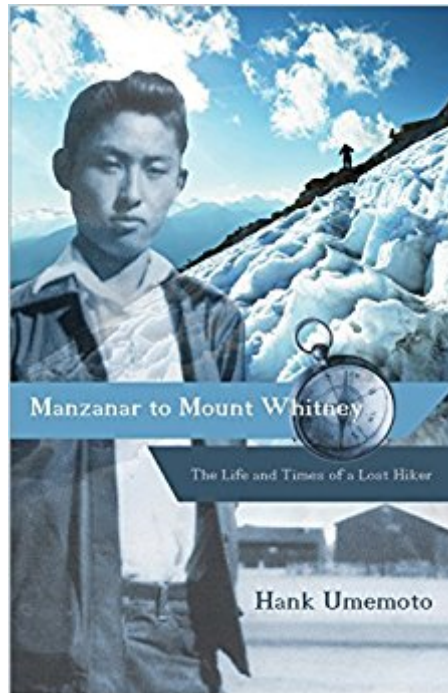




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Manzanar To Mount Whitney: The Life And Times Of A Lost Hiker



Synopsis

In 1942, fourteen-year-old Hank Umemoto gazed out a barrack window at Manzanar Internment Camp, saw the silhouette of Mount Whitney against an indigo sky, and vowed that one day he would climb to the top. Fifty-seven years and a lifetime of stories later, at the age of seventy-one, he reached the summit. Part memoir and part hiker's diary, *Manzanar to Mount Whitney* gives an intimate, rollicking account of Japanese American life in California before and after World War II. As he wanders through the mountains of California's Inland Empire, Umemoto recalls pieces of his childhood on a grape vineyard in the Sacramento Valley, his time at Manzanar, where beauty and hope were maintained despite the odds, and his later career as proprietor of a printing firm, all with grace, honesty, and unfailing humor. And all along, the peak of Mount Whitney casts its shadow, a symbol of freedom, beauty, and resilience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A Nisei's story of being confined in an internment camp during World War II and hardscrabble years afterward, interspersed with a diary of high-altitude hiking."--Kirkus Reviews "An entertaining romp...He is the closest writer in Niseidom to write like Charles Bukowski."--Rafu Shimpo "Equal parts memoir and hiking diary, the book's Owens Valley landscapes give way to tales about Umemoto's many lives: as janitor, dishwasher, skid row denizen, soldier, jeweler, and writer." --Los Angeles Magazine "With both grace and humor, Hank Umemoto tells stories of resilience, adventure, and courage. His engaging memoir is a welcome addition to the literature of the Japanese American experience." --Maggie Wittenburg, executive director, Manzanar History

Association

Hank Umemoto was born in 1928 to immigrant grape farmers in Florin, a rural community near Sacramento, California. After his release from camp, he moved to Los Angeles, where he spent the first three and a half years living on skid row. After finishing high school, he worked to support himself and his mother while attending Los Angeles City College. During the Korean War, he served overseas in the army with the 38th Military Intelligence Service. After his discharge, he attended Cal State Los Angeles using funds from the GI Bill, then married, raised a family, and worked in a variety of trades and businesses. His jobs included gardener, owner of a jewelry store, owner of a mail-order business, and insurance agent with Cal Western Life. He eventually started a print shop and remained in the printing business for thirty-two years, until his retirement in his mid-seventies. He now writes for enjoyment during his sunset years.

This book was just ok. I really enjoyed the stories of his hiking, as I've hiked in a lot of the same areas, but the book was definitely in need of better editing. The stories were interesting, but the jumping around wasn't finessed enough, and got distracting. There were also random details that didn't need to be included and that weren't followed through with (his friends wanting him to go visit geishas with them, etc.) that just distracted from the theme. All in all, I'm glad I read it, but wish it had more experienced editing.

The author's ability to weave his memories in and out while on his various hiking excursions is quite unique. How many times have we experienced similar situation where certain events will recall past events; (good and bad). Past events (good or bad) shape our character; and in this book, it is quite obvious the events leading to, during and after WWII have shaped the authors character to never give up. Good book.

After having climbed Whitney twice recently with each of my two daughters, I have an emotional tie to Whitney. This man's story is also an emotional testament to the power of this mountain.

I really enjoyed reading this book. I was surprised that he made so many mistakes in life and in hiking that he recovered from, but I give him props for trying! I liked the way he told his stories.

Thank you

Conquering a climb to the top of Mt. Whitney and his interesting comparisons to his struggles through life is a very satisfying story.

Excellent

Very inspiring. It's amazing that someone who went through so much in his youth would grow into a man with great dignity.

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