

Japanese internment, 1942

Introduction

Responding to fears of Japanese spies within the United States, President Roosevelt signed an order authorizing the forced relocation and confinement of more than 110,000 Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans living in the West. This broadside, printed in Los Angeles, ordered “all persons of Japanese ancestry” to assemble for transport to detention camps. The document gives specific directions to families about what they could take with them—household and personal items limited to “that which can be carried by the individual or family group.” Although some Japanese families had sympathetic friends who held their property and ran their businesses in their absence, most lost their homes and livelihoods as they followed government orders.

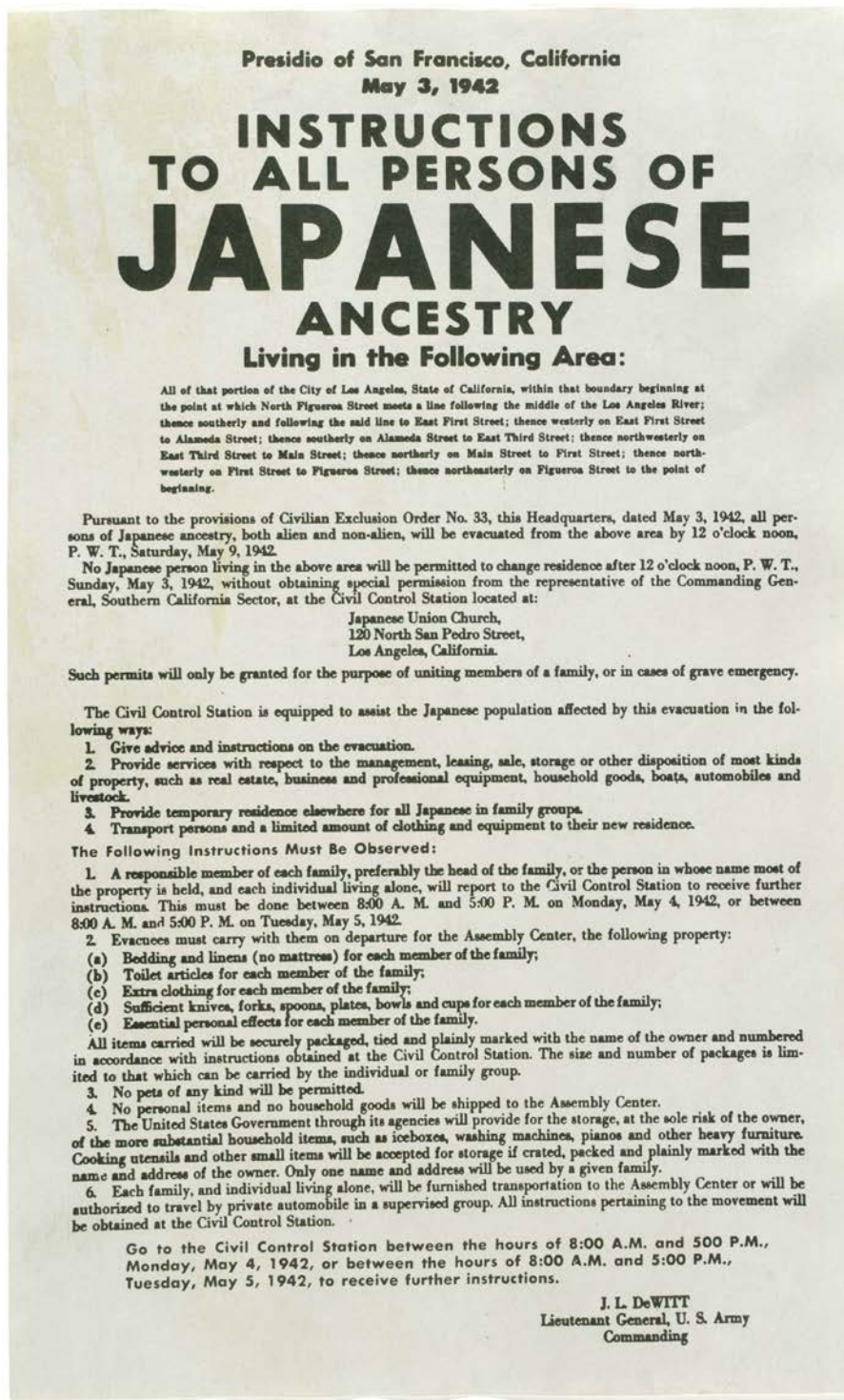
Questions for Discussion

Read the document introduction and view the poster, and then use your knowledge of American history to answer the questions that follow.

1. Why did the US government institute these orders? Why was it issued, for the most part, along the West Coast?
2. Imagine yourself being asked to evacuate your apartment or home and to take with you only items you could carry. What would you select to include? What problems did this pose for the Japanese following these orders?
3. Why did only a very few Americans protest these orders? Why did the Japanese cooperate?

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Image



Japanese internment broadside, May 3, 1942. (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC06360)