

WORLD WAR II ALIEN ENEMY CONTROL PROGRAM CURRICULUM GUIDE AND LESSON PLANS

LESSON PLAN FIVE: *“Research, Poetry, and Japanese Enemy Aliens”*

APPROPRIATE GRADES/COURSES: 8-14, U.S. History, English, Creative Writing, American Government, Political Science, Minority Studies

TOPIC BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

In the days and weeks following December 7, 1941, long-held ethnic and racial prejudices, aggravated by wartime panic, led to the arrest of thousands of Japanese, German, and Italian so-called “dangerous enemy aliens.” The arrests were done under the authority of the “Alien Enemies Act” (Title 50, sec. 21-24, United States Code), which is still in effect. The Act specifies that citizens of enemy nations can be “apprehended, restrained, secured and removed” in the event of a declared war or actual, attempted, or threatened invasion of the United States.

Beyond the arrests, Presidential Proclamations 2525, 2526, and 2527, signed by President Roosevelt immediately after Pearl Harbor, declared that all Japanese, German, and Italian aliens age fourteen and over were now defined as “enemy aliens” who were required to register and carry certificates of identification. Approximately 600,000 Italians, 300,000 Germans, and 100,000 Japanese registered as enemy aliens who were subject to removal from designated military areas as well as severe restrictions on their freedom of movement and their property rights. Japanese branch banks were closed and taken over by the government. Nearly thirty million dollars of business enterprises and real estate owned by Japanese aliens were seized.

The arrest of Japanese enemy aliens began on the evening of December 7, 1941. Presidential Proclamation 2525 authorized the confiscation of enemy alien cameras, weapons, and radio transmitters, which the government feared would be used as instruments of espionage and sabotage. The arrests were done by the FBI, working off so-called “A, B, C” lists which classified aliens as well as a few citizens as to their degree of dangerousness. For Japanese aliens, donations to a national cultural society placed them on one of the lists. Leadership in any Japanese organization meant classification as an “A” risk, subject to immediate arrest and detention in the event of war.

By the evening of December 7, 726 Japanese nationals had been arrested. By February 16, 1942, that number had grown to 2192. More than half of those were from the Pacific Coast, and thirty were women. In northern California and the San Francisco Bay Area, Japanese aliens were taken to a temporary detention center in the old Salvation Army Building on Silver Avenue. There, they were joined by Italian and German enemy aliens who had also been arrested. When the Silver Avenue facility filled up, enemy aliens were sent to Sharp Park Detention Facility, in Pacifica. Thousands of arrested enemy aliens eventually passed through Sharp Park on their way to permanent internment

in the interior.

Eventually, there would be over fifty detention and internment facilities for enemy aliens throughout the United States, including eight internment camps run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Ft. Missoula, Montana, held Japanese and Italians, and occasionally a few Germans; a huge camp in Crystal City, Texas, held Japanese and Germans and their families, as well as internees brought to the U.S. from Latin America; Ft. Stanton, in New Mexico, was a maximum security camp for Germans; Santa Fe, New Mexico and Kooskia, Idaho also held Japanese internees; camps in Kenedy and Seagoville, Texas, held Japanese and Germans and their families.

One of the larger camps, and one of the few that held enemy aliens from all three nationalities, was Ft. Lincoln Internment Camp, on the Missouri River flatland just south of Bismarck, North Dakota. From 1941 until 1946, thousands of enemy aliens, mostly Japanese and Germans, passed through the gates of Ft. Lincoln. Two of them have since become the subjects of literary and motion picture history.

Their names were George Ko Wakatsuki, and Itaru Ina. Who were they, and what had they done to deserve imprisonment as enemy aliens?

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION OF LESSON PLAN:

One class period for discussion of subject and the assignment. An additional week of student work outside the classroom on research/writing assignments is required.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

Review and understand the Alien Enemies Act and related Presidential Proclamation 2525, pertaining to Japanese enemy aliens.

Discuss and understand the internment process (see also “Lesson Plan One”).

Discuss and understand the effects of internment on any ethnic community, particularly the Japanese and Japanese American community during WWII.

Refine and exercise online research skills.

Discuss, refine, and exercise poetry writing skills, especially haiku.

MATERIALS:

Printed copies of the **Topic Background Summary** (see above)

Printed copies of the **Alien Enemies Act** (see “Lesson Plan One”)

Printed copies of **Presidential Proclamation 2525** (See Related Laws:

<http://www.gaic.info/history.html>

Printed copies of the **Research/Writing Assignment** (see below)

Printed copies of **Principles of Haiku Poetry** (see below)

TEACHER PREPARATION:

Prepare a list of discussion questions concerning Japanese internment. Some suggested questions:

Should attendance during WWII of Japanese and Japanese Americans at social club gatherings have been viewed with suspicion?

Should membership in a Japanese cultural organization have been grounds for suspicion?

With respect to the WWII threat of espionage/sabotage, should the Japanese community have been regarded with more suspicion than the German or Italian communities? Less? Why? Why not?

PERIOD ONE--CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

For the teacher

Distribute copies of **Topic Background Summary**

Distribute copies of the **Alien Enemies Act**

Distribute copies of **Presidential Proclamation 2525**

For the teacher and students

Discuss:

Should attendance during WWII of Japanese and Japanese Americans at social club gatherings have been viewed with suspicion?

Should membership in a Japanese cultural organization have been grounds for suspicion?

With respect to the WWII threat of espionage/sabotage, should the Japanese community have been regarded with more suspicion than the German or Italian communities? Less? Why? Why not?

For the teacher

Distribute copies of **Principles of Haiku Poetry**

Distribute copies of **Research/Writing Assignment**

For the teacher and students

Discuss the Research/Writing Assignment and the deadline for completion.

Discuss the principles of haiku poetry.

The teacher should explain that the online starting point for the research/writing for the students is only the name **Itaru Ina** or **George Ko Wakatsuki**.

KEY TERMS/CONCEPTS:

See Lesson Plan One – “The World War II Alien Enemy Control Program” for a glossary of key Enemy Alien terms and concepts.

RESEARCH/WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Choose from one of the following options for your **Research/Writing Assignment**. The completed assignments will be collected one week from today

1. Pretend that you are writing a biography, to be posted on *Wikipedia*, the online encyclopedia, on **George Ko Wakatsuki**. Your biography should be 500 words, and summarize all the details you can discover through online research concerning Mr. Wakatsuki's life. The biography must include a description of why Mr. Wakatsuki was interned at Ft. Lincoln, and what eventually happened to him. Explain why and how Mr. Wakatsuki became the subject of a book and a motion picture.

2. Pretend that you are writing a biography, to be posted on *Wikipedia*, the online encyclopedia, on **Itaru Ina**. Your biography should be 500 words, and summarize all the details you can discover through online research concerning Mr. Ina's life. The biography must include a description of why Mr. Ina was interned at Ft. Lincoln, and what eventually happened to him. Explain why and how Mr. Ina became the subject of a motion picture.

3. Find online examples of the haiku poetry of Itaru Ina. Based on your research into Mr. Ina's life, explain what you think was the inspiration for ten of the poems you found online.

4 Find online examples of the haiku poetry of Itaru Ina. Then, following the traditional forms of haiku poetry, write approximately ten haiku poems that reflect what you think *you* would be thinking and feeling during your internment because of your race or nationality.

PRINCIPLES OF HAIKU POETRY

A Japanese poem in three lines, of 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively, which presents a sharp picture that arouses emotion and suggests a spiritual insight. This haiku by the sixteenth-century poet Moritake reflects the structure:

The falling flower
I saw drift back to the branch
Was a butterfly