

# The 1980s

1981 "Another Step Toward Reparations and Justice" 1982 "After 40 years, A Time to Remember, A Time to Bear Witness" 1983 "The Gardens of Manzanar" 1984 "A Pilgrimage for Peace," speakers: Warren Furutani and Karl Yoneda 1985 "Justice Delayed is Justice Denied," in honor of Coram Nobis plaintiffs; photographer Ansel Adams memorialized; plaque dedicated honoring designation of Manzanar as a National Historic Landmark 1986 "A Celebration: Closing the Circle," Dr. Peter Irons of Coram Nobis cases, Hon. Mervyn Dymally, 31<sup>st</sup> Congressional Dist. honored 1987 "Honor the U. S. Constitution," Warren Furutani, keynote speaker 1988 Honoring Sue Kunitomi Embrey, Wilbur Sato; spoken words by Hannah Tomiko Holmes 1989 Dedicated to Memory of Elaine Black Yoneda, speaker: Dr. Alexander Sexton, UCLA



Warren and Sue at the 1985 Pilgrimage with the National Historic Landmark certification from the government. This was recognition on a national level.

## Manzanar Goes National

The Manzanar Committee's goal of heightening the profile of the Camp to preserve it and also to bring the Internment into the mainstream consciousness took another step forward in 1985 with the designation of the site as a National Historic Landmark.

It was national recognition (in effect, acknowledgement) of the historic nature, albeit negative, of the Camp and the Internment that spawned it.

Embrey, now sole chair of the Manzanar Committee, was becoming increasingly adept at advancing the cause of civil rights and liberties by portraying it through the lens of the Internment. Through these battles, Embrey's close friend Rose Ochi, a civil rights lawyer and fellow former internee (from Rohwer), played an increasingly prominent role as legal advisor.

## Pilgrimage and Redress

by Dr. Arthur Hansen

(excerpts from 2008 Manzanar Pilgrimage keynote address)

Had it not been for the Manzanar Committee, the Manzanar Pilgrimage, and their moving spirit, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, the redress movement, while it no doubt would have eventually materialized, almost certainly would have been substantially delayed and assumed a quite different coloration and character than it did. Let me explain.

When the first Manzanar Pilgrimage was held in 1969, it was a very loosely organized event that involved some 150-250 pilgrims. Aside from setting a precedent for future pilgrimages to Manzanar (and to other sites...), it accomplished two related objectives. It forced those involved in the actual pilgrimage both to remember their personal and community past and to confront their painful memories of discrimination and incarceration, which amounted, in effect, to taking one giant step toward seeking justice (that is, redress)...

By the time of the 1972 Pilgrimage, the Manzanar Committee had been formed and it added a sharper focus to the occasion while broadening its concern from the process of personal and community therapy ... to that of linking up the events associated with what Japanese American had experienced ... with what was currently going on in American society...

These two roles of the Manzanar Pilgrimage, as galvanized by the Committee—remembering the harsh past ... and drawing upon this memory to confront present injustices—have continued right up through [today]... This is the legacy of the Manzanar Pilgrimage and the Manzanar Committee...

We need, always, to keep in mind what a pilgrimage is. I have found one definition for a pilgrimage, by Benedictine monastic Macrina Wiederkehr, which I feel encapsulates its essence as applied to the present context:

"A pilgrimage is a ritual journey with a hallowed purpose. Every step along the way has meaning. The pilgrim knows that life-giving challenges will emerge. A pilgrimage is not a vacation; it is a transformational journey during which significant change takes place. New insights are given. Deeper understanding is attained. New and old places in the heart are visited. Blessings are received and healing takes places. On return from the pilgrimage, life is seen with different eyes. Nothing will ever be quite the same again."

This was the great gift of the Manzanar Pilgrimage to the redress movement. It forced Japanese Americans to view their lives—past, present, and future—with different eyes, and it gave them the desire and the strength to move mountains. The Manzanar Pilgrimage endowed the Japanese Americans with a will toward righteousness and pointed [them] in the direction of ways to achieve it.



## A Decade of 'Building'

As promised in the theme for the Pilgrimage in 1980, the next decade would be one of building. The Pilgrimage had become established and was proving an increasingly important platform to speak out on the issues of the day.

The designation of the Camp as a National Historic Landmark created a national stage. Two issues in particular touched close to the heart of the Japanese American community--the *coram nobis* appeal in the case of Korematsu vs. the United States. In 1984, Korematsu won, and his conviction in the 1940s for evading the Internment was overturned.

The Korematsu case had been a long-supported cause at the Pilgrimages.

Then there was Redress, which became a reality in 1988, when Pres. Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 into law, apologizing for the Internment. In one sense, it was finally over.