

Civil Liberties:

What Are They? Who Needs Them?

Time

4 class periods (49 minutes per period)

Objectives

- Students will understand the definition of “civil liberties.”
- Students will become aware of at least one period in United States history when civil liberties were withheld from a group of people.
- Students will integrate quotations, documents, and photographs into a poster that visually responds to the Essential Question.

Essential Question(s)

- Civil liberties: What are they? Who needs them?

Guiding Question(s)

- What are civil liberties?
- What do civil liberties protect?
- What impact did the suspension of civil liberties have on the Japanese Americans during World War II?

Colorado Model Content Standards (2008)

- History 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of historical information.
- History 5.1: Students understand how democratic ideas and institutions in the United States have developed, changed, and/or been maintained.

Materials

- A copy of the young adult novel *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata
- Poster paper
- Scissors
- Markers (different colors)
- Construction paper
- File folders

- Printed copies of this unit’s handouts (quotations, documents, and photographs)
- Masking tape

Background

- Read the overviews and timelines about the Japanese American experience found in the introductory materials accompanying this unit.
- Become familiar with the novel *Weedflower*, written by Newbery Award–winning author Cynthia Kadohata. Cynthia Kadohata maintains a Web site aimed at young readers about herself and her work: <http://www.kira-kira.us/> (accessed July 24, 2009).
- Review this unit’s handouts (quotations, photographs, and documents).

Activities

Day 1:

- Discuss with students the United States’ involvement in World War II, including the fact that the United States officially entered the war after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. Then talk about the feelings of those who were there when Pearl Harbor was attacked and what the students would have done if they were there.
- Introduce the Essential Question of this unit: *Civil Liberties: What are they? Who needs them?* Explain that as they listen to excerpts from *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata, they should think about the Essential Question.
 - If necessary, explain that civil liberties are fundamental individual rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, protected by law against unwarranted governmental or other interference.
- Read aloud to the class the first excerpt from *Weedflower* (pages 33 to 37).
 - Provide the following background information: Sumiko and her brother live in California with her extended family because her parents passed away. They work in the flower fields and sell carnations.



This excerpt is about Sumiko preparing for and arriving at a birthday party for her sixth-grade classmate.

- After reading the excerpt, ask students the following questions:
 - What is happening to Sumiko?
 - How would you feel if it were happening to you?
 - What would you do in her place?
- Read aloud the second excerpt from *Weedflower* (pages 47 to 51). The excerpt begins in the middle of page 47 with “Sumiko wondered . . .” Provide students with the following background information: Someone came to visit the adults in Sumiko’s household to discuss something very important with them. Sumiko wonders what the problem could be. Ask students about this excerpt:
 - Why did they feel they had to burn their belongings?
 - Why is everyone angry?
 - How would you feel in this situation?
 - What could they have done differently to protect themselves?
- Read aloud the third excerpt from *Weedflower* (pages 54 to 59). The excerpt ends after the first paragraph on page 59. Pose these questions to students:
 - Why was the government taking people?
 - How did Sumiko feel when people she loved were taken away?
 - What would have been your reaction if someone came for you or a loved one?
- After the three excerpts are read and discussed, ask students to draw upon what they have been learning about the U.S. Constitution and civil liberties. Follow up by asking students additional questions that will help them understand what happened to Sumiko in the context of civil liberties being violated:
 - Which civil liberties were withheld?
 - Which other groups of people have not always been afforded the civil liberties outlined in the Constitution?

Days 2 to 4:

- Before class, the teacher should prepare the room.
 - Review this unit’s handouts (quotations, photographs, and documents) and assemble five to six file folders containing at least ten primary sources. These file folders will contain some of the same sources; however, no two folders should be alike.
 - Divide the class into groups of five to six.
 - Provide each group with their own work space.
 - Each work space should have poster paper, scissors, markers, construction paper, and a file folder that contains at least ten handouts.
- When the students arrive, review the Essential Question: *Civil liberties: What are they? Who needs them?*
- Explain that the task of each group is to make a poster answering the Essential Question using at least five but no more than seven of the primary sources found in the file folder. First, select the five to seven documents the group thinks best illustrate/answer the Essential Question. Urge students to BE CREATIVE and ask them to use the primary sources, scissors, markers, and construction paper to make a poster answering the Essential Question.
 - If students have access to a computer lab and printer, they can supplement their folders with online searches.
- Display the completed posters on a wall, door, or white board.
- Have students do a gallery walk to look at each group’s poster.
- Have a member of each group explain their poster and open it up for questions.
- Debrief the activity by asking students the following questions:
 - What patterns can we see in all of the posters?
 - What are some differences?
 - Is there only one answer to the Essential Question?



Extensions

- Continue to read *Weedflower*. Other options would be to read novels such as *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis and *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Read these novels in literature circles to gain further understanding about how individuals' lives were affected by the government's actions. The entire class should be divided up into groups, with each group reading its own book and then having a discussion with the teacher about the events in the book. The discussion should focus on the rights being violated. The books mentioned above are below the eighth-grade reading level and should be easy and quick reads for the students.
- In addition to Japanese Americans, other groups of people have had their rights violated as well. Research and discussion about these groups would be beneficial and create a fuller representation of certain actions the U.S. government has taken at different points in history. These groups include Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans, Native Americans, African Americans, and women.
 - Some questions to ask: *Which groups of people have not always been given the rights outlined in the Constitution? Can you think of individuals who stood up for the rights that were being withheld? What were they standing for?*
 - Have a discussion about how the actions of the government have impacted groups of people since its inception and how sometimes the government's actions impact more than one group.

References

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- "United States Japanese Relocation Center Papers and Records, 1942–1945, Ms 0011, 0221, 0295, 0299." Colorado College. <http://www.coloradocollege.edu/library/SpecialCollections/Manuscript/Amache/Amache.html> (accessed July 24, 2009).



Where, after all, do human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

—Excerpt from Eleanor Roosevelt's "The Great Question"
(remarks delivered at the United Nations, New York, March 27, 1958)



*“We were put here for our own protection,”
Auntie insisted again. “To protect us from
all the people who hate us.”*

—from *Weedflower*, by Cynthia Kadohata (page 179)



Daytime, with its debilitating heat and the stresses of camp life, was harsh and unkind, but early evening after supper was a peaceful time of day at Topaz. The sand retained the warmth of the sun, and the moon rose from behind dark mountains with the kind of clear brilliance seen only in a vast desert sky. We often took walks along the edge of camp, watching sunsets made spectacular by the dusty haze and waiting for the moon to rise in the darkening sky. It was one of the few things to look forward to in our life at Topaz.

—from *Desert Exile*, by Yoshiko Uchida (page 112)



We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.



*I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the
United States of America, and to the
Republic for which it stands, one Nation
under God, indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all.*



In the future days which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want, which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.

—President Franklin D. Roosevelt
State of the Union Address, January 6, 1941



The only sure bulwark of continuing liberty is a government strong enough to protect the interests of the people, and a people strong enough and well enough informed to maintain its sovereign control over the government.

—President Franklin D. Roosevelt





*If you harm them, you must harm me.
I was brought up in a small town where
I knew the shame and dishonor of race
hatred. I grew to despise it because it
threatened the happiness of you and you
and you.*

—Ralph L. Carr, Governor of Colorado (1939–1943)

Courtesy of the Colorado State Archives and Public Records.





THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. W. Bush".

GEORGE BUSH
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 1990

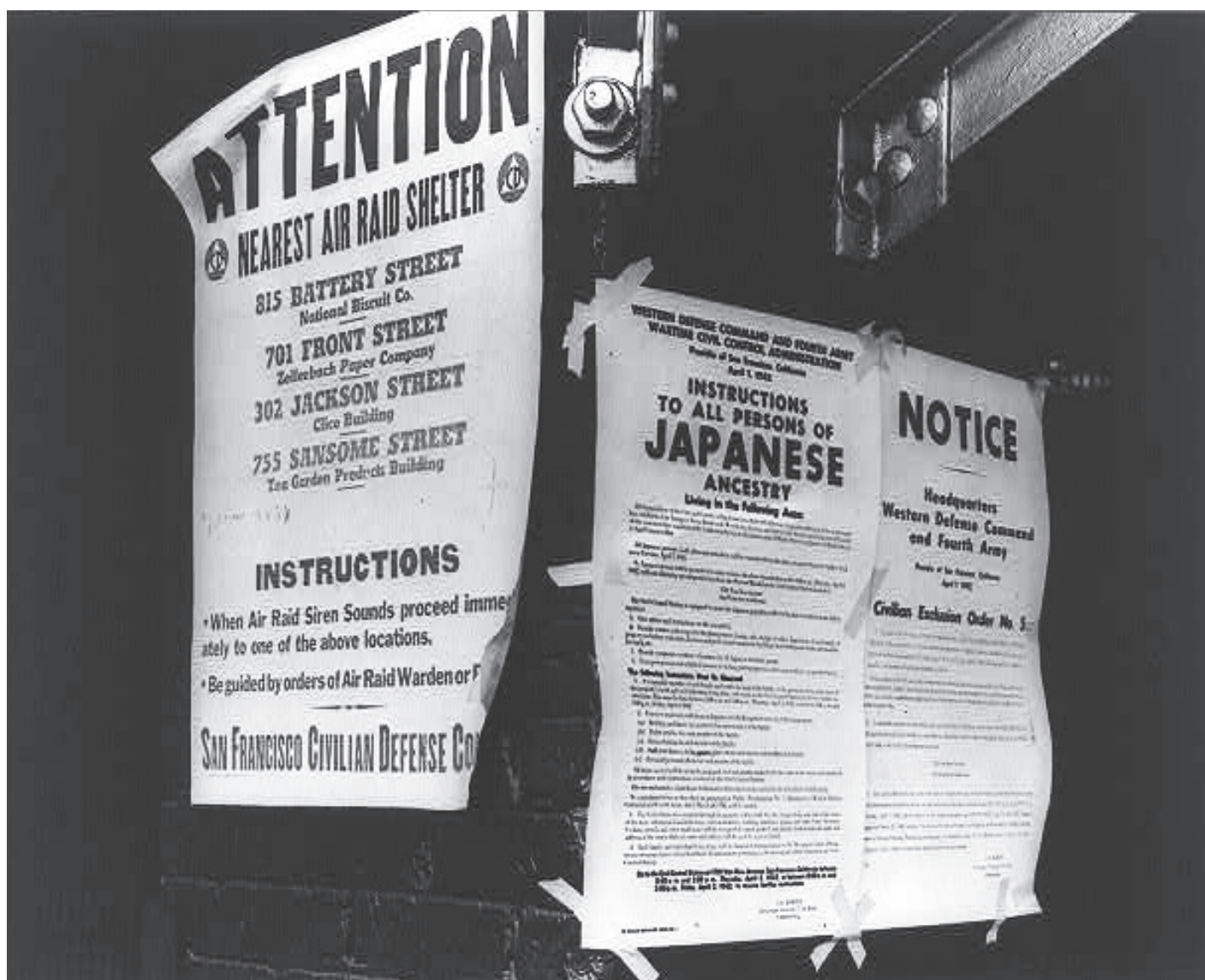
All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.
Gift of Bob and Rumi Uragami, Japanese American National Museum (93.179.2)





San Francisco, California. Just about to step into the bus for the Assembly center. 04/06/1942

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536068/Local Identifier 210-G-A95



Civilian [E]xclusion [O]rder #5, posted at First and Front streets, directing removal by April 7 of persons of Japanese ancestry from the first San Francisco section to be affected by evacuation.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
Reproduction Number LC-USZ62-34565



Los Angeles, California. Japanese-American child who is being evacuated with his parents to Owens Valley.

Photographer: Russell Lee
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
FSA-OWI Collection, Reproduction Number LC-USF33-013297-M1 DLC
(b&w film neg.)



San Francisco, California. Flag of allegiance pledge at Raphael Weill Public School, Geary and Buchanan Streets. Children in families of Japanese ancestry were evacuated with their parents and will be housed for the duration in War Relocation Authority centers where facilities will be provided for them to continue their education.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536053/Local Identifier 210-G-A78





San Francisco, California. An early comer arrives with personal effects at 2020 Van Ness Avenue as part of the 664 residents of Japanese ancestry to be evacuated from San Francisco on April 6, 1942. Evacuees will be housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536061/Local Identifier 210-G-A87



San Francisco, California. In response to the Army's Exclusion Order Number 20, residents of Japanese ancestry appear at Civil Control Station at 2031 Bush Street for registration. The evacuees will be housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536409/Local Identifier 210-G-A517



San Francisco, California. Bush Street, San Francisco. Japanese family heads and persons living alone form a line outside Civil Control station located in the Japanese American Citizens League Auditorium at 2031 Bush Street, to appear for “processing” in response to Civilian Exclusion Order Number 20.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536421/Local Identifier 210-G-A529



San Francisco, California. Dave Tatsuno, president of the Japanese American Citizens League of San Francisco, and his family pack for evacuation. Tatsuno was born in this country and was graduated from the University of California in 1936. Evacuees of Japanese ancestry will be housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536459/Local Identifier 210-G-A569



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Construction begins at Manzanar, now a War Relocation Authority center for evacuees of Japanese ancestry.

Photographer: Clem Albers
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536869/Local Identifier 210-G-B121



Hayward, California. A mother with her American-born-and-educated children awaiting evacuation bus. Evacuees of Japanese ancestry will be housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 537515/Local Identifier 210-G-C165



Oakland, California. Following evacuation orders, this store, at 13th and Franklin Streets, was closed. The owner, a University of California graduate of Japanese descent, placed the “I AM AN AMERICAN” sign on the store front on December 8, the day after Pearl Harbor. Evacuees of Japanese ancestry will be housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration.

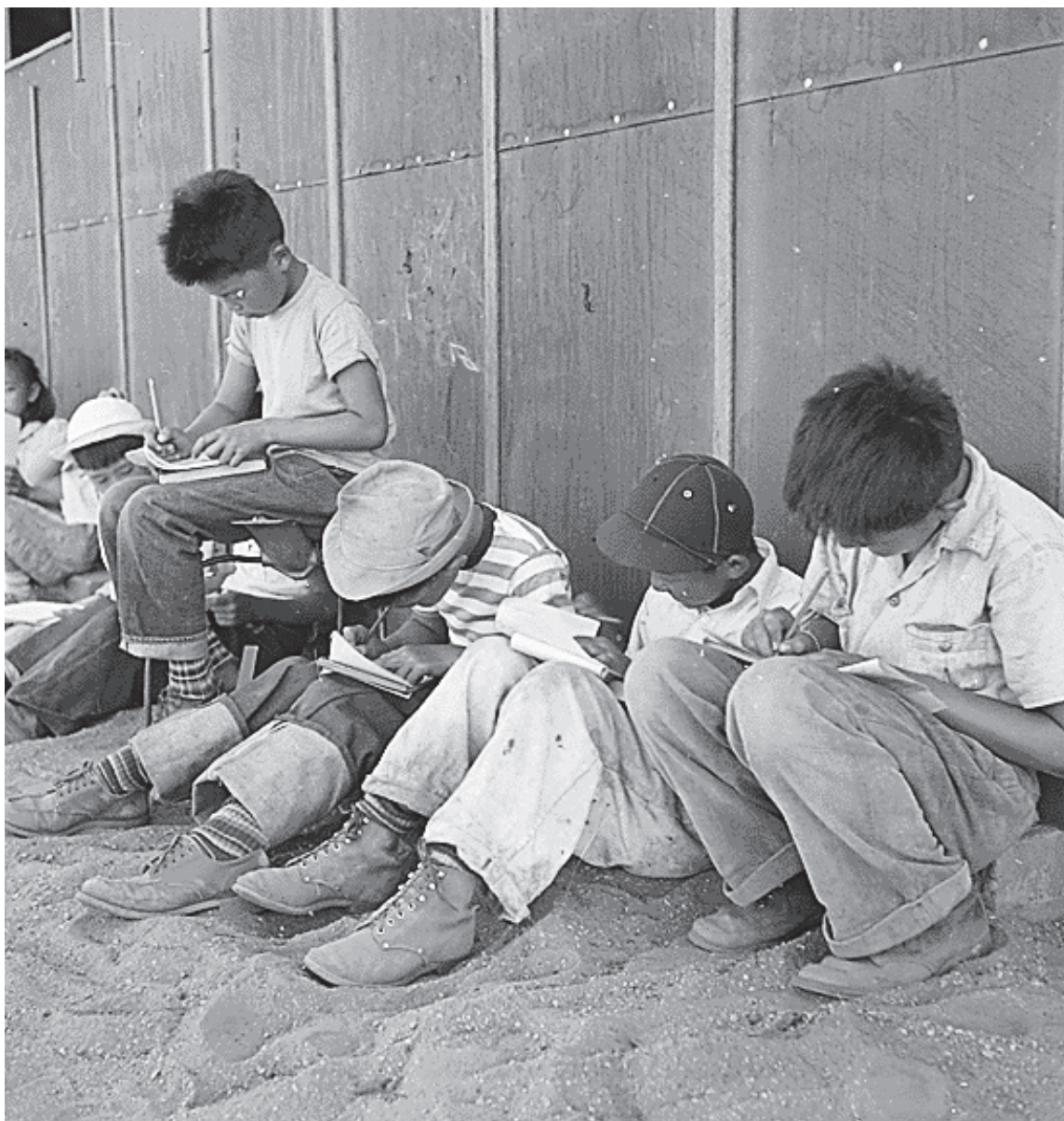
Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 537833/Local Identifier 210-G-C519





Florin, California. Hands of Reverend Naito (Buddhist priest) are here as he locks the door of his church. The beads are carried by Buddhist priests at all times.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 537853/Local Identifier 210-G-C542



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Young sixth-grade students studying their lessons in the shade of the barracks at this first voluntary elementary school.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 537957/Local Identifier 210-G-C659



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Grandfather and grandson of Japanese ancestry at this War Relocation Authority center.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 537994/Local Identifier 210-G-C397



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Baseball is the most popular recreation at this War Relocation Authority center with 80 teams having been formed throughout the Center. Most of the playing is done between the barrack blocks.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 538065/Local Identifier 210-G-C772



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Mealtime in one of the mess halls at this War Relocation Authority center for evacuees of Japanese ancestry.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 538170/Local Identifier 210-G-C888



Gila River Relocation Center, Rivers, Arizona. Members of the Boy Scout troop who participated in the Harvest Festival Parade held at this center on Thanksgiving day.

Photographer: Francis Stewart
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 538605/Local Identifier 210-G-D643



Manzanar, California. Dust storm at this War Relocation Authority center where evacuees of Japanese ancestry are spending the duration.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 539961/Local Identifier 210-GC-839

