A. *Narration:* Milton S. Eisenhower, *Music:* Adapted from *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, *Production:* Office of War Information, *Distribution:* War Activities Committee of the Motion Picture Industry, *Print:* 16mm, sd., English, b&w, 11 min., 1943.

The day after Pearl Harbor, the *New York Times* reported that police forces across the nation acted to "control Japanese nationals," and that "a nation-wide round-up of Japanese nationals was ordered by Attorney General Biddle through cooperation

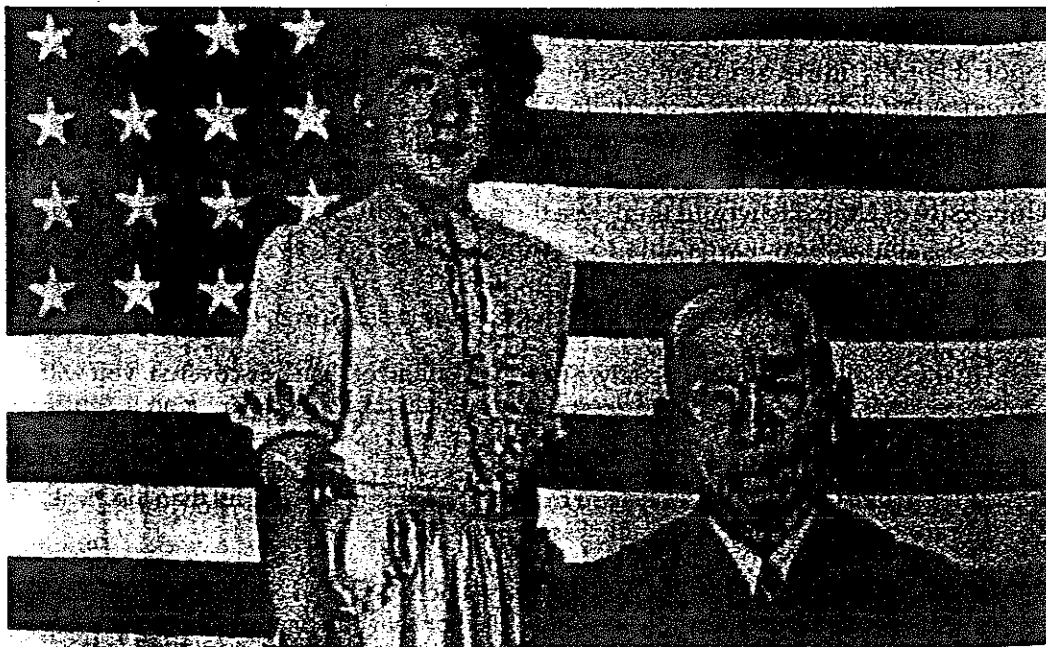


Fig. 10. Americans.
(Credit: Rea Tajiri)

by the FBI and local police forces." Americans of Japanese descent were subsequently harassed and gradually stripped of their rights until President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 making it all official. This directed the government to remove nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans from their homes in California, Oregon and Washington and imprison them in 10 hastily built camps in the interior. *Japanese Relocation* is the government's explanation and justification for this betrayal of its own citizens.

The setting is California, where Japanese Americans are assembled at Los Angeles' Santa Anita race track before incarceration at Manzanar, deep in the California deserts. Milton Eisenhower, the director of the War Relocation Authority, narrates the film using specious euphemisms and suspicious adjectives. As they pack their belongings, he assures us that "the evacuees cooperated wholeheartedly. The many loyal among them felt this was a sacrifice they could make on behalf of America's war effort." Upon arrival at Santa Anita, "the Japanese themselves cheerfully handled the enormous paper work involved in the enormous migration," and "the Army provided housing and plenty of healthy, nourishing food for all." A more credible account would point out that the first Americans arrived at Santa Anita only four days after the horses were evacuated. Their only bathing facilities were the horse showers, and the smell of horse shit lingered for the duration. These Americans were treated like animals in other states as well, placed initially in converted horse, cattle and pig pens before being moved to the camps.

Japanese Relocation characterizes Executive Order 9066 as either a war-time sacrifice or (more curiously) a frontier experience. These Americans "migrated" to "pioneer communities." Deep in the interior, they found "land that was raw, untamed, and full of opportunity. Here they would build schools, educate their children, reclaim the desert." Though more appropriately compared to Native Americans, the Japanese Americans take the place of white settlers in this documentary western scenario. As for the role of the democracy that put them there, the film ends by announcing, "we are setting a standard for the rest of the world in the treatment of people who may have loyalties to an enemy nation. We are protecting ourselves without violating the principles of Christian decency." Words to make every Christian and democrat wince.

— Abé Mark Nornes

Fighting Young Citizens — Winter
(*Tatakau shōkokumin — Fuyuhēn*)

Japan Production: Dentsū, Sponsor: Bureau of Military Preservation, Print: 16mm, sd/silent, Japanese, b&w, 23 min. (incomplete), 1944.

Fighting Young Citizens was completed in April 1944, and was one of a series of films designed to introduce children throughout the country as "supporters at the homefront." This "Total Uprising Edition" (*sōkekkihen*) features the children of Yamagata Prefecture's Ōsone Primary School. Dentsū M.P. Co., formally called Nippon Electric Communication Co., was engaged in the production of newsreels from 1928. They began larger scale independent productions in 1941, then became Dentsū M.P. Co. with the absorption of several companies in 1943.