

ENDURING COMMUNITIES

New Mexico Curriculum Units*

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Enduring Communities



Photo by Motonobu Koizumi

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Enduring Communities is a partnership between the Japanese American National Museum, educators, community members, and five anchor institutions:

[Arizona State University's Asian Pacific American Studies Program](#)

[University of Colorado, Boulder](#)

[University of New Mexico](#)

[UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures](#)

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enduringcommunities

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* Download other [Enduring Community units](#) (accessed September 3, 2009).

Project Overview

Enduring Communities: The Japanese American Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah is dedicated to reexamining an often-neglected chapter in U.S. history and connecting it with current issues.

The collaboration with educators, community members, students, and five partner anchor institutions—Arizona State University’s Asian Pacific American Studies Program; University of Colorado, Boulder; University of New Mexico; UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures; and Davis School District, Utah—resulted in the curricula created by educator teams from five states. Two other components of the project include a national conference, “Whose America? Who’s American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice,” hosted in Denver in July 2008, and a practical handbook about partnership projects for peer institutions.

During World War II about 65,000 Japanese Americans—nearly one half of the mainland Japanese American population—lived in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah, either in concentration camps created by the United States government, as long-standing community members, or as “resettlers” from the West Coast. The situation of Japanese American populations in these states during World War II affords the opportunity to explore the contradictions and racism inherent in how we have defined citizenship and dealt with diversity.

These stories have provided—and continue to provide—a compelling point from which to consider more broadly the experiences of other regional communities during World War II and beyond. In this way, the collaboration has generated materials and dialogue that reveal how the diverse realities of American communities have challenged and shaped this country’s definitions of citizenship, patriotism, and democracy.

Introduction to the Curricular Units

These curricular units were developed over the course of four years by phenomenal educators who thoughtfully and collaboratively tackled the challenge of teaching their students about a lesser-known part of United States history. Although everybody may not have been familiar with the Japanese American experience prior to joining this project, they are committed to being lifelong learners. Together they embarked upon a three-year quest to hear more first-person stories, seek out primary resources, read scholarly works, and engage in reflection and discussion about how to most effectively teach young people.

The intense process of developing and sharing units with colleagues and then receiving feedback from field testers resulted in two dynamic outcomes. The first is a five-state collection of standards-based elementary and secondary curricular units and accompanying media pieces. Although these materials have been edited for consistency, we hope that the distinctive style and spirit of each of the individuals, teams, and communities still remains.

The second, less tangible outcome has been the formation of interstate and intrastate educator com-

munities. Seeing these communities develop and be sustained via email, telephone calls, and face-to-face meetings has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this project. The camaraderie and mutual respect of these educators is at the heart of all of these materials.

Consequently, we hope that even more teachers will be able to use these materials in their classrooms. We hope that the essential questions might cause new groups of teachers and students to think about how the World War II Japanese American experience relates to contemporary events. We hope that these materials expand and rethink the notion of what it means to be American.

In this spirit, we hope that these materials are helpful, and we welcome your feedback. Thank you!

Sincerely,

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Diane L. Ball

Name of Unit

A Teacher’s Journey to Increasing Student Knowledge and Comprehension About the Japanese American World War II Experience

Suggested Grade Level(s)

11

Suggested Subject Area(s)

U.S. History, Advanced Placement U.S. History, or can be adapted for a Special Education Core class

Ms. Ball’s students in Denver, Colorado, at the Japanese American National Museum’s 2008 National Conference “Whose America? Who’s American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice.”

Photo by Tracy Kumono



Unit Map

[Note: This unit, unlike the others created for the *Enduring Communities* project, is written as a journal, capturing one teacher’s journey as she creates and teaches curriculum about a little-known topic: the Japanese American World War II experience. The emphasis of this unit is on the reflections of the teacher and her students as they explore this content; the instructional strategies have been de-emphasized.]

Author

Diane L. Ball

Name of Unit

A Teacher’s Journey to Increasing Student Knowledge and Comprehension About the Japanese American World War II Experience

Suggested Grade Level(s)

11

Subject Areas(s)

U.S. History, Advanced Placement U.S. History, or can be adapted for a Special Education Core class

Number of Class Periods Required

6 to 7 class periods for full project (60 minutes per period); can also be used as 5 one-day units of instruction depending on the focus of the teacher

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objectives, Guiding Questions, and Assessment

The calendar on the following page is an at-a-glance reference for the content and pedagogical components of this unit.

New Mexico Content Standards

- History Strand 1-A: Analyze the role and impact of New Mexico in World War II
- History Strand 1-B: Analyze the role of the United States in World War II to include movement from isolationism to involvement following Pearl Harbor, and activities to support the war effort on the home front.

Purpose/Context of Unit

While there are comprehensive curriculum units on the Japanese American experience during World War II, the New Mexico experience is vastly different from those states with War Relocation Authority camps. The focus of this unit is for an eleventh-grade U.S. History class and is connected to my belief in using primary source documents. This was a natural fit given that there are only four sentences about the Japanese American World War II experience in our textbook. In addition, as a teacher in the Gallup-McKinley County Schools, I was able to bring in local historical connections related to Gallup’s situation during the World War II period and the unique experience of local Japanese American families.

Goals for Student Understanding

The overarching pedagogical question for this unit is, *How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?* My students had no prior knowledge of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and their time spent learning about the period had been relatively brief: the topic was discussed in World History at the tenth-grade level. To that effect, I wrote this unit with three overarching goals in mind:

- To walk students through the content knowledge relating to the incarceration of the Japanese Americans during World War II;
- To help students improve reading comprehension; and
- To guide students as they examine the larger issues of civil liberties during wartime.

Consequently, I formulated seven guiding (pedagogical) questions as I approached this unit:

- Are students able to make comparisons between America's concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust?
- How do students respond to visual images of this topic?
- Are students able to make sophisticated comparisons about the Japanese American experience in New Mexico versus their experiences in other states?
- How do students respond to literature about this topic?
- Are students able to develop an understanding about the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?
- Are students able to grasp the importance of New Mexico in the World War II effort?
- Are students able to grasp the dichotomy of Japanese Americans' incarceration and their patriotism?

It is not intended that students walk blindly into this topic, but rather that they gradually increase their knowledge of this time period as their exposure to a variety of texts is expanded. There is also an attempt in this unit to elicit the students' own personal reactions to the history being presented. The exercises were written to provide opportunities for cooperative learning and provide hands-on activities to help English Language Learners (ELL), encompass the various learning styles of the students' multiple intelligences, encourage higher-order thinking, and provide an increasingly sophisticated framework for students to analyze primary source documents and then draw conclusions about what they have seen and read.

Reflections at the Conclusion of the Unit

Overall, I have been extremely pleased with this unit and the outcomes achieved by the students. They demonstrated a willingness to embrace new knowledge and examine artifacts they had never seen before, ask questions, and generally get involved in the unit. Their constructed responses demonstrated knowledge about the subject that was more than surface material. The students responded very well to the children's books and wanted to listen to "story time" more often.

However, there are still several areas for improvement. First, the students need time to discuss the photographs and shorter documents. These portions could be expanded to include students generating their own constructed responses about the documents. Also, as the teacher, I need to help them "read" a photograph for what is there and what is not there. This is a large component that needs to be added for their understanding.

I also realize that I need to employ more graphic organizers as part of some basic brainstorming activities. This is a proven ELL strategy, and I think it will help students focus more on their learning rather than taking their cues from me. I did find that adding just a short page of notes was effective to create context and a basic understanding, while using primary documents—especially pictures—provided an added dimension.

In conclusion, I would say that the students responded well to new material, especially in the presented format. They were able to move from concrete to more abstract thinking, although some connections may have been somewhat superficial. Also, their understanding of racial prejudice was increased—prior to this we had covered other subjects that addressed racial prejudice, including the Indian wars, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, and anti-immigration laws.

A Teacher’s Journey to Increasing Student Knowledge and Comprehension About the Japanese American World War II Experience

Essential Questions (Content-Related): How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?

Essential Question (Pedagogical): How do my students respond to new material about which they have no background information?

Lesson Title	Objectives (Content-Related)	Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)	Assessments
STOP #1: Orders to Go: Packing Your Things	Students will learn about the World War II experience of Japanese Americans who, under the authority of Executive Order 9066, were removed and excluded from the West Coast.	How do students respond to literature about this topic? Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?	Students will chart basic necessities and nonbasic necessities.
STOP #2: Home Was a Horse Stall: Why Are We Living Here?	Students will learn about how Japanese Americans adjusted to their lives in the temporary assembly centers.	How do students respond to literature about this topic? Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?	Students will create an acrostic using the word “confinement” to describe life in camp.
STOP #3: Camp: What Did It Look and Feel Like?	Students will examine primary and secondary sources to learn more about life in the camps.	Are students able to make comparisons between America’s concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust? How do students respond to visual images of this topic? How do students respond to literature about this topic? Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience? Are students able to grasp the dichotomy of Japanese Americans’ incarceration and their patriotism?	Students will work as a group to describe the positive and negative aspects of camp life. Students will create a collage about life in camp using images and five words.

**A Teacher's Journey to Increasing
Student Knowledge and Comprehension
About the Japanese American
World War II Experience**

Lesson Title	Objectives (Content-Related)	Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)	Assessments
STOP #4: We Are Americans: Civil Liberties During Wartime	Students will examine the civil liberties issues raised by the World War II Japanese American experience.	Are students able to make comparisons between America's concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust? How do students respond to visual images of this topic? Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?	Students will look at resources for evidence of racial prejudice against Japanese Americans during World War II.
STOP #5: The New Mexico Response: Are These Friends Now Our Enemies?	Students will examine the local experiences of Japanese Americans in New Mexico during World War II.	Are students able to make sophisticated comparisons about the Japanese American experience in New Mexico versus their experiences in other states? Are students able to grasp the importance of New Mexico in the World War II effort?	Students will compare and contrast the experiences of Japanese Americans in Santa Fe and Gallup, New Mexico, during World War II.
FINAL STOP: Final Assessment	Students will synthesize the lectures, resources, and discussions to respond to the Essential Questions.	Are students able to make comparisons between America's concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust? How do students respond to visual images of this topic? Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience? Are students able to grasp the dichotomy of Japanese American incarceration and their patriotism?	Students will respond to these questions: <i>How did the American government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?</i>

Orders to Go:

Packing Your Things

Time

1 class period (60 minutes per period)

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objective (Content-Related)

- Students will learn about the World War II experience of Japanese Americans who, under the authority of Executive Order 9066, were removed and excluded from the West Coast.

Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)

- How do students respond to literature about this topic?
- Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?

Assessment

- Students will chart basic necessities and nonbasic necessities.

Materials

- Cardstock, paper, pens, and glue for each student to create a booklet (interactive notebook); see *Diagram of Notebook Layout*
- A copy of the young adult novel *When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka
- *Handout 1-1: Packing a Suitcase*
- *Handout 1-2: Class Notes*

Activities and Teaching Strategies

- Instruct students to create a booklet (interactive notebook) made up of 12 pieces of cardstock attached with strips, giving the impression of railroad tracks. See *Diagram of Notebook Layout* for a diagram. Students will keep this unit's notes and handouts in this booklet.
 - The students should leave the booklet's cover blank until the final lesson.
 - The booklet must have 10 pages, plus a cover.
- Read aloud Chapter 1 of *When the Emperor Was Divine*, which describes a mother who must pack up the house and decide what to take.
- Distribute *Handout 1-1: Packing a Suitcase* and ask students to decide what stays and what goes.
- Once they have completed this handout, give them additional instructions about what items might be considered "subversive" and must be removed, including MP3 players, video games, language books, books with maps, or anything that resembles a weapon.
- Distribute and review *Handout 1-2: Class Notes*, which contains information on the events following the attack on Pearl Harbor.
- Have students attach both handouts to their booklets.

Author Reflections on Stop #1

The students really rose to the challenge in this first section. I asked the students to draw images as they listened to Chapter 1 of *When the Emperor Was Divine*. The story describes a family packing their things because they must leave their home following Executive Order 9066. The students responded to the personal aspect of the story, particularly the killing of the family pet, White Dog, who was not allowed to go with them. This is a great activity for Special Education units, but it is also a way to focus all students on the key aspects of the story. What I found is that their responses were not focused on the order to leave but the leaving itself, creating a personal connection.



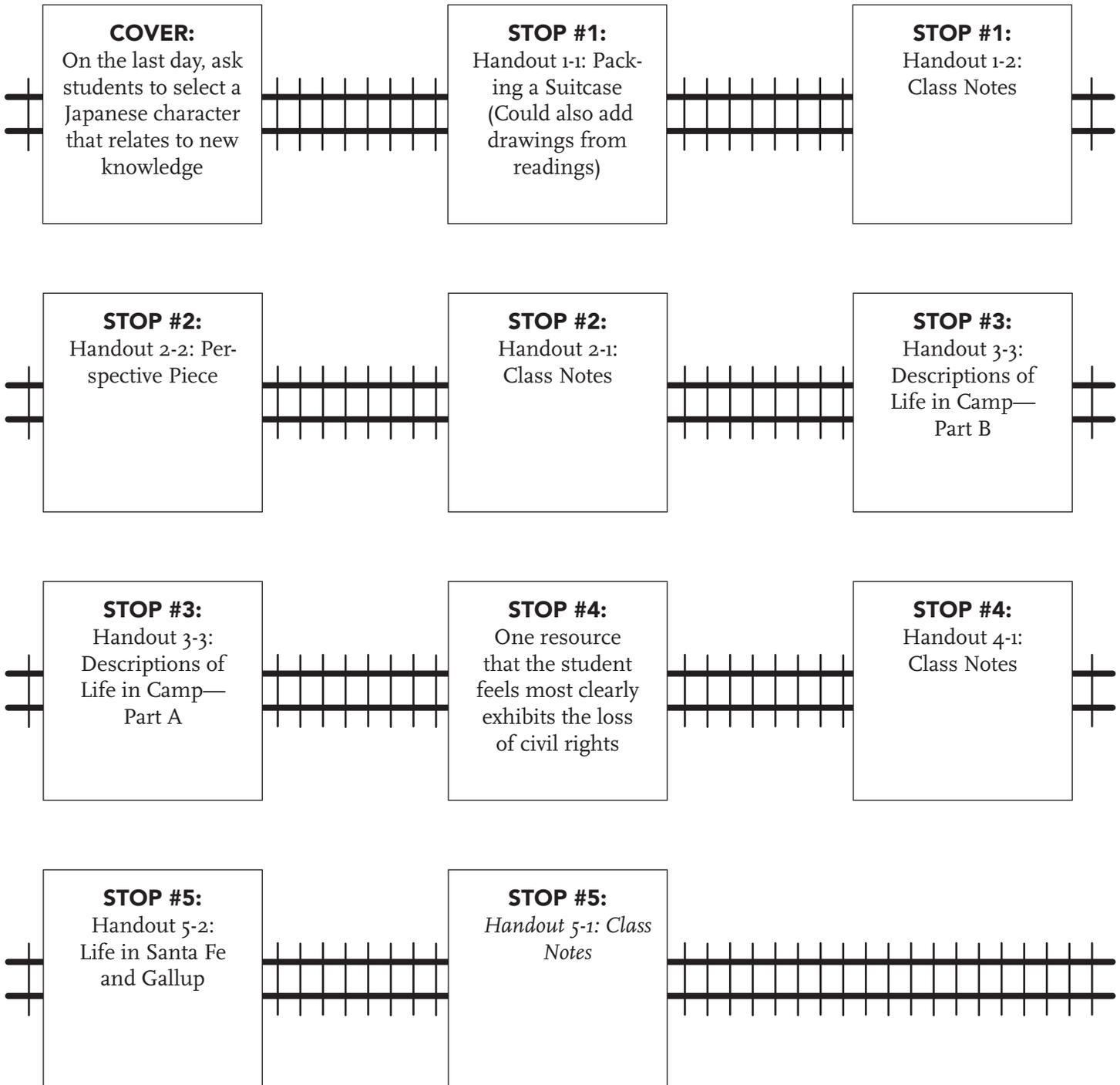
To help them process the content, students were given a graphic of a suitcase and asked to list essential and nonessential items they would take. Most of them really thought about what they would need. As the discussion progressed, we then had to cross out items such as cell phones, iPods, video games, and other electronic devices. Here the cultural divide between a teenager in 2009 and 1941 was most evident.

When I taught this section I spent time clarifying what life was like for most teenagers during the early war years, and this seemed to increase students' understanding of what to take and what to leave behind. The output for this particular exercise was strong: they enjoyed the story, and they made a personal connection and understood what was really necessary to live. The results indicated that most students understood the very real situation that Executive Order 9066 imposed on most Japanese Americans in early 1942.

References

Otsuka, Julie. *When the Emperor Was Divine*. New York: Random House, Inc., 2003.

Diagram of Notebook Layout



Packing a Suitcase

Handout 1-1

14

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

Instructions: You are allowed to pack three outfits, a few personal items, and two books or magazines. You are not sure how long you will be gone or even where you are going. List your items on the chart below.



P.S. Only one medium suitcase per person is allowed.

Basic Necessities	Nonbasic Necessities
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.

Class Notes

Handout 1-2

15

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

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G

- On December 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.
- Immediately, anti-Japanese sentiment and wartime hysteria grew.
- By 1941, there were more than 110,000 people of Japanese descent living on the West Coast. Some were Japanese immigrants, ineligible for citizenship, and others were American-born citizens.
- Some lived in the cities and others were involved in agriculture, often growing oranges, avocados, and nuts.
- *Issei* = Japanese term meaning, “first generation,” referring to immigrants who came to the U.S. from Japan.
- *Nisei* = Japanese term meaning, “second generation,” referring to Japanese Americans born in the U.S.
- *Sansei* = Japanese term meaning, “third generation,” also referring to Japanese Americans born in the U.S.

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- The U.S. government needed a solution to the possible “threat” that the people of Japanese descent on the West Coast posed, and on February 19, 1942, the U.S. government issued Executive Order 9066, which set forth a policy of exclusion and removal.
- The West Coast was designated as “Military Area Number One,” and Executive Order 9066 set the stage for certain citizens to be excluded from this area.
- This meant the forced removal of 110,000 people of Japanese descent. More than 60 percent of those excluded and removed were American citizens by birth.
- Orders were posted for all people of Japanese descent within Military Area Number One to report to processing stations with their belongings, sometimes with as little as a week’s notice.
- There was little resistance.
- They had to leave their homes and businesses behind, and they had no idea what would happen to them.
- They also had no idea where they were going or for how long.



STOP #2

Home Was a Horse Stall: Why Are We Living Here?

Time

1 class period (60 minutes per period)

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objective (Content-Related)

- Students will learn about how Japanese Americans adjusted to their lives in the temporary assembly centers.

Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)

- How do students respond to literature about this topic?
- Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?

Assessment

- Students will create an acrostic using the word “confinement” to describe life in camp.

Materials

- A copy of the children’s book *The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida
- Class copies of the article “Home was a Horse Stall” by Jim Carnes, found in the Southern Poverty Law Center’s journal, *Teaching Tolerance* (Spring 1995)
- *Handout 2-1: Class Notes*
- *Handout 2-2: Perspective Piece*

Activities and Teaching Strategies

- Read aloud *The Bracelet* and discuss how we use objects to help us remember.

- Ask students to review *Handout 2-1: Class Notes* about the War Relocation Authority and the purposes of sending Japanese Americans to temporary assembly centers.
- As a group, read “When Home Was a Horse Stall” and highlight key points.
- Ask students to complete *Handout 2-2: Perspective Piece* by constructing a perspective piece that reflects how life was different at the racetrack (horse stall) and in the War Relocation Authority camps.
- Have students attach both handouts to their booklets.

Author Reflections on Stop #2

All students seemed to gravitate towards the specific details provided in this lesson. I found it useful to tape off a section of my room for them to see the actual size of the horse stall, although many of my students come from farming families and therefore are familiar with the dimensions. According to their drawings, they were mostly worried about the bathroom situations and the long lines. I found this interesting given that most families would have been squeezed into a 9-by-20-foot space—with sometimes four or more people living there—and yet this did not seem as important as the bathrooms. They also were concerned with manure on the floors, and much of the discussion was about the smell.

After reexamining the article “Home Was a Horse Stall,” I find that it is too long even for my advanced students. In the future, this needs to be presented in pieces instead of one sitting. I noticed several of the students’ attention wandering by the time we got to the third page. Breaking it down into manageable pieces is really necessary; perhaps not using the entire article would help to keep students’ attention while utilizing the valuable content.

Nonetheless, at this point in the unit some of the students began to ask questions such as, “Why didn’t

they fight or run away?” They were slowly beginning to grasp the gravity of the situation even though they were lacking in details about the mass incarceration. Most didn’t draw barbed wire fences or guard towers because there was little mention of them in the readings. With some guidance, most students came up with five to six major points about living in the horse stalls.

References

- Carnes, Jim. “Home was a Horse Stall.” *Teaching Tolerance* 4, no.1 (Spring 1995): 50-57.
- Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Bracero*. New York: Putnam Berkeley Group, Inc., 1976/1993.

Class Notes

Handout 2-1

18

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

H O M E W A S A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This mass removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast was coordinated by the War Relocation Authority (WRA), which was part of the War Department.• The problem at the beginning was that there wasn't anywhere for people to be sent to.• In order to handle the large number of people, most Japanese Americans were temporarily sent to racetracks.• The Santa Anita (California) racetrack held the largest number of Japanese Americans.• Families lived in the horse stalls for several weeks with just a short wall separating them from other families
H O R S E S T A L L	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conditions were very primitive. Portable bathrooms were brought into the racetracks, but bathing was a problem.• There was no privacy at all.• There was also very little to do.• Many of the young people began to socialize with each other and move away from the traditional ways of their parents.• Dining was no longer done in family units, but in a large mess hall where the younger people often chose to sit with friends rather than family.• This caused a huge rift between the Issei and Nisei generations.• While Japanese Americans waited in the racetracks, the WRA began to identify land away from the West Coast where they would be placed.• The WRA built structures quickly but of such poor quality that conditions were often worse than at the racetracks.• Japanese Americans were often moved from the racetracks to their new locations in boxcars, with the shades drawn.

Perspective Piece

Handout 2-2

19

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

Instructions—Part A: You are to create a perspective piece comparing life for Japanese Americans in the horse stalls and later in the War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps. Look at the descriptions from the readings to help guide you. You also need to illustrate what you describe.

Home was a Horse Stall	Life in the WRA Camps
Text	Text
Drawing	Drawing

Instructions—Part B: You are to find key descriptors or phrases about life in the camps to complete the chart below.

C	
O	
N	
F	
I	
N	
E	
M	
E	
N	
T	

Camp: What Did It Look and Feel Like?

Time

1 class period (60 minutes per period)

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objective (Content-Related)

- Students will examine primary and secondary sources to learn more about life in the camps.

Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)

- Are students able to make comparisons between America's concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust?
- How do students respond to visual images of this topic?
- How do students respond to literature about this topic?
- Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?
- Are students able to grasp the dichotomy of Japanese American incarceration and their patriotism?

Assessment

- Students will work as a group to describe the positive and negative aspects of camp life.
- Students will create a collage about life in camp using images and five words.

Materials

- A copy of the children's book *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki
- *Something Strong Within*, produced by the Japanese American National Museum, or another short media piece on camp life

- *Handout 3-1: Letter to Miss Clara Breed from Elizabeth Kikuchi*
- *Handout 3-2: Photographs of Life in Camp* or other photographs found in books or downloaded from the Internet
- *Handout 3-3: Descriptions of Life in Camp*

Activities and Teaching Strategies

- Read aloud *Baseball Saved Us*.
- Watch *Something Strong Within* or another short media piece on camp life.
- In groups of four, have students read *Handout 3-1: Letter to Miss Clara Breed from Elizabeth Kikuchi*, written by a young person, originally from San Diego, whose family was removed to Poston, Arizona. She wrote this letter to Miss Clara Breed, her former librarian. Additional letters can be downloaded from the Japanese American National Museum's Clara Breed Online Collection: <http://www.janm.org/collections/clara-breed-collection/> (accessed September 5, 2009).
- Next have students examine *Handout 3-2: Photographs of Life in Camp*.
- Distribute *Handout 3-3: Descriptions of Life in Camp*. While still in their groups, students should be asked to write descriptions of and then create a collage of life in the camps, addressing the following: physical conditions, living space, lack of privacy, activities for young people, lack of freedoms, questions of loyalty to the United States, and helping the war effort.
- Have students attach Parts A and B of *Handout 3-3: Descriptions of Life in Camp* to their booklets.

Author Reflections on Stop #3

Reading aloud the children's story *Baseball Saved Us*, which tells of the teams that were formed in camp, led to much discussion of sports in general. We then watched about 10 minutes of footage shot in the camps from the media piece *Something Strong Within*. Originally cameras had to be sneaked into camp, but later cameras were allowed. The media piece shows

people leaving on buses, as well as footage of life at Manzanar, Heart Mountain, and Minidoka.

We discussed what students saw and what they didn't see. A very telling object spotted in the footage was a board with an American eagle on the top of it and a list of all those who served in World War II. This started a whole series of questions about why those Japanese Americans served in the war and why most Japanese Americans did not protest the mass incarceration.

In groups, students were given some letters from young people to Clara Breed, a San Diego librarian who sent gifts and corresponded with many children in the camps. Students also looked at a series of photographs about life in the camps. The most telling were from Linda Gordon and Gary Okihiro's book *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment*, which show women making camouflage nets for the war, men planting gardens, and boys playing ball. It also depicts the living quarters and other aspects of daily life.

Students spent a considerable amount of time making collages—they could rip up magazines or had the option of finding images on the Internet. They had a difficult time selecting just five words to describe life in camp because many of them just wanted to write about what they thought. This exercise emphasized the idea of limiting one's words, and some students really struggled with this. Overall, they enjoyed the creativity of looking for specific images to tell their tale.

References

- Gordon, Linda and Gary Y. Okihiro, eds. *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006.
- Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1993/1995.
- Something Strong Within*. Film. Produced by Frank H. Watase Media Arts Center. Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 1995.



Letter to Miss Breed

Handout 3-1

22

Dear Miss Breed,
How are you getting along?
Now that school is started I suppose
you are busy at the library.
We are now in Boston Camp.
We arrived here the 24th of August.
The San Diego people are all to-
gether now and all happy. This place
is just like a desert, in fact it
is. It is dusty here & have quite
a few whirlwinds. Today we think
we will have a dust storm. There
isn't any school started yet but
it will start in October. I go to
Bible school every day. We make
all sorts of handicraft.
Last week my father, brother &
sister went fishing to Colorado River
it is 9 miles away. They started 5:00

and came back 7:00 p.m.
Before I came here I wrote
you a letter but I didn't ~~send~~
send it. I received your ~~letter~~
book the day after I came
back from the hospital. I was
very happy to receive it. At
that time I had pneumonia.
I took the book "How to Live"
and it kept me from being
lonesome. My mother sends
her best regards to your mother.
Truly yours,
Elizabeth
Kibuchi
93.75.31 CO

Gift of Elizabeth Y. Yamada
Japanese American National Museum (93.75.31CO)

All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be
submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American
National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.

Photographs of Life in Camp

Handout 3-2

23



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Evacuees of Japanese ancestry are growing flourishing truck crops for their own use in their “hobby gardens.” These crops are grown in plots 10 x 50 feet between blocks of barrack at this War Relocation Authority center.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 537987/Local Identifier 210-G-C690



Boys behind barbed wire.

Gift of Kimie Nagai, Japanese American National Museum (92.125.12)
All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.



Tule Lake Relocation Center, Newell, California. One of the barracks at this center which is used for a high school. As yet the students haven’t decided on a name for the school.

Photographer: Francis Stewart
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536385/Local Identifier 210-G-A484



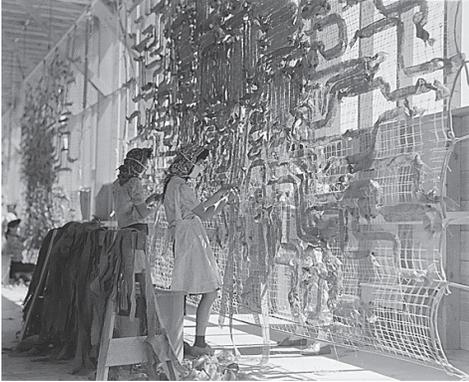
Gila River Relocation Center, Rivers, Arizona. Members of the boy scout troop who participated in the Harvest Festival Parade held at this center on Thanksgiving day.

Photographer: Francis Stewart
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 538605/Local Identifier 210-G-D643

Photographs of Life in Camp

Handout 3-2

24



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Making camouflage nets for the War Department. This is one of several War and Navy Department projects carried on by persons of Japanese ancestry in relocation centers.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 538106/Local Identifier 210-G-C814



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Baseball is the most popular recreation at this War Relocation Authority center with 80 teams having been formed throughout the Center. Most of the playing is done between the barrack blocks.

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 538065/Local Identifier 210-G-C772



Poston, Arizona. Living quarters of evacuees of Japanese ancestry at this War Relocation Authority center as seen from the top of water tower facing south west.

Photographer: Fred Clark
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536152/Local Identifier 210-G-A190



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. Mealtime at the Manzanar Relocation Center. Every effort is put forth to keep family groups intact in the dining halls as well as in their living quarters in the barracks.

Photographer: Clem Albers
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536013/Local Identifier 210-G-A17

Photographs of Life in Camp

Handout 3-2

25



Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California. An evacuee resting on his cot after moving his belongings into this bare barracks room. An army cot and mattress are the only things furnished by the government. All personal belongings were brought by the evacuees.

Photographer: Clem Albers
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 536861/Local Identifier 210-G-B112



Two United States Army soldiers with large family in front of barracks, Rohwer, Arkansas, November 21, 1944.

Gift of the Walter Muramoto Family
Japanese American National Museum (97.292.3V)
All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.

Descriptions of Life in Camp

Handout 3-3

26

Names of Group Members _____

Date _____ Period _____

Instructions—Part A: Using the letter and photographs you have, your group needs to create a written description of life in the camps, both the positive and negative details. Consider what you see AND ALSO what is missing or what you don't see that you think should be there! Be history detectives!!!

Physical Conditions	
Living Space	
Lack of Privacy	
Activities for Young People	
Lack of Freedoms	
Questions of Loyalty to the U.S.	
Helping the War Effort	

Instructions—Part B: Using the resources you have, along with images from magazines and the Internet, your group needs to create a collage of life in the camps showing BOTH positive and negative details. You can only use five words in each piece of the collage, so be selective. Five words that you might use include *smells, friends, dust, noise, and boredom.*

We Are Americans: Civil Liberties During Wartime

Time

1 class period (60 minutes per period)

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objective (Content-Related)

- Students will examine the civil liberties issues raised by the World War II Japanese American experience.

Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)

- Are students able to make comparisons between America's concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust?
- How do students respond to visual images of this topic?
- Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?

Assessment

- Students will look at resources for evidence of racial prejudice against Japanese Americans during World War II.

Materials

- *Handout 4-1: Class Notes*
- The teachers must select resources, either from those included in this lesson, or downloaded from the Web, or located in other sources:
 - *Handout 4-2a: Transcript of Message to Congress Requesting Declaration of War Against Japan, 12/08/1941*
 - *Handout 4-2b: USS Shaw*
 - *Handout 4-2c: Civilian Exclusion Order No. 43*
 - Dr. Seuss cartoons can be found in *Dr. Seuss Goes to*

War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel by Richard Minear, or they may be downloaded from the Web:

- “Honorable Fifth Column” can be downloaded from the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/Frame.htm> (accessed August 3, 2009)
- “This Is the Enemy” can be downloaded from the Spring Hill Unified School District <http://www.usd230.k12.ks.us/PICTT/publications/cartoons/1944/m.html> (accessed August 3, 2009)
- “All Packed Up” can be downloaded from the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/editorial4.html> (accessed August 3, 2009)

Activities and Teaching Strategies

- Ask students to review *Handout 4-1: Class Notes* about the loss of civil liberties during World War II.
- Distribute several different resources selected by the teacher (*Handouts 4-2a–c* or others from books or downloaded from the Web) and discuss as a group.
- In their booklets, students should attach their notes and the one resource that they feel most clearly exhibits the loss of civil rights.

Author Reflections on Stop #4

The fourth lesson focuses on civil liberties during wartime and concludes with a discussion on racial prejudices against Japanese Americans. In my class we examined the political cartoons “The Honorable Fifth Column” and “The Guy Who Makes a Mock of Democracy” from *Dr. Seuss Goes to War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel* by Richard Minear. Students were able to pick out various components in the cartoons that represented a loss of civil liberties and why the U.S. government felt this was necessary at that time.

The most valuable result of this exercise was the discussion piece. Students' questions were thought provoking and showed a real concern about one's individual rights even during wartime. In one class, the students really focused on connections between the current war with Iraq, and several references were made to 9/11 and the aftermath of racial prejudice aimed at Arab Americans. In the other classes, the students were more concerned with how people were treated in general and seemed to fixate on Pearl Harbor and how that incident had been a turning point for the nation. Several students compared this experience to the Navajo Long Walk, a subject we had discussed earlier in the semester. Overall, the students were beginning to understand multiple points of view, which was crucial to a deeper sense of content knowledge.

References

Minear, Richard H. *Dr. Seuss Goes to War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel*. New York: New Press, 1999.

Class Notes

Handout 4-1

29

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

C I V I L L I B E R T I E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1913—California’s Alien Land Law prohibits “aliens ineligible to citizenship” from owning land. Throughout the 1920s, similar (and in some cases, stricter) laws are passed in other Western states.• 1930s—Japan aggressively tries to obtain more territory in Asia.• 1939—The FBI compiles a list of potentially dangerous “enemy aliens.”• December 7, 1941—Japan bombs Pearl Harbor.• December 11, 1941—The FBI detains 1,291 people of Japanese descent, classified as “enemy aliens.”• February 19, 1942—President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, which allows military authorities to exclude anyone from anywhere without trial or hearings. This sets the stage for the exclusion and removal of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast.
I N W A R T I M E	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 1942—For a short time, governors of Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Arizona offer to accept Japanese Americans excluded from the West Coast.• September 1942—More than 110,000 people of Japanese descent are removed from the West Coast, with most forced to live in concentration camps.• 1943—More than 2,500 Japanese Americans who are in camp volunteer for U.S. military service.• September 1943—Tule Lake becomes a “segregation camp” for those allegedly causing problems in other camps.• January 1945—The exclusion order is lifted and people of Japanese descent are allowed to return to the West Coast.• August 14, 1945—Japan surrenders.

Transcript of Message to Congress Requesting Declaration of War Against Japan, 12/08/1941

Handout 4-2a

30

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
BROADCAST FROM THE CAPITOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
December 8, 1941 -- 12.30 P.M., E.S.T.

MR. VICE PRESIDENT, AND MR. SPEAKER, AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES: (TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:)

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 -- a date which will live in infamy
-- the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by
naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the
solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and
its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed,
one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American
Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his col-
league delivered to (the) our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent
American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to con-
tinue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint
of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes
it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks
ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately
sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions
of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe
damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that
very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have
been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against

- 2 -

Malaya.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

But always will (we) our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us. (applause)

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to (loud and prolonged cheers and applause) absolute victory.

I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again (endanger us) endanger us (again). (applause)

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces -- with the unbounding determination of our people -- we will gain the inevitable triumph -- so help us God. (applause)

- 3 -

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire. (loud and prolonged cheers and applause).

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE,

December 8, 1941.

USS *Shaw* Handout 4-2b

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____



Photograph of the exact moment the USS *Shaw* exploded during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 12/07/1941

Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
ARC Identifier 306543

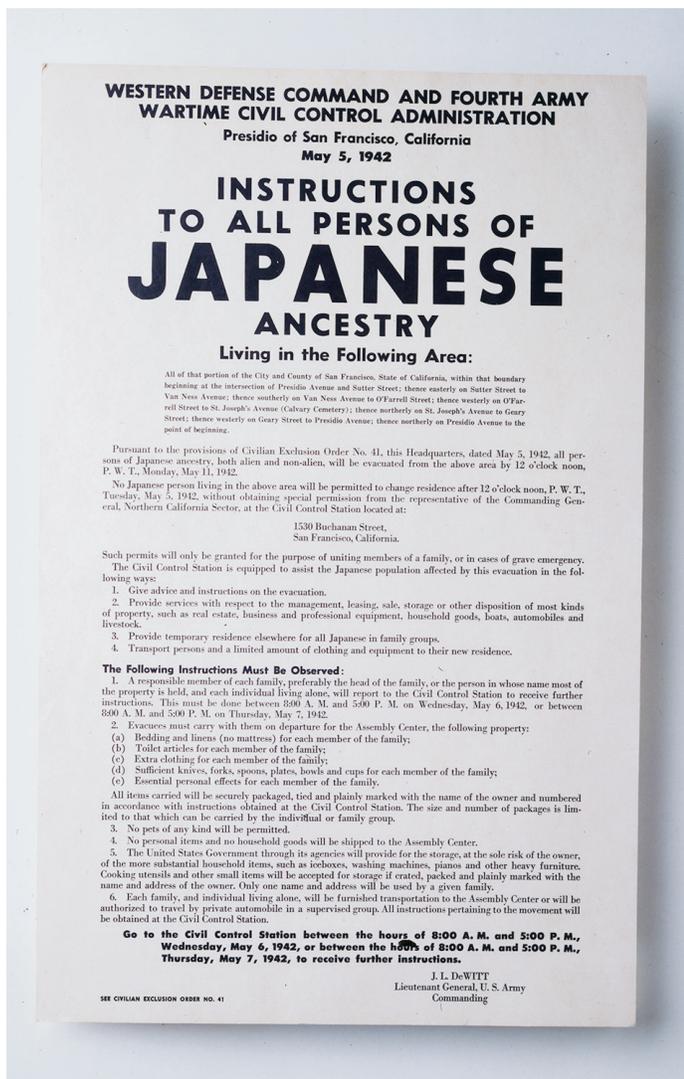
Civilian Exclusion Order No. 43

Handout 4-2c

34

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____



Gift of Kiyoshi Toi

Japanese American National Museum (92.94.1)

All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.

The New Mexico Response: Are These Friends Now Our Enemies?

Time

1 class period (60 minutes per period)

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objective (Content-Related)

- Students will examine the local experiences of Japanese Americans in New Mexico during World War II.

Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)

- Are students able to make sophisticated comparisons about the Japanese American experience in New Mexico versus their experiences in other states?
- Are students able to grasp the importance of New Mexico in the World War II effort?

Assessment

- Students will compare and contrast the experiences of the Japanese Americans in Santa Fe and Gallup, New Mexico, during World War II.

Materials

- Class copies of the article “The Years of ‘Los Japos’: Santa Fe’s Wartime Internment Camp” by Sharon Neiderman, published in the *Santa Fe Reporter* (July 10–16, 1991)
- *Handout 5-1: Class Notes*
- *Handout 5-2: Life in Santa Fe and Gallup*

Activities and Teaching Strategies

- Ask students to review *Handout 5-1: Class Notes* about Japanese Americans in New Mexico.

- Read the article “The Years of ‘Los Japos’: Santa Fe’s Wartime Internment Camp,” about the Santa Fe Department of Justice (DOJ) camp.
- Complete *Handout 5-2: Life in Santa Fe and Gallup*, comparing life during World War II in the Department of Justice camp in Santa Fe with life in the town of Gallup, New Mexico.
- Have students attach both handouts to their booklets.

Author Reflections on Stop #5

The information in *Handout 5-1: Class* was compiled from interviews with local historians and from a traveling exhibition called *Turning Leaves: The Photograph Collections of Two Japanese American Families*, sponsored by the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities. This lecture led to many questions about Gallup’s role during this period, and the students found four points especially interesting:

- Many of the landmark businesses owned by Japanese Americans are still in existence.
- Gallup was the only known town in the United States to refuse to turn their citizens of Japanese descent over to the authorities for relocation, most likely because they were well integrated into the community. Most families of Japanese descent working for the railroad were not forced out of their company housing, which was highly unusual for the time period.
- In 1942 and 1943, Gallup High School elected Japanese American student body presidents.

My students from Gallup-McKinley County Schools enjoyed using the railroad track graphic since this is a visible piece of life in our area. Their discussions revealed a real interest in the idea of community, and several questions were raised about the Japanese American families still living in Gallup. By this time they were able to respond to the document with a greater sense of content knowledge and seemed to be able to categorize information more quickly. The results were very positive: students were able to make

connections with previously presented material to show the differences in the Santa Fe DOJ camp versus the WRA camps.

Postscript: On April 23, 2009, Gallup-McKinley County Schools dedicated their newest high school to Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura, a hometown hero and World War II Medal of Honor recipient. The article “Miyamura HS to be Dedicated to War Hero” can be found on the *Gallup Independent* Web site: <http://www.gallupindependent.com/2009/04April/040709miyamura.html> (accessed September 5, 2009).

References

Neiderman, Sharon. “The Years of ‘Los Japos’: Santa Fe’s Wartime Internment Camp.” *Santa Fe Reporter* (July 10-16, 1991): 17.

Class Notes

Handout 5-1

37

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

G A L L U P	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gallup was founded in 1881 because of the railroad.• The railroad workers would go see David Gallup for their paychecks.• The Mercantile and other trading posts were established to service the nearby Native American groups.• Downtown consisted of four blocks located alongside the railroad tracks.• Gallup was a business-oriented town from the beginning, attracting more than 25 different ethnic groups to town.• Coal mining attracted several Japanese American families to Gallup, including the Miyamura family.
D U R I N G W A R T I M E	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1889 Peter Kitchen built an opera house/theatre above the City Café, later renamed the Eagle Café.• In 1919 two Japanese residents of Gallup signed a lease and joined the business of the opera house.• The Eagle Café was run by Harry Shinto and Roy Urabe while Route 66 was developed.• Virgie Chávez began Virgie’s Restaurant, with the help of George Taira, to compete with the Eagle Café.• When World War II broke out, there were seven major Japanese families in town. None of these families lost their leases after Executive Order 9066 was issued, and none were turned over to the government.• No Japanese Americans in Gallup were sent to the camps, and the Eagle Café continued to do a brisk business.• In 1943 and 1944, Gallup High School elected two student body presidents who were Japanese American.• Following the regular school day, most Japanese American students would spend three hours learning about Japanese culture and language, meeting in an old railroad car on 3rd Street.

Life in Santa Fe and Gallup

Handout 5-2

38

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

Instructions: List key aspects of the Santa Fe camp, as described in the article. Contrast camp life with the life of Japanese Americans living in Gallup during World War II.

	Santa Fe Camps	Life in Gallup
Location		
Conditions		
Activities		
Community Links		

Final Assessment

Time

1 class period (60 minutes per period)

Essential Questions

- *Content-Related:* How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?
- *Pedagogical:* How do my students respond when they encounter material about which they have no previous knowledge?

Objective (Content-Related)

- Students will synthesize the lectures, resources, and discussions to respond to the Essential Questions.

Guiding Questions (Pedagogical)

- Are students able to make comparisons between America's concentration camps and the death camps of the Holocaust?
- How do students respond to visual images of this topic?
- Are students able to develop an understanding of the racial prejudices of the time that led to this experience?
- Are students able to grasp the dichotomy of Japanese American incarceration and their patriotism?

Assessment

- Students will respond to these questions: *How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?*

Materials

- "In Response to Executive Order 9066" by Dwight Okita, downloaded from the National Park Service Web site: <http://www.nps.gov/manz/forteachers/dwight-okita.htm> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- *Handout 6-1: RACE Format*
- For Advanced Placement Document-Based Question, excerpts of the following documents must be available to students:

- Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, downloaded from the National Archives and Records Administration Web site: <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=706> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, downloaded from the National Archives and Records Administration Web site: <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=506> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Espionage Act of 1917, downloaded from the First Amendment Online Web site: <http://1stam.umn.edu/archive/historic/pdf/Espionage%20Act%20of%201917%20and%20current%20overion.pdf> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Immigration Act of 1924, downloaded from the U.S. Department of State Web site: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/id/87718.htm> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Headlines from bombing of Pearl Harbor downloaded from the Pearl Harbor Newspaper Archive Web site: <http://www.thepearlharborarchive.com/Home.aspx> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Executive Order 9066, downloaded from the National Archives and Records Administration Web site: <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=219> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Supreme Court Majority Decision from either *Korematsu v. United States* or *Hirabayashi v. United States*, downloaded from the Facing History and Ourselves Web site: <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/facingtoday/identity-religion-violence-c> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- *Handout 6-2: I Am An American*
- A variety of Japanese characters may be downloaded from a number of places, including the Kanji Symbol Web site at <http://www.kanjisymbol.net/> (accessed September 5, 2009)



Activities and Teaching Strategies

- Read aloud Dwight Okita’s poem, or another poem about the Japanese American World War II experience.
- For the final assessment, introduce the acronym RACE: R = Restate the Question; A = Answer the Question; C = Cite from a Document; E = Explain and Expand Your Answer. Explain that this is a constructed response format used in high-stakes testing.
- Distribute *Handout 6-1: RACE Format* and ask students to use the resources they have gathered over the course of the unit to complete a RACE-constructed response to these questions: *How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II? Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?*
 - Special Education students will complete the RACE-constructed response while using class notes and resources for guidance.
 - Give Advanced Placement students excerpts from approximately eight documents (see Materials section above) and have them respond to the questions.
- For the conclusion of the unit, distribute copies of Japanese characters with a variety of meanings and allow students to pick a word or phrase to put on the front of their notebooks. Have them draw the character(s) and explain how it relates to the Japanese American World War II experience.

Author Reflections on Stop #5

The results were simply amazing. The first semester I taught this, students tended to rely on Executive Order 9066 and information about life in the camps to respond to the prompt. Because I had added more resources for the second semester, the results were much more in-depth. The students expanded their answers with “America was not thinking,” and “They had to enlist in the army to prove they were loyal Americans.” They also supported their answers with detailed information from both the notes and other

resources. The results, overall, indicate that the students developed a sense of the subject and that they understood the injustices done to Japanese Americans during the war.

I do recommend differentiating instruction in the assessment piece for either Advanced Placement or Special Education students. Advanced Placement students were able to draw deeper connections using the documents following a standard Document-Based Question format.

When the students were given a series of Japanese characters and asked to pick one that somehow represented the Japanese American experience, it was a quick way for me to gauge what really had stuck with them from this unit.

RACE Format

Handout 6-1

41

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

Instructions: Use the RACE format to answer these questions:

How did the U.S. government treat Japanese Americans during World War II?

Why were American citizens seen as the enemy?

Be sure to not only describe, but also explain your responses.

R = Restate the question as a statement.	
A = Answer the question using at least two complete sentences.	
C = Cite from the resources and explain what everything means.	
E = Explain and expand your answer to six or more sentences.	

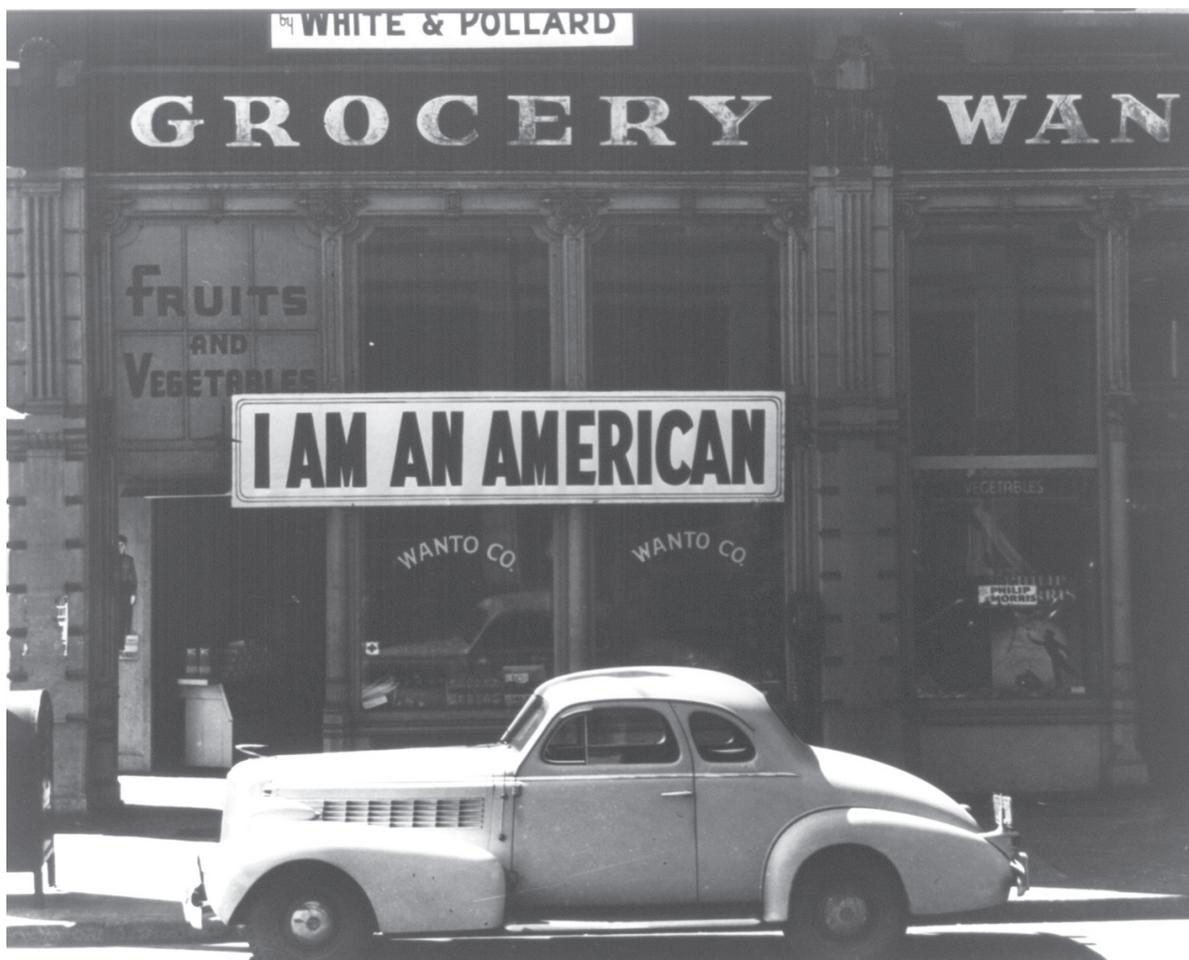
I Am An American

Handout 6-2

42

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____



San Francisco, Calif., Mar. 1942. A large sign reading "I am an American" placed in the window of a store, at 13th and Franklin streets, on December 8, the day after Pearl Harbor. The store was closed following orders to persons of Japanese descent to evacuate from certain West Coast areas. The owner, a University of California graduate, will be housed with hundreds of evacuees in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration of the war

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
Reproduction Number LC-USZ62-23602

Terminology

and the Japanese American Experience

The present procedure of keeping loyal American citizens in concentration camps on the basis of race for longer than is absolutely necessary is dangerous and repugnant to the principles of our Government.

—Attorney General Francis Biddle, December 30, 1943

In this war we are seeing more euphemistic terms than in previous conflicts. Consequently, the concentration camp which the government is starting to build at Puyallup is termed an “assembly center.” But it is a concentration camp, even though temporary.

—Tacoma News-Tribune, March 31, 1942

They were concentration camps. They called it relocation but they put them in concentration camps, and I was against it. We were in a period of emergency but it was still the wrong thing to do.”

—Harry S. Truman in Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Berkeley Publishing Corp., 1974)

The words and phrases used to describe this history vary considerably amongst scholars, government officials, and even those directly affected by Executive Order 9066: “relocation,” “evacuation,” “incarceration,” “internment,” “concentration camp.” There is no general agreement about what is most accurate or fair.

Officially, the camps were called “relocation centers.” Many now acknowledge that “relocation center” and

“evacuation” are euphemisms used purposefully by the government to downplay the significance of its actions.

America’s concentration camps are clearly distinguishable from Nazi Germany’s torture and death camps. It is difficult to accept the term “concentration camp” because of the term’s associations with the Holocaust. This educational material uses “concentration camp” not in an effort to bear comparisons to the atrocities of the Holocaust, but to express the veritable magnitude of what was done to Japanese Americans.

It is an unequivocal fact that the government itself, including the President, used the term “concentration camp” during World War II in speeches and written documents. It is also crucial to note that a “concentration camp” is defined broadly as a place where people are imprisoned not because they are guilty of any crimes, but simply because of who they are. Many groups have been singled out for such persecution throughout history, with the term “concentration camp” first used at the turn of the twentieth century in the Spanish-American and Boer wars.

Despite some differences, all concentration camps have one thing in common: People in power remove a minority group from the general population, and the rest of society lets it happen.

Adapted from the Japanese American National Museum’s exhibition *Haunting Questions: Understanding the Japanese American Incarceration*



Japanese American Confinement Sites in the United States During World War II*



WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY (WRA) sites—
 Concentration or so-called relocation camps established to confine Americans of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were American-born citizens.

ASSEMBLY CENTER sites—
 Initial temporary detention sites used to assemble persons of Japanese ancestry, citizens and non-citizens alike, for transit to more long-term incarceration sites predominantly outside of an "exclusion zone."

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) sites—
 Internment sites that primarily Issei, or alien residents of the United States of Japanese descent excluded from seeking citizenship through naturalization, were detained and/or confined. **

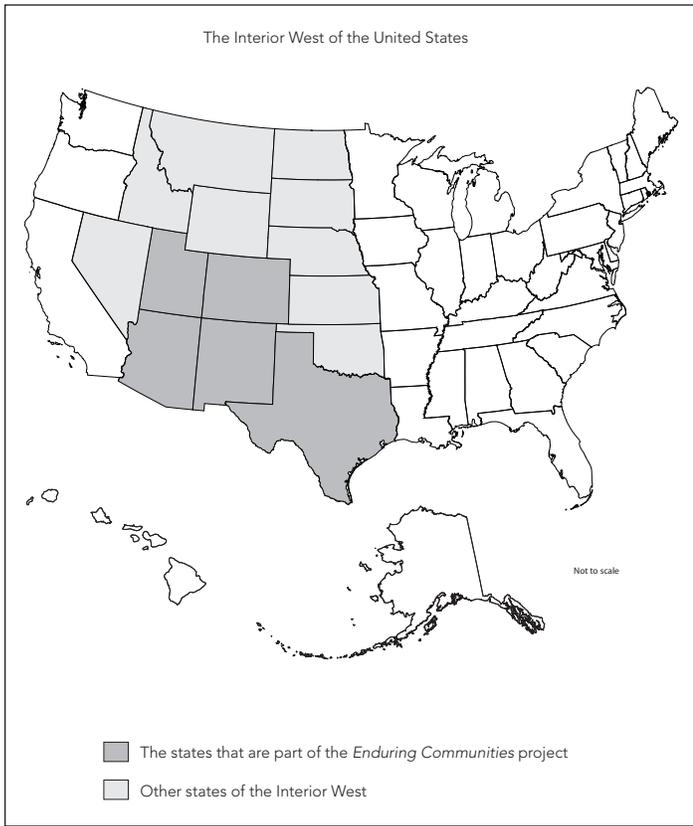
** Crystal City among DOJ sites is notable for having operated similarly to a WRA concentration camp. German and Italian enemy aliens who were treated separately and Latin American Japanese, primarily from Peru who had been involuntarily deported to the United States, also were confined at Crystal City. Other DOJ sites detained and/or confined mixed populations of enemy aliens, as did many of the U.S. Army centers.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR sites—
 Primarily U.S. Army centers where predominantly non-citizens of Japanese descent were detained and/or confined en route to long-term internment or incarceration sites.

PENITENTIARIES—
 Federal penitentiaries and facilities where Japanese American citizens who were convicted of "unlawfully" challenging federal government orders such as draft dodging or the constitutionality of the government orders restricting persons of Japanese ancestry, were imprisoned.

* To see a map of the confinement sites for all enemy aliens, please refer to the Web site www.enemyalienfiles.org.

Japanese Americans in the Interior West



Japanese Americans in the Interior West: A Regional Perspective on the Enduring Nikkei Historical Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah (and Beyond)

Arthur A. Hansen

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which allowed U.S. military commanders to designate military areas as “exclusion zones” from which “any or all persons may be excluded.” This action came two and a half months after Japan’s December 7, 1941, attack upon Pearl Harbor—the U.S. naval station in the Territory of Hawaii then home to the main part of the American fleet—which precipitated the United States’s entry into World War II.

Although it did not specifically mention Japanese Americans, E.O. 9066 led to the decision by Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, the Western Defense Command head, to exclude people of Japanese ancestry—both Issei (Japan-born aliens ineligible for American naturalization) and native-born Nisei, who were U.S. citizens—from California, the western

halves of Washington and Oregon, and southern Arizona. Of the roughly 127,000 pre-World War II U.S. Nikkei (Japanese Americans), two-thirds were U.S. citizens and the overwhelming majority lived in the three excluded states bordering the Pacific Ocean. Approximately 94,000 Nikkei resided in California.

Initially, General DeWitt opted for “voluntary” resettlement: this allowed the “excluded” Nikkei to move—at their own expense—to any unrestricted area in the country.¹ As a result, 1,963 people moved to Colorado, 1,519 to Utah, 305 to Idaho, 208 to eastern Washington, 115 to eastern Oregon, 105 to northern Arizona, 83 to Wyoming, 72 to Illinois, 69 to Nebraska, and 366 to other states (including New Mexico and Texas). There were many other potential refugees, however, who were thwarted in their attempts to move inland by the unwillingness of some states to accept them, difficulties in obtaining lodging and automobile fuel en route to their destinations, and upon their arrival, hostile “No Japs Wanted” “reception” committees, both public and private.

Consider the case of Clarence Iwao Nishizu, a 31-year-old Orange County (California) Nisei farmer. Having decided in early March 1942 that he preferred to have his family voluntarily move out of California and resettle inland, he drove his recently purchased 1941 Chevrolet to Colorado to check out possibilities there; he was accom-

¹ See Janis Takamoto, “The Effects of World War II and Wartime Sentiment on Japanese and Japanese American ‘Voluntary’ Evacuees” (master’s thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 1991).

panied by a younger brother, John, and a longtime Nisei friend, Jack Tsuchara. They were well aware that Colorado—thanks to the courageous civil libertarian commitments of its governor, Ralph Carr—and Utah (to a lesser extent) were the only western states willing to have excluded Japanese American citizens become residents.²

As restricted citizens under curfew on the Pacific Coast, the Orange County Nisei trio was required to carry travel permits, and they were not allowed to be out any later than eight o'clock in the evening. Before their early morning departure from southern California, they had heard rumors that no gas would be sold to Japanese travelers. After passing through Las Vegas on their first evening on the road, they were obliged to test the veracity of these rumors in the gateway southwestern Utah city of St. George. There, practically out of fuel, they stopped at the first filling station they encountered. It was closed, but when they saw someone sleeping inside the station they knocked on the door, and were greeted by a tough, burly man toting a shotgun, who growled: "What do you want?" To which Jack Tsuchara replied, "We're out of gas, can you sell us some?" Surprisingly, the man responded in the affirmative. Relieved, and now with a full tank of gas, the pilgrims drove to Salt Lake City, via Vernal, Utah, where they bought alcohol for the car's radiator to prevent it from freezing.

It was after midnight when the Nisei travelers crossed the state line into Colorado, after which they drove past Steamboat Springs up to the 12,000-foot summit of the Rockies. There it was snowing, a cold wind was blowing, and the temperature was 35 degrees below zero—and the water in the car's radiator had completely boiled out. While the men initially contemplated filling the radiator with tea, they ultimately rejected this plan due to the tea's high tannic acid content. Instead, they used a roadside cedar post to make a fire and so were able to melt snow for radiator water. With that problem solved, they continued their Colorado journey to Loveland and then on to Denver. There they succumbed in the early morning to their desperate need for sleep, only to be awakened by a policeman who inquired what they were doing sleeping in their car in the daytime. They replied, "Getting some rest after driving all night from California."

Fortified with a letter of introduction from a produce shipper back home in southern California, the three Nisei went to see the head of a seed company in Littleton, a town south of Denver, and he kindly offered to let them stay at his home. After looking around Littleton, however, they realized that there was little hope of their families establishing a footing in that community. They then traveled to San Luis, Colorado's oldest city, in search of suitable agricultural property to farm, but there they found nothing but alkaline soil, so they drove on to La Jara, a town near the Colorado/New Mexico border, to meet with one of the oldest pioneer Issei farmers in the state. Already reluctant to accommodate Nikkei "outsiders," this patriarch apparently used the pretext of an earthy utterance by Clarence Nishizu, made in earshot of several of his ten daughters, to refrain from even inviting the three travelers into his home to discuss resettlement prospects.

After a visit to the alien internment center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to visit Issei relatives and family friends detained there, the three Nisei drove south to Las Cruces. There they met an Issei who was farming chilies—the crop their own families grew in the world's chili capital, Orange County, California. Known as the "chili king" of Las Cruces, this Issei obviously feared potential competition and so offered his Nisei visitors no encouragement whatsoever to resettle in his area. Before leaving New Mexico, the threesome traveled west to Deming, a town they left in a hurry after an incident in a bar: an edgy local drinker inquired as to whether they were Chinese or Japanese, explaining, ominously, that "I can't tell the difference between a [good] Chinese and a bad Jap." Going next to El Paso, Texas, they met with yet another unfriendly reception, this time from the staff of the Chinese restaurant where they stopped to

2 For a full assessment of Governor Ralph Carr's actions in relation to Japanese Americans during World War II, consult the biographical study by Adam Schrager, *The Principled Politician: The Ralph Carr Story* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum, 2008).

eat. Following a meal punctuated by shouts from the restaurant’s noticeably agitated personnel, the Nisei returned to their car, only to be menaced by the sight of a knife placed under a tire in order to puncture it.

Clearly it was time to return to California, but even as they attempted to get home the group met with further degradation. Driving through Chandler, Arizona, they were stopped by a state highway patrolman. After informing the Nikkei travelers that they were in a restricted zone, the lawman reminded them that there was a curfew in effect and asked if they possessed an authorized travel permit. When Jack Tsuchida flashed the obligatory document for inspection, the patrolman then patronizingly announced that they were headed in the wrong direction and smugly corrected their mistake.

In May of 1942, Clarence Nishizu’s family was detained first at the Pomona Assembly Center on the site of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds; in August 1942 they were moved to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in northwestern Wyoming. At the time, almost all of the nearly 2,000 Nikkei in Orange County had been evicted from their homes and were incarcerated at the large concentration camp called Poston Relocation Center, located on Colorado River Indian tribal land in southwestern Arizona. After being declared ineligible for military service, in 1944 Clarence resettled with his wife, Helen, and their two young daughters in Caldwell, Idaho (near Boise), where he worked hauling potatoes. Around the same time, his parents and his two brothers, John and Henry, resettled in Ordway, Colorado, where they attempted to farm, unsuccessfully, on leased land. During the winter of 1945, with the West Coast now reopened to Japanese Americans, the entire Nishizu clan returned to southern California.³

The Nishizu family’s story of “relocation” and “resettlement” is only one among thousands of parallel versions involving other Japanese American mainlanders—truly a “people in motion” —during the World War II era. It is of particular value, however, because it spotlights and invites strategic exploration of a largely neglected aspect of Japanese American history, society, and culture: the prewar, wartime, and postwar circumstances of Nikkei communities within what historians Eric Walz and Andrew Russell have styled the Interior West of Japanese America.⁴ This essay will examine this topic in some depth, placing special emphasis upon the enduring historical experience of Japanese Americans living in the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah.⁵ By exploring these lesser-known stories, we achieve a broader and more multidimensional understanding of the Japanese American experience as a whole and give a voice to those communities that have always existed but have often been pushed to the margins in accounts of the more mainstream West Coast Japanese American communities.

In addition to touching upon the five states mentioned above, the Nishizu narrative mentions three other western interior states: Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming. These eight states—as well as Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North

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- 3 See Clarence Iwao Nishizu, interview by Arthur A. Hansen, June 14, 1982, interview 5b, Japanese American Oral History Project, Oral History Program [Center for Oral and Public History], California State University, Fullerton. This interview was published as a bound volume (edited, illustrated, and indexed) in 1991 by the CSUF Oral History Program. For the resettlement narrative featured here, see pp. 142-44.
- 4 See, in particular, the following studies: Eric Walz, “Japanese Immigration and Community Building in the Interior West, 1812-1945” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1998) ; “From Kumamoto to Idaho: The Influence of Japanese Immigrants on the Agricultural Development of the Interior West,” *Agricultural History* 74 (Spring 2000): 404-18; “Japanese Settlement in the Intermountain West, 1882-1946,” in Mike Mackey, ed., *Guilty by Association: Essays on Japanese Settlement, Internment, and Relocation in the Rocky Mountain West* (Powell, Wyo.: Western History Publications, 2001), pp. 1-24; and Andrew Benjamin Russell, “American Dreams Derailed: Japanese Railroad and Mine Communities of the Interior West” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2003). In the second of the three citations above, Walz offers a precise definition of the Interior West: “that part of the United States east of Washington, Oregon, and California and west of the Missouri River” (p. 404). In addition to these writings by Walz and Russell, see a relevant new study by Kara Allison Schubert Carroll, “Coming to Grips with America: The Japanese American Experience in the Southwest” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2009).
- 5 My intention here is to avoid, as much as possible, replicating information about these five states that the *Enduring Communities* project state scholars—Karen Leong and Dan Killoren (Arizona); Daryl J. Maeda (Colorado); Andrew B. Russell (New Mexico); Thomas Walls (Texas); and Nancy J. Taniguchi (Utah)—have provided in their respective essays, included in this curriculum and written from a multicultural perspective.

Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota—can be perceived in the present context as constituting the Interior West region. (This categorization is useful despite the fact that these states range over a number of variably designated geographical subregions: Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Intermountain, Great Plains, and Midwest.)

One notable commonality between these fourteen states is their relatively large geographical size. This point is dramatized by their rankings in total area among the 50 U.S. states.⁶ These states also are alike in that they have comparatively small total populations.⁷ Another common denominator for the 14 Interior West states is their comparatively small Asian American population relative to the national average of 3.6 percent (according to the 2000 U.S. census).⁸ In terms of the racial-ethnic population (Asian/Black/American Indian/Hispanic) of the Interior West, however, it is apparent that a noticeable disparity in this regard exists between the five principal states and the nine subsidiary states when the percentages for the two units are compared to the national average percentage of 29.3.⁹

When Clarence Nishizu and his party explored resettlement possibilities in the Interior West in early 1942, the demographic profile for the area's 14 states (based on 1940 census information and arrayed in alphabetical order) reveals the following total and racial-ethnic population figures: **Arizona (499,261 - 174,371)**; **Colorado (1,123,296 - 109,343)**; Idaho (524,873 - 8,300); Kansas (1,801,028 - 79,571); Montana (559,456 - 21,228); Nebraska (1,315,834 - 23,705); Nevada (110,247 - 9,263); **New Mexico (531,818 - 261,387)**; North Dakota (641,935 - 10,791); Oklahoma (2,336,434 - 232,629); South Dakota (642,961 - 24,206); **Texas (6,414,824 - 1,663,712)**; **Utah (550,310 - 9,962)**; Wyoming (250,742 - 10,273).¹⁰ As for the Interior West Nikkei population at the point of the U.S. entry into World War II, it was distributed as follows: **Arizona (632)**; **Colorado (2,734)**; Idaho (1,200); Kansas (19); Montana (508), Nebraska (480); Nevada (470); **New Mexico (186)**; North Dakota (83); Oklahoma (57); South Dakota (19); **Texas (458)**; **Utah (2,210)**; and Wyoming (643). Even in 1940, all fourteen Interior West states could claim enduring com-

6 Rankings in terms of area: Texas (2); Montana (4); New Mexico (5); Arizona (6); Nevada (7); Colorado (8); Wyoming (10); Utah (13); Idaho (14); Kansas (15); Nebraska (16); South Dakota (17); North Dakota (19); Oklahoma (20).

7 Rankings in terms of population size: Wyoming (50); North Dakota (47); South Dakota (46); Montana (44); Idaho (39); Nebraska (38); New Mexico (36); Nevada (35); Utah (34); Kansas (33); Oklahoma (27); Colorado (24); Arizona (20); Texas (2). The last three of these states (Colorado, Arizona, and Texas), observably, are exceptional in that their present-day population ranking falls within the upper half of the nation's fifty states. However, viewed historically, only Texas claimed such a ranking in the six national censuses extending from 1910 to 1960: 1910 (5); 1920 (5); 1930 (5); 1940 (6); 1950 (6); 1960 (6). As for Arizona, its population rankings differed markedly, with a population loss from the early part of the twentieth century until 1960: 1910 (45); 1920 (45); 1930 (43); 1940 (43); 1950 (37); 1960 (35). Colorado's ranking during this time period changed very little: 1910 (32); 1920 (32); 1930 (33); 1940 (33); 1950 (34); 1960 (33). When looked at another way, it can be appreciated that Colorado's population increased by a robust 30.6 percent between 1990 and 2000, while Arizona's grew by a whopping 40 percent.

8 This is certainly true of the five principal states: Arizona (1.8 percent); Colorado (2.2 percent); New Mexico (1.1 percent); Texas (2.7 percent); and Utah (1.7 percent). But this point applies (with one obvious exception) even more powerfully to the nine other states: North Dakota (0.6 percent); South Dakota (0.6 percent); Nebraska (1.3 percent); Nevada (4.5 percent); Kansas (1.7 percent); Oklahoma (1.4 percent); Wyoming (0.6 percent); Montana (0.5 percent); and Idaho (0.9 percent).

9 On the one hand, all but Nevada (32.3) of the latter states fall beneath this percentage (and most substantially so): North Dakota (6.3 percent); South Dakota (10.9 percent); Nebraska (11.7 percent); Kansas (15.3 percent); Oklahoma (20.1 percent); Wyoming (10.1 percent); Montana (9.0 percent); Idaho (10.6 percent). On the other hand, three of the five former states exceed (two quite strikingly) the national average percentage: Arizona (35.2 percent); Colorado (24.1 percent); New Mexico (54.6 percent); Texas (46.0 percent); Utah (12.8 percent).

10 Because the primary focus in this essay is on the five states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah, the statistics for these states are rendered in bold type.

munities, however modest, of Nikkei living and working within their boundaries.¹¹ In 1900 there were a total of 5,278 Japanese Americans living in the 14 Interior West states, with 767 of them residing in the primary five states and 4,509 in the supplementary nine states. By 1940, the total number of Nikkei in the Interior West had grown to 9,624—however, their distribution in the primary and supplementary states had almost reversed itself: the five primary states now counted 6,220 as opposed to the nine states' 3,404 Nikkei. What accounts for this transformed situation?

The work of the late Nisei historian Masakazu Iwata—in particular, his book *Planted in Good Soil: A History of the Issei in United States Agriculture*—is especially helpful in explaining the population numbers above.¹² Because Iwata's focus is on Japanese immigrants who came to the U.S. mainland after 1884 when Japan began allowing general emigration of laborers to foreign countries, he only alludes to the 61,111 Japanese who were living in the Hawaiian Islands by 1900, by and large toiling on the many sugar plantations there. For Iwata, what is notable is that between 1902 and 1907 37,000 Japanese migrated to the continental U.S., where they joined the 80,000 who had arrived directly on the mainland between 1893 and 1910; these numbers were augmented by thousands of their fellow countrymen who indirectly entered the U.S., legally and illegally, from Canada and Mexico.¹³

Whether journeying directly to the U.S. mainland or via Hawai'i, most Japanese immigrants landed at the West Coast ports of Seattle and San Francisco. While some people settled proximate to these cities, many more fanned out to other parts of the West. "In contrast to the westward migration across the American continent of immigrants from Europe after their landing in Atlantic coast ports," observes Iwata, "those from Japan pushed eastward from the Pacific Coast, their progress generally coming to a halt roughly at the Missouri River in the Nebraska sector, [while] in the south the farthest advance eastward was into the Rio Grande Valley of Texas."¹⁴

These overwhelmingly unmarried male Issei were drawn to the U.S. primarily for economic reasons. Most came from agrarian backgrounds in southern Japan and—despite the fact that they were preponderantly common laborers—most were relatively well-educated. As compared to those in this immigrant wave with a sojourner mentality (i.e., who determined to stay abroad only long enough to earn sufficient money to alleviate their Japanese families' dire financial straits and/or to build lives for themselves in Japan), there was only a very small number who intended to settle permanently in America.

Fortuitously, the Issei arrived in the U.S. as the Interior West region was experiencing what historian Eric Walz has described as "an economic boom fueled by railroad construction, coal and hard-rock¹⁵ mining, and agricultural

11 For example, in 1900, at the twentieth century's outset, the five primary states had these Japanese American populations: **Arizona (281); Colorado (48); New Mexico (8); Texas (13); Utah (417)**. In the three decennial censuses between 1900 and 1940, the almost universally escalating number of Nikkei in these states is captured statistically: **Arizona (371 - 550 - 879); Colorado (2,300 - 2,464 - 3,213); New Mexico (258 - 251 - 249); Texas (340 - 449 - 519); Utah (2,100 - 2,936 - 3,269)**. As for the subsidiary nine states, their Nikkei decade-by-decade populations—recorded in the four U.S. censuses for those decades—from 1900 through 1930 were characterized by a generally fluctuating growth pattern: Idaho (1,291 - 1,263 - 1,569 - 1,421); Kansas (4 - 107 - 52 - 37); Montana (2,441 - 1,585 - 1,074 - 753); Nebraska (3 - 590 - 804 - 674); Nevada (228 - 864 - 754 - 608); North Dakota (148 - 59 - 72 - 91); Oklahoma (0 - 48 - 67 - 104); South Dakota (1 - 42 - 38 - 19); Wyoming (393 - 1,596 - 1,194 - 1,026).

12 Masakazu Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil: A History of the Issei in United States Agriculture*, 2 vols. (New York: Peter Lang, 1992). The two volumes of this work are consecutively numbered.

On Japanese immigration into the western U.S. mainland, see also the following two studies: Azusa Tsuneyoshi, "Meiji Pioneers: The Early Japanese Immigrants to the American Far West and Southwest, 1880–1930" (PhD diss., Northern Arizona University, 1989) and Andrea A. E. Geiger, "Cross-Pacific Dimensions of Race, Caste and Class: Meiji-era Japanese Immigrants in the North American West, 1885–1928" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2006).

13 Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil*, p. 112.

14 Ibid.

15 Gold, copper, zinc, nickel, lead, etc.

development.”¹⁶ Recruited by labor contractors, the Issei were a mobile workforce. As both individuals and gang laborers, they moved not only between different work opportunities on the Pacific Coast and the western interior sections of the U.S., but also between America and Japan and many other parts of the world in which Japanese workers filled a variety of employment needs. Concurrently, their emigration patterns relieved population pressure on their native Japan, and through remittances, increased its wealth.¹⁷

Many Issei who came to America first found employment with the steam railroad companies in two of the five primary Interior West states, Colorado and Utah, but many more also worked for the railroad industry in such secondary states as Montana, Idaho,¹⁸ Wyoming,¹⁹ and Nevada.²⁰ This largely accounts for why the 1900 census counted so many more Nikkei in the secondary states rather than the primary states. However, as Iwata notes, even though they achieved remarkable success—supplanting Chinese railroad workers; gaining wage parity with (and then employer preference over) other immigrant laborers from such countries as Italy, Greece, and Austria; improving their status within the industry by becoming section workers (occasionally even foremen) and office secretaries and interpreters; and accumulating some surplus capital—the majority of Issei “began to look about for work other than that in the railroads.”²¹ Nonetheless, as Masakazu Iwata is quick to remind us, in spite of this exodus of Issei workers from the railroads during the first decade of the twentieth century, “even as late as 1930 there were over 2,000 Japanese still working in the railroad industry.”²² Moreover, as historian Andrew Russell has more recently indicated, “while their numbers shrank steadily in the prewar [World War II years], the Nikkei of the railroads and mines continued to account for a sizable percentage of the Japanese-American population of most interior states right up to the start of the war.”²³

Russell recounts that sometime after going into railroad work, Issei entered into mining operations (albeit to a far lesser extent). While there were outcroppings of Japanese mining settlements in Rock Springs and other

16 See Eric Walz, “From Kumamoto to Idaho,” p. 405.

17 Remittances were money sent by overseas Japanese laborers to Japan for investment or for family support. Although the largest Issei remittance payments came from Hawaii and California, those sent home by Interior West laborers were also fairly substantial. For example, a 1908 survey of Japanese farmers in Colorado revealed that one-third of them sent annual remittances averaging one hundred dollars.

18 For details about Issei employment in the Pacific Northwest (Montana and Idaho, as well as Washington and Oregon), see William Thomas White, “A History of Railroad Workers in the Pacific Northwest, 1883-1934” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1981) and “Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Railroad Work Force: The Case of the Far Northwest, 1883-1918,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 16 (July 1985): 265-83, especially pp. 273-76. In “Race, Ethnicity, and Gender,” White explains that most of the peak 13,000 Issei workers on western railroads were in the pay of the Northern Pacific, the Great Northern, the Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, and Milwaukee lines, with the Great Northern alone employing 5,000 of them, “although their number declined rapidly in the wake of the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907-1908” (p. 274).

19 For an in-depth treatment of Nikkei railway employment within Wyoming, see Barbara Hickman, “Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming, 1891-1941” (master’s thesis, University of Wyoming, 1989). Hickman emphasizes that her study concentrates on “the Japanese who worked for the Union Pacific, both on the tracks and in its related industries across the southern tier of Wyoming, and along the Oregon Short Line northwest from Kemmerer in the southwest of the state” (p. 1).

20 For a brief overview of pre-World War II Issei railroad workers in Nevada, see Andrew Russell, “Friends, Neighbors, Foes and Invaders: Conflicting Images and Experiences of Japanese Americans in Wartime Nevada” (master’s thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1996), pp. 21-24. In “American Dreams Derailed: Japanese Railroad and Mine Communities of the Interior West” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2003), Russell broadens his 1996 treatment of Issei railroad workers to embrace the Interior West region. After stating that in 1905 one-sixth of the Issei (11,783 out of 61,338) worked for railroads, he writes that initially most worked as trackmen in the northwestern and central mountain states. “However,” he concludes, “by 1906 the number of railroad workers had climbed to between 13,000 and 15,000 dispersed along virtually all of the major roads of the West. Thereafter, the ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’ went into effect, causing a sharp decrease in Japanese railway workers by 1910. . . . The Union Pacific and other roads that traversed Wyoming, which once employed thousands, by then reported between 600 and 800 Japanese workers” (pp. 15-16).

21 In the peak year of 1906, some 13,000 Issei worked for the railroads.

22 See Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil*, p. 125.

23 See Russell, “American Dreams Derailed,” p. 3.

southern Wyoming towns in the late 1890s, most Japanese immigrants did not labor in coal and copper mining camps until the first decade of the twentieth century. “The first Japanese coal miners in Utah,” surmises Russell, “probably arrived in 1904, when 145 hired on at the Castle Gate Mine in Carbon County . . . [and] around this time, coal mining companies in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico also began to employ significant numbers of Japanese miners.”²⁴

It is the opinion of Masakazu Iwata that Japanese working in the coal mines of Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah experienced harsher treatment than did Issei laborers in the coal mining industry within Wyoming, where they were more numerous than in the other three states. Although Issei miners in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah avoided wage discrimination and were paid roughly the same as other immigrant groups, they typically were disallowed union membership and were consigned to live in a “Jap Town” outside of the boundaries of a given community settlement; they were also regarded by other races and ethnic groups to be in the same category as blacks. Wyoming—which in 1909 was home for over 13 percent of the total 7,000 Japanese living in the Interior West region—permitted Nikkei (and Chinese) to become members of the United Mine Workers, and this development led to a shortened work day and higher wages for Asian workers compared to their counterparts elsewhere in the region.

Barbara Hickman, a historian of the Nikkei experience in Wyoming, has observed that by 1909 the Issei residents of that state were increasingly finding the conditions of railroad and mining life too harsh. At the same time, they began to shift their goals: rather than continue to live in deprivation in order to save money and then return to Japan, they sought to become permanent settlers in America. “For those who stayed in the U.S.,” writes Hickman, “savings went towards the establishment of small businesses and family farms. Issei, for the most part, quit the perilous railroad and mining industries by 1910 and [thereafter steadily] moved away from the state of Wyoming.”²⁵

In her work, Hickman seeks to rectify the fact that historians of Wyoming history have tended to restrict their treatment of the Japanese experience in the so-called “Equality State”²⁶ to their World War II incarceration at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center (whose peak population reached 10,767); the camp was located in the northwest corner of the state between the small communities of Powell and Cody.²⁷ Wyoming’s population of people of Japanese ancestry did decline from a 1910 figure of 1,596 (1.09 percent of the state’s total population of 145,965) to 1,194 in 1920 and 1,026 in 1930, dropping somewhat precipitously to 643 in 1940. Despite these falling numbers, Hickman does not feel that this justifies the fact that “the Japanese [have] quietly disappeared” from Wyoming’s

24 Ibid., 16. Nancy Taniguchi, in *Castle Valley America: Hard Land, Hard-won Home* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2004), places the arrival of the first Japanese miners in Castle Valley, Utah, in 1901, when they replaced Italian immigrants in the multinational, multiracial, and semi-segregated workforce. In *Planted in Good Soil*, Masakazu Iwata maintains that “it was not until 1903 that the members of this race [Japanese] entered the mines of southern Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, at which time they were introduced as strikebreakers” (p. 127). For a detailed historical treatment of the experience of Japanese miners within the multicultural coal industry of southern Wyoming, see Ellen Schoening Aiken, “The *United Mine Workers of America* Moves West: Race, Working Class Formation, and the Discourse of Cultural Diversity in the Union Pacific Coal Towns of Southern Wyoming, 1870-1930” (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 2002).

25 Hickman, “Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming,” p. 30.

26 This nickname for Wyoming—bestowed because in 1869 it became the first place in the U.S. where women were granted the right to vote—is a bit of a misnomer: in 1869 Wyoming was still a territory and did not become the nation’s forty-fourth state until 1890.

27 The literature on the Heart Mountain Relocation Center is voluminous. The most comprehensive nonfiction studies are Douglas W. Nelson’s *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp* (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1976) and Mike Mackey’s *Heart Mountain: Life in Wyoming’s Concentration Camp* (Powell, Wyo.: Western History Publications, 2000). In addition, Gretel Ehrlich’s *Heart Mountain* (New York: Viking, 1988) represents an overview of this camp’s wartime experience from the perspective of a historical novelist. At present, there is no book extant that examines the overarching history of people of Japanese ancestry in Wyoming.

historical record.²⁸ To make her point, she not only references the existence of pre-1910 communities in Wyoming with a considerable population of Issei, but also documents those towns—such as Rock Springs in south central Wyoming²⁹—that boasted *nihonmachi* (Japantowns).³⁰

Montana shares Wyoming’s historical experience of having had a sizeable Nikkei population at the outset of the twentieth century that thereafter dwindled in the decades prior to World War II.³¹ In 1900 Montana’s Japanese population was 2,441, which then spiraled downward: 1,585 in 1910, 1,074 in 1920, 753 in 1930, and 508 in 1940; this drop was even more dramatic than the Nikkei population numbers in Wyoming. During World War II, the U.S. Department of Justice operated the Fort Missoula Internment Camp for enemy alien Italians and roughly 1,000 Japanese internees. Unfortunately, the camp’s existence and its place within the context of Japanese America’s defining event—wartime exclusion and detention—has seemingly overshadowed all other facets of the Nikkei experience from Montana’s historical narrative and collective memory.³²

The two-pronged cause prompting the mass exodus of Issei railroad and mining gang laborers from Wyoming and Montana was their desire to pursue agricultural employment as well as the comparative paucity of opportunities to do so within these neighboring states. Wyoming suffered the most dismal agricultural scenario; subject to extremely cold temperatures and generally considered to be semi-arid, it was “climatologically inhospitable to farming.”³³ According to Masakazu Iwata, while the great majority of Issei immigrants were toiling in the railroad and mining industries in the southwestern part of the state,³⁴ in northern Wyoming a much smaller number took

28 “Of all the ethnic groups attracted to southwestern Wyoming by employment opportunities in the coal mines and the railroad,” explains Hickman, “the Japanese immigrants are arguably least recognized. Few studies of cultural diversity in Wyoming even mention the presence of Japanese, choosing to focus on the European immigrants.” See, Hickman, “Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming,” p. 52.

29 Rock Springs, Wyoming, was the site of the Rock Springs massacre on September 2, 1885. The result of racial tensions between immigrant Chinese and white (primarily immigrant) miners growing out of an ongoing labor dispute, this event ended with at least 28 Chinese miners dead and another 15 wounded, plus property damage that included 75 Chinese residences burned.

30 Drawing upon oral history evidence provided by a 14-year-old who was living in Rock Springs in 1907, Hickman notes that its Japantown—then consisting of 272 people—had “two Japanese pool halls, two Japanese professional photographers, grocery and fish stores, a noodle restaurant, and a regular restaurant.” Its residents staged a public parade to celebrate the Meiji emperor of Japan’s birthday. Moreover, while conceding that most of the post-1910 Japanese-ancestry population in Wyoming continued to be connected to the railroad and mining industries, Hickman relates that with growing frequency Nikkei entered a wide range of occupations. See Hickman, “Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming,” pp. 2, 32, and 42.

31 “Most of the Japanese [preponderantly men],” writes historian William Lang, “had come to Montana during the late nineteenth century as railroad workers . . . [chiefly maintenance crew members for the Northern Pacific, Great Northern, and Union Pacific lines] and lived in railroad division-point towns such as Missoula [in the northwest] and Dillon [in the southwest].” See William Lang, “Alloyed Montana: Ethnic Components of a Twentieth-Century People,” in Michael P. Malone, ed., *Montana Century: 100 Years in Pictures and Words* (Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 1999), p. 86.

32 The only published volume spotlighting Nikkei history in Montana is Carol Van Valkenburg’s *An Alien Place: The Fort Missoula, Montana, Detention Camp 1941-44* (Missoula, Mont.: Pictorial Histories Publication Company, 1995). For two other books covering Nikkei internment at Fort Missoula, see: Yoshiaki Fukuda, *My Six Years of Internment: An Issei’s Struggle for Justice* (San Francisco: Konkō Church of San Francisco, 1990); and Louis Fiset, *Imprisoned Apart: The World War II Correspondence of an Issei Couple* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998). Within the literature on Japanese Montanans, there is not even a counterpart to a periodical article such as Robert Swartout’s on the Chinese experience in Montana: “Kwangtung to Big Sky: The Chinese in Montana, 1864-1900,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 38 (Winter 1988): 42-53.

As in the case in Montana, the placement of an enemy alien internment camp near Bismarck, North Dakota, during World War II (Fort Lincoln, whose Japanese-ancestry population numbered more than 1,800) has resulted in this one momentous chapter of the Japanese experience in North Dakota so overshadowing the rest of the state’s Nikkei story as to render it practically nonexistent. Whereas diverse dimensions of Fort Lincoln’s wartime situation have been featured in a book (Hyung-ju Ahn, *Between Two Adversaries: Korean Interpreters at Japanese Alien Enemy Detention Centers during World War II* [Fullerton, Calif.: Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton, 2002]); a museum exhibition (*Snow Country Prison: Interned in North Dakota*, curated by Laurel Reuter and exhibited in Bismarck, North Dakota, at United Tribes Technical College, 2003); and a documentary film (Satsuki Ina, producer/co-director, *From A Silk Cocoon: A Japanese American Renunciation Story* [San Francisco: Center for Asian American Media, 2005]), there are no media representations whatsoever of any other aspects of the Japanese historical presence in North Dakota.

33 Hickman, “Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming,” p. 32.

34 See A. Dudley Gardner, “The Japanese in Southwest Wyoming,” http://www.wgcc.sy.edu/wyo_hist/Japanese.htm (accessed July 11, 2009).

up farming in the Powell and Worland districts and around the town of Sheridan.³⁵ Most of the farmers remaining in Wyoming after 1910 found work as gang laborers in the northern sugar beet fields, although the majority of Issei agricultural workers migrated to such nearby Interior West states as Colorado, Nebraska, and, in particular, Idaho, for employment in those states' respective sugar beet operations.³⁶

The Japanese agricultural story in Montana, as Iwata has recorded, played out differently from that in Wyoming—and the primary factor in that difference was not climate, but racism. Very early in the twentieth century, as Japanese immigrant railroad workers began to seek other employment (due in part to the hostility they encountered from white laborers), they were recruited to work on labor gangs in the state's burgeoning sugar beet industry. By 1907 Issei had gained invaluable experience farming sugar beets, and they began raising this crop on land they controlled either as owners, or more generally, as leaseholders; most of these farms were located in south-central Montana, just north of Wyoming's border, around communities like Joliet, Park City, Bridger, and Fromberg. Shortly after World War I (which swelled Montana farm profits), Issei farmers began growing other crops (e.g., potatoes, melons, onions, and cabbage) as well as sugar beets. Issei also launched farming ventures in northwest Montana near the town of Whitefish, with some cultivating crops previously deemed not feasible for the area (such as celery and lettuce), and some abandoned vegetable production altogether for dairy farming. By 1923, anti-Asian sentiments were formalized in the form of an alien land law modeled on the one imposed in California; its strict enforcement both prohibited white landowners from leasing farmland to aliens ineligible for citizenship (i.e., Japanese and Korean immigrants) and persuaded many Issei to either stop farming in Montana or move, as many of their compatriots already had, to more accommodating Interior West states (in particular, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska, and Idaho)³⁷ and there pursue their agricultural aspirations.³⁸

The history of the sugar beet industry in the Interior West is too complicated to be discussed in much detail here,³⁹ but since it was of paramount importance to the frontier and settlement stages of Nikkei in this region, a few basic facts are in order. (Thankfully, Masakazu Iwata has admirably tackled how and to what extent the sugar beet industry influenced the development of Nikkei agriculture and community building in not only Colorado, Idaho, Nebraska, and Utah,⁴⁰ but also in such other Interior West states as Arizona, Kansas, Montana, New Mex-

35 Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil*, pp. 604-05. See also, Cynde Georgen, "Subjects of the Mikado: The Rise and Fall of Sheridan County's Japanese Community, 1900-1930," <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com~wyoming/ar-sheridanmikado.htm> (accessed July 11, 2009)

36 Hickman, "Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming," p. 33.

37 Thus, all four of these states experienced increased Japanese populations between 1910 and 1920—Colorado, 2,300 to 2,464; Idaho, 1,263 to 1,569; Nebraska, 590 to 804; Utah, 2,100 to 2,956— even after the passage of the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement, by which the Japanese government agreed to limit issuance of continental passports to non-laborers; former residents; parents, wives, or children of residents; or settled agriculturists (i.e., those who wished to assume active control of an already possessed interest in a mainland farming enterprise). See Hickman, "Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming," p. 47.

38 The information about Japanese farming in Montana is drawn from Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil*, pp. 605-07.

39 For a baseline study pertaining to this topic, see Leonard J. Arrington, *Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966). See also four articles on this same topic that appeared in volume 41 (January 1967) of *Agricultural History*: Leonard Arrington, "Science, Government, and Enterprise in Economic Development: The Western Beet Sugar Industry," pp. 1-18; Paul S. Taylor, "Hand Laborers in the Western Sugar Beet Industry," pp. 19-26; Gerald D. Nash, "The Sugar Beet Industry and Economic Growth in the West," pp. 27-30; and Wayne D. Rasmussen, "Technological Change in Western Sugar Beet Production," pp. 31-36.

40 For a discussion about Colorado, see Iwata, *Planted In Good Soil*, pp. 634-69, especially pp. 634-45 and 661-63; for Idaho, see *ibid.*, pp. 615-24, especially pp. 616 and 622-24; for Nebraska, see *ibid.*, pp. 607-614, especially p. 609; and for Utah, see *ibid.*, pp. 595-604, especially pp. 595-99, 601, and 603-04.



ico, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.⁴¹)

The research and development phase of the industry—which primarily took place in Utah under the guidance of Mormon Church agricultural supervisors—was effectively completed by 1897; between 1898 and 1920, abetted by irrigation practices and the securing of sufficient labor throughout the region, the industry experienced tremendous expansion.⁴² Working in labor gangs, thousands of Issei dominated the handwork done in the regional sugar beet fields during the twentieth century’s opening decade. (As succinctly described by Masakazu Iwata, in *Planted in Good Soil*, “handwork” in the sugar beet fields consisted of “the bunching and thinning, the arduous hoeing, and the back-breaking work of topping and loading.”⁴³) By about 1920, however, most sugar beet hand laborers were Mexican immigrants.⁴⁴ This change occurred because Issei bachelors began to nurture a family-based Nikkei society here in the United States, in part due to both the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1908 and the Immigration Act of 1924; they began to marry and bring relatives over from Japan. As Eric Walz writes, they “chose to move as quickly as possible from the ranks of the common laborer to operating their own farms and businesses.”⁴⁵

Not all Issei laborers who exchanged railroad and mining employment for agricultural pursuits in the Interior West migrated to this region from within the continental U.S., nor did these migrants always enter farming in their new locations via the sugar beet industry.⁴⁶ One way of giving these abstract points concrete embodiment is through examining a case study, that of the Japanese experience in El Paso, Texas. Invaluable to this case study is work done by two past graduate students at the University of Texas, El Paso: the first by a Japanese social scientist,

41 The situation in Arizona is discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 672-701, particularly pp. 674-75; for Kansas, see *ibid.*, pp. 614-15; for Montana, see *ibid.*, pp. 605-07; for Nevada, see *ibid.*, pp. 624-26; for New Mexico, see *ibid.*, pp. 701-08, particularly pp. 702-03; for South Dakota, see *ibid.*, p. 755; for Texas, see *ibid.*, pp. 717-41, particularly pp. 734-35; and for Wyoming, see *ibid.*, pp. 604-05. Of the 14 Interior West states, Iwata fails to mention only Oklahoma and North Dakota relative to the Japanese role in sugar beet agriculture. However, he does state that “in the Dakotas, statistics indicate that the Japanese population in North Dakota was from the earliest years greater than that of South Dakota because of the entry of railroad, mine, and farm workers from the neighboring state of Montana” (*ibid.*, p. 755).

42 Historian Leonard Arrington observes that in the 1898-1913 interval, a total of 86 new beet factories were built, more than half by 1903, involving an \$80 million investment (“Science, Government, and Enterprise in Economic Development,” p. 10). In “Japanese Settlement in the Intermountain West” Eric Walz, being more pointed, writes that in the states of “Colorado, Idaho, Nebraska, and Utah, sugar beet acreage expanded from a total of 168,425 acres in 1910, to 506,200 acres in 1920 [and that] the number of sugar factories in those same four states increased from ten in 1900, to forty-nine in 1920, while the total tonnage of sugar beets produced . . . grew from 39,385 tons in 1901 to 4,779,00 tons in 1920” (p. 2).

43 Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil*, p. 167. For a detailed account of sugar beet handwork, including a recollection by an Issei who experienced it, see Eric Walz, “Masayoshi Fujimoto: Japanese Diarist, Idaho Farmer” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 1994), pp. 16-17.

44 Taylor, “Hand Laborers in the Western Sugar Beet Industry,” p. 22. For the role of Mexican labor in the Interior West sugar beet industry in the states of Wyoming and Colorado, see, respectively, Augustin Redwine, “Lovell’s Mexican Colony,” http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/RobertsHistory/lovells_Mexican_colony.htm (accessed July 13, 2009); Barbara Hawthorne, “Mexican American Cultural History,” http://library.ci.fort-collins.co.us/Local_history/topics/Ethnic/mexican.htm (accessed July 13, 2009).

45 Walz, “From Kumamoto to Idaho,” pp. 408-09.

46 For a useful multicultural study focused on the sugar beet industry within the Interior West, see R. Todd Welker, “Sweet Dreams in Sugar Land: Japanese Farmers, Mexican Farm Workers, and Northern Utah Beet Production” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 2002). Welker’s scholarship builds upon three published studies of the sugar beet industry in Utah and Idaho—Arrington’s *Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966*; J. R. Bachman, *Story of the Amalgamated Sugar Company 1897-1961* (Caldwell, Ida.: Caxton, 1962); and Fred G. Taylor, *A Saga of Sugar: Being a Story of the Romance and Development of Beet Sugar in the Rocky Mountain West* (Salt Lake City: Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1944)—and a newer unpublished work on the same subject: John L. Powell, “The Role of Beet Growers in the Cache Valley Sugar Beet Industry 1891-1981” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 1995). Whereas the books by Arrington, Bachman, and Taylor are written, as their titles may indicate, from the perspective of the sugar companies, Powell’s thesis generally embodies the point of view of the white, Mormon beet growers. As for Welker’s thesis, it approaches the topic from the frame of reference of two racial-ethnic groups—Japanese/Japanese Americans and Mexicans/Mexican Americans—involved within a single sugar beet farming community in northern Utah.

Tsuyako Miyasato, and the second by an American historian, Christe Celia Armendariz.⁴⁷

Most Issei migrants to El Paso, the largest city along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border, traveled either from Mexico or from diverse parts of the continental United States. After experiencing difficulty entering America from Mexico during 1906-1907, owing to widespread fears in the U.S. of a so-called “Japanese Invasion,” Issei laborers resorted to smuggling themselves across the border into El Paso, where Texas officials welcomed them because of their reputed agricultural expertise. When the Mexican Revolution erupted in 1910, the United States suspended its immigration laws in order to provide Nikkei refuge from Mexico. Thereafter, the refugees—primarily ex-railroad laborers in Mexico—formed the cornerstone of a small yet flourishing Japanese colony in El Paso.

Texas did not impose an anti-Japanese alien land law until 1921, so prior to that date the Japanese population in the city and the surrounding valley of El Paso grew steadily as Nikkei farmers availed themselves of the twin opportunities to farm their own land and to become permanent settlers. The first Issei to purchase land in El Paso did so in 1914, and just two years later El Paso had 44 Japanese residents. By 1920 Issei farmed—mainly as leaseholders—one-fifth of El Paso Valley’s 50,000 acres of fertile land, and by the next year there were 125 Japanese who owned 70 acres and leased another 5,000 acres proximate to the city. Cantaloupes were the chief crop, although it later suffered devastation by nematodes (i.e., roundworms).

A number of Issei men who came to El Paso not only married Mexican women, but they also adopted Spanish first names; thus, Ryiochi Okubo became José Okubo. During the 1930s, the El Paso Nikkei population swelled due to those who moved to Texas to escape the unbearable racism leveled against those of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast and in Mexico. Then, too, in the 1930s, as the actions of the fascist Japanese government became manifest in the media, some Japanese El Pasoans sought to protect themselves by changing their Japanese surnames to Mexican ones.⁴⁸ Of the 38 Nikkei who made El Paso their home during World War II, the majority escaped confinement in concentration camps, while El Paso Valley’s mainstream population and their organizations refrained from publicly demanding the wholesale removal of its Japanese-ancestry residents. When the war ended, however, the Japanese in El Paso became the victims of racial hatred, and this persecution drove many to move to other parts of the U.S.⁴⁹

Unlike Armendariz, who chiefly builds her account of El Paso’s early Nikkei community from local newspaper articles, Miyasato relies heavily upon oral history interviews to construct her community narrative. Because these life stories provide a window through which to apprehend the special character of the Japanese El Pasoans and the complex ways they became embedded in the history, culture, and society of the Interior West region, they merit careful attention. The following representative sample focuses on Mansaku Kurita, an Issei man, but it also captures his Issei wife Teru’s experiences.

47 See Miyasato Tsuyako, “The Japanese in the El Paso Region” (master’s thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1982); and Christe Celia Armendariz, “Inconspicuous but Estimable Immigrants: The Japanese in El Paso, 1898-1948” (master’s thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1994). A note: the author’s name on the title page of the first of these studies follows the Japanese practice of placing the surname before the given name; however, all references made to this source will follow the practice in English of a given name preceding the surname. For additional information on the early Japanese community in El Paso, see Beverly Ramirez, Kenneth Kurita III, and Elvi Nieto, “Japanese Immigration Came Slowly to Borderland,” *Borderlands: An El Paso Community College Local History Project*, <http://www.epcc.edu/nwlibrary/borderlands/26/japanese.htm> (accessed July 26, 2009); with respect to the World War II experience of the Nikkei community in El Paso, see Beverly Ramirez and Elvi Nieto, “World War II Affected Japanese Immigrants,” *Ibid.*

48 See Armendariz, “Inconspicuous but Estimable Immigrants,” pp. 18-44 passim.

49 See *ibid.*, 105-15 passim.

Around 1910, Mansaku Kurita came to El Paso through Mexico. He once worked for the railroad company, [and] then he started farming in Colorado. . . . In Colorado, he was in real good shape financially, but he got wiped out when his crops failed, so his friend Kuniji Tashiro called him in 1928 to come to New Mexico and farm there for a year. Then he came to El Paso. By the time he settled down in El Paso, he was financially secure. Mansaku married Teru, a woman from Shizuoka [Japan], who was about five years younger than he. When Mansaku called for Teru, she lived in Kansas. Teru had a college education and taught school in Japan. Later she worked as a midwife to many Mexicans in El Paso, and was known as the mother of El Paso.⁵⁰

For Nikkei, life in Arizona pre-World War II and during the war was markedly different from that in Colorado in important respects. By 1910 Colorado had some 2,500 Japanese immigrants, while fewer than 400 people of Japanese ancestry resided in Arizona; by 1940 Colorado claimed close to 3,225 Nikkei and Arizona nearly 900. The prewar distribution of these two states' Nikkei populations was also very different. Most Japanese Coloradans were scattered around their state in modest-sized farming communities; there was also a comparatively dense cluster in the area of Denver, where they were supported by the budding Japantown located within the city's deteriorated core. In contrast, Japanese Arizonans—who were primarily agriculturalists—congregated in the Salt River Valley's Maricopa County, in central Arizona, where they found rudimentary ethnic support systems in Phoenix, Glendale, Tempe, and Mesa.

Another distinguishing feature differentiating life for Japanese in Arizona and Colorado during this era is that Nikkei in Arizona had to contend with a greater degree of legal and extralegal prejudice, discrimination, and out-right racism than those residing in Colorado. This is not to say that Colorado's anti-Japanese climate was mild or sporadic—in fact, it was both severe and unremitting, as historian Kara Miyagishima has copiously documented. In the early twentieth century, because Colorado's laboring class generally viewed “little yellow men” from the Far East to be “invading” their state and, as railroad, mining, and farm workers, they were felt to be posing unfair employment competition. To counter this perceived problem, labor groups excluded them by creating associations such as the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League founded by the Colorado State Federation of Labor in 1908. Even after the Issei bachelors progressively transformed the Nikkei population within Colorado from one dominated by mobile laborers with a bird-of-passage mentality to one characterized by stabilized family-based farm and commercial enterprises, nativist groups organized against the Nikkei to hinder their ascent of the social and economic ladder. “Like the Negroes of the South,” writes Miyagishima, “the Japanese were accepted without rancor only so long as they remained in their place.”⁵¹ In Denver, where by 1920 some 85 percent of the population

50 Miyasato, “The Japanese in the El Paso Region,” p. 21. Although the names in this mini-biography were rendered in the Japanese mode—family names preceding given names—they have been reversed to reflect the American naming style.

Miyasato's study of the Japanese in El Paso does not end with World War II, an event that “fragmented psychologically the small number of Japanese living in the region.” Instead, she reveals how a new El Paso Nikkei community was formed in the post-World War II years by an amalgam of Japanese Americans, Japanese-Mexicans, and Japanese war brides who, during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, came in substantial numbers from Japan (where they met and married American soldiers—including, increasingly, African Americans—stationed there) to live in the El Paso area with their husbands at the nearby Ft. Bliss military base. See *ibid.*, pp. 38 and 38-92 *passim*, especially 38-53.

51 Kara Mariko Miyagishima, “Colorado's Nikkei Pioneers: Japanese Americans in Twentieth Century Colorado” (master's thesis, University of Colorado, Denver), p. 124. Miyagishima's study and another recent work by the late Bill Hosokawa—*Colorado's Japanese Americans from 1886 to the Present* (Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2005)—cover the same general historical territory. However, Hosokawa does so in an episodic, anecdotal, and engagingly colorful and palpable way without benefit of footnotes, while Miyagishima fashions a narrative featuring lineal chronological development, exacting factual detail, contextual amplification, extensive documentation, and clear writing. Accordingly, these two texts very nicely complement one another in style as well as content.

was native-born, restrictive covenants and similar segregating mechanisms were imposed, leaving only the city's Skid Row area open for residency by Nikkei and other people of color. With the onset of World War II, Colorado—and Denver, in particular—experienced a large infusion of Nikkei from the West Coast. Many arrived in Colorado during the period of “voluntary evacuation” and afterwards, with a large number settling there as a consequence of temporary work leaves and semipermanent resettlement from the WRA camps.

With an increase in Nikkei residents came a sharp increase in anti-Japanese sentiment and activity. The state's major newspaper, the *Denver Post*,⁵² became America's most venomous journalistic purveyor of Nikkei race-baiting. It pervasively promoted the notion that Japanese Americans “were not genuine U.S. citizens, but unassimilable and untrustworthy,” unacceptable even to harvest the state's direly endangered sugar beet crop, and altogether unwanted in Colorado without strict federal and military supervision and control. The *Post* also helped to provoke a rising wave of vigilante violence against Nikkei and championed the 1944 campaign mounted for a state constitutional amendment to restrict land ownership by alien Japanese residents (as well as East Indians, Malaysians, and Filipinos).⁵³

But the anti-Japanese movement in Colorado, from the early twentieth century through World War II, always had to contend with countervailing forces. Some came from within the Nikkei community, which possessed sufficient numbers to command the Japanese government's attention and to capitalize upon its considerable international power and influence. Nikkei had also developed an institutional network that could resist—or at least deflect—oppressive measures and campaigns designed to inflict damage upon or destroy Japanese Colorado. Thus, in 1908, to protect the interests of Japanese against the Colorado State Federation of Labor's Japanese and Korean Exclusion League and similar organizations, the state's Issei established, in Denver, the Japanese Association of Colorado. Along with other Japanese Association branches that developed throughout Colorado, it concurrently forged political ties to the Japanese government and encouraged the assimilation of Japanese Coloradans. This situation no doubt was a key reason why Colorado, unlike most other Interior West states, did not institute an anti-Japanese alien land law.

Although an attempt was made to do precisely that during World War II—at a point when mainstream negative feeling toward the Nikkei was at its zenith—via a state constitutional amendment, what transpired showed that the Japanese American community could count on countervailing support on its behalf outside the boundaries of its ethnic subculture. In seeking to counteract the drive for the amendment, which was spearheaded by the American League of Colorado in conjunction with such other supporters like the Colorado Veterans of Foreign Wars and citizens of Brighton and Adams counties (most of whom were truck drivers of Italian descent), the Nikkei were aided by a diverse array of backers. Organizations who sided with the Japanese in opposition to the amendment included a Citizens Emergency Committee formed by ministers and educators (with a statewide executive committee made up of prominent citizens), which disseminated its message via public meetings, newspapers, and radio; the Denver Council of Churches; the Denver YWCA; the Colorado State League of Women Voters; the Denver-headquartered National Civic League; the Cosmopolitan Club, a student organization at the University of Colorado; the Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union; and mainstream newspapers like the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Pueblo Star Journal and Chieftain*, as well as vernacular newspapers such as the *Intermountain Jewish News* and the *Colorado Statesman* and the *Denver Star* (both of which were African American publications). As a result of this diverse

52 For an assessment of the *Denver Post*'s anti-Nikkei campaigns, see Kumiko Takahara, *Off the Fat of the Land: The Denver Post's Story of the Japanese American Internment during World War II* (Powell, Wyo.: Western History Publications, 2003).

53 See Miyagishima, “Colorado's Nikkei Pioneers,” pp. 57-178 passim, but especially pp. 57-60, 122-26, and 175-78.

support, the amendment was defeated.⁵⁴

The smaller number of Issei in pre-World War II Arizona—as well as the state’s proximity to California, where anti-Japanese emerged earliest and most intensely—made Japanese Arizonans more vulnerable than Japanese Coloradans to racist mainstream attacks. Thus, as Eric Walz has documented, beginning in 1913, the state’s Nikkei farmers had to contend with the alien land law that Arizona (following California’s lead) passed that year; this law forbade members of racial groups ineligible for U.S. citizenship, which included the Japanese, from purchasing land but did permit them to enter into leasing arrangements.⁵⁵ An attempt was made in 1921 to legally close this loophole, although Issei circumvented the new law by leasing land in their children’s names or through non-Japanese landlords and neighbors. Still, the Issei were swimming against the tide of public opinion, for “non-Japanese farmers in Maricopa County,” to quote Walz, “resented competition from Japanese immigrants . . . and accused the Japanese of using unfair labor practices (Japanese wives and children worked in the fields), of paying too much in rent, and of taking up the best farmland in the [Salt River] valley.”⁵⁶

In late 1923, the Maricopa County Farm Bureau’s president forwarded Arizona’s governor a Farm Bureau resolution opposing creation of a Japanese population with the potential to “expand in time and prove to be undesirable residents” and requesting “a strict enforcement of the Arizona Statute which forbids the selling to [Japanese] or leasing of farming lands in this state.”⁵⁷ In reply, the governor promised to urge the state attorney general and the county attorneys to strictly enforce the laws. Notwithstanding this official resolve to see that the alien land law’s spirit as well as its letter were respected, the Issei community was “cohesive enough to defend itself”: while Japanese immigration was slowed, “the number of Japanese farm operators in Arizona increased from sixty-nine in 1920 to 121 in 1930.”⁵⁸

By the early 1930s, with the Depression in full swing, this situation was reversed. In that dire economic climate, the market value of agricultural products was slashed, and a series of circumstances led to Japanese farmers essentially monopolizing cantaloupe production. They also enjoyed a bumper crop that, confronted by very little competition, brought windfall profits even as Maricopa County’s non-Japanese farmers, who had reduced their sideline cantaloupe acreage, were hit by dismal returns for their principal cotton and alfalfa crops. As a consequence, strong anti-Japanese sentiments—including enforcement of the alien land laws—came to the fore once again. The capstone to this escalating racist climate was the explosive situation that Eric Walz has so graphically depicted:

On August 16, 1934, 600 Caucasian farmers met in Glendale to decide how to rid the [Salt River] valley of their Japanese competitors. At a rally the following day, more than 150 cars paraded through town. One carried a banner that read:

WE DON’T NEED ASIATICS
JAP MOVING DAY AUGUST 25TH, WE MEAN IT

54 Ibid., pp. 177–8. It should be noted, however, that the legislative vote on the measure (the Senate’s narrow victory margin of 15 to 12 and the House’s overwhelming repudiation of 48 to 15) highlighted the prevalence of anti-Japanese sentiment in Colorado.

55 Eric Walz, “The Issei Community in Maricopa County: Development and Persistence in the Valley of the Sun, 1900–1940,” *Journal of Arizona History* 38 (Spring 1997): 1–22.

56 Ibid., pp. 8–9.

57 Ibid., pp. 9–10.

58 Ibid.



MOVE OUT BY SATURDAY NOON AUGUST 25TH
OR BE MOVED

Over the next few weeks nativists and their minions flooded Japanese farms, bombed Japanese homes, pushed pick-ups owned by Japanese farmers into irrigation canals, and fired shots at Japanese farmers who tried to protect their growing crops.⁵⁹

A bloody catastrophe was prevented by timely intervention by the general community's educational and religious leaders, Arizona Japanese Association lobbying efforts, and the local Japanese community's appeals to the Japanese consulate. However, in the long run persecution was halted by economic pragmatism: the Mitsubishi Company, a large Southwest cotton purchaser, warned that the price of persisting violence against Japanese farmers would be the loss of cotton contracts; the U.S. government also made it clear that federal water projects for Arizona would be put at risk should the maltreatment of Japanese farmers continue. But the damage had already been done. "While few Japanese farmers actually left the valley as a direct result of violence," concludes Walz, "discrimination and depression reduced their numbers in Arizona from 121 in 1930 to 52 by 1940."⁶⁰

In prewar Arizona's towns and cities there also existed racist feelings toward Nikkei (as well as other people of color) which had hardened into customs and institutional practices. Susie Sato, an Arizona native reared in Lehi, a small Mormon community in the central part of the state, has testified that while the kindness of Mormon neighbors mitigated prejudice against her Nikkei family, she encountered discrimination at movie theaters and swimming pools in the municipalities surrounding her hometown. Nikkei, along with other Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans, "were not permitted to swim in the Tempe public pool, and throughout the [towns of the] Phoenix area, movie theaters practiced a strict policy of segregation."⁶¹

The Japanese Arizona World War II experience has been assayed by two historians, both working at Arizona universities: Charles Ynfante at Northern Arizona University and Andrew Russell at Arizona State University. Their work on this topic has in common the fact that both consider it within the context of Arizona's overall home-front experience during World War II.⁶² Russell's article in *Arizona Goes to War: The Home Front and the Front Lines during World War II*, co-edited by Brad Melton and Dean Smith, is not very compatible with the celebratory tenor of the anthology. Smith, for example, observes that World War II "brought about amazing changes in Arizona's economy," and he suggests that these changes were matched by Arizona's "improvement in race relations." To support his contention, he does not emphasize changes occurring during or immediately after the war, instead

59 Ibid., pp. 10-11.

60 Ibid., p. 12.

61 See Vicki S. Ruiz, "Tapestries of Resistance: Episodes of School Segregation in the Western United States," in Peter F. Lau, *From the Grassroots to the Supreme Court: Brown v. Board of Education and American Democracy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 55. See also the following sources: Susie Sato, "Before Pearl Harbor: Early Japanese Settlers in Arizona," *Journal of Arizona History* 14 (Winter 1973): 317-34; Mesa Historical Museum, "Mesa Leadership Talk with Angy Booker, Celia Burns, and Susie Sato," audio recording, November 1, 2003 at the Mesa Historical Museum in Mesa, Arizona; and Valerie Matsumoto, "Shigata Ga Nai": Japanese American Women in Central Arizona, 1910-1978" (senior honors thesis, Arizona State University, Tempe, 1978); and Valerie J. Matsumoto, "Using Oral History to Unearth Japanese American History," presentation at Japanese Americans in Arizona Oral History Project Workshop, Arizona State University, Tempe, November 8, 2003.

62 See Charles Ynfante, "Arizona during the Second World War, 1941-1945: A Survey of Selected Topics" (PhD diss., Northern Arizona University, 1997), later revised and published as *The Transformation of Arizona into a Modern State: The Contribution of War to the Modernization Process* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen Books, 2002); and Andrew B. Russell, "Arizona Divided," in Brad Melton and Dean Smith, eds., *Arizona Goes to War: The Home Front and the Front Lines during World War II* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), pp. 38-55.

focusing on ones that, while catalyzed by the war, did not materialize until later in the postwar period.⁶³ “Even the Japanese Americans,” contends Smith, “[who were] vilified after Pearl Harbor and herded into relocation centers, gained new acceptance after the war as Arizonans increasingly embraced the ideal of cultural diversity.”⁶⁴ While Russell’s narrative and sidebars are not without some triumphalism, he does not shield readers from the darker aspects of the wartime exclusion and detention experience in Arizona. Thus, at one point, he writes:

Within a few short weeks [after Pearl Harbor] the climate of tolerance evaporated [in Arizona]. By March of 1942 the southern half of Arizona (including much of Maricopa County) became part of the huge military zone from which all Japanese Americans were to be evacuated. Military planners at the headquarters of the WDC [Western Defense Command] ultimately drew the exclusion line that cut across Arizona, but Arizona forces probably played a significant role in the shaping of evacuation policy within the state. Considering the high levels of anti-Japanese antagonism that had surfaced during the Salt River War [in 1934], it is not difficult to imagine that some Arizonans would have jumped at an excuse to finally rid the valley of Japanese farmers. Governor [Sidney P.] Osborne’s collected papers and state newspapers bear witness to the steady growth of anti-Japanese sentiment in wartime Arizona.⁶⁵

Russell indicates, too, how the Arizona press barely even paid attention to the U.S. government-sited concentration camps in Arizona for incarcerating Nikkei.⁶⁶ When newspapers did write about the Japanese they “tended to be negative,” as headlines such as “[Gila] River’s Japs Take 600 Jobs” and “[Officials] Forbid Japs to Leave Camps Lest Hostile Acts Occur” confirm. Russell also describes specific developments about the Nikkei presence in wartime Arizona that incited negative press coverage.⁶⁷ Finally, he floats this mordant note: “Japanese Arizonans can recount few if any pleasant memories of World War II.”⁶⁸

As for Charles Ynfante’s study of World War II Arizona, it tests historian Gerald Nash’s thesis that the war transformed the western region into a modern economy by applying it to a western state Nash largely neglects in

63 Smith cites, for example, a desire by Native Americans to “broaden their horizons” and the breakdown of segregation for African Americans and Mexican Americans (along with Raul Castro’s 1974 gubernatorial election). In 1962, the United States Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR), which five years earlier Congress had established “to document disparities in the rights, laws, and social experiences of those deprived of rights and legal recourse as a result of race, color, religion, or national origin,” made Phoenix its first urban metropolis study site, “because of its tremendous growth, the diversity of its minority groups, and because it is a city where there are few, if any, antidiscrimination laws, and where progress in the realization of civil rights has reportedly been made.” However, after hearings held in Phoenix, the USCCR discovered that Arizona’s largest city, whose population had exploded from 65,000 to 440,000 between 1940 and 1960, and contained a modest “Oriental” and “Indian” population, a substantial number of “Negroes,” and a large, rapidly growing “Mexican American” community, had as late as the 1950s segregated schools, theaters, and even many restaurants—sometimes with the force of law. See Tom I. Romero, “Of Race and Rights: Legal Culture, Social Change, and the Making of a Multicultural Metropolis, Denver 1940-1975” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004), pp. 253-55, which compares the findings of the USCCR in Denver with those in other western urban centers such as Phoenix.

64 Dean Smith, “Conclusion,” in Melton and Smith, *Arizona Goes to War*, 178-79.

65 Russell, “Arizona Divided,” pp. 44, 46.

66 Arizona’s detention facilities included Mayer Assembly Center, Poston and Gila River Relocation Centers, Leupp Isolation Center, and Catalina Federal Honor Camp, which collectively imprisoned upward of 35,000 Nikkei, far more than in any other Interior West state during World War II.

67 Specific developments mentioned by Russell include the following: when a profit-making cooperative at the Gila River camp was established in 1942; when the War Relocation Authority [WRA] instituted a policy allowing those behind barbed wires to accept temporary jobs or long-term employment outside the military zone (especially in the Intermountain states); when, in mid-summer 1943, “a team of army investigators from WDC had to travel to Phoenix . . . because some Arizonans had blamed ‘Japanese sabotage’ for fires that consumed two produce-packing sheds”; and when, in 1944, the federal government lifted West Coast exclusion orders and announced the imminent closing of the WRA camps, thereby causing “renewed concerns that the camp populations might try to settle in Arizona.”

68 *Ibid.*, 53-55.

his scholarship—Arizona.⁶⁹ Additionally, Ynfante explores the wartime experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, Japanese Americans, and Mexican nationals (but not Mexican Americans) to determine whether Nash is right in judging World War II a watershed for Arizona’s racial-ethnic minorities. While conceding that Nash is correct in concluding that Arizona experienced a major turning point economically during and after the war, Ynfante enters this caveat:

At the same time, Arizona’s dominant Anglo society was generally racist toward its resident minority groups. Perhaps Nash should have made further inquiry into the social experiences of this southwestern state before making his optimistic assessment about the war’s impact upon minority groups in western society. Had he done so, he would have found that Arizona was laggard in improving its own racial relations. Arizona is as vital a state as any in the western region. Its experiences deserve exploration that penetrates deeper than Nash’s general assessment.⁷⁰

Ynfante’s closing words nicely lend themselves to appropriation and reapplication here. Directly put, they can be used to support the argument that the Interior West experience of Japanese Americans is as vital as that for any other region of the United States, and that it deserves a much deeper exploration by dedicated students of Nikkei history, society, and culture than it has received to date.

This essay has thus far examined how scholars from varying disciplines have, in recent years, supported a deeper exploration of the Interior West Nikkei experience from pioneering days through World War II. Let us now briefly explore recent scholarship pertaining to the post-World War II experience of Interior West Nikkei. A strategic starting point is a 2006 study done by Joel Tadao Miyasaki.⁷¹ The larger and direct concern of Miyasaki—who describes himself as “the son of a Japanese American father and a white mother”—is Nikkei identity in Utah and Idaho during the World War II exclusion and detention experience of Japanese Americans (and, indirectly, for Nikkei generally in the period since World War II).⁷²

Miyasaki’s study has a three-part theoretical base: first, it draws on a concept from sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, that “historical circumstances influence the process of ‘racialization,’ the creation of racial identity [and that] this identity in turn affects the way that historical actors live and make decisions within any particular moment in time”⁷³; second, it explores the idea from historian George Sánchez, “that cultural adaptation affects identity [which] occurs when ethnic groups encounter the dominating influence of white society”⁷⁴; and third, it examines the concept, put forth by historian Lisbeth Haas, that “history occurs both in time and space [and] power relationships [are] formed by different groups as they enter a particular space and attempt to manipulate that space for their own purposes.”⁷⁵

69 See Gerald D. Nash, *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1988) and *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985).

70 Ynfante, “Arizona during the Second World War,” p. 317; for Ynfante’s evaluation of the Japanese American experience in World War II Arizona, see Chapter 8, pp. 208-39, in which he baldly states that “the legacy of Japanese internment is deplorable” (p. 232).

71 See Joel Tadao Miyasaki, “Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West: Japanese American Ethnic Identity in Utah and Idaho” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 2006).

72 Miyasaki’s specific interest is with the area extending southward from Rexburg in southeastern Idaho to Price in northern Utah.

73 See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

74 See George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

75 See Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

For Miyasaki’s articulation of his study’s tripartite theoretical base, see “Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West,” pp. 1-3.

Miyasaki uses this conceptual framework to illuminate the World War II story of the “small, but influential” and “largely ignored” Japanese American population in Utah and Idaho, who “found themselves dispersed inside a largely white, Mormon population.” He then concludes that, in general, “these regional circumstances created a much different communal identity” from that constructed by West Coast Nikkei, and in particular, that the relative “freedom” Interior West Japanese Americans had during World War II (together with the wartime prejudice in their region) “created a discourse of self-preservation among Utah’s and Idaho’s Nikkei [and] the spirit of survival found its way into the JACL’s [Japanese American Citizens League] wartime policies and [thereby] consequently affected the United States’ larger Japanese American population in real and tragic ways.”⁷⁶

Miyasaki argues that not only have scholars showed a preoccupation with World War II politics and prejudice, but also that traditional Japanese American historical scholarship has been “California-centric.” As a result, the wartime experience of Utah and Idaho—Interior West states in the “Free Zone”—has been woefully slighted. Still, recent work on the Nikkei experience, especially that stimulated by oral history interviewing, has placed a premium on first-person perspectives; this work has provided Japanese Americans in the Interior West a chance to examine “how they participated in the creation and absorption of culture.” This, in turn, has allowed studies like “Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West” to at long last “find a home and [gain] a sense of importance.”⁷⁷

The heart of Miyasaki’s study is its fourth chapter, entitled “A Discourse of Survival.” Therein, Miyasaki maintains that the two Utah-based Japanese vernacular newspapers—the *Utah Nippo* and the *Pacific Citizen*—progressively sounded a chauvinistic message reflecting a “discourse of good citizenship.” (The *Utah Nippo* had an English-language section edited by Mike Masaoka, a Mormon convert; just before the outbreak of World War II he became national secretary and field executive for the Japanese American Citizens League, the organization recognized by the U.S. government as the Nikkei community’s “voice.” The *Pacific Citizen* was the JACL’s newspaper, and during the war it relocated, along with the organization’s national leadership, from San Francisco to Salt Lake City.) Convinced that for Nikkei to “survive” in Utah and Idaho they needed, at all costs, to preserve the American way of life, Sunao Ishio—Masaoka’s successor as *Utah Nippo*’s English-language section successor—trumpeted this uncritical patriotic anthem on October 8, 1941: “Let there not be found within the Japanese American Community one to criticize the course set by the people of the United States.”⁷⁸

Ishio’s verbal flag-waving, as Miyasaki explains, foreshadowed “the policy the JACL and its allies would use in the months and years after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor.”⁷⁹ Moreover, because the national JACL increasingly relied on those chapters constituting the organization’s newly organized Intermountain District Council⁸⁰ (which just weeks before Pearl Harbor held its second annual convention in Pocatello, Idaho, with the theme of “Thank God I am an American”)⁸¹ for membership and funding support during the war, the “local” survival discourse of

76 Ibid., iii-iv.

77 Ibid., 4.

78 Ibid., pp. 68-69. The gold standard for the articulation of the JACL’s discourse of citizenship was achieved the previous year by Mike Masaoka in his widely circulated “Japanese-American Creed” (for this creed, see *ibid.*, p. 67). By way of prefacing it, Miyasaki notes that Masaoka’s creed “represents his feelings as an intermountain Nisei” and characterizes it as “the first written manifestation of the policies the JACL supported during World War II.” Miyasaki alludes to precursors to this brand of nationalistic boosterism in Utah, such as the *Rei Nei Magazine*; this periodical was published in the 1920s in Salt Lake City explicitly to “promote patriotism,” and the existence of an informal Salt Lake City-based organization in the 1930s, the *Rei Nei Kwai*, that “often found ways to perform . . . patriotic fervor” (*ibid.*, pp. 63-64).

79 Ibid., p. 69.

80 Ibid., p. 89.

81 Ibid., p. 72.

militant Americanism increasingly reverberated in the public philosophy espoused by national JACL leaders and within the pages of both the *Utah Nippo* and the *Pacific Citizen*.

These two newspapers, along with two Denver-based vernaculars, the *Colorado Times* [*Kakushu Jiji*] and the *Rocky Shimpō* [*Rocky Jiho*], were all “authorized” by the U.S. government to serve as the “free” Japanese American wartime press, and they substantially enlarged their print runs to serve the expanded Nikkei readership within the concentration camp and resettlement populations. Responding to government subsidization (and a fear of being forced by the government to suspend operations), the *Utah Nippo* and *Colorado Times* English-language sections intensified their prewar editorial policy espousing a muscular Americanism, and in so doing they complemented—and, arguably, deepened—the all-English *Pacific Citizen*’s nationalistic message and tone.⁸²

As interpreted by Miyasaki, the content and tenor of both the JACL and the vernacular press led to Japanese Americans feeling as if they had to fit into American society in a nonthreatening way: they had to work harder than whites, maintain low profiles, fully support government actions, personify the idea of “blood assimilation” through risking and even losing their lives on the battlegrounds of America’s wars, and privilege “playing American” over protecting civil liberties and individual rights.⁸³ According to an influential theory postulated by historian Gary Okihiro, this situation represents a quintessential example whereby the mainstream (in this case, the national Japanese American community) was transformed through the ideas and actions occurring on one of its margins (in this instance, the regional Nikkei community of the Intermountain West).⁸⁴

In his study of World War II Nevada, Andrew Russell contends that “few scholars have looked east of California at Japanese-American life, history and wartime experiences outside the camps.”⁸⁵ He suggests that this neglect of the Interior West states, where some 12,000 to 14,000 Japanese Americans (one-tenth of the pre-World War II Nikkei population) lived prior to and just after Pearl Harbor, “represents a large gap in history.” In his opinion, this gap represents a serious problem, not simply because “historical significance of a group is not determined strictly by its size,” but also because information about the general Japanese American experience provides a master “mainstream” narrative to which are bound the stories and struggles of the “marginal” Interior West region. Russell reveals his indebtedness to Okihiro’s work in the observation that if “great lessons for mainstream America have emerged from the study of how Japanese Americans were victimized and how they protested these transgressions of justice during and after the war,” so too can “the images and experiences of Japanese Americans that emerged and evolved beyond the West Coast and the barbed-wire parameters of the camps . . . shed additional light on experiences of the ethnic mainstream, on the attitudes and actions of the larger American mainstream, and, most importantly, on the historic margins and mainstreams of interior states like Nevada.”⁸⁶ Thus, a searching examination of both “the historic margins and mainstreams” is crucial to achieve the broadest and deepest understanding of the Japanese American experience.

82 For a critical assessment of the Japanese American press during World War II, see Takeya Mizuno, “The Civil Libertarian Press, the Japanese American Press, and Japanese American Mass Evacuation” (PhD diss., University of Missouri, 2000). The situation of the *Rocky Shimpō*’s English-language edition, particularly during the January-April 1944 editorship of James Omura, which featured editorial support for the organized Nisei draft resistance at the Heart Mountain concentration camp, was different from these other three papers both in its greater emphasis upon civil liberties and social justice and its independence from and even spirited opposition to the JACL. However, after the U.S. government, encouraged by the JACL leadership, forced Omura out of his editorship and replaced him with JACL stalwart Roy Takeno, the *Rocky Shimpō*’s English-language section was in editorial accord with its three Interior West counterparts.

83 See Miyasaki, “Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West,” pp. 71-72, 86, and 89.

84 See Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

85 See Russell, “Friends, Neighbors, Foes and Invaders,” pp. 1-4.

86 *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.



In order for scholarship to continue in this area, the present wealth of studies pertaining to the mainstream Japanese American experience before, during, and after World War II must be supplemented by a proliferation of *published*—and thus readily accessible—work centering on the Interior West Nikkei experience. While a good start has been made by the appearance in print of some of the books and articles referred to in this essay,⁸⁷ a next step must be to convert a selected number of currently unpublished book-length manuscripts cited in this essay.⁸⁸ Readers are encouraged to go beyond the select secondary sources cited in this essay to explore some of those not mentioned but nonetheless pertinent and readily obtainable,⁸⁹ along with the abundant (if more ephemeral) virtual

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- 87 Bill Hosokawa, *Colorado's Japanese Americans from 1886 to the Present* (2005); Masakazu Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil: A History of the Issei in United States Agriculture* (1992); Mike Mackey, ed., *Guilty by Association: Essays on Japanese Settlement, Internment, and Relocation in the Rocky Mountain West* (2001); Andrew Russell, "Arizona Divided" (2003); Susie Sato, "Before Pearl Harbor: Early Japanese Settlers in Arizona" (1973); Kumiko Takahara, *Off the Fat of the Land: The Denver Post's Story of the Japanese American Internment during World War II* (2003); Eric Walz, "The Issei Community in Maricopa County: Development and Persistence in the Valley of the Sun, 1900-1940" (1997), "From Kumamoto to Idaho: The Influence of Japanese Immigrants on the Agricultural Development of the Interior West" (2000), and "Japanese Settlement in the Intermountain West, 1882-1946" (2001); and Charles Ynfante, *The Transformation of Arizona into a Modern State: The Contribution of War to the Modernization Process* (2002).
- 88 Ellen Schoening Aiken, "The *United Mine Workers of America* Moves West: Race, Working Class Formation, and the Discourse of Cultural Diversity in the Union Pacific Coal Towns of Southern Wyoming, 1870-1930" (2002); Kara Allison Schubert Carroll, "Coming to Grips with America: The Japanese American Experience in the Southwest" (2009); Barbara Hickman, "Japanese Railroad Workers in Wyoming, 1891-1945" (1989); Kara Miyagishima, "Colorado's Nikkei Pioneers: Japanese Americans in Twentieth Century Colorado" (2007); Joel Tadao Miyasaki, "Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West: Japanese American Ethnic Identity in Utah and Idaho" (2006); Tom I. Romero, Jr., "Of Race and Rights: Legal Culture, Social Change, and the Making of a Multiracial Metropolis, Denver 1940-1975" (2004); Andrew Benjamin Russell, "American Dreams Derailed: Japanese Railroad and Mine Communities of the Interior West" (2003) and "Friends, Neighbors, Foes and Invaders: Conflicting Images and Experiences of Japanese Americans in Wartime Nevada" (1996); Eric Walz, "Japanese Immigration and Community Building in the Interior West, 1812-1945" (1998) and "Masayoshi Fujimoto: Japanese Diarist, Idaho Farmer" (1994); and R. Todd Welker, "Sweet Dreams in Sugar Land: Japanese Farmers, Mexican Farm Workers, and Northern Utah Beet Production" (2002).
- 89 Since books are much easier to access and use than articles, the references here pertain only to books. Listed by state, they represent but a select sampling of those rendered within an interethnic/multicultural context: (Arizona) Brad Melton and Dean Smith, *Arizona Goes to War: The Home Front and the Front Lines during World War II* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003); (Colorado) Adam Schrager, *The Principled Politician: The Ralph Carr Story* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2008); (Idaho) Robert Hayashi, *Haunted by Waters: A Journey through Race and Place in the American West* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2007); (New Mexico) Richard Chalfen, *Turning Leaves: The Photograph Collections of Two Japanese American Families* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991) and Everett M. Rogers and Nancy R. Bartlit, *Silent Voices of World War II: When Sons of the Land of Enchantment Met Sons of the Land of the Rising Sun* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2005); (Oklahoma) Juli Ann Nishimuta, *The Nishimutas: An Oral History of a Japanese and Spanish Family* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2006); (Texas) Irwin A. Tang, ed., *Asian Texans: Our Histories and Our Lives* (Austin, TX: The It Works, 2007) and Thomas K. Walls, *The Japanese Texans* (San Antonio: The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, 1987); and (Utah) Leslie G. Kelen and Eileen Stone, *Missing Stories: An Oral History of Ethnic and Minority Groups in Utah* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2000) and Allan Kent Powell, *Utah Remembers World War II* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1991).

sources available on the Internet.⁹⁰ Before proceeding down this path of inquiry, you are invited—and strongly encouraged—to read the contents and ponder the meanings of the luminous five essays that are included with this curriculum: each has a unique perspective on the enduring communities created by Japanese Americans in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah.⁹¹

- 90 The following state-by-state entries for websites pertaining to the Interior West Japanese American experience are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to provide information that is particularly relevant, interesting, reliable, useful, and, when possible, interethnic/multicultural: ([Arizona](#)) Naomi Miller, “Racial Identity in Balance,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 7, 2004, <http://chronicle.com/article/Racial-Identity-in-Balance/44738/> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Colorado](#)) “History of Longmont,” *ColoradoInfo*, <http://coloradoinfo.com/longmont/history> (accessed August 15, 2009), Takeya Mizuno, “Keep and Use It for the Nation’s War Policy: The Office of Facts and Figures and Its Use of the Japanese-Language Press from Pearl Harbor to Mass Internment,” <http://list.msu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=indo309D&L=aejmc&P=7317> (accessed August 15, 2009), and Takeya Mizuno, “To Suppress or Not to Suppress, That is the Question: Pros and Cons Over the Suppression of the Japanese-Language Press from Pearl Harbor to Mass Evacuation,” <http://list.msu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=indo411a&L=aejmc&P=11852> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Idaho](#)) Laurie Mercier, “Japanese Americans in the Columbia River Basin,” <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/crbeha/ja/ja.htm> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Nebraska](#)) Twin Cities Development Association, Inc., “Cultural Diversity [in Southern Panhandle of Nebraska],” <http://www.tcdne.org/cultural.htm> (accessed August 15, 2009), and “Sugar Beet Production in Nebraska,” Panhandle Research and Extension Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, http://panhandle.unl.edu/web/panhandlerec/sugarbeet_nebhistory (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Nevada](#)) “Japanese-American Experience,” University of Nevada, Reno, Oral History Program, <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/JapanWW.html> (accessed August 15, 2009), and Joan Whitely, “Bill Tomiyasu (1882-1969),” Stephens Press, <http://www.ist100.com/part1/tomiyasu.html> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Oklahoma](#)) Dianna Everett, “Asians [in Oklahoma],” Oklahoma Historical Society, *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History & Culture*, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/A/ASoo6.html> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Wyoming](#)) Western Wyoming Community College, *Wyoming History*, http://www.wvcc.cc.wy.us/wyo_hist/toc.htm (accessed August 15, 2009), and Cynde Georgen, “Subjects of the Mikado: The Rise and Fall of Sheridan County’s Japanese Community, 1900-1930,” <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wyoming/ar-sheridanmikado.htm> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([New Mexico](#)) “Albuquerque Ethnic Cultures Survey,” <http://www.abqarts.org/cultural/survey/index.htm> (accessed August 15, 2009), “Japanese Americans – City of Albuquerque,” <http://www.cabq.gov/humanrights/public-information-and-education/diversity-booklets/asi...> (accessed August 15, 2009), and Brian Minami, “Justice Camp Remembered in Santa Fe,” April 20, 2002, <http://manymountains.org/santa-fe-marker/020420.sfemoument.php> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Texas](#)) “The Japanese Texans,” The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, <http://www.texascultures.utsa.edu/publications/texasnoneandall/japanese.htm> (accessed August 15, 2009), “Japanese-Texans,” *Texas Almanac*, <http://www.texasalmanac.com/culture/groups/japanese.html> (accessed August 15, 2009), and “Texas Since World War II,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/npt2.html> (accessed August 15, 2009); ([Utah](#)) Helen Zeese Papanikolas, “Peoples of Utah” (updated by Phil Notarianni), *Utah History to Go*, http://historytogo.utah.gov/people/ethnic_cultures/peoplesofutah.html (accessed August 15, 2009), Raymond S. Uno, “Minority Racial and Ethnic Mix of Utah,” Utah Minority Bar Association, February 2005, http://www.utahbar.org/bars/umba/judge_uno_racial_ethnic_mix.html (accessed August 15, 2009), Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai, “Japanese Life in Utah,” *Utah History to Go*, http://historytogo.utah.gov/people/ethnic_cultures/the_peoples_of_utah/japaneselifeinutah (accessed August 15, 2009), Nancy Taniguchi, “Japanese Immigrants in Utah,” *Utah History Encyclopedia*, <http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/j/JAPANESE.html> (accessed August 15, 2009), Barre Toelken, “Dancing with the Departed: Japanese Obon in the American West,” <http://www.worldandi.com/specialreport/1994/august/Sau588.htm> (accessed August 15, 2009), and Joel Tadao Miyasaki, “Mike Masaoka and the Mormon Process of Americanization,” *The Juvenile Instructor*, March 22, 2008, <http://www.juvenileinstructor.org/mike-masaoka-and-the-mormon-process-of-americanization> (accessed August 15, 2009).
- 91 The author would like to extend his profound appreciation to Sherri Schottlaender for her remarkable work in copy-editing the present essay. The time, energy, and intelligence she invested in this undertaking far exceeded reasonable expectations. Her efforts not only greatly improved the essay, but also provided the author with an invaluable learning experience.

Timeline for Japanese Americans in the Interior West

(Compiled by Arthur A. Hansen)

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- 1882 • U.S. Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, essentially cutting off Chinese immigration and creating a demand for Japanese labor for the American West's railroad, mining, and agricultural industries
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- 1900 • Issei immigrant population in the Interior West is 5,278
 - 1907–8 • Gentlemen's Agreement between the U.S. and Japan becomes effective and greatly reduces Japanese immigration into the American West
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- 1910 • In the decade between 1910 and 1920, Interior West region experiences an economic boom fueled by railroad construction, coal and hard-rock mining, and agricultural development; also, sugar beet production increases dramatically in this region during this peak period of Japanese immigration to the U.S., as seen in the rise in acreage devoted to this crop in Colorado, Utah, Idaho, and Nebraska from 168,425 to 506,200
 - 1913 • California and Arizona pass anti-Japanese alien land laws, leading to migration of Issei laborers to Interior West states
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- 1921 • Washington, Texas, and Nevada enact anti-Japanese alien land laws, while New Mexico adds an amendment to its constitution that serves a similar function
 - 1922 • The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Takao Ozawa v. United States* that Japanese aliens are definitely prohibited from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens on the basis of race, and this ruling remains in effect until 1952
 - 1923 • Oregon, Montana, and Idaho pass anti-Japanese alien land laws
 - 1925 • Kansas enacts an anti-Japanese land law
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- 1930 • Population of Japanese immigrant community in Interior West is estimated at 12,862
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- 1940 • U.S. Census reports Japanese American population of Interior West to be 9,624, a numerical loss reflecting the Depression's impact
 - 1941 • Mike Masaru Masaoka, a Mormon from Salt Lake City, Utah, becomes executive secretary of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL); Japan bombs U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i, an act that precipitates America's entry into World War II and marks the beginning of arrests of Nikkei and the imposition of restrictive measures on the Japanese American community
 - 1942 • President Franklin Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, setting the stage for the mass removal of people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast and detention in U.S. Army, Department of Justice, and War Relocation Authority (WRA) concentration camps sited mostly in Interior West states; Fred Isamu Wada departs Oakland, California, with 21 people, en route to Keetley, Utah, to form Keetley Farms, a "voluntary resettler" community in the Interior West; U.S. Army issues Public Proclamation No. 4, which effectively ends the period of "voluntary evacuation" responsible for a substantial migration of West Coast Japanese Americans into the "free zone" states of the Interior West; JACL moves its national headquarters from San Francisco to Salt Lake City; U.S. government authorizes two Nikkei newspapers in Denver, Colorado (the *Colorado Times* and the *Rocky Nippon/Shimpo*) and two in Salt Lake City (the *Utah Nippo* and the *Pacific Citizen*) to serve as the "Free Zone" Japanese American wartime press; emergency meeting of JACL leaders

held in Salt Lake City, which is followed by wave of anti-JACL beatings, riots, and strikes in the WRA camps; WRA issues policy statement on resettlement from its camps, resulting in a greatly enlarged Interior West Nikkei population, including a substantial number of farm workers credited with saving the region's imperiled sugar beet crop

- 1943 • Utah and Wyoming pass anti-Japanese land laws
- 1944 • Native Nebraskan Ben Kuroki, an Army Air Corps sergeant, achieves acclaim as Japanese America's first war hero upon completing 28 bombing missions in the European Theater, and then goes by order of the U.S. War Department on a controversial morale-raising tour of three Interior West WRA camps; two federal trials are held in Cheyenne, Wyoming, for Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee draft resisters and their leaders, and another federal trial, for treason, is held in Denver for three Nisei sisters charged with assisting in the escape of two German prisoners of war that they met when all five were working on a Trinidad, Colorado, farm; U.S. government removes restrictions preventing resettlement of Japanese Americans on the West Coast, which catalyzes a steady migration in the following years from the Interior West to California, Oregon, and Washington
- 1945 • World War II ends
- 1946 • JACL holds its first postwar biennial convention in Denver, at which former Colorado governor Ralph Carr, the keynote speaker, is feted for being the only Interior West governor to welcome West Coast Nikkei to resettle in his respective state after Pearl Harbor
- 1948 • JACL holds its second postwar biennial convention in Salt Lake City

- 1953 • President Dwight Eisenhower confers the Congressional Medal of Honor on Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura of Gallup, New Mexico

- 1962 • Idaho voters approve a constitutional amendment extending basic American rights to naturalized Asian Americans, ending their exclusion from voting, holding civil office, and serving as jurors, and also terminating Idaho's status as the only U.S. state holding such restrictions
- 1967 • Salt Lake City razes its *nihonmachi* (Japan Town) and replaces it with the Salt Palace Convention Center

- 1973 • Sakura Square, a one-block complex of shops, housing, and a remodeled Buddhist church, opens in downtown Denver, near the heart of the Nikkei community's historic *nihonmachi*
- 1978 • At the JACL biennial convention in Salt Lake City, the organization adopts a resolution calling for redress in the form of individual payments of no less than \$25,000 to compensate Japanese Americans for their World War II mass exclusion and detention by the U.S. government

- 1988 • President Ronald Reagan signs Civil Liberties Act, which involves a presidential apology to the Japanese American community for its World War II mistreatment, along with a redress payment of \$20,000 for each surviving camp inmate and the establishment of a civil liberties public education fund

- 2006 • New Mexico repeals its anti-Asian alien land law
- 2008 • Bryan Clay, a Texan of mixed African American and Japanese American heritage,

wins the gold medal for the decathlon held in Beijing, China, and is declared “the world’s best athlete”; the Japanese American National Museum ‘s project *Enduring Communities: Japanese Americans in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah*, as a highlight to its three-year existence, stages a national conference in Denver, “Whose America? Who’s American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice”

Japanese Americans in New Mexico

Andrew B. Russell

New Mexicans have been celebrating their racial and cultural diversity long before most other Americans. Comprising Native Americans, Latinos, and Euro Americans, the New Mexico mosaic, often described as a “tricultural society,” is actually much more complex. This part of the Southwest is the ancestral homeland of a variety of Indian people, including the Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, and Comanche. More than four hundred years ago it became the northern frontier of Spain’s vast empire and was settled by people representing Spanish, Indian, African, and mixed bloodlines. The “conquest” of the Southwest by Americans in the 1800s brought new multitudes to the territory’s military forts, supply stations, railroads, mines, boomtowns, ranches, and homesteads; the majority were “European Americans” (with ancestral roots in various parts of Europe), but many African Americans, Chinese, and Mexicans also came to explore opportunities. While this great mixing of humanity certainly spawned some epic conflicts, from the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 through the wars against the Navajo and Apache in the late 1800s, on the whole New Mexico has earned its reputation as a place where diversity rules and racists fair poorly.

This tolerant landscape provides a unique backdrop for studying Japanese Americans in the West. On the surface at least, Japanese Americans, or Nikkei, seemed to gain little ground in New Mexico until World War II. Few came to settle in the state, and no more than 300 Nikkei were counted by census-takers between 1900 and 1950. Despite the small number of Nikkei living there, New Mexico joined other states in passing an alien land law, and the state supported anti-Japanese immigration restrictions in the 1920s. During World War II two major Japanese internment camps were located in New Mexico. That said, the low settlement figures closely resemble those of Nevada, Arizona, Wyoming, and Texas. If prejudice had its

effects, it seems that no sizable anti-Japanese movement ever existed here. As for New Mexico’s reaction to the World War II “Japanese question,” it was decidedly mixed, molded in part by New Mexican influences but largely by federal intervention.

Japanese immigrants, the Issei, were slow to discover New Mexico: in 1900 the U.S. Census counted only eight, but the figure had increased to 250 by 1910. Lured mainly by coal-mining jobs, hundreds of Issei passed through New Mexico in that decade. Most worked in the mines around Gallup, Madrid, and Raton. Other Japanese contract workers harvested sugar beets in some of the valleys north of Santa Fe. These crews of recent immigrants came via Japanese labor contractors based elsewhere but were supervised locally by a Japanese “boss” such as Masatomo Nakaniishi (who reportedly managed 300 Japanese coal miners in the Albuquerque-Madrid region in these early days).

Throughout the second decade of the twentieth century, some Japanese men found permanent work in the mines and on the railroads of New Mexico, and a few moved into farming. A handful of Japanese women also arrived and married, becoming the cornerstones of a number of small family-based communities that dotted the New Mexico map by 1920; these pioneer couples gave birth to a Nisei generation that would soon outnumber Issei in the state.

Powerful forces worked against Japanese settlers in the West, with federal immigration laws and alien land laws in particular stifling ambitions in New Mexico. The earliest rumblings of these California-based exclusion campaigns were not felt in the territory, which was struggling toward statehood in 1912 (although New Mexico’s “sister state,” Arizona, passed its first land law a year later). New Mexico joined those pushing for exclusion in 1921 when the state legislature amended the Constitution to bar “alien” (meaning Japanese) individuals or partnerships from acquiring “title, leasehold, or other interest in or to real estate in New Mexico.” Republican Governor Mer-

ritt C. Mechem had received a mass of anti-Japanese propaganda and instruction from the V. S. McClatchy, editor of the Sacramento Bee, and he pushed his lawmakers to act. New Mexican voters approved the amendment, but how “homegrown” the anti-Japanese sentiment involved in that action involved is not clear.

Only a few Japanese families had acquired New Mexico farmland prior to 1920—lands were tied up in old Spanish/Mexican land grants and Indian reservations, there were homesteading restrictions, and available lands were often in marginal condition, so it is not difficult to understand why this was the case. A dozen or so Japanese farmers did help to pioneer agriculture in the still underdeveloped Mesilla and Las Cruces districts. They arrived in the late teens to plant traditional crops such as wheat, corn, beans, and sugar beets, but tenacious and willing to experiment, they soon began growing various so-called truck crops, including cantaloupes, onions, cabbage, peas, and tomatoes. The Tashiro and Nakayama families built thriving operations that survived a general shutdown of farms during the Great Depression, and their business expanded well into the 1950s. Roy M. Nakayama, a Nisei member of the family, earned a doctorate in agricultural science, taught and did fieldwork for New Mexico State University, and developed the important NuMex Big Jim variety of green chile, as well as the Nakayama Scale, which measures the hotness of chiles. A few others, including the Togami, Yonemoto, Ebina, and Mizunuma families, migrated into New Mexico during the 1920s and 1930s to lease land and farm around Bluewater, Grants, and Albuquerque.

Despite the success of some Japanese in agricultural enterprises, in the prewar decades, railroad work sustained a majority of Nikkei families. The Santa Fe Railway alone employed scores of Japanese trackmen and craft workers in its repair shops. Western railroads also favored Japanese section foremen to supervise track maintenance crews of mixed ethnicity during this period. The onset of World War II threatened

to erase these modest inroads made by the Japanese in New Mexico. Most vulnerable were the railroad workers and their families living on or near the nation’s vital transportation/communication systems. In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Department of Justice sent confused signals as to whether Japanese nationals could continue working. The Santa Fe Railway and some other railroads pulled Japanese employees off their jobs within days, ultimately terminating them and “excluding” them from company homes and property.

This development caused extreme hardship for a significant number of Japanese New Mexicans. The worst effects were felt in Clovis, where about 30 Japanese Americans lived under house arrest for a month before being “evacuated” from Clovis to an abandoned and isolated Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Lincoln County. Local factors, such as physical and cultural isolation, resentment over seniority rights, and Clovis’s proximity to “Little Texas” (oil fields located at the eastern and southern fringes of the state), contributed to this tragedy.

Elsewhere, however, the state’s trademark tolerance seemed to prevail. The Japanese families of Gallup received especially kind treatment from local residents and officials, who reportedly banned together and signed a petition to resist any efforts to intern the local Japanese, and incredibly, Gallup High School students elected two Nisei students as senior class presidents during the war. Most eligible Nisei sons of the state served with the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT). By luck or design, the devastating line of exclusion that wrecked so many Japanese and Japanese American lives on the West Coast and in Arizona stopped abruptly at the New Mexico border. Still, between lost railroad wages, confiscated property, and a variety of newly instituted restrictions, the Nikkei of New Mexico suffered considerably.

Newspapers and other period documents testify to increased anti-Japanese wartime sentiment in the

state. A great many New Mexicans stationed in the Philippines suffered through the Bataan Death March and experienced years of abuse in Japanese prison camps, which generated misplaced fears, anger, and lingering frustration. Racial hatred also surfaced over a plan—which failed—to establish farming colonies in New Mexico that would accommodate tens of thousands of Japanese Americans being forcibly expelled from the West Coast. Federal authorities did build two large internment camps in New Mexico on the outskirts of Santa Fe and Lordsburg.

Unlike the larger mass concentration camps in other states established by the War Relocation Authority (WRA), the official internment camps were creations of the Department of Justice, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the Army. Roughly 800 Issei “enemy aliens,” arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other authorities during the early part of the war, arrived at the Santa Fe camp in May of 1942. By the following summer, the INS-administered Santa Fe facility housed close to 1,900 people; the Lordsburg camp held about 600 internees by then, who were guarded by Army Military Police units. The prisoners held in Santa Fe and Lordsburg represented the economic, intellectual, and creative elite of the Japanese American community: businessmen, writers, editors, artists, teachers, former military officers, and community leaders.

The government treated the internees like prisoners of war and basically ran the camps according to the rules of the Geneva Convention. Living conditions were crude. Although relatively few problems seem to have occurred, the history of the Lordsburg camp was punctuated by the shooting deaths of two weak and aged Issei in 1942 who were alleged to be trying to escape. In addition, a brief riot disrupted camp operations in Santa Fe for a time in 1945, a situation that stemmed from the importation to the camp of more than 350 men who had been identified as “trouble-

makers” and removed from the Tule Lake Segregation Center in California. A handful of Kibei (American-born Nisei educated in Japan) in the Tule Lake group began to engage in pro-Japan activities and in the process intimidate some of the peaceful Issei internees, prompting a minor revolt and crackdown by authorities. These men—and others identified as troublemakers from various camps—were subsequently sent either to Lordsburg or to another segregation facility known as “the stinker camp,” located at Fort Stanton in Lincoln County.

Overarching federal decisions such as those to summarily dismiss Nikkei railroaders and to place internment camps in the state magnify New Mexico’s role in a larger narrative. The Bataan saga and the building here of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan created other uncomfortable links between New Mexico and Japan in the war years. Conversely, the modest increase in the so-called free Japanese American population of New Mexico during and just after the war points to another side of a complex legacy.

From the 1940s to the present, Japanese Americans have made many important contributions to the fabled multicultural landscape of New Mexico. Noteworthy individuals have made significant impacts in the areas of agriculture and education, art and architecture, military service and civic affairs, including Nakayama’s development of the beloved Big Jim Chile; the Monastery of Christ in the Desert near Abiquiu, designed by famed architect and woodworker George Nakashima; and the Miyamura Veterans Park and I-40 overpass in Gallup named after Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura, recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his feats of bravery during the Korean War. The importance of Japanese Americans is also reflected in the work of postwar arrivals such as Satoye “Ruth” Hashimoto, who settled here in the early 1950s. Among other honors stemming from her work on behalf of the United Nations Association, the United Nations Children’s Fund, Sister Cities Inter-

national, and Japanese American Redress, Hashimoto was invited to the White House for the signing of the Civil Liberties Act in 1988. She has since received the Living Treasure of New Mexico Award, the Woman of the Twentieth Century Award, the Japanese Emperor's Medal, and induction into the New Mexico Women's Hall of Fame.

This enduring legacy is also reflected in a wide variety of Japanese American clubs, businesses, and annual celebrations which endure in this Land of Enchantment. While it has remained rather small in membership, the Albuquerque-based New Mexico chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), which dates back to 1946, hosts the annual Aki Matsuri Celebration. Links between the Sister Cities of Albuquerque and Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, were forged in 1966 and remain strong. Numerous Japanese restaurants can be found in the state's larger cities, as well as clubs dedicated to teaching and preserving Japanese martial arts, bonsai, flower arranging, and taiko drumming. Albuquerque is home to the Kyokai Buddhist Community association, and several Zen centers dot the state map as well. These organizations, businesses, and events are rather amazing

reflections of cultural persistence, given that the 2000 U.S. census counted only 1,593 Japanese Americans living in New Mexico.

Another benchmark was achieved in 2006 when New Mexicans voted to amend the state's constitution to remove the obsolete anti-Japanese land law. As we celebrate this achievement, we should also ask why New Mexico lagged so far behind other states in taking this step (and why the same ballot question had failed just a few elections back). We should reflect as well on the uproar and anti-Japanese sentiments that surfaced in 1999 over plans to establish a modest historical marker near the site of the Santa Fe internment camp (the marker was placed in 2002).

Like so many ethnic groups, Japanese Americans have become an integral part of the diversity that is New Mexico, but the sum of their experiences reflects a mixed legacy of tolerance and intolerance, successes and setbacks, and long-term contributions and accomplishments, none of which have been fully explored. Indeed, a wide audience can profit from further study into the peculiar history of the Nikkei in New Mexico, a history still being written today.

Timeline for Japanese Americans in New Mexico

(Compiled by Andrew B. Russell)

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- 1900 • U.S. Census counts eight Japanese in the New Mexico Territory
 - 1907 • So-called Gentlemen’s Agreement greatly reduces Japanese immigration
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- 1910 • U.S. Census counts 250 Japanese in New Mexico Territory
 - 1912 • New Mexico and Arizona gain statehood
 - 1913 • California and Arizona pass tough anti-Japanese alien land laws
 - 1915 • Number of Japanese women arriving in New Mexico begins to grow
 - 1918 • Japanese farmers settle in Doña Ana County
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- 1921 • New Mexico adds anti-alien land law amendment to state constitution
 - 1922 • Ten Japanese railroad workers in Clovis work through major shop strike
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- 1930 • U.S. Census counts 249 Japanese Americans in New Mexico
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- 1940 • U.S. Census counts 186 Japanese Americans in New Mexico (72 Issei; 114 Nisei)
 - 1941 • Japanese workers dismissed from Santa Fe Railway
 - 1942 • Workers in Clovis and their families removed to Baca Ranch camp, Lincoln County
 - Santa Fe and Lordsburg internment camps established; two Japanese internees later killed at Lordsburg camp
 - General John DeWitt sets up military zones along the West Coast; Western evacuation zone ends at New Mexico border
 - News of horrors of Bataan Death March reaches New Mexico
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- 1945 • Small “riot” occurs at the Santa Fe internment camp
 - Atomic bombs, built in New Mexico, are dropped on Japan, ending World War II
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- 1946 • New Mexico chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is established
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- 1950 • U.S. Census counts 251 Japanese Americans in New Mexico
 - 1953 • New Mexican Hiroshi H. Miyamura is awarded Congressional Medal of Honor
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- 1966 • Albuquerque (USA) and Sasebo (Japan) become Sister Cities
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- 1988 • President Ronald Reagan signs Civil Liberties Act, in which the U.S. government officially apologized for incarcerating Japanese Americans and authorized monetary reparations
 - 1989 • Satoye “Ruth” Hashimoto is inducted into New Mexico Women’s Hall of Fame
 - 1998 • Department of Justice extends redress to victims of railroad/mine firings
 - 1999 • Opposition surfaces over plan to establish Santa Fe camp historic marker
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- 2000 • U.S. Census counts 1,593 Japanese Americans in New Mexico

- 2002 • Santa Fe Internment Camp marker is placed at Frank S. Ortiz Park

- 2006 • Gallup Veterans Park is dedicated to Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura
- New Mexico repeals its anti-alien land law

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—Studs Terkel, Forward to *This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women*, 2006

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