

LESSON 2: PROMISES DENIED

DOCUMENT SET 4: MEXICAN AND MEXICAN AMERICAN LABOR



Library of Congress, LC-USF34- 032108-D [P&P]

Photograph by Russell Lee, 1939

Above: Migrant camp, Weslaco, Texas. Local employment men say that there was no need for migrant labor to handle the citrus and vegetable crops in the valley, the local supply of labor being ample for this purpose. Most of the local labor is Mexican and the labor contractors favor Mexican labor over white labor, partly because the Mexican will work much cheaper than whites. One white woman who was a permanent resident (her husband was on WPA) said that the white people who lived in the valley, had no trouble with the Mexicans. The Mexicans were good neighbors, she said, always willing to share what they had. She said the white migrants who came into the valley and resented and misunderstood the Mexicans caused the trouble between the two races. Some towns in this section permit camping only in trailers. The charge for camping in tents is about fifty cents per week, including water, which in some cases must be carried four city blocks. Privies are tin, very bad condition. Garbage is collected only once a week, with large dumps of decaying fruits and vegetables scattered among the camps. Some of the white migrants in this camp were very suspicious of governmental activity, due to the use by south Texas newspapers of the term “concentration camps” referring to FSA (Farm Security Administration) camps.

Questions to think about:

1. Why do you think the California legislature passed these laws? What groups of people would have been affected by them?
2. How do you think those who were anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican American justified their actions?
3. What factors contributed to discrimination against Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans?

LESSON 2: PROMISES DENIED
 CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND LEGISLATION

Please compare the Constitution (including the Bill of Rights and other amendments) to your document.

1. Act Name:
2. Act Date:
3. Purpose of Act:
4. Which group of people does this Act restrict or affect?

Constitutional Right limited or denied by the Act	Quote from the Act limiting or denying the rights of a group of people

5. List one or two things the documents tell you about life in the United States at the time they were created.

6. Write a question that you feel is left unanswered by these documents.

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EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066: JAPANESE RELOCATION ORDER, 1942 (EXCERPTS)

Executive Order No. 9066

The President

Executive Order

Authorizing the Secretary of War to Prescribe Military Areas

Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage...

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...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 necessary...

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...including the use of Federal troops and other Federal 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....

Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House,
February 19, 1942.

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FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, "A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY" SPEECH, DECEMBER 8, 1941 (EXCERPTS)

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and...was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific...

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost....

Japan has...undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area...The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory....

We will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbounded determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

Full text available at <http://www.ukans.edu/carrie/docs/texts/fdr81241.htm> and on the CD-ROM

LESSON 2: PROMISES DENIED
CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

Please compare the Constitution (including the Bill of Rights and other amendments) to Executive Order 9066, issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942.

Constitutional Right (listed in the constitution or amendments) limited or denied by Executive Order 9066	Quote from Executive Order 9066 limiting or denying the rights of the Japanese and Japanese Americans

1. What can you infer from Executive Order 9066 and/or the “Day of Infamy” speech about life in the United States during World War II?

2. How else might President Roosevelt have responded to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

3. What conditions led to the violations of rights listed on the chart above?