

**The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine
Health and Medicine Division**

**Spatial Justice as a Driver of Health in the Context of Societal
Emergencies**

A Virtual Workshop

Session I:

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Incarceration of Japanese Americans

- **December 7, 1941 Japan Bombs Pearl Harbor**
- **FBI detains suspicious persons** On December 8, 1941, the FBI detained 1700 “enemy aliens” on the West Coast. These were individuals of German, Italian, and Japanese ancestry, mostly immigrant community leaders.
- The FBI stated that all potentially dangerous individuals had been detained. J. Edgar Hoover saw no reason to detain additional persons of Japanese descent for reasons of national security.
- By March 1942, Japanese represented over 50% of the persons arrested.

Mid-January 1942

Anti-Japanese groups from West Coast ask FDR to remove all persons of Japanese descent from the West Coast, regardless of citizenship.

Executive Order 9066

February 19, 1942

- Authorized Secretary of War to remove all persons from designated military areas.
- In later notes, Attorney General Biddle noted that this order was only meant to apply to Japanese Americans.





Figure 1. Map of Western United States showing Relocation and Assembly Centers

Source: Spicer, Impounded People, p. 67

Where to place 120,000 “enemies”?

- Politicians throughout western United States did not want to host the Japanese Americans in their states.
- 10 civilian prison camps created in remote areas accessible by train
- AZ Governor Osborn stated, “We do not propose to made a dumping ground for enemy aliens from any other state.”

Soucre: “Osborne Spurns Plan to Dump Enemy Aliens,” *Arizona Republic* March 1, 1942. Reprinted in *History Behind the Headlines/ Behind Barbed Wire*, 23.

Arizona Intersections

- Over 25% Japanese Americans incarcerated on 2 American Indian Reservations
- Gila River Indian Community (tribal council protested)
 - South of Phoenix
 - Butte and Rivers Camps
 - July 20, 1942-November 10, 1945: 13,348 incarcerated
- Colorado River Indian Tribes Community (tribal council protested)
 - Between Needles and Blythe: hot and arid desert 8000 acres
 - Poston Camps I, II, and III
 - May 8, 1942-November 28, 1945: 17,814 incarcerated
- *Leupp (high security camp)
 - Department of Justice Camp for 50 “trouble makers” - anti-draft resisters
 - Navajo Reservation, former Indian Boarding School

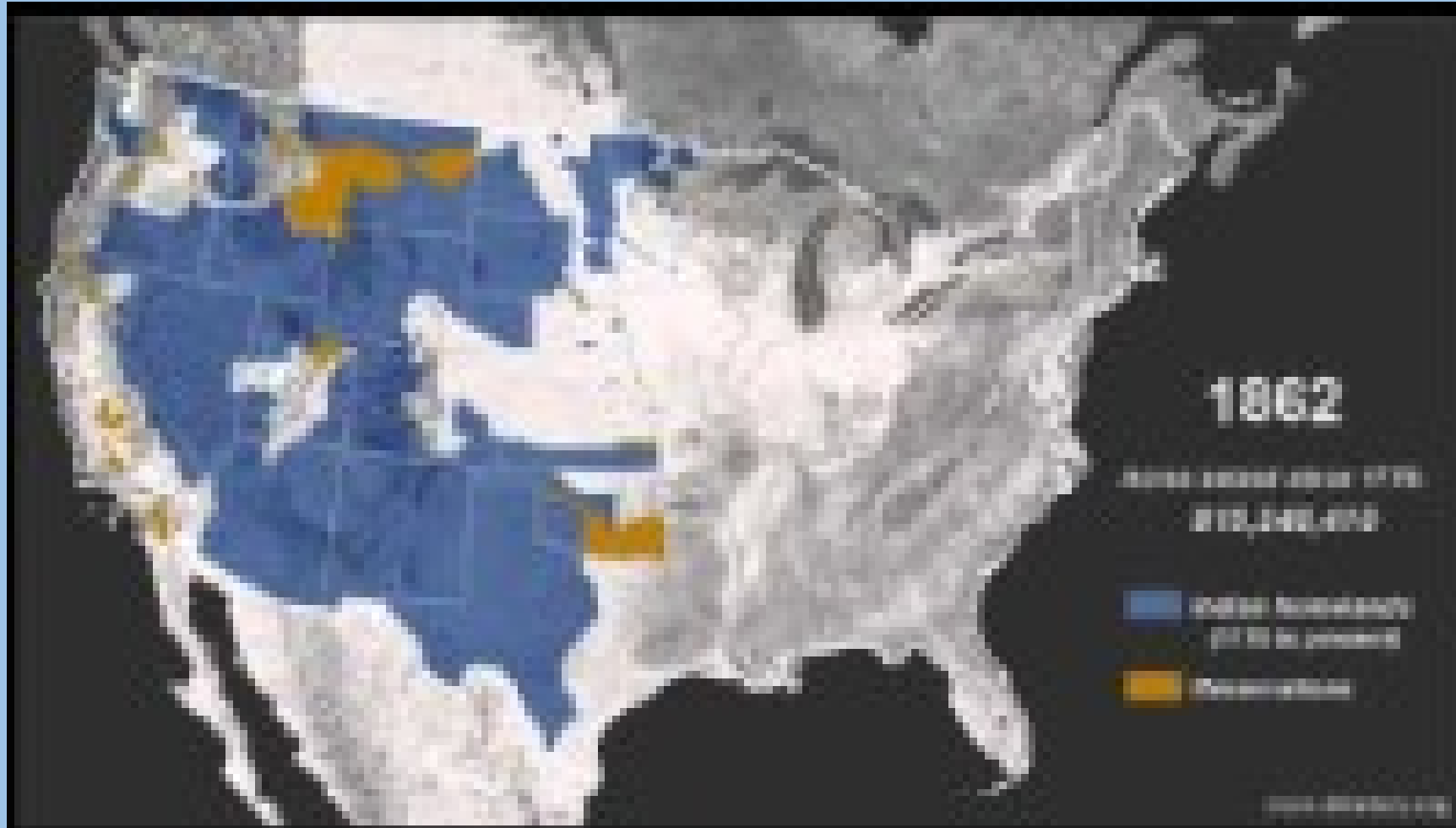
Source Paul Bailey, *City in the Sun: The Japanese Concentration Camp at Poston Arizona* (Westernlore Publications, 1997)

Settler colonialism

Settler Colonialism not an “event” but rather a structure, that seeks to “erase to replace.” The erasure of the native population to replace (claim, history) of the lands.

Complex layering of whose histories are remembered

- What is included in the history books?
- What is remembered?
- Why do we remember certain histories?
- What are the implications of...?



What does that mean when you are
“something else”?

