

How Hawai'i Protected Japanese Americans From Mass Internment and Transformed Itself

When the United States entered World War II in December 1941, the fate of Japanese Americans on the mainland was sealed. In the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the military to remove all Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Over 120,000 people were forcibly relocated to internment camps, where they were held for the duration of the war.



Inclusion: How Hawai'i Protected Japanese Americans from Mass Internment, Transformed Itself, and Changed America by Tom Coffman

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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But in Hawai'i, a different story unfolded. Japanese Americans made up over one-third of the islands' population, and they played a vital role in the local economy. Thanks to the efforts of local leaders and the unique demographics of the islands, Hawai'i was able to avoid mass internment.

Instead, the islands became a model for how to protect civil liberties in wartime.

The Demographics of Hawai'i

One of the key factors that saved Japanese Americans in Hawai'i from mass internment was the islands' demographics. Unlike the mainland, where Japanese Americans were a small minority, they made up over one-third of the population of Hawai'i. This meant that it would have been politically impossible to remove all Japanese Americans from the islands without causing widespread social and economic disruption.

In addition, the Japanese American community in Hawai'i was well-established and had deep roots in the islands. Many Japanese Americans had been living in Hawai'i for generations, and they had close ties to the local community. This made it difficult for the government to justify removing them from their homes.

The Role of Local Leaders

Another key factor that saved Japanese Americans in Hawai'i from mass internment was the role of local leaders. Governor Ingram Stainback and Delegate to Congress Joseph Farrington were both strong supporters of civil liberties, and they refused to cooperate with the federal government's plans to remove Japanese Americans from the islands.

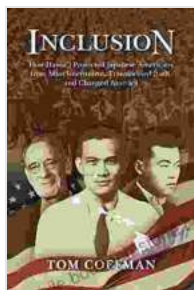
Stainback and Farrington argued that there was no military necessity for mass internment, and they pointed out that Japanese Americans in Hawai'i had not been involved in any acts of sabotage or espionage. They also argued that mass internment would be a betrayal of the ideals of democracy and freedom that the United States was fighting for in the war.

The Impact of Mass Internment

The mass internment of Japanese Americans on the mainland had a devastating impact on the Japanese American community. Families were torn apart, businesses were closed, and people lost their homes and their livelihoods. The internment also had a lasting psychological impact on many Japanese Americans, who felt betrayed by the government that they had always thought of as their own.

In Hawai'i, however, the story was different. Thanks to the efforts of local leaders and the unique demographics of the islands, Japanese Americans were spared the horrors of mass internment. The islands became a model for how to protect civil liberties in wartime, and they helped to set a precedent for the eventual redress of the wrongs that had been committed against Japanese Americans on the mainland.

The story of how Hawai'i protected Japanese Americans from mass internment is a complex one, but it is ultimately a story of hope and resilience. In the face of adversity, the people of Hawai'i stood up for what they believed in, and they defended the civil liberties of their fellow citizens. Their efforts not only saved Japanese Americans from mass internment, but they also helped to transform Hawai'i into a more just and equitable society.



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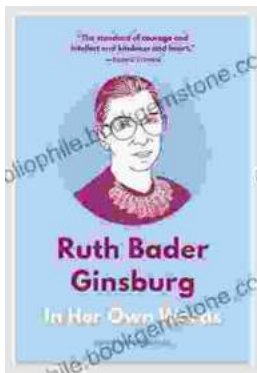
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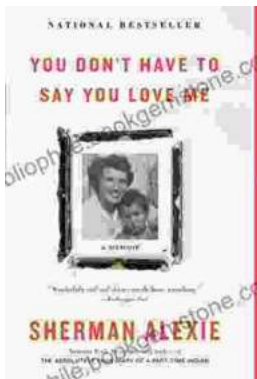
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