

QUESTIONS ABOUT
FAREWELL TO MANZANAR
Part 1

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston tells how she and all West Coast Japanese were relocated to camps in the interior of the USA during World War II and describes life in her camp.

The questions below run from the beginning of the book to the end of *Chapter Twelve: Manzanar USA*.

One What is Pearl harbor?

1. How old is Jeanne at the beginning of the book? What is her race?
2. What did Jeanne's father (called Papa for these questions) do for a living in 1941?
3. On Sunday, December 7, 1941 the fishing trip was cancelled, and all the boats returned to harbor. Why?
4. What is *Pearl harbor*?
5. The Japanese fishing families living on Terminal Island near Long Beach CA all came under suspicion of being enemy agents. What were the reasons? Do you agree that these reasons were legitimate?
6. What was the official reason given for Papa's arrest?

two *Shikata Ga Nai*

7. Why did Jeanne's mother (called Mama for these questions) move the family to terminal Island?
8. Why did her new neighborhood frighten Jeanne?
9. Why did the family move to Boyle Heights after only two months?
10. Mama had no way to move her expensive china dishes to Boyle Heights and had to sell them. What did she do when the dealer wouldn't give her a fair price?
11. They soon left Boyle heights for a place called Manzanar. Moving seemed like a good idea. Why?
12. Describe Manzanar. What was their first meal, and why was it almost inedible?
13. Describe their new living quarters.

14. In *The Volunteer*, author Jack Fairweather gives the true account of prisoner Witold Pilecki's arrival at the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz. Here is how *The Volunteer* describes his arrival.

"The train stopped after dark. Somewhere up the track, a freight car door cracked open and was followed by shouts, screams, and yelping dogs. Witold felt the crowd shift inside the carriage. To shouts of "Out! Out! Out!" the prisoners surged toward the entrance and tumbled forward.... He hit the gravel siding and stumbled as a club whistled past his head. Men with sticks were laying into those who fell and dragging stragglers from the train....

"On either side of their ragged column, SS guards smoked and laughed among themselves. They ordered a prisoner to run over to a fence post beside the path. The man, confused, staggered off only for the guards to gun him down. The column came to a halt, and the guards dragged out ten more men from the crowd and shot them, too. Collective responsibility for the "escape," one of the Germans announced. The march resumed; the bodies of the executed men were dragged at the rear of the column by other prisoners as guard dogs snapped at their heels."

The WWII Japanese relocation camps are often called America's concentration camps. Compare Pilecki's arrival at Auschwitz with the Wakatsuki family's arrival at Manzanar. Were the American and Nazi camps equivalent? What does "*Shigata ga nai*" mean?

three A Different Kind of Sand

15. Was there really a difference in the sand coming through the knotholes and that coming through the cracks in the walls?

four A Common Master Plan

16. The Wakatsukis arrived near the beginning of winter when it was beginning to be very cold at night. How did they keep warm?

17. There were no partitions between toilets in the latrines. What did the women do to preserve their modesty?

five Almost a Family

18. How did family dynamics change after the move to Manzanar? Did this change happen in other families as well?

19. Were the camp residents required to take jobs? What job did Mama take?

20. To what religious group was Jeanne attracted?

six Whatever He Did Had Flourish

21. Papa's parents were of the Samurai caste in Japan and ranked just below nobility. His family owned huge tracts of land there. What happened that began the changes that reduced his family's wealth?

22. Papa wanted something different and better than what Japan had to offer. Where did he go?
23. How did he get from Japan to Idaho?
24. Why did he never finish his law degree?
25. Why did Mama's parents try to keep Papa away from her?
26. What was Papa's defining characteristic?

seven Fort Lincoln: An Interview

27. During interrogation, Papa was asked if he felt loyalty toward Japan. What did he answer? When asked whom he wanted to win the war, what was his answer?

eight Inu

28. What meanings can "inu" have? Which meaning did the women have in mind when gossiping about Papa?
29. Papa and Mama had a fight. How did it end?

nine The Mess Hall Bells

30. What happened at Manzanar one year after Pearl harbor? What were the causes? What was the result?

ten The Reservoir Shack: An Aside

31. What happened at the reservoir shack the night of the riots?

eleven Yes Yes No No

32. In 1943 camp prisoners were required to sign a loyalty oath swearing allegiance to the USA and assenting to serve in the army in combat. If you were in their shoes, imprisoned simply because of your origins and skin color and then asked to swear those who imprisoned you, what would you do? What did the Wakatsukis do?

twelve Manzanar USA

33. Owens Valley was once a beautiful valley. What happened to turn it into a desert?
34. How did the Wakatsuki family's life change when they move to Block 28?
35. How did Woody sign the loyalty oath? What promise did he make to his father?
36. What was life like in Manzanar during this period?