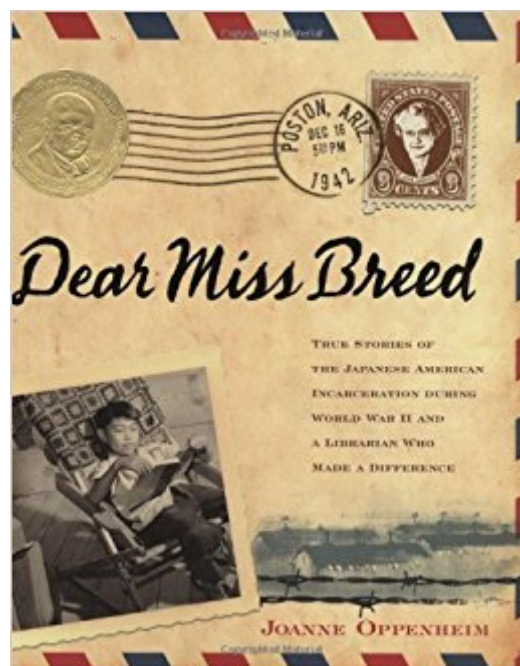


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Dear Miss Breed: True Stories Of The Japanese American Incarceration During World War II And A Librarian Who Made A Difference



Synopsis

A chronicle of the incredible correspondence between California librarian Clara Breed and young Japanese American internees during World War II. In the early 1940's, Clara Breed was the children's librarian at the San Diego Public Library. But she was also friend to dozens of Japanese American children and teens when war broke out in December of 1941. The story of what happened to these American citizens is movingly told through letters that her young friends wrote to Miss Breed during their internment. This remarkable librarian and humanitarian served as a lifeline to these imprisoned young people, and was brave enough to speak out against a shameful chapter in American history.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up
Through letters and recollections, Oppenheim relates the story of a group of young people who were interned during World War II. Breed had come to know many Japanese Americans through her work as the children's librarian at the San Diego Public Library. When the young people were sent to camps in 1942, she began sending letters and care packages of books, candy, and other treats to her children. She also wrote articles for Library Journal and The Horn Book that articulated their plight. In return, the recipients expressed their gratitude in letters. While

their lives were marked by deprivation and uncertainty, their letters reveal an unquenchable optimism. Their story, along with that of Miss Breed, is both remarkable and inspiring, and Oppenheim has done a fine job of assembling these poignant eyewitness accounts. Unfortunately, she muddles her assessment, ladling on a variety of unnecessary details and her own anecdotal experiences. There's a lack of clarity and focus, and though this is a welcome addition to this topic, its appeal will be limited to those familiar with it. Readers seeking a concise, overall perspective would fare better with Michael L. Coopers *Fighting for Honor: Japanese Americans and World War II* (2000) and *Remembering Manzanar: Life In a Japanese Relocation Camp* (2002, both Clarion).
—Marilyn Taniguchi, Beverly Hills Public Library, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review Gr. 7-10. Like Michael O. Tunnell's *The Children of Topaz* (1996), this passionately written history bears witness to the World War II injustices endured by Japanese Americans, from a vantage point of particular relevance to young people. In a poignant introduction, seasoned children's writer Oppenheim explains how her hunt for a former classmate, a Japanese American, serendipitously led her to an Internet profile of San Diego children's librarian Clara Breed, and to a collection of letters written to Breed by her incarcerated Japanese patrons--grateful, illuminating responses to Breed's faithful missives and care packages containing books and other gifts. Although the letters (and interviews with their grown-up authors) form the narrative's bedrock, Oppenheim weaves them into a broader account, amplified by photos, archival materials (including a startlingly racist cartoon by Dr. Seuss), and moving quotations from the later reparation hearings: "I was just 10 years old when I became a 'squint-eyed yellow-bellied Jap.'" Along with the basic facts, Oppenheim urges readers to critically interpret primary sources and identify "governmental doublespeak

This book describes in detail the horrors Japanese American citizens encountered after the bombing of Pearl Harbor simply because they were of Japanese ancestry. The letters to Miss Breed from the interned Japanese children, who had known her through the library, and her many acts of kindness towards them while they were in the concentration camps, is very inspiring and heartbreaking. This book is a must read for persons who want to have a better understanding of the injustices faced by innocent Japanese American citizens and how one brave woman made a difference in the lives of many children.

Joanne Oppenheim has created a masterpiece of writing and research. This book should be a must-have for anyone interested in this time period in history, social studies, and just plain human drama and courage. I really love the way she weaves together personal stories and regional and national events. It is a great way to show how great events have a personal side which is rich and complex, not the abbreviated, often cartoon-slogan way we get history in school. This is not a dis against the "nutshell" version of history that must be done in order to get through all of it in a school year, but it is vital that resources like this survive so that the more detailed realities will be known and remembered. Thank you Joanne. This is a great book and great writing.

I absolutely loved this book. Miss Breed was an incredible woman and an inspiration in a time of great injustice. She is someone I would like to have known personally. I could not put this book down until I had read it from cover to cover, and I will read it again. Kudos to Joanne Oppenheimer for telling Miss Breed's story.

Having read this book, from our local library before, I was so enthralled with the story that I bought two copies, one to keep to reread and the second to give to a man, who at 8 years old, went through the same experience as these children did. I am recording his experiences, and those of his siblings and I'm sure that "Dear Miss Breed" will help revive some of the experiences, both good and bad. This book is too good not to share with others.

My wife and I both loved the book. It is a wonderful book and Joanne Oppenheim is an outstanding writer. The book should be read by every adult in this country - especially the people that run this country. There are so many times that we have fallen far from the principles upon which this country was established. The book describes our treatment of the Japanese Americans during the second World War. There are many other similar examples: the practice of slavery, the way we destroyed the indigenous people that were here first, the prejudice against Jews and Blacks...the examples go on and on...

I'm in the process of reading this & am loving the stories, letters, pictures, so much so that I gave the book as a gift to someone who just graduated from her Master's to be a librarian.

It was interesting to read. Many of our parents who went through this bleak time do not like to talk about this time. It was a terrible time and often broke up families. I know I wouldn't be alive as I am

due to the camps as my mother and father would not have associated if it were not for the camps.

Love this book. I use in the classroom often when teaching about the Japanese internment camps.

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