In January, 1972, the California State Department of Parks and Recreation acknowledged Manzanar as State Historical Landmark No. 850. Manzanar was a former World War II Concentration Camp for some 10,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast of the United States.

The Committee most responsible for this state action was the Manzanar Committee. Their primary function during the past few years has been to sponsor annual pilgrimages to Manzanar, about 225 miles north of Los Angeles on Highway 395, and to conduct educational programs and presentations to interested community and educational organizations regarding this internment experience.

Committee members are available for presentation and film showings. For further information, contact

THE MANZANAR COMMITTEE
1566 Curran Street
Los Angeles, California 90026
(213) 662-5102
SELF-GUIDED TOURS OF MANZANAR
Prepared by the Manzanar Committee

Although Manzanar was abandoned in December of 1945, the square mile where the camp once stood still contains many traces of what once stood there. The tours described in this guide can all be walked in one hour or less, but they will allow you to find some reminder of the history of Manzanar.

GETTING THERE
Manzanar is located in the Owens Valley, 11 miles north of Lone Pine on U.S. Highway 395. The stone houses that mark the old main gate (and where the plaque marking the site as a California state historical landmark number 850 is located) are just off the highway. Exactly one mile north on the left side of the highway is a cattle guard that marks the entrance to a dirt road that provides access to the Manzanar cemetery—the focus of the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage. See the map on the next page.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
There are two starting points for the tours: the stone houses next to U.S. 395, and the cemetery monument. The map on the next page locates the tours within the general layout of Manzanar, and in relation to the starting points. Select the tour that you would like to take, drive to that starting point... and you're all set.

Each tour is intended to be self-contained, but if you have the time (and gas), you might want to combine two or more. A suggestion: combining Tour 1 with Tour 4 or 5 can make for a nice one-mile walk through Manzanar.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER
Driving on the old camp streets is NOT recommended; they are in terrible shape for the most part, making it all too easy to get stuck.

Wear good, comfortable walking shoes. Manzanar is a big place (one square mile), and the ground is soft and sandy. There is no water, so be sure to bring your own.

We trust that you will observe the visitor's Golden rule:
Take only pictures, and leave only footprints.

TOUR 1
ADMINISTRATION AREA
This was "Hakujin country," where W.R.A. officials and employees had their offices and quarters.

The tour starts at the Military Police stone house (A). This was the control point that anyone entering or leaving Manzanar had to clear. This structure (and the stone house behind it) were erected in 1942 by Mr. Ryozo Kaddo, an Issei stonemason who later constructed the Manzanar cemetery monument. His intention was to construct something substantial enough so that it would mark the presence of the camp long after the camp itself was gone. The Manzanar plague was cemented in place by Mr. Kaddo in 1973, during the Fourth Manzanar Pilgrimage.

The wooden uprights that you pass as you pull off the highway once carried a carved sign, announcing the "Manzanar War Relocation Center." Moving on, the area between the stone houses (B) provided space for visitor parking, and also an area for people leaving camp to gather for their final clearance. The other stone house (C) was occupied by the camp internal security police—it was the inner checkpoint.

The cement slab just beyond and to the right of the police stone house (D) was the foundation for the Manzanar police station. It was in front of this location, on December 6, 1942, that the Manzanar Riot reached its bloody climax when M.P.'s fired on a crowd massed before the station; two men died as a result of disturbances set off by the arrest of Harry Ueno and two others by the camp administration for allegedly beating up Fred Tayaama, a JACL official. Ueno, who had raised the ire of camp officials by attempting to organize a kitchen workers union (and investigating the sale of camp food supplies on the black market), was being held inside the police station at the time the shootings took place.

The street that you are looking up is "1st Street," and it runs all the way to the other side of the camp. It marked the boundary between the evacuee and administrative parts of the camp.

Walking up 1st Street, one can find the walkway separator (E) that marks the entrance to the administration building, and the stone borders of the camp post office (F). Turn left at the intersection, and you can find your way to the stone and cement traffic circle center (G), once planted with cacti and bearing the names of the people who built it. Visible from here, and only a short distance away, are the patio walls of the caucasian recreation club (H). This substantial structure, built for the pleasure of the W.R.A. staff, is in stark contrast to the tarpaper-covered barracks that were living quarters for the Japanese American evacuees. It is mute testimony to the caste system that existed in all the W.R.A. camps from beginning to end.
The tour starts with the cemetery itself—specifically, with its most prominent feature, the monument erected in 1943 under the supervision of Mr. Ryozo Kaddo, the laisei stonemason who had earlier built the stone houses that stand at the main gate (A). The characters on the face of the shaft read "I Rei To" ("Soul consoling tower" or "Tower of memory").

The small stone for Jerry Ogata (B) is a recent replacement for a concrete marker of the same size that was battered and lying on its side when the Manzanar pilgrimages began in 1969. Ogata died, when he was only three months old, in 1943. The battered marker further on (C) has special significance; it marks the first burial at Manzanar.

The fence around the cemetery was largely rebuilt during the 1977 and 1978 Manzanar pilgrimages.

Moving out, toward the camp itself, you will find a remaining section of an aqueduct (D) that was built to supply water to garden plots cultivated within the camp.

Follow the road to your right, and you will come upon the foundation blocks for watch tower four (E). Manzanar had eight such watch towers, one on each corner of the camp, and one (such as tower four) mid-way on each side. Armed Military Police watched the camp from these towers 24-hours a day.

Guiding on the south end of the cemetery, a short walk will bring you to the pits where most of Manzanar's cups, plates, and bowls ended up (F). The Manzanar mess halls were equipped with Army-issue crockery, and when the camp shut down, it was disposed of by heaping it into this pit and crushing it under the weight of a heavy vehicle. Each year, erosion exposes a new layer of shards.

The tour begins in front of the cemetery monument. Pass through the gate in the barbed wire fence, continue until you encounter the remains of paved street ("I Street"). Follow this street, heading left until you encounter an intersection. Then head off diagonally as shown. You are heading into the grounds of the Manzanar Hospital, and should easily encounter the slab of the Laundry (A). This spot looks down over the area where the wards were located. Walk down through the ward area, and after passing through the area where the hospital administration complex was located, you will reach another street.

Heading to your right you will soon come to another intersection, where the hospital garden (B) was located. The garden pond is still there, although clogged with brush. Head left, down the street you have come to, and you will pass the site of the Children's Village (C). This was an orphanage, run under the supervision of the Maryknoll Order—the only such institution in any of the ten War Relocation Authority camps.

The Children's Village was built in one of the four firebreaks that cut through the camp, and which were intended to contain fires, should any breakouts in the highly flammable barracks in which evacuees lived. This firebreak was the largest, and provided natural space for baseball games, concerts, film shows, garden projects, as well as space for an orphanage. It remains the firebreak for many who were in Manzanar.

Turn left at the next street and you will encounter a large, upright stone at the corner of Block 34 (D). According to one story, Manzanar-grown produce was exhibited here.

Further on, near the end of the street, you will find the remains of a garden (E). It is difficult to realize, especially in view of the overgrown nature of the blocks that you are now standing in—that in 1942 the camp site was largely bare. Gardens such as this one, plus the tree planting that has produced much of the present vegetation, were the work of the people in camp. It was their effort to make habitable an environment that—for all they knew—might have become their home for the rest of their lives.

The easiest way to return to the cemetery is to retrace your steps back to the firebreak, and head back up. The cemetery monument will be in plain view.
For J/ou street crossed over before reaching the Dojo down the road. You may wish to look right there is a bare patch of ground (A) was on the site, the Bare Slab, and the general appearance of the site, which had few trees. As you walk down this street, you will be passing some representative buildings: men's latrine, women's latrine, laundry, and ironing rooms. The water faucets that were the water supply for individual barrack buildings may also be found. Their growth has radically changed the appearance of the site, which was not as attractive as it is now. As you walk down this street, you will be passing some representative buildings: men's latrine, women's latrine, laundry, and ironing rooms. The water faucets that were the water supply for individual barrack buildings may also be found. Their growth has radically changed the appearance of the site, which had few trees. It may seem hard to imagine, but this bare patch of ground (A) was once the site for an attractive park, "Merritt Park," named after the camp director, Ralph Merritt, had an artificial stream with an attractive wooden bridge across it. The bridge appears in a number of pictures in Manzanar High School yearbooks. Just beyond the intersection you have reached by now is the first garden project at Manzanar (B), built in August, 1942. Continue down the street for two blocks, and you will find the foundation of the Manzanar Judo Dojo (C). The care taken in building the Dojo can be judged by its placement (the trees were here before the war), and the general layout. From here, you have a clear view of the auditorium building--now used by Inyo County as a garage--with the Inyo Mountains rising in the background. The street you crossed over before reaching the Judo Dojo site makes for a convenient way back to your starting point.

Tour 5

South-West Corner Area

It may take a little walking to get here, but there are some interesting things to see in this area.

Starting from the cemetery monument, go through the gate in the barbed wire fence and turn right at the street you encounter. Keep track of the intersections as you walk past them; you will pass four of them as you head south, toward Bairs Creek.

The last two blocks (6 and 12) that you would pass before reaching the creek contain good examples of the garden projects that were so characteristic of camp life. The Block 12 garden (A) is a good example of a water garden. The Block 6 garden will be a little harder to find (B), due to the total deterioration of the roads that formed this corner of the block, but it is representative of the rock gardens that also were part of the efforts made by people in camp to beautify what had been nothing but bare sandy soil and ugly tar paper barrack walls.

Now, backtrack to the street next to the Block 12 garden. Head down this street, and turn right at the first intersection you come to. Before going much further, head into Block 5 for a short distance. You should find a unique legacy of the tree-planting that was done in Manzanar by the people confined there: the Block 5 ironing room slab, with full-grown trees forming walls around it on three sides (C). The saplings planted during the war managed to survive the building removal and demolition that took place after the camp closed down.

Continue on down the street you were on, and you will reach the general area of the Manzanar guayule project (D). The wartime experiment in obtaining natural rubber from the guayule bush never got past the laboratory stage, due to the availability of synthetic rubber from oil, but the feasibility of the idea was demonstrated here, by Japanese Americans.

Go a little further, and you will reach Bairs Creek. This part of the creek was a picnic ground (E). It was a nice, secluded area, and no clearance from the powers-that-be was needed to get to it. You may be able to spot the concrete steps that were made to make access to the creek bed easier.

You may wish to head back now, but if you have a little time and are not afraid to rough it a little bit, find a good spot to cross the creek bed. On the other side is the Manzanar chicken ranch (F), surprisingly well preserved, down to the BBQ pit.
This 600,000 gallon reservoir, built by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1942, provided Manzanar's water supply. Runoff from Shepards Creek still fills it each Spring.

Before setting off from your parking place beside the road, take a moment to look back at Manzanar, and the rest of Owens Valley. It is an impressive view.

As you head around the reservoir, note the cement and stone work. This was done, in February and March, 1943, by the "Emergency Crew", a general construction crew of evacuees. One of these workers, Mr. E. S. Muroka, who attended the 1980 Manzanar Pilgrimage, left his name, camp address, and the date behind (A).

As we go further, you will see a large rock with a coat of cement on it (B). Written on the cement are the characters for "heiw" (peace). This was no doubt a monument to someone's hope for better times.

The small slab at the point where the intake channel enters the reservoir (C) was the foundation for the chlorine shed.

Part of the Emergency Crew's work was cement work around the settling basin. Apparently some of the crew were members of, or sympathizers with, the "Black Dragons", a group of militantly pro-Japan Kibei's who contributed their share to the turmoil in Manzanar that finally led to the riot of December 6, 1942. In bold characters on the cement work one can read, "Long live the Great Japanese Empire-Manzanar Black Dragon Association Headquartes," and "Knock over England and America" ("Ei-Bel", literally "Br.-Amer.", a contraction that only a fairly well-educated person would be likely to use). These inscriptions are on the north section of the settling basin wall (D).

A little further on, other inscriptions, both in English and Japanese, may be found on the Shepards Creek diversion channel cement work (E). But watch your step around there—it's a long fall to the bottom.

Work your way around the settling basin, and you will find, on the north side of the reservoir, a flat shelf where the Emergency Crew left its name in pebbles set into the cement (F). Nearby is another inscription, in Japanese, marking the year of Shōwa—the reign name of Emperor Hirohito.

The best return route is to retrace your steps. It is a bit of a hike trying to get past the reservoir's discharge channel.
Guard Towers

Just outside the perimeter fence that surrounded Manzanar stood eight guard towers—one at each corner of the camp, and four positioned at points midway between the corner towers. Each tower stood 50 feet tall; they were topped by an enclosed guard station, with a searchlight mounted on the roof.

These towers were the main surveillance points from which armed U.S. Army Military Police kept an eye on the Manzanar population. The M.P.'s also manned the stone house at the main gate that was closest to the highway—anyone entering or leaving Manzanar had to clear this checkpoint.

The M.P. detachment at Manzanar was equipped, in 1942, with 21 rifles, 89 shotguns, 6 machine guns, and 21 submachine guns. The M.P.'s were authorized to shoot to kill if anyone attempted to break through the fence.

Crockery Pits

Just above the Manzanar cemetery are the pits where the plates, dishes, bowls, and cups used in Manzanar's three dozen mess halls were disposed of. War Department-issue plates and bowls were supplied to the camp for use in the mess halls, creating a large inventory of surplus crockery when the camp was closed. Rather than dump these items on the civilian market, the War Relocation Authority buried them and ran a truck over the burial site to destroy the whole lot. Over the years the soil covering the pits has eroded, and a fresh layer of shards is usually exposed every year.

Tours 7 & 8

Tour 7 - Start from in front of the monument and walk east until you reach "I" Street. Turn left and after crossing Seventh Street cut across the hospital area. Watch for the large floor slab of the laundry, the small cement pads for the wards, the reddish concrete slab bench and the fish pond which is in the southeast corner. Next, go south on "H" Street a short distance and turn left on Seventh Street. Watch for the small cement pads on your right which remain from the Children's Village. Turn right at the first street, which is a long block distance. Turn right on Sixth Street and watch for the Block 22 Garden on your left. Now, retrace your steps back to the north side of the firebreak and turn right on "F" Street. When you see the large upright rock at "F" and Eighth, turn left. The large park will be on your right. Then continue on to "H" Street and turn right. At the end of the block is the Block 34 Garden. Return to monument.

Tour 8 - Start from in front of the monument and walk south on "I" Street. Just after the fourth intersection you can see the Block 12 Garden and nearby down Third Street is another small pond. Go south on "I" Street one more block to see the Block 6 Garden. You can return by walking back towards the north and the easily visible monument.