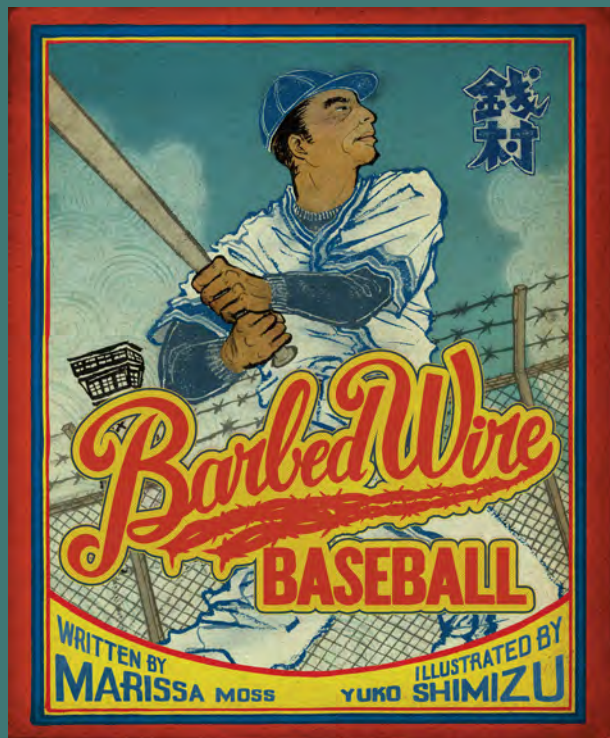


Curriculum Guide

Introduce students to Japanese-American internment during WWII using book as a springboard for discussions. The subject fits into learning national learning standards for U.S. History.



Standard topics:

- Living and Working Together in Families Now and Long Ago
- The History of the United States: Democratic Principles and Values and the People form Many
- Cultures who Contributed to is Cultural, Economic, and Political Heritage.
- The Great Depression and World War II: the implication of the Japanese-American internment for civil liberties.

Objective:

- To introduce history of Japanese-American internment, its causes and effects.
- To understand how difficult conditions can inspire creativity and resourcefulness.
- To understand how hardship can both bond and/or weaken communities, how it can strengthen and/or destroy individuals.
- To gain a different perspective to a historical event.

Key Terms/Concepts:

- Civil Rights
- Internment
- Resiliency
- Prejudice
- Patriotism

Background Information

When Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the internment of all people of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast. More than 110,000 people were forced to leave their homes, two-thirds of them U.S. Citizens. They lost their property, their businesses, their communities. Although they were loyal Americans, they were considered dangerous anyway, possible spies for Japan.

Kenichi Zenimura and his family were sent to Gila River, Arizona. Zeni may have started his baseball career on a Japanese-only team in Fresno because the regular white teams wouldn't allow him to play, but he ended up playing with Yankee greats like Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig for exhibition

games. His Fresno team also played against teams in the Negro leagues, two outsider groups coming together over baseball.



Whack. The bat met the ball with a crisp, splintering sound. Zeni threw the bat down and ran. He ran to first base, then second, then third, his eyes following the arc of the ball as it soared up and away, far over the barbed wire fence.

So it was perhaps natural that when Zeni found himself caged up at Gila River, he turned to the sport that defined his life. But Zeni did more than build a field of dreams. He started a league of teams that played each other across internment camps throughout the southwest. He organized three divisions and thirty-two teams competing beyond Gila River to Jerome, Arkansas, Manzanar, California, Tule Lake, California, and Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

If a relative died, the internees couldn't leave the camp to attend the funeral, but for baseball games, they were allowed to travel. Baseball gave them a kind of freedom, both within the barbed wire of the camps and a pass outside of them. It gave them a patriotic focus, a pride in themselves, and a connection to the greater Japanese-American community, and beyond that, to all of America.

When the camp closed in November 1945, the field was left to the desert creatures. Back home in Fresno, Zeni built a new ballfield. After their experience playing ball in Gila River Internment camp, both of Zeni's sons went on to play big-league baseball in Japan for the Hiroshima Carp. In July 2006, Kenichi Zenimura was posthumously inducted into the Shrine of the Eternals, the national equivalent of the Baseball Hall of Fame. His son, Kenso Howard Zenimura, accepted the award on his father's behalf.



Activities

Part One: Making subject relevant

Lead a discussion about team sports, talk about what the students play, why (for fun, fitness, friendship), what they need to play, and what sports mean to them.

Part Two: Read Aloud

Read *Barbed Wire Baseball* to students and start a discussion on the following topics:

1. Why was Zeni's family moved to a camp? Was this fair? Why or why not?
2. How did Zeni feel about being in the camp? What did he decide to do about being there?
3. Why did Zeni build the baseball field?
4. How did the other people in the camp help Zeni? Why do you think they helped him?
5. Why did the camp commander allow Zeni to build the baseball field?
6. What did playing baseball mean to Zeni and the other people in the camp?

Part Three: Concluding Activity

Have students write a story about a time when a sport meant more to them than simply playing a game. Did their city's team win the World Series and they celebrated? Did they watch an underdog team win and cheered them on? Have they had a personal experience when participating in a sport made them feel better about themselves?

Or have them write about prejudice, about being judged as disloyal simply based on ethnicity. Is it ever fair to judge a person by race, what's called racial profiling? Should cops be able to stop somebody based on race? Should airport security single out certain ethnic groups for more careful scrutiny? Why or why not?

Additional Digital Resources: Photos and Memories of Japanese Internment Camps

- PRI's The World: Baseball Behind Barbed Wire: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b91t7pEu4yk>
- <http://www.azcentral.com/travel/articles/2011/04/08/20110408ken-zenimura-baseball-japanese-internment-camp.html>
- <http://www.mercedsunstar.com/2013/02/18/2826170/hitting-home-japanese-americans.html>
- <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/anseladams/aamabout.html>
- <http://twistedifter.com/2012/02/ansel-adams-life-on-japanese-internment-camp/>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/27/japanese-american-internm_n_1304668.html





Barbed Wire Baseball
By Marissa Moss, illustrated by Yuko Shimizu

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