

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

I. Research Topic, Projected Value, Documentation Style

A. The research topic I have chosen is the Japanese-American internment in concentration camps during World War II. I am currently taking a United States History class with Nancy Zens, and a research paper is required for that class. The only requirement for paper is that its topic is in the era between the Civil War and 1980. I have chosen to write about the Japanese-American internment, which occurred in the 1940s, because it interests me. In ninth grade I was in a humanities literature class and we read a work by a woman who was in a concentration camp as a young girl in California. I was ultimately shocked that the United States could do such a thing - I was also upset that in all of the nine years I had been in school I had heard NOTHING about it - as if it was on its way to removal from United States history. So, I did a small research paper on the internment my junior year in high school. I feel it is very important for all Americans to know about what our "free" country did and why it was done. I think there is no reason at all to forget about this tremendous mistake our country made. I am sure that there are many people who have never heard about the Japanese-Americans' internment, and it is valuable and important to know about it and learn from it. I hope to learn more about why and how a free country DID in fact imprison people - and why it did so while trying to stop another country (Germany) from interning people in concentration camps (as well as for doing other things).

B. This topic is appropriate for Writing 123 because it is informative to me and my readers. I have previously researched about this topic, but I would like to perform more in-depth, quality, college-level research and learn more about the complete situation. I feel that this will be a challenge and I will learn a wealth of information. Also, there is a wealth of information for and against the Japanese-American internment. Therefore, I can do an in-depth research of the topic using many kinds of sources, and draw logical conclusions as well as fulfill the requirements satisfactorily for this course.

C. The documentation system I have chosen is Chicago-Humanities. My topic's subject matter is history, and historical research papers are usually written with Chicago-Humanities documentation system. I have never used this system, and so I look forward to learning and applying this style. Nancy Zens was not particular as to which system to use.

II. Leading Research Question and Hypothesis

A. The leading research Question that I **propose** to pursue is: "Was Japanese-American internment during World War II right? Ethical? Justifiable? Was it the correct solution to the problem?"

B. My working hypothesis (I propose) is that the Japanese-American internment during World War II was a result of bad decisions based upon prejudices and was a major mistake for the United States - it accomplished nothing.

III. Research Strategy

A. What do I need to find out through research?

Why did the internment happen?

What drove the government to go that far?

Why were Japanese-Americans the only ones interned? Why weren't other "enemy races" interned?

What led to their freedom from camps?

Has the heavy discrimination stopped? If heavy discrimination against Japanese-Americans has stopped, when did it stop?

Have the former prisoners been reimbursed, apologized to, etc. for what happened to them?

What were conditions like before, during, and after internment?

Why have we as a country tried to hide or forget about what happened?

B. How/where to find information: After looking in Infotrac 2000 and the library catalog, I have come up with some search terms. They are as follows:

Japanese-American internment during WW II

War relocation center

+

World War 1939-1945 Japanese Americans

World War II internment

United States concentration camps

Pearl Harbor

Key answers/ideas gained on topic: I know that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor led to a panic against all of the Japanese race - many thought Japanese-Americans were spies, and thus did not trust them. The "only" solution was to put ALL Japanese-Americans in camps, considering every single person of the Japanese race a suspect. There was not much research or inquiry pertaining to whether or not they were truly spies, and they were not given a chance to speak up or try to prove their innocence.

The types of primary sources that I plan on using are magazines, journals, books, and videos. I have found some magazines and journals that give personal accounts of what the Japanese-American internment victims went through throughout the whole wartime era. One such magazine, called the *Booklist*, has an article in it titled "Life in a Japanese American Internment Camp." When I wrote my research paper in high school on this topic, I found some books that were written by those who were placed in the internment camps. One that I specifically remember was titled *I Am an American*. I look forward to finding that book again, as it was very helpful. Also, Cora Agatucci has lent me a video that is titled *Japanese Internment; A Family Gathering*. This tells of a Japanese-American family that lived in Hood River, Oregon, and how they were treated. It is also very helpful. I plan on searching for other videos that give first-hand experiences. The secondary sources that I plan on consulting are newspapers, magazines, books, and perhaps videos.

While taking Library Skills 127 last term I learned that it is possible to find and read newspaper issues from many years ago. I plan on consulting the library for newspaper articles from that time period. I am not sure if they would be considered secondary sources because they are authentic from that time period that the Japanese-Americans were being interned, but I know they will be helpful to me so I can see what people were reading in the newspapers about the incidents at that time. I also plan on finding secondary sources in magazines. I remember one magazine article from the research paper I did in high school that was very helpful. It was in a *National Geographic* magazine, and described numerous families' experiences. The article also had many pictures of the concentration camps which told stories in themselves. Also, I have found one article titled "Ansel Adams and Civil Rights" published in *Popular Photography*. From the article's description, I have found that it is full of photos of the camps. I know I will learn a lot from the pictures alone, because they are not interpreted or warped by any writer, but they show exactly what it was like (a picture is worth a thousand words).

I have found that there are numerous books written about the Japanese-American internment during World War II. I plan on consulting books for the majority of the information that I need for reasons why such actions were taken against the Japanese-Americans as well as information on reimbursement/apologies for the internment.

I plan on using the skills that I learned in Library Skills 127 for research. In fact, I have already ordered a book through the interlibrary loan system and I have found more that I would like to order. Both the COCC Library catalog and the whole library homepage are very helpful to me in leading me to sources.

Finally, if possible, I would like to actually travel to Tule Lake, California, which is the site of a former concentration camp during World War II. The site has become a walk-through memorial for the internment that occurred. By traveling to Tule Lake, I hope to see first hand what the living quarters were like as well as how desolate the camps were. Overall, I am really looking forward to learning more about the Japanese-American internment during World War II, and I know that having good sources is the key to success in doing so.

IV. Sources

NOTE: I realize that the variance of source types is limited here, but I plan on consulting many more source types later, as I have mentioned above.

"The Color of My Skin, The Shape of My Eyes." *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Fall 1996, 223. (Journal)

Daniels, Roger, ed. *American Concentration Camps*. Introduction by Roger Daniels. New York: Garland, 1989. (Book)

Fondiller, Harvey. "Ansel Adams and Civil Rights: An Uncensored Version of a 1944 Exhibit Documents Life in a Japanese-American Internment Camp." *Popular Photography*, October 1985, 92. (Magazine)

Houston, Jeanne W., and James D. Houston. *Farewell to Manzanar; a True Story of Japanese American Experience During and After the World War II Internment*. New York, Bantam, 1974. (Book)

"Life in a Japanese American Internment Camp." *Booklist*, 1 January 1998, 788. (Magazine)

Maga, Timothy P. "Ronald Reagan and the Redress for Japanese-American Internment, 1983-1988." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Summer 1998, 606. (Journal)

Rancourt, Linda. "Remembering Manzanar." *National Parks*, May-June 1993, 30. (Magazine)

Stromer, Walt. "Why I Went Along: 1942 and the Invisible Evacuees." *Columbia Journalism Review*, January-February 1993, 15. (Journal)