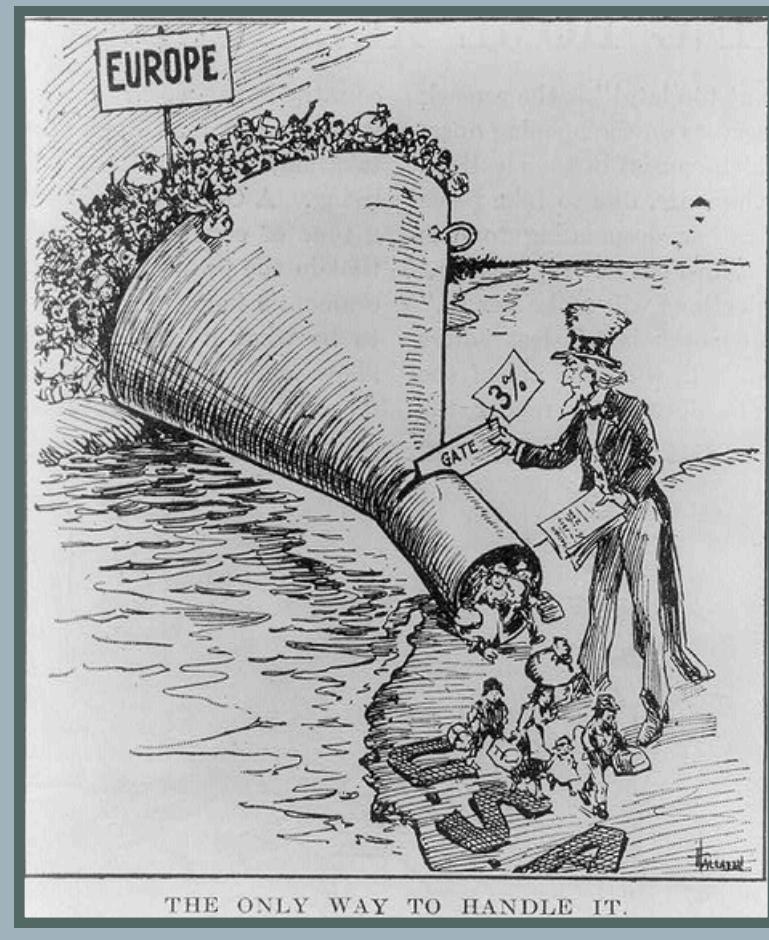


The Road to Japanese American Incarceration



1924 - Immigration & Quota Act

The United States Congress passed this act, which severely restricted the number of immigrants from parts of Europe and Asia, including Japan, as the U.S. sought to maintain the racial composition of the country. As a result, tensions between the U.S. and Japan rose dramatically.

1932 to 1941 - U.S. Trade Embargos

Between 1932 and 1937, Japan took over parts of Manchuria (Northeast China). This was significant due to China's wealth of resources, which the United States sought as well. In response to this unchecked imperialism, the U.S. issued trade embargos targeting Japan's air and naval vessels. The U.S. stopped shipments of aircraft parts and oil, and also froze Japanese assets and bank accounts in the U.S.



Two U.S. naval ships burn after the Pearl Harbor attack.
National Archives.

December 7 and 8, 1941 - Pearl Harbor

353 Japanese planes from 6 aircraft carriers bombed the U.S. deep-water naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The U.S. Pacific Fleet had been moved from California to Hawaii in May of 1940. A total of 2,403 Americans were killed, and 19 US naval vessels were destroyed. The next day, the U.S. declared war on Japan and officially entered World War II.

Executive Order 9066

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt announced Executive Order 9066. The President cited the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, which authorized placing citizens of enemy nations into prison during wartime, as legal support for his executive order. President Roosevelt believed the people of Japanese descent living on the West Coast, closest to Japan, posed a significant threat to the safety and security of the U.S. and its citizens. Congress supported the President by passing a law that imposed fines and penalties for those who violated the order.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Library of Congress

Executive Order 9102

On March 18, 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9102, which established the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Some of the powers given to the WRA included the ability to supplement the military evacuations and carry out their own evacuations.

People of Japanese ancestry were detained in 10 different incarceration camps. Known as "relocation centers" or "internment camps," the prison camps were scattered throughout the United States from California to Arkansas.