

A Historical Timeline to accompany

"10,000 Landscapes: Japanese-Mexican Immigration, WWII Internment and Transborder Geographies Through the Life of Denzo Jesus Kihara"

Legend:

 USA  Japan  Mexico  International  Migration  Anti-Asian

Key Historical Context

1798

Alien Enemies Act (USA) - Authorizes wartime detention of enemy nationals, later used against Japanese in WWII

1846-1848

Mexican-American War - U.S. military invasion of Mexico culminating in occupation of Mexico City

1847-1848

U.S. Occupation of Mexico City - Marines occupy "Halls of Montezuma," locals resist

1848

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo - Mexico cedes half its territory (present-day California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming) to the U.S.

1868-1912

Meiji Restoration in Japan - Ends isolation, begins rapid modernization, traditional social classes realigned, peasants adopt surnames for first time, creation of imperial military

1888

Treaty of Amity (Mexico-Japan) - First "equal" treaty with a Western nation, establishes diplomatic relations

1897

U.S. Anti-Asian Legislation & Xenophobia ▼

1882

Chinese Exclusion Act - First U.S. law to prohibit immigration based on nationality; sparked anti-Chinese violence including lynchings and massacres; banned Chinese laborers for 10 years (later extended indefinitely)

1885

Rock Springs Massacre (Wyoming) - White miners kill 28 Chinese miners and burn Chinatown

1892

Geary Act - Extended Chinese exclusion and required Chinese residents to carry registration certificates or face deportation

1898

United States v. Wong Kim Ark - Supreme Court affirms birthright citizenship for U.S.-born children of immigrants, counter to exclusionist pressure

1906

San Francisco School Board segregates Japanese students in separate schools

1907-1908

Gentlemen's Agreement - Informal arrangement where Japan agrees to limit emigration to U.S. in exchange for ending school segregation

1913

California Alien Land Law - Prohibits "aliens ineligible for citizenship" (primarily Japanese) from owning land

1922

Takao Ozawa v. United States - Supreme Court rules Japanese immigrants ineligible for citizenship as non-white

1924

Immigration Act (Johnson-Reed Act) - Bans all Asian immigration; establishes national origins quota system favoring Northern Europeans; explicitly excludes "aliens ineligible for citizenship"

1930-1934

Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act and reciprocal trade agreements - Established protective tariffs at highest historical levels to shield American industry and agriculture from foreign competition

Japanese Migration & Policy Response

1894

Japan establishes emigration companies to organize overseas movement

1908

U.S. border restrictions on entry through Mexico begin; focus on "Japanese laborers"

1920s-1930s

Significant Japanese emigration to Brazil, Peru, and Mexico as U.S. closes its doors

1924-1940

Japanese migration redirected to Latin America after U.S. exclusion; Mexico becomes important destination

Transborder Period

1900-1940

Border industrialization creates economic opportunities

1905-1941

Japanese communities establish in Northern Mexico, especially Baja California

1910-1920

Mexican Revolution disrupts borderlands; some Japanese involuntarily drawn into conflict

1917

Zimmermann Telegram incident - German proposal to Mexico to attack U.S. mentions alliance with Japan; increases suspicion of Japanese in borderlands

1920-1941

Significant Japanese migration to Baja California for fishing & agriculture

World War II Era

Dec 7, 1941

Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, Philippines, Guam, and other Pacific locations; Roosevelt only mentions "American island of Oahu" in Infamy Speech; U.S. enters WWII

Dec 8, 1941

Mexico breaks diplomatic ties with Japan

Feb 19, 1942

Executive Order 9066 - Authorizes internment of 120,000+ Japanese Americans, including U.S. citizens; property confiscated; families separated

Early 1942

Mexican raids & internment of Japanese (Juárez & Mexico City); forced relocation of Japanese from borders & coasts to interior of country

Jan 1942

Comité Japonés de Ayuda Mutua formed to assist Japanese in Mexico

1942-1964

Bracero Program - U.S. recruits Mexican laborers to replace interned Japanese farmworkers and fill war labor needs; over 4 million Mexican workers enter U.S.

Apr-Dec 1942

Villa Aldama forced labor camp for Japanese from Ciudad Juárez

Aug 1942

Hacienda de Temixco established as Japanese community settlement

1942-1945

Mexico City & Guadalajara concentration of Japanese population

Aug 1945

Focus on Denzo Jesus Kihara

Denzo Kihara emigrated from Kyushu, Japan to Mexico in the early 20th century, settling in Ciudad Juárez along the Mexico-U.S. border. His migration occurred during a pivotal period when U.S. anti-Asian legislation redirected Japanese immigration toward Latin America. Unlike Japanese Americans who were interned in prison-like camps, Japanese Mexicans like Kihara experienced a different form of wartime control. During WWII, Kihara was removed from the border region to the Villa Aldama labor camp and later to Mexico City. His experience demonstrates how Japanese immigrants navigated the complex political landscape between Mexico, Japan, and the United States during this turbulent period, managing to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to increasingly restrictive policies.