Life for Kids in the Internment Camps

This is a skyview picture of the barracks. For more information click here. Children were sent from their homes and schools two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. In all, the Army took 112,353 Japanese-Americans. Guards made Nisei teens show I.D. when going back and forth from school on ferries. One time, soldiers detained a group of students ALL day while they were at school. This scared young people and many quit going to school. Mothers were afraid to let their children out of their homes. On their way to the camps, children were identified with tags dangling from their coats stating the I.D. number the Army had assigned their family. Once they arrived to the camps, police searched through homes and stole money and belongings without approval. They even confiscated needles and scissors. The life of children in Internment Camps was very hard. They had to go to school, do chores at the barracks, and they were under strict authority. The guards would lock the gates to prevent people from leaving or entering the camps.

Soon enough, they allowed children to actually go outside and play. Adults were able to mingle with other people around the camps. However, children were always able to write letters. A very nice, young librarian would constantly write them letters back from California, asking them how they were doing. She was very nice to them, and loved them very much. They were always happy to write her back, and so was she. She would send them candy and other goodies through the mail. Although people were now able to mingle around and see other people, they did not do much visiting. This was because it was still too hot to even walk outside. There were canteens around the camps, but they were never that full, because people were still short of money.

Almost half of the Japanese Americans were children. They were forced to live in bleak camps, that were surrounded by barbed wire fences for four years. They were taken away from their homes and schools. They were able to get an education in the Internment Camps.

Before the Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps they had normal lives. They lived in the cities and they worked at regular jobs. Then president Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Executive Order 9066 authorizing the relocation of about 113,000 Japanese Americans including children. The children had to undergo many changes to get used to living with different people that they had never seen before.
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