



Historical Perspective

Chronology of World War II and Japanese-American Incarceration

December 7, 1941

Japan bombs Pearl Harbor.

December 8, 1941

United States and Britain declare war on Japan.

February 19, 1942

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 (see transcript, next section). This order leads to the assembly and incarceration of over 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast.

March 1942

The United States creates the War Relocation Authority (WRA) to assume jurisdiction over the Japanese and Japanese-Americans evacuated from California, Oregon, and Washington.

April 1942

Japanese-Americans sent to ten remote relocation centers scattered across the Western United States.

December 1944

President Roosevelt rescinds Executive Order 9066. The WRA begins a six-month process of releasing internees and shutting down the camps.

August 6, 1945

United States drops first atomic bomb, on Hiroshima, Japan.

August 9, 1945

United States drops second atomic bomb, on Nagasaki, Japan.

Reading
Group
Gold



*Historical
Perspective*

August 14, 1945

Japan agrees to unconditional surrender.

September 2, 1945

Japan signs the surrender agreement.

June 1952

Congress passes the McCarran-Walter Act, granting Japanese aliens the right to become naturalized U.S. citizens.

1976

President Gerald R. Ford officially rescinds Executive Order 9066.

1981

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (set up by Congress) holds hearings across the country and concludes that internment was a “grave injustice” and that Executive Order 9066 resulted from “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.”

August 1988

President Reagan signs the Civil Liberties Act, apologizing to the Japanese-American internees and offering \$20,000 to survivors of the camps.

January 1998

Fred Korematsu receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom. (Korematsu was arrested for remaining in his home and not reporting to the local Assembly Center. He was convicted of violating Executive Order 9066. The judgment was later overturned.)

*Japanese American Documentary Collection,
Smithsonian Institute/National Museum of
American History*

Historical Perspective

Japanese American Imprisonment During World War II

This map illustrates the locations of Japanese American imprisonment facilities across the United States from 1942 to 1946. A thick black line traces the West Coast exclusion area, starting from Seattle, Washington, through Portland, Eugene, Medford, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento, ending at Ft. Bidwell in California. The legend identifies five types of facilities: WCCA Assembly Centers (circles), WRA Relocation Centers (triangles), WRA Isolation Centers (squares), WRA Temporary Camps or Other WRA Facilities (rectangles), and Justice Dept., U.S. Army, or Other Facility (stars). Numerous specific sites are labeled, such as Heart Mountain, Topaz, Granada, and Rohwer. Insets show Alaska with Ft. Richardson and Hawaii with Sand Island and Kure Island.

Exclusion Area

- WCCA Assembly Center
- ▲ WRA Relocation Center
- WRA Isolation Center
- ▣ WRA Temporary Camp or Other WRA Facility
- ☆ Justice Dept., U.S. Army, or Other Facility

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Executive Order 9066

Executive Order Authorizing the Secretary of War
to Prescribe Military Areas

As Issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U.S.C., Title 50, Sec. 104).

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be nec-



essary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Attorney General under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, and shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclamations in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area hereinabove authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services.

This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8972, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility

Historical Perspective

of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigation of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas hereunder.

—February 19, 1942

"This order shall...prescrib[e] regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies."



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From the National Archives.



1. Rennie's parents caution her frequently not to lie. How well do they succeed in following their own advice? How akin is the way they keep large secrets (that Marthalice was pregnant, that Mary is very sick) to lying to their friends and daughter? Why do they draw the line against pretending Daisy was married before she got pregnant, but conspire with the sheriff to dupe the town later?
2. *Tallgrass* shows Rennie dealing with tough issues: rape, murder, prejudice, and danger to her family. How much of her opinions seem to come from her parents, and how much from her own observations? What did you think of her still being afraid of "the Japs," even after she got to know and respect the Japanese her family had hired?
3. What is the importance of community to men and women in this book? Mary has the courage of her convictions and the love of her family, so why does she still care what other people think? Do you think she's right to care?
4. Mary Stroud didn't want the inmates of Tallgrass working on her farm. Why did she change her mind?



Keep on Reading

5. There are two funerals in *Tallgrass*: Susan Reddick's and Harry Hirano. How are they similar? How are they different? How does each change Rennie's view of the Japanese and her town?
6. In the 1940s, it was taken for granted that men acted and women talked. How much complicity do women have in the actions of their men: Mrs. Smith in her husband's late-night raid on Tallgrass; Mrs. Snow in her husband's descent into addiction and his treatment of her and Betty Joyce; Mrs. Reddick in her husband's refusal to acknowledge Helen? Why do you think that Mary Stroud broke through the convention to confront the men outside Tallgrass?
7. Why were Americans so frightened of Japanese-Americans during World War II—more than the German- and Italian-Americans? In her acknowledgments, Sandra Dallas mentions that she was inspired to write this book, in part, by the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay. What parallels do you see between them? What differences?
8. Did you recognize any characters from Sandra's other books in *Tallgrass*?