Episode 2: Voices In The Hall

Lesson Title: Colorado's Complicated Response to the Wartime Incarceration of Japanese Americans

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Episode Description:

Voices in the Hall explores how diverse Coloradans fought for representation, civic participation and expanded civil rights across multiple generations. Connecting early struggles for inclusion with modern movements that reshaped Colorado's political and social landscape through interviews with disability advocates, supported by accessibility subject matter experts, illuminating how Colorado became a focal point of disability justice.

Episode Inquiry Questions:

1. What strategies have people and communities used to influence change in Colorado? What were the outcomes of civic engagement?
2. Why is it important that diverse voices are heard by communities, as well as, local and state government officials?
3. Why is it important for those who are most impacted by an issue to be involved in creating solutions?

Lesson Description:

This lesson focuses on the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans in Colorado. Colorado's complicated response to this grave injustice is highlighted in this lesson through Governor Ralph Carr's opposition to Executive Order 9066 and pitted against contemporary political cartoons supporting incarceration used by The Denver Post. The lesson uses primary sources and a variety of teaching techniques to focus student inquiry as background instances in which Coloradans have struggled over and fought for justice.

Grade Level/Time Needed:

High School/ 90 Minutes

Lesson Inquiry Question:

1. What was Colorado's response to the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans?

Supporting Questions:

1. How did Colorado Governor Ralph Carr defend the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor?
2. How did political satire shape public distrust of Japanese Americans during World War II?
3. How did Colorado Governor Ralph Carr's position on the Constitutional rights of Japanese Americans contrast with anti-Japanese nativism in Colorado?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Contrast the legal and civic principles expressed in Governor Carr's radio addresses with the visual arguments presented through the *Denver Post* political cartoons.
2. Analyze how wartime fear and political satire weaponized xenophobia, altering public perceptions of Japanese American citizenship and loyalty.
3. Evaluate the tension between national security policies and constitutional protections by synthesizing Governor Carr's arguments as background preparation for broader framework evaluations of landmark judicial challenges such as *Korematsu v. United States*.

Background Knowledge / Contextual Paragraph for Teachers:

Following the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, wartime panic and deeply ingrained xenophobia rapidly reshaped American definitions of loyalty and citizenship. This hostility was aggressively fueled by popular media, where political cartoonists and journalists used vicious anti-Japanese satire and

propaganda to depict Japanese Americans as a dangerous "Fifth Column" loyal only to the Japanese Emperor.

Amidst this climate of heightened fear, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. This order authorized the military to exclude any person from designated coastal zones, laying the groundwork for the forced removal and mass incarceration of approximately 120,000 individuals of Japanese descent—nearly two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens.
While most Western governors vehemently refused to accept these displaced individuals unless they were kept under strict military guard, Colorado Governor Ralph Carr took a unique, principled stand rooted in the U.S. Constitution. Carr publicly championed the civil rights of Japanese Americans, famously reminding citizens that *"they are as loyal to American institutions as you and I."* This defense triggered a massive political backlash that ultimately cost Carr his 1942 U.S. Senate bid.

To accommodate the federal mandate, Colorado became home to the Granada Relocation Center (Camp Amache) in August 1942. Holding a peak population of 7,567 incarcerees, Amache briefly became the tenth-largest city in Colorado. Behind barbed wire, residents endured extreme weather in uninsulated, tar-paper barracks while simultaneously building a community complete with schools, a newspaper, and farms, until Public Proclamation No. 21 finally paved the way for the camp's closure in late 1945.

Building Background Knowledge for the Student

- Use the following speech to activate students' prior knowledge related to the attack by the Empire of Japan on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.
- Prompt: Watch the video recording of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's A Day Which Will Live in Infamy", President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Dec. 8, 1941) speech. Stop the audio/recording immediately after Roosevelt says *"...a date which will live in infamy."* Ask students:
    - What event is Roosevelt talking about?
    - What does the word "infamy" mean?

- What might have been the range of emotions felt by those listening to this speech?

- Continue building student background knowledge by using the following cartoon. This cartoon was created by children's cartoonist - Dr. Seuss - as a piece of anti-Japanese American propaganda and was released just days prior to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. **NOTE:** This cartoon is best used through the slow reveal strategy. To use a slow reveal, divide the cartoon into segments. First, show students the top portion of the cartoon and ask: "What is the signal from home?" Next, reveal the states to highlight - "where?" Then, reveal the rest of the cartoon to and ask students what they notice about the cartoon.



Image: Cartoon; Title: "Waiting for the Signal from Home" Dr. Seuss (Feb. 13, 1942). Source: Wikimedia Commons.

NOTE (Review & Discuss with Students PRIOR to engaging in further materials): J-- is an English abbreviation for the word Japanese. Today, the use of this word is seen as an ethnic slur. The controversy associated with this word today was the direct result of its use in propaganda and rhetoric during World War II. As you view materials using this word please be aware of how the use of this word is highly offensive.

Lesson Sources:

Source 1


Image: Cartoon; Title: "Unity," The Denver Post, (Dec. 10, 1941).

NOTE: This cartoon was published just days after the December 7 attack on Pearl Harbor.

Source 2

Excerpt: Radio Address
Governor Ralph L. Carr (Dec. 10, 1941)
"...As governor of Colorado, I want to express my pride in the people of this state for the manner in which they have received the news of the happenings in the Pacific. Not by hysterical expressions nor by panic-stricken public demonstrations… but quietly, calmly, and as intelligent citizens…. And it is my urgent request that no person may say or do anything which might cause embarrassment to some individual who is as truly American by reason of birth or adoption of this country and his unselfish patriotism as you and I…Let us remember that America is the great melting pot of the modern civilized world. From every nation of the globe people have come to the United States who sought to live as free men here under our plan of government. We cannot test the degree of a man's affection for his fellows or his devotion to his country by the birthplace of his grandfathers… "

Source 3



Image: Cartoon; Title: "The Spirit of '42," The Denver Post, (Jan. 18, 1942).

Source 4



Image: Cartoon; Title: "And We Don't Mean Maybe," The Denver Post, (Feb. 18, 1942).

NOTE: This cartoon highlights the opposition to allowing Japanese Americans to be forcibly relocated to Colorado out of fear that Japanese labor would compete with existing labor.

Source 5

Title: "Executive Order 9066"

President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Feb. 19, 1942)

Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U.S.C., Title 50, Sec. 104);

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Attorney General under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, and shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclamations in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area hereinabove authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services. This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8972, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigation of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas here under.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House,
February 19, 1942.

Source 6

Excerpt: Radio Address
Governor Ralph L. Carr (Feb. 28, 1942)

> *"...They are as loyal to American institutions as you and I. Many of them have been born here–are American citizens, with no connection or feeling of loyalty toward the customs and philosophies of Italy, Germany and Japan. ... I am not talking on behalf of Japanese, of Italians, or of Germans as such when I say this. I am talking to ... all American people whether their status be white,*

brown or black and regardless of the birthplaces of their grandfathers when I say that if a majority may deprive a minority of its freedom, contrary to the terms of the Constitution today, then you as a minority may be subjected to the same ill-will of the majority tomorrow…"

Source 7



Image: Cartoon; Title: "Uncle Softheart - I Wonder if They Are Real Angels?" The Denver Post, (March 1, 1942).
NOTE: The reference to Enemy Aliens falls under President John Adams Enemy Alien Act of 1798. This cartoon highlights German, Italian, and Japanese aliens who were not citizens of the United States.

Source 8

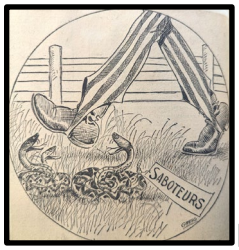


Image: Cartoon; Title: "Watch Your Step, Uncle - The Grass is Full of Them!" The Denver Post, (July 28, 1942).
NOTE: Protection against sabotage and espionage were among the chief rationales for Executive Order 9066 and the incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Source 9



Image: Cartoon; Title: "Good News from Home," The Denver Post, (April 22, 1943).

NOTE: This cartoon contributed to propaganda that Japanese Americans forced into incarceration camps were overfed. This was especially timely since news of the harsh and cruel treatment of American soldiers kept prisoners of war by the Empire of Japan had reached Colorado by 1943. The treatment of U.S. soldiers is highlighted by the newspaper and television footage used in the cartoon.

Source 10



Image: Cartoon; Title: “We’ve Got to Know,” The Denver Post, (Oct. 1, 1944).

NOTE: This cartoon highlights the underlying belief that Japanese Americans were involved in the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, and that their subsequent incarceration was justified. This cartoon appeared only a few weeks prior to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Korematsu v. U.S.

Source 11

“A Day Which Will Live in Infamy” Address to Congress on December 8, 1941, asking for a Declaration of War Between the United States and Japan.

Lesson Materials Needed:

1. Reproducible Handouts
2. Use the Political Cartoon Analysis Sheet to direct student inquiry as needed.
3. Assessment Success Criteria

Lesson Instruction:

Strategy A: The "Parallel Timeline" Analysis

Instead of showing all quotes or cartoons at once, have students evaluate them in strict chronological order. This lets students feel the rapid shift in public pressure between the Pearl Harbor attack (December 7, 1941) and the signing of Executive Order 9066 (February 19, 1942).

Have students chart the timeline side-by-side:

- **December 10, 1941:** Governor Carr delivers a calm radio address stating, "We cannot test the degree of a man's affection for his fellows or his devotion to his country by the birthplace of his grandfathers...".
- **December 10, 1941 (Same Day):** *The Denver Post* publishes the cartoon "Unity" demanding fierce, uncritical wartime unity following the attack on Hawaii.
- **January 18, 1942:** *The Denver Post* prints "The Spirit of '42," depicting three generations ("Grandpappy," "Daddy," and "Son") armed with clubs and passionately demanding their "quota" to attack Japanese Americans.
- **February 13, 1942:** Dr. Seuss publishes "Waiting for the Signal From Home," utilizing harmful stereotypes to falsely depict Japanese Americans along the West Coast as a coordinated "Fifth Column" hoarding explosives.
- **February 18, 1942:** *The Denver Post* prints "And We Don't Mean Maybe," showing a truckload of West Coast refugees labeled "alien enemies" encountering a "No Dumping Here" sign at the Colorado state border.
- **February 19, 1942:** President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, authorizing military commanders to exclude individuals from designated coastal zones.
- **February 28, 1942:** Governor Carr gives another speech, warning that if a majority can strip a minority of its freedom today, anyone could be subjected to that ill-will tomorrow.

REFLECTION: Consider the following quote by author Shirley Higuchi from her book *Setsuko's Secret*: "In the nine weeks between December 7, 1941, and February 19, 1942, the day President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast, government officials fought a battle between racism and reason. Racism won." Ask students: How does the timeline of events reflect the tension between racism and reason?

Strategy B: Direct Visual-Textual "Clashes"

Guide students to look for explicit thematic contradictions between Carr's wording and the cartoonists' drawings. For example:

- **The "Grandfather" Contrast:** Highlight Carr's line: *"We cannot test... devotion to his country by the birthplace of his grandfathers"*. Pair this directly with the *Denver Post's* January 18 cartoon, *"The Spirit of '42,"* which uses "Grandpappy" as a character seeking vengeance against a racial group. Ask: *"How does the cartoon use generational identity differently than Governor Carr?"*

Strategy C: Political Cartoon Analysis Sheet

Use the Political Cartoon Analysis Sheet for a deeper dive for students. Suggested focus:

- **"And We Don't Mean Maybe" (The Denver Post - Feb. 18, 1942):** This cartoon focuses on the brief time period in which Japanese Americans were allowed to flee the west coast in the spring of 1942 to seek refuge in States such as Colorado. Only Japanese Americans on the west coast were forced removal and incarceration in camps such as Amache. Japanese Americans already living in states such as Colorado were not forcibly removed.
- ***"Good News from Home" (*The Denver Post (April 22, 1942):** This cartoon depicts a Japanese American family housed in an incarceration camp such as Amache. There are so many details and opportunities to explore. For example, notice the depiction of well-fed Japanese Americans, the reference to "Alien Enemy" which links to President John Adams "Enemy Alien" Act, etc.

Discussion from the Film:

1. In the film, the narrator states that, "Amache reminds us belonging is not defined only by law, but by how communities respond when recognition is withdrawn." How did Colorado's complicated response to Japanese American incarceration shape the truth of this statement?
2. How did the satirical response to Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor shape the following statement:" Amache represents a moment when citizenship did not protect people from fear-driven policy."
3. What similar events in Colorado history draw parallels to this time period in history?

4. How did fear over the attack by the Empire of Japan at Pearl Harbor reshape ideas of loyalty and belonging related to Japanese Americans living on the West Coast?
5. How does Japanese American survival at Amache speak to Colorado's story of belonging and resilience?

Sample Activities:

ENGAGE
Infamy Introduction: Play the FDR speech snippet. Have students pair-share the meaning of "infamy" and list the immediate, visceral emotions a civilian listener would experience on Dec 8, 1941.

EXPLORE
The Cartoon Jigsaw: Divide the class into 4-5 small groups. Use Strategy C to address one specific political cartoon for each group. Students use the What do you See/Think/Wonder? analysis sheet to dissect their assigned visual.

EXPLAIN
Regroup chronologically using Strategy A. Have each group briefly present their cartoon's argument while the class tracks the timeline. Interleave this with Governor Carr's Dec 10 and Feb 28 radio quotes to explicitly map out the clash between racism and reason. Use Strategy B to further layer your instructional analysis.

ELABORATE (Optional Extension)
Utilize Extension Option A or Extension Option B as appropriate.

Strategy Instruction Differentiation:

- **For Multilingual Learners & Modified Curriculums:** Provide a scaffolded version of the primary source texts with Carr's key constitutional vocabulary highlighted and defined (e.g., *hysterical, unselfish patriotism, ill-will, minority*). Allow students to point out specific symbolic objects in the cartoons (like the broom in *"House Cleaning"* or the family guns in *"The Spirit of '42"*) to satisfy the "What do you See?" tier of the matrix.

- **For Advanced/Extension Learners:** Have students analyze the political and personal stakes of civic courage. Challenge them to read ahead to the 1944 *Korematsu* or *Endo* rulings.

Assessment:

Exit Ticket: Students independently answer the core Inquiry Question in 2–3 sentences: What was Colorado's response to the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans, and how did Governor Carr's defense contrast with public media? Use the Assessment Success Criteria Guide.

2022 Colorado Social Studies Standards:

- SS.HS.1.1.GLE 1.EO.a: Formulate compelling and supporting questions after evaluating primary sources for point of view and historical context.
- SS.HS.1.1.GLE 1.EO.b: Gather and analyze historical information to address questions from a range of primary and secondary sources containing a variety of perspectives. For example: Perspectives of historically underrepresented groups.
- SS.HS.1.1.GLE 1.EO.c: Gather and analyze historical information from a range of qualitative and quantitative sources. For example: Demographic, economic, social, and political data.
- SS.HS.1.1.GLE 1.EO.d: Construct and defend a historical argument that evaluates interpretations by analyzing, critiquing, and synthesizing evidence from a wide range of relevant historical sources.
- SS.HS.1.2.GLE 2.EO.c: Analyze the complexity of events throughout United States history. For example: migration, immigration, and displacement (e.g., immigration and citizenship legislation, Japanese American incarceration).
- SS.HS.4.7.GLE 2.EO.g: Understand the structure of the American judicial system, the process of judicial appointments and key court decisions, in both Colorado and the United States, that affect the system of checks and balances and interactions of the local, state, tribal, and federal systems. Including but not limited to: landmark U.S. Supreme Court Cases such as Korematsu v. United States (1944).

Extension Activities:

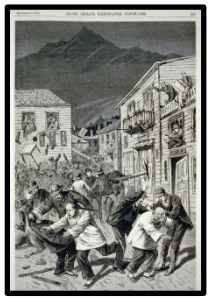


Image: Cartoon; Title: Colorado - the anti-Chinese riot in Denver, on October 31st (1880). Source: Library of Congress.

Extension Option A: Hateful political satire and acts of racism towards Asian Americans pre-dates the events of Dec. 7, 1941. Explore historical links to Denver's 1880 Anti-Chinese Riot and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1883. Inquiry Question: To what extent did late-19th-century anti-Chinese nativism and political satire establish the social and political blueprint for the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans in 1942?

Extension Option B: While Colorado Governor Ralph L. Carr fought a political and moral battle against President Franklin D. Roosevelt, four Japanese American citizens utilized the U.S. Supreme Court to challenge the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066. Explore the constitutional issues, decisions, and further historical developments of the following cases: Hirabayashi v. United States (1943), Yasui v. United States (1943), Korematsu v. United States (1944), and Ex parte Endo (1944). Inquiry Question: In his dissenting opinion in Korematsu, Justice Robert H. Jackson warned that the decision approved a permanent *"weapon"* of racial discrimination, creating a legal precedent that *"lies about like a loaded weapon, ready for the hand of any authority that can bring forward a plausible claim of an urgent need"* - How have the concerns expressed by Justice Jackson been challenged and/or realized in contemporary times?

Additional Resources:

The following resources related to the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans are available through History Colorado:

- An Educator's Guide to Amache: Japanese Internment During World War II (grades 3-8).

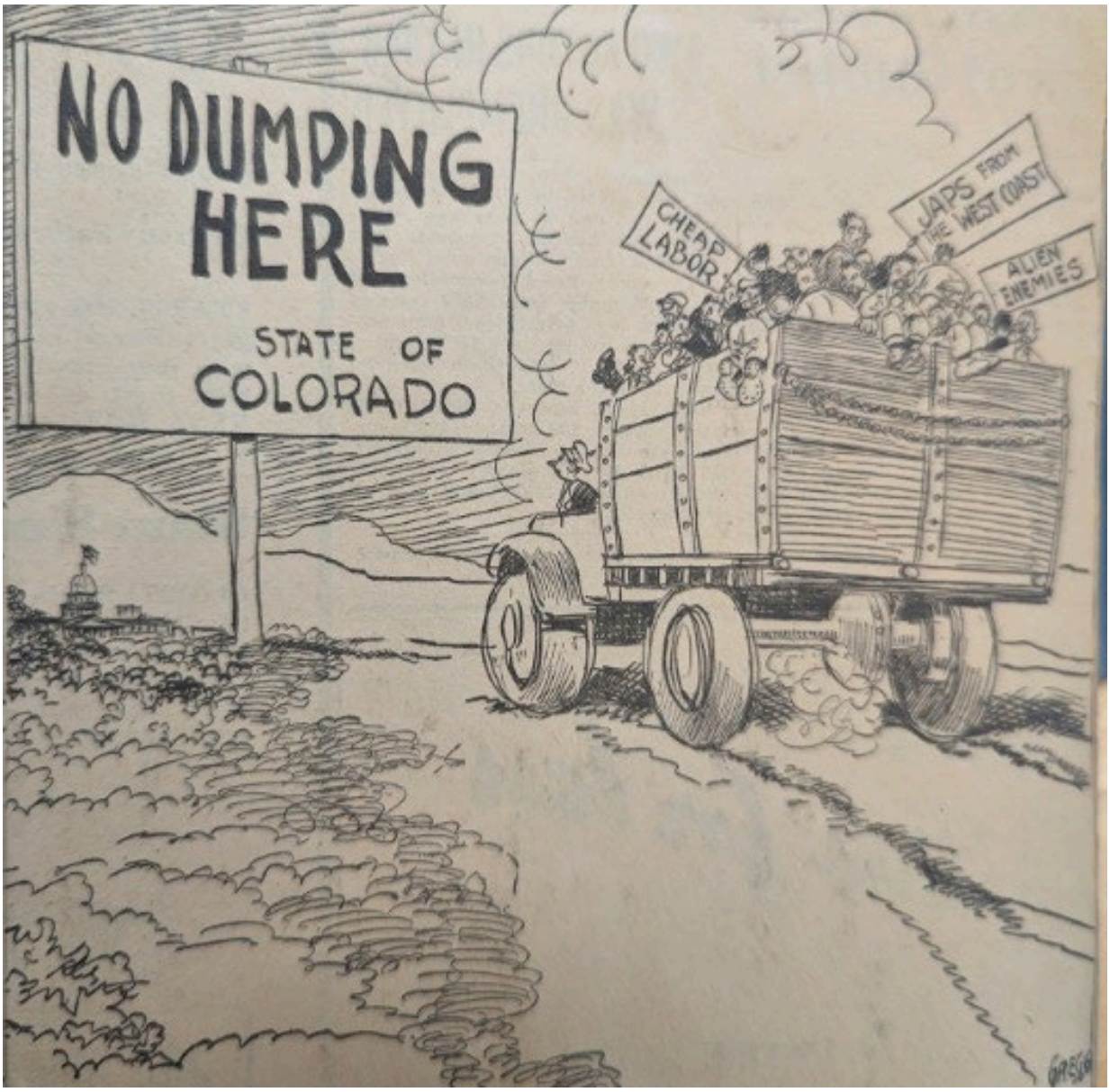
- Amache Annotated Resource Set (grades 9-12).
- Amache Primary Resource Set.



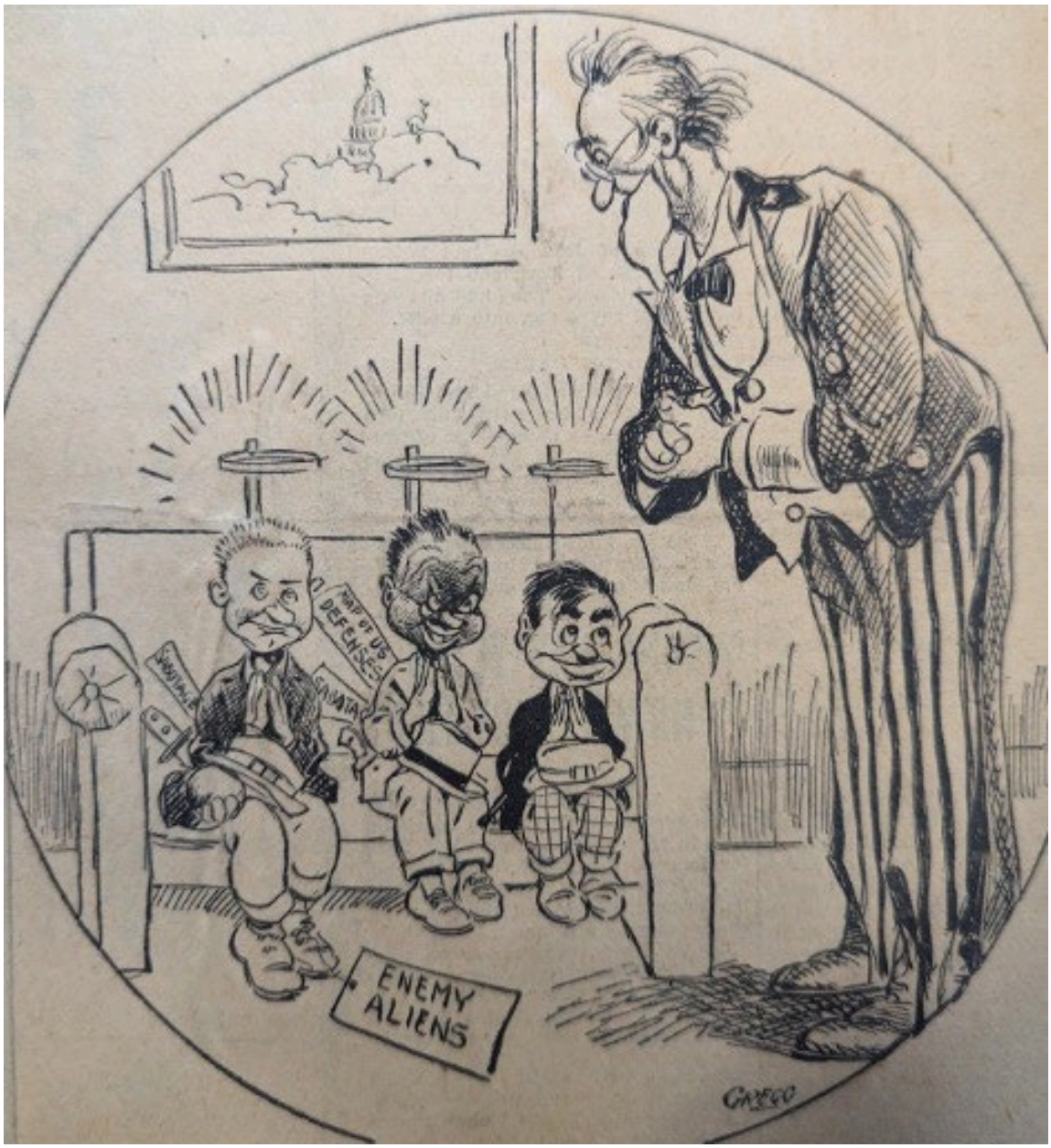
"PHOENIX!" The Denver Post. Dec. 10, 1941



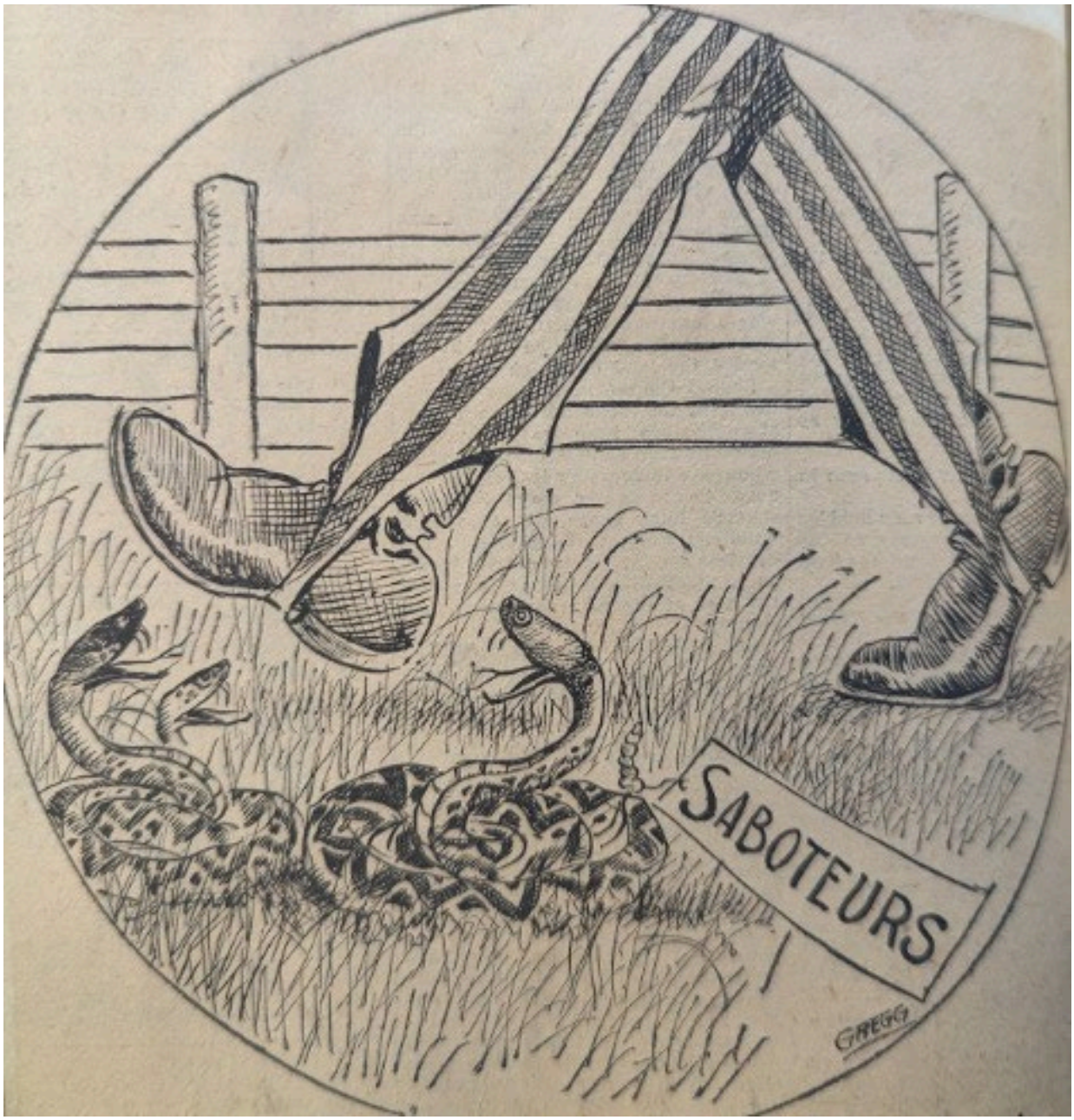
"The Spirit of '42," The Denver Post. Jan. 18, 1942.



"And We Don't Mean Maybe," The Denver Post. Feb. 18, 1942.



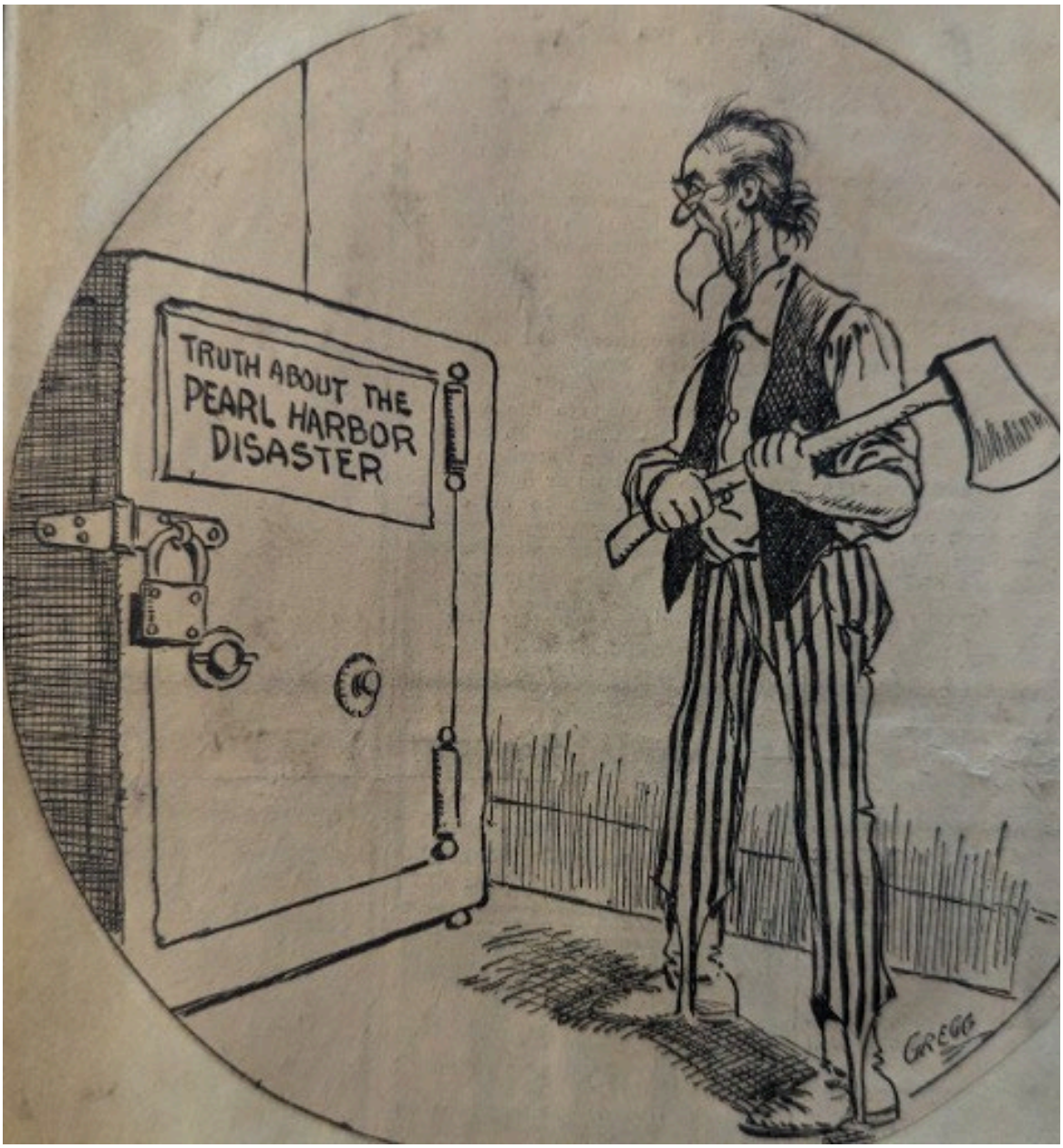
"Uncle Softheart - I Wonder if They Are Real Angels?" The Denver Post. March 1, 1942.



"Watch Your Step, Uncle - The Grass Is Full of Them!" The Denver Post. July 28, 1942.



"Good News From Home," The Denver Post. April 22, 1943.



"We've Got to Know," The Denver Post. Oct. 1, 1944.

Political Cartoon Analysis Sheet

Divide the cartoon into separate areas. Focus on each area to find the details for the basic information highlighted within the cartoon.	**WHAT do you SEE?** 1. What objects do you see in this cartoon? What details do you notice? 2. What words appear in the cartoon?
UNDERSTAND	
Use "Active Reading" strategies to critically engage with the political cartoon by identifying unfamiliar words, phrases, and pictorial references.	**WHAT do you THINK?** 3. What does the caption say? What does the caption mean? 4. What is the date of the cartoon? Why is the date of the cartoon important?
APPLY	
Use "Lateral Reading" strategies and additional research to evaluate the historical context for items referenced through the political cartoon or surrounding the date the cartoon was published.	**WHAT do you WONDER?** 5. What related events occurred around the time the political cartoon was published? 6. What is the historical reference for the words, phrases, and artistic details found within the cartoon?

CREATING	EVALUATING	ANALYZING
A. Formulate a compelling question(s)	7. What is the artist's main purpose in	10. What are the main conclusion(s)

about the materials presented in this cartoon. B. Gather and analyze historical information from qualitative and quantitative as well as primary and secondary sources containing a variety of perspectives to address your question(s). C. Construct and defend a historical argument related to your question(s) that evaluates interpretations by analyzing, critiquing, and synthesizing evidence from a full range of relevant historical sources.	drawing this political cartoon? 8. What is the most important information conveyed through this political cartoon? 9. What are the main assumptions underlying the artist's depiction?	promoted through this political cartoon? 11. If we take the artist's line of reasoning promoted through this political cartoon what are the implication(s)?

Assessment Success Criteria

Developing / Missing	**Proficient (The Standard)**	**Exceeds / Advanced**
The response covers only one side of the argument, lacks specific evidence from the sources, or fails to address the contrast between Carr and the political satire.	To meet the standard, the student's 2–3 sentences must contain: 1. **Contextual Accuracy:** Identifies that Colorado had a fractured, complicated response to Japanese Americans. 2. **The Stance of Reason:** States that Governor Carr defended constitutional rights and birthright citizenship. 3. **The Stance of Racism/Satire:** Explains that public media (like *The Denver Post*) actively fueled distrust by portraying Japanese Americans as economic or national security threats.	The response seamlessly connects the local media panic to the broader federal policy (Executive Order 9066) or uses highly sophisticated analytical vocabulary.