



# Camp Nine

*Vivienne Schiffer*

Download now

Read Online →

# Camp Nine

*Vivienne Schiffer*

## **Camp Nine** Vivienne Schiffer

When Camp Nine, a relocation camp for Japanese Americans, is built near tiny Rook, Arkansas, Chess Morton becomes involved with two young internees and an American soldier who has some connection with her mother's past.

## **Camp Nine Details**

Date : Published October 1st 2011 by University of Arkansas Press (first published January 1st 2011)

ISBN : 9781557289728

Author : Vivienne Schiffer

Format : Hardcover 151 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, War, World War II, Cultural, Japan

 [Download Camp Nine ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Camp Nine ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Camp Nine Vivienne Schiffer**

---

## From Reader Review Camp Nine for online ebook

### Amber Healy says

Beautiful story of a life we don't talk about enough in US History. I couldn't put the story down, wanting to know more. Highly recommend for Historical Fiction lovers or those just looking for a good novel.

---

### Jenn Ravey says

Raised by her headstrong mother and near her disapproving but wealthy grandparents, Chess is a product of the time and the land, in an era where land still defined American status and wealth. However, the world is not all peaceful and bucolic in Vivienne Schiffer's Camp Nine. Pearl Harbor has dragged America into the second World War, and the government buys land in the Arkansas Delta from Chess's grandfather, Mr. Morton, for an internment camp for Japanese citizens from San Francisco. The community reacts in the ways you'd expect a southern town at that time to react: with fear and thus, prejudice.

Chess's mother Carolina, raised Italian and considered not good enough by her wealthy in-laws, does not plan to sit idly by while these innocent people sit behind barbed wire at Camp Nine. She flies into the face of southern deportment, visiting the camp often with a former (now-married) beau, bringing her daughter along and making friends with the Matsuis. Her attachment alone is enough to bring talk, but her affinity for and defense of the Japanese families in the camp brings the tension to a head, exposing Chess to the ugly side of southern "hospitality."

One of the aspects of this novel I appreciated the most was Chess's adult insight. She isn't judgmental or sentimental but rather looks at her life and the events in it with a curiosity that is both honest and endearing, as though she is questioning it ever happening or more likely, her naïveté. Instead of overcompensating for her hindsight or excusing the actions of her family, Chess sticks to stark observations, remarking about the true nature of the KKK and the ruling class's opposition:

Its opposition of the Klan was not so much that it felt a noble obligation to protect vulnerable blacks. The Klan threatened its valuable work force, the means through which its wealth was achieved.

This sort of explanation could easily have felt heavy handed, but there were only a few instances toward the end of the novel when Chess meets up with David Matsui after many years that there was any sort of protracted explanation. However, that's being quite nitpicky because I raced through this novel, enjoying it and - as many a good novel makes me do - turned to Internet research to learn more about the internment of the Japanese and Japanese Americans and both the intense shame these families felt but also their struggles to take back any sort of life after the war. Fascinating and horrifying stuff.

Read this: if you have any interest in World War II, particularly the American experience. Would also make for an excellent book club book.

---

### Ryan says

For some strange reason, I've been reading a lot of books this year that relates a story during World War II.

I've never been a big fan of war history or that particular time period, so I have found it all that more curious that I seem to be reading everything that comes my way that deals with that era of history. They have for the most part been nonfiction and the few fiction books have been mysteries or Gothic that just happens to be set during that period. Up until this point, I hadn't read a fiction books that needs to be set in that period in order for the story to work. Camp Nine is the first one and if they are all like this one, I have a very busy life ahead of me. For me this book wasn't about the history, though it played a huge part, it was more about the story itself.

Now while this book does deal with race, class, and the societal structures of the day, that's not what I focused on as I was reading it. Those elements needed to be there in order for the story to progress, but I couldn't take my mind off the characters long enough to really analyze the rest of it. This experience was all about some of the most wonderful characters I have had the pleasure of discovering in a long time.

The action revolves around Chess and her mother from the beginning and it never leaves them as the other characters are introduced. The way they interact with one particular family in the internment camp, the Matsui family, made me feel hope and relief that there may still be people who are willing to fight for what's right and just, even if it's only in the smallest way. They, despite their faults and blindness to other issues, do what they can to make the lives of those in the camps a little better and develop close friendships with some of them. I can't even start to explain the richness of all the other characters as they brought in their voices and stories to the tale. These will a cast of extraordinary people that I don't think I will forget for a very long time.

But the one character that set this book apart from a lot of others, was the place. The land became the most important character as it dictated so many of the relationships between the human characters. The land controlled the fates of those who owned and those who worked. It gave some riches and caused others to be little more than serfs of those who owned the land. It was the canvas that gave life to all those who lived on it and it wouldn't hesitate to take it all back. It was a living, breathing entity that provided a lush and rich background for the dynamic relationships that I found so much pleasure in.

---

### **Allie says**

I found this book in the new fiction section at the library one morning. Once again, a historical fiction novel set in my favorite time period. Unlike the others, this one takes place in the USA. For the first time, or my first time anyways, I found a WWII book about America that wasn't directly about the war. This story takes place in Arkansas. A young girl and her mother are living on the large plantation, near the parents of the deceased husband. There's not much to do in this little town except talk to the help and visit the general store. Until one day when a large plot of land gets turned into a living area. Suddenly there are barracks, houses, a school, and guard towers. All at once, this sleepy little town is home to an internment camp for hundreds of Japanese Americans who have been relocated out of California. Through this camp, the main character learns true life lessons about life, race, and love.

It was an interesting story and covered a topic that generally gets swept aside. I enjoyed it as a random read, I recommend it, though it wasn't the MOST interesting book I've ever read.

---

### **Carolyn says**

Just finished reading the novel "Camp Nine" by Vivienne Schiffer. I was moved by the story, a first-person telling of the years that Japanese-Americans were interned at a fictional detainment camp in Arkansas, on the

Mississippi. The story is based on the Rohwer Relocation Center, and the narrator is a pre-teen white girl, negotiating the class and racial divides so powerful in the Deep South in the 1940s and beyond. One heroine and focal point of the tale is the narrator's mother, a widow of Italian-American descent, who confidently manages the narrow cultural judgments of the hamlet's inhabitants. Schiffer ably conveys a sense of place: the dense, lush stillness of a Bayou culture that time forgot, complete with allusion to Klan activities, jolted awake by a shameful episode in American history. The reader is drawn into the past, and the lives of those who suffered at the hands of racist policy, one too easily dismissed by our history books.

A white lawyer from Houston, Schiffer was raised in the town of Rohwer, and although the story is layered and provocative, the writing is not particularly strong. That's unfortunate, because this is a story that could serve as a staple of young adult fiction if told in a more artful manner. Nonetheless, I recommend "Camp Nine" for those with an interest in the internment camps or 20th Century history of the Mississippi Delta, or who are drawn to coming-of-age stories addressing race or class. It's only by chance I found this book - I happened upon it on the stacks one day - so I thought I'd spread the word: reading "Camp Nine" will make my understanding of the detainment camps richer for the novel's emotional rendering of tender relationships and devastating injustice.

---

### **Mary Lindsey says**

I loved this well-researched, creative story about an unfamiliar aspect of our country's history.

---

### **Susana Olague Trapani says**

Overall, a well-researched book that suffered from a weak protagonist. Unfortunately, Chess is too much of a passive observer. She is constantly pushed into acting as opposed to asserting herself as an actor in the story. You could almost say this was her mother's story, but Chess assures us it's hers, too--I would have been more convinced of that had she been more aware, more eager to learn who she was, who her family was, and how Camp Nine affected her life. She's still playing catch up years later, which only goes to show how little her character grows.

The narration was also a lot of telling instead of showing; the biggest example I can think of is Chess' crush on Henry Matsui. She says they've bonded over common interests, but prior to that declaration, we've seen them interact once. Their later interactions carry more meaning, but they're clumsily introduced because the reader doesn't see a relationship until Chess tells us it's so. And when we learn of Henry's death, Chess' reaction is supposed to be emotional, but it rang hollow.

Again, it was a well-researched novel, and a look into a shameful period of the nation's history, but I feel it fell short of the mark. With Chess as the narrator, there were a lot of missed opportunities to fully explore the impact of the camp on families, the communities, the country, simply because Chess doesn't like confronting truths. As hard as it is to do so, it would've made for a more compelling character who is able to understand and interpret what's going on around her instead of having to be told everything.

In the end, 2.5 stars from me; this was a Goodreads Giveaway win.

---

## **Kristi Bell says**

Adult book....enjoyed!

---

## **Patsey says**

Page 121.

"It would be many years before America would become accustomed to talk like that, the idea that the world at large is alive, not just something to plow up and chop down and bend to our will. But they were the same sentiments I'd heard from Ruby Jean and her family. Despite the atrocities they were forced to commit against the earth with our newfangled chemicals and poisons, they maintained a reverence and respect for nature that went far beyond our desire for dominance over what we could never truly hope to tame." How did we allow tens of thousands of our citizens to be imprisoned in their own country? Lack of understanding? Knowledge? Or just a need to feel better than someone anyone?! To blame someone else for your problems thereby not shouldering any responsibility? Like Trump followers? Could it happen again? I am watching.

---

## **Kimber says**

Very easy to read and an interesting story. My biggest complaint was that the author tried to add drama and intrigue into a story that was really pretty simple. Lots of "Little did I know that telling him that would change the course of his life forever," etc etc. Overall though, it was enjoyable and an important piece of American history to be told.

---

## **Amber says**

Following an "all things Asian or the like" appetite I was picking up any book with an almond blossom on the cover for sure. "Camp Nine" was about the internment camps for the Japanese in the United States during WWII. Not a world shattering expose but a well told story with believable characters struggling to find a sense of belonging in a greater tale of war and the many forgotten victims.

I was only little aware of the camps, so I was thankful for Schiffer giving voice to a page often left out of the histories. I believe she also gives a fair hand to the telling. There is no raging fist that blames, but an unfolding of lives that may have never been so entwined if they were not forced to be so. In "Camp Nine" they do just that, unfold.

---

## **Augusta Scattergood says**

Based on personal experiences of the author who lived in Arkansas when Japanese citizens were forced into relocation centers, this remarkable story is told by a young girl trying to make sense of a mother's complicated indignation. Family dynamics, race and class, and the Blues connect in a love story intertwined with history and horror at the situation.

---

Perhaps the novel's truth comes as Chess, the young narrator, attempts to understand her beloved Arkansas Delta. When David Matsui, her new Japanese American friend calls the place a sinkhole, she takes umbrage. Only later does she realize that "stark criticism by a native is tolerated—from a stranger, it is not." By book's end, Chess accepts that "no one could really appreciate one's home except through the eyes of outsiders."

The story of the Japanese American internment camps in the 1940s South is not well known. This beautifully-written new novel should rectify that.

(from my review in Delta Magazine)

---

### **Hannah Banowsky says**

I personally did not enjoy reading his book. It was not very interesting to me and I had a hard time focusing on the story. This book is about a girl and her mom who live next to a Japanese camp. I read this story because it is about Arkansas and the history. I currently live in Arkansas and really love reading stories that take place in Arkansas. This is a good book for high school students who might be reading about this subject in schools.

---

### **Meg says**

Vivienne Schiffer's *Camp Nine* is a quiet, moving coming-of-age story detailing life at fictionalized Camp Nine, a place teeming with life and culture in the 1940s. In modern times, it's difficult to believe that places like this actually existed on American soil — but while reading, I had to remember the mayhem that followed the dark days after Sept. 11, 2001. The rampant fear and uncertainty. The chaos and confusion. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the American people struggled to make sense of the attack and questioned the loyalties of anyone of Japanese descent — the new enemy. Sound familiar?

This is not at all to justify what happened — that would be impossible. I suppose I just had to repeat to myself that it was a different time, a different time.

And this time, indeed, was scary. If Chess wasn't playing witness to the despair within Camp Nine, she was dealing with the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in Rook. Growing up with black servants she also considered friends, Chess can't make sense of the hatred spreading through Rook like a sickness. The military installation of thousands of Japanese Americans nearby was like throwing a match into a powder keg.

What I liked best about *Camp Nine*, aside from the lovely writing, was the way Schiffer chose to tell us Chess' story from her adult perspective. Though we don't know exactly how the story ends, we know that Chess is reflecting upon her early experiences as a married mother herself. We know she remembers these hazy days in Rook clearly, but that doesn't mean her memories haven't taken on a soft patina with time. Narrator Chess is wise, thoughtful, intelligent. She recalls moments at Camp Nine with a clarity her young self could not understand. Her narration was very moving.

If you're looking for a book ripe with action and plot, *Camp Nine* might not quench your literary thirst. The novel is definitely a character exploration examining family dynamics, race relations, this particular moment in history — and what came after. Though I love historical fiction, this is the first book I've read detailing the experiences of Japanese Americans in the U.S. during World War II. The situation was deplorable, and I

feel like I've gained a new perspective.

Schiffer has crafted a fine-tuned, lyrical and affecting work and doesn't waste a single word in her narrative. Dropped immediately into Arkansas, readers experience a great progression — a sincere, unexpected journey — with Schiffer's well-drawn, sympathetic characters. If you like historical fiction and character studies, add it to your wishlist.

---

## **Patty says**

This book tells a fictionalized account of the interned Japanese US citizens during WWII. A camp was set up in Arkansas and our government moved law abiding CITIZENS to a military base simply because they were Japanese. It was one of the worst offenses post-slavery that this country had sanctioned.

Chess Morton is just a child when the Camp is established on land that was hers; her grandfather is guardian of her estate and he sells it to the government. She is of the "landed gentry" in the area and very protected. Her mother was born of immigrant parents and not at all what was expected in a wife for a Morton. Chess's father died young leaving her with a mother trying to do what was best for her child in a difficult time.

Into their protected world drops Camp Nine, the Japanese internment prison. The colonel in charge of the camp is an old friend of Chess's mother and she becomes involved with him and the people at the camp. She starts teaching art classes and becomes friendly with one family in particular, the Matsuis.

Chess tries to remain ignorant of the camp but her mother forces her to acknowledge it. She starts going to the camp and she befriends the young Matsui boys, David and Henry. She learns that there is a whole other world outside of her pampered, Southern upbringing.

In spite of learning some harsh facts about the world at large Chess still remains in the dark about much that goes on around her until the conclusion of the book when a final meeting lays bare a past she thought she understood and exposes truths as lies.

This was a beautifully written book covering a horrible topic. Despite this, Ms. Schiffer has crafted a novel that I found to be one that I will keep and read again. I don't do this often. Chess is the focus of the tale, not the Camp. It is her story; as she grows and learns and finally discovers her painful past. All of the adults in her life wanted to protect her from the worst of life and I am not sure they did her any favors.

I think this is book that will be even better on a second reading. The foreknowledge of the ending will allow the reader to better appreciate some of the characters' actions. In spite of the awful topics - internment, racial hostility, the Klan - the book is softly written. I will look forward to further writings from Ms. Schiffer.

---