Group Two: Japanese-American Internment

**Primary Sources:**

Mary Miki Shiritori Akimoto, Santa Anita Assembly Center Painting, 1942

Photograph, *Arcadia, California. Evacuees of Japanese Ancestry from San Pedro, California, Arrive by Special Trains for Santa Anita Assembly Center...*, April 5, 1942

*Granada Pioneer*, March 31, 1943

Photograph, *Amache District Headquarters, Boy Scouts of America, Granada Relocation Center*, May 10, 1943

Loyalty Questionnaire, War Relocation Authority, January 1943

Poster, *Instruction to all Persons of Japanese Ancestry...*, May 23, 1942

Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Mary and Masanori Akimoto, April 13, 1943

Photograph, *Military Police on Duty in Watch-Tower at Santa Anita Park Assembly Center...*, April 6, 1942

Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Ruth and Hideo Kodani, February 19, 1943

Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Mary and Masanori Akimoto, February 3, 1943

**Secondary Sources:**

Excerpt, Matthew Elms, *When the Akimotos Went to War*
Group Two Task Card

You will have 30 minutes to prepare a two to three minute skit that includes all of your group members. The skit will:

1. Introduce Executive Order 9066
2. Internment process from homes, to assembly centers, to permanent camps
3. Introduce the Loyalty Questionnaire
Mary Miki Shiritori Akimoto, *Santa Anita Assembly Center Painting*, 1942

Akimoto Family Collection

Watercolor of the Santa Anita Racetrack Assembly Center painted by Mary “Miki” Akimoto. Notice the guard towers with machine guns pointed toward the internment barracks. The small fort and post office fly the American flag outside the fence. The San Gabriel Mountains are portrayed in the background, 1942.
Photograph, Arcadia, California. Evacuees of Japanese Ancestry from San Pedro, California, Arrive by Special Trains for Santa Anita Assembly Center..., April 5, 1942
National Archives and Records Administration (537038)
Article announcing the induction of Johnny Akimoto out of the Amache Internment Camp in Granada, Colorado. 
Granada Pioneer, March 31, 1943
Photograph, *Amache District Headquarters, Boy Scouts of America, Granada Relocation Center*, May 10, 1943

National Archives and Records Administration
Loyalty Questionnaire, War Relocation Authority, January 1943

Densho

Excerpt from the Loyalty Questionnaire created by the War Relocation Authority, January 1943
Poster, *Instruction to all Persons of Japanese Ancestry…*, May 23, 1942

National Park Service
Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Mary and Masanori Akimoto, April 13, 1943

Akimoto Family Collection

Transcription

April 13, 1943

Dear Mom & Pop,

I’m leaving for the army tomorrow morning.

I talked with Mr. Findley and he said it would be alright for you to come to camp [Amache.] Margaret has to make direct application to this camp if she wants to come in. Tell her to wire right away if she wants to come in. They won’t take anybody if they can help in.

Not much to write about. Will write later after I have been stationed.

Always,

Johnny
Photograph, *Military Police on Duty in Watch-Tower at Santa Anita Park Assembly Center...*, April 6, 1942
National Archives and Records Administration (537019)
Excerpt, *When the Akimotos Went to War*

In Washington, D.C., despite the lack of evidence of Japanese American traitors, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made his most controversial decision during his nearly four full terms in office. He issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, sealing the fate of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans. In the weeks and months that followed, Japanese Americans along the West coast of the United States were rounded up and put into internment camps. While Victor trained with the U.S. Army to defend America, that same U.S. Army put his family under armed guard.

Thousands of Japanese Americans, faced with threats of bayonets and machine guns, sold their homes. Victor’s family unloaded their home, as well as household furnishings and family heirlooms, at cut-rate prices. As his family departed their home, eagerly awaiting profiteers snapped up the riches left behind. Items such as cameras, shortwave radios, and ceremonial Japanese swords were forbidden in the assembly and internment camps. These articles were discarded or sold for pennies on the dollar.
Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Ruth and Hideo Kodani, February 19, 1943

Akimoto Family Collection

Transcription

Dear Ruth & Hideo,

Well, I guess I might as well get to the point. I joined the army. I done a lot of thinking about it before I signed so don’t think I done it on the spur of the moment.

You know I never did like any part of farming and about getting jobs in defense plants are a bunch of baloney. I didn’t want to be a farm laborer, and don’t want to stay in camp so I signed up.

Another thing, on our registration we got a couple of questions concerning our loyalty & willingness to fight for America. Well, to those two questions, 3 to 1 nusus put no to that question. Well, that would take away all our rights & stuff. Well them dumb guys just make things tough for everybody else. Don’t think I’m patriotic or stuff but I’m just looking out for myself. We’ll be going the 1st of next month.

Ask Ned if he wants my clothes or what. Only thing he probably could wear would be my shirts. I was thinking of leaving them with my friends or something.

How is everything down in Idaho? How is the PH situation coming along? Has mom gone to Arizona yet?

The weather down here is well. Haven’t seen any snow since I hit camp. For the last 2 weeks, it’s been just like L.A. weather. The food is good and bad. We have roast pork or beef at least once a week. The barracks are a lot better than Santa Anita but spread out to far.

Well, not much more to write about so I’ll sign off. Be seeing you. (I hope)

Just Johnny
Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Mary and Masanori Akimoto, February 3, 1943
Akimoto Family Collection

Transcription:

Dear Mom & Dad,

February 3, 1943

Arrived in camp monday [sic] night. Everything is pretty good out here. Its [sic] not like Santa Anita though.

I’m staying with Ioshi Mori & Yammy in a barracks.

The floor is brick & the inside is like our bunkhouse, lined with seltex.*

There’s a coal stove in every barrack and they furnish all the coal. It sure is nice & warm in the room.

I’ve seen Watada san already & he sends his regards.

So far the food is pretty good. Haven’t seen everybody yet cause the camp is pretty well spread out.

Nothing more to write so I’ll sign off. Say hi to Dot & Vic.

Just Johnny

Address: 6F – 3F

Amache Branch

Lamar, Colorado

*Seltex – a thin-coated paper product used to cover the outside or inside of wall to keep dust, dirt, and wind out of the internment camp barrack building.
Military Life and Death

Primary Sources:
Letter from Victor Akimoto to his family, April 29, 1942
Akimoto Family Collection

Photograph, *Members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team are seen in the Vosges mountain range in France*, October 1944
U.S. Army Signal Corps, American Battle Monuments Commission

Photograph, *Two color guards and color bearers of the Japanese-American 442nd Combat Team, stand at attention, while their citations are read…*, November 12, 1944
U.S. Army Signal Corps (SC-196716)

Akimoto Family Collection

Photograph, *Johnny, Jane, and Ted Akimoto*, c. 1943
Akimoto Family Collection

Photograph, *Victor on Guard Duty*, c. 1943
Akimoto Family Collection

Letter from Major General J.A. Ulio to Masanori Akimoto, August 21, 1944
Department of the Army

Letter from Ted Akimoto to Mary and Masanori Akimoto, August 21, 1944
Akimoto Family Collection

Letter from Johnny Akimoto to Mary and Masanori Akimoto, June 21, 1943
Akimoto Family Collection

Secondary Sources:
Excerpts, Matthew Elms, *When the Akimotos Went to War*