In 1942, the U.S. government interned 120,000 Japanese Americans, an act that severely violated their civil liberties and human rights. The internment was based on fear and misinformation, and it lasted for years, causing immense hardship and suffering. The 82nd Regimental Combat Team, the "Vets," were trained and deployed in Europe. The Japanese Americans who were interned were not criminals, but they were considered a threat by the government. The internment lasted until 1945, when it was finally declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

In 1946, the U.S. government began to redress the wrongs it had committed. The Civil Liberties Act of 1948 was passed to provide compensation and relief to those who had been interned. The act also established the Japanese American National Museum, which today serves as a testament to the history of Japanese American internment and the struggle for civil rights.

Like other people of color, Japanese Americans endured and survived a gamut of legalized terror and oppression. By persistently striving to ensure that our Constitutional principles of freedom, equality, and the inalienable dignity of all people, Japanese Americans challenged America to live up to its ideals, and gave witness to the enduring power and spirit of those ideals. This history has taught Japanese Americans the importance of remembering their roots and of the need to stand with others when these ideals are threatened by prevailing fears and prejudices.


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The Internment of Japanese Americans was one of three momentous landmark cases that shaped Supreme Court jurisprudence in the 20th century. In 1944, the Japanese American Citizens League, led by its president Fred Korematsu, challenged the constitutionality of the internment laws on the ground that they violated the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. The Supreme Court upheld the internment laws, citing the national security and military objectives of the government.

On December 11, 1944, before a packed courtroom, Korematsu testifies that the internment was wrong. In his memoir, "For the Love of the Country," he writes, "I was not a spy. I was not a criminal. I was not a threat to society or to the United States government. I was a Japanese American citizen with equal rights, just like everyone else."

In 1983, Korematsu v. United States was overturned by the Supreme Court, in a case that was brought by a group of Japanese American citizens who had been interned during World War II. The court ruled that the internment had been unconstitutional, and that the government's actions had been based on ethnic stereotypes and prejudices.

In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the government could not use Executive Order 9066, which authorized the internment of Japanese Americans, to justify the internment of Muslims.


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Although the African American experience has its own history, the 20th and 21st Century Civil Rights Movements also included the efforts of Asian Americans and other oppressed peoples. In the 20th century, the Civil rights movement led to greater equality and justice for all Americans. The Civil Rights Movement marked a turning point in American history, and it continues to inspire us today.

The Civil Rights Movement was a period of social change in the United States from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. It was a time when African Americans fought for the right to vote, to go to school, and to live free from discrimination. The movement included sit-ins, freedom rides, and protests against segregation and discrimination.

The Civil Rights Movement was led by a group of activists, including Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. King was a leader of the nonviolent civil rights movement, and he helped to bring about the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, or sex.

Malcolm X was a leader of the more radical wing of the Civil Rights Movement. He believed in the use of violence to achieve equality and justice for African Americans. Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965, but his message continues to inspire us today.

The Civil Rights Movement was a time of great change and progress. It was a time when people came together to stand up for what was right, and to demand equality and justice for all Americans. The Civil Rights Movement is a time of pride and joy, and it continues to inspire us today.