

# 1890s-1930s

---

1894

U.S. district court rules that the Naturalization Act of 1790, allowing white immigrants to become U.S. citizens, does not apply to Japanese immigrants.

1906

The San Francisco Board of Education segregates Asian American children in schools.

1908

The Gentlemen's Agreement between the U.S. and Japan reverses the decision to segregate Japanese students but limits Japanese immigration to spouses of current U.S. residents.

1913-1920

Alien land laws established in Western states prohibit Japanese immigrants from owning land.

1924

The Immigration Act of 1924 prohibits all immigration to the U.S. from Japan.

# 1940

1940

127,947 Japanese Americans live in the mainland U.S., with the majority on the West Coast. Another 157,905 live in the Territory of Hawai'i.

# 1941

November 1, 1941

U.S. Army opens a top-secret military language school in the Presidio of San Francisco to train mostly Japanese American enlisted soldiers for intelligence operations against Japan.

December 7, 1941

Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and attacks the Philippines, Hong Kong, the Malay Peninsula, and Wake and Midway Islands. On December 8th, the U.S. declares war on Japan and enters World War II.

December 1941

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and police raid Japanese American homes and businesses, arresting and detaining community leaders and persons deemed a threat to national security.

# 1942

---

February 19, 1942

President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066.

It authorizes the creation of military exclusion zones “from which any and all persons may be excluded” for “protection against espionage... and sabotage”

March 24, 1942

Lt. Gen. DeWitt issues Civilian Exclusion Order No 1, ordering Japanese Americans off Bainbridge Island, Washington. DeWitt issues a total of 108 orders, forcibly removing and incarcerating 110,000 Japanese Americans.

March-July 1942

Some Japanese Americans openly challenge Executive Order 9066, violating curfew or forced removal orders. Four cases make their way to the Supreme Court. The court rules that the government’s actions towards Japanese Americans are constitutional.

# 1943

January 28, 1943

The War Department allows Japanese Americans to volunteer for a segregated Army combat unit. Out of 20,000 eligible camp inmates only 1,200 volunteer.

March 1943

The War Relocation Authority issues controversial loyalty questionnaires in the camps, causing widespread unrest.

# 1944

---

January 1944

The Selective Service begins to draft Japanese Americans for segregated units. 2,800 incarcerated men are drafted.

December 17, 1944

The government announces the end of incarceration, one day before the Supreme Court decides that loyal citizens cannot be detained.

# 1945

August 14, 1945

V J (Victory over Japan) Day  
Japan surrenders on September 2, ending World War II.

# 1940s-1990s

---

1940s-1970s

The U.S. government begins to address the legacy of incarceration, including property reimbursement (1948), allowance of immigration and naturalization (1952), and an official termination of Executive Order 9066 (1976).

1980-1983

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians investigates the causes and consequences of incarceration.

1983-1988

The convictions of Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui are overturned based on findings that the government withheld evidence during trials in the 1940s. But the constitutionality of Japanese American incarceration stands.

1988

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 includes an official government apology and establishes financial compensation for incarceration survivors. The first redress payments are issued in 1990.