

Leaving THINGS BEHIND

Introduction

When Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes during World War II, they were given as little as ten days to prepare for the move, and could only take what they could carry to the internment camps. Children did not have much room for toys or special objects from home.

Mary Tsukamoto was one of the Japanese Americans who was forced to leave her home during the war. This is what she said about packing up and moving to the camp.



Two children help their father carry their suitcases to an internment camp.
Dorothea Lange; Courtesy of the National Archives

“...I started to gather rice, small sacks of rice and...and collected the packages of dehydrated soup and jello and things that were light, so that they wouldn't be such a heavy baggage for us to carry because they said you could only take what you could carry. And we knew we had to take blankets and sheets and bedding and things as well as some of our clothes.”

What Do You Think?

Answer the questions on the next page to express how you feel.

What Do You Think

A Few Things to Think About

1. What decisions did Mary have to make when she was packing up to go to the internment camp? Why?

2. Look at the picture to the right. How do you think the children feel? Why?



3. Look at the trunk pictured below. Think about the objects you have in your house. How many things would fit inside that trunk? How would you decide what to bring?



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4. If you were forced to move with your family to an internment camp, what personal belongings would you take with you?

5. In the suitcase below, draw the special things you would take to the camp. Why would you bring those things?

