

Chapter 15 - Section 4

The Struggle for Justice at Home

Economic Situation facing African Americans in the 1940's

- Had it even **worse off than whites during the Depression**
- Many employers **hired “whites only”**



Limited Housing

- Segregation & low pay **limited houses and apartments available** to blacks
- Many **had to live in ghettos**



Race Riots

- Broke out in big cities because white workers and homeowners **feared and resented the newcomers** in their workplaces and neighborhoods



Hypocrisy for Black GI's

- They were **fighting against fascism and discrimination overseas** only to experience the **same racism back home**
- Returning black soldiers were still turned away at white's only restaurants
- The “Double V” campaign urged victory over enemies overseas and over racial discrimination at home



FDR's attitude

- The most important thing right now is fighting the war and **fighting racism would have to wait** until later



A. Philip Randolph

- African American who **fought to get blacks** into unions so that they could get the **same job opportunities** and working conditions **as whites**
- He later organized the march on Washington in which MLK Jr. gave his famous *I have a Dream* speech



Braceros

- Spanish for “workers”
- Thousands were brought into the US **from Mexico during the war due to a shortage of workers**



barrios

- **Spanish speaking neighborhoods** with crowded conditions and racial tension



Zoot-suiters

- **Mexican-Americans in the LA area who wore a style of clothing called a “zoot suit”**
- a long draped sport coat and baggy pants with a slicked back “ducktail” haircut



- **Sailors on nearby military bases were offended by this look so they roamed the streets beating them up and humiliating them for looking “un-American”**



Zoot Suit Riots

- **Street fighting against Mexican Americans** that turned into full scale riots when they fought back
- **Police often arrested the Mexicans rather than the sailors** even though they began the attacks



Native Americans

- Lives were changed by the war because many left the only life they knew on the reservations to join the military or get jobs in the cities
- **Treated the same way as African Americans**
- **Struggled to get out of poverty**



Japanese-Americans

- Had already experienced prejudice in America, but **became hated after the war began**
- The media created hysteria **by accusing them of being spies** (“Jap boat flashes message ashore”)



Nisei

- People **born in the US of Japanese parents** who had emigrated from Japan
- **2/3 of all Japanese Americans** were actually born here



Result of Fears and Prejudices

- President Roosevelt ordered the **removal of all Japanese “aliens”** from the West coast



Internment (confinement) Camps

- **“prisons” that Japanese Americans were sent to in remote areas inland**





U.S. Department of Justice
KOOSKIA
Internment Camp Reservation
For next 5 miles.
No Admission ^{EXCEPT} *on official*
business.



Lost Everything

- Relocation **took place so fast** that they had no time to make arrangements
- **Lost their homes, businesses, and property**
- **Could only bring what they could carry**



Conditions in the Camps

- Desolate areas
- Wooden barracks with only cots, blankets, and a light bulb – **families had only 1 room**
- **Had to share bathing and dining facilities**
- **Barbed wire and armed guards** surrounded the camps



After the War

- When they were sent home in 1945 **many had nothing to return to**
- One man lost \$55,000 worth of fishing nets, his car, and his furniture



Unconstitutional?

- When some Japanese Americans contested it the **Supreme Court ruled that it was constitutional**



1988

- **40 years later the US Congress officially apologized and gave each survivor \$20,000**



Japanese-American soldiers

- Despite this treatment **many volunteered to fight in the military** (17,000 – 1,200 from camps)
- **442nd Regiment** fought in France and Germany and combat **won more medals for bravery than any other unit in US History**



Assignment

- Imagine that you are a Japanese American living in California during WWII. In a **½ to 1 page essay** discuss your experience being relocated to an internment camp. Use specific details from your notes.