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**The Internment of Memory: Forgetting and Remembering
the Japanese American World War II Experience**

by

Abbie Lynn Salyers

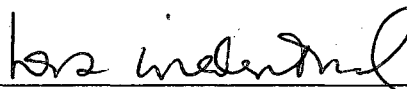
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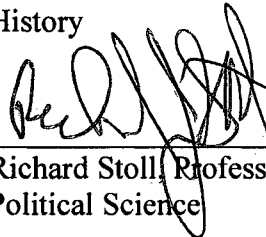
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ABSTRACT

The Internment of Memory:
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Japanese American Experience During World War II

by

Abbie Salyers

During World War II, over 100,000 Japanese American were confined in relocation and internment camps across the country as a result of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. While many of their families were behind barbed wire, thousands of other Japanese Americans served in the US Army's Military Intelligence Service and the all-Japanese American 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team. These circumstances were largely public knowledge during the war years, but a pervasive silence on the subject became apparent in the decades following the war. Due to widespread racism and recognition of the hypocrisy evident in a democratic country confining its own citizens, many Americans were content to allow the Japanese American experiences to be forgotten. The destruction and scattering of communities through evacuation and resettlement and a sense of shame within the Japanese American community helped perpetuate the silence amongst Japanese Americans as well. Through the Civil Rights Movement, the social protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and ultimately through the redress movement in the 1980s, the Japanese American voice gradually entered the public consciousness.

Following the discussion of the historical context for the WWII experiences of the Japanese Americans, this research analyzes the period of forgetting and the various factors that combined to allow for eventual change. An analysis of public commemoration through war memorials, museums, historic sites, community events, and the less traditional memorials of novels, artwork, and films reveals how members of the Japanese American community and sympathetic Caucasian Americans overcame racist opposition and demonstrated determination in their efforts to pay tribute to the sacrifices of the soldiers, preserve relevant sites, and provide for the education of current and future generations on the subject of the Japanese American experience. The research also demonstrates the diversity within the Japanese American community, by disproving the common stereotype of homogeneity within the “model minority,” and revealing the strength of individualism within the community as a significant contributing factor to memorialization efforts.

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My research on the Japanese American World War II experience began as an undergraduate at James Madison University when Dr. David Dillard suggested that I study the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team as part of a research scholarship. It was under his guidance that I not only chose history as a major, but also completed my research and successfully applied to graduate school. Though I am no longer his student, I still seek his advice and appreciate the support he has always offered.

One of the most rewarding parts of my research, as both an undergraduate and graduate student, has been the opportunity to interview the Japanese American veterans and former detainees whose lives have shaped the history I am trying to capture.

Veterans Joe Ichiuji, Grant Ichikawa, and Norman Ikari welcomed me into their homes while I was an undergraduate, and they have continued to provide me with information and encouragement. During the past three years I have also had the privilege of interviewing Fred Hoshiyama, Lawson Sakai, Frank Kitamoto, Masuko and Albert

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Any list of thanks would be incomplete without giving credit to those who have supported me personally. To my college friends, who have supported and encouraged me

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To all those who have helped me along the way, I dedicate this project and hope it will inspire others to ensure that the dark spots of history are not forgotten.

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Preface

For many people the word “monument” conjures images of tall obelisks or heroic men on horseback forever immortalized in marble or stone. Some may move viewers to tears through seemingly never-ending lists of lost comrades while others inspire contemplation and quiet respect through stirring inscriptions, artistic sculptures, and thought-provoking testimonies. These traditional monuments have a timeless quality to them; indeed they never move or alter their appearance beyond that of the natural erosion of time and weather. Observers rarely know exactly when they were erected, yet they seem to take for granted that they will always remain. They dot the landscape in cities and throughout the countryside of not only the United States but also countries around the world. Monuments bear witness to lives lost, heroic deeds accomplished, religious ideals attained, and events experienced throughout history. They may be subtle or overt, large or small, pretty or harsh, traditional or contemporary, yet all exist for one reason: to remember.

Americans pass by monuments daily, weekly, or perhaps more rarely; yet observers know their stated purpose: to honor those who came before us. But what is often ignored about these timeless stone companions is that beyond the person or deed they depict, each monument is also a tribute to its creators. The artistry, architecture, and style reflect the imagination and symbolism of its designers. While interpretations of monuments occasionally change over time to reflect various political and social movements, the original motivation, development, and creation remains an integral factor

in the monument's meaning, even though routine observers may not be aware of its background.

What assumptions then can be made when no monument exists to commemorate a significant person, place, or event? If the purpose of a monument is to remember, the lack of such a tribute reflects an unconscious or conscious decision to forget. Though the existence of a memorial does not guarantee the eternal remembrance of its subject, it does symbolize the simple fact that someone thought its subject was worth remembering. Yet who decides what is worthy and what is not? In many cases, national, state, and local leaders choose what is commemorated and in what fashion, but these same leaders can prevent or hinder the remembrance of events they deem unworthy of such recognition. It was in this manner that the Japanese American World War II experience of confinement and military service was largely forgotten in the decades following the war.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, local, state, and national leaders as well as citizens across the country shared an unspoken agreement that the Japanese American story was one to be ignored. Due to a feeling of shame in the Japanese American community and pervasive racism amongst white Americans, there was very little public recognition of the World War II experience for decades after the war. Though the military service of Japanese American soldiers was honorable and praiseworthy, it was hard to discuss their service without also mentioning the confinement of American citizens and resident aliens without charges or trials. An evacuation and confinement based purely on race was antithetical to the concepts of democracy that Americans fought for during WWII and therefore proved to be a hypocritical embarrassment that many Americans preferred to ignore. In addition, the

scattered resettlement of Japanese Americans after their release and a persistent yet mistaken belief in the “military necessity” argument resulted in decades of silence before the public memorialization of the Japanese American experience emerged.

When commemoration finally did begin to appear during the latter part of the 20th century, it was due to a variety of factors. First and foremost was the service record of the Japanese American soldiers. Without the sacrifices of these men and women to disprove accusations of disloyalty, the story of the confinement would likely have been ignored for even longer. The pride and appreciation felt within the Japanese American community towards the soldiers drawn from their own ranks led to the earliest forms of local commemoration within the community. Broader public commemoration began to spread beyond the community as a result of both this military recognition and broader social changes. The nineteenth century was rife with racial upheaval that affected citizens across the US particularly during the Civil Rights Movement, which helped improve conditions for minorities through social awareness and legislation such as the 1948 desegregation of the military and the 1954 decision to integrate public schools. The introduction of Hawaii as a state combined with increasing racial tolerance resulted in the entrance of numerous influential Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) into local, state, and national politics. Japanese American participation in the countless social, political, and military protest and activist movements also provided many with the experience to raise a previously unheard voice. Their activism resulted in social, academic, and political advancements such as the creation of Ethnic Studies programs and the passage of the 1988 Civil Liberties Act. The success of their political efforts combined with their

increased social and racial acceptance gave the Japanese American community the courage needed to bring their story on to the national stage.

This dissertation is an examination of this process of forgetting and remembering both within and without the Japanese American community. Following a brief introduction on uses of language and terminology, I then begin by discussing the historical background of Japanese American immigration, settlement, and wartime experiences. I also discuss the impact and significance of “Go For Broke,” a 1951 film that stood alone until the 1970s as one of the only public representations of the Japanese American war experience. This is followed by an analysis of the period of forgetting and the period of remembering, and the events that brought about that transition. Through discussions of the creation of war memorials, the preservation of the confinement camp sites, and the development of related museum exhibits, I will show how individuals, both Japanese American and Caucasian, managed to bring the story of the Japanese American WWII experience to the national level despite opposition and even divisions within their own communities. I conclude with a look at how community centered events contribute to the public memory surrounding the experiences and how non-traditional memorials such as novels, artwork, and film have significantly helped introduce the Japanese American story to the broader American public. Ultimately, I show how the unique composition of the Japanese American community shaped the development of these memorials and encouraged a reluctant American to remember an important part of their shared history.

Introduction: What's in a Word?

It seems to have become almost a prerequisite in histories dealing with the World War II Japanese American experience to define and defend one's choice of terminology. Some authors have written entire articles about terminology relating to the Japanese Americans, while others include a preface or appendix, or simply mention the subject in the course of their analysis.¹ As my dissertation title suggests, I am interested in the different ways in which the Japanese American WWII experience has been remembered, or not remembered; and I believe that the language used in books, movies, and at historic sites is an integral part of commemoration and therefore merits attention. While the subject of word choice and language will reappear throughout the text, I want to explain the debate and clarify my decisions at the beginning.

Undoubtedly the single most contentious word within this debate is "concentration camp," which is often used to describe the camps in which Japanese American citizens and first generation aliens, or *Issei*, were housed after removal from the West Coast in 1942. This wording has caused numerous debates at local, state, and even national levels in the decades since Executive Order 9066 called for the creation of military zones on the West Coast from which residents could be excluded. Most authors that choose to use this word quickly cite the unquestionable fact that President Franklin D. Roosevelt himself used this term in reference to the Japanese American camps, as did

¹ Roger Daniels, "Words do Matter: A Note on Inappropriate Terminology and the Incarceration of the Japanese Americans" in Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura, eds., *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 190-214; Deborah Schiffrin, "Language and Public Memorial: 'America's Concentration Camps,'" *Discourse and Society* 12, No. 4 (2001); Alice Yang Murray, *What did the Internment of Japanese Americans Mean?* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000).

numerous other leaders.² However, historian Roger Daniels, who “believe[s] that it [concentration camp] is the most appropriate term,” also claims that he does not think that the word was extensively used during the war era.³

In the immediate aftermath of the war, many of the anthropological and sociological studies and memoirs that emerged from the camps addressed the term “concentration camp” only briefly, if at all, primarily to deny that this term was accurate. According to historian Alice Yang Murray, in the 1960s and 1970s, published histories and memoirs took a “revisionist” turn and began to reexamine the Japanese American experience through a more critical eye.⁴ These new histories particularly examined the motivations for and impact of protest movements, the existence of a history of racism in the United States, and the role of administrators within the camps.

One of the most significant contributions of these new publications was the debate over the terminology and euphemisms used by the US government, the military, and the War Relocation Authority (WRA) during the war. As books emerged with “concentration camp” in the title, historians, Japanese Americans, and former administrators alike were required to “come to terms” with their choice of words. Daniels has described how some reprints of earlier publications began to use “concentration camp” where they had not earlier and former administrators felt the need to defend the conditions in the camps.⁵ In 1971 as the debate over “concentration camp” heated up, former director of the WRA, Dillon Myer, wrote:

² Daniels, “Words do matter,” 201.

³ Daniels, “Words do Matter,” 205, 201.

⁴ Murray, *What did the Internment Mean*,” 20-21.

⁵ Daniels, “Words do Matter,” 202 – He specifically mentions Mine Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946) and Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1953).

The WRA centers were all too often referred to as concentration camps, which in the minds of many carried the implication that the centers were similar to Hitler's Dachau and other European prison camps. In truth, the relocation centers were just what the name implies; they were way-stations for persons willing to resettle in other parts of the United States, or they served as temporary homes for those persons who wished to remain until they could return to their permanent homes.⁶

Sixteen years later, historian Richard Drinnon directly countered this generous claim with the publication of, *Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism*, which portrayed Myer as a racist overseer of not only the Japanese Americans but also the Native Americans.

The heart of the debate over the use of "concentration camp" and the underlying motivation for such fervent argument lies not in the dictionary definition of the term, but in its connotation. While "concentration camp" may have been benign in 1900, the use of the term following the forced labor and extermination camps of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party is far more complex. Merriam Webster defines a concentration camp as "a camp where persons (as prisoners of war, political prisoners, or refugees) are detained or confined" and the Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "a camp for detaining political prisoners or persecuted minorities, especially in Nazi Germany." On August 10, 1936, when President Roosevelt sent a memo to his staff requesting a list of Japanese in Hawaii that worked closely with naval traffic so they "would be the first to be placed in a concentration camp in the event of trouble," it is doubtful he envisioned a "concentration camp" the likes of Treblinka.⁷ Eight years later when the full horror of Nazi extermination camps was known, the broad term "concentration camp" that had been

⁶ Dillon Myer, *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority During World War II*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971), xiv.

⁷ Karen L. Ishizuka, "Coming to Terms: America's Concentration Camps," in Akemi Kikumura-Yano, Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, and James A. Hirabayashi, eds., *Common Ground: The Japanese American National Museum and the Culture of Collaborations* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005), 103.

applied to Hitler's work camps and death camps took on new meanings. As the Oxford definition shows, the literal meaning may be broadly applicable, but the connotation is steadfastly rooted in the Nazi camps of WWII Germany.

Despite the connotations, many have chosen to rely on the factual meaning of "concentration camp" and to apply it to the Japanese American camps of the United States. Historically the most common words used to describe the camps were "internment," "relocation," and "concentration" camp or center. The first is perhaps the most common and is frequently considered the most acceptable, but in reality it is quite problematic. To rely again on the dictionary, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines an "internment camp" as "a detention camp for prisoners of war and aliens." As hinted at earlier in FDR's memo, prior to America's entrance into WWII, the Department of Justice Aliens Division, the FBI, and military intelligence organizations had compiled a list of potential alien suspects from all anticipated enemy nations to be arrested upon the outbreak of war.⁸ In the week following the attack on Pearl Harbor 3,000 enemy aliens were interned, 1,500 of whom were Japanese Americans; and throughout the course of the war as many as 11,000 Japanese, Germans, and Italians were interned in camps and prisons across the country.⁹

This internment of enemy aliens, though perhaps unpleasant, was legal.

According to the Alien Enemies Act of July 6, 1798, which is still in effect today, the President has the power to force non-citizens of a warring nation to be "apprehended,

⁸ Roger Daniels, *Prisoner Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 24.

⁹ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 26; Daniels, "Words do Matter," 193. For more information on other enemy aliens interned during WWII, see Lawrence DiStasi, *Una Storia: The Secret History of Italian American Evacuation and Internment During World War II* (Berkeley: Heydey Books, 2001) and Timothy J. Holian, *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

restrained, secured, and removed as alien enemies.”¹⁰ The internees had the right to a hearing, and though they could not have legal counsel present many still managed to gain their freedom.¹¹ In addition, internment camps were subject to the statutes of the Geneva Convention, and thus were frequently of a higher quality than other camps in the often futile hope that Axis nations would provide similar hospitable conditions for American prisoners overseas.¹²

While historians and linguists can, and have, argued over the connotations and implications of “concentration camp” for years, there is far less room for negotiation in the use of “internment camp.” As Daniels has pointed out, the use of “internment camp” in reference to the forced removal and mass confinement of over 100,000 citizens and non-citizens of Japanese descent from the West Coast is not only inaccurate, but also confusing.¹³ Regardless of this simple fact however, a quick look at your library shelves will tell you that the use of “internment” is still prevalent. In 2001, Greg Robinson published, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans*, an in-depth analysis of the motivations and actions of FDR in the decision and application of Executive Order 9066. According to Robinson, he chose to use “internment” because “it is readily grasped and has been commonly employed in reference to the government’s policy,” although he acknowledges that it is not an accurate definition. He continues, “As a result of its association with the Holocaust and the sites of mass murder set up by Nazi Germany, the term ‘concentration camp’ evokes such powerful and emotional responses that its use obscures rather than clarifies the

¹⁰ U.S. Code, Title 50, Chapter 3 – Alien Enemies, Section 21 – Restraint, Regulation, and Removal
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/50/usc_sec_50_00000021----000-.html.

¹¹ Daniels, “Words do Matter,” 194-195.

¹² Daniels, “Words do Matter,” 193-194.

¹³ Daniels, “Words do Matter,” 205.

nature of the Japanese American camps.” Instead he uses simply “camp” or “internment camp.”¹⁴

It seems that “concentration camp” is by definition accurate but by connotation debatable, while “internment camp” is the opposite – a legal and accepted term that is by definition inaccurate when applied to the mass round-up of Japanese immigrants and US citizens in 1942. The heart of the debate over terminology lies in the belief that sugar-coated terms or “euphemisms” are “semantics of suppression [which] shrouded the gross injustice of the incarceration and has effectively and methodically distanced the reality of the concentration camp experience from honest scrutiny.”¹⁵ The use of less meaning-laden words has even been used by some apologists to forward their own opposing arguments - to downplay the trauma of an event. In her book, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, Deborah Lipstadt showed how some Holocaust deniers have referred to the “internment” of Jews in Europe and have even attempted to equate it to the “internment” of the Japanese Americans in the United States.¹⁶ In all the Japanese American literature pertaining to the terminology of the World War II experience, I have yet to find any reasonable attempt to equate the two experiences; however, the tactics remain the same. Historians and former detainees who prefer the use of “concentration camp” consider the use of “internment” to be an affront to their suffering just as it would be to refer to the death camps as “internment camps.”

“Relocation camp” is a word that many during the war and since have chosen to use as an alternative to both “concentration camp” and “internment camp.” The OED

¹⁴ Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 261.

¹⁵ Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 103-104.

¹⁶ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 213-214.

defines “relocation” as “the action of locating afresh; a new allocation,” and specifies that a “relocation centre” is “an internment camp to which persons of Japanese birth or origin were committed during the war of 1939-1945.” While the first definition is benign the second is far more complex. It includes the word “internment,” which carries its own distinct definition and by referring to “persons of Japanese birth or origin” it avoids explicitly stating that such camps detained American citizens. In fact, the definition of “relocation centre” could fit “internment camp” as well.

The connotation of “relocation” is less debatable than “concentration camp,” but even it errs on the side of being more pleasant than the evacuation actually was. Typically a relocation for a job for instance, does not involve a loss of personal property, ethnic discrimination, and loss of personal freedoms. Jeff Burton, the author of *Confinement and Ethnicity*, a comprehensive historical and archaeological study of sites related to the Japanese American WWII experience, used “relocation camp” despite its positive connotations because of its prevalence during the war. He claimed, “when discussing the relocation centers this report [*Confinement and Ethnicity*] to a great extent uses the terminology originally coined by the War Relocation Authority. The terms are not presumed to be an accurate definition of the events, attitudes, or facts of the relocation. They are used because they are most common in the historical records and may reflect the contemporary subjective context.”¹⁷ It becomes clear after reading even a few authors’ perspectives how contentious the debate over language truly is.

Robert Asahina, who recently published *Just Americans: How Japanese Americans Won a War at Home and Abroad*, put the debate into an entirely different

¹⁷ Jeff Burton, Mary Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard W. Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Arizona: Western Archeological and Conservation Center, 1999), 18.

perspective. According to Asahina, the debate is not over whether words such as “exclusion,” “evacuation,” “registration,” etc., were euphemisms. He argues that this is not nearly as significant as the fact that many of the terms that are still discussed today are common “military jargon.”¹⁸ He writes, “the terminology suggests how the whole process, from Executive Order 9066 on, authorized by the commander in chief and carried out by the Army, was actually a military campaign – though on American soil, directed against Japanese Americans who were mostly U.S. citizens.”¹⁹ He is also careful to clarify the difference between “internment” and the Executive Order that excluded large numbers of Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Considering the common argument at the time that the mass relocation was based on military necessity, it is not surprising that the euphemisms most frequently used by the government were military in nature.

In the debate over terminology, it is important to look not only to scholars and journalists who are writing about the subject after the fact, but also to the survivors and detainees themselves. Unfortunately even this is unlikely to make the debate any clearer. In the preface to her classic memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*, former camp detainee Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston wrote that she and her husband wanted to write about life inside the camps because so few people knew what it was really like. They asked, “How many know what actually went on inside? If they think anything, they think concentration camps. But that conjures up Poland and Siberia. And these camps weren’t like that at all.”²⁰ She and her husband obviously did not want comparisons to the camps of Nazi

¹⁸ Robert Asahina, *Just Americans: How Japanese Americans Won a War At Home and Abroad* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006) 263.

¹⁹ Asahina, *Just Americans*, 263.

²⁰ Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), ix.

Germany and Communist Russia, yet “concentration camp” has still become one of the acceptable terms for the camps. In another instance, I requested an interview with former camp detainee Fred Hoshiyama and in my original correspondence I used the term “internment camp.” When he responded he used the term “concentration camp,” and pointed out that my use of “internment” was “polite” and therefore acceptable, but his preferred term was “concentration camp.”²¹ As I found in nearly every aspect of my research, the individual opinions regarding correct terminology varied greatly depending on personal experience and motivation.

While not nearly as contentious as “concentration camp,” other words have become debatable in reference to the persons within the camp and the method by which they arrived. After Executive Order 9066 permitted the creation of exclusionary zones along the West Coast, the Western Defense Command began posting notices of imminent removal of the Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast. This began the process of what is frequently called “evacuation.” According to the OED, “evacuation” has two definitions that are relevant here: “The action of emptying (a receptacle), or of removing (the contents of anything) so as to produce a vacancy,” and a military definition of “a. The clearing (a place) of troops (*obs.*) b. The withdrawal (by an army or commander) from occupation of a country, fortress, town, etc. c. The removal (of a garrison, the population of a place, etc.)” The goal was certainly to create a vacancy of Japanese Americans along the West Coast and it was carried out as a military operation, though not of troops but of enemy aliens and “non-aliens.”

The use of “non-alien” to refer to American citizens of Japanese Americans is perhaps one of the most obvious “euphemisms” used by the government to justify their

²¹ Phone message, Fred Hoshiyama, November 2007.

actions. According to the final report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 70% of the people evacuated from the West Coast were American citizens.²² The Exclusion Orders issued from the Western Defense Command ordered “all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, be excluded....”²³ The use of “non-alien” as opposed to “citizen” maintained an illusion of justification by focusing on the Japanese heritage of a person rather than their American citizenship. The use of “alien” as applied to a first generation Japanese immigrant is accurate, but it is crucial to remember that any number of these “aliens” remained such not out of a lack of desire to become a citizen, but because they were denied the right of naturalization.²⁴

Following the Army’s orders, the Japanese and Japanese Americans of the West Coast were evacuated to one of fifteen temporary “assembly centers” in the western states. Many were former fairgrounds and racetracks that had been outfitted with additional but still insufficient facilities to house thousands of displaced civilians. “Assembly,” which also has both civilian and military definitions, refers to the gathering or collection of the detainees that occurred at these centers as the US government considered its next course of action. While Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts referred to an “assembly center” as a “euphemism for a prison” in his dissenting opinion on the *Korematsu v. United States* case of 1944, the temporary camps are still most commonly referred to as “assembly centers.” It was within these improvised facilities

²² *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), 135.

²³ *Personal Justice Denied*, 112.

²⁴ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 88.

that the Army “assembled” the civilians affected by the Exclusion Order until authority was transferred to the newly created WRA in late 1942.²⁵

According to historian Roger Daniels, the “assembly centers” were “prison-like,” and had insufficient facilities leading to unpleasant living conditions, poor sanitation, and widespread sickness.²⁶ While inhabitants were allowed to visit with friends through the barbed wire fences surrounding the facilities, they were not allowed to leave without military permission. As the detainees gradually moved into one of ten camps run by the WRA, conditions improved significantly, though they certainly never reached pre-war levels of freedom and quality of life. Communities developed within the camps providing many of the services that existed outside camp, such as hospitals, schools, newspapers, libraries, scout groups, clubs, and churches. Families lived together in partitioned barracks with only a semblance of privacy; and each barrack building had water, electricity, and a heating system, though there was very little furniture or luxury items provided and all meals were eaten in communal mess halls. Over the following years, conditions steadily improved as detainees attempted to make their conditions better by building furniture, ordering items from catalogues, and creating gardens within the camps.²⁷

Almost as soon as the camps were created, detainees began to leave. Over 4,300 students entered college from within the camps and 10,000 detainees left the camps in 1942 alone to assist local farmers with agricultural work due to the shortage of manpower brought on by the war effort. Another 5,000 left the camps to serve as linguist translators for the US Army in the Pacific and over 2,000 left the camps to return to Japan as

²⁵ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 55, 65.

²⁶ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 66.

²⁷ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 66-71.

prisoner exchanges. In September 1942 the WRA also instituted "leave clearance," which began with the intention of being a controlled temporary release but in reality it was the first permanent resettlement program from the camps.²⁸ By December of 1944, 35,000 of the 110,000 relocated people had resettled outside the exclusion zones and on December 18, 1944, the exclusion orders were repealed allowing those released during the last year of the war to return to their West Coast homes if desired.²⁹

The loss of personal freedom and the accompanying loss of property was devastating for the Japanese Americans that were evacuated from the West Coast and conditions within the camps were frequently deplorable. In light of the military orders that confined them, the barbed wire that surrounded them, and the guard towers that faced into camp many have referred to those inside the camps as "prisoners." "Prisoner," defined as either "1. A person who has been captured or who has surrendered to an opponent in war; a captive" or "2. A person who is kept in prison or in custody; *spec.* one who is legally committed to prison as the result of a legal process, either as punishment for a crime committed, or while awaiting trial for an offence" is another word with complex implications. Certainly the detainees did not surrender, nor were they captured in a military engagement; and while they were kept in custody, they were not being punished or awaiting a trial.

Although this subject will be addressed in much more detail throughout this study, it is interesting to consider the fact that many former detainees claim that part of the reason that they were reluctant to discuss their experiences was that they felt a sense of shame. Many felt that if they were locked up they *must* have done something wrong.

²⁸ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 72-78.

²⁹ *Personal Justice Denied*, 234-235.

This is obviously untrue as there were no sabotage or treason charges brought against the group or individuals prior to their relocation. The lack of charges, the fact that there was a constant stream of resettlers departing from the camps almost as soon as they arrived, the living conditions within the camp, and the numerous stories of picnicing, hunting, and fishing outside the boundaries of camp would imply that they were not up to “prison” standards. This is not to say that they were not largely forced to remain inside the fences while they were detained at the camps, but as “prisoner” carries the connotation of having committed a crime, it seems an injustice to label innocent people as “prisoners.” Ironically, this term is frequently used today for just that reason - it emphasizes the injustice of confining an ethnic group with no criminal charges, hearings, or proven guilt. Similarly, “incarcerate,” which means “to put in confinement” bears no legal or procedural definition, but is often heard in the context of criminal proceedings and therefore leads to an assumption of one having committed a crime.

A similar word that is frequently used is “inmate.” Its definition is innocuous enough as it refers only to “an occupant along with others, one of the family or company who occupy a house or other abode.” “Detainee” is another term that is used based on its definition of “a person detained in custody, usually on political grounds and in an emergency, without or pending formal trial.” Amidst all the various words that have been used, “detainee” is one that is both accurate by definition and seems to bear no false connotations, though this cannot be universally determined. It becomes clear after analyzing just these ten words that regardless of definition, connotation, or frequency of use, the semantics of the Japanese American World War II experience are incredibly

complex and are frequently based on personal experience and understanding as much as dictionary definitions.

Museum Terminology

Given the extensive historiographical differences surrounding the terminology of the Japanese American experience, it is not surprising that the debate has also surfaced in the public arena as well. While the unique history of the Manzanar, California WRA camp will be discussed in more detail later, one aspect of its development can help shed light on the many facets of the terminology debate. On April 14, 1973, the site of Manzanar in the Owens Valley of California hosted over 1,500 people who had come to the remote location to celebrate the unveiling of a historic plaque designating Manzanar as the California Registered Historic Landmark Number 850. The California State Department of Parks and Recreation had agreed to designate a 4.33 acre area, including two rock sentry houses and the camp cemetery as a State Historic Landmark in January 1972. The designation resulted from the efforts of the Manzanar Committee founded with the dual purpose of educating the public as to the significance of the Manzanar site and of preserving Manzanar as a historic site. Led primarily by one former detainee, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, the Committee successfully won state and later national landmark status.³⁰

The state landmark plaque that was unveiled at the ceremony read:

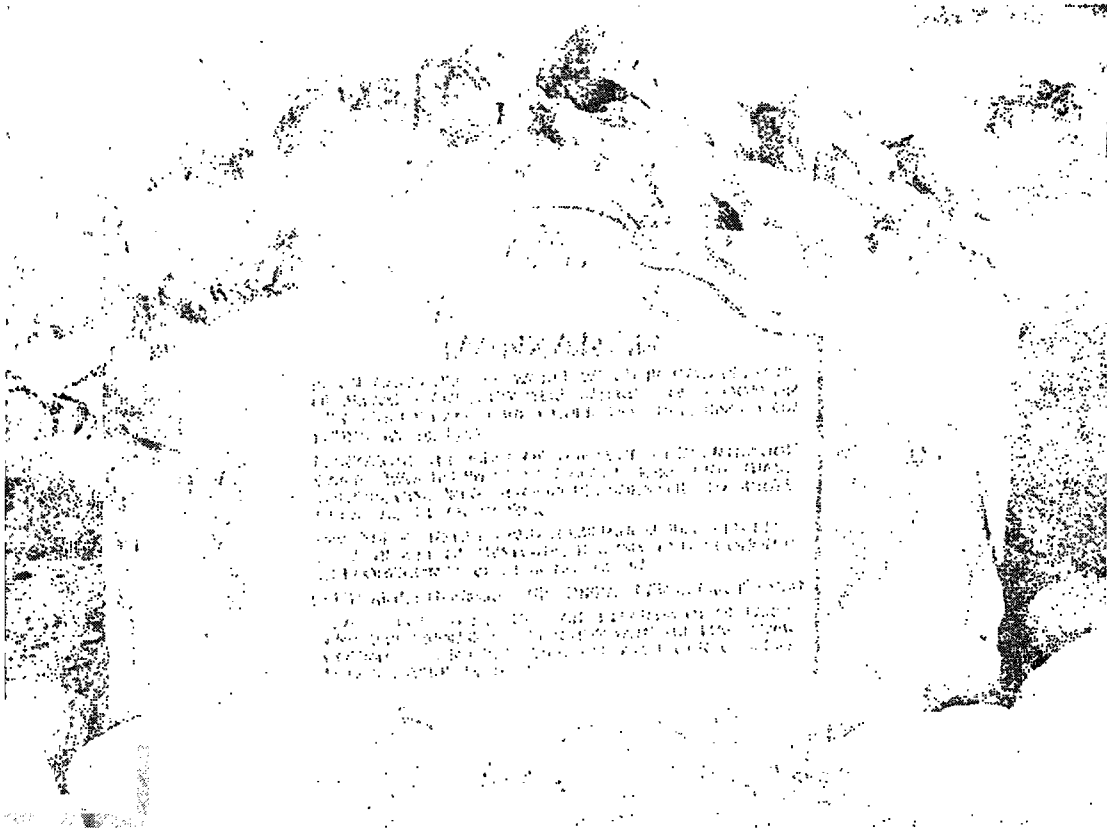
In the early part of World War II, 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were interned in relocation centers by Executive Order No. 9066, issued on February 19, 1942. Manzanar, the first of ten such concentration camps, was bounded by

³⁰ Harlan D. Unrau, *The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry During World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1996).

barbed wire and guard towers, confining 10,000 persons, the majority being American citizens. May the injustices and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism and economic exploitation never emerge again.

The wording of the plaque was the result of a series of debates among the Manzanar Committee, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), numerous state and local officials, and the representatives of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. According to Embrey, the Manzanar Committee originally submitted a much longer text and they were told they would have to change not only its length but also its wording. The State Advisory Commission of the Department of Parks and Recreation opposed such words as “racism,” “economic greed,” and “concentration camp.” Embrey recalled a heated meeting with Department of Parks and Recreation Director William Penn-Mott in which he refused to allow the “negative words” originally penned by the Committee members. Warren Furutani, founding chair of the Manzanar Committee, called Penn-Mott a racist for his refusal to allow the preferred wording, and Assemblyman Alex Garcia, who represented the Little Tokyo district of Los Angeles, threatened to take their argument to the Legislature, at which point Penn-Mott gave in to the demands of the Manzanar Committee and JACL representatives. According to the Manzanar Historic Resource Study, the final three sentences that appear on the plaque today are a compromise between the state and the committee. The state wrote the first sentence, the Committee wrote the second, and the third was a compromise between the two organizations.³¹

³¹ Sue Kunitomi Embrey, “From Manzanar to the Present: A Personal Journey,” in Erica Harth, ed., *Last Witnesses: Reflections on the Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 179, 178; Unrau, *Evacuation and Relocation*, 2.



California Historical Landmark Plaque, Manzanar, California
Photo by author, April 2007

The debate over the wording of the Manzanar plaque may have been one of the first historic site or museum debates over the terminology of Executive Order 9066, but it was in no way the last. Twenty-five years after the dedication ceremony at Manzanar, the Japanese American National Museum in collaboration with the Ellis Island Immigration Museum hosted an exhibit at Ellis Island called “America’s Concentration Camps: Remembering the Japanese American Experience.” The original exhibit was staged at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in 1994 and was invited to New York by Steven Briganti, the executive director of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation.³² The curator of this exhibit, Karen Ishizuka, chose to use “concentration camp” in the title and throughout the exhibit and while she reported that museum staff

³² Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 102-103.

did encounter some negative feedback, the exhibit had a largely successful display at the JANM.

After the invitation to Ellis Island, Ishizuka worked with the exhibit designer, Ralph Appelbaum Associates, the JANM art director Clement Hanami, and the Japanese American National Museum's New York Advisory Council to adapt the original exhibit to travel, while also integrating local New York history and artifacts into the redesigned exhibit. In the months leading up to the opening of the exhibit, National Park Service (NPS) representative Diane Dayson of the Statue of Liberty National Monument expressed concerns over the use of "concentration camp" in the title fearing that it would incite a negative reaction from the large Jewish community of New York. President and chief executive of the JANM, Irene Hirano, instructed Ishizuka to inform Dayson that she had communicated with members of the Jewish community and had been encouraged to continue with the exhibit and related programs as a means to create open dialogue on the subject and to oppose the "semantics of suppression." Even after further discussion between Hirano, Dayson, and Briganti, Hirano received notice from Dayson and the NPS that she must remove "concentration camp" from the title and that while the wording could be used throughout the exhibit as long as it included an explanation of its meaning, she must realize that there may be public pressure to remove that wording as well.³³

The staff and associates of the JANM immediately opened the question for discussion among their Board of Directors, museum colleagues, and community members. According to Ishizuka, the response was overwhelmingly in favor of maintaining the title citing censorship fears and academic accuracy. In an attempt to settle the matter, the chair of the JANM Board of Governors, Senator Daniel K. Inouye,

³³ Ishizuka, "Coming to Terms," 107, 108.

wrote a letter directly to the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt. Senator Inouye pointed out that “concentration camp” was clearly displayed in the exhibit at the JANM prior to receiving the invitation from Ellis Island and that he had personally spoken with numerous Japanese Americans and Jewish community members regarding the text and had no concerns over its reception in New York. In the ensuing days a number of meetings were held with the organizations and people involved as they awaited the decisions of Secretary Babbitt and Dwight Pitcaithley, the chief historian of the NPS. On February 13, 1998 word was received from Dayson stating that the exhibit could proceed as planned, and the staff returned to their focus of finishing the exhibit and hosting informational programs prior to the grand opening.³⁴

Unfortunately, the JANM and Ellis Island staff soon hit another roadblock with the publication of an incendiary news article in Jewish newspapers across the country.³⁵ With the headline “Jews, Japanese Clash over Holocaust Language,” the article hinted at the existence of a far more negative and still-ongoing debate over the terminology of the upcoming exhibit. On March 8, 1998 the *New York Times* picked up the story and published, “What is a Concentration Camp? Ellis Island Exhibit Prompts a Debate.”³⁶ While this article was far more balanced, it served to heighten awareness of a March 9 meeting hosted by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) that included representatives of the American Jewish and Japanese American communities. At this meeting Senator Inouye spoke about his experiences as a member of the all-Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team and his discovery of camps in both the US and Germany. In

³⁴ Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 108-110, 110-111, 112.

³⁵ Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 112.

³⁶ *New York Times*, “What is a Concentration Camp? Ellis Island Exhibit Prompts a Debate,” March 8, 1998.

response, the executive director of the AJC, David Harris, expressed his agreement regarding the injustices suffered by Japanese Americans during the war, but he still opposed the use of the term “concentration camp,” claiming it immediately reminded readers of the Holocaust. The meeting continued in a respectful manner as the various organizations discussed their shared concerns for teaching future generations about the past. According to Ishizuka, Benjamin Meed, president of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, finally presented a solution. Knowing that the JANM was not trying to equate the Holocaust and the Japanese American relocation, he suggested that an explanation be placed at the beginning of the exhibit to inform the public of the differences between the two experiences and the reasoning for the word choice.³⁷ This brief explanation appeared as a footnote in the Ellis Island exhibit as well as all later destinations including the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, the California Historical Society in San Francisco, California, and the Little Rock Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock, Arkansas.³⁸

In the aftermath of the debates, the JANM produced a “Question and Answer Fact Sheet for *America’s Concentration Camps: Remembering the Japanese American Experience*,” to answer such questions as “Why were they called concentration camps?”

³⁷ Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 114.

³⁸ Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 103, 114-115. The footnote reads: “A concentration camp is a place where people are imprisoned not because of any crimes they have committed, but simply because of who they are. Although many groups have been singled out for such persecution throughout history, the term ‘concentration camp’ was first used at the turn of the century in the Spanish-American and Boer Wars. During World War II, America’s concentration camps were clearly distinguishable from Nazi Germany’s. Nazi camps were places of torture, barbarous medical experiments and summary executions; some were extermination centers with gas chambers. Six million Jews were slaughtered in the Holocaust. Many others, including Gypsies, Poles, Homosexuals and political dissidents were also victims of Nazi concentration camps. In recent years, concentration camps have existed in the former Soviet Union, Cambodia, and Bosnia. Despite the difference, all had one thing in common: the people in power removed a minority group from the general population and the rest of society let it happen.”

and “But didn’t the government also call them relocation centers?”³⁹ It explains the reasons for hosting the display at Ellis Island and the use of the site as an internment camp for Japanese, Germans, and Italians during the war. The document states, “‘Concentration Camps’ was the term used by U.S. officials at the time,” and cites Congressman John Rankin and Attorney General Francis Biddle to support this assertion. The answer concludes, “It is also critical not to use the governmental euphemisms in order to understand the magnitude of the occurrence.” The second question regarding “relocation centers” states,

The U.S. government quickly shrouded the incarceration in euphemistic terminology to make the incarceration more acceptable... The detention orders were called “civilian exclusion orders,” and American citizens were referred to as “non-alien.” This extensive and persistent use of euphemisms not only worked to sidetrack legal and constitutional challenges but, more insidiously, functioned to gain the cooperation of its victims as well as deceive the American and worldwide public.⁴⁰

Manzanar also produced their own response to the “concentration camp” debate in the form of a lesson plan titled, “Loaded Words,” which aimed to teach tenth graders the differences between denotation, connotation, and euphemisms as well as how connotations can change over time.⁴¹ This lesson plan is distributed to teachers as part of Manzanar’s educational materials that were developed to assist educators in teaching the Japanese American experience through a variety of subjects. Interestingly, the final page of the lesson plan is a disclaimer of sorts. Written by Gordon Chappel, Regional Historian for the NPS, the letter states, “A lot has been made of the use of the terms “concentration camp” and “internment camp.” I have recommended that the National

³⁹ “Question and Answer Fact Sheet for *America’s Concentration Camps: Remembering the Japanese American Experience*,” Japanese American National Museum, Hirasaki National Resources Center, 2.

⁴⁰ “Question and Answer Fact Sheet,” 2.

⁴¹ Secondary Lesson Plan: Loaded Words, Manzanar National Historic Site, Teacher’s Packet.

Park Service not use the term “concentration camp” in its interpretation because the term has become inextricably associated with Nazi death camps of World War II.”⁴² He goes on to discuss the origins and definitions of the word but concludes that when “concentration camp” was used most frequently in reference to the Japanese American camps the extent of the Nazi programs was not yet well known to the US. This letter and the concerns raised at Ellis Island clearly reveal that the NPS, the JANM, and the Manzanar Committee were at odds over the use of such a meaning-laden description as “concentration camp.”

Though the organizations involved had reached an accord, the debate over the Ellis Island terminology continued to rage in the newspapers. On March 10, 1998 the *New York Times* reported that there was “Accord on Term ‘Concentration Camp,’” and explained that the new text to be added to the exhibit would not only define “concentration camp,” but also it would explain the difference between the Japanese American camps and the Jewish Holocaust camps and provide the history of similar camps in the Soviet Union, Cambodia, and Bosnia.⁴³ That same day, a letter to the editor appeared in the *Times* pointing to the wartime use of “concentration camp” in regards to the Japanese camps, which the author claimed refuted any objection that the Jewish Community might have towards the use of that term.⁴⁴ Another letter to the editor that day voiced a different opinion. Linda Goetz Holmes wrote, “The confinement of Japanese-American civilians in this country from 1942 to 1945 cannot compare, even in semantics, with the experience of civilians interned by the Nazis or the 130,000 white

⁴² Secondary Lesson Plan: Loaded Words, Manzanar National Historic Site, Teacher’s Packet.

⁴³ *New York Times*, “Accord on Term ‘Concentration Camp,’” March 10, 1998.

⁴⁴ *New York Times*, “Debate on Camps Goes Back to War,” March 10, 1998.

civilians held by the Japanese, including more than 14,000 Americans.”⁴⁵ She argues that, “Ellis Island officials and the American Jewish Committee are correct to dispute the use of the term “concentration camps” by Japanese-Americans to describe their experiences of relocation during World War II.”⁴⁶ Ironically, in her anger over the use of “concentration camp” for the Japanese Americans she also seems to condone the use of “interned” for Nazi camps.

A particularly interesting article appeared on March 13, 1998 entitled, “Defending Jews’ Lexicon of Anguish.”⁴⁷ Written by columnist Clyde Haberman the article claims that terms once reserved for the horrors of the World War II Jewish Holocaust are slowly being usurped by others for their shock value. He cites the examples of “ghetto,” “genocide,” “diaspora,” and even “holocaust,” all of which he argues have been “appropriated by others, notably American blacks, who have recognized the sheer force of this vocabulary and have harnessed it to describe their own history of suffering and bloodshed.” Haberman acknowledges that no one ethnic group owns the dictionary, but he still argues that there is a sense of watering down history when terms such as “holocaust” and “genocide” are used for less intense circumstances. Similarly he claims that labeling people as “Nazis,” “Gestapo,” or “Fuhrer’s” as has been done in popular and political arenas serves to “trivialize the evils of Hitler and his Gestapo.” In contrast, Rebecca Silber wrote a letter to the editor on March 15, 1998 claiming, “That such terminology [concentration camp] should refer only to the Holocaust degrades its tragedy by forgetting what we should have learned: that genocide and mass racial and ethnic

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, “Japanese Atrocities,” March 10, 1998.

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, “Japanese Atrocities,” March 10, 1998.

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, “Defending Jews Lexicon of Anguish,” March 13, 1998.

cleansing are things we must all band together against.”⁴⁸ Obviously the compromise of an explanatory paragraph at the Ellis Island Exhibit may have satisfied the leaders, but it left much to be debated in the public arena.

Linguist Deborah Schiffrin was called upon by CNN to give a Jewish linguist’s perspective on the Ellis Island “concentration camp” debate, which eventually led to the article “Language and Public Memorial: ‘America’s Concentration Camps.’”⁴⁹ Her initial reaction was that “the term ‘concentration camps’ had been ‘appropriated’ by the organizers of the exhibit in order to draw attention to what had really been a very different type of subjugation....”⁵⁰ Throughout her ensuing article she presented a brief history of European Jews and Japanese Americans during the war, an analysis of the varying meanings of “concentration camp,” a linguistic examination of the terminology of the explanatory footnote, and a discussion of how language can help or hinder efforts to present history, particularly in public memorials. She concluded in part that the use of terms such as “concentration camp” did equate to the usurpation of terminology, but as she explained,

Using language that already had a place in a general American national schema about a well-known historical tragedy situated the exhibit in a larger symbolic domain, providing a link to the many other symbolic resources (museums, monuments, ceremonies, videos, conferences) commemorating other concentration camp victims. The title ‘America’s Concentration Camps’ thus compensated for Americans’ misinformation (or ignorance) of their own tragedy by lexically embedding the exhibit in a larger, and more familiar, symbolic domain.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, “Lexicon of Genocide,” March 15, 1998.

⁴⁹ Schiffrin, “Language,” 506.

⁵⁰ Schiffrin, “Language,” 506.

⁵¹ Schiffrin, “Language,” 525.

While she acknowledged Jewish fears over the borrowing of their history, Schiffrin also understood that there were “clear advantages” to using the title that the JANM choose. She pointed out that while these fears were increased due to the rate of death among Holocaust survivors as well as the increasingly common use of traditionally Jewish terminology, the normalization of the Holocaust was also accomplished through the seemingly positive increases in US Holocaust museums and academic classes on the subject.⁵² Amidst her complex analysis she seemed to accept the more common use of such terms with all the advantages and disadvantages that come along with it. She wrote, “what happened during WWII is over: it cannot change or be changed. But just as new data – documents, witnesses, artefacts – lead historians to revise their earlier accounts, so too, the world in which we live leads to revisions of our own personal and collective narratives.”⁵³

Curator Ishizuka reached a similar conclusion after the Ellis Island debates. She later wrote that the real issue was not terminology but perspective. Who decides what is history, who writes it, and from whose point of view is it written? For former detainees and Holocaust survivors the word “concentration camp” evokes a particular memory, while younger generations have yet another understanding of the term. Individual experience, age, education, and numerous other factors affect one’s understanding of history and the words used to present history become important factors in preserving and passing on a particular narrative of history. As Ishizuka concluded, “the exhibition process was an exercise in the study and presentation of history and culture, a study in the contrast and connectedness between official history and community memory, the

⁵² Schiffrin, “Language,” 527.

⁵³ Schiffrin, “Language,” 528.

interrelationship between public and private, political and personal.”⁵⁴ Perhaps the single most contested question in museums and memorials is “who writes history?” But within this question is the fundamental issue of what words will be used to write history. How these questions are answered dictates the interpretation of history that is presented to the public and is therefore critical to an understanding of the development of public memory.

Terminology Choices

Somewhere amidst the decades-long debate, I must come to terms regarding the word choice to be used in my dissertation. For the purpose of objectivity and accuracy, I will primarily rely on definitions and avoid loaded words. “Camp,” “detention center,” or “relocation camp” will be used in reference to the ten camps created and maintained by the War Relocation Authority in response to the Executive Order 9066. The fairgrounds and racetracks where Japanese Americans were initially held in temporary facilities will be referred to as “assembly centers,” and the process of moving the West Coast populations will be referred to as the “evacuation” or “relocation.” Any Japanese Americans inside these camps are “inmates,” “detainees,” or “camp inhabitants,” and the process of putting them into camps is also “evacuation” or “relocation.” “Japanese American” refers to both American citizens and the long-term Japanese aliens, while “Japanese” or “Issei” refers specifically to the first generation immigrants that were denied naturalization. The Department of Justice, FBI, and Army facilities that held primarily Japanese immigrants following the arrests of “suspect” enemy aliens after Pearl Harbor will be “internment camps,” and their inhabitants are “internees.”

⁵⁴ Ishizuka, “Coming to Terms,” 118.

By using what may be considered to be “euphemisms,” I am in no way trying to diminish the injustice suffered by Japanese immigrants during the Second World War. The disregard for constitutional law, the loss of personal freedom and property, and the deplorable conditions of the camps are undeniable and inexcusable. It is not my intent to either justify the government’s decision or vilify the political leaders involved in those decisions. I only hope to provide an understandable differentiation between camps and people and to present an objective analysis of how history remembers the WWII Japanese American experience.

Chapter One: "Go For Broke"

Thirty years before the first Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) hearing and forty-one years before Manzanar Camp became part of the National Park Service, Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer released a movie that was to become one of the only significant public representations of the Japanese American World War II experience for the next three decades. In May 1951, "Go For Broke!" debuted in theaters around the world and was largely met with praise for both the film and the subject matter. Produced by Dore Schary and written and directed by Robert Pirosh, the film presented, "a forceful lesson in racial tolerance and friendliness."¹ It depicted the exploits of the all-Japanese American 100th Infantry (Separate) and 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) as they trained at Camp Shelby and fought their way through campaigns in North Africa, Italy, and France. While they were not the main focus of the movie, both racism and the unjust relocation of the Japanese Americans were openly discussed among the men of the unit. But despite the fact that countless Americans saw the film and numerous newspapers and magazines reported on both the filming and the release of "Go For Broke," its subject matter was soon relegated to an afterthought of the war years.

The lead role of Lt. Michael Grayson was played by Van Johnson, the star of Pirosh and Schary's previous collaboration, "Battleground" (1949). Grayson reports to Camp Shelby only to learn that he has been assigned to command the 442nd RCT comprised entirely of Japanese American soldiers. He is disappointed with his new unit's race and hopes to return to the all-Texan 36th Infantry Division, in which he had served

¹ *New York Times*, May 25, 1951.

prior to his officer training. As Grayson trains and enters combat with the men of the 442nd RCT his attitude towards them gradually softens, but he never slackens in his race to catch up with the 36th, which always seems to be one step ahead of him. Though he finally finds them and arranges a transfer, he soon regrets the decision when his company from the 36th finds itself surrounded by Germans and dependent on the men of the 442nd to find and rescue them. In the end, Grayson and his men are rescued through the bravery and determination of the 442nd, and the Japanese American unit returns to the United States as honored heroes.

The response to “Go For Broke” was overwhelmingly positive yet the film remained the only significant public representation of the World War II relocation and military service of the Japanese Americans until the 1970s. The reasons for the decades of silence are complex, as are the reasons for the gradual emergence of the story, both of which will be examined in detail in the following chapters. Regardless of the reasons, it seems clear through the persistent popularity and diverse audiences of “Go For Broke,” that the film had a significant role in the creation of popular memory regarding the Japanese American experiences. Perhaps the first thing to consider regarding the film’s influence is its accuracy and subject matter, which requires a general understanding of the history of Japanese Americans in the United States.

Japanese Americans in the United States

Early records show that shipwrecked Japanese began arriving in the US as early as the seventeenth century, but the first purposeful immigration did not begin until the

late 1800s when small groups came to Hawaii to work on plantations.² Eventually, Japanese came to the mainland as well, though many were “sojourners,” who expected to stay only a short time to earn money before returning to Japan.³ During the 1800s, significant numbers of Chinese immigrants were also entering the country as laborers. By 1860 their population was over 34,000 compared to the Japanese who numbered only 2,039 in 1890.⁴ When the Chinese population began to compete with local white citizens for jobs, especially on the West Coast, political pressure produced the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which banned Chinese laborers from entering the country.⁵ The Exclusion Act combined with new leadership in Japan under a restored Imperial government produced an increase in the numbers of Japanese immigrants coming to America.⁶ Between 1885 and 1924, approximately 200,000 Japanese came to Hawaii and 180,000 came to the mainland.⁷

In comparison to their Chinese immigrant counterparts, the Japanese were significantly better educated, wealthier, and more prone to assimilate to western customs. The Japanese adopted US clothes and hair styles while the Chinese maintained queues and traditional dress. In addition, education was mandatory in Japan making Japanese immigrant’s literacy rates higher than both their Chinese and European counterparts. The traditional Japanese practices of “impartible inheritance” and primogeniture, which

² Robert A. Wilson and Bill Hosokawa, *East to America: A History of the Japanese in the United States* (New York: Quill, 1982), 19-27. For more information on Japanese immigration and early settlement in the United States see, Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

³ Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 5.

⁴ Wilson and Hosokawa, *East*, 37, 29.

⁵ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 7.

⁶ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 7; Wilson and Hosokawa, *East*, 24; Takaki, *Strangers*, 43-45.

⁷ Takaki, *Strangers*, 45.

passed a family's entire wealth solely to the eldest son, also led to the immigration of numerous prominent, upper class, wealthy younger brothers who stood to inherit nothing.⁸ To avoid the creation of a young "bachelor society" of Japanese in America, Japan also encouraged the immigration of wealthy, educated Japanese women, frequently in the form of "picture brides." Traditionally families arranged marriages through a "go-between," and this process expanded across oceans through the exchange of pictures and letters to arrange marriages between men and women who had frequently never met. By 1905, women comprised almost one quarter of the Japanese population in Hawaii and almost one tenth of that in the US.⁹

As not only numbers, but also the wealth of the Japanese immigrant population increased along the West Coast, an anti-Japanese movement began to emerge, popularized with a series of propagandistic newspaper articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* during 1905. Using headlines warning of "The Japanese Invasion" and "Yellow Peril," the Hearst papers fed off long standing fears of spies and secret desires to rape white women. In 1906, local officials brought anti-Japanese sentiment to the forefront of local, state, and even national news when the city of San Francisco ordered Japanese children to attend the segregated Chinese school. Representatives in Tokyo contacted President Theodore Roosevelt who had supported the Chinese Exclusion Act but also recognized the growing power of Japan and hoped to maintain good relations. The 1908 so-called "Gentleman's Agreement" was the compromise agreed upon to address the immediate problem. In exchange for allowing the San Francisco Japanese children to

⁸ Wilson and Hosokawa, *East*, 38; Takaki, *Strangers*, 45-46.

⁹ Takaki, *Strangers*, 46-48.

attend local white schools, Japan would no longer allow the immigration of Japanese laborers, though wives, children, parents, and students could still arrive.¹⁰

If anything, the years following the Gentleman's Agreement produced even more discrimination against the Japanese than had previously existed. By 1919, Japanese farmers in California farmed over 450,000 acres and while this was only 1% of California's farmland, the Japanese farmers earned \$67 million per year, which was 10% of the state's total agricultural revenue. According to a 1790 law that was updated in 1870, Asians could not be naturalized as American citizens, though their children born in the US were citizens at birth. As the amount of Japanese controlled land gradually increased in the early years of the twentieth century, the state government reacted by passing a law prohibiting land ownership by "aliens ineligible to citizenship."¹¹ In many cases, Japanese farmers managed to circumvent the land ownership laws by placing their property in the name of their citizen children. Others leased or rented land, or in some cases wealthy Japanese hired lawyers who formed corporations to own the land in which the farmers could then purchase stock. Tensions towards immigrants eventually resulted in the Immigration Act of 1924, which established quotas on the number of immigrants from many nations and also forbade immigration entirely to "aliens ineligible to citizenship."¹²

Despite discriminatory laws, the population of persons of Japanese ancestry in the US continued to increase, and by 1940, the *Nisei*, or second generation, outnumbered the *Issei*, or first generation immigrants. Over 88% of the Japanese population lived in the Pacific States and of all the Japanese in the country over 50% of the men and one third of

¹⁰ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 9-13.

¹¹ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 13-14; Daniels, *Prisoners*, 14; Wilson and Hosokawa, *East*, 64.

¹² Daniels, *Prisoners*, 11-12; Daniels, *Prisoners*, 14-15.

the women worked in agriculture, fishery, or forestry businesses. Most of the Japanese-owned farms were small, family operated; and despite rumors and tensions, they were not in competition with other American owned farms. The Japanese often farmed “labor intensive, high-yield” agriculture, while Americans traditionally were the opposite with “resource-intensive, low-yield” agriculture. In addition, the Japanese harvested earlier or later to avoid the periods of higher competition and they usually kept all parts of their agriculture from the farm to markets within the community. In many cases the Japanese also helped introduce new or improved techniques such as early maturing rice from Japan, determining the gender of chicks, and using poles instead of nets to catch tuna, which reduced the damage to the meat.¹³

As the Japanese immigrants became more successful, they tended to maintain a fairly segregated community. Within a few years of arrival there were Japanese language newspapers that printed information from Japan, and Buddhist priests also emigrated from Japan to lead congregations in the US. However, the cultural emphasis on segregation began to fade with the Nisei generation, who were born as American citizens, attended public schools, spoke English, and usually took advantage of American higher education opportunities. Traditionally, education was important to the Japanese Americans, but unfortunately even college educated Nisei were likely to face discrimination on the job market and return to work for family businesses. The creation of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) reflected the attitudes of the Nisei as they attempted to improve conditions for Japanese Americans in the US in part by separating themselves even more from the Issei who were forbidden to join since they

¹³ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 16-18; Wilson and Hosokawa, *East*, 64-67.

were not citizens.¹⁴ Though the support of a growing and increasingly successful community provided Japanese Americans with many local opportunities, the early decades of the twentieth century were still more marked by obstacles and discriminatory laws than by political or legislative advancement.¹⁵

One factor that did significantly influence the possibilities for and acceptance of Japanese Americans was location. Hawaii was perhaps the greatest contrast for Japanese immigrants compared to the West Coast. By 1940, there were nearly 160,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans living on the Hawaiian Islands and they comprised roughly forty percent of the total population. There were more Japanese women on the islands than on the mainland, which meant more opportunities to start families; and though plantation labor was difficult, there was not the same discrimination or sense of competition that eventually arose on the mainland. In an already diverse population, Japanese immigrants simply became one more strand in a very complex thread that helped create Hawaii through its combined laborers.¹⁶

On the mainland, by 1923, all three states on the West Coast had instituted anti-land ownership laws, but further inland states, like Utah and Wyoming, were much more accepting of immigrants. The Mormons in Utah welcomed them to settlements around Salt Lake City and Ogden, and Wyoming mines employed a number of Japanese immigrants, many of whom were even union members. Colorado, Wisconsin, and Idaho were also relatively welcoming to Japanese immigrants, while numerous other Japanese

¹⁴ For more information on the Japanese American Citizens League, see Bill Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1982).

¹⁵ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 18-21.

¹⁶ Takaki, *Strangers*, 176-180; For more information on the Japanese settlers in Hawaii, see Dorothy Ochiai Hazama and Jane Okamoto Komeiji, *Okage Same De: The Japanese in Hawaii, 1885-1985* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 1986), Yukiko Kimura, *Issei: Japanese Immigrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), and Roland Kotani, *The Japanese in Hawaii: A Century of Struggle* (Honolulu: Hawaii Hochi, 1985).

Americans found less stationary jobs working for the railroads that stretched across the country. A Japanese colony was established in Florida, many Japanese students found temporary homes on the East Coast where they attended schools, and others settled in New York, which still today boasts the second largest Japanese American population in the country behind Los Angeles. Japanese immigrants in Texas had yet a different experience from the others as they established successful colonies from Houston to the Rio Grande Valley growing rice and citrus fruits. While settlers outside of the West Coast dealt with slightly less discrimination than their counterparts in Washington, Oregon, and California, they were still an easily recognizable and frequently second class group. As the war years approached and it became increasingly likely that Japan and the US would soon face one another as belligerents, the discrimination all across the country only increased exponentially.¹⁷

With the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the US and Japan officially launched themselves into war, and Hawaii became the scene of significant debate concerning the fate of the local Japanese American population.¹⁸ The damage caused by the unexpected attack at Pearl Harbor combined with the ever-increasing Japanese victories in the Pacific, forced the US to face the real possibility of a Japanese invasion of US soil, particularly in Hawaii. Though discrimination against Japanese Americans was historically less in Hawaii than on the mainland, the sneak attack and war fervor raised concerns over the anticipated reaction of the Japanese American community to such an invasion. Many feared they would act as spies and saboteurs and would join

¹⁷ Wilson and Hoşokawa, *East*, 69-101.

¹⁸ Portions of the following section appeared in: Abbie Salyers, "Discrimination to Decoration: The Japanese Americans During World War II," Undergraduate Senior Thesis, James Madison University, 2003.

the Imperial forces as soon as they invaded. Others were concerned that given their physical appearance, loyal Japanese Americans would not be able to distinguish themselves from a traitor or Japanese infiltrator.¹⁹ The problem for local officials was that Japanese Americans constituted approximately 40% of the entire population of Hawaii, formed the basis of the plantation economy and could not be removed from society for economic reasons alone.²⁰ In addition, there were over 160,000 Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) living on the islands and logistically the removal or confinement of such a large number in such a small place posed a significant obstacle. Amidst debates over long-term solutions, 482 Japanese Americans were imprisoned by December 8 and by January 1942 all AJA members of the Hawaiian Territorial Guard were removed from service.²¹

On May 12, 1942, Commander of the Army in Hawaii Lieutenant General Delos Emmons, recommended to the War Department that a special unit be formed from the Japanese American soldiers formerly enlisted in the 298th and 299th Hawaiian National Guard Units and any other currently enlisted Nisei.²² Facing the need to remove the military Japanese American forces from the islands to avoid sabotage from within, on May 28, 1942, Chief of Staff of the Army General George C. Marshall ordered the formation of a Japanese American special infantry combat unit and the 100th Infantry Battalion (Separate) was born.²³ With very little fanfare, 1,300 enlisted soldiers and 29

¹⁹Thomas D. Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1955), 59.

²⁰Dorothy Matsuo, *Boyhood to War: History and Anecdotes of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team* (Hawaii: Mutual Publishing Co., 1992), 7.

²¹Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 47.

²²Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 59.

²³For more information on the Japanese American military service, see Lyn Crost, *Honor By Fire: Japanese Americans at War in Europe and the Pacific* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1994); Masayo Duus, *Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and 442nd* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987); Robert Asahina, *Just Americans: How Japanese Americans Won a War At Home and Abroad* (New York: Gotham

Caucasian officers departed quietly for the mainland on June 5, 1942. When they reached San Francisco they boarded trains headed for Camp McCoy, Wisconsin where they were to be trained as a combat infantry unit, though their future placement and use remained uncertain.²⁴

During their training they quickly established themselves as an incredibly capable and hardworking unit. One visiting general described their drill as “the best exhibition of practice fire he had ever seen,” and one of the noncommissioned white officers who joined the team during training said, “I’d rather have a hundred of these men behind me, than a hundred of any others I’ve ever been with.”²⁵ Throughout their training, they maintained good relations with the civilian community around them, frequently through baseball games, and had only infrequent brushes with both other soldiers and locals who disliked the fact that they looked like the enemy.²⁶ On July 20, 1942, the 100th Infantry received its colors, the insignia of a hand holding a torch, and adopted their motto, “Remember Pearl Harbor.” At the end of the year they were transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi where they continued to distinguish themselves through their performance. The troops were later visited and inspected by three members of the General Staff who approved them for overseas combat and ordered them to prepare for departure to North Africa.²⁷

Books, 2006); C Douglas Sterner, *Go For Broke: The Nisei Warriors of World War II Who Conquered Germany, Japan, and American Bigotry* (Clearfield: American Legacy Historical Press, 2008); Bill Yenne, *Rising Sons: The Japanese American GIs Who Fought for the United States in World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007); Orville C. Shirey, *Americans: The Story of the 442nd Combat Team* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1946); and Michael L. Cooper, *Fighting For Honor: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Clarion Books, 2000).

²⁴ Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 60-71.

²⁵ Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 76.

²⁶ Masayo Duus, *Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and 442nd* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 25, 31, 38.

²⁷ Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 117-118.

While the fate of the experimental 100th Infantry was still to be determined, the Army was in the process of weeding all men of Japanese ancestry either out of the military entirely or into labor and guard units, and imprisoning any AJA's that were considered suspicious. To combat the growing tensions on the Hawaiian Islands, both before and after the formation of the 100th Infantry, many locals voiced their support of the Nisei and others formed active groups in defense of the AJA. Local Japanese Americans formed the Emergency Service Committee (ESC) to help regulate and control interracial relations and members of the discharged Territorial Guard and university ROTC units formed the Varsity Victory Volunteers (VVV), who worked for 11 months on labor projects all around Honolulu repairing roads vital to military defense in an attempt to prove themselves loyal and encourage reinstatement of Nisei in the military.²⁸ Hawaiian AJAs voluntarily shut down Japanese language schools and encouraged war bond and blood donation drives in an attempt to prove their loyalty. The VVV and the JACL complied with all government orders to show that they were loyal and willing to do anything to support the war effort. They obeyed travel restrictions and established ties to the FBI to voluntarily report any sabotage or espionage acts committed by Japanese Americans.²⁹

These acts of compliance and loyalty caught the attention of authorities, and many leaders began to see the benefits of using such a group. Those in favor of reinstatement of Japanese Americans in the military felt that the majority of AJA's were loyal and capable of being trained for combat use in Europe or Africa and that the refusal to use the

²⁸ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 52-53.

²⁹ Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), 41.

Nisei was a waste of manpower.³⁰ A committee formed by the War Department however, recommended against the use of such troops claiming that Japanese Americans were,

A distinctive class of individuals so marked by racial appearance, characteristics and background, that they are particularly repulsive to the military establishment at large and the civilian population. The lone fact that the individuals are of Japanese ancestry tends to place them in a most questionable light as to their loyalty to the United States.³¹

They discouraged the formation of an AJA unit based on “universal distrust.”³²

Despite the report, local officials in Hawaii who were convinced of Nisei loyalty and usefulness took their fight to the oval office and urged President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue a public statement in support of the efforts of the AJA’s and to allow for the volunteer enlistment of Nisei in the Army through the formation of a special Nisei combat unit. Supporters argued that the formation of such a unit would remove what many thought were dangerous characters from Hawaii and would keep the rising discontent among the Nisei from exploding into rebellion or violence. In addition, the use of Japanese Americans would counter Japanese propaganda in Asia that labeled the war as a racial war and would help shape a positive image of the democracy of the United States.³³ With the support of high brass and the President, on January 1, 1943, Gen. Marshall approved the formation of a special combat unit comprised of Japanese Americans and issued an official call for volunteers on January 28.³⁴

While debates over the military raged in Hawaii, Japanese American civilians on the mainland were fighting a different battle to maintain their freedom. Even before the

³⁰ Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 105.

³¹ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 56.

³² Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 56; Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 105.

³³ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 57.

³⁴ Murphy, *Ambassadors in Arms*, 110.

attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States had expected war with both Japan and Germany and had already begun planning for such an event. The government transferred the Immigration and Naturalization Services from the Labor Department to the Justice Department and passed the Alien Registration Act requiring all aliens over 14 to be registered and fingerprinted. In addition, the FBI, the Department of Justice Aliens Division, and various military intelligence offices also created secret lists of suspicious aliens to be interned upon the outbreak of war.³⁵

President Roosevelt used a number of official informants to gauge the attitude and loyalty of the Issei and Nisei population of the West Coast. In 1941, journalist John Franklin Carter and businessman Curtis B. Munson studied the Japanese Americans of the West Coast and reported to the President that the overwhelming majority of Japanese Americans were loyal to the United States but that there were some who might try to sabotage the US, particularly through the damage of strategically important sites like dams and railroads. Much of the information used by Carter and Munson was gathered by Navy officer Lieutenant Commander Kenneth D. Ringle, who was fluent in Japanese and had managed to stage a successful raid on a Los Angeles Japanese consulate office, from which he gathered information regarding local sympathizers. Based on both the information gathered and his informants within the Japanese American community, Ringle believed that over 90% of the Nisei and 75% of the Issei were completely loyal to the US. In light of their findings, Carter, Munson, and Ringle worked together to devise a plan to best handle the community following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Their strategy involved passing much of the property and power into the hands of the overwhelmingly

³⁵ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 22-24.

loyal Niseis, who would be closely supervised, investigated, and regulated by governing military and civilian authorities.³⁶

While FDR initially seemed pleased with the plan his informants devised, he faced increasing pressure from General John DeWitt of the West Coast Defense Command who pushed for increasingly strict controls over the Japanese and Japanese Americans on the coast. The surprise attack on the US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor had only increased accusations of sabotage and disloyalty against the Japanese Americans in Hawaii and along the West Coast, and while arrests, financial restrictions, and curfews had been instituted in the immediate aftermath many officials hoped to see more limits placed on the suspect populations. By the end of January 1942, amidst untrue rumors of Japanese ships off the coast, Japanese American uprisings in support of the Imperial Army, and agricultural poisoning conspiracy theories local media outlets, fearful businesses, farmers, and community organizations began to call for the removal of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast.³⁷

While the idea of exclusion zones and mass removal had been discussed both before and after Pearl Harbor, it was primarily intended to protect strategic military operations and was aimed at those considered to be suspects based on intelligence reports. All early restrictions placed on Issei in particular were distasteful or undesirable but constitutionally legal based on martial law and wartime regulations. However, by the end of January 1942, fear, economic greed, and basic racial prejudice had combined to create a different tone on the issue of dealing with the immigrant Japanese population. Local civilians began a letter writing campaign to both their regional leaders and the

³⁶ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 24-26; Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 64-80.

³⁷ Robinson, *By Order*, 84-90; Daniels, *Prisoners*, 28-30.

president, and it did not take long for local and state officials to take up the cause and carry it to the Attorney General, the War Department, and the Justice Department.³⁸

In the midst of the American debates, the Canadian government ordered the removal of all Japanese aliens between the ages of 18-45 from the western coast of British Columbia, Canada on January 14, 1942. The story of discrimination against the Japanese in Canada is remarkably similar to that of the United States, yet the differences in the wartime treatment were significant. Japanese Canadian immigrants had settled primarily on the Pacific Coast and worked in many of the same fishing, canning, and agricultural industries as their American counterparts. They too were affected by the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, yet Japanese Canadians were allowed to become naturalized citizens and many even fought for Canada in World War I. But despite citizenship, they still faced discriminatory laws, including disenfranchisement, land ownership restrictions, and segregation. In 1941, Canada also registered all its enemy aliens, and upon the outbreak of war the government confiscated and sold the property of all Japanese Canadians along the coast, forced the community to move inland, and separated families into work camps for men and isolated living areas for women and children. Between the loss of property, the separation of families, the voluntary repatriation of over 4,000 in 1946, and the continued ban on Japanese on the Pacific Coast until 1949, the Japanese Canadian population was effectively disbanded and destroyed.³⁹

³⁸ Robinson, *By Order*, 90-92; Daniels, *Prisoners*, 38-40.

³⁹ Robinson, *By Order*, 93; Grace Eiko Thomson, ed., *Re-Shaping Memory, Owning History: Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress*, (Vancouver: Japanese Canadian National Museum, 2002), 6-10; For more information on the experience of the Japanese Canadians see: Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991); Keibo Oiwa, *Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei* (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1991); Roy Ito, *(We Went to War: The Story of the Japanese Canadians Who Served During the First and Second World*

While it is likely that FDR knew of the Canadian evacuation, there is no indication of how much it might or might not have influenced his decisions. What is clear is that Roosevelt faced increasing pressure to act in early February even though his military and civilian leaders were still at odds regarding the Japanese American situation. Some favored exclusionary zones around key installations, while others preferred to remove the Issei and not the Nisei, and still others called for the wholesale evacuation of any person of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast. Much of the debate centered on questions of legality; civil rights minded officials were concerned with maintaining the *writ of habeas corpus* and preferred to reach a solution that would satisfy security concerns while avoiding mass racial discrimination. The solution that was ultimately reached neither protected the *writ of habeas corpus* nor avoided race prejudice. Executive Order 9066, signed into law by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, approved the creation of “military areas in such places and of such extent as [the secretary of war] or the appropriate military commanders may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded...”⁴⁰ While Japanese Americans were not mentioned anywhere in the exclusion order, it was understood to give the military commanders of the West Coast the authority to create zones from which they could exclude anyone of their choosing – meaning the Japanese Americans – so long as they were provided for.

By the end of March 1942, curfews were in place for Japanese Americans on the West Coast and the newly created War Relocation Authority (WRA) had begun the process of forcibly removing over 100,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast to

Wars (Stittsville, Ontario: Canada's Wings, 1984); and Roy Miki, *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004).

⁴⁰ Lawson Fusao Inada, *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2000), Appendix A, 401.

temporary assembly centers and eventually to one of ten relocation camps located in California, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Arkansas. The first step on this path came with the March 24th Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1 which removed fifty families from Bainbridge Island, Washington to a deserted camp in the Owens Valley of California called Manzanar. Following this initial exclusion order the rest of the West Coast was divided into 107 evacuation areas that each included approximately 1000 Japanese each. Notices were posted within each area that informed the local population of the rules and provided instructions, preparation requirements, and a timeline for their removal.⁴¹

⁴¹ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 53-55; For the purposes of a brief synopsis, I have relied primarily on Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993). For more information on EO 9066, the exclusion order, evacuation, and internment see: Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

Headquarters Western Defense Command and Fourth Army

Presidio of San Francisco, California
March 24, 1942

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1

1. Pursuant to the provisions of Public Proclamations Nos. 1 and 2, this headquarters, dated March 2, 1942, and March 16, 1942, respectively, it is hereby ordered that all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and naturalized citizens, be excluded from that portion of Military Area No. 1, described as "Bainbridge Island," in the State of Washington, on or before 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., of the 30th day of March, 1942.

2. Such exclusion will be accomplished in the following manner:

(a) Such persons may, with permission on or prior to March 29, 1942, proceed to any approved place of their choosing beyond the limits of Military Area No. 1 and the prohibited zones established by said proclamations or hereafter promulgated, subject only to such regulations as to travel and change of residence as may now or may hereafter be prescribed by this headquarters and by the United States Attorney General. Persons affected hereby will not be permitted to take up residence in any place designated as Military Area No. 1 or in any prohibited zone, hereafter established, unless such persons are required, on leaving, to surrender their identification cards to the Civil Control Office to be established on said Island at or near the Ferry Boat Landing.

(b) On March 30, 1942, all such persons who have not removed themselves from Bainbridge Island in accordance with Paragraph 1, hereof, shall, in accordance with instructions of the Commanding General, Western Sector, report to the Civil Control Office referred to above on Bainbridge Island for detention in such manner and to such place or places as shall then be prescribed.

(c) A responsible member of each family affected by this order and each individual living alone so affected will report to the Civil Control Office described above between 8 a. m. and 5 p. m., Wednesday, March 25, 1942.

3. Any person affected by this order who fails to comply with any of its provisions or who is found on Bainbridge Island after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., of March 30, 1942, will be subject to the criminal penalties provided by Public Law No. 503, 77th Congress, approved March 21, 1942, entitled "An Act to Provide a Penalty for Violation of Restrictions or Orders with Respect to Persons Entering, Remaining in, Leaving, or Contributing Any Act in Military Areas or Zones," and such Japanese will be subject to immediate apprehension and internment.

J. L. DEWITT
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

Denise Digital Archive, 2008

Initially the Army oversaw the evacuation of the detainees to one of fifteen assembly centers hastily constructed at racetracks and fairgrounds in California, Oregon, and Washington. Under the leadership of Milton Eisenhower, brother of the esteemed General, the WRA coordinated the creation, management, and administration of the ten permanent camps that would eventually house the detainees. As a liberal minded

proponent of the New Deal and civil rights, Eisenhower hoped to use the camps as “staging areas” through which the Japanese Americans would pass only briefly before resettling in the interior states. As his requests for acceptance of Japanese American settlements were rejected by numerous state governors, Eisenhower became more reconciled to creating moderately comfortable camps that would provide homes for the detainees for the duration of the war, but he remained opposed to the inhumane and racist treatment of the camp inmates. Due in part to his vocal opinions regarding the camps and the treatment of the inhabitants, Eisenhower resigned from his position in June 1942 and was replaced by Dillon Myer, who would remain at his post throughout the war.⁴²

The conditions in the assembly centers were often literally fit for animals, as many families found themselves living in retiled horse stalls at racetracks such as Santa Anita and Tanforan, California. There was poor sanitation and insufficient facilities for those housed at the temporary camps, and one of the most common complaints, that would be repeated later within the relocation camps as well, was the lack of privacy. There were long lines for everything from the latrines to the mess hall, and once inside the bathroom facilities there were no doors, only short partitions, and the showers were so inconsistent that one detainee remembered that people would use barrels as makeshift bathtubs. While these conditions brought out a need to fend for oneself, they also tended to bring families and communities closer in their efforts to work together and improve their situation. Scrap materials were used to construct furniture and friends outside the camp would frequently provide additional food and supplies for those confined within.⁴³

⁴² Daniels, *Prisoners*, 54-57.

⁴³ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 65-66; Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 69-81.



Comic from *Camp II, Block 211: Daily Life in an Internment Camp*
By Jack Matsuoka, p. 57

Many of these same conditions persisted even once the detainees were relocated to the permanent camps in the mid-western states. Most families were kept together, but they were allotted very small spaces that only improved marginally for larger families. Each family lived in an apartment of 20X8 up to 20X24 based on the number of family members, and each family was separated from their neighbors only by partitions that did not even reach to the ceiling. Each barrack building shared one outdoor water faucet, while individual apartments were outfitted with one electric light bulb, army cots, a coal stove, and very little else. As in the assembly centers, necessity bred invention and detainees used spare lumber and building materials to make tables, chairs, dressers, and numerous other household items. In addition, detainees could order items from

catalogues, which allowed them to decorate their apartments and even purchase some luxury items. The money to purchase such things came from both savings accounts and wages of up to \$19.00/month, which could be earned by the detainees through jobs at camp factories, newspapers, hospitals, schools, etc.⁴⁴

In many cases, boredom was the biggest problem with which the administrators and detainees alike had to deal. While the free time was fun for children and teenagers, it became a source of discontent for the previously hard working Issei and Nisei. The lack of supervision and the mess-hall style of meals also proved to be a disruption for traditional family structures. Instead of eating as a family, children frequently chose to eat with friends, as did fathers, leaving the women and small children to congregate together. One positive that did arise from the free time and community feeling of camp was that Japanese Americans were able to participate in social activities and roles that had frequently been denied them outside of camp. Those with education backgrounds could teach, though they had been discriminated against prior to the war. Students who participated in sports and school activities could rise to leadership positions that would have been previously prohibited. In many cases women also had more opportunities than they had previously enjoyed. Women could choose to work in war production in some camps, or could work in the fields, or they could choose to not work, which was a luxury that few Japanese American women had enjoyed outside of camp. Those who did work received wages equal to those of men, and Japanese American women of this generation

⁴⁴ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 66-67. For more information on life inside the camps, see: Jeanne Wakatsuke Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995, reprint of 1973); Lawson Fusao Inada, *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2000); and *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993).

also became the first to move away from arranged marriages and choose to marry for love in large numbers.⁴⁵

The experiences of detainees varied to some degree based on the camp in which they lived.⁴⁶ While in some cases the differences were largely weather related, others were significantly different based on their inhabitants and their living situations. For instance, Manzanar, California was the home of the Children's Village, the only orphanage within the ten WRA Camps and it also included an experimental guayule plantation and laboratory used to produce a rubber substitute. The 6,000 acres at Manzanar housed over 100 orphans among its 10,000 inhabitants and is considered one of the best documented camps as both acclaimed photographers Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams photographed the camp as outside observers, while Toyo Miyatake illegally documented his time there as a detainee with a contraband homemade camera as well.⁴⁷

In Arizona, the two camps at Gila River and Poston were especially unique in that they were constructed on tribal lands of the Gila River Indian Community and the Colorado River Indian Reservation, though neither tribe had wanted to provide the land. Gila was comprised of two separate camps, Canal and Butte, that collectively housed over 13,000 detainees, while Poston hosted almost 18,000 at its three sites, Poston I, II, and III, which were nicknamed Roasten, Toasten, and Dustin. Due to the extreme heat in

⁴⁵ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 68; Valerie Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women During World War II," in Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol Dubois, eds., *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 436-449.

⁴⁶ For an introduction to each of the ten camps, see Jeff Burton, Mary Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard W. Lord. *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Arizona: Western Archeological and Conservation Center, 1999).

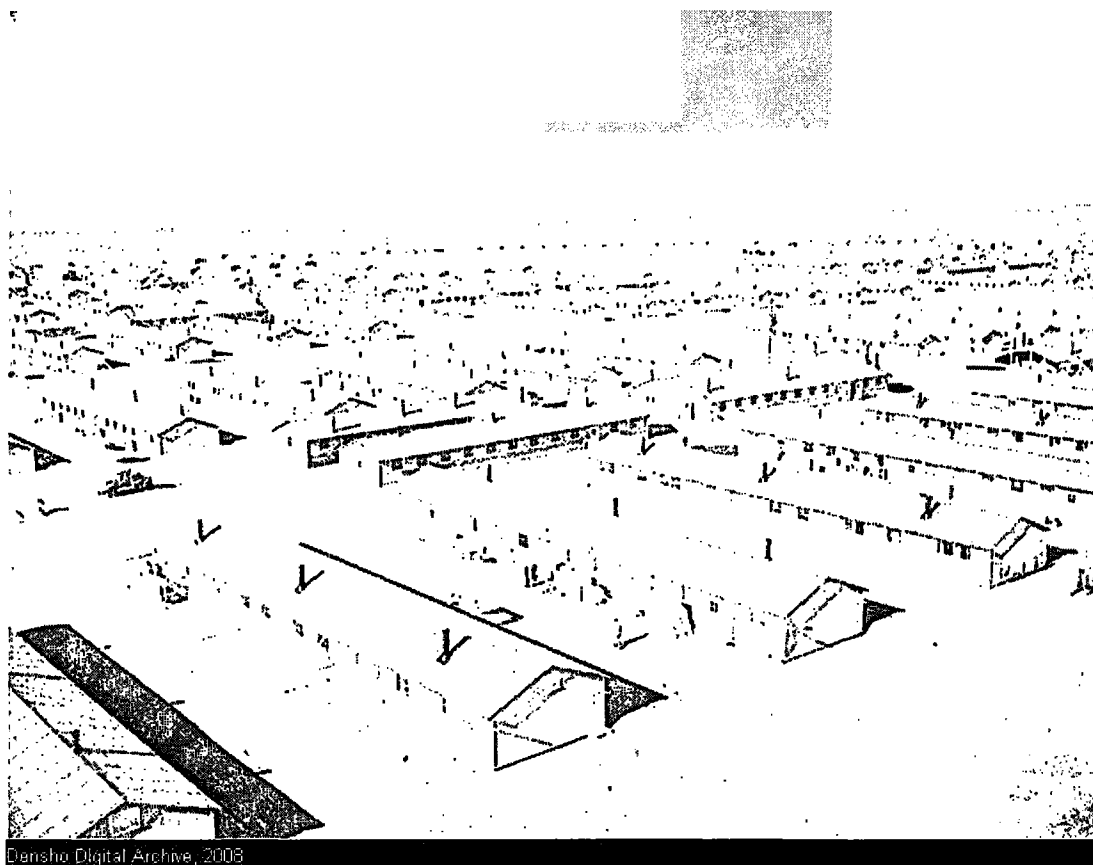
⁴⁷ "Manzanar Free Press," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service); For more information on Manzanar, see Jeanne Wakatsuke Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995, reprint of 1973) and Harlan D. Unrau, *The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry During World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1996).

the Arizona desert, both camp's barracks were designed with double roofs topped with fireproof shingles to add protection and insulation. Poston also incorporated structures that the detainees made themselves out of adobe, including school buildings and an auditorium, while Gila River included a model shipbuilding shop used for military training purposes.⁴⁸

Outside the city of Delta, Utah was the Topaz Relocation Camp, which housed over 8,000 inhabitants on its nearly 20,000 acres in the Sevier Desert. Temperatures here could range from 30 degrees in the winter to 106 degrees in the summer. During the war, Topaz was actually the fifth largest city in Utah and it was home to the headquarters of the Buddhist Church of America, which relocated to Topaz from San Francisco. In a region that was similarly dusty and arid, Granada, or Amache Camp, in Colorado served as the wartime home to over 7,500 detainees from California. The inhabitants of Amache constructed their own cooperative, the Amache Consumer's Enterprise, which provided clothing, shoes, a barber shop, a sign making shop, and other retail services and conducted approximately \$30,000 in business each month. In addition, the detainees could work in a silk screen shop established by the Navy in 1943 to produce propaganda posters for the war effort.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ "Poston Chronicle," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "Gila News Courier," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service). For more information on Poston, see: Richard S. Nishimoto and Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, *Inside an American Concentration Camp: Japanese American Resistance at Poston, Arizona* (Tucson: The University of Arizona, 1995).

⁴⁹ "Topaz Times News Daily," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); Topaz 1942-1945, (Delta: Topaz Museum); "The Granada Relocation Center (Amache)," Brochure, Amache Preservation Society; "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service). For more information on Topaz during World War II, see Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982); Yoshiko Uchida, *Journey to Topaz: A Story of the Japanese-American Evacuation* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1971); Kimi Kodani Hill, *Topaz Moon: Art of the Internment* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2000); Mine Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1946); Sandra C. Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert: Japanese American Internment at Topaz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Michael O. Tunnell and George W.



Aerial view of Amache Relocation Camp outside Granada, Colorado, December 1942
Photo from Densho Digital Archives

The camps that were the farthest east were in Arkansas outside the city of McGehee. Jerome Relocation Center was the last center to open and the first to close, making it active less than two full years before it became a German POW camp. While it was inhabited by only 8,000 Japanese Americans, it included a sawmill that produced over 280,000 board feet of lumber and over 6,000 cords of firewood for the detainees. Across town, the 8,000 inhabitants of Rohwer Relocation Center dedicated a great deal of

Chilcoat, *The Children of Topaz* (New York: Holiday House, 1996).. For more information on Granada Relocation Center and Colorado during World War II, see Adam Schrager, *The Principled Politician: The Ralph Carr Story* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008) and the Amache Preservation Society at www.amache.org.

their time and property to agriculture, producing over 85% of the vegetables that were consumed by the detainees.⁵⁰

Outside the city of Twin Falls, Idaho was the eighth camp, Minidoka or Hunt Relocation Center. Located on 33,000 acres, Hunt Camp was home to over 9,000 detainees from Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, nearly 1,000 of whom volunteered for service in the military during the course of the war. During their time in Idaho, the detainees helped clear, cultivate, and irrigate 950 acres of previously unusable land. In addition, over 2,000 inmates left the confines of the camp to assist with the harvesting of sugar beets in Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah. According to some accounts, the efforts of the Japanese Americans on sugar beet farms was critical to farmers in preventing a loss of thousands of dollars worth of crops due to the labor shortage caused by enlistments.⁵¹

The camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming was perhaps most well known for its inhabitants that resisted the draft. In January 1944, the US government had reinstated the draft for Japanese American citizens, a move which would ultimately result in the largest single draft resistance movement in US history encompassing over 300 Nisei, 85 of

⁵⁰ "Jerome Communique," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service); "Rohwer Outpost," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service. For more information on Jerome, see Mary Tsukamoto and Elizabeth Pinkerton, *We the People: A Story of Internment in America* (San Jose: Laguna Publishers, 1987); Russell Bearden, "Life Inside Arkansas' Japanese American Relocation Centers," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 48, No. 2 (1989), 169-196; and E.J. Friedlander, "Freedom of Press Behind Barbed Wire: Paul Yokota and the Jerome Relocation Center Newspaper," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 44 (1985), 303-313. For more information on Rohwer, see: Colburn Cox Stuart, "Inside View Japanese American Evacuee Center at Rohwer, Arkansas 1941-1945," in *Programs of Desha County Historical Society*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1979), 1-31; Russell Bearden, "Life Inside Arkansas' Japanese American Relocation Centers," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 48, No. 2 (1989), 169-196; and *Lil Dan'l: One Year in a Relocation Center* (Rohwer Outpost, 1989).

⁵¹ "Minidoka Irrigation," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service); Minidoka Internment National Monument, National Park Service Brochure (Minidoka: National Park Service); For more information on Minidoka, see Jeffrey Burton and Mary Farrell, *This is Minidoka: An Archeological Survey of Minidoka Internment National Monument* (Tuscon: Western Archeological and Conservation Center, 2001), National Park Service, *Minidoka Internment National Monument: General Management Plan* (Washington DC: Department of the Interior, 2006).

whom were from Heart Mountain. In 1947, President Harry Truman pardoned all those who had been convicted, but the actions of the draft resisters created a great amount of tension between veterans and resisters that remained divisive for decades after the end of the war. While Heart Mountain was home to the greatest number of resisters, it was otherwise much like the other camps housing almost 11,000 on its 20,000 acres in a desolate region of Wyoming.⁵²

The tenth camp was perhaps the most unique of all. Not only was Tule Lake in Modoc County, California the largest and longest lasting camp, but also it was the only camp to be designated a segregation camp. In one of the most distasteful moves made by the WRA during the war, the administrators created and distributed a Loyalty Questionnaire to separate disloyal Issei and Nisei from their loyal counterparts and to determine who would be eligible for either temporary leaves from camp or voluntary military service. Two questions came to represent the confusing and discriminatory questionnaire:

27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered? _____

28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization? _____

Question 27 angered many Nisei who had little inclination to lay their life on the line after having been confined by their own country, but question 28 posed unique problems

⁵² "Heart Mountain Sentinel," *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); "War Relocation Centers," National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service); For more information on Heart Mountain, see Mamoru Inouye, *The Heart Mountain Story* (Las Gatos: M. Inouye, 1997); Estelle Ishigo, *Lone Heart Mountain* (Los Angeles: Anderson, Ritchie, & Simon, 1972); Michael R. Mackey, *Remembering Heart Mountain: Essays on Japanese American Internment in Wyoming* (Powell: Western History Productions, 1998). For more information on the draft resisters, see Eric L. Muller, *Free to Die for their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Shirley Castelnovo, *Soldiers of Conscience: Japanese American Military Resisters in World War II* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Groups, 2008).

for both the Issei and Nisei. Second generation American citizens felt that “forswearing” their allegiance to Japan falsely implied that they were in fact previously loyal to Japan. For the Issei, forswearing of allegiance to Japan meant that they turned their back on their native country and swore allegiance to a country that refused them citizenship, which in effect forced them to become stateless citizens. Despite the confusion, those who chose to answer “no-no” to the two questions found themselves shipped to Tule Lake, a high security camp kept under martial law. By the end of the war, nearly 19,000 detainees had passed through the desolate 7,000 acres of the Tule Lake Camp, including over 1,300 who were expatriated to Japan and 5,400 of whom renounced their citizenship to the United States.⁵³

In addition to the ten WRA relocation camps, the Army and the Justice Department also maintained a series of camps around the country that housed not only Japanese, but also Italian and German internees and POWs. Temporary centers confined internees at sites like Ellis Island and Angel Island, while more permanent facilities were created in cities across the nation, including Crystal City, Segoville, and Camp Kennedy, Texas; Fort Missoula, Montana; and Santa Fe, New Mexico. During the course of the war, approximately 11,000 German, Italian, and Japanese Americans, and Latin American Japanese were interned in camps and prisons across the country. In some cases, the conditions at camps like Crystal City were actually better than those of the WRA camps because the US hoped that good treatment of Axis POWs would encourage

⁵³ “Tule Lake Tulean Dispatch,” *Camp Connections* (National Park Service, 2002); “War Relocation Centers,” National Park Service Brochure (Manzanar: National Park Service); For more information on Tule Lake, see: “A Question of Loyalty: Internment at Tule Lake,” from *The Journal of the Shaw Historical Library* Vol. 19 (2005); Dorothy S. Thomas and Richard Nishimoto, *The Spoilage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946); and Donald E. Collins, *Native American Aliens: Disloyalty and the Renunciation of Citizenship by Japanese Americans During World War II* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985).

the enemy nations to treat American prisoners equally as well. On two occasions, the US even used internees, specifically those Japanese who had settled in South America, in POW hostage exchanges with Japan. While internment and expatriation were sad examples of harsh security measures during wartime, both acts were legal and their story can only merit brief mention here in comparison to the blatant civil rights violation of the mass relocation of civilian citizens and aliens.⁵⁴

Although it is easy today to recognize EO 9066 as an infringement on the constitutional rights of the Issei and Nisei, it was socially and culturally more difficult in 1943 and 1944 when four cases opposing the relocation reached the nation's highest court. In 1943, the Supreme Court ruled on the case of *Hirabayashi v. US*, in which Japanese American Gordon Hirabayashi deliberately disobeyed the curfew to challenge the constitutionality of such a law. In a unanimous decision, though it was later revealed that Justice Frank Murphy assented only under pressure, the court declared the curfew justified under the argument that the measures put in place on the West Coast were a military necessity vital to the carrying out of the war effort. At the same time, the Supreme Court heard the case of Minoru Yasui, who had also broken curfew, and while the Supreme Court did not issue a ruling, they referred the Portland courts to the outcome

⁵⁴ Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 379; For more information on the Department of Justice and Army camps, see: *Crystal City Internment Camp: 50th Anniversary Reunion* (Monterey: Anniversary Reunion Committee, 1993); Daniels, *Prisoners*, 77; For more information on the internment of Italian and German Americans, see Stephen Fox, *Uncivil Liberties: Italian Americans Under Siege During World War II* (Universal Publishers, 2000); DiStasi, Lawrence, *Una Storia: The Secret History of Italian American Evacuation and Internment During World War II* (Berkeley, California: Heyday Books, 2001); Stephen Fox, *Fear Itself: Inside the FBI Round Up of German Americans During World War II* (iUniverse, 2005); and Timothy J. Holian, *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

of their Hirabayashi ruling and Yasui was found guilty and sentenced. In both cases, the lower and higher courts found the curfew to be a necessary but legal evil of wartime.⁵⁵

In 1944, the Supreme Court was called upon to rule on the question of the relocation itself, not just the curfew. Fred Korematsu attempted to disguise himself as a Mexican American to avoid relocation and stay with his Caucasian girlfriend on the West Coast. When he was eventually captured and his case reached the Supreme Court, the Justices ruled that the relocation was constitutional, but this time there were three dissenting Justices, Owen Roberts, Robert Jackson, and Frank Murphy. The fourth case, *Ex parte Endo* was based on Mitsuye Endo's written request for a *writ of habeas corpus*, which would release her from the relocation center. A unanimous court decision granted her freedom based on the argument that the WRA had no authority to hold loyal residents, only disloyal residents. With over 70,000 Japanese Americans still detained in camps, the court's ruling granted not only Endo's freedom, but also every detainee who had been declared "loyal" through the WRA and Army's questionnaire programs.⁵⁶

While Endo's decision in December 1944 sped the resettlement program, the fact is that the detainees had actually been leaving the camps almost since they had arrived in them. Students and laborers left the camps in large numbers aided by organizations like the Quaker American Friends Service Committee. Over 4,000 students left the camps to attend colleges across the country that had agreed to accept the Japanese American students. As early as May 1942 requests for local laborers had reached the camps, and numerous men, women, and teenagers left the confines of the relocation centers to farm.

⁵⁵ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 59-60.

⁵⁶ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 60-63; Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 323, 342.

Their contributions to the war effort were immense in light of the labor shortages caused by enlistment and conscription. By January 1944, the total number of detainees had dropped from 120,000 to 93,000 and by December 1945 every camp except Tule Lake was empty.⁵⁷

Two other groups to leave the camps in large numbers were the volunteers of the newly created all-Japanese American unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the linguist translators of the Military Intelligence Service Language School. In January 1943, all of the Japanese Americans who were interned on the mainland, as well as those living on the islands, heard the call for volunteers to join Marshall's new Japanese American unit. The War Department had made arrangements to accept 1,500 from the islands and 2,500 from the mainland, but the response was quite different from what they had expected. Over 10,000 Hawaiian Nisei rushed to enlist, of whom 2,500 were chosen, while only 1,200 volunteered from the camps instead of the 3,500 expected.⁵⁸ The men who volunteered in Hawaii were honored as heroes while the men from the mainland were frequently seen as having betrayed their heritage. When Rudy Tokiwa, from the Poston Camp, told his father that he had enlisted, he was told, "You'll be lucky if they use you in a labor battalion. They're leading you on, you young fool! When you get to the front they'll use you as a shield for the white soldiers. That's what everyone is saying."⁵⁹ Among the soldiers who left Hawaii there was a wide range of emotions as well, but most of the Issei had been supportive, knowing that the United States was more

⁵⁷ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 72-75; For more information on the resettlement process, see Japanese American National Museum, et al., *RE:Generations Oral History Project: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum).

⁵⁸ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 58-59.

⁵⁹ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 71.

of a home to their children than Japan. In April 1943, a crowd of over 15,000 lined the streets of Honolulu in a going away party for the men of the new 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

On April 13, 1943 both the mainland and Hawaiian Nisei troops arrived at Camp Shelby. They combined their numbers to form the combat team, which was organized into the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, 232nd Engineering Company, a Cannon Company, and the 206th Band. As training began, the men of the 442nd soon encountered distrust from their fellow soldiers, but ironically it came from within their own ranks not from other units. Due to the different backgrounds of mainland and Hawaiian born Japanese Americans, the men often did not get along. The treatment of mainland Japanese Americans had been much harsher, and it affected the attitudes of those raised in such a discriminatory environment. The West Coast Nisei spoke better English and reportedly had a superior attitude in their dealings with the Hawaiians.⁶⁰ In contrast, the men of the islands had a very relaxed way of life and spoke a pidgin dialect, which combined Hawaiian, English, and Japanese. In addition, the Hawaiians had a sense of unity and an "all for one, one for all" attitude, which led them to never strive to get ahead at the expense of another.⁶¹ After weeks of arguments, the officers finally sought a solution by loading as many Hawaiians onto buses as possible and bringing them to visit the Rohwer Camp in Arkansas. The experience gave the islanders a much better understanding of what the others had gone through and slowly a mutual respect began to develop.⁶²

⁶⁰ Cooper, *Fighting for Honor*, 51.

⁶¹ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 66.

⁶² Cooper, *Fighting for Honor*, 52.

While the 442nd RCT was still in training at Camp Shelby, the 100th Infantry Battalion arrived in Oran, North Africa and joined forces with the Allied troops already there, who were attempting to weaken Germany through what Churchill referred to as the “soft underbelly of Europe.” By the summer of 1943, the Allies had defeated Germany in Algeria and Tunisia and had control of the Mediterranean Sea, across which they hoped to advance into Italy and the Balkans to prevent Russia from taking control. Gen. Marshall assigned the 100th to General Mark Clark’s 5th Army under Major General Charles Ryder’s 34th Division. The 34th Division had been the first American division sent to Europe, training first in Ireland before arriving in North Africa. They were a National Guard unit from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota, nicknamed the “Red Bulls,” for the bull head found on their insignia. These Midwesterners welcomed the new recruits, and the 100th was put under the command of Ray C. Fountain of the 133rd Regiment, who began familiarizing the men in the ways of the German army. They had not yet learned the intricacies of improvised German traps and defensive strategies at Shelby, so the more experienced men of the 133rd taught them what to expect while the Nisei taught the Red Bulls Hawaiian songs and games. The “Aloha” baseball team that had often played in Wisconsin was reactivated and helped lead the 34th Division team to a victory in the North African Army Championships. Unfortunately their baseball season ended when they received transfer orders to Italy. On September 22, the 34th Division landed in Salerno, and the Associated Press dispatchers quickly sent messages home about the newly arrived troops. They reportedly all wore excited smiles rather than the tense appearances usually seen by new recruits and their commanders considered them to be some of the finest troops they had ever led. These

reports were the first that the United States had heard about Japanese Americans serving overseas.⁶³

When the men arrived in Salerno, they found a difficult situation facing the Allies. In July 1943, Generals George S. Patton and Bernard Montgomery had successfully captured Sicily before racing to see whether Montgomery's British Army or Patton's US Army would be the first to reach Messina. During their invasion, three German divisions escaped to Italy and became the basis for the strong defensive lines that would later become obstacles to the advancing Allied forces. In September, Montgomery's 8th Army and Clark's 5th Army crossed into Italy and began to move toward Naples. That same month, Italian forces surrendered and King Victor Emmanuel III discharged Benito Mussolini and dismissed the Italian Army, leaving the German Army to defend the country. For four days, the Allies battled the Germans at Salerno before Clark secured the city on the fifteenth and received orders from General Dwight D. Eisenhower to continue to push towards Naples and beyond, to Rome.⁶⁴

When the 100th Infantry waded ashore to join the rest of the 5th Army, many underwater due to their height, they entered the midst of preparations to move towards Rome. The two roads in consideration were the Roman roads, the Via Appia, which ran up the west coast, or the Via Casalina, which wound around the base of Monte Cassino and through the Liri Valley towards Rome. As the Nisei troops moved along the latter they began to witness the destruction that war had brought to Italy. Though they moved slowly in the face of rain, mud, and treacherous terrain with steep mountains heavily defended by the enemy, the unit soon earned a reputation for tenacity and courage. The

⁶³ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 67; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 68; Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 88; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 71; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 71; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 72.

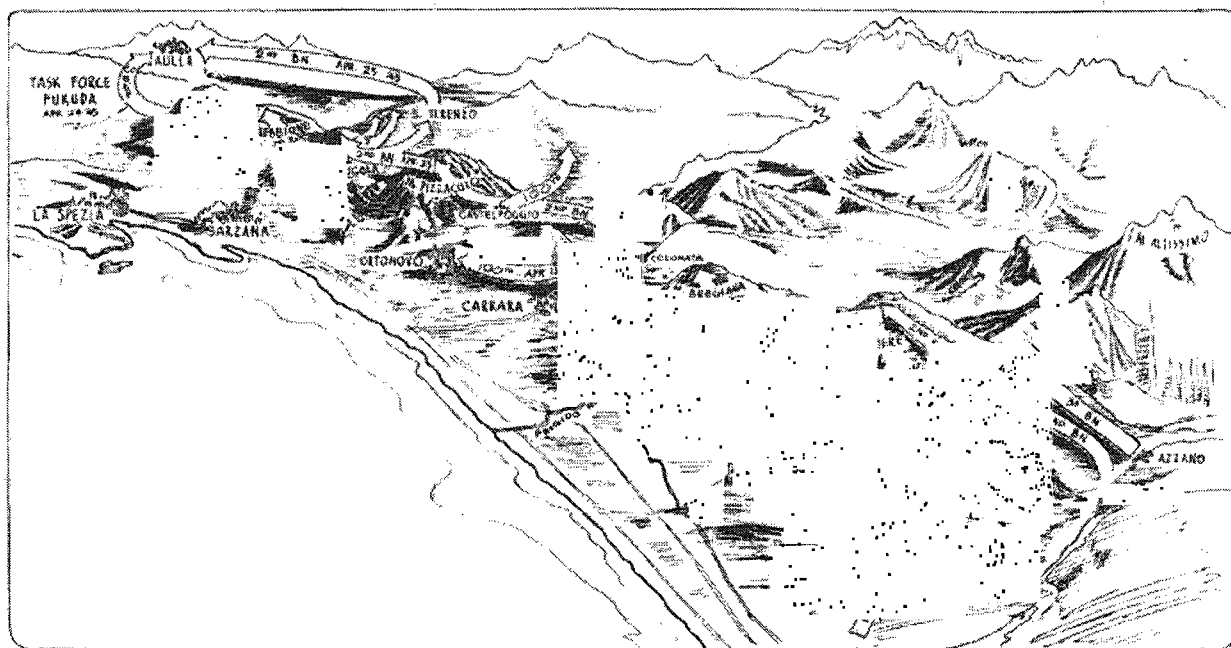
⁶⁴ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 73-75.

first major mission that the Nisei completed in their advance through Italy was the capture of Benevento, an important rail center and road junction. After this loss, the Germans were pushed back into what became a series of strong defensive lines all across the country. This victory marked a turning point in the war for the Nisei as they received their first praise for their fighting abilities. In the 34th Division news bulletin that Clark sent to Eisenhower, he praised the Infantry's recent actions and the 34th gave them their first Army "home," issuing all Nisei the Red Bull insignia. The men of the 100th never forgot this first sign of acceptance and continued to wear their patches proudly, even after joining the 442nd RCT.⁶⁵

After Benevento, the Nisei fought along the Volturno River into the Liri Valley, taking San Angelo d'Alife, Santa Maria Olivetto, and Roccaravindola despite heavy artillery fire, mine fields, enemy bombing, and steep terrain. By mid-January, the 100th had progressed as far as the Gustav, or Winter Line, a German defensive line considered by many to be one of the strongest ever built in the history of warfare. The Line stretched from coast to coast, with a particularly strong fortification at Monte Cassino, a Benedictine Monastery dating back to the sixth century, which perched over 1,700 feet above the confluence of the Rapido River Valley and the Liri Valley.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 90-92; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 75-78; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 80.

⁶⁶ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 81-94; Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 99-100; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 95-96.



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

To overcome the Gustav Line, the Allies developed Operation Shingle, which was comprised of a simultaneous ground assault on the Gustav Line and an amphibious assault on the beaches of Anzio, north of the Line in the hopes that the Germans would withdraw troops from Gustav to defend Anzio and therefore allow the Allies to overcome the defensive line.⁶⁷ As part of the 133rd Regiment of the 34th Division, the 100th Infantry participated in the first assault on the nearly impenetrable Abbey in early 1944. Mines blocked every path, and miles of barbed wire crossed the slopes of the mountain, which was topped with interlocking machine guns facing down the sides. All brush had been removed from the slopes and the fields below except for three foot stumps, which helped prevent tank advancement. Mines were placed every five feet along the ground and trip wires spread out in every direction. Concrete pillboxes with machine gun nests dotted

⁶⁷ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 84-86.

the mountainside and the riverbed below was flooded to increase mud and obscure underwater mines and trip wires.⁶⁸

Clark later described the Battle of Cassino as “the most grueling, the most harrowing, and in one aspect the most tragic, of any phase of the war in Italy.”⁶⁹ After weeks of fierce attempts to gain ground, the 100th Infantry found themselves with little to show for the large number of casualties they had suffered. Eventually, against the wishes of conservationists, the Allies bombed the Abbey, which had housed numerous manuscripts, paintings, and books. Though initially the bombing simply provided more hiding spots for the Germans amidst the rubble, the combination of air and ground assault finally allowed the Allies to take the hilltop fortress on May 18 when Polish Troops captured the Abbey almost four months after the fight had begun.⁷⁰ The battle at Monte Cassino was the last great battle of the original 100th Infantry Battalion. The troops of what came to be called the “Purple Heart Battalion,” emerged so decimated that their ranks had to be replaced by newly trained members of the 442nd RCT.⁷¹

While the Allies had battled at Cassino, the beaches of Anzio had become a stalemate. After a brief rest in Alife, the 100th Infantry and their new replacement troops headed to the beach. Upon their arrival, Captain Young Oak Kim of the 100th, a lone Korean American amidst the Japanese American unit, helped lead six men behind enemy lines to capture German prisoners for intelligence purposes. His actions earned him a Distinguished Service Cross and the information provided helped the Allies to eventually break the stalemate at Anzio. The Nisei moved northward towards the town of Lanuvio

⁶⁸ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 100-101.

⁶⁹ Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*, 118.

⁷⁰ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 98-99; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 89.

⁷¹ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 97.

and the German Caesar Line, where they successfully managed to open a gap in the Line that allowed Allied troops, tanks, and artillery to pour through on the road to Rome.⁷²

The German Army was in retreat, even leaving the city of Rome without a fight or their customary destruction. On June 4, Allied troops marched into the capitol city as liberators and heroes.⁷³

The 34th did not stay long in Rome, but moved north on the trail of the retreating German Army, which they met in a brief engagement at Civitavecchia, before being relieved by fresh troops. In the early weeks of June, the 100th Infantry was removed from the 133rd Regiment to join the newly arrived 442nd RCT. The 1st Battalion of the 442nd had stayed at Camp Shelby to continue training Japanese American replacements, so the 100th Infantry became the 1st Battalion of the 442nd, though they maintained their 100th Infantry designation out of respect for their impressive battle record. The combined regiment saw their first action on June 26 when the 442nd attempted to take Belvedere, a small city held by the Germans. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions successfully flanked the Germans on both sides before the 100th led an impressive and successful assault on the German position that earned the 100th the first of three Presidential Unit Citations.⁷⁴

The 100th/442nd continued to move up the west coast of Italy and crossed the Cecina River toward Livorno, or Leghorn, a seaport important to German supplies. While en route, the Nisei encountered Hill 140, nicknamed "Little Cassino," where they were constantly under fire from a high German offensive position. The 100th Infantry concentrated their attention on the city of Castellina Marittima to the east of Hill 140, hoping to cut off the Germans, while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions focused on the Hill itself.

⁷² Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 91-93.

⁷³ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 95-96.

⁷⁴ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 101-104; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 147-149.

By the end of five days of harsh fighting the 442nd had begun to establish their own reputation, earning three Distinguished Services Crosses for heroism during the battle.⁷⁵ After successfully capturing Hill 140 and Castellina Marittima in what is still considered to be some of the harshest fighting that the Nisei ever faced, the 100th/442nd continued towards the Arno River.

The 34th Division was ordered to capture the port cities of Livorno and Pisa, but the Nisei faced numerous smaller engagements en route. The German defense was persistent, the roads in the area were of poor quality, and the Germans had destroyed many of the local bridges. After days of fighting around Pieve di San Luce and Luciano, the 100th/442nd secured both cities, largely due to the assistance of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion. On July 18th the 100th/442nd and other units entered Livorno and established high defensive positions overlooking the Arno River and the city of Pisa. Once the area was secured, the 100th/442nd was sent to the city of Vada for a well-earned rest.⁷⁶

After their brief respite, the 100th/442nd was removed from the 34th Division and the 100th and 442nd were separated and slated to participate in assaults at Pisa and Florence respectively against the latest German defense, the Gothic Line. However, on August 15, 1944 the Allies launched Operation Anvil/Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France intended to divert German forces from the defense of northern France against the Allies that had landed at Normandy in June. Just as the 5th Army was building up steam in its assault on the Gothic Line, the 100th/442nd RCT was pulled for the operations in Southern France. In his biography of General Clark, Martin Blumensen said that Clark

⁷⁵ The Distinguished Service Crosses of Ted Tanouye, Frank Ono, and William Nakamura were upgraded to Medals of Honor in 2000; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 106-112.

⁷⁶ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 115-119; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 155-156.

“was sad when he learned he was about to lose his Japanese Americans....their departure was a great blow to him, for they were among his ablest soldiers.”⁷⁷



General Mark Clark and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal inspect the 100th Infantry outside Bighorn, Italy in August 1944.
Photo from Densho Digital Archive

Preceded by their antitank company that had been trained as tactical gliders for the invasion, the rest of the 100th/442nd arrived in France at the end of September. The Nisei were assigned to General Alexander Patch’s 7th Army, 36th Infantry Division, or the “Lone Star Division” led by Major General John Dahlquist. Here they received a group of Nisei replacements, who were the first set of Japanese American trainees to have been

⁷⁷ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 120-122; Martin Blumensen, *Mark Clark* (New York: Congdon & Weed, Inc., 1984), 228.

drafted after the government rescinded the 4-C “enemy alien” classification of Japanese Americans.⁷⁸ The outfit soon found themselves facing terrain similar to that of Italy when they arrived in the Vosges Mountains, home of the command post of the 36th Infantry Division near the city of Epinal. The mountains were heavily wooded with steep inclines, both of which made long-distance and night vision almost nonexistent.⁷⁹

The Allied objective was to clear passages through the Vosges into Strasbourg, cross the Rhine River, and move into Germany. The 7th Army’s particular goal was Saint-Die, an industrial and commercial center, which held the key to three mountain passes. Bruyeres was a railroad town and road intersection that guarded the road to Saint-Die, and it was there that the Germans had concentrated a large part of their defenses. The 100th/442nd RCT arrived on the scene just in time to lead the assault on Bruyeres.⁸⁰ The town was surrounded on three sides by four hills: A, B, C and D, all of which were mined, armed with machine gun nests and snipers, tank divisions and roadblocks, while the natural terrain provided a dense forest shrouded in fog. The fighting endured for four days through the rain and between the hills, from house to house as the Nisei struggled to gain ground. The Germans kept up a seemingly unending supply of reinforcements so that every time the 100th made ground, they were pushed back. However, by October 18, the 100th Battalion had taken Hill A, the 2nd Battalion tenuously held Hill B, and the 3rd Battalion was moving house by house through the city of Bruyeres beneath the hills. By evening the 3rd Battalion met the 143rd Infantry Regiment of the 36th Division, and together freed Bruyeres from four years of Nazi

⁷⁸ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 173.

⁷⁹ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 152-153.

⁸⁰ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 174; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 153.

occupation. The 100th then fought for and gained the surrounding towns of Belmont and Biffontaine, frequently through close order, hand to hand, and bayonet combat.⁸¹

One week later, the 1st Battalion of the 141st Regiment, 36th Division had attempted to take advantage of the gains made by the 100th/442nd by following German units through the forests. Unknowingly, the men walked into a trap and were surrounded by Germans who attacked from the rear, pushing them towards more Germans ahead. The unit lost contact with headquarters and their fellow GI's becoming the "Lost Battalion," and forcing the Nisei into one of their toughest and most heroic battles to date. When the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 141st made no headway in their efforts to reach their stranded comrades, General Patch and Major General Dahlquist sought the efforts of the 100th/442nd, despite a previous promise of rest following their actions at Bruyeres and Biffontaine.

After receiving their orders, the 100th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion of the 442nd moved to the front line through mud and rain and began their trek towards the surrounded Texans. At some points during the ensuing battle the Nisei were outnumbered by as many as four to one; and one particular hill that witnessed a fierce bayonet charge led by Private Barney Hajiro came to be known as "Suicide Hill" due to the casualty rate of the advancing troops. As most of the attempts to drop aid failed, the situation for the Texans became increasingly desperate in light of low rations, below freezing temperatures, and few medical supplies for the wounded. Finally six days after the Texans were surrounded, the 100th and the 3rd Battalion encircled the unit from either side, pushed back the remaining Germans, and reached the Lost Battalion by mid-day. In what has become a famous exchange, the first greeting between the Nisei soldiers and the Texan

⁸¹ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 176-183; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 154-162.

unit was Private First Class Matt Sakumoto's, "Do you need any cigarettes?", which he posed to the first Texan he saw when his scout patrol reached the surrounded unit. The Nisei had rescued the 211 Texans left of the 275 who had been surrounded at the cost of 140 killed and a total of over 800 casualties. As the men went into the final assault, the seven companies involved averaged at less than half their normal full strength.

Companies I and K of the 3rd Battalion emerged from the battle with only 17 and 8 infantry men respectively and both were led by sergeants because all higher ranking officers and non-commissioned officers had been killed or wounded.⁸²

The unit received a Presidential Unit Citation for their actions during the rescue, and nearly every man involved earned a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Many also earned Silver Stars, and three Distinguished Service Crosses were awarded to Barney Hajiro, Fujio Miyamoto, and George Sakato.⁸³ Maj. Claude D. Roscoe of the 141st Regiment remembered the moment when they finally realized who their heroes were; "To our great pleasure it was members of the 442nd Combat Team. We were overjoyed to see these people for we knew them as the best fighting men in the ETO."⁸⁴ Despite their extreme physical and emotional losses, the 100th/442nd was ordered to remain on the front line and continued to move through the Vosges Mountains. They received some relief from the men of the 442nd RCT 232nd Engineer Combat Company who had been busy clearing, building, and maintaining roads through the treacherous mountain region. Finally on November 9, General Dahlquist, who had not earned much respect from the Nisei during

⁸² Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 184-193; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 163-173. For more information on the fight to rescue the Lost Battalion, see Ed Yamasaki, *And Then There Were Eight: The Men of I Company 442nd Regimental Combat Team* (Honolulu: I Company Chapter 442nd Veterans Club, 2003).

⁸³ The Distinguished Service Crosses of Barney Hajiro and George Sakato were upgraded to Medals of Honor in 2000.

⁸⁴ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 197.

his relentless push to rescue the Texans, ordered that the 100th/442nd depart from the front lines for rest. Dahlquist arranged a final dress review to thank the Nisei soldiers for their accomplishment, but was apparently unaware of the costs of his orders. He became angry with the officers at the small number in attendance not realizing that it was the entire remaining 442nd RCT. Of the 2,943 who arrived in the Vosges in October, 161 had been killed, 43 were missing, and over 2,000 were wounded with 882 out of action due to their injuries. For their heroism and determination during the fighting in Bruyeres, Biffontaine, and the rescue of the Lost Battalion, the Nisei were awarded four Presidential Unit Citations and received praise from their superiors and the men of the Texan regiment.⁸⁵ As a fitting reward for their accomplishment and their removal from Dahlquist's command, the Nisei were next moved to the Alps-Maritimes region near the border of France and Italy where they could visit the Riviera on leave. They had to face very few skirmishes here, and although it was cold and snowy, they had better shelter than during the Vosges Campaign. They were so much more comfortable, they nicknamed their time there the "Champagne Campaign."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 199; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 174-183.

⁸⁶ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 182-185.



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

In March, the 100th/442nd received orders back to the frontlines and returned to face the Gothic Line in Italy, while their 522nd Field Artillery was separated and sent to the Siegfried Line with the 63rd Infantry Division. These Artillery men became wanderers, moving from unit to unit helping wherever they were most needed. Before the war ended, they had provided support for at least seven divisions, traveled 1,100 miles across Germany, fired over 11,000 shells, and accomplished all 52 assigned objectives. Their engagements included an assault on the Siegfried Line, the crossing of the Rhine and Neckar Rivers, and the capture of Mannheim and Heidelberg. The unit was later sent with the 4th Infantry Division to Wurzburg and on to Munich and the Bavarian Alps. It was north of this region that the men of the Artillery unit discovered and helped liberate starving prisoners of the Dachau satellite camp Kaufering IV in Hurlach. The liberation of Jewish prisoners from concentration camps was perhaps one

of the most famous and ironic actions of the Nisei soldiers, many of whom had volunteered or been drafted out of the United States's camps.⁸⁷

When the 100th/442nd arrived back in Italy, they discovered that while the Allies had dug in and remained inactive during the harsh winter, German engineers of the Organization Todt had been busy reinforcing the Gothic Line with concrete bunkers and over 2,000 machine gun nests that provided interlocking fire cover. In preparation for the assault on the line, the Nisei were attached to the 92nd Infantry, a mostly African American unit, and they were supplied with Italian Partisans to use as guides in the unfamiliar territory. During the following weeks the units moved up the western coast of Italy and were assigned to take a series of hills overlooking the cities of Massa and Carrara that would open the way to La Spezia, a naval city necessary to the Gothic Line. In a surprise night assault on the Mountains of Cerreto, Folgorito, Carchio, Belvedere, Altissimo and others, the Nisei managed to make significant gains through the mountains despite fierce fighting, mines, lack of water, and harsh terrain. It was during the fight for Mount Folgorito that Private First Class Sadao Munemori, who had joined the 100th at Anzio earned the bittersweet distinction of being the only Japanese American soldier to earn the Medal of Honor during World War II when he threw himself onto a German hand grenade to save two comrades that were in a crater with him. Munemori's parents, who were confined at Manzanar during the war, received his posthumous medal in March 1946.⁸⁸

Within just 32 minutes of their initial assault on the Gothic Line, the Nisei had created a small hole in the line. After three days there was an irreparable and growing

⁸⁷ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 237-239; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 200-208.

⁸⁸ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 251-254; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 190-195.

breach in the supposedly unbreakable line. For their actions amidst the hills of western Italy during early April 1945, the Nisei earned their sixth Presidential Unit Citation. They continued up the coast taking towns and hills along the way, aided by the 232nd Engineer Combat Company, who attempted to make roads more passable for their supply trucks. By mid-April the 100th/442nd had taken Massa and Carrera and engaged the Germans at Tendola and San Teranzo, during which time Private Joe Hayashi and Second Lieutenant Daniel Inouye earned Distinguished Service Crosses. By the end of April defenses across Italy were crumbling as the end of the war approached, and the Allies took Bologna, Aulla, La Spezia, crossed the Po River, and made their way north to Genoa on April 27, the same day that Fascist leader Benito Mussolini was captured. In the following days the Nisei were primarily involved with processing German prisoners and preventing the escape of partisan and enemy soldiers. With the news of the fall of Europe, the 100th/442nd received orders home.⁸⁹

Military Intelligence Service

Even before the men of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team had made a name for themselves in Italy and France, many other Nisei were being used around the world in an attempt to outsmart the enemy. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the war in the Pacific became increasingly more disconcerting for the US as the Japanese invaded Far Eastern countries. By the spring of 1942, they had occupied the Philippines, Netherland's East Indies, parts of northern New Guinea, Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, and most of Burma. In May they suffered their first defeat at the air and naval

⁸⁹ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 192-197; The Distinguished Service Cross of Joe Hayashi and Daniel Inouye were later upgraded to Medals of Honor in 2000; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 263, 267; Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 210-220.

Battle of the Coral Sea, and one month later met disaster at Midway. In August, the United States began to retaliate, invading Guadalcanal, eastern New Guinea, and eventually Burma. The US recaptured the Aleutian Island of Attu, and began their island hopping campaign on Tarawa and the Marshall Islands to the Marianas, where they were only 1,500 miles from the Japanese mainland.⁹⁰

As tensions mounted before the US joined the war, intelligence officers Lieutenant Colonel John Weckerling and Captain Kai Rasmussen had argued for the establishment of a school to teach the Japanese language so that the Allies could gain useful information through translation. Unfortunately, an article in *Life Magazine* in 1942 reported that fewer than one hundred people in the United States had mastered the Japanese language.⁹¹ In the late 1930s, many Army officials were against the “cushy” job of sending officers overseas simply to learn a language; however, the War Department eventually organized the Fourth Army Intelligence School in an abandoned hanger at Crissy Field, Presidio of San Francisco, under the leadership of Weckerling and Rasmussen, who had a budget of \$2000.⁹²

As the two men began to organize the construction and development of their school, they interviewed and surveyed all enlisted Nisei, and later those who were currently confined, so that they could pick those with the most knowledge of Japanese. Their results were not at all what they expected and in fact emphasized the

⁹⁰Stanley L. Falk and Warren M. Tsuneishi, *MIS In the War Against Japan: Personal Experiences Related at the 1993 MIS Capital Reunion*, “The Nisei Veteran: An American Patriot,” (Washington D.C.: Japanese American Veterans Association 1995), 1. For more information on the Japanese American Military Intelligence Service see also James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service During World War II* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2007) and Joseph D. Harrington, *Yankee Samurai: The Secret Role of Nisei in America’s Pacific Victory* (Detroit: Pettigrew Enterprises, Inc., 1979).

⁹¹Joseph D. Harrington, *Yankee Samurai: The Secret Role of Nisei in America’s Pacific Victory* (Detroit: Pettigrew Enterprises, Inc., 1979), 15.

⁹²Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 18-19.

Americanization that the Nisei had been trying to prove since the early 20th century. The first 3,700 Nisei surveyed produced only 3% who were actually accomplished linguists, an additional 4% who were proficient, and another 3% who could be useful only after a long period of training. The commanders were lucky enough to find four new leaders in Major John F. Aiso and Pfc. Arthur Kaneko and civilians Akira Oshida and Shigey Kihara, who became the first instructors at the school.⁹³

Sixty men were finally selected to comprise the first class at the Presidio, and an additional civilian instructor Tetsuo Imagawa joined them before classes started on November 1, 1941.⁹⁴ As this first class neared its graduation date months later, they were faced with the Executive Order to evacuate the West Coast. Although exceptions had already been made to allow them into the army regardless of their "4-C," enemy alien status, they were still forced to move their school to a new location.⁹⁵ The governor of Minnesota happily accepted the men, and they were given use of Fort Savage, where they continued to teach more men and to increase the size and scope of the language school.

After the move it was placed directly under the War Department and renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS). The instructors began to establish more specialized courses, including separate classes for officers and enlisted men. As the worth of the translators was seen overseas, demand for the linguists increased and the program was shortened from nine months to six to produce more graduates. By the fall of 1944, MISLS had produced 1,600 enlisted men, 142 officer candidates, and 53 officers. They were taught how to read, write, and speak Japanese,

⁹³ *MISLS Album* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1946), 8.

⁹⁴ Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 23.

⁹⁵ Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 32.

along with translation, interrogation, and interpretation skills.⁹⁶ One of the few Caucasians in the program, Sheldon Covell also reported that they were trained to recognize whether a Nisei was translating or interpreting incorrectly so that they could watch for betrayal, but Covell reported that he never saw any signs of problems.⁹⁷ By the end of the war the school had moved to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, where it had even more room to expand and eventually produced over 6,000 graduates. As it had changed homes, the program also changed its focus throughout the war to provide for the current needs. In the early years it focused on Japanese military terminology but it later changed to emphasize Civil Affairs terms for the occupation after the war.



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

A Nisei MIS translator from Hawaii proofreads a document for accuracy as part of the occupation responsibilities. September 1946
Photo from Densho Digital Archives

⁹⁶ *MISLS Album*, 11.

⁹⁷ Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 62.

The first MISLS class enrolled 200 in 1942 and by 1945 attendance peaked at 1,836 students in 103 different sections, revealing the significance and value of the linguists to the war effort.⁹⁸ As the Nisei translators began to make a name for themselves, they gained more support in the upper levels of the military and political circles. General Douglas MacArthur established the Allied Translation and Interpreter Service (ATIS) in September 1942, in recognition of linguist's contributions to the war effort and in response to the growing need for more language experts. Intelligence Chief for MacArthur's forces, Major General Charles Willoughby, described MacArthur as having "complete confidence in the Nisei." After its initial development, ATIS was reorganized by Col. Sidney F. Mashbir into an inter-Allied organization with a testing system to classify each linguist based on his skill and to assign him accordingly. He also brought in a paper expert from Washington D.C. to restore bloody or torn documents, and he pushed for more cooperation between ATIS and MISLS to insure the best distribution of linguists where they were most needed.⁹⁹

Although Allied leaders continued to struggle to find linguists until the end of the war, the accomplishments of those that volunteered showed what a vital role they played in the strategic defeat of Japan. One linguist who became quite famous but worked in complete secrecy at the time, was Richard Sakakida. Early in the war he served as a linguist in the Philippines where he countered Japanese propaganda with his own leaflets and broadcasts and later monitored Japanese movements on Corregidor. He was imprisoned in Manila after the United States surrender, and since many other prisoners argued they had seen him in an American uniform, he was tortured and questioned about

⁹⁸ *MISLS Album*, 13.

⁹⁹ *Crost, Honor by Fire*, 31-32.

his identity and loyalty. Eventually he earned the trust of his Japanese captors and gained a position interpreting for a judge, where he continued to gather information for the US. He freed Filipino guerilla Ernesto Tupas and 500 other inmates from a prison in one night, and later used Tupas as a contact point to continue to provide intelligence to the Allies, which proved vital in blocking the Japanese invasion of Australia. In one of the last Japanese attempts to prove him disloyal before he escaped, a Japanese officer handed him his gun and told him to clean it. Cleverly disregarding the "field stripping" technique taught by the Army, which calls for the dismantling and cleaning of all the parts, he simply used his handkerchief to brightly polish the handle and barrel and innocently handed it back to the officers. For his dangerous assignments and unflinching loyalty to the Allied cause, Sakakida was later inducted into the Military Intelligence Service Hall of Fame.¹⁰⁰

In addition to infiltration, as in Sakakida's case, the linguists were also involved in the capture and interrogation of prisoners. After the Japanese surrender they were often required to inform the Japanese on the outlying islands of the surrender and to encourage them to come out of hiding.¹⁰¹ Those responsible for interrogating prisoners discovered two interesting facts about the Japanese that they captured: most importantly, kind treatment such as water, cigarettes, and bandages made them more likely to cooperate, but also they tended to tell everything they knew to anyone who asked.¹⁰² Their compliance was based on the fact that the Japanese did not expect to be given back to their country, so, assuming they were going to die anyway, they had no qualms about

¹⁰⁰ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 30.

¹⁰¹ MIS Linguist Grant Ichikawa, interview by author, 23 March 2002, Vienna, tape recording, George C. Marshall Foundation Library, Lexington.

¹⁰² Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 66, 109.

sharing all they knew. But while prisoners may have cooperated after capture, the process of capturing them was frequently more difficult than the interrogation. In many cases, Japanese soldiers were either convinced they would be tortured upon capture or they felt that death was better than the dishonor of surrendering so they would commit suicide rather than allow the Allies to catch them.¹⁰³ Despite the difficulties, according to Willoughby's final report, the Nisei assisted in the capture and interrogation of over 14,000 prisoners during the course of the war.¹⁰⁴

Another responsibility of the linguists was document translation. Throughout the war they were credited with translating 20,598,051 pages of Japanese documents for units all around the world. The men often translated diaries and letters found on the bodies of dead soldiers, but the most notable contributions were the translations of captured official Japanese military documents. For example, a thick manual was found on the Solomon Islands and copies were given to linguists Isao Kusuda, Shigeru Yamashita, and Kei Sakamoto. Once translated it provided a complete list of all Imperial Navy ships, call signs, and code names, along with the same information for Japanese air squads and bases. In another instance, MISLS graduates translated the Japanese battle plans for the defense of the Philippines, allowing for a successful Allied victory in the San Bernadino Straits. Also, the Nisei reported information on the Japanese offensive against Bougainville, which helped keep American casualties down to 1/20 of Japan's losses. It was also based on information gathered by a linguist that Allied P-38s were able to shoot

¹⁰³ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 278-279.

¹⁰⁴ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 32.

down the plane carrying Commander in Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet Admiral Yamamoto, the brains behind the Pearl Harbor attack.¹⁰⁵

Despite their many accomplishments, there was relatively little known about the MIS and ATIS teams because of the secrecy surrounding their mission during the war. It took the proof of documents stamped “declassified” to prove to some of the retired MIS members that it was okay for them to talk about what they had done. Their orders were often given as Temporary Duty (TDY), which meant that very few records remained and the total losses and gains remained unaccounted for; however, it is known that Nisei linguists were present in units such as Merrill’s Marauder’s, OSS detachments, the Manhattan Project, Pacific Military Intelligence Research Section, the Japanese Occupation Forces, and many more. They were credited with shortening the war and saving a million lives, yet the secrecy surrounding them reduced recognition and honor to only a fraction of what they deserved.¹⁰⁶

Homecoming

On July 4, 1946, the remaining 100th/442nd RCT soldiers, mostly late draftees and replacements, returned home from Europe and were met by crowds of cheering Americans waving flags and streamers in New York’s harbor. In Washington DC, President Harry Truman rearranged his schedule, government workers received extended lunch hours, and preparations were made for the 100th/442nd RCT to receive a parade of honor in front of the White House. Though it was a wet and rainy day, the streets were

¹⁰⁵ Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 112; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 15; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 56; Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 54.

¹⁰⁶ Ichikawa, Grant, “Background of the Presidential Unit Citation for MIS,” (photocopy), personal research, Grant Ichikawa, Vienna, Virginia.

crowded with admirers and fellow wounded Nisei veterans in wheelchairs or supporting one another as they watched their comrades receive the honor they were due. The President pinned on their seventh Presidential Unit Citation for the 522nd Artillery's European campaign and commended their accomplishments:

It is a very great pleasure to me today to be able to put the seventh regimental citation on your banners. You are to be congratulated on what you have done for this great country of ours. I think it was my predecessor who said that Americanism is not a matter of race or creed, it is a matter of the heart. You fought for the free nations of the world along with the rest of us. I congratulate you on that, and I can't tell you how very much I appreciate the privilege of being able to show you just how much the United States of America thinks of what you have done. You are now on your way home. You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice – and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win – to make this great Republic stand for just what the Constitution says it stands for: the welfare of all the people all the time.¹⁰⁷

In his book, *Back Home*, cartoonist Bill Mauldin said, "...no combat unit in the army could exceed [the Japanese Americans] in loyalty, hard work, courage, and sacrifice. Hardly a man of them hadn't been decorated at least twice, and their casualty rates were appalling...the Nisei could do no wrong. We were proud to be wearing the same uniform."¹⁰⁸ The Nisei emerged from the war as the most decorated unit for their size and length of service, and returned home proudly bearing their medals to prove it. They fought in eight major campaigns across Europe and received seven Presidential Unit Citations. They earned 9,486 Purple Hearts and 18,143 individual awards and honors. These included 1 Medal of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 560 Silver Stars, 28 Oak Leaf Clusters, 22 Legions of Merit, 4,000 Bronze Stars with 1,200 Oak Leaf Clusters, 15 Soldier's Medals, 12 French

¹⁰⁷ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 305-306.

¹⁰⁸ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 303; Bill Mauldin, *Back Home* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1947), 164-166.

Croix de Guerre, 2 palms representing second Croix de Guerre awards, 2 Italian crosses for military merit, and 2 Italian medals for military valor.¹⁰⁹ In addition, Major General Willoughby stated that the Nisei linguists, “saved over 1,000,000 American lives and shortened the war by two years...they collected information on the battlefield, they shared death in battle...in all they handled between two and three million [Japanese] documents.” Eventually nine Nisei linguists were inducted into the Military Intelligence Corps Hall of Fame in Arizona, and many buildings at the Defense Language Institute are dedicated to Nisei.¹¹⁰

Immediately after the soldiers returned to the United States, white officers of the Nisei division and sympathetic members of the WRA began a series of lectures and speeches that told of the loyalty proven in battle by the Japanese Americans. They hoped that their support would help the AJA’s reintroduction to society. Many influential military leaders spoke in their defense both during and after the war, and their support drastically helped raise the status of the soldiers and their families.¹¹¹ One 442nd RCT Commander, Colonel Charles Pence had said, “These were fine young men, whose character and courage were above and beyond the call, who carried every mission, performed every duty without stint, in the best American traditions.” General Marshall reported that “the Nisei were superb – they took terrific casualties, showed rare courage and fighting spirit. Everyone wanted them.” Clark, Commander of the 5th Army, said, “They performed magnificently on the field of battle; I’ve never had such fine soldiers...”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 312.

¹¹⁰ Ichikawa, “Background.”

¹¹¹ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 299.

¹¹² James M. Hanley, *A Matter of Honor* (New York: Vantage Press, 1995.), xiii.

Unfortunately, people at home were only just realizing the accomplishments of the Nisei soldiers; and the government had underestimated the amount of damage, both financial and emotional, that the relocated Japanese Americans had suffered. Under the leadership of the Chief of the War Relocation Authority, Dillon Myer, the WRA and the United States government were attempting to provide restitution for the Japanese American families who were confined during the war. It was estimated that detainees lost a combined \$400,000,000 in property and possessions.¹¹³ In 1948, Congress attempted to settle claims with the Evacuation Claims Act, but reached a settlement of only 10 cents per dollar lost.¹¹⁴

Though the government attempted to make some minor restitution for the Nisei, many civilians still viewed the Japanese Americans as suspicious, though there were some who defended their loyalty. Veteran Mitsuo Usui remembers one instance in Los Angeles when he boarded a bus in full uniform, proudly displaying all his medals and awards. A woman muttered, "Damn Jap," as he walked by, and although Usui ignored her, the bus driver did not. He immediately stopped his bus and told her, "Lady, apologize to this American soldier or get off my bus." As she got off, the bus driver told Usui that he felt that things should be different now since they had proven themselves, and as Usui thanked him for his appreciation, he noticed that the driver himself wore a discharge pin on his jacket lapel.¹¹⁵ In addition, veteran and future Senator Daniel Inouye was turned away from a barbershop while also in full uniform, and even wearing an artificial arm as proof of his sacrifice. He was told, "You're a Jap and we don't cut Jap

¹¹³ Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 113.

¹¹⁴ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 300.

¹¹⁵ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 301.

hair.”¹¹⁶ Signs saying “No Japs allowed,” and “Whites Only,” still appeared in store windows and restaurants for a time, but veteran Mamoru Noji felt that there was a “coalition of sane people who befriended us. They were the true heroes of the day.”¹¹⁷

“Go For Broke” As History and Memory

Despite the discrimination that many Nisei veterans and civilians faced on the homefront, MGM Studios managed to create the not only financially successful, but also wildly popular film “Go For Broke!” just six years after the end of the war. According to a survey conducted following a December 1950 screening of “Go For Broke!” in Los Angeles, one viewer reported that she “liked the picture because it showed that other nationalities are just as good as we are, and can fight side by side when necessary.” Another claimed that the film was a “well done production of something we were aware of but knew little about...Very well done.” The survey generally reported an overwhelmingly positive response amongst the 398 total responses with 251 rating the picture as “outstanding” or “excellent,” and only 16 selecting the lowest rating of “fair.” Of those that reported negative opinions, most either criticized the acting, the subject matter of war, or the cinematography, including the length, realism of action scenes, or overly loud music. For instance, when asked “which scenes, if any, did you dislike?” one viewer responded, “ones with Van Johnson,” while another complained that some

¹¹⁶ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 301.

¹¹⁷ Crost, *Honor by Fire*, 307.

“scenes were phoney enough for me to detect – (vines, backdrops, dubbed in newsreel.)”¹¹⁸

The contemporary media outlets were equally as positive about the nature of the movie. The *New York Times* called the film “a respectful and rousing tribute to the men of the 442d Regimental Combat Team,” and *Time Magazine* reported that “Go For Broke!” “adds another laurel to one of the most decorated U.S. combat units of World War II.”¹¹⁹ In Hawaii, from which the greatest number of early 100th Infantry and 442nd RCT volunteers came, the Territorial Legislature was so impressed with the film that they passed a Concurrent Resolution in praise of the subject matter and accurate retelling of the story. Introduced by Representative Yasutaka Fukushima on May 1, 1951, the Resolution pronounced the film to be “an excellent production...which presents our American citizens of Japanese ancestry in a true light and which does due justice to the exploits of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team...”¹²⁰ In recognition of its merit as a film, Director Pirosh was nominated for Best Story and Screenplay at the 1952 24th Annual Academy Awards, though he lost to Alan Jay Lerner’s “An American in Paris.”¹²¹

The popularity of the movie in 1951 is somewhat surprising given the openness with which it addressed the relocation of the Japanese Americans. In fact, the movie is arguably more of a social commentary than a war film considering the relatively few

¹¹⁸ First Preview First Report, December 17, 1950, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 12, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

¹¹⁹ *New York Times*, May 25, 1951; *Time Magazine*, May 28, 1951.

¹²⁰ House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution No. 70, Robert Pirosh Papers, Accession Number 3196, Box 6, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY.

¹²¹ 24th Annual Academy Awards Presentation Program, Robert Pirosh Papers, Accession Number 3196, Box 6, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY.

battle scenes compared to the number of scenes related to the relationships of the characters and their views of the current situation. For instance, from the beginning to the end the film never shied away from the subject of the relocation. When Lt. Grayson meets Captain Solari upon his arrival at Camp Shelby, the captain scolds Grayson for his use of the term "Japs," to which Grayson responds, "All I know is they were put under armed guard in relocation centers last year. Maybe the Army just had some surplus barbed wire they wanted to use up. Was that it?" Solari explains,

The Army was facing an emergency at the start of the war; a possible invasion by Japanese troops, so all Japanese Americans were evacuated from the West Coast. No loyalty check. No screening. Nothing! If there were any spies among them, I can assure you they're not in the 442. Every man in this outfit has been investigated, re-investigated, and re-re-investigated.

While this is certainly not an endorsement of relocation, he also does not condemn the decision, only the method.

Perhaps the most frequent reminder of camp life comes from the friendship and conversations of Sam, played by Lane Nakano, and Tommy, played by Henry Nakamura. Tommy finds Sam surrounded by the contents of what appears to be a package from home, but soon learns that it is actually a package *for* his family. Sam tells Tommy that his family lives in a camp in Arizona where he sarcastically says there are, "All the comforts of home. And only one block from the barracks to the toilets and showers." At Tommy's incredulous questions Sam explains that his family is actually one of the lucky ones because there are only five sharing their partitioned space in the barracks since he left for war. Throughout the film Sam continues to share his correspondence to and from home with Tommy. Tommy is excited to learn that Sam's brother will soon be leaving camp to pick sugar beets at a local farm, and he is as indignant as Sam when he learns the

same brother had to return to camp after being beaten up and threatened with lynching from locals. In another letter from home, Sam's girlfriend praises the men of the 442nd claiming that they are receiving "lots" of media coverage and that news of their success and acceptance has changed the attitudes of many within the camps. She reported that "Nothing's the same because everybody knows what the 442 is doing," and described the students in her class as being transformed from "sad" children to one of the noisiest classes in the country.

The discussion of relocation adds a unique layer to one of the most varied but interesting aspects of the Nisei soldiers: their motivation for joining. The perpetually disgruntled Chick, played by George Miki, claimed that he had worked at chick sexing in Iowa and had simply been convinced to join by a smooth talking recruiter. In contrast, Tommy reveals that both his parents were killed while visiting friends during the attack on Pearl Harbor and he had attempted to join the 100th Infantry but was turned down because he was too young. When he was old enough, he responded to the call for 442nd volunteers in the hopes that he might get to fight in the Pacific Theater against the enemy that killed his parents. When Tommy first hears about conditions in the camp he can not understand why Sam would have voluntarily enlisted, but Sam tells him that, "We had to do something so we never get a deal like that again." For the University of Southern California educated architect Frank, played by Akira Fukunaga, enlistment was a way to escape the fruit stand where he worked, and he later revels in the opportunity to see examples of the architecture from around the world that he had only ever read about. As with any unit, the motivations for enlistment were as varied as the men themselves, but the discrimination facing Japanese Americans in the United States, especially on the

mainland, made the question of voluntary military service even more complex than normal.

In many ways the depiction of the diverse perspectives of the Japanese American soldiers was one of the more open minded or racially unbiased aspects of the movie. Historian John Dower has clearly and persuasively shown how Americans tended to hold numerous stereotypes of the Japanese, one of which was the idea of a monolithic culture. According to Dower, within American propaganda portrayals of the Japanese, “The individual was thoroughly subordinated to the state, with the whole educational system being geared to the mass production of obedient subjects who absorbed what they were told like sponges.”¹²² The Japanese were believed to have very little desire or ability to think independently, but instead were content to blindly follow the directives of their political and military leaders. The varied personalities, perspectives, motivations, and lifestyles of Chick, Sam, Frank, and Tommy as well as the clear differences displayed between the “katonks” and “buddaheads,” or Japanese Americans from the mainland and Hawaii respectively, were in direct contrast to this long-held stereotype.

In recent years, historian Takashi Fujitani has raised questions about just how positive the portrayal of the Nisei soldier actually was in “Go For Broke!”¹²³ While he acknowledges that the film presented a much more realistic and less stereotyped view of the Nisei men than wartime propaganda films had, he also argues that, “the cultural or ethnic differences evoked in the film are not critical ones that could upset the unspoken

¹²² John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 21.

¹²³ T. Fujitani, “Go For Broke, the Movie: Japanese American Soldiers in U.S. National, Military, and Racial Discourses,” in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, Lisa Yoneyama, eds., (Charlotte: Duke University Press, 2001), 239 – 266.

but assumed racial hierarchy.”¹²⁴ He claims that the traditional threat of the sexuality and physical strength of the Japanese were removed from the characters in the movie through the “emasculinization of the Nisei soldiers” by focusing on their short stature and lack of sexual encounters compared to their Caucasian officer, Grayson. In fact, all but one of the officers depicted in the film was Caucasian, which both reflected reality and helped reinforce the accepted hierarchy. Fujitani argues that the differences highlighted in the movie were part of a national move away from assimilation pressure and towards a celebration of differences, especially those cultural traditions that were “conducive to Americanism.”¹²⁵ According to Fujitani, this film was a significant step on the way to the creation of the Japanese American “model minority” concept of the 1960s.¹²⁶

While Fujitani’s analysis of how the film fits into the broader narrative of nationalism and race is excellent, the long-term and forward thinking role that “Go For Broke!” played in countering prejudice towards the Japanese Americans was far more positive than he claims. In addition to the positive and novel portrayal of the Nisei soldiers themselves, the film may also have aided in creating a feeling of respect towards the Japanese Americans community as a whole through a remarkably accurate depiction of both their discrimination and their heroics.

From discussions of the relocation and the prejudice facing Japanese Americans at home, to the accurate depiction of all Caucasian, or *haole* officers, the second-class status of the Nisei is made obvious from start to finish. Lt. Grayson’s attitude and that of his friend Sgt. Culley, played by Don Haggerty, reflected contemporary racial prejudices. As historian Roger Daniels has pointed out, “the wartime abuse of Japanese

¹²⁴ Fujitani, “Go For Broke,” 250.

¹²⁵ Fujitani, “Go For Broke,” 252.

¹²⁶ William Petterson, “Success Story, Japanese-American Style,” *New York Times*, January 9, 1966.

Americans...was merely a link in a chain of racism that stretched back to the earliest contacts between Asians and whites on American soil.”¹²⁷ Obviously a film set during the last two years of World War II could not efficiently present the complete early immigration history of the Japanese, but it did attempt to show the status of racial prejudice against the Japanese during the war and how the efforts of the 100th/442nd may have helped shift the views of their fellow soldiers and the nation more broadly. As Fujitani explained, “Grayson’s and Culley’s renunciations of racism are clearly allegories of America’s overcoming of it.”¹²⁸ However, one viewer of the film stated that, “I find it hard to believe that racial prejudice was overcome by the heroic deed of the Japs-Americans. The heroism would not overcome 25 years of trained bigotry.”¹²⁹ While it is questionable how effective a 92-minute film can be in overcoming the racism of a nation, it has long been argued by historians that the heroic deeds of the 100th/442nd did in fact help alter the treatment of Japanese Americans in the United States.

To counter the existing feelings of Grayson and Culley, and symbolically of the US public, the film’s creators portrayed the characters as not only likeable ukulele-playing friendly Nisei, but also highly capable and almost recklessly brave soldiers. From the successful training at Camp Shelby to the 100th/442nd Battle Record displayed at the end of the movie, the storyline and characters evoke a great deal of respect for their bravery in the line of fire. A three-person assault on a German machine gun nest, Tommy’s wounded solo mortar barrage, and Sam’s uphill charge to rescue the surrounded Texans were not only inspiring but also authentic - based on real 100th/442nd Nisei soldiers’ actions. In addition, Tommy’s return to his unit prior to their departure

¹²⁷ Daniels, *Prisoners*, 3.

¹²⁸ Fujitani, “*Go For Broke*,” 249.

¹²⁹ First Preview, First Report, Robert Pirosh Papers.

for France despite his not yet fully healed wound depicted “reverse AWOL,” an action that was common among the Nisei who were anxious to remain with their units.

The attention to detail and accuracy is hardly surprising considering the fact that five of the six Nisei actors were veterans; the writer/director Pirosh was a veteran; and Pirosh, the producer Schary, and star Van Johnson had previously combined their talents to create the Academy Award winning World War II film, *Battleground!* (1949). One viewer wrote, “the combat scenes were outstanding – the most authentic use of weapons, cover and concealment and maneuvers yet to come out of Hollywood and I’ve seen all the war pictures. The action of the three Japanese taking the vineyard hill could well be used as a training film showing advantage of terrain.”¹³⁰ In addition to the attempt at accuracy in the depiction of battle scenes, the filmmakers also attempted to tell the history of the 100th/442nd by including either mention or depiction of three of the four arguably most significant engagements of the Nisei: Monte Cassino, Hill 140, and the rescue of the Lost Battalion.¹³¹ To further its accuracy, the film also used original archival footage of the 442nd in battle and receiving their Presidential Unit Citations throughout the course of the war.

The film’s “Special Consultant,” Mike Masaoka, a veteran of the 442nd and significant yet controversial member of the Japanese American community, also likely aided the attention to accuracy. According to many sources, Masaoka was given the credit for being the first volunteer to join the 442nd, and he was one of five brothers who all served in the military during the war. He graduated from the University of Utah and later worked as a spokesman, National Secretary, and legislative director for the Japanese

¹³⁰ First Preview, First Report, Robert Pirosh Collection.

¹³¹ The fourth most frequently mentioned action of the Nisei soldiers during WWII would likely be the ironic liberation of a Dachau subcamp by the artillery of the 442nd.

American Citizens League. As a spokesman for the JACL, Masaoka issued numerous statements before and during the war urging unfailing loyalty and full cooperation with the WRA mass relocation. He pushed for the creation of the volunteer Japanese American unit and for the reinstatement of the draft for Nisei, and he even voiced support for a "suicide battalion" to prove the loyalty of the Japanese American community. In his zeal to prove that the Nisei were trustworthy, he discouraged all forms of protest, dissidence, and draft resistance, which made him a rather divisive character despite his prominence. In his autobiography, Masaoka defended his actions during the war and claimed "there was no choice but to cooperate." Regardless of his views, Masaoka assisted Pirosh and Schary during filming, and considered his role in the process to be "perhaps my most important single public relations project."¹³²

Unquestionably, the two people with the greatest influence on the creation of the movie itself were the writer/director Robert Pirosh and the producer Dore Schary. Born in Newark, New Jersey as Isadore Schary, the son of Jewish immigrant parents, Schary rose to fame through screen writing - becoming the chief of production of MGM studios in 1948 and head of the studio in 1951. Though he held this position only until 1956, his signature graced numerous significant films and plays before, during, and even after his tenure at MGM. He made a name for himself with his script for "Boys Town," a 1938 Academy Award winning movie and he went on to write, produce, or direct other notable productions including "Battleground!" (1949) and the Tony Award winning "Sunrise at Campobello" (1960). At the height of the Hollywood blacklist controversies led by the

¹³² *Facts for Editorial Reference About the Filming of MGM's "Go For Broke!"*, page 17, Robert Pirosh Papers, Accession Number 3196, Box 5, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY; Annie Nakao, "Furur over Memorial to Japanese Americans," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 July 2000; Mike Masaoka with Bill Hosokawa, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1987), 93, 215-216.

House Un-American Activities Committee, Schary came under scrutiny for his obvious left-leaning tendencies and admitted willingness to hire anyone, regardless of their ideological opinions. In addition to "Go For Broke!," many of his other feature films addressed questions of race and tolerance including "Bad Day at Black Rock" (1955), which dealt with the story of the relocation of the Japanese Americans. He also became known at MGM for the introduction and frequent use of minority actors. During his lifetime, he was Chairman of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League (ADL); he received the Golden Slipper Club Award for humanitarianism in 1947 and the Thomas Jefferson Award from the Council Against Intolerance in America in 1948. After his death in 1980 the ADL honored him with the creation of the Dore Schary Award, which is awarded to student film makers whose work promotes the ADL mission of tolerance, human rights, and justice.¹³³

Schary's partner on "Go For Broke!" was Robert Pirosh, who had previously worked with Schary on "Battleground!" Equally as prolific, though perhaps slightly less prominent than Schary, Pirosh gained fame through his comedic writing for the Marx brothers and through screenplays such as "I Married a Witch" (1942), "Battleground!," "Go For Broke!," and "Hell is for Heroes" (1962). He later worked as a writer and producer for numerous TV shows including, "Combat!," which he created, "Bonanza," and "The Waltons." "Go For Broke!" was actually Pirosh's first project as a writer/director having spent the previous fifteen years as purely a screenwriter.

According to an article that Pirosh wrote about the development of the storyline, after he

¹³³ Seymour Brody, *Jewish Heroes and Heroines of America* (Hollywood, Florida: Lifetime Books, Inc., 1996), 271-272; Robert Koehler, "Schary A Precursor to New H'Wood," *Variety* (November 19, 1999), 6, 10, 16; Anti-Defamation League Website, Dore Schary Award Info, http://www.adl.org/doreschary_awards/.

was approached with the idea for a movie on the Nisei, he intended to write about a young Japanese American university girl, but,

I found, instead, the story of her brothers and her sweetheart and her parents and three hundred thousand other Japanese-Americans here and in Hawaii back in 1943 when the ugly flame of race prejudice was being fanned by war hysteria. And the way to tell that story, it seemed to me, was to follow a representative group in the 442d Regimental Combat Team as they fought their way through Italy and France...segregated Nisei troops with Caucasian officers...gallant Nisei troops, many with families behind barbed wire and under armed guard in relocation centers back home.¹³⁴

After having researched the subject of Japanese Americans through archives and interviews, Pirosh chose to focus on the 100th/442nd combat record to tell the broad story of the Issei and Nisei.

Schary approved the decision, and according to a handwritten note that he attached to one of his copies of the script,

‘Go For Broke’ started as a search by Bob Pirosh and myself for a theme on the Nisei detention camps. What we learned was so shocking and depressing we felt that in the early years of the Cold War that it would be a disservice – so instead we told the story of the 442nd Combat Team, composed of Japanese Americans and were the most honored of all combat units. It was affirmative, yet had enough letter of criticism so that it was true and complete.¹³⁵

In his autobiography, Schary was even more explicit regarding his opinions of the “depressing” story of the treatment of Japanese Americans, stopping his narrative to condemn Earl Warren’s role in the decision and to describe his thoughts on the situation,

To have rushed Japanese, who were American citizens, into those faraway areas – treeless, barren, lonely, surrounded by vistas of flat, scrubby plains – was unconscionable. The nisei were not guilty of anything but became victims of terror and panic, losing their homes, farms, equipment and security. That crime against them we wished to report.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Robert Pirosh, “Everything Went According to Plan Except-” *New York Times*, 3 June 1951.

¹³⁵ Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 10, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

¹³⁶ Dore Schary, *Heyday: An Autobiography* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1979), 226-227.

He continued to explain that,

The accent on the affirmative was the story of the 442nd Infantry Battalion, the nisei combat unit that earned more medals and suffered more casualties than any other combat unit and proved more than any other factor the absurdity and shame of the detention camps. We designed a way of telling their story without omitting the truth of the nisei internment centers.¹³⁷

Through Schary's humanitarianism and Pirosh's award-winning writing abilities the collaborators soon had the screenplay for "Go For Broke!" completed.

Due to the lack of Japanese American actors in 1950s Hollywood, the pair placed ads around the country and held casting calls in both Los Angeles and Honolulu with the goal of finding actual 442nd veterans to play the lead roles. Pirosh found five of the actors in Honolulu: George T. Miki, Ken Okamoto, Akira Fukunaga, Henry Oyasato, and Henry Nakamura, while the sixth lead Nisei, Lane Nakano, plus numerous extras came from the mainland. With the exception of Henry Nakamura, who played Tommy and was too young to have served, the other five lead roles were veterans of the famed combat unit. As Schary wrote, "In the main, our actors were veterans of the battalion, and many of the stories that Bob [Robert Pirosh] wrote were their stories."¹³⁸ The casting of Van Johnson in the seventh and final lead role was considered a "logical choice" given his experience with both Pirosh and Schary on "Battleground!" Not only was "Go For Broke!" groundbreaking in its subject matter, but also it was the first time that MGM had attempted a major motion picture with a cast of all but one "unknowns" in its lead roles.

Based on numerous reviews and newspaper articles about the film, Henry Nakamura as Tommy emerged as the clear audience favorite. Described as an "always humorous, sometimes pathetic GI," Nakamura was a psychology student at the

¹³⁷ Schary, *Heyday*, 227.

¹³⁸ Schary, *Heyday*, 227.

University of Hawaii before he responded to the casting call only because his sisters dared him. One reviewer later reported, "it is little Henry Nakamura who pretty much steals the show as a pint-sized rifle-wrassler with a heart and courage as big as himself." After "Go For Broke!," Nakamura went on to appear in Schary's production, "Westward the Women" (1951), as well as other movies throughout the 1950s.¹³⁹

Lane Nakano, who played the soldier with a family detained in camp at home, did not have to act much to fill the shoes of his character, Sam. Nakano and his family were confined at Heart Mountain, Wyoming before he and his twin brother Lyle volunteered for the 442nd RCT. Nakano also went on to appear in other movies and TV shows as an actor and singer. His son Desmond Nakano carried on the family tradition of working with films when he co-wrote and directed the 2007 film "American Pastime," portraying the life of two interned brothers, Lane and Lyle, and how they dealt with the frustrations of life in camp.

The four other major Nisei stars of "Go For Broke!" came from ordinary backgrounds in Hawaii, though some later established themselves as local celebrities. George Miki, who played the embittered Chick, graduated from St. Louis College and continued to serve in the reserves as well as the 442nd Veterans Club and the Territorial Pacific War Memorial Commission after his discharge from active duty. Ken Okamoto, the ukulele playing Kaz of "Go For Broke!," actually performed for his fellow soldiers during his time in the service, and even after he returned to civilian life, he continued to play with the Shelby Serenaders, a small band he began at Camp Shelby. Sgt. Ohara was played by Henry Oyasota, whose acting also duplicated his real life wartime service during which he earned a Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart, in addition to

¹³⁹ *Facts for Editorial Reference*, 16; "The Screen in Review," *New York Times*, 25 May 1951.

numerous other decorations before his discharge as a Captain. Akira Fukunaga, the architect Frank, worked as a reporter for the Hawaii Times before his enlistment, and after his brief acting stint he became active in local Hawaii politics. Though none of the six Japanese American actors earned lasting fame through their roles, one reviewer described them as “natural-born performers.”¹⁴⁰

In addition to the complications of using amateur actors, Pirosh and Schary also ran into other difficulties during the filming process. The Hawaiian Nisei’s Pidgin dialect was hard to script as there were not only numerous regional variations, but also there was no dictionary to use as a guide. In addition, Pirosh and Schary were frustrated by the tendency of the Hawaiians to quickly fall into the more acceptable mainland English once they arrived on the set for filming. Though the “buddaheads” eventually managed to maintain their unique speech for filming, the cast ran into new problems when they introduced yet another amateur actor, “Paisan,” the pig. There were reportedly no trained pigs available for the part, forcing the cast to find and train one to play the part of Tommy’s lovable pet.¹⁴¹

After all the obstacles were overcome and the film hit theaters, to say that it was greeted with excitement within the Japanese American community is an understatement. The anticipation for the premiere was perhaps greatest in Honolulu where five of the actors and countless Japanese Americans lived. One section of the Waikiki Theater was reserved for 281 Gold Star Mothers of the 100th/442nd RCT, and, according to one report, tickets went on sale and, “block-long lines started to form before dawn, eight hours

¹⁴⁰ *Facts for Editorial Reference*, 16-17; Lee Mortimer, “‘Go For Broke’ Exciting Tribute to Nisei,” Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 11, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

¹⁴¹ *Facts for Editorial Reference*, 17.

before the box office was to open.” The media reported that, “Within minutes after the box-office opened, all tickets for the opening night were bought up.” Another article claimed that the tickets for the first night sold in 22 minutes and the first week sold out within four hours. “Go For Broke!,” which was the first movie to host a premier in Honolulu, set a record for the Waikiki Theater earning \$6,270.67 in the first two nights. Not only did the theater sell out its intended two weeks, but also they rearranged their previous schedule to accommodate an unprecedented third week run at Waikiki.¹⁴²

In addition to Honolulu, MGM arranged for six other key city premiers; Tokyo, Japan; Washington DC; New York, New York; Hollywood, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Houston, Texas. The premiere at the Ernie Pyle Theater in Tokyo hosted 200 Nisei who were in Japan as part of the occupation force. Approximately 4,200 soldiers arrived to watch the film on its opening night in a theater that could only accommodate 2,600. Eventually they were forced to turn away over 3,500 hopeful viewers before they also rearranged their schedules to show the film for two more nights. The premiere in New York coincided with a reunion of all East Coast Veterans of the 100th/442nd, and the premier in Hollywood, hosted by Schary himself, included a presentation to Mrs. Nawa Munemori, mother of Medal of Honor recipient Sadao Munemori, as well as presentations to Schary and Pirosh in recognition of their work and success on the film. The invitation list to the Hollywood Premiere on May 9, 1951 at the Egyptian Theater spoke to the expected significance of the film and read as a “who’s

¹⁴² *Pacific Citizen*, 4 May 1951; *Pacific Citizen*, 5 May 1951; Telegram to Dore Schary from Ted Galanter, 7 May 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Telegram to Dore Schary from E.I. Parker, President of Consolidated Amusement Company, Honolulu, 8 May 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

who” of Hollywood’s finest, including Frank Capra, Bing Crosby, Betty Grable, Cary Grant, Howard Hughes, Danny Kaye, the Marx Brothers, Ronald Reagan, Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., Ginger Rogers, and Frank Sinatra.¹⁴³

While the invitation list in Washington DC may not have been as glamorous, it included many significant politicians and leaders at the urging of Masaoka and others who hoped that the film would encourage officials to support current legislation in favor of relaxed naturalization laws and Hawaiian statehood. Numerous Washington officials and organizations voiced their support and praise for the film including the Department of Defense, Colonel Kendall J. Fielder, a previous officer in the 442nd RCT, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. According to Major General F.L. Park, Chief of Information for the Department of the Army, “Go For Broke!” had the “official approval of the Department of the Army,” and one Army Colonel wrote, “I hear only the best about “Go For Broke” which doesn’t surprise me...I cannot see how a picture like this will not be seen and talked about by millions of people all over the world If there ever was a story of academy caliber this is it.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ *Pacific Citizen*, 5 May 1951; Telegram to Dore Schary from Dave Blum of Loew’s International, 9 May 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Letter to Dore Schary from John Dickson Jr., Public Information Office, General Headquarters, Far East Command, 8 May 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 8, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Letter to Dore Schary from Kelly Kuwayama, 442nd Committee, MGM Studios, 25 April 1951; Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Letter to James T. Hamada of the *Hawaii Times* from Barrett Kiesling, 18 June 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 8, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Telegram from Mike Masaoka to Dore Schary, 18 December 1950, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Dore Schary List, Hollywood Premiere, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

¹⁴⁴ Telegram from Mike Masaoka to Dore Schary, 18 December 1950, Dore Schary Papers; Letter to Dore Schary and Robert Pirosh from Kenneth Mackenna, MGM Studios, 13 January 1950, Dore Schary Papers,

As a measure of the excitement surrounding the opening of "Go For Broke!," the publicity for the film was quite extensive. According to Howard Dietz the Vice President of Advertising and Publicity for Loew's Inc., which owned MGM, the media campaign for "Go For Broke" featured the largest number of ads in weeklies "in years." With ads in *Look*, *Colliers*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Life*, which had readership of 18,453,000, 11,514,000, 16,982,000, and 28,700,000 respectively, they had the potential to reach over 75,649,000 readers. In addition, Loew's placed advertisements in the *Veterans of Foreign Wars* and *American Legion* magazines, as well as *Scholastic* and *Cosmopolitan*, with the slightly smaller combined readership of 16,329,526. Schools around the country also received posters publicizing the movie with accompanying resource guides to supplement lessons with information related to the movie.¹⁴⁵

Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Letter from Major Clair Towne, Department of Defense Office of Public Info, to Carter Barron, MGM Studios, Washington Office, 21 March 1950, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; *Veterans of Foreign Wars*, Resolution, 24 October 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 8, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Letter to Dore Schary from Major General F.L. Parks, Chief of Information, Department of the Army, 22 January 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Telegram to Dore Schary from Colonel B. Halsey, 9 April 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

¹⁴⁵ Letter to Dore Schary from Howard Dietz, Loew's Inc., 13 April 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 9, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

★ ACTIVITIES IN FRONT OF THEATRE ★ 9:30 P.M.
★ LIGHTS—MUSIC—100-PIECE ARMY BAND ★ TOMORROW

★ ON STAGE ★ Author and Director of "GO FOR BROKE" ★
★ ROBERT PIROSH ★

Regular Continuous Showings of "Go For Broke" From 11 A.M. Tomorrow

Extra ON STAGE TOMORROW NIGHT ONLY AT 9 P.M.
M.G.M.'s Glamorous Star of "Texas Carnival"
ESTHER ILLIAMS

You went for
"BATTLEGROUND" and...



"They made the pants too long!"



It's "Go For Broke!"... Whether they gambled with dice, or with their lives!



It was a talented musical outfit.



Objective within sight!



...you'll go for

GO FOR BROKE!

...means "Shoot The Works!"

FROM M-G-M STARRING VAN JOHNSON AND THE HEROES OF THE 442ND REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

"Go Fro Broke" Ad from *The Evening Star*, Washington, D.C., 16 May 1951

The media response was largely positive, with articles and reviews praising the subject matter, the actors, and the film as a whole. In an article titled, "An Impressive Tribute to Heroism of the Nisei," the *New York Journal-American* reported that the film, "...not only dramatizes the exploits of the Niseis but also carries an important message of inter-racial understanding." Another review claimed the film was "an irresistible entertainment, and its added social comments are well worth making and well deserved." The *Washington Post* wrote, "the thrills of the picture derive from combat, the human touches from warmly expressed sequences of what it means to be a Japanese-American in this country, and the humor from both sides of the race-prejudice fence. Everything is handled tastefully and with commendable realism." Perhaps the best summation of the majority of the critic's views, was written by Lee Mishkin in the *Morning Telegraph*; "'Go For Broke!' has its heart in the right place and should go a long way toward effecting some deeper understanding and appreciation of the kind of people with whom it deals."¹⁴⁶

However, the film was not without its critics, many of whom felt that the use of amateur actors and veterans of the 442nd was praiseworthy for its accuracy, but lamentable for the acting that resulted. According to one somewhat forgiving yet critical reviewer,

Since acting was new to all of these men, this has led to a very uneven collection of performances. Most of the way, however, it is surprisingly good. These players have their crude and artificial moments, but obviously they were fired by

¹⁴⁶ Rose Pelswick, "An Impressive Tribute to Heroism of the Nisei," *New York Journal-American*, 25 May 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 11, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Otis L. Guernsey Jr., "On the Screen," *New York Herald-Tribune*, undated, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 11, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.; Archer Winsten, "Reviewing Stand: 'Go For Broke' at the Capitol," *Washington Post*, 25 May 1951; Lee Mishkin, "'Go For Broke!' Is First Rate War Film With Message," *Morning Telegraph*, 25 May 1951.

zeal to ennoble the reputation of their race by recalling these wartime exploits. Fervor and sincerity are a convincing substitute for acting finesse.¹⁴⁷

Another critic condemned the acting but did not believe that it would affect audiences because, “this is not a picture that will be judged by conventional standards, technically or dramatically. It draws its force from an overwhelming eagerness to vindicate an improperly understood section of our people.” One partial or potential compliment paid to the Nisei actors was that they were an “improvement over those repetitious and dreary Japanese characterizations of villains used in so many war pictures of a few years back.” To judge the “Go For Broke!” actors as being better than caricatured, prejudiced, stereotyped versions of an enemy race is hardly a compliment, but was at least better than another critic who criticized both the writing and the acting, saying, “All of them [actors] are competent and appealing but they aren’t able, when the story goes slack, to camouflage the fault with resourceful acting.”¹⁴⁸

One aspect of the criticism that often appeared cloaked in praise was condescension. Though it may have been received as overt praise in 1951, many of the comments made in reference to the actors and the exploits of the soldiers are made in such a way as to come across sounding condescending. For example, one article reports that Henry Nakamura’s character Tommy “has the guileless charm of Walt Disney’s Dopey, plus his own special warmth of character. His is a completely endearing screen portrait.” Another reviewer went so far as to claim that the movie itself was condescending saying, “Robert Pirosh, who wrote the story and directed the men, did a very good job, except for a tendency to be somewhat condescending to the Niseis.” One

¹⁴⁷ Alton Cook, *Washington Telegraph*, 25 May 1951.

¹⁴⁸ Alton Cook, “Tribute to Niseis in ‘Go For Broke,’” *World Telegram*, 25 May 1951; Archer Winston, *Washington Post*, 25 May 1951; “Screenings,” *Boston Eagle*, 25 May 1951.

described the film as, “a straightforward job with a very minimum of condescension in its sympathy for the Japanese-Americans.” It is hard to argue that the constant references to short stature, the use of the less-sophisticated Pidgin dialect, and the happy-go-lucky demeanor of all but one of the Nisei do not come across as somewhat patronizing in the film, but many of the reviewers were even more explicitly condescending in their reviews than the depictions of the Nisei were in the film.¹⁴⁹

In addition to acting and patronizing complaints, some reviewers actually felt that the movie did not go far enough in condemning the actions of the US government in its treatment of the Japanese Americans. According to columnist Lee Mortimer, the film “does not shoot the works. It is an important, a necessary contribution to Americana bringing long overdue bows to a brave bunch who saw their duty and did it, but it misses the central point....” The central point that Mortimer feels was purposefully ignored was the role of President Roosevelt, “now widely adored as the protector of minorities,” as the “major offender against American citizens of Japanese descent.”¹⁵⁰ He gives a brief history lesson on the confinement of the Japanese Americans, which he calls a “Hitlerian order,” and claims that,

With typical Hollywood disregard for the truth, the film opens with a gooey quote from the late Commander-in-Chief, stating it is not the color of one’s skin but what’s in one’s heart that identifies an American. But the relatives of these heroes were in inland barracks only because of their origins.¹⁵¹

He concludes his review with, “The direction is fast and there’s plenty of entertainment, with hulas, island melodies and comedy, all in a saleable package – which may help you

¹⁴⁹ Frank Morriss, “Here There and Hollywood,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 July 1951; Kate Cameron, “MGM’s ‘Go For Broke’ Tribute to Nisei GI’s,” *Daily News*, 25 May 1951; Seymour Peck, “Today’s Movies: ‘Go For Broke’ Tells Bravery Of Nisei Troops in World War II,” *The Daily Compass*, 25 May 1951.

¹⁵⁰ Mortimer, “‘Go For Broke’ Exciting Tribute to Nisei,” Dore Schary Papers.

¹⁵¹ Mortimer, “‘Go For Broke’ Exciting Tribute to Nisei,” Dore Schary Papers.

forget what was left out.” Though other articles more generally condemn the forced relocation or even praise the film for addressing the subject, Mortimer had the harshest perspective on what he saw as a deliberate attempt to present only the acceptable and familiar side of the story without dredging up less desirable subjects.

It is perhaps this desire to avoid disturbing, distasteful, and unflattering representations of American history that most influenced the decades of silence regarding the relocation that followed World War II. Despite the praise for both the movie and its subject matter in the excitement surrounding the film’s release, it is hard to deny that mention of both the Nisei soldier’s exploits and the mass relocation largely disappeared from the public view for the next twenty five years. During that time, “Go For Broke!” remained one of the only widely dispersed and nationally accessible depictions of the WWII Japanese American experience. Even as the story of the 100th/442nd and EO 9066 began to emerge in the 1970s, “Go For Broke!” still held a unique and significant role as one of the most publicly familiar representations of the experience. If this is the case, historians must ask themselves why this particular film held the attention of Americans even during years of silence.

As mentioned earlier, one viewer questioned the ability of a movie to counteract years of entrenched racial stereotypes reinforced by federal and state legislation, and this is a valid question. Yet something, or many things, did change in the ensuing years that allowed the story of the WWII Japanese American experience to emerge, and this was in part due to “Go For Broke!” It was a fictional movie, but it was widely publicized to have been based on real life events. Those who had lived through the war had the opportunity to have personally heard about both the relocation and the military service

through contemporary news outlets, many of which reported on both the heroics of the 100th/442nd and the confinement of the West Coast Nisei. In light of the basis in truth for the movie, it would be hard for audiences to attempt to deny either the relocation or the military service, though admittedly they could question the motivations for the evacuation and the conditions of the camps. In addition, by basing the story around military veterans, a group traditionally held in esteem by many Americans, even audience members who retained prejudicial views of the Japanese or Japanese Americans would have been unlikely to disparage the men of the most decorated unit in US history. And whether it was likely or not, the records indicate that the movie did have the ability to change the mind of at least one viewer who wrote to Schary after seeing the film and said, "For a number of years, I was very much prejudiced against them [the Japanese Americans] and for the first time I begin to see the light."¹⁵² Perhaps others felt the same way and chose not to write, or perhaps she was alone in her conversion, but either way it can be said that the movie did have the ability to change people's minds about the Nisei.

Historian Fujitani described the 100th/442nd as the "most remembered, almost forgotten heroes of the war," because of the seeming abundance of representations and historical references that commemorate the Nisei soldiers today as opposed to the relative silence that followed the war years. He argues that the somewhat patronizing depictions of the Japanese Americans in the film allowed the public to see them as non-threatening and to recognize their achievements and gradual acceptance as proof of America's democratic ideals. He writes that the "Japanese Americans have served as one of the primary sites on which to claim steady progress in the national renunciation of racism,"

¹⁵² Letter to Dore Schary from Mrs. Charles, 18 May 1951, Dore Schary Papers, Accession Number MCHC63-12, Box 39, Folder 8, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

and he believes “Go For Broke!,” was one step in this progression. All of his arguments have validity, yet the lasting significance of “Go For Broke!” as a popular film cannot be overstated as an important if isolated early example of public recognition.¹⁵³

“Go For Broke’s” positive representation of Nisei soldiers and recognition of the wrong committed by the relocation served as an affirmation to the Japanese American community, even through the years of silence. It was a film that community members could be proud of and it helped define the community for years and arguably still continues to today. As with most individuals, Japanese Americans tend to have a very localized understanding of their history.¹⁵⁴ For instance, if a Nisei from Portland, Oregon was interned at Minidoka, he or she is likely to know a great deal about both Portland and Minidoka, with a general understanding of the laws that led to their confinement and eventual release, but facts about the Japanese American community in San Jose or Rohwer Camp are likely to be unfamiliar. One exception to this that exists almost across the board is knowledge of the 100th/442nd and their portrayal in “Go For Broke!.” Even more significant is the tendency of Caucasians, especially of older generations, to be familiar with the film, regardless of how little or how much they know about other aspects of the Japanese American experience. In the 58 years since it was released, “Go For Broke!” has managed to make enough of a name for itself that it can be purchased on DVD and it still shows regularly on classic movie channels.

Even in the years since the story has become more publicized, only the “Snow Falling on Cedars,” novel and film has come close to the national popularity of “Go For Broke!.” Years before the “model minority” stereotype, in the midst of a segregated and

¹⁵³ Fujitani, “*Go For Broke*,” 239.

¹⁵⁴ This claim is based on numerous conversations and interviews with Japanese Americans from communities across the country.

discriminatory population, "Go For Broke!" provided a foundation on which Japanese Americans could build a new, respected, and proud identity that would eventually emerge into the public spotlight. During the years of civil rights movements, emerging cultural pride, and increasing willingness to criticize the government, the Japanese Americans began to enter the national consciousness in ways they had not for thirty years. Asian American Studies programs began at colleges, museums and monuments emerged to represent the experiences and achievements of the Issei and Nisei, and perhaps most significantly the US Government was called upon to admit their wrong and compensate those who had suffered. Through these awakenings, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the images, perspectives, and achievements of the Nisei in "Go For Broke!," remained as a constant yet isolated testimony to the loyalty, bravery, suffering, and determination of the Japanese Americans.

Chapter Two: Awakenings

"The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."

Milan Kundera, Czech writer

Though "Go For Broke!" brought the exploits of the all-Japanese American unit to theaters across the country, it stood alone for decades as one of the only widespread public representations and acknowledgements of the mass confinement during World War II. A small number of memoirs, sociological studies, and novels appeared, but these reached a smaller audience than a Hollywood film and they were not successful enough to overcome the unspoken yet widespread decision to maintain silence on the subject of the evacuation. Brought about by a number of factors, this "forgetting" lasted until the 1970s when the confluence of social, academic, political, and legislative changes gradually brought the story of the Japanese American WWII experience back into the public consciousness.

According to detainee Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed, "...Papa burned the flag he had brought with him from Hiroshima thirty-five years earlier. It was such a beautiful piece of material, I couldn't believe he was doing that. He burned a lot of papers too, documents, anything that might suggest he still had some connection with Japan." This scene played out in numerous homes over the following months as Japanese Americans attempted to dispel rumors of sabotage and espionage activities by destroying any physical items from Japan that could imply loyalty to the Emperor. The destruction of so many cultural objects effectively destroyed the

heirlooms of an entire generation and removed the possibility of commemorating ones Japanese heritage or family history through artifacts.¹

While fear and confiscation led to the ruin of the physical reminders of Japanese American's heritage, the evacuation and resettlement also resulted in the scattering and frequent destruction of Japanese American communities along the West Coast. In a purposeful move orchestrated by the president, Japanese Americans were encouraged to relocate in small numbers to widespread areas to avoid large settlements that could incite discrimination in local communities. In a June 1944 memo, President Franklin D. Roosevelt argued that, "...I am sure that there would be no bitterness if they were distributed – one or two families to each county as a start. Dissemination and distribution constitute a great method of avoiding public outcry." Tens of thousands of Japanese Americans had lived together in numerous "Japantowns" in the western states prior to the outbreak of war, but the evacuation and resettlement led to a diaspora of sorts that contributed to the dissolution of Japanese American communities, one of the main mediums through which shared experiences would have coalesced into public memory.²

Another factor that contributed to the public silence on the subject of the confinement was the silence of Japanese Americans themselves. For many, the concept of "*shikata ga nai*," or "it cannot be helped," led to a grudging acceptance of the situation rather than vocal opposition. Others felt that decades of discriminatory laws, naturalization restrictions, and the ultimate punishment of confinement, must mean that the Japanese Americans were somehow at fault. In a culture that avoids shame at all

¹Jeanne Wakatsuke Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995, reprint of 1973), 6.

² President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Resettlement Memorandum, June 12, 1944, Densho Digital Archives; Dirk Johnson, "War Legacy: Japanese American Diaspora," *New York Times*, 14 August 1995. The effects of this diaspora will be addressed in more detail in chapter six.

costs, the act of being imprisoned combined with the embarrassing situations faced while in camp resulted in a desire to keep the experience within the Japanese American community. Relying on the notion of “*gaman*,” or perseverance, Japanese Americans took the cards they were dealt and silently made the most of them. In many cases, this silence was passed down through later generations as well, perpetuating the silence and resulting in numerous accounts of children learning about their parents’ experiences through television programs or school lessons rather than family stories.³

Though a sense of shame kept the Japanese American community silent, it was a feeling of denial that silenced the American public more broadly. Having fought in a global war to eliminate tyranny and spread democracy, the US appeared hypocritical for enforcing a domestic policy of mass relocation and confinement of American citizens. The irony of Japanese Americans freeing prisoners at Dachau was not lost on the average American, regardless of their views on the relocation. There was less contention over the subject of the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, as their illustrious war record spoke for itself, but it was difficult to mention the soldiers without alluding to their families in camps or their desire to prove themselves loyal in the face of discrimination. Thus a desire to forget the confinement rather than face questions of justice led to almost total silence on the subject for decades. Yet despite the widespread desire to ignore unpleasant aspects of history, the story gradually emerged. Through numerous steps led by individual efforts, local organizations, social movements, and eventually federal attention, the history of the Japanese American confinement entered the national public memory.

³ Mitsuye Yamada, “Legacy of Silence (I)” in Erica Harth, ed., *Last Witnesses: Reflections on the Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 37, 35.

De-Segregation of the Military

Immigrants from around the world have served in the US military since the settlement of the colonies within both segregated units and integrated groups. In some cases their service was greeted with enthusiasm and praise, such as in the Civil War and the Spanish-American war, but in other instances during the 20th century segregated units were criticized for their actions. In most historical analyses, the attention to race in the military has focused on African American troops, but Filipino, Mexican, Korean, Irish, German, and of course, Japanese Americans as well as many others have served in the US military since the founding of the nation. In many cases these hyphenated Americans have faced limited opportunities and discrimination in the service, including the relegation of Filipino Americans to Stewards in the Navy, the segregation of race-based units, and the frequent use of ethnic minorities in labor and support units, not combat.⁴

The traditional racial policies of the American military began to face closer scrutiny in light of the ideological battles that accompanied WWII. Many Americans, Caucasian and otherwise, recognized that to tout the ideals of democracy and equality for all in Europe and the Pacific required the US to “practice what they preached” or else be labeled a hypocrite. The “Double-V” campaign represented the desire of many Americans to live up to their democratic ideals and win a double victory over both fascism abroad and racism at home. As the US entered the Cold War, the enemy shifted

⁴ For more information on African Americans and Native Americans in the US military see Gail Lumet Buckley, *American Patriots: The Story of Blacks in the Military from the Revolution to Desert Storm* (New York: Random House, 2001) and Al Carroll, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags: American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

from fascism to communism, but the desire to prove democracy's superiority remained the same.⁵

During the blossoming years of the civil rights movement and Cold War tensions, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in July 1948 integrating the armed forces. According to one biographer, Truman "had disapproved of the entire action against the Japanese Americans," and in Truman's own words regarding civil rights he wrote, "I am asking for equality of opportunity for all human beings and, as long as I stay here, I am going to continue to fight."⁶ His actions regarding minorities in the military reflected his civil rights leanings and continued to impact not only Japanese Americans, but also Americans of all ethnicities and origins for decades after his presidency. He appointed Charles Fahy as chairman of a committee organized to implement the new integration policies and oversee a smooth transition. While this process was just getting underway, however, the United States became involved in the Korean conflict, which effectively forced immediate and efficient compliance. Studies during this engagement found that integrated units were actually performing better than those that had remained segregated, and the troops themselves responded favorably with increased enlistment rates.⁷ Just six years after Truman's order, civilian integration also reached an important milestone with the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*,

⁵ Mary Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review* 41, No. 1 (November 1988), 62.

⁶ J. Robert Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War: The Final Victories of World War II and the Birth of the Postwar World*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 129; Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980), 146-147.

⁷ Charles C. Moskos, Jr., "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces," *The American Journal of Sociology* 72, No. 2 (September 1966), 135; For more information on the desegregation of the US military, see Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military History, 1985).

Kansas, which declared separate facilities to be inherently unequal and ultimately led to the integration of public school systems across America.

Unfortunately, prior to the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision, Congress passed a racially ambiguous bill in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, or the McCarran-Walter Act. This bill, which was vetoed by Truman but passed through a Congressional vote, prohibited using race as a factor to bar immigration, but it maintained entrance quotas and limitations based on the 1920 census. It removed racial prohibitions on naturalization, but according to Truman, the bill "was nothing in the world but approval of all the mistakes the State and Justice Departments have made in the last ten years in the administration of the immigration laws."⁸ Immigration was revisited over a decade later with the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which removed all remaining national quotas and encouraged family and skilled labor immigration. While the 1952 law left much to be desired, the 1965 act was a significant improvement and still forms the basis for much of the current immigration policy of the United States. For the Japanese Americans, the INA of 1952 removed the prohibition of naturalization and allowed the Issei to become American citizens for the first time since the Japanese had begun arriving in large numbers.

Hawaiian Statehood & Japanese American Congressional Representation

Proponents of Hawaiian statehood had been pushing for the state's entrance into the United States since the early decades of the twentieth century. However it was not until March 18, 1959 that President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the statehood bill as advocates had to overcome decades of racist opposition to allow the ethnically diverse

⁸ Ferrel, *Off the Record*, 258.

territory into the union. As one scholar has shown, this achievement, as well as the “Democratic Revolution” that took place in Hawaii in 1954, was due in no small part to a number of politically active Japanese Americans on the islands. In turn, the inclusion of Hawaii in the US paved the way for many of these island Japanese Americans to make a name for themselves in the nation’s capitol city. One of these figures was a rising politician who was to become one of if not the most prominent figure in the Japanese American community during the second half of the twentieth century. As a teenager, Daniel K. Inouye had enlisted in the 442nd RCT and served with the distinguished unit until 1945 when he lost his arm near Carrera, Italy. His wound ended his dream of becoming a doctor, but he soon found a new pursuit as he attended first the University of Hawaii and later the George Washington University Law School. He returned to Honolulu and worked as a prosecutor until 1954 when he was elected to the Territorial House of Representatives and later the Senate. In 1959 and again in 1960 Inouye was elected to the US House of Representatives where he served only two years before being elected to the Senate. He has represented the people of Hawaii and the US for fifty years, continues to be one of the most senior respected members of the Senate, and boasts an outstanding record for civil rights legislation.⁹

In addition to Senator Inouye, the increasingly civil-rights minded 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of numerous Japanese American political leaders, all of whom both benefited from and helped encourage the increasing acceptance of Japanese Americans in the US. Following a brief military career as a Military Intelligence Service

⁹ Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 67, 276; Mariko Takagi Kitayama, “Hawaii’s Japanese Community in the Postwar Democratic Movement,” Dissertation. May 2004. University of Hawaii; Daniel Inouye, *Journey to Washington* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

interpreter, Nisei George R. Ariyoshi studied law at the University of Michigan before serving in Hawaii's territorial House of Representatives and Senate between 1954 and 1959. After Hawaii entered the union he served as a state Senator until 1970, at which time he was elected Lieutenant Governor under John Burns. When the Governor became ill in 1973, Ariyoshi filled his role and was officially elected governor the following year, making him the first Japanese American governor in the country. He served as Hawaii's leader until 1986 and was remembered for his state's strong economic growth, international tourism expansion, and cooperation with Asian and Pacific Rim nations.¹⁰

Just as Hawaiian Japanese Americans were rising to political prominence, many of their mainland counterparts were as well. One such example was Robert Matsui, a *Sansei*, or third generation Japanese immigrant, confined at Tule Lake, California when he was just six months old. His political career began on the Sacramento City Council in 1971 and he was later elected to Vice Mayor of the city in 1977. In 1978 he campaigned for and won the election to California's House of Representatives where he served until his death in 2005, at which time his wife Doris Matsui succeeded him through a special election. During his time in Congress he was a strong voice for Japanese American issues such as redress, the creation of a national memorial, and the establishment of Manzanar as a National Park Service Site.¹¹

Norman Mineta and "Spark" Masayuki Matsunaga are two other Japanese Americans who rose to political prominence and helped advance civil liberties issues for all citizens, and particularly Asian Americans. Matsunaga served honorably in the 100th

¹⁰ For more information on George Ariyoshi, see his biography, George Ariyoshi, *With Obligation to All* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

¹¹ Helen Zia and Susan B. Gall, eds., *Notable Asian Americans* (New York: Gale Research Inc., 1995), 238-240. For more information on Robert Matsui, see his wife's senate biography at <http://www.matsui.house.gov/>.

Infantry during World War II, earning a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal, and five Battle Stars. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Matsunaga worked as a prosecutor in Honolulu for two years before his election to the Hawaii Territorial House of Representatives in 1953. In 1962, he was elected to the US House of Representatives in which he served seven terms. In 1976, he campaigned for and won a Senate seat, which he held until his death in office in 1990. He also represented his fellow Japanese Americans by pushing for redress and a formal apology and always championed racial tolerance.¹²

Norman Mineta lived with his family in the Heart Mountain, Wyoming relocation camp during the war before attending school at the University of California, Berkeley and serving briefly as an interpreter in Japan and Korea. An active member of social and civic organizations in his home town of San Jose, Mineta was appointed to the city council in 1967 as the city's first minority councilman. He was officially elected to the council in 1969 and became the first Japanese American mayor of a major US city in 1971. From 1975 until 1995 Mineta served in the US House of Representatives where he established a well-deserved and highly praised reputation for civil rights advocacy. In 2000, President Bill Clinton appointed Mineta to the cabinet post of Secretary of Commerce, making him the first Asian American to hold a cabinet seat. In 2001, President George W. Bush also appointed him to his cabinet as Secretary of Transportation, a position he held until his resignation in 2006.¹³

¹² Zia, *Notable Asian Americans*, 240-241; Congressional Biography <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M000250> .

¹³ Zia, *Notable Asian Americans*, 259-160; Congressional biography <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M000794> .

The election, continued re-election, and respected status of Senator Inouye, George Ariyoshi, Robert Matsui, Spark Matsunaga, Norm Mineta, and numerous other Japanese American political leaders serve as proof of the changing attitudes of Americans, particularly in Hawaii and along the West Coast towards Asian Americans and Japanese Americans specifically in the decades following the war. The same state that pushed for land ownership laws, immigration restrictions, and mass confinement during the first part of the twentieth century later emerged as a stronghold of Japanese American political leadership and activism at both the local and national level. As more Japanese Americans emerged in leadership positions, average citizens and leaders in the Asian American community recognized the opportunity for exponential benefits through the efforts of men and women like Daniel Inouye, Robert and Doris Matsui, and others. In many cases, these young leaders who paved the way for Asian Americans after them, came of age during the 1960s and 1970s and gained the prominence necessary to successfully fight for civil liberties legislation during the groundbreaking redress movement of the 1980s.

“Model Minority” Myth

As many of these Japanese Americans were just entering the political scene, an article appeared in the *New York Times* that would largely, though inaccurately, define the Japanese American community for decades afterward. William Petterson's January 9, 1966, "Success Story, Japanese American Style" popularized the concept of Japanese Americans as the "model minority," a classification that was neither created nor appreciated by the community itself. According to Petterson, among people living at the

time, the Japanese Americans had faced more discrimination than any other ethnic minority in the country. As he explained it,

Like the Negroes, the Japanese have been the object of color prejudice. Like the Jews, they have been feared and hated as hyperefficient competitors. And, more than any other group, they have been seen as the agents of an overseas enemy. Conservatives, liberals and radicals, local sheriffs, the Federal Government and the Supreme Court have cooperated in denying them their elementary rights-most notoriously in their World War II evacuation to internment camps.¹⁴

In a strange combination of what appears to be both condescending terminology and laudatory subject matter, Pettersen presented his explanation as to how the Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJAs) had overcome such obstacles.

He began with a brief history lesson, describing the immigration and discriminatory laws facing Japanese Americans in the first half of the twentieth century. He explained the increasing problems after Pearl Harbor, but interestingly devoted far more time to those who chose to renounce their citizenship and return to Japan than those who were confined to camps. His history continued with an analysis of the many generational differences facing the Issei and Nisei, two groups he described as seeming to have “a whole generation missing” between them due to late marriages and cultural differences. He addressed the military experience of the Japanese Americans as they went from an “enemy alien” classification to the most decorated unit and sympathized with those who chose to resist the draft after its reinstatement.

Despite the difficulties of discrimination and confinement, he argued that the Japanese Americans overcame their situation, in part through education, which he describes as “the key to success in the United States, for Japanese or anyone else.” According to Pettersen, Japanese immigrant’s median years of school completed in 1960

¹⁴ William Pettersen, “Success Story, Japanese American Style,” *New York Times*, 9 January 1966.

was 12.2, which was over a year longer than that of both their Chinese and Caucasian counterparts, and multiple years over African Americans, Filipinos, and Indians. He explained that in the 1930s many Nisei had attended school, but there were fewer opportunities available and most who earned degrees did so within middle-class professional or trade programs. As evidence of their success, however, Pettersen pointed out that current Japanese Americans were moving out of this trend and studying subjects like liberal arts. He illustrated this with a photo of a Sansei, Roy Tanabe, whose caption explained that as a violinist he was “the first Japanese to play with a major American symphony orchestra, the Los Angeles Symphony.”

Pettersen’s analysis then turned to the question of Japanese American youth crime rates, which he described as being lower than that of other groups but still increasing. Despite the increases, however, he did not see any cause for alarm and in fact, considered most of the cases of Japanese American youth delinquency to be exceptions not the norm. As part of his research for the article he spent time with students from the University of California, Berkeley’s Japanese Student Club, and wrote,

On a campus where to be a bohemian slob is a mark of distinction, they wash themselves and dress with unostentatious neatness. They are mostly good students, no longer concentrated in the utilitarian subjects their fathers studied but often majoring in liberal arts.

Based on his experiences and research, Pettersen attributed much of the good behavior of Japanese American youths to a traditional desire to not shame their families. As he explained it, “brazenly to break the law invites retribution against the whole community, and thus is doubly wrong.”

He went on to attribute two other influences, family and religion, to the success of the AJAs. According to Pettersen,

The two vehicles that transmitted such values from one generation to the next, the family and religion, have been so intimately linked as to reinforce each other. By Japanese tradition, the wishes of any individual counted for far less than the good reputation of his family name, which was worshipped through his ancestors.

He argued that it did not matter whether the immigrants held to Buddhist teachings or adopted Christianity, as “there seems to be an adaptation to American institutional forms with a considerable persistence of Buddhist moral values,” regardless of which church is attended.

While he put forth education, shame, family, and religion as reasons for Japanese American success, Petterson concluded that each of these was still too simple an explanation and if true, would have applied to some other immigrant groups as well. He explained that instead, it was pride in their Japanese heritage that had made a “model minority.” For instance, Petterson described African Americans as the ethnic minority most “imbedded” in American culture with the fewest ties to a historic nation and its culture. Thus,

...A Negro who knows no other homeland, who is as thoroughly American as any Daughter of the American Revolution, has no refuge when the United States rejects him. Placed at the bottom of this country's scale, he finds it difficult to salvage his ego by measuring his worth in another currency.

In contrast, the Japanese Americans “could climb over the highest barriers our racists were able to fashion, in part because of their meaningful links with an alien culture. Pride in their heritage and shame for any reduction in its only partly legendary glory – these were sufficient to carry the group through its travail.” While his explanation still seemed to leave room for other groups to fit the mold, he maintained his elevation of the Japanese Americans above all others, even Caucasians, to the end.

Through all of his praise, he did not claim that the Japanese Americans have overcome racism or that it was no longer an issue. For instance, he mentioned the claims cases that were still in court in the mid-1960s as Japanese immigrants attempted to regain some amount of their lost property and income from their confinement twenty years earlier. In addition, he pointed out that while Japanese Americans tended to have a higher "occupational level" compared to Caucasians, they still received slightly lower pay. In 1960, 56% of Japanese employees worked in white-collar jobs, compared to 42% of whites; and 26.1% of Japanese worked in professional positions, compared to 12.5% of whites, yet the 1959 median income for a male Japanese American was almost \$200.00 less than that of Caucasians.

In December 1966, Pettersen's article was followed by a *U.S. News and World Report* article titled, "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.," which similarly chronicled Chinese American's rise to prominence as Pettersen's had the Japanese. In much the same way as Pettersen, the author used crime, education, and career statistics to demonstrate the "success" of Chinese Americans despite the discrimination they had faced in earlier years. According to the article, Chinatowns across the country were pleasant and safe places to live where family members held each other accountable and helped one another during rough times. In fact, the author stated that, "At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent to uplift Negroes and other minorities, the nation's 300,000 Chinese-Americans are getting ahead on their own, with no help from anyone else."¹⁵ According to the article, the Chinese Americans had managed to overcome discrimination and adversity specifically through hard work and family support, not government assistance and special treatment.

¹⁵ "Success Story of One Minority Group In U.S.," *U.S. News and World Report*, December 1966.

Appearing as they did in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, one must ask whether the Pettersen and *US News and World Report* articles had more to do with praising Asian Americans or condemning African Americans. According to one analysis, in the context of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, and the general racial turmoil of the 1960s, “the articulation of successful Asians in the popular press carried ramifications that extended well beyond the Chinatowns and Japantowns of America.” The obvious question in the two article’s praise of Asian American culture was that if the Japanese and Chinese could make it on their own, why were African Americans arguing that America was an inherently racist country and they needed government assistance to overcome the barriers imposed on them?¹⁶ In addition to its latent racism, Asian Americans have long since argued that the “model minority” idea perpetuated stereotypes and simplified the complexities of Japanese and Chinese cultures. Read within the context of the 1960s it is hard to argue that the articles did not present a “lesser of two evils” message that hardly did justice to their culture.

Protest and Participation

The “model minority” articles reflected a small part of the discussions that were prominent during the 1960s regarding race relations, but other social issues like the Vietnam War and women’s rights were the subject of much discussion and protest as well. Perhaps in part because of the “model minority” myth, it has often been assumed that Japanese Americans were silent during this time of social upheaval. One member of the community even wrote that those that were outspoken were “an unusual creature: A

¹⁶ Keith Osajima, “Asian Americans as the Model Minority: An Analysis of the Popular Press Image in the 1960s and 1980s” in *A Companion to Asian American Studies*, ed. Kent A. Ono (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 216-217.

Nisei activist.”¹⁷ In reality, the Japanese Americans were socially and politically active in many of the movements that swept the country in the 1960s and 1970s. In many ways it was their involvement during this time that provided the foundation and experience for later community based movements such as redress and the *coram nobis* cases.

In her book, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945-1960*, Caroline Chung Simpson has argued that the Japanese American experience was often ignored in the early decades following the war, but it nevertheless played a large part in creating postwar American culture and identity. She uses situations like the occupation of Japan to show that the American perception of such events was largely formed through the perception of the World War II relocation experience of the Japanese Americans. For instance, she writes, “the difficulty of Japanese American incarceration and relocation as a vital part of the war abroad ultimately left its mark on the formation of postwar policy in occupied Japan. Liberal anthropologists stationed in the internment camps to observe Japanese Americans were also instructed to use the opportunity to develop policies for administering the Japanese after the war.”¹⁸

One of the subjects that Simpson and numerous other historians have looked to as evidence of Japanese American activism was the trial of “Tokyo Rose,” Iva Toguri D’Aquino. Iva was a Nisei who visited family in Japan in early 1941 and, due to the unfortunate timing, was forced to remain there through the course of the war. Though she refused to renounce her American citizenship, she worked for Radio Tokyo as an announcer on *Zero Hour*, a program directed at Allied troops. After eventually returning

¹⁷ William Minoru Hohri, *Repairing America: An Account of the Movement for Japanese-American Redress* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1988), 61.

¹⁸ Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Post-War American Culture, 1940-1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 9.

to the United States, Iva was arrested in 1949 and charged with treason. Despite numerous veterans and prisoners of war that testified to the contrary, the Department of Justice convinced the jury that Iva had presented pro-Japanese propaganda rather than simply music and small talk. She was convicted of one count of treason and served six years in prison, a punishment she ironically would not have had to suffer if she had been less of a patriot and renounced her US citizenship while in Japan.¹⁹

Though attempts were made to gain a presidential pardon from Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon, it was not until President Gerald Ford's last day in office in 1977 that Iva received a pardon. According to historian and activist William Hohri, the Japanese American Citizen's League (JACL) and the Japanese American community had largely turned their backs on Iva during her original trial, but as evidence surfaced that prosecution witnesses had lied, the Department of Justice had not believed her to be guilty, and many veterans were willing to testify to the innocuous subject matter of her broadcasts, the community switched sides. Senators Matsunaga and S. I. Hayakawa spoke in her defense and the JACL advocated a pardon as well. Considering both her original trial and her pardon, the Iva Toguri case reflected larger American social issues of justice, international relations, and community activism and provided proof to many within the Japanese American community that past wrongs could be righted through such movements.²⁰

In addition to community-based efforts like the movement to pardon Iva Toguri, the Japanese Americans were also involved in much larger political movements. JACL

¹⁹ Mitchell T. Maki, Harry H.L. Kitano, and S. Megan Berthold, *Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 77-78.

²⁰ Hohri, *Repairing America*, 43-45; Maki, *Achieving the Impossible Dream*, 78; For more information on the Iva Toguri case, see Masayo Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1979).

representatives participated in the 1963 March on Washington, and leader Mike Masaoka even had a reserved seat on the platform for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech. According to his autobiography, Masaoka had also been instrumental in founding the National Civil Liberties Clearing House, which later became the influential Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. Japanese Americans in New York participated in the Asian Americans for Action group, which was just one example of many such politically active organizations that began to emerge around the nation. Perhaps one of the most prominent Nisei activists on numerous issues of civil rights and the rights of political prisoners was Yuri Kochiyama, whose image became famous as the woman cradling Malcolm X after his assassination. Though numerous Japanese Americans fought in the Vietnam War, many others like Kochiyama and Aiko Yoshinaga Herzig participated in marches and demonstrations in opposition to American involvement in Vietnam. The Japanese American community was incredibly diverse and revealed various perspectives on the issues facing the nation in the 1960s and 1970s, though the same could be said of the entire American population at that time. Some may have fit the "model minority" myth, while others were "unusual creatures" that participated in demonstrations and activist groups. Regardless of their level of involvement or their side of the aisle, Japanese Americans definitely began to emerge as one of the many political players in the American melting pot of the 1960s and 1970s.²¹

Academic Developments

²¹ Mike Masaoka with Bill Hosokawa, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1987), 289-290; Aiko Yoshinaga Herzig, Interview, Densho Digital Archive; Diane Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle: Yuri Kochiyama* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Toshio Wheelchel, *From Pearl Harbor to Saigon: Japanese American Soldiers and the Vietnam War* (New York: Verso, 1999).

One of the many fields in which Japanese Americans emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century was the academy. In the midst of social movements in the US and international calls for self-determination, many university students became politically active and sought their own means of representation. For the Asian American population, this movement climaxed with the 1968-1969 student-led strike at the San Francisco State College (SFSC). According to one historian, the period of 1964-1966 at SFSC boasted increasing numbers of student-led initiatives that catered to the needs of the minority students, but these developments came to an end with a socio-economic restructuring of the California University system that resulted in the redirecting of most minority students away from state universities and into junior colleges. With the new structure came a more centralized and bureaucratic leadership that removed much of the governing from the university and placed it in the hands of business and political leaders. In the late 1960s, student and faculty unrest increased, and members of Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and African Americans came together under the auspices of the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) to push for increased minority admissions and an ethnic studies program with program autonomy. The main argument for a School of Ethnic Studies was that education should be relevant and should reflect the needs of all community members, not businesses or corporations.²²

A May 1968 sit-in in SFSC President John Summerskill's office resulted in a compromise allowing increased admissions and third world faculty hires with student representation, but Summerskill resigned months later having implemented no changes. In the fall, the TWLF hosted a large rally attended by hundreds of students who gathered

²² Karen Umemoto, "'On Strike!' San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-69: The Role of Asian American Students," *AmerAsia Journal* 15, no. 1 (1989), 3-41.

to hear Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) representative Stokely Carmichael speak on overcoming racism. Shortly thereafter, the SFSC strike officially began on November 6, 1968 as students rallied, lit trash cans on fire, and generally disrupted classes across campus. Over 400 students marched to the president's office, and this group increased to 600 the following day. As class attendance dropped by 50%, the president closed campus and ended classes, particularly after police involvement resulted in student injuries. A rally on November 21 was attended by over 2,000 students who opposed the efforts of administrators and trustees who were attempting to reinstate classes. Due to internal and external pressures President Smith, who had replaced Summerskill, resigned on November 26 and was replaced with S. I. Hayakawa.

The new president banned student rallies, which conversely resulted in a gathering of 1,500 students on December 2, at which time Hayakawa personally ripped the power cords from a speaker and later reported how "exciting" the day had been. The strike began to gain power as organizations like the American Federation of Teachers joined, but police intervention and arrests forced much of the protesters' efforts to turn to legal issues. In light of the police repression and the large number of arrests (900 between November 1968 and March 1969), the TWLF was forced to negotiate with a committee that Hayakawa appointed to settle on a compromise. Though the students had been overpowered by the political strength of the administration, they still retained some negotiating power because of Hayakawa's desire to end the strike and his concerns over repercussions for his sometimes excessive use of police force. The two most significant outcomes of the negotiations were the end of the strike and the creation of the first School of Ethnic Studies in the country, which would have student representation in hiring and

faculty authority equal to other departments at the university. The success in creating such a school not only influenced the creation of similar programs at universities around the country, but also it inspired a generation of students to stand up and fight for community representation, which is a lesson that was to have immeasurable results within the Japanese American community, and the US more broadly.

The introduction of Asian American Studies programs in universities across the country publicly acknowledged the academic significance of ethnic studies, but 1968 was not the first year to see academic interest in the subject. Even during the war three groups of sociologists had conducted interviews and research within the camps: the WRA Community Analysis Section, the Bureau of Sociological Research, and the Evacuation and Resettlement Study of the University of California, Berkeley. In the 1960s, Bill Hosokawa conducted interviews that are now part of the Japanese American Research Project at the University of California, Los Angeles; and the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California, Berkeley also conducted interviews during this time, particularly of Caucasian administrative and government officials related to the Japanese American confinement.²³

While a few books on the subject had emerged earlier, the late 1960s saw a dramatic increase in the number of published studies and memoirs relating to the evacuation and military service during the war. In 1967 Allan Bosworth's *America's Concentration Camps* became the first monograph on the subject, and it was soon followed by such works as Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis's *The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of the Japanese-Americans During World War II* (1969) and Paul Bailey's

²³ Arthur Hansen, "Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation," *The Journal of American History* (September 1995), 625, 628.

City in the Sun: The Japanese Concentration Camp at Poston (1971), both of which drew on personal oral histories conducted by the authors. In 1976, Michi Weglyn published *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps*, which relied on numerous boxes of WRA documents at the National Archives and revealed many previously unknown aspects of the evacuation, such as the use of Latin American Japanese as prisoner exchanges. Since its publication, *Years of Infamy* has held a well-earned spot as one of the “standard” texts on the subject of the World War II treatment of Japanese Americans.²⁴

Although the emerging scholarship and university programs reflected changing attitudes towards Japanese Americans at the academy level, one contemporary study of social studies textbooks found that there was still a great deal of room for improvement in textbook depictions of Asian Americans. Michael Kane's 1970 *Minorities in Textbooks: A Study of Their Treatment in Social Studies Texts* followed a 1949 American Council on Education Study and a 1961 Anti-Defamation League Study and attempted to determine whether there had been significant change in the intervening two decades. According to Kane, the 1949 study found that, “Asiatic minorities, such as those of Chinese and Japanese origin or descent, were frequently treated in a manner implying they were racially inferior. Offensive generalizations were applied to such groups, and positive material about their current status and contributions was omitted.” In 1969, Kane conducted his analysis of 45 commonly-used junior and senior high school texts, many of which were used in the earlier studies as well, but he found that he was “unable to report

²⁴Allan Bosworth, *America's Concentration Camps* (New York: Norton, 1967); Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, *The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of the Japanese-Americans During World War II* (New York: MacMillan, 1969); Paul Bailey, *City in the Sun: The Japanese Concentration Camp at Poston* (Tucson: Westernlore Publications, 1971); Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996, reprint of 1976).

any significant changes in textbook presentations of [Orientals].” According to his research, many books left the Chinese and Japanese out altogether while those that included them told only part of the story or presented biased representations.²⁵

The rare historical mentions of the Chinese focused primarily on their work on the railroads and the discriminatory immigration laws that made their lives so difficult. Many accounts reinforced stereotypes through discussions of cheap labor, their reclusive nature, their lack of assimilation, and their economic competition with Caucasians. Those that addressed Asian Americans at all presented a better image of Japanese Americans but still focused on historical events like the evacuation and military service as opposed to current contributions. He did point out that some references “express indignation” at the confinement and that many praised the Nisei troops. Kane concluded that the presentation of Asian American history is “uneven...at best” and that in matters of factual accuracy and balance, the treatment of Asian Americans did not compare with the treatment of Anglo, Protestant Americans.²⁶

Redress Movement

The two major events that are consistently discussed within current works that address the subject of Japanese American history are the WWII experience of confinement and military service and the redress movement. Yet just as the WWII experience varied based on geography, individual experience, and numerous other factors, the redress movement can hardly be classified as one unified or cohesive movement. The general push for some form of apology and/or monetary compensation

²⁵ Michael Kane, *Minorities in Textbooks: A Study of Their Treatment in Social Studies Texts*. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 112, 122.

²⁶ Kane, *Minorities in Textbooks*, 123-126, 126, 138.

spanned decades and included various local, regional, and national organizations that were comprised of and led by people with very different perspectives on how to achieve redress and in what form it should be presented. But despite the various leaders and approaches involved, the multifaceted redress movement eventually coalesced to reach one conclusion that stemmed from the support and political pressure provided by the various entities involved. This effort, which gained attention across the country, represented the epitome of the social and political awakenings that started in individuals and local organizations and grew into a national campaign that solidified the WWII Japanese American story as an American story of national significance.

During WWII, James Omura, a Nisei journalist in Denver, Colorado, frequently published press releases and editorials relating to the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Fair Play Committee, which represented the draft resisters. As part of his support of confined Nisei and their civil rights he hoped to bring a law suit against the United States citing civil rights violations and fighting for financial compensation for the economic losses suffered by those forced to relocate. Unfortunately, given the climate and war situation in 1942 he was never able to raise the money and this early attempt at redress did not get far. During the war, two other Japanese Americans also advocated for redress, Joseph Kurihara and Koyoshi Okamoto. Kurihara protested the evacuation and led pro-Japanese groups in Manzanar that resulted in his transfer to the Tule Lake Segregation Center. He returned to Japan after the war, but before he left he wrote a letter proposing redress payments from the government to those who were confined. Okamoto, who was also involved with the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee, advocated redress during the war

and even helped establish the Fair Rights Committee in LA in 1945 with the express intent of seeking redress. Little came of either Okamoto or Kurihara's efforts.²⁷

The following year, two bills were introduced in the Senate and House to establish a commission under the Secretary of the Interior to compensate the Japanese Americans for their property loss during the war. President Truman was a supporter of the bills and his July 15, 1946 recognition of the 442nd RCT on the White House lawn went far to publicly proclaim his support for the Japanese Americans. Unfortunately, the House did not like the fact that the bill would provide money to expatriates and Nisei who had renounced their citizenship so it did not pass. The Senate took issue with the bill's lack of consideration for the interned German and Italian Americans, but it still passed the Senate with some adjustments. A revised bill was introduced to the House during the following congressional session and this time the Evacuation Claims Commission Bill passed unanimously. The revised bill also passed the Senate and was signed into law by President Truman July 2, 1948. The Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 eventually paid over \$38 million, but this was far less than the estimated \$400 million of income and property lost as a result of the evacuation. In addition, the Claims Act required extensive documentary proof and receipts were not likely to have been retained in the rushed, forced relocation allowing "only what you can carry."²⁸

It is not surprising that the later generations of Japanese American activists found the Claims Act of 1948 to be insufficient as redress, especially since there was no admittance of wrongdoing or apology involved in the payments. In response to changing

²⁷ Brian Niiya, ed., *Japanese American History: An A-Z Reference from 1968 to the Present*. (New York: Facts on File, 1993), 275-276, 212-213, 272-273; Hohri, *Repairing America*, 29-34.

²⁸ Maki, *Achieving*, 52-54; Sandra C. Taylor, "Evacuation and Economic Loss: Questions and Perspectives," in Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H.L. Kitano, eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 163-167.

attitudes towards the injustices suffered during the war, many Japanese Americans began to call for a formal apology and some form of restitution for the loss of not only income and property, but also freedom and civil liberties. The person most-often credited as the father of this redress movement was Edison Uno, a Nisei activist from Los Angeles who brought the issue of redress before the 1970 JACL National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. As a representative of the Northern California - Western Nevada District Council of JACL, Uno presented a resolution advocating a tax free fund for victims plus a \$400 million fund for community projects. The national JACL voted in favor of the resolution in 1970, 1972, and again in 1974 but they never actually acted on the resolutions.²⁹

Despite the changing attitudes of not only Japanese Americans, but also of the general public towards Japanese Americans, there was still a great deal of reluctance within the community to pursue redress or reparations. One of the major obstacles was generational differences between the emerging Sansei, who came of age during a time of social movements and protest, and their aging Issei and Nisei family who were more accepting, with a *shikata ga nai*, or "it cannot be helped" attitude. Some were concerned that monetary reparations would "cheapen" the experience of evacuation by putting a price tag on it, and still others took issue with redress because (at this point) it was spearheaded by the JACL, which was distrusted by many. In some instances, redress activists found that veterans were the hardest to convince because they felt as though a controversial movement like redress could undo some of the advances that they had fought so hard to achieve. According to one JACL redress leader who distributed questionnaires on the subject, "The answers I got was a complete surprise to me because

²⁹ Maki, *Achieving*, 64; Hohri, *Repairing America*, 37-38.

so many of so-called leaders of the Japanese American community were not for redress, they were against it.”³⁰ As various people and organizations began to push for redress, much of their campaigning consisted of educating the public and the Japanese American community about the WWII injustices to try to counter both internal and external opposition.

While the national JACL chapter seemed content to pass resolutions, the local Seattle, Washington chapter became frustrated with the lack of action and decided to work on their own to research redress options, educate their local and regional chapters, and hopefully incite the national chapter to action. Following the national JACL convention in 1972, the Seattle chapter leaders had reported on the redress resolution and asked their members if anyone was interested in volunteering to support the issue. Local Boeing employee Henry Miyatake, who had spent some time studying constitutional law and the evacuation, volunteered and soon presented his plan to a group from the local chapter. Miyatake recommended a plan of individual payments of \$5,000 to people affected by EO 9066 including Aleuts, Germans, Italians, Latin American Japanese, and Japanese Americans. In addition, each would receive \$10/day for every day of confinement. These numbers were based on the standard amounts provided by the government in the case of involuntary relocation (i.e. building a road, etc.) and the amount paid for prisoners of war. His method of payment was based on a voluntary check-off on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax forms that would allow Japanese

³⁰ Maki, *Achieving*, 64; May K. Sasaki, Interview, Densho Digital Archive; Fred Hirasuna, Interview, Densho Digital Archive; Henry Miyatake, Interview, Densho Digital Archive; Clifford Uyeda, Interview, Densho Digital Archive.

Americans to allocate their taxes to a fund that would accumulate money to be distributed as lump payments, with the eldest Issei being paid first.³¹

By early 1975, the Seattle Evacuation Redress Committee (SERC) led by Miyatake and Shosuke Sasaki had a redress plan in hand but was continually frustrated by the apparent lack of interest in the national JACL. On the local level, SERC found a great deal of support among churches, social groups, and even Caucasian organizations. Though they were encouraged by the local support they were receiving, they found that the higher they went through JACL ranks, the less encouragement and interest they received. To apply pressure to the national organization, SERC decided to solicit the support of the 102 local JACL chapters around the country. In November 1975, SERC distributed over 200 audio tape and written copies of "An Appeal for Action to Obtain Redress for the World War II Evacuation and Imprisonment of Japanese Americans" to JACL chapters, national board members, Japanese American newspapers, and members of congress.³²

On January 23, 1976, the JACL newspaper, the *Pacific Citizen*, published a copy of the Appeal along with a questionnaire that was distributed with the document. The Appeal spoke from a first-person perspective and minced no words regarding the relocation, which was referred to as a "monstrous violation of the most basic of American traditions and laws relating to human freedom," that represented "the culmination of four decades of anti-Japanese propaganda of the most vile, outrageous, and pervasive sort...." Beginning with an allusion to the founding fathers and the principles on which this country was founded, the Appeal argued that the Nisei had been "brainwashed" by

³¹ Robert Sadamu Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle: The Campaign for Japanese American Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.), 15-18.

³² Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 22-27.

propaganda that convinced them that they were unworthy, which psychologically affected them to such a degree that they had not previously felt they had a right to fight for redress. As the bicentennial approached, the authors of the Appeal invoked the founding fathers, claiming “passive submission or self-abasement when confronted by government tyranny or injustice was alien to the beliefs held by the founders of this nation.” Therefore, they argued, “in commemorating the birth of our nation...it is time that Americans of Japanese ancestry repudiate the pseudo-American doctrine, promoted by white racists and apparently believed in by some former Nisei leaders, that there is one kind of Americanism for whites and another kind for non-whites.”³³

The Appeal claimed that numerous Caucasians still held the belief that the relocation was necessary, and in American society when a person or group is slandered or libeled, a lack of retaliation is often considered admittance of guilt. Therefore, SERC argued, it was no wonder that many still held beliefs of Japanese American espionage. According to the article, the eradication of this misconception could only be accomplished “when the Government of the United States either through Congress or through its courts publicly declares that the wartime uprooting and imprisonment of Japanese Americans was totally without justification and awards the victims of its wartime outrage proper and reasonable redress.” Based on this, SERC argued that action needed to be taken to bring about redress, particularly in light of the gradually increasing death rate of aging Issei and Nisei victims.³⁴

The remainder of the Appeal focused on the method by which the Japanese Americans hoped to seek redress. Since they argued that there was no way to calculate

³³ “Seattle’s Reparation Proposal Put on Tape,” *The Pacific Citizen*, January 23, 1976, 4.

³⁴ “Seattle’s Reparation Proposal,” 4.

the emotional, psychological, educational, and mental suffering, they instead based their plan on the current payment for “unjustified imprisonment,” which was \$5,000. On top of this would be the \$10 per day addition to compensate for loss of freedom and loss of personal and business income. According to the authors, the two possible methods of funding were Congressional appropriations and what they referred to as the Bootstrap Concept, or the Seattle Plan. They argued against the appropriations, in part because of the poor example set by the Evacuation Claims Act of 1948, which received funding through appropriations. In contrast, the Bootstrap Concept created the IRS Trust Fund into which Japanese Americans could choose to direct their taxes for up to ten years or until all claims had been paid to those who contributed to the fund.³⁵

The Appeal concluded with a complaint against the lack of action within the national JACL and a request “for the various JACL chapter members to make it clearly known to the National JACL officers and staff that action to seek redress must be given top priority among the league’s activities.” In addition, local chapters were encouraged to seek the support of local and regional organizations and to bring this support to the attention of their political leaders. The authors pleaded with readers saying,

The members of the Seattle JACL earnestly ask for the help and cooperation of your organization in these efforts, not only to obtain justice in the form of reparation payments to the innocent victims of the World War II evacuation and imprisonment, but also to have the government of the United States thereby demonstrate to the whole world that it still has the greatness of spirit to acknowledge and provide redress for its past miscarriages of justice.

According to SERC, redress from the government would reinforce the founding father’s notions of the equality of justice before the law.³⁶

³⁵ “Seattle’s Reparation Proposal,” 5.

³⁶ “Seattle’s Reparation Proposal,” 5.

The questions that accompanied this statement requested general information on the number of members in attendance (if at a JACL meeting) and the number of those in agreement or disagreement with the general idea of redress. It also requested more specific opinions regarding methods of funding, individual versus organizational payments, Issei priority, and the amount of payments. By April 1976, Seattle had received 778 individual responses representing over 40 JACL chapters. Of those who chose to respond, only 2.7 percent were opposed to the concept of redress, while all the others were in full or partial agreement with the plan. The results also indicated that a majority (69.5 percent) favored the bootstrap method over appropriations, an even greater majority (89 percent) preferred individual payments as opposed to block grants for organizations, and almost everyone (96.7 percent) felt that the Issei should receive priority. Over 75 percent thought that the amount requested was reasonable, although 28.5 percent thought it was not nearly enough. The overwhelming response was favorable with almost 95 percent reporting a willingness to support some form of redress legislation.³⁷

Unfortunately for the redress activists, they soon realized that one of their most ardent opponents would come from within their own ranks in the person of S. I. Hayakawa, a Japanese American academic who became the first Japanese American Senator from the mainland when he was elected to represent California in November 1976. Hayakawa, who had not endeared himself to Asian American students as SFSC president during the strike of 1969, published a column in the *Seattle Times* on February 3, 1976 criticizing the Appeal and labeling the Seattle members as uninformed young radicals. SERC member Sasaki immediately responded, countered all of Hayakawa's

³⁷ "Seattle's Reparation Proposal," 4; Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 28.

claims, and pointed out that the authors of the Appeal were hardly young at 46, 58, and 63, while the majority of Seattle JACL members were Nisei and Issei who had lived through the evacuation.³⁸

Although Hayakawa's opposition was an unexpected stumbling block for redress activists, the positive responses from the questionnaires encouraged the Seattle group. Their cause also received additional recognition and support on February 19, 1976 when President Gerald R. Ford Signed "An American Promise," officially revoking Executive Order 9066. The idea for rescinding the law came from Seattle's Miyatake who was surprised to learn that it was technically still on the books and felt that an official revocation would be an opportunity to further increase public awareness regarding the relocation and redress. Though the push originated at the local level in Seattle, the major battle soon moved to Washington, DC through Washington state's Governor Dan Evans and his staff members, James Dolliver and Mich Matsudaira, executive director of Evans' Asian American Affairs Commission. When it looked as though the official revocation was possible, Matsudaira contacted national JACL director David Ushio and JACL representative Wayne Horiuchi to spread the word and publicize the movement.³⁹

Unfortunately for those who had initiated the movement at the grassroots level, the decision to rely on the national JACL leaders effectively led to the exclusion of Miyatake and those in Seattle. Horiuchi chose not to initiate a nationwide publicity campaign through local JACL chapters, but instead, by Ushio's own admission, "we were in a position to make choices between people who were stabbing me in the back and people who were bending backwards to help me." When the last minute notice arrived

³⁸ Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 28-30.

³⁹ Maki, *Achieving*, 70-71; Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 30-34.

that the order would be signed on February 19, Matsudaira was the only Seattle representative at the ceremony. He was surrounded by JACL leaders who had only recently come into the movement for publicity, and some of whom, like Ushio, had openly opposed the idea of revocation when Miyatake had approached them with the idea at the 1974 JACL convention. Miyatake himself learned about the success of his brainchild on the morning that the ceremony took place, far too late to actually attend.⁴⁰

According to one history of the JACL, “there were a good many bruised egos over the invitation list. Many JACL leaders were left out. Some who may or may not have been deserving were invited,” yet the formal revocation of EO 9066 was still a celebrated step towards redress in the minds of the Japanese American community. According to President Ford’s statement titled, “An American Promise,” “We now know what we should have known then – not only was that evacuation wrong, but Japanese Americans were and are loyal Americans.” The statement acknowledged that EO 9066 “was for the sole purpose of prosecuting the war with the Axis Powers, and ceased to be effective with the end of those hostilities,” but it also stated that “I think it appropriate, in this our Bicentennial Year, to remove all doubt on that matter, and to make clear our commitment in the future.” Though the repeal may have been legally unnecessary it served to raise awareness of the Japanese American experience and to reinforce for the Japanese American community that governmental support might be strong enough to secure support for redress legislation.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 33; Bill Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1982), 340; Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 21.

⁴¹ Lawson Fusao Inada, ed., *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2000), Appendix A, 410-411; Maki, *Achieving the Impossible Dream*, 71.

As the Seattle and Pacific Northwest District Council JACL chapters became more determined to pursue redress, they still believed that the key to their success was the strength of the national chapter behind the movement. The District Council managed to secure the support of the prominent but recently retired JACL member, Mike Masaoka, who in turn wrote an article for the *Pacific Citizen* supporting redress. In the article he supported the plan created by Ed Yamamoto, president of the Columbia Basin JACL Chapter. This plan called for all reparations funds to filter through a trust fund, governed by a Japanese American board that would direct the money towards community and education projects.⁴²

In early 1976, the national JACL convened a National Reparations Campaign meeting to discuss the various proposed plans in preparation for redress discussions at the upcoming June National Convention. Though SERC representatives continued to argue for individual payments rather than block grants distributed through a board, they compromised by allocating any unclaimed tax money to a trust fund for educational purposes. The major concerns for those opposed to the block grant plan were that areas with greater Japanese American populations would receive more funding and that the evacuation was experienced on an individual level, not organizational, therefore reparations should also be individual. In addition, there was little doubt that any governing board that oversaw the distribution of funds was likely to be composed of primarily JACL leaders and there was still a great deal of distrust towards the JACL dating back to the war and their compliance with the evacuation order.⁴³

⁴² Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 35; Maki, *Achieving*, 73.

⁴³ Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 36.

At the 1976 JACL National Convention the National Council voted unanimously to support the movement for redress through the creation of a committee, the National JACL Reparations Committee, led by Edison Uno. Though there was still doubt over which plan the JACL would endorse, the various local organizations were pleased to see some action from the national chapter after six years of ineffective resolutions. Unfortunately, in December of that year Uno, who had fought so hard to see redress succeed, died and was replaced by Clifford Uyeda the following October. During 1977 and 1978 the JACL and members of SERC attempted to gauge public opinion regarding redress and to determine which method of payment – individual or block grant – was more popular. Both organizations published pamphlets and articles regarding redress options, and numerous plans were discussed in an attempt to reach a consensus. Prior to the 1978 Convention, the Committee devised a plan for legislation seeking \$25,000 for each individual in addition to a community trust fund. The plan was unanimously adopted at the Convention and a new committee, renamed the JACL National Committee for Redress (NCR) was created under the leadership of John Tateishi, previously chairman of the San Francisco chapter's redress committee.⁴⁴

As the NCR attempted to choose from the Seattle Plan, the Columbia Basin Plan, or some comprise of the two, a brand new option emerged in the debate. In a meeting between JACL representatives and Congressional representatives Inouye, Matsunaga, Matsui, and Mineta, it was suggested that perhaps the creation of a commission to first educate the public on the subject of the relocation and then to decide on the most appropriate form and method of redress would be better received by Congress and the public and therefore would be more likely to succeed. Though this suggestion was less

⁴⁴ Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 37; Maki, *Achieving*, 79-81.

direct than the JACL leaders had hoped for, they accepted the suggestion and voted in support of two steps: first the creation of a commission to establish the facts of the relocation, and second, the proposal of redress legislation based on the findings of the commission. This difficult and controversial decision resulted in all new debates and movements within the community between those in favor of and those opposed to such a commission.⁴⁵

Those within the community who actively supported the creation of a commission formed grassroots organizations to increase interest, educate the public, and encourage action. In Little Tokyo, the center of the Japanese American community in Los Angeles which had long been known for its community activism, supporters formed the LA Community Coalition on Redress/Reparations (LACCRR). This organization helped unite multiple local movements in support of redress under the combined National Coalition of Redress/Reparations (NCRR), which sought to bring together those who were interested in redress but were not strong supporters of the JACL, as well as members of the Asian American community more broadly.⁴⁶

Despite, or perhaps because of, the presence of these and other various organizations, individuals, and movements for redress around the country, the JACL plan for a commission proceeded successfully at the federal level. In August and September of 1979, companion bills were introduced in the Senate and the House to establish a commission to study the wartime confinement of Japanese Americans. Asian American representatives, Clarence Mitchell of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights,

⁴⁵ Maki, *Achieving*, 85-89.

⁴⁶ Maki, *Achieving*, 89-91; Glen Kitayama, "Japanese Americans and the Movement for Redress: A Case Study of the Grassroots Activism in the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations," (M.A. Thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1993).

historian Roger Daniels, Representatives Mineta and Matsui, as well as co-sponsor and Majority Leader Jim Wright from Texas, and JACL leader Mike Masaoka all spoke in favor of the commission at Senate hearings, though Japanese American activist William Hohri spoke in opposition saying, "We know it was wrong...Dismiss this sorry excuse for justice. Let us, instead, resolve to redress the victims and repair the Constitution." Despite his perspective, the bill passed the Senate in May 1980.⁴⁷

Shortly thereafter, the House held hearings on the commission bills and lobbyists voiced their support, though they were forced to make some adjustments to include claims brought forth by the Aleuts through Alaskan Senator Ted Stevens. The Senate Bill had already included this but the House version was amended before it was taken out of committee and put before the entire House. Representatives Wright, Mineta, and Matsui again spoke in favor of the bill along with Illinois Congressman Robert McClory, whose family had taken in a young Japanese American boy during the war. In the House the only vocal opposition was Representative Robert E. Bauman who felt the bill could set a bad precedent, the commission's results would not atone for the wrong done, and the Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 had already settled the financial side of the issue. Despite opposition, the bill had bipartisan support from many, which resulted in a vote of 279 to 109 in favor of the bill. On July 31, 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 96-317, creating the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) to review the circumstances of both the Japanese Americans and Aleuts and to make recommendations for redress based on their findings.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Maki, *Achieving*, 91-94.

⁴⁸ Maki, *Achieving*, 95-96.

The Commission was eventually comprised of nine members: Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, Chairman of the US Commission on Civil Rights; Joan Z. Bernstein, former general counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services; Judge William Marutani; former US Supreme Court Justice and United Nations Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg; Republican Representative Daniel Lungren of California; former US Senators Edward W. Brooke and Hugh B. Mitchell; Jesuit priest and former Congressman Reverend Robert F. Drinan; and Father Ishmael Vincent Gromoff, an Aleutian Russian Orthodox priest. On the recommendation of Senator Inouye, the Commission only included one Japanese American, Judge Marutani, so that the findings would be seen as more objective. In addition to the nine members, there were other support staff including Aiko Yoshinaga Herzig and her husband Jack Herzig who spent many hours researching the confinement and relocation of the Japanese Americans and Aleutians. Various national and local organizations including the JACL and NCCR also worked with the Japanese American community to prepare the testimonies of over 750 witnesses for the eleven public hearings that took place in ten cities: Washington D.C.; Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; Anchorage, Unalaska, and St. Paul, Alaska; Chicago, Illinois; New York, New York; and Boston, Massachusetts.

Speakers included Inouye, Mineta, Matsui, and Matsunaga, as well as the current leaders of the JACL National Committee on Redress, the NCCR, and National Council for Japanese American Redress, Min Yasui, Bert Nakano, and William Hohri, respectively. Historian Roger Daniels presented evidence that six major figures involved in the relocation, including Chief Justice Earl Warren and the first leader of the WRA Milton Eisenhower, had all expressed regret over their role in the war and had admitted

that the decision had been wrong. In contrast, military officials Karl Bendetsen and John McCloy testified in Washington that the decision was justified and, according to McCloy, that there was no need for any form of monetary reimbursement as their sacrifice was no more than others who were affected by the war. Relocation apologist Lillian Baker also testified as a representative of her organization, Americans for Historical Accuracy, which opposed the use of the term “concentration camps” and claimed that the relocation was mostly voluntary and entirely constitutional. Fellow Japanese American Senator Hayakawa’s testimony was of a similar nature opposing the use of the harsher terms, describing the camps as a “vacation” away from work for many, and arguing that he was embarrassed by the Japanese American community’s desire for monetary compensation. Commission member Lungren had to calm the gathered audience to silence the jeering response that met Hayakawa’s testimony. Though the leaders received much of the attention, the brief testimonies of the Issei and Nisei individuals affected were the most touching, cathartic, and revealing speeches presented as they described their years of suffering, confinement, and loss. Their testimonies represented the end of decades of silence within the Japanese American community that eventually allowed their story to reach the state and national levels that it did in the latter years of the twentieth century.⁴⁹

After twenty days of testimonies and independent research by the staff, the Commission released their findings in *Personal Justice Denied*, which concluded that the exclusion order was not based on military necessity but on “race prejudice, war hysteria,

⁴⁹ Maki, *Achieving*, 100-104; For more information on Karl Bendetsen see Klancy Clark de Nevers, *The Colonel and the Pacifist: Karl Bendetsen, Parry Saito, and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004). For more information on Lillian Baker, see Lillian Baker, *American and Japanese Relocation in World War II: Fact, Fiction, and Fallacy* (Oregon: Webb Research Group, 1989) and Lillian Baker, *The Japanning of America: Redress and Reparations Demands by Japanese-Americans* (Oregon: Webb Research Group, 1991).

and a failure of political leadership.” They estimated the total losses of income and property of the Japanese Americans to be between \$810 million and \$2 billion based on the 1983 economy. In addition, while they recognized the justification for the removal of the Aleuts from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, their treatment, living conditions, and losses were insupportable. Four months later, the Commission released their five recommendations for redress in the hopes that such atonement would make the nation less likely to repeat their mistakes. Their recommendations included an apology; a presidential pardon to those convicted of curfew and relocation disobedience; the creation of an agency to review applications of restitution of wartime losses; Congressional appropriation of funds for an educational foundation; and \$1.5 billion in Congressional appropriations to provide \$20,000 to every surviving evacuee and internee.⁵⁰

The reaction to the recommendations was mixed. Senator Hayakawa supported the apology but opposed individual redress, while Representative Matsui supported the redress payments but did not think they were likely to be funded. The JACL voiced their pleasure over the suggestions, but Bert Nakano of the NCRR felt that the redress did not go far enough by excluding heirs, not allowing claims to be made for sums greater than the \$20,000, and by issuing pardons rather than canceling the convictions. Hohri and the NCJAR expressed some encouragement over the findings and recommendations but were doubtful whether the money would actually be appropriated. John McCloy spoke out against the monetary reparations vehemently claiming that those killed at Pearl Harbor had received no such compensation and thus those that perpetrated the attack deserved none. McCloy’s views represented a minority of people who by the 1980s were still

⁵⁰*Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993); Maki, *Achieving*, 111-112.

unable to differentiate between American citizens of Japanese Ancestry and members of the Imperial Army of Japan.⁵¹

Although the recommendations of the CWRIC were published in 1983, it took five more years to successfully pass legislation through Congress to act on the findings. On September 17, 1987 the House passed H.R. 442 and the Senate followed in April with their equivalent. President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 into law on August 10 in a highly publicized ceremony at the White House. The Act created the Office of Redress Administration (ORA), which had identified over 48,000 potential recipients of the allocated \$20,000 within the first six months of their existence. Unfortunately, the Act had authorized payments but had not provided the funds for them. It was not until Senator Inouye changed the bill from an appropriation to an entitlement fund that the funding bill passed Congress and was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on November 21, 1989. The following October, the first nine recipients, ranging in age from 73 to 107, received their \$20,000 checks in a ceremony at the Great Hall of the Justice Department where Attorney General Richard Thornburgh presented the checks and a formal apology signed by President Bush. Though there were still debates in the following months and years over eligibility claims, the ORA continued their identification, registration, and payment until 1999 at which time they had disbursed over \$1.6 billion to 82,250 people. In addition, during their first active year, the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, created by the 1988 Act, distributed \$3.3 million to 132 various projects that would increase public awareness and understanding of the Japanese American wartime experience.⁵²

⁵¹ Maki, *Achieving*, 113-114.

⁵² Maki, *Achieving*, 137-227; Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 101-109.

Though the Commission turned out to be a successful and highly praised route to redress, there were many who were angered by the national JACL's decision to pursue such a method. The Seattle JACL chapter was perhaps the most upset by the commission decision because their IRS plan was rejected and they felt it was taking the easy way out instead of forcing the issue. There was also anger and anxiety in Seattle and elsewhere over the fact that the investigations by the commission would force Japanese Americans to publicly describe their experiences, emotions, and losses, which was something that many never had done nor had any desire to do. In response, concerned members of the JACL, primarily from Seattle and Chicago, formed the National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR) to provide an alternative to the National JACL commission movement. Prominent Chicago civil rights activist William Hohri, who had supported the National JACL redress movement until the commission decision, led the group in their effort to attain direct legislation for redress. Through the work of the Seattle JACL and the NCJAR, the first monetary redress bill was introduced to Congress in November 1979 as the Lowry Bill, H.R. 5977, sponsored by young Washington Representative Mike Lowry. This bill received no support from fellow Japanese American congressmen and eventually died in the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations.⁵³

Undaunted by their initial failure, the NCJAR sought a different route to compensation – a class action law suit against the United States. Instigated primarily by Hohri, who had been instrumental in the development of the earlier Seattle or Bootstrap Plan, the lawsuit route was chosen for three major reasons. First, and perhaps most importantly, it allowed the NCJAR to act with autonomy, particularly from the JACL.

⁵³ Hohri, *Repairing America*, 50-55; Maki, *Achieving*, 93.

Second, it represented a seemingly appropriate choice to account for the unconstitutional grievances suffered by those forcibly detained. Finally, a court decision was not dependent on popular opinion or constituent support but was based solely on the ability to successfully argue the merit of one's case. Despite the autonomy and the apparent strength of their case, the law firm approached by the NCJAR, Landis, Cohen, Singman, and Rauh, were concerned about the success due to the statute of limitations and the sovereign immunity of the United States. Regardless of the obstacles, the law firm agreed to take the case and planned a year for research and preparation at an initial cost of \$75,000.⁵⁴

In November 1981, young attorney Ellen Godbey Carson took the lead role in the Japanese American lawsuit, and through her research efforts the lawsuit was officially filed on March 16, 1983. The plaintiffs sued the government of the US for \$27 billion, a number based on the 22 causes of action, including Due Process, Equal Protection, and Unjust Taking, each worth an estimated \$10,000 for each of the 125,000 victims of the exclusion order. The 125,000 were represented by twenty five people who were chosen to reflect the diversity of the community, coming from various geographic locations and backgrounds, including draft resisters and veterans; Issei, Nisei, and Sansei; Christians and Buddhists; Department of Justice internees and War Relocation Authority detainees, etc. Using the history of racial injustices directed at the Japanese American community since their arrival in the country and the government's actions following Pearl Harbor, the plaintiff attempted to define the character of the defendant and establish a precedent for the unjust acts of the wartime confinement.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Maki, *Achieving*, 122; Hohri, *Repairing America*, 79-81.

⁵⁵ Hohri, *Repairing America*, 191-195.

As anticipated, Jeffrey Axelrad of the Department of Justice returned with a Motion to Dismiss just two months after the lawsuit was filed. In addition to the expected statute of limitations and sovereign immunity oppositions, he also cited the Japanese American Evacuations Claim Act of 1948 as having settled the issue of losses. In July 1983, the NCJAR attorney filed their opposition to the Motion arguing first that the statute of limitations did not take effect until after the release of confidential documents relating to the "military necessity" argument. Second, the attorneys argued that the Fifth Amendment statement, "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation," necessitates governmental responsibility which would prevent the US from claiming sovereign immunity in a case that claimed the government had not protected property rights, which the NCJAR lawsuit did. And finally, the opposing motion argued that the Claims Act of 1948 had not addressed all losses, including interest, rent, and income losses; private property damages and losses; educational and employment benefit losses; expenses involved in evacuation and resettlement; and losses caused as a result of imprisonment. The Justice Department filed its response to the opposition and Judge Louis F. Oberdorfer gathered additional documentation and held an oral argument with both sides as the court proceedings continued into 1984.

On May 17, Judge Oberdorfer released a 59-page explanation of his decision to grant the Department of Justice's Motion to Dismiss. The Judge agreed that the Unjust Takings complaint based on the Fifth Amendment prevented the US from claiming sovereign immunity, but only on the issue of private property, not constitutional rights, which the NCJAR lawsuit had attempted to argue. Therefore, only one of their 22

complaints was admissible. He also agreed with the NCJAR claim that the 1948 Act fell far short of accounting for all the grievances and losses suffered by the Japanese Americans. Unfortunately, he concluded that the most relevant documents had in fact been published during and soon after the war, thus the statute of limitations had expired six years after their publication.⁵⁶

The following year, the NCJAR appealed to the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia before a panel of Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, James Skelly Wright, and Howard Thomas Markey. In a vote of 2-1, Ginsburg and Wright overturned Judge Oberdorfer's decision and declared that the plaintiffs could not have known about the government's misconduct until the CWRIC hearings, therefore the statute of limitations had not expired. Though the case went to court, only the Unjust Taking Fifth Amendment clause was listed as a complaint and all those who had been compensated by the Claims Act of 1948 were prohibited from filing additional claims. The NCJAR attempted to gain a new hearing before the entire Court of Appeals but their request was denied. As both the Justice Department and the NCJAR were dissatisfied with the Court of Appeals ruling, both petitioned the Supreme Court, though only the Justice Department's petition was granted. The Justice Department argued that the Statute of Limitations count should have begun during the war because it was commonly accepted that racism was the cause of the exclusion, not military necessity, and the Japanese Americans were aware of racism during the war. He also argued on the technicality that the appeal was filed in the wrong court, and thus the case should be dismissed.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Hohri, *Repairing America*, 209-211.

⁵⁷ Maki, *Achieving*, 126-127; Hohri, *Repairing America*, 215-224.

United States v. Hohri et al. was heard before the Supreme Court on April 20, 1987 and while Justice Thurgood Marshall expressed anger over the victimization of the Japanese Americans, the ultimate decision was a unanimous vote for dismissal. Their decision was based solely on the jurisdictional issue and did not address either the statute of limitations or the general arguments of the case, which led the NCJAR to continue their lawsuit. They re-filed their appeal in the proper US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, but the case was dismissed with a 2-1 vote upholding Judge Oberdorfer's decision. Though the NCJAR had begun with the understanding that their case was a long shot, the final decision was disappointing, but there were still positive results. The case earned media attention, which increased awareness of the Japanese American experience and of the broader redress movement. In addition, the \$27 billion figure made the smaller amount requested later through congressional appropriation appear much more reasonable; which no doubt aided its approval.⁵⁸

In the midst of the NCJAR lawsuit, additional court cases relating to the Japanese American experience were introduced by lawyer Peter Irons. While researching for an article on the wartime *Korematsu*, *Yasui*, and *Hirabayashi* cases, Irons, with the assistance of Aiko Herzig's research, stumbled across "smoking guns" that proved the government was both aware of the lack of "military necessity" for the relocation and had purposefully lied to the Supreme Court to uphold the argument during the wartime Japanese American cases. In light of the documents, Irons considered the possibility of

⁵⁸ Maki, *Achieving*, 128.

filing a *coram nobis* petition, which is a rare case filing that seeks belated justice only after a conviction has been issued and the sentence served.⁵⁹

Under the leadership of San Francisco area attorney Dale Minami, Irons and a legal team conducted the research and paperwork necessary to file the writ of error *coram nobis* petition in the original courts in which the wartime convictions had been made. On January 19, 1983, the Korematsu case was filed and was frequently brought before Judge Marilyn Hall Patel throughout the course of the year. Department of Justice lawyer Victor Stone initially raised the idea of offering a pardon as the CWRIC had recommended, but the Japanese American's legal team as well as Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui themselves refused, arguing that their conviction would remain on the books rather than being overturned and there would be no admission of government wrongdoing. To avoid a hearing, Stone suggested that Korematsu's conviction be vacated and his case dismissed, which would successfully overturn the original conviction without subjecting the government to any investigation into the charges leveled against them. Judge Patel felt that Stone's willingness to vacate the conviction all but admitted guilt even without the hearing, leading her to both grant petition and vacate the original 1944 conviction, though Stone still managed to avoid facing the suppression of evidence charges in court.⁶⁰

Attorney Peggy Nagae filed the petition for Yasui in January 1983 in the original Portland courts that had convicted him forty years earlier. Stone made the same recommendation to vacate the conviction without granting the *coram nobis* petition, and

⁵⁹ Maki, *Achieving*, 129-132; For more information on Iron's investigation into the suppression of evidence during the wartime Supreme Court trials, see his work: Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁶⁰ Maki, *Achieving*, 132-133.

Judge Robert C. Belloni sided fully with the Justice Department. Rather than be forced to make a judgment on the validity of the wartime decision, Belloni vacated the conviction but without granting the petition, which allowed the courts to skirt the issue of whether the government was at fault in the original decision. Yasui and Nagae filed an appeal, but Yasui passed away in November 1986 before a decision could be made.⁶¹

In an attempt to build on their success in Portland, the Justice Department presented an even tougher case against Hirabayashi than they had against Korematsu and Yasui. Though Stone attempted to avoid a hearing as he had in the past, the Seattle Judge Donald S. Voorhees gave Hirabayashi the chance to seek a “vindication of his honor,” which allowed his case to be argued at the hearing by the legal team’s Seattle representative, Rodney Kawakami, in June 1985. To counter the charge that there was no military necessity, Stone attempted to use the MAGIC cables, a series of intercepted Japanese diplomatic messages that allegedly demonstrated Japanese American espionage activities, though their source, relevance, and reliability has never fully been proven. In February 1986, Judge Voorhees issued his decision that the withholding of information had impacted the wartime conviction, but he granted the petition only for the exclusion order charge, not his curfew violation. In March 1987, the team appealed his decision and received a unanimous reversal the following year.⁶²

While the class-action lawsuit and the *coram nobis* cases did not directly affect the redress movement, they “contributed greatly to the energy, momentum, and overall

⁶¹ Maki, *Achieving*, 133-134.

⁶² Maki, *Achieving*, 134-135; For more information on the MAGIC Cables and their purported indictment of Japanese Americans, see: David Lowman, *Magic: The Untold Story of US Intelligence and the Evacuation of Japanese Residents from the West Coast During World War II* (Provo: Athena Press, 2000) and Michelle Malkin, *In Defense of Internment: The Cases for Racial Profiling in World War II and the War on Terror* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2004).

support for the redress movement.” According to one article in the *New York Times* on the Hirabayashi case, the ruling could “bolster” the NCJAR lawsuit, while the findings of the CWRIC had already impacted several other court cases and studies along the West Coast. In California, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, Santa Clara, and Alameda Counties had already passed legislation to pay \$5,000 to previous employees of the city/county who lost wages during the war as a result of the exclusion order. The state of California had already enacted a similar bill in 1982 as had Washington state and the city of Seattle. Thus while some redress actions were more successful than others, all contributed to the public awareness and political pressure that not only helped pass the significant redress legislation of the late 1980s, but also helped reinforce the public understanding that the military necessity argument was false and the Japanese American community had been the victims of racist political policy not justifiable wartime security measures.⁶³

Conclusion

The existence of divisions within the Japanese American community as they pushed for redress was hardly a surprise. Just as detainees during the war had been split among pro-Japanese contingents, military volunteers, draft resisters, and “no-no” boys, the redress movement activists were a multi-faceted group that in some cases barely seemed to fit in the same category. Ironically, it was this complexity and depth of culture that “model minority” myths and wartime caricatures had ignored. It is impossible to categorize Caucasian Americans as fitting within any one image, but racial prejudice has

⁶³ Maki, *Achieving*, 136; Katherine Bishop, “Settling a Debt from World War II,” *New York Times*, 16 February 1986; Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle*, 90 – 100.

frequently led this very group to unfairly stereotype others, such as Asian Americans, African Americans, and other minority groups as unthinking, homogenous masses.⁶⁴

The redress movement clearly revealed the extent of varying personalities within the Japanese American community, but some have since argued that the various approaches actually allowed for activists of all ages and interests to find a group in which they fit. In addition, though some routes to redress were more successful than others, all contributed to the public awareness and knowledge regarding the wartime experiences, and the progress within each organization frequently benefited the others as well. For instance, Aiko Herzig was a staff member of the CWRIC who conducted extensive research in various archives to provide the Commission members with primary documents relating to the confinement. As a leading member of NCJAR, she also contributed her research to the lawsuit, along with transcripts of many testimonies that supported their case. Her diligence in the archives also helped Peter Irons find a crucial piece of evidence for the *coram nobis* cases. Thus, the various organizations had different strengths and weaknesses but the combined resources, political pressure, and public awareness succeeded in bringing about change despite divisions.⁶⁵

Across the board, members of the Japanese American community regard the redress movement as a turning point. Regardless of their opinions on the process of seeking redress or their organizational affiliations, those that argue that there has been an increased public awareness and sympathy towards the Japanese American exclusion experience attribute this to the movement. Redress organizations existed in cities across the country from Los Angeles, to Seattle, Chicago, and Washington DC; Issei and Nisei

⁶⁴ For more on American stereotypes of the Japanese, see John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

⁶⁵ Sue Komitomi Embrey, Interview, Densho Digital Archives.

publicly and privately spoke extensively about their experiences – many of them for the first time; National media sources reported on the various lawsuits, court cases, and Congressional committee hearings and broadcast the story of EO 9066 to the nation. Yet arguably, these events would not have been possible if earlier generations of Japanese Americans had not laid the foundation. The honorable service of Japanese Americans during WWII, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War demonstrated the loyalty of the young soldiers; the steadily increasing numbers of Japanese American leaders in politics and community activism revealed the growing strength and significance of the community within the United States; the Civil Rights Movement and legislation like *Brown v. Board* helped increase racial tolerance not only towards African Americans, but also towards all ethnic minorities; the social protest movements of the 1960s and 70s gave those who had previously felt unheard a voice, which, for the Japanese American community, resulted in advances such as Ethnic Studies and Asian American studies programs. Finally, by the 1980s, social and political forces had aligned in such a way as to make the Japanese American community feel they could speak openly about their experiences and incite change through legislation and litigation. This sense of empowerment would significantly impact the public representation and remembrance of the Japanese American WWII experience within the community, across the country, and even around the world.

Chapter Three: From Local Cause to National Conscience

Memorials

Memorials and more specifically, military memorials have a long and surprisingly varied history dating back centuries. According to Lord Chatfield, President of the British War Memorials Advisory Council, “it is...true to say that it has always been an instinct in human nature to remember those who have died; and after a war to honour and commemorate the fallen, not merely in some temporary manner, but in a way which will endure and be an inspiration to future generations.” In the United States the practice of commemorating events and people through memorials and monuments has existed for generations. Tributes to the heroes of the American Revolution still stand today as examples of some of the earliest memorials, and the National Mall, home to numerous such monuments, receives an estimated 25 million visitors each year. Although the permanence of stone monuments has made them seem to be static fixtures in today’s society, the interpretation of these sites has actually changed many times throughout history.¹

Most early monuments in the US followed the trend of academic history in portraying “great man” versions of history, depicting the founding fathers and men (and some women) who had performed extraordinary and heroic deeds. Until the mid-1800s, few monuments were erected in honor of common soldiers, and many soldiers’ gravesites were simply mass burials with little or no individual recognition. During the course of the Civil War, graves were more often marked individually; and alongside monuments to

¹ Arnold Whittick, *War Memorials* (London: Country Life Limited, 1946), v; Dr. Judy Scott Feldman, “Reconnecting the National Mall to the Capital City in the 21st Century,” from the Framing a Capital City Symposium, National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., April 11, 2007.

the great leaders, emerged numerous statues depicting common soldiers and the women who had supported them. After World War I, monuments became even more individualized and often featured inscriptions bearing the names of all the soldiers killed. Leading up to World War II many people expressed dissatisfaction with the earlier monuments that served no functional purpose resulting in a move towards more progressive “living history” memorials. Recreation centers, theaters, parks, libraries, and town halls emerged as useful structures dedicated to the memory of those who had died to provide a better future for the living, though traditional monuments still remained popular as well.²

As the physical creation and construction of new memorials has changed over time, so has the interpretation of existing memorials. In her analysis of the numerous objects left at the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial (VVM) in Washington, D.C., Kristin Ann Hass has argued that the presence of three separate monuments within the VVM and the addition of visitors’ belongings and offerings has created a constantly changing and very individualized memorial. She writes, “The multiplication of memorials, names, and objects at the Wall has, indeed, replaced the possibility of a singular memory of the war; the single figure of the male citizen embodying the nation has been supplanted by three official memorials and a steady stream of combat boots, bicycle parts, and St. Christophers. People come to this memorial and they make their own memorials.”³ In a similar analysis of the Lincoln Memorial, Christopher A. Thomas has shown how the

² Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 36-37; Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 162, 176; Hass, *Carried to the Wall*, 54; Whittick, *War Memorials*, vi-vii, 4.

³ Hass, *Carried to the Wall*, 20.

monument was a political struggle from its inception and has continued to serve as the site of contested versions of history to the present day. He argued,

Public memory...is never safe, neutral ground. It is always political in the broad sense. As Martin Luther King's memory has been recaptured from African-American civil rights fighters to weave it into a seamless narrative of national progress and 'multiculturalism,' so sites such as the Lincoln Memorial, because of their symbolic charge and resonance, are always metaphorical battlefields. Every generation must reconstruct them mentally..."⁴

According to Thomas, the original designers of the monument had interpreted "Lincoln as Savior," for his role in the Civil War, but decades later African Americans of the civil rights movement hailed "Lincoln as Emancipator," due to his Emancipation Proclamation. The Lincoln Memorial became a center for civil rights activity and later for anti-Vietnam activity. VVM architect Maya Lin was aware of the symbolic importance of the Lincoln Memorial to the anti-war movement and pointed one end of the Wall directly towards Lincoln. Thus within sites like the VVM and the Lincoln Memorial, as well as many other sites across the country, the interpretation and meaning can differ with each visitor or with each changing political climate that infuses a monument with a particular symbolic reference.

One of the most interesting and insightful questions to consider regarding a war memorial's meaning is who built it and why. Was it a grieving town mourning the loss of its sons, or was it an organization hoping to make a political statement through the commemoration of an event or person? Historically the creators of monuments have varied from individual grieving parents to national governments intent on honoring the sacrifice of its citizens, yet the motivating person(s) can reveal as much about the meaning of the monument as the design and content. In the case of memorials to the

⁴ Christopher A. Thomas, *The Lincoln Memorial & American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 167.

Japanese American soldiers that emerged in both Europe and the US after the war, the origins of these tributes varied greatly between the nations and revealed significantly different perspectives towards the Nisei ranging from liberator to enemy. An analysis of the creation of war memorials to the Japanese Americans in both regions sheds light on attitudes towards the soldiers during and after the war and how these attitudes changed over time as a result of the social, political, and academic changes of the late twentieth century.

EUROPE

According to the official monthly report of the 100th Infantry/ 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), during October 1944, the unit “Assaulted and occupied city of BRUYERES. Captured Towns of BIFFONTAINE and BELMONT...” and “Spearheaded division attack approximately 12 miles, destroyed enemy in regional sector.”⁵ The understated report did not mention the numerous days of hard fighting from hilltop to hilltop through the dense Vosges Mountains during a cold, rainy autumn in southeastern France. Nor did it mention the excitement of the townspeople that greeted the Nisei soldiers as they liberated the villages from years of Nazi occupation. Yet for both the soldiers and the local residents, it was undoubtedly the physical and emotional struggle and eventual success that remained foremost in their minds as opposed to the sterile description of the engagement found in the battle report. In describing the response of the citizens of Bruyeres, one veteran recalled,

⁵ Monthly Historical Report, 15 November 1944, Japanese American Veterans Association, DC Archives, http://www.javadc.org/images/archivedocs/1944-11-15_Monthly%20Report%20of%20442nd%20RCT.pdf.

They finally realized, these guys might be Japanese, but they are Japanese Americans fighting for the United States. And after that, they all came pouring out and hugged everybody and everything... And this is the reason why I think the town of Bruyeres even today respects the Japanese so much... where else can you go in Europe today where every five years the town wants to put on a big get together for you... where else can you find on the main drag, if you was to walk down the sidewalk, every fifty feet you see the 442nd emblem put into the sidewalk... they named a street after the 442nd and everything... The people in Bruyeres were real appreciative of us.⁶

One chaplain from the 442nd wrote to his wife, "Whenever we come into a new town – the villagers come running out, clapping their hands and cheering the liberators. They mob the jeep to shake your hands and to hold you."⁷

The first soldier's quote raises an interesting question of where else one could find such appreciation as that of the people of Bruyeres. The unfortunate truth for him and other Japanese Americans was that the appreciation, acceptance, and respect with which they were greeted in Italy and France was far from common in their own home country. While it has long been argued that the service of the 100th/442nd and MIS linguists helped improve the acceptance of Japanese Americans in the US, the recognition of their loyalty and military accomplishments was still far more scattered, inconsistent, and delayed than that of their fellow Caucasian servicemen and women. Many Americans preferred to ignore the hypocrisy of Executive Order 9066 within a democratic nation, which resulted in an unspoken yet widespread suppression of information regarding the Japanese American experience. While the service of the soldiers raised no such questions of loyalty or justice, it was difficult to discuss the military service without mentioning the uniqueness of their situation as volunteers and

⁶ Rudy Tokiwa, Interview II, Segment 45, Densho Digital Archives, July 2&3, 1998, Honolulu, Hawaii.

⁷ Chaplain Hiro Higuchi, "Dear Mom": Letters Home," in Hawaii Nikkei History Editorial Board, *Japanese Eyes, American Heart: Personal Reflection of Hawaii's World War II Nisei Soldiers* (Honolulu: Tendai Educational Foundation, 1998), 236.

draftees from prison camps in their own country. Thus, the military service was praised far more than the confinement was discussed, but neither received the attention it deserved.

In contrast, the citizens of Italy and France were far more excited to be free than concerned by the color of their liberator's skin. While there was frequently some confusion in the initial moments as townspeople wondered whether they were Chinese soldiers or perhaps Japanese forces coming to relieve the Germans, they were primarily interested in their US uniform not their ethnicity. In fact, as the townspeople of Bruyeres learned of the situation that the Japanese Americans faced at home, they came to appreciate them even more and to recognize the ironic relationship of liberator and captive. In many ways, the citizens of Bruyeres felt that they helped liberate the Japanese Americans, just as they were liberated by them. According to one source,

At first unaware of the wartime internment of Japanese Americans, in the postwar years the French came to appreciate the investment of the Nisei soldiers in proving their loyalty as Americans by securing the liberty of the French. Knowledge of this double liberation redoubles the pride of the French of Bruyeres and Biffontaine to the extent that it has become a trope: the French repeatedly assert that the fiftieth star of the American flag was earned on their soil.⁸

Those who were liberated by these unique soldiers called them "*les Hawaïens*," recognizing the origins of some of the men, the aloha spirit with which they all treated the locals, and the affection that they felt for the men who were special in the eyes of the French compared to the more "normal" tall and fair "*American*" soldiers.

⁸ Valerie Nao Yoshimura, "The Legacy of the Battle of Bruyeres: Reflections of a Sansei Francophile," in Erica Harth, ed, *Last Witnesses: Reflections on the Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 238.

Due to the almost immediate affection and respect for the Japanese American soldiers, tributes to their sacrifice and bravery appeared in Europe before the war had even concluded. In January 1945,

Major General Arthur R. Wilson dedicated the "Hawaiian Room" at the 21st General Hospital, Ravenel

Hospital in Mirecourt, France in honor of the 100th Battalion. Decorated in a Hawaiian theme as part of an occupational therapy exercise for patients, the room served as a recreational room and a meeting place for group psychotherapy sessions for neuropsychiatric patients. Since the war's end, monuments have also been erected in Sospel and Menton, France as well as San Angelo, Italy. The rebuilt monastery at Monte



Grave of Tadao Hayashi
Florence American Cemetery
Photo by Author, December 2008



Major General Arthur R. Wilson dedicating the Hawaiian Room at the 21st General Hospital, Ravenel Hospital, Mirecourt, France, 1945
Photo From Bernard Becker Medical Library
Washington University School of Medicine

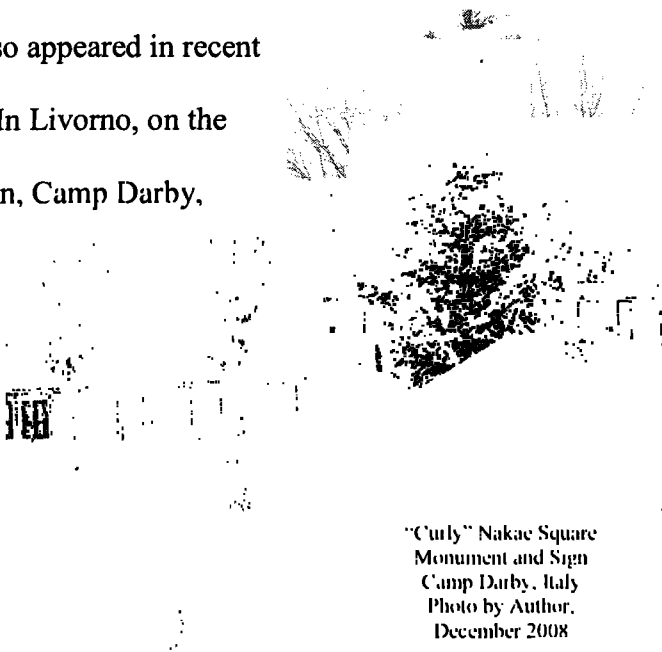
Cassino includes a stained glass window honoring the men of the 100th Infantry for their role in that difficult battle; and memorials of a different form exist in the overseas American cemeteries at Monte Cassino, Sicily-Rome, and Florence, Italy;

Epinal and Lorraine, France; the Netherlands; and the Philippines.⁹ Though the majority of Nisei soldiers killed in battle were returned to US cemeteries, one account claimed that the citizens of Epinal, France specifically requested that one Nisei grave remain in their cemetery so townspeople could continue to honor their fallen liberators. The Go For Broke National Educational Foundation ensures that floral tributes are placed at each of the 39 overseas WWII Nisei graves every five years.¹⁰

Two new monuments have also appeared in recent years in Livorno and Tendola, Italy. In Livorno, on the grounds of the US Military Installation, Camp Darby, active duty soldiers, residents, veterans, and family members gathered on June 21, 2006 to

dedicate the Private Masato “Curly”

Nakae Freedom Square. A plaque



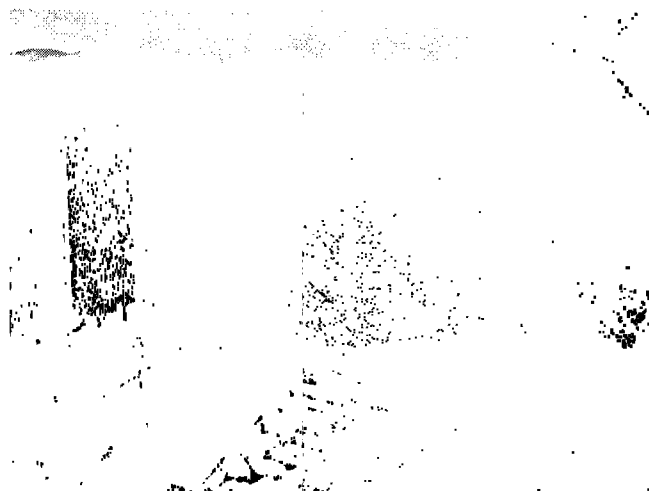
“Curly” Nakae Square
Monument and Sign
Camp Darby, Italy
Photo by Author,
December 2008

⁹ Though one MIS linguist is interred at the Manila American Cemetery, there is little to no other recognition of the Japanese American contribution in the Pacific Theater. While I have seen no direct explanation for this, the most obvious reason is the secrecy surrounding the use and locations of Japanese American interpreters. While information gradually became available in the United States following the conclusion of the war, the exploits and accomplishments of the Nisei linguists was still far less known than those of their Western Theater counterparts. Tributes eventually emerged in the United States, as will be discussed in the following chapter, but to my knowledge, the only representation of Japanese American soldiers in the Pacific is a memorial in the Imjin-gak Park in Paju-City, South Korea honoring the 247 who died during the Korean Conflict. For more information on the MIS linguists, see: James McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service During World War II* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006).

¹⁰ Bernard Becker Medical Library, University of Washington, St. Louis, Digital Archives; Bill Yenne, *Rising Sons: The Japanese American GIs Who Fought For the United States in World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 185; Lyn Crost, *Honor by Fire: Japanese Americans at War in Europe and the Pacific* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1994), 230; Japanese American Veteran's Association, Press Release, “Italian Town Honors 100th Infantry Battalion,” October 31, 2004 Digital Archives, <http://www.javadc.org/Press%20release%2010-1-04%20Italian%20town%20honors%20100th.htm> ; “Go For Broke Educational Foundation Announces Floral Tribute Endowment for Japanese American WWII Soldiers Interred Overseas,” *Go For Broke Newsletter*, 11 May 2005 http://www.goforbroke.org/about_us/about_us_news_press051105.asp.

in the center of the square commemorates the Medal of Honor recipient, while a series of interpretive panels in English and Italian provide visitors with the details of his service and medal citation. The square is also considered a tribute to the late George Watanabe, a US Army veteran who settled in Italy, dedicated himself to preserving and sharing the history of the 100th/442nd, and pushed for the construction of the Nakae memorial. In 2007, another monument was dedicated north of Livorno in the hilltop village of Tendola, near Fosdinovo, a location that saw heavy fighting during the Po River Valley campaign. The memorial, written entirely in Italian, commemorates the spot where PFC Tadao “Beanie” Hayashi was killed while on a patrol with his buddy Lt. Sadaichi Kubota in April, 1945. Kubota revisited the site in 2004 and honored his friend with traditional Buddhist funeral rites, fulfilling the promise he had made to return to the site almost sixty years earlier. Unfortunately Kubota died only months after his visit and never had the opportunity to see the newly erected memorial honoring Hayashi and the others who lost their lives to liberate Tendola and the surrounding villages.¹¹

¹¹ Japanese American Veterans Association, Press Release, “One Year Anniversary of Pvt. Masato “Curly” Nakai Freedom Square in Camp Darby, Italy. Monument is Also Testament of George “Joji” Watanabe’s Perpetuation of Nisei Legacy.” June 28, 2007, Digital Archives, <http://www.javadc.org/Press%20release%2006-28-07%20One%20Year%20Anniversary%20of%20PVT%20Masato%20Curly%20Nakae%20Freedom%20Square%20in%20Camp%20Darby.htm>; Chiara Mattiolo, “Community Gathers to Mourn Friend, Passionate Historian,” *The Outlook* (Vicenza, Italy) Vol. 38, No. 39 (October 4, 2005), 3; Go For Broke Educational Foundation Announces Floral Tribute Endowment for Japanese American WWII Soldiers Interred Overseas,” *Go For Broke Newsletter*, 11 May 2005 http://www.goforbroke.org/about_us/about_us_news_press051105.asp; “Ceremony Spurs Sergeant Major to Recount World War II Friendship,” *Camp Darby Newsletter*, undated, Digital Archive, <http://www.usag.livorno.army.mil/sites/News3.html>.



442nd RCT Monument near Tendola, Italy
Photo by Author, December 2008

The sentiment that led liberated villages and citizens throughout Italy and France to dedicate monuments in honor of the Nisei soldiers is perhaps epitomized in the efforts of two men, Pierre Moulin and Americo Bugliani. Born in the town of Bruyeres, France on November 1, 1948, Moulin was always aware of the war's effect on his hometown even though he was born four years after its liberation. Situated in the Vosges Mountains, Bruyeres and the surrounding area was of strategic importance during wartime because of the local crossroads, rail lines, and supply warehouses that developed in the late 1800s. The town of 4,000 had fallen to the Germans in June 1940, though its Mayor, Louis Gillon, retained his position for a full year before being removed for openly speaking out against collaboration with the occupation troops. France's wartime shortages, rationing, and harsh occupational rule greatly affected the small town, which lost 57 men to German work camps and 30 Jewish residents to concentration camps. Many locals also assisted the French Resistance movement, including Pierre's father, Max-Henri Moulin, who provided important intelligence to the advancing American army in late 1944. In the fall of that year, US troops began shelling the city and the

surrounding forests and villages, and the 100th/442nd RCT assault began on October 14. Four days later, the Japanese American troops defeated the Germans and liberated the townspeople from four and a half years of Nazi occupation.¹²

Knowledge of his father's highly praised resistance efforts and even the presence of the war memorial in the town's Place Stanislaus no doubt informed Moulin of the war from an early age. In addition, Bruyeres is a town that is particularly proud of its association with the Japanese Americans who liberated it, and this relationship certainly influenced Moulin. On the anniversary of the liberation in 1947, Mayor Gillon accepted a bronze plaque from Wilson Makabe of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). The inscription described the rescue of the Lost Battalion during the Battle of Bruyeres in both English and French, honoring the 100th/442nd RCT "who reaffirmed an historic truth here...That loyalty to one's country is not modified by racial origin." Rather than place the plaque on the town hall with others of a similar nature, the mayor and deputy mayor decided to show greater honor to the Nisei soldiers through the creation of a specific memorial in the Helledraye Forest, in which they had fought so hard for the townspeople's liberation.



Bruyeres Monument
Photo by Author, January 2008

¹² Pierre Moulin, *U.S. Samurais in Bruyeres: People of France and Japanese Americans: Incredible Story*, (Peace and Freedom Trail, 1993), 6, 14, 23, 28, 39, 50, 59.

In an ironic twist of fate, Europe, not America, was to be the first country to honor the Japanese American soldiers with a public memorial. On October 30, 1947, nearly 2,000 people gathered at the WWI/WWII memorial in town and paraded through the streets and into the forest to the site of the new memorial. A series of speeches from both American and French dignitaries was followed by the national anthems of both nations before the revealing of the stone tribute in the first of what would become an annual memorial service. The celebrations were even bigger in 1949 as the town of Bruyeres commemorated both the anniversary of the liberation and the receipt of a Croix de Guerre, the "War Cross," from the French Government. Following speeches and the acceptance of the medal in the morning, the townspeople and visiting dignitaries again followed a narrow path away from town into the woods sheltering the memorial. This tradition of annually recognizing the sacrifices of both their town's soldiers and the Japanese American soldiers on the anniversary of their liberation continues to this day.¹³

The relationship between the townspeople and the Japanese Americans continued to grow in other ways over the years. Due to the imagination and determination of Nisei Wilbert Sandy Holck and Bruyeran Gerard Deschaseaux, the cities of Bruyeres and Honolulu, Hawaii became Twin Cities in October 1961. The French Mayor, Rene Drahon, and the American Mayor, Neal Blaisell, celebrated the event with numerous Nisei veterans and local townspeople, not only in Bruyeres, but also at the nearby American Cemetery, and of course, the Nisei memorial. The festivities lasted for multiple days during which time the locals and visitors did their best to bridge cultural and linguistic differences through translators, folklore performances, and gift exchanges. The Islanders introduced leis, luaus, a pig roast, the hula, exotic shirts, the ukulele, and

¹³ Moulin, *U.S. Samurais in Bruyeres*, 196-203.

other uniquely Hawaiian items, while the French locals provided hospitality, decorations, and performances by traditional Vosgian Minstrels. In addition, the local authorities revealed one more honor for the Japanese Americans – the naming of the road that leads to the memorial, the “Rue du 442nd Regiment Americain.” The respective mayors met again in Hawaii in 1963 and 1967 and in Bruyeres in 1969 on the 25th anniversary of the liberation of the town.¹⁴

In addition to the mayoral exchanges of the twinning, the two groups also deepened their relationship through the pilgrimages of veterans and townspeople. Though individuals had visited Bruyeres on their own or as part of ceremonies since the conclusion of the war, the first large-scale return was in 1971 when 17 members of K Company descended on the town. This visit was followed by another boasting 200 attendees for the 30th Anniversary in 1974. Two years later, they reversed roles and over 150 442nd veterans met a contingent of Bruyerans at the Honolulu airport and spent two weeks introducing the French men and women to the sights and sounds of the Islands. Upon their return to Bruyeres, the travelers carried out their annual memorial service at the monument and raised a flag given to them by the veterans over the stone tribute. In 1984, American dignitaries and Nisei veterans again descended on the small French town to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the liberation and to dedicate a new monument to the 36th Division, with which the 100th/442nd RCT had served, in the neighboring town of Biffontaine. Speeches, memorial and religious services, gift exchanges, and festive celebrations marked the days of community shared between the distant and yet united groups.¹⁵

¹⁴ Moulin, *US Samurais in Bruyeres*, 207-234.

¹⁵ Moulin, *US Samurais in Bruyeres*, 262-289, 293-313.

Though he was not yet born when the first memorial to the Nisei was erected just outside the town of Bruyeres, Pierre Moulin would soon feature largely in the relationship between the two cities. As a child he participated in the memorial services; and as an adult he helped coordinate the Bruyeran visit to Honolulu and attended multiple events, pilgrimages, exhibit openings, and memorial services all around the world in honor of his heroes, the Japanese American soldiers. He and his fellow Bruyeran, Serge Carlesso, started a letter-writing campaign in support of the movement for an apology and monetary redress in the 1980s; and in 1989, Moulin created the "Peace and Freedom Trail" tracing the liberation route of the Japanese Americans using 89 commemorative plaques placed throughout the region. The dedication of the trail included memorial services, the unveiling of a Peace and Freedom Fountain in the center of town, and an exhibition on the Japanese Americans that was viewed by over 5,000 visitors. Moulin was declared an official Ambassador of Bruyeres-Hawaii Friendship in 1969 and he has since dedicated himself to ensuring the dissemination of information on the subject and the continued relationship between the Twin Cities. His work, *US Samurais in Bruyeres*, is certainly the definitive book on the subject of the Bruyeres-Japanese American alliance and his current residence in Honolulu is further proof of his desire continue to pursue the history of the Japanese American soldiers and the future cooperation between the cities.¹⁶

Moulin's dedication to the subject was mirrored in his neighboring country of Italy by Americo Bugliani. Bugliani was only twelve years old when he and his family found themselves living as refugees near the Allied encampment in Valdicastello, Italy in the spring of 1945. As he and his family struggled to find food in the war-torn

¹⁶ Moulin, *US Samurais in Bruyeres*, 323-337, 337-344, 345-369; Pierre Moulin, Interview by Author, (March, 2008), Honolulu, Hawaii.

countryside, he would frequently visit the Americans in the camp hoping that they would have food or candy for them. The men that he remembers meeting most were those of the 92nd Buffalo Division, which included African Americans, Caucasians, and Japanese American troops within its ranks. On the morning of April 4, 1945, during Bugliani's visit to camp, a Nisei soldier gave him candy, C-rations, toothpaste, a toothbrush, and his Class A woolen cap emblazoned with the two rifles of the infantry insignia. The soldier also handed him his picture and introduced himself as Paul Sakamoto before departing with the rest of his unit to face the battle for Mount Folgorito. Bugliani never forgot the kindness of Sakamoto and the other Nisei who always seemed to have handouts for the local Italian children.¹⁷

As the child of American citizens, and therefore a citizen himself, Bugliani traveled to the United States after the war and enlisted in the Army, serving in the Korean Conflict and later in Austria, Germany, and Italy. After his term of service, he worked a series of odd jobs while pursuing his education, which eventually led to a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1973. While living in Chicago, Bugliani was reminded of his hometown liberators while watching a Pearl Harbor special on TV that featured an interview with Nisei soldier, Sam Yoshinari. Through a series of coincidental meetings, Bugliani soon found himself to be a member of the American Legion's Chicago Nisei Post, despite his Italian descent. He delved into the history of the Japanese Americans during the war, gathering numerous resources on both the soldiers and the confinement of the West Coast communities. In the midst of his research, he found the name of his benefactor from so many decades before and eventually managed to reestablish contact

¹⁷ Arnold T. Hiura, "Americo Bugliani: One Man's Mission of Thanks," *Hawaii Herald: Hawaii's Japanese American Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (February 3, 1995), A-1.

and even visit Sakamoto at his home in Hawaii. According to one report, Sakamoto had never believed that he would survive the war and had regularly distributed his belongings, including blankets, an overcoat, candy, rations, and, of course, the items he had given to Bugliani.¹⁸

What Sakamoto could not have foreseen was the impact that his casual generosity would have on Bugliani over the decades. According to Bugliani, the exchange with Sakamoto “was probably the few happy moments at that time of trouble, the war. Fifty years later, it’s still there, inside of me, in the spiritual part of me. Of course, I was just a boy, and even I didn’t appreciate it fully at the time. Later, I realized that this man gave me practically all of his possessions.” Fifty years later, Bugliani not only still treasured the photo he had received but also sought to honor the kindness of Sakamoto and the other Nisei through a lasting tribute in Italy. With the help of a childhood friend, Paolo Tommasi, a banker, and Tommasi’s brother, Marcello, a sculptor, Bugliani spent three years raising funds and seeking approval for the placement of a permanent memorial to their liberators in the city of Pietrasanta, Italy.¹⁹

The design of the sculpture was the image of a soldier, standing on a marble base which featured a relief depicting the local region devastated by the war and an image of a mother lifting up her child to represent hope for the future. The soldier selected as the model and inspiration for the sculpture was the late Sadao S. Munemori, the only Nisei recipient of the Medal of Honor from World War II at that time.²⁰ According to his citation,

¹⁸ Hiura, “Americo Bugliani, A-1.

¹⁹ Hiura, “Americo Bugliani, A-12; Martha Nakagawa, “Italy to Dedicate Monument in Honor of Nisei Soldiers,” *Pacific Citizen* Vol. 130, No. 15 (April 14-20, 2000), 7.

²⁰ Nakagawa, “Italy to Dedicate Monument,” 7.

When his [Munemori's] unit was pinned down by grazing fire from the enemy's strong mountain defense and command of the squad devolved on him with the wounding of its regular leader, he made frontal, 1-man attacks through direct fire and knocked out two machine guns with grenades. Withdrawing under murderous fire and showers of grenades from other enemy emplacements, he had nearly reached a shell crater occupied by two of his men when an unexploded grenade bounced on his helmet and rolled toward his helpless comrades. He arose into the withering fire, dived for the missile and smothered the blast with his body. By his swift, supremely heroic action PFC Munemori saved two of his men at the cost of his own life and did much to clear the path for his company's victorious advance.²¹

Private Munemori died one day after Sakamoto and Bugliani's meeting near Seravezza, Italy, and his family received the news while confined at Manzanar Relocation Camp in California. On April 25, 2000, the monument bearing his likeness and dedicated with dirt brought from each of the ten relocation camps was unveiled in a small park at the "Piazza Caduti della Linea Gotica," the Plaza of the fallen from the Gothic Line. Due in no small part to the kindness of Sakamoto and other Nisei soldiers, the memorial tribute now stands to commemorate the liberators of the mountain villages of Northern Italy and the appreciation of the liberated.²²



Sadao Munemori Monument
Pietrasanta, Italy
Photo by Author, December 2008

Today, schoolchildren and citizens of liberated towns in France and Italy still study and honor the Japanese American soldiers that came to their rescue almost seventy

²¹ G. Douglas Sterner, *Go For Broke: The Nisei Warriors of World War II Who Conquered Germany, Japan, and American Bigotry* (Utah: American Legacy Historical Press, 2008), 154.

²² Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 195; John Ellington, Interview by author, November 2007, McGhee, Arkansas.

years ago. Veteran pilgrimages to Bruyeres are scheduled for both July and October of 2009, and relationships between the villages continue to grow through the new generations of visitors and local residents who participate in the memorial services and sentimental reunions. It is clear through the decades of connection, particularly between Bruyeres and Hawaii, that the residents of Europe's affected cities are not likely to forget their unique liberators, despite the delay of appreciation demonstrated by the Nisei soldier's homeland. Yet one analysis has argued that "the memorial reunions that commemorate the double liberation of the Battle of Bruyeres suggest that meaning and memory are profoundly personal and all too vulnerable to the vicissitudes of time," and thus the celebrations and memorials will eventually fade into memory and abandonment. While this may be true, the significance of the European tributes to the Japanese American soldiers lies in their immediacy and their sincerity, both of which provided a sense of appreciation and respect on both sides that strengthened community and national identity despite the harshness of war and prejudice. Later generations of Americans eventually recognized the significance of the Japanese American story and created cultural representations that would pass on the history to future generations, but the early relationship between Europeans and the Japanese Americans helped preserve a flame long before there was anyone to which to pass a torch.²³

UNITED STATES

On Sunday April 23, 1944, over 1,000 detainees gathered in the desert of Arizona to witness the dedication of a monument honoring the 464 men who had entered the

²³ Susan Spano, "A French Village's Unexpected Heroes," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 September 2005; Yoshimura, "The Legacy of the Battle of Bruyeres," 248.

service from within the confines of the Gila River Relocation Camp. Bishop Walter Mitchell of the regional Episcopal Church and Arthur Von Rhein of the Phoenix area American Legion were two of the honored speakers at the unveiling of the monument, as well as Gila River's Project Director, L. H. Bennet, who was reported to have said that "Rivers has a right to be proud of the monument, created and built by voluntary services of its residents." The camp high school band provided music while the Boy and Girl Scouts served as ushers and choir members for the ceremony, which was attended by visitors from surrounding communities as well as camp detainees. According to an editorial found in the *Gila News-Courier* two days later, "The monument is evidence of the devotion residents have for their sons, brothers, and fathers and the faith they have in the eventual freedom that will be won for all peoples in the United States including those of Japanese descent." The editor pointed out the sad fact that for some of the "boys" whose names were on the Honor Roll Monument, it would become a memorial because, "everybody cannot hope to come back alive."²⁴

On August 13, 1944, a similar service was held in Wyoming as 28 draftees were given a warm send-off by over 1,500 fellow detainees of the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp. The ceremony that morning took place in front of a newly completed honor roll panel displaying the names of more than 500 men who had served from the camp, either voluntarily or through the draft. The Minidoka Relocation Camp in Hunt, Idaho had dedicated their honor board in October 1943 to pay tribute to their servicemen, and Rohwer Relocation Camp in McGehee, Arkansas celebrated the unveiling of their war monument on Sunday November 4, 1945. The 13 ton concrete monument in the shape of

²⁴ "Rivers Men in Service Honored," *Gila River News-Courier*, 25 April 1944, p.1,3; "Editorial: The Real Tests," *Gila River News-Courier*, 25 April 1944, p.2.

a small tank held the names of 30 veterans from Rohwer who were killed in Europe with the 442nd RCT. Under a color image of the American flag, an inscription by Assistant Project Director Edward B. Moulton read, "In memory of our sons who sacrificed their lives in the service of their country. They fought for freedom. They died that the world might have peace."²⁵

During the course of World War II, induction ceremonies, monument dedications, and memorial services took place in communities around the world as families and friends sought to honor and remember their loved ones. Yet few faced the irony found behind the barbed wire and guard towers that surrounded the ten relocation camps. During one memorial service, the chairman of the citizen's council of Heart Mountain, Minejiro Hayashida, thanked the Nisei soldiers who, "by their heroic deeds, have contributed to the liberation of prejudice and intolerance imposed upon us, especially after they had come through the hard way of evacuation, which no other American soldiers have ever experienced." Though their lives were worth no more than the other men who died in service to their country, the irony of their background, experience, and motivation for enlistment combined with their incredible service record have captivated the hearts and minds of fellow soldiers, civilians, and historians for decades. Yet as we look back at their story it is important to remember that they were what some have described as the "most remembered, almost forgotten heroes of the war," and to ask how it was that they were almost forgotten.²⁶

²⁵ *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, 19 August 1944, p. 1; "Hunt Honor Board Set Up Near Gate," *Minidoka Irrigator*, 16 October 1943, p.1; "Monument to be dedicated Sunday," *Rohwer Relocator*, 2 November 1945, p. 1.

²⁶ "Project Director Pays Tribute to 7 Heart Mountain War Dead," *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, 16 December 1944, p.8; T. Fujitani, "Go For Broke, the Movie: Japanese American Soldiers in U.S. National, Military, and Racial Discourses," in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, Lisa Yoneyama, eds. (Charlotte: Duke University Press, 2001), 239.

Given the importance of politics and public memory in the creation of memorials in the US, it is not surprising that memorials to the Japanese American soldiers have had a contested history since World War II. Japanese Americans honored their veterans through a variety of memorials ranging from active veteran club houses, to traditional stone monuments, and even the non-traditional memorial mediums of films and novels. While debates over these memorials existed, they were far different than those revolving around public remembrance of the WRA confinement. The service of the Nisei soldiers was rarely criticized at the public level, and when it was, it was such blatantly racist rhetoric that even the majority of 1940s Americans opposed it. Such was the case for one particular Honor Roll plaque in a small town in Oregon towards the end of the war.

In the 1940s, Hood River, Oregon was an agricultural area located at the base of Oregon's Mount Hood in the Hood River Valley, and it boasted a population of only 11,500, including over 400 Japanese Americans. As the young men from Hood River left home for the war, the town, like thousands of others across the nation, created an Honor Roll memorial plaque affixed to the town's courthouse to remember those who served, including the 16 Niseis who volunteered. Unfortunately for the local Japanese American population, EO 9066 affected the Hood River Valley; and on May 13, 1942 the 431 local Japanese Americans boarded a train and headed for Tule Lake, California. The following year, the local American Legion Post No. 22, under the leadership of Jess Eddington, began introducing a series of resolutions aimed at stripping all Japanese Americans of their citizenship, preventing the further sale of property to Japanese Americans, and purchasing their existing holdings. The Legion also encouraged the ultimate deportation of all Japanese Americans from the country on the false grounds that their loyalty was

suspect because they all had dual citizenship in America and Japan and therefore they had sworn allegiance to the Japanese emperor.²⁷

Though their resolutions were ignorant, racist, and discriminatory, they actually received a level of support from local citizens, fellow American Legion posts, and even the state and national American Legion offices. However, their support quickly dwindled with the introduction of another resolution to remove the names of the 16 Japanese Americans from the Honor Roll because of their supposed dual citizenship. The enactment of this action was followed by immediate and angry opposition from around the world. In late 1944, just days after the names were removed, newspapers and magazines across the country had spoken out in opposition to the American Legion's action, and letters began to pour into the local post. Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, Roger Baldwin, spoke against the Hood River post as did representatives of the Justice Department. The *New York Times*, reported on "Hood River's Blunder," and wrote, "Japanese-American units have done splendid service in Italy. Japanese-Americans have been of great help in the Pacific War. They do not ask recognition beyond that given to German-Americans and other sorts of Americans who have served faithfully. They are entitled to as much recognition. Hood River owes them an apology." *Collier's*, New York's *PM*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Des Moines Register*, and the *Salt Lake Tribune* also published opposition to the removal of the soldier's names as did *The Defender* and *The Stars and Stripes*, both armed forces newspapers.²⁸

²⁷ Linda Tamura, "'Wrong Face, Wrong Name': The Return of Japanese American Veterans to Hood River, Oregon After World War II," in Sucheng Chan, ed., *Remapping Asian American History* (New York: Altamira Press, 2003), 108, 111-112.

²⁸ Tamura, "Wrong Face, Wrong Name," 112; "Church Ready for Battle Against Legion Over Nisei," *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, 9 December 1944; "Justice Department Assails Hood River," *Manzanar Free Press*, 13 January 1945; "Hood River's Blunder," *New York Times*, 9 December 1944, p. 14; Tamura, "Wrong Face, Wrong Name," 113.

The announcement in military newspapers brought an even greater outpouring of opposition from servicemen stationed around the world. Lieutenant Colonel James M. Hanley, commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 442nd RCT; Secretary of War Henry Stimson; Hood River local, Sgt. Taro Asai, whose name was removed; and 300 other soldiers sent letters to the post. Some of the most outspoken soldiers were the men of the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment of the 36th Division, the "Lost Battalion," who had been rescued by the Nisei just two months earlier. War correspondents Gordon Gammack, Clinton G. Conger, and Richard W. Johnston each reported that men in the European and Pacific Theaters were outraged over the removal of Nisei names because of their honored service in both theaters. The anger among fellow soldiers reached an even greater pitch after the death of Hood River local Private Frank T. Hachiya, who was killed while performing dangerous reconnaissance in the Pacific Theater. His death came just one month after his name was removed from the Hood River Honor Roll.²⁹

The news from Hood River was followed with great interest in each of the camps. On December 9, 1944, the *Mindoka Irrigator* reported, "Hood River Legion scratches names of Nisei in Army," and on the same day an editorial in the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* wrote, "Adolph Hitler, if he is still alive and ranting, probably chalked up a good mark for the Hood River American Legion post last week." The assistant director of the WRA, Robert Cozzens, also wrote to the legion post voicing his disapproval of the actions. In the early months of 1945, the camp newspapers anxiously published reports of those detainees that still chose to resettle in Hood River despite the obvious tension. The *Topaz*

²⁹ Tamura, "Wrong Face, Wrong Name," 113; "French Front Soldiers Angry at Hood River Legion Post's action," *Poston Chronicle*, 13 January 1945, p. 1; "Oregon Soldiers Resent Hood River Legion Act," *Manzanar Free Press*, 21 March 1945, p. 3; "Private Hachiya, American," *New York Times*, 17 February 1945, p. 12.

Times reported that Ray Sato, Sat Noji, and Min Asai made a safe return despite warnings of a “welcoming committee” that would greet Japanese Americans and urge them not to stay. Mary Ogawa also returned to prepare her soldier brother’s home for his return and was quoted as saying the staff at Safeway “practically fell over themselves serving me,” while the owner of another store greeted her by name and spoke with her for over half an hour.³⁰

Unfortunately, not everyone remembered the same warm welcome. Despite receiving over 400 letters, two-thirds of which were negative, and despite the opposition of numerous local churches and organizations, the Post refused to reverse its actions. During the first three months of 1945 the Post took out five full-page ads urging Japanese Americans not to return and listing the 30 Japanese Americans who still owned property in the area. These ads frequently featured the names of local residents who supported the ban while those who did not support the move received threats. Some detainees who returned to Hood River remembered having difficulty purchasing goods in certain stores and some shop owners would allow Japanese Americans in only after dark to prevent recrimination.³¹

In response to the negative attention, the National American Legion Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana eventually became involved. National Commander Edward N. Scheiberling issued a strongly worded recommendation that the Hood River post restore the names of the Nisei soldiers, but the local post refused to alter their position saying

³⁰ “Hood River Legion Scratches Names of Nisei in Army,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 9 December 1944; “Prejudice and Patriotism,” *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, 9 December 1944; Tamura, “Wrong Face, Wrong Name,” 113; “Three Evacuees go Back to Hood River,” *Topaz Times*, 17 January 1945; “Family Returns to Hood River,” *Gila News-Courier*, 11 April 1945; “Hood River Returnees Recount Experience,” *Rohwer Outpost*, 11 April 1945.

³¹ Tamura, “Wrong Face, Wrong Name,” 115; “Portland Council of Churches Threatened for his Objections,” *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, 16 December 1944; Tamura, “Wrong Face, Wrong Name,” 116-117.

they still felt the same and wanted to let the Japanese Americans know that they were not welcome back in Hood River. Though the local post refused to admit the Nisei, the Captain Belvidere Brooks Post No. 450 in New York extended an invitation to the 16 who had been removed to “offset” the “black eye” given to the American Legion by the Hood River post. In addition, in January 1945, the Hollywood Post No. 591 welcomed Harley Oka, the first Nisei veteran to join the American Legion, and they were soon followed by posts in Omaha and Los Angeles. In the midst of the debate, residents of Gardena, California also became acutely aware of the absence of Distinguished Service Cross recipient Pvt. Kiyoshi Muranaga’s name on their local Honor Roll, and they quickly began discussions to fix the problem.³²

When it became clear that the bad publicity was not likely to dissipate, National Commander Scheiberling put more pressure on the Hood River post threatening an investigation into their practices and the possible loss of their charter. Facing this possibility, post Commander Edington sent a telegraph to national headquarters on March 6, 1945 agreeing to restore the names of 15 Nisei with the understanding that their sentiments had not changed towards the return of Japanese Americans to Hood River.³³ Japanese Americans in Hood River still faced some discrimination, such as a “No Cigarettes. No Negroes. No Japs.” sign; and a small number of local servicemen claimed that they would remove their own names from the Honor Roll if the Japanese American names were restored. But despite remnants of opposition, the names were eventually

³² “Region National Commander Asks Hood River Post to Restore Nisei Soldier Names to Honor Roll,” *Poston Chronicle*, 26 January 1945; “Hood River Legion Gets Black Eye,” *Gila News-Courier*, 27 December 1944; “First Nisei Veteran Accepted in Hollywood American Legion Post,” *Manzanar Free Press*, January 17, 1945; “Condemn Hood River’s American Legion,” *Manzanar Free Press*, 13 January 1945; “Omaha American Legion Accepts Nisei,” *Manzanar Free Press*, 13 January 1945; “Absence of Nisei Names from Honor Roll Stirs Gardenans,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 6 January 1945.

³³ “Hood River Legion Post to Restore Names of Nisei Men,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 10 March 1945. One name was left off because he received a dishonorable discharge from the service.

restored to the Honor Roll, and in fact, a local organization called the League for Liberty and Justice was created by concerned citizens to educate the public regarding tolerance towards the Japanese Americans and to ensure that the reception for the returning residents would be positive.³⁴

In the midst of the controversy, a concerned citizen, Joe Mickle, wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* on behalf of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, arguing that, "The purpose of a war memorial is to honor those who have died to preserve American freedom and the American way of life. Such honor should be conferred without regard to race, color, or religious creed." Clearly there were a number of people that disagreed with this sentiment and were willing to limit a place on an Honor Roll to those who looked a certain way. Fortunately, in the decades following the war the frequency and virulence of race prejudice towards the Japanese Americans gradually diminished to a point that monuments and memorials to the Nisei soldiers became more frequent and acceptable. Today the Japanese American population in Hood River is about 1% of the total population but they are accepted as one of many ethnicities now residing in the ethnically diverse area. In an ironic twist, the Hood River American Legion Post No. 22 hosted an exhibit in 1994 entitled, "In This Great Land of Freedom: The Japanese Pioneers of Oregon," and while many of the younger locals may not understand the irony, it still shows how far the region and the nation has come in its

³⁴ "Store in Hood River Displays Posters Against Japanese," *Manzanar Free Press*, 2 June 1945; "American Fair Play?," *Time*, 19 March 1945; "Hood River Aims for Tolerance," *Gila News-Courier*, 23 May 1945.

acceptance and remembrance of the significant role that Japanese Americans played in our nation's history.³⁵

100th Infantry Battalion Memorial Building

Before the war was even over, USO organizations, Ex-Servicemen Clubs, and parents of veteran's groups had overseen Honor Rolls, memorial services, and the erection of traditional monuments in numerous confinement sites across the US. Though the servicemen undoubtedly appreciated the warm send-offs and tributes that they received, their thoughts quickly turned from their departure to their return. While still training at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, the men of the 100th Infantry Battalion created the Club One Puka Puka,³⁶ and every member paid \$2/month in dues to the company clerk who meticulously recorded everyone's donations for a wartime total of \$50,000. In December 1945, Club One Puka Puka became incorporated as Club 100 in the Territory of Hawaii; and in 1946, the Club used their savings to purchase a former Japanese language school for use as a club office. They later sold that property, made a substantial profit, and moved into a one room office rented from the Young Buddhist Association where they still managed to meet occasionally and distribute news to their members. In 1952, Club 100 moved into their current building at 520 Kamoku Street, where they also built an apartment complex to maintain a steady income for the Club and its members. With the motto of, "For Continuing Service," Club 100 spent the following decades

³⁵ Joe Mickle, "Hood River Action Criticized," *New York Times*, 11 December 1944; Tamura, "Wrong Face, Wrong Name," 120.

³⁶ "Puka" is the Hawaiian word for zero or nothing.

participating in local fund raisers, supporting organizations in the community, and providing charitable donations to a number of causes around the country.³⁷



100th Infantry Battalion Memorial Building, Honolulu, Hawaii
Photo by author, March 31, 2008

Today, the Club 100 building, which started as “A Place to Shoot the Bull,” has become a touching and uniquely living memorial to the memory of the 100th Infantry. The unassuming blue building, now called the 100th Infantry Battalion Memorial Building, is full of tributes to the men of the 100th Infantry. The entry hall houses a large glass display case boasting plaques, certificates, trophies, and engraved silver from organizations and people around the world who wanted to offer their thanks for the

³⁷ Naoji Yamagata, “A Place to Shoot the Bull,” in *Remembrances: 100th Infantry Battalion 50th Anniversary Celebration, 1942-1992* (Honolulu: Sons & Daughters of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 1997), 155-165.

service of the unit. A small lounge area displays more photos, tributes, and artifacts from the war and also includes a table with a guest book and informational brochures. On the wall is a large slab of marble, imported in 1952 from Carrara, Italy and inscribed with the names of the 100th Infantry soldiers that were killed in action during the war.



Lounge area with marble memorial plaque
Photo by author, March 31, 2008

The Club includes a large reception hall with photos of each 100th Infantry Medal of Honor recipient overlooking the floor and a bulletin board posted with photos, newspaper articles, and letters written to the Club 100 to thank them for their service, their community dedication, and, in some cases, to send in donations for the upkeep of their building. An adjoining room features a small snack bar area and large meeting space or sitting room, and down a long hall there were smaller rooms for activities,

meetings, etc. Just inside the main entrance is the office, staffed by manager Amanda Steven, which housed an impressive collection of books, videos, and document archives.

The building was not large or ornate but comfortable and intimate. Its close proximity to two area schools has encouraged many joint programs and interaction, and it is Steven's goal that all local high school students have the opportunity to interview a World War II veteran during the course of their schooling. In an effort to expand their educational opportunities, the Club 100 is currently in the process of building a Learning Resource Center inside the Club. They hope to expand and enclose part of their large reception hall to add space for computers, a projector, and a classroom and also to make their currently inaccessible archives more readily available for researchers. In February 2008, Club 100 received a \$1 million grant from the state of Hawaii to help forward their plans for the Learning Center, and they hope to raise the funds and complete the addition by 2010.³⁸

While the library, archives, plaques, Medal of Honor tributes, and even Turner Hall, named after a beloved wartime commanding officer, were all compelling memorials to the legacy of the 100th Infantry, the most poignant feature of Club 100 is the veterans themselves. Frequently, visiting members like veterans Leighton "Goro" Sumida, Akira Akimoto, and Albert Matsumoto sit in the back rooms playing cards and willingly talk with visitors about their experiences. In March 2008, in a haunting reminder of the age of many WWII veterans, the flag outside the clubhouse flew at half-staff in honor of Shizuya Hayashi, the last 100th Infantry Medal of Honor recipient who had recently passed away. The lowered flag, the photos of the veterans - both current and past - and

³⁸ Amanda Stevens, Interview with Author, March 31, 2008, 100th Infantry Battalion Memorial Building, Honolulu, Hawaii; Amanda Stevens, "Grant for Learning Resource Center from the State of Hawaii," *Puka-Puka Parade* (March 2008), 11.

the veterans themselves spoke louder than any plaque about service to country, sacrifice, and camaraderie.



Akira Akimoto, Abbie Salyers, Leighton "Goro" Sumida, and Albert Matsumoto Outside the Club 100 Veteran's Building, Honolulu, Hawaii
Photo by Amanda Stevens, March 31, 2008

In light of the aging 100th Club members, a new generation of soldier has stepped in to fill the shoes of the WWII veterans. The 100th Infantry/442nd RCT was originally inactivated in 1946, but it has since been redesignated as a National Guard unit and is currently the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry attached to the Hawaii Army National Guard's 29th Infantry Brigade. Between 2004 and 2006, the 100th Battalion served in Iraq, and the unit was redeployed in 2008 for a tour of duty in Kuwait. Conversations with some of the soldiers of the younger 100th Battalion generation reveal a devoted attachment to their particular unit designation. One soldier said his wife felt he loved his

unit more than he loved her, while others claimed that they definitely loved their unit more than any other soldiers in any other unit in the country.³⁹

While these claims may not be verifiable, there is an undeniable connection between the older and younger generations of 100th soldiers. Many of the young soldiers joined because of family members that had served in the famed WWII unit, and others reported that their sense of camaraderie with the older war veterans had increased dramatically since they returned from combat in Iraq. Perhaps the most stirring interaction between the two generations, however, is their shared recognition of fallen soldiers. According to the young 100th members, there is not a day that goes by that they are not involved with the elder soldiers through service projects, social activities, and funerals. The young soldiers serve as an honor guard for every WWII 100th Infantry veteran that passes away on the islands and are present for every funeral and every memorial service in honor of the aging veterans. Members of the WWII generation returned the honor and held two ceremonies in honor of the young soldiers prior to their departure to Iraq in 2004 and again upon their return in 2006. When Medal of Honor recipient and WWII veteran Hayashi died on March 12, 2008, the young men of the current 100th Battalion provided an honor guard for the services; and when the 37-year old 100th Battalion soldier SSG Julian F. Manglona died on October 9, 2008, the WWII veterans voices joined their younger comrades at his memorial to honor his memory and his service with the song, "Go For Broke." As the older generation of WWII soldiers passes away, the young men of the 100th Battalion serve as a living memorial to the

³⁹ "100th Battalion on Alert for Possible Kuwait Deployment," *The Honolulu-Advertiser*, 21 December 2007; William Cole, "Hawaii Guard to be Sent to Kuwait Next Fall," *The Honolulu-Advertiser*, 20 October 2007.

memory and inspiration of the men of the 100th/442nd RCT that first formed their beloved unit over sixty years earlier.⁴⁰

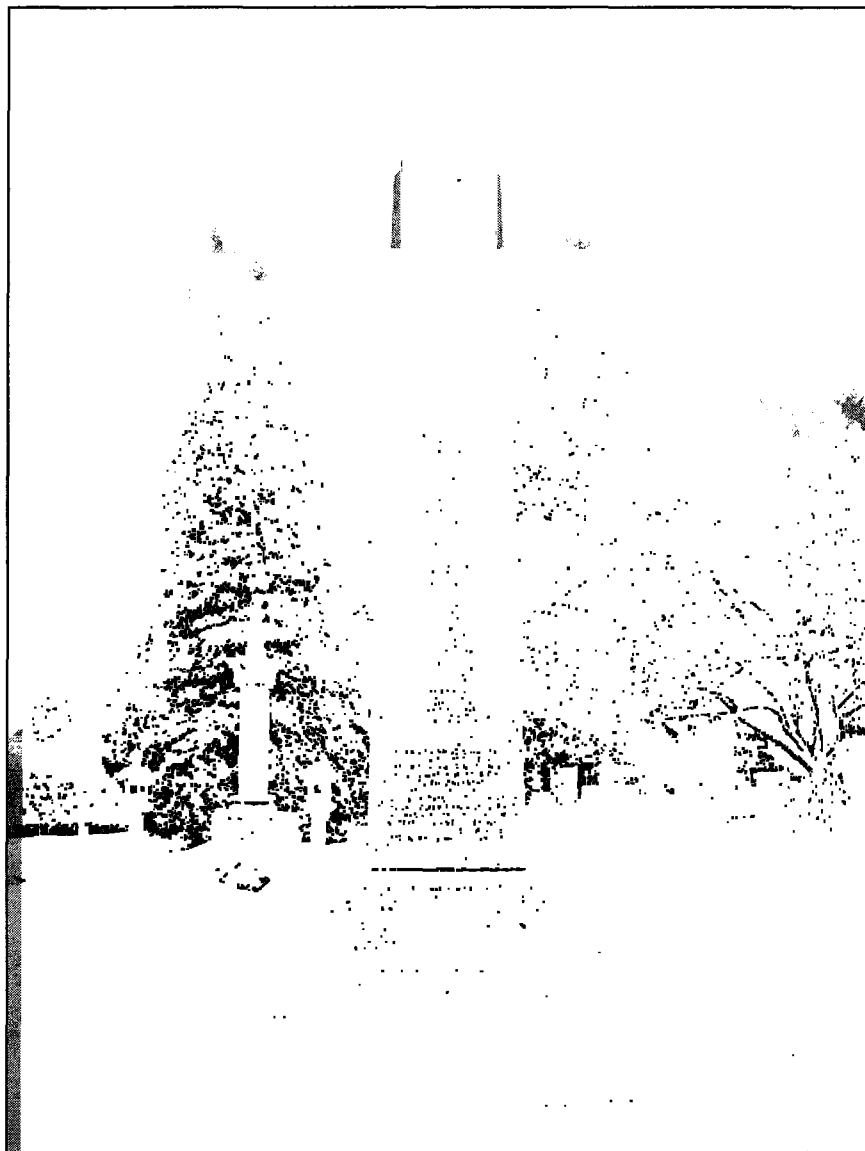
Emergence of Memorials

With the exception of isolated incidences like the Hood River American Legion Post, the wartime record of the 100th/442nd RCT was often considered a legitimate and acceptable subject to honor through memorials or monuments at the individual or local level. In fact, the relative lack of monuments in the decades after the war had little to do with the service record of the Nisei and more to do with its association with the relocation and confinement of Japanese Americans. It was difficult to mention the enlistment of new soldiers without reminding the public about their origins in strange cities like Manzanar, California or Topaz, Utah. Thus, the public tribute to Japanese Americans was not contested for what it represented on the surface – the heroic deeds of the Nisei soldiers in Europe and the Pacific – but for what it implied – the hypocrisy of the mass relocation. The desire felt by many, Japanese American and Caucasian alike, to forget the WRA confinement led to the repression of national commemoration for a highly honored group of soldiers for decades before the political climate became such that the Japanese Americans and other minority groups regained their voice. Instead, Nisei tributes erected by their fellow soldiers quietly emerged in communities and cemeteries across the nation with little public fanfare or national recognition.

⁴⁰ Gregg K. Kakesako, “100th Battalion Members have ties to WWII Heroes,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 10 October 2004; Gregg K. Kakesako, “Honoring the 100th: 100th Battalion Veterans Pay Tribute to their Fallen Comrades in a Ceremony at Punchbowl,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 27 September 2004; Gregg K. Kakesako, “War Vets with Leis Honor 100th Battalion: The Ceremony Brings Together World War II and Iraqi Combat Vets,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 21 July 2006; Jayne Hirata-Epstein, “Memorial Ceremony in Honor of SSG Julian F. Manglona Held on October 15,” 100th Infantry Battalion Blog, Honolulu Advertiser, 16 October 2008.

In many cases, the earliest construction of memorials other than wartime Honor Rolls began with tributes in cemeteries to honor the veterans as they began to pass away in the years after the war. One of the first such monuments to appear was built by the Seattle Nisei War Memorial Committee of the Seattle Nisei Veteran's Committee (NVC) in the city's Lakeview Cemetery in 1949. The Seattle NVC began in the years after the war when returning veterans did not receive a warm welcome from local American Legion and Veteran's of Foreign War Posts. In response, they created a club of their own and purchased a wooden building in the International District on King Street for \$1,000. The NVC Memorial Hall stood for decades as a center of the Seattle Japanese community and has just recently undergone a \$2.5 million restoration. A wall inside the hall pays tribute to local Nisei who were killed during combat in the last half of the twentieth century, and the organization still holds services at Lakeview Cemetery every year on Memorial Day.⁴¹

⁴¹ Brad Wong, "A New Look For Memorial Hall Honoring Nisei War Veterans," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 15 March 2008.

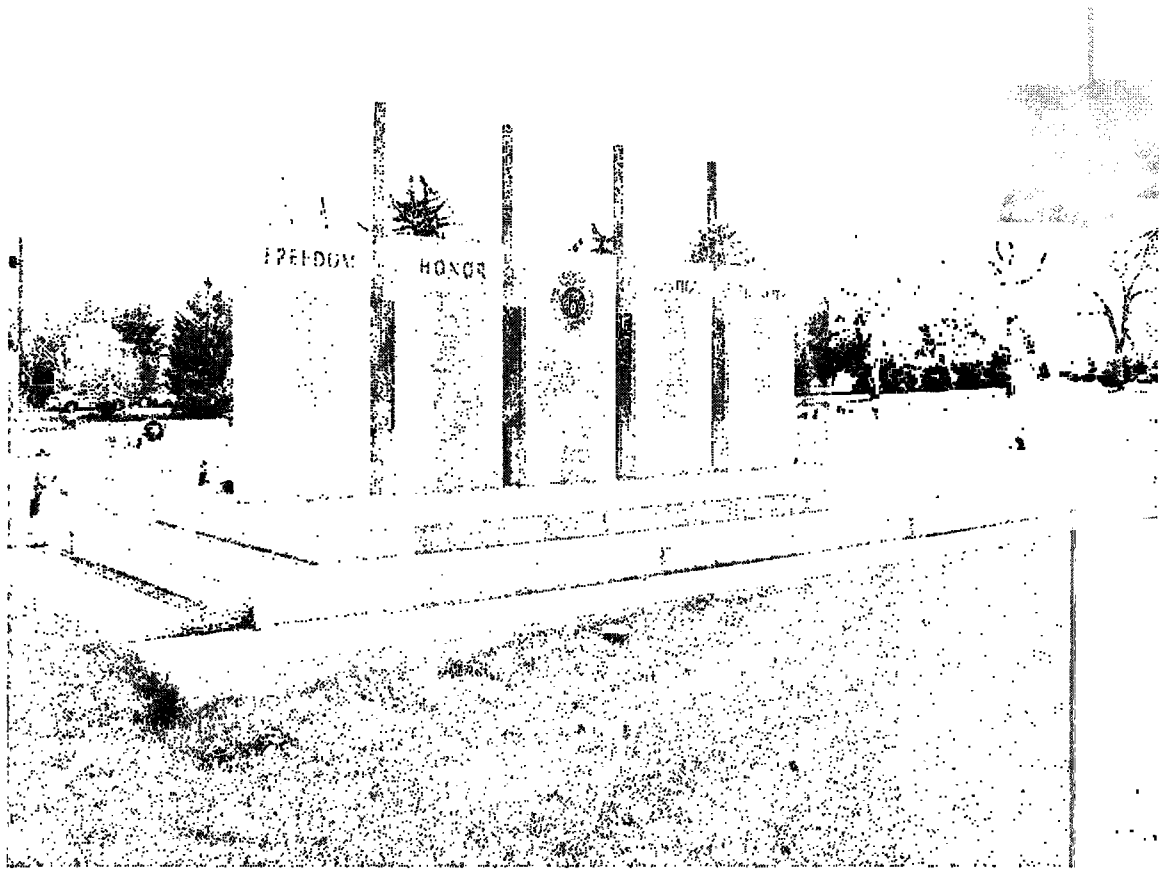


Lakeview Cemetery Nisei War Memorial
Photo by author, April 2007

Also in 1949, the Japanese American community of Los Angeles worked with the Southern California Burial and Memorial Committee to erect a memorial in Evergreen Cemetery to honor the fallen Nisei soldiers of World War II, and later, the Korean conflict. Located in the diverse Boyle Heights neighborhood, Evergreen was also home to a memorial honoring the earliest Issei pioneers that helped settle the region. With such deep roots, this area seemed a fitting resting place for the many Japanese Americans who

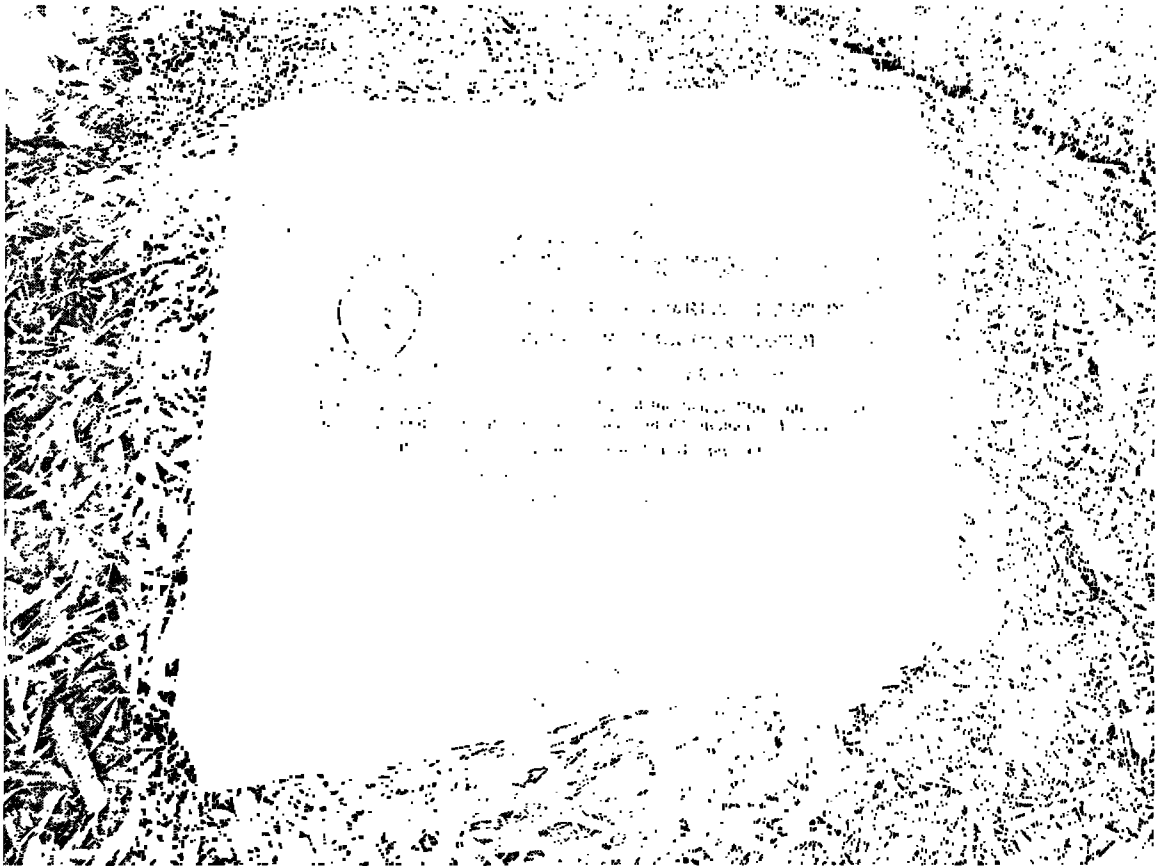
are buried within the cemetery. Visitors today can see the graves of four Medal of Honor recipients, Ted Tanouye, Kiyoshi Muranaga, Joe Hayashi, and Sadao Munemori, the first Nisei to be awarded the honor. American flags, flowers, and offerings at the veteran's graves and memorial show that current residents still pay tribute to those soldiers who, according to the inscription, died, "that liberty, justice, and equal opportunity in the pursuit of happiness might come to all democratic and peace-loving people everywhere regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin."

Fourteen years after the creation of the LA and Seattle memorials, Nisei veterans, friends, and families in Denver worked with the American Legion Post 185 to erect the Nisei War Memorial in Fairmount Cemetery. The inscription reads in part, "It is to those who made the supreme sacrifice in demonstrating that Americanism is not a matter of race or ancestry that this monument is dedicated." The structure of five concrete slabs contains the names of local veterans who died in combat on one side under the headings of Freedom, Honor, Justice, and Equality, with the seal of the 442nd RCT atop the center slab. The opposite side bears an inscription in the center with the names of local veterans who have died in the years since their time of service on the left two slabs. The remaining two slabs are ominously blank as they await more inscriptions. As in Seattle and LA, the monument is the site of a Memorial Day service every year.



Fairmount Nisei War Memorial
Photo by author, March 2007

In Honolulu's Punchbowl Crater sits the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the final resting place for numerous Nisei veterans including eight Medal of Honor recipients and Senator "Spark" Matsunaga. The cemetery has over 55 memorials to various units, ships, and individuals, and five of these specifically commemorate the Japanese American veterans.



100th Infantry Battalion Memorial, Punchbowl Cemetery
 Photo by Author, March 29, 2008

Two were dedicated by the living veterans of the 100th/442nd to their fallen comrades, one was dedicated to the men of the MIS from their fellow servicemen, and two were dedicated to the 100th/442nd RCT from the people of Bruyeres and Biffontaine, France for their heroic efforts in liberating the two cities. The island of Oahu is also the home of another memorial to the Nisei Veterans, the Brothers in Valor Memorial, located on a quiet corner in the otherwise bustling area of Waikiki in Honolulu.



Brothers in Valor Monument, Honolulu, Hawaii
Photo by author, March 29, 2008

The sculpture was the idea of local professor and lawyer, Judy M. Weightman, who dedicated her life to justice, equality, and the preservation of memories regarding WWII and the Holocaust. Given that the 100th Infantry began in Hawaii, the area is a fitting location for such heartfelt tributes to the servicemen.

As public interest in and awareness of the Japanese American experience increased in the decades of the late twentieth century, more memorials began to appear. In the late 1980s and 1990s Heart Mountain, Minidoka, Amache, Topaz, and Poston all created or restored a memorial to the Nisei soldiers from each camp that died during their

combat service. The original 1944 Honor Roll at Heart Mountain was slowly destroyed by the weather, but a plaque was added to the site in 1985 to commemorate those who died in military service. Almost two decades later, the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Foundation researched and recreated a replica of the Honor Roll, which was dedicated on July 25, 2003 to add to other ongoing interpretive projects at the site. Following the addition of Minidoka to the National Register of Historic Places, a series of plaques were added to the site, one of which commemorated those who died during their service. In 1983, the Denver area veterans and the Denver Central Optimist Club dedicated a memorial in Granada, honoring both the 31 soldiers who died during combat and the 120 civilians who died during their years in the camp. In 1992, a memorial at Poston was created to similarly honor and remember the experience of the detainees as well as the fallen soldiers; and at the same time, a new memorial was added to the cemetery at Rohwer listing on one side the names of the servicemen from camp who died and explaining the relocation and confinement on the other. The most recent camp memorial is at Topaz, Utah where two large plaques provide a brief history of the relocation, pictures of the camp during the war years, and a list of all the men who served from the camps during WWII and the Korean War.

Beyond the confines of the camps, other memorials have emerged, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, to commemorate the service of Japanese American soldiers. In 1999, the Club 100 Veterans erected a memorial on Sacrifice Field at Fort Benning, Georgia to pay tribute to the heroic service of the 100th Infantry. The three granite slabs list the medals received and the battles fought on either side of an inscription honoring their "courage and uncommon valor...grace and forbearance." Citizens of Santa Fe, New

Mexico; Pasadena, California; and Torrance, California have all created memorials honoring their local Medal of Honor recipients Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura (Korean War), Joe Hayashi, and Ted Tanouye respectively. Another significant site that paid tribute to the Nisei soldiers was Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, which is where the men of the 100th Infantry trained before going to Camp Shelby. The post is currently in the process of collecting photos and information to create a sign memorializing the efforts of the soldiers during their time at McCoy. Numerous Japanese Gardens around the country also include memorials to the Japanese American veterans including the Kokomo Peace Garden of Darrough Chapel Park in Indiana and the Normandale Community College Japanese Gardens in Bloomington, Minnesota.⁴²

In addition to memorials that commemorate the men of the 100th/442nd RCT, a number of sites have also been chosen to pay tribute to the linguists of the Military Intelligence Service. In 1991, the MIS Association of Northern California joined forces with the National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS) to preserve Building 640, a small building on the Presidio that originally housed the first MIS class in 1941. Since then, the NJAHS has worked with the various organizations involved, including the National Park Service, to conduct the necessary studies, raise the funds, preserve, and interpret the building as the MIS Historic Learning Center, which would feature a memorial wall listing the names of every Nisei linguist as well as a classroom and temporary exhibit area. The NJAHS hopes to create the site to reflect on global issues such as languages, war and peace, and international relations. After EO 9066, the MIS

⁴² Kevin Killough, “Miyamura Memorialized,” *Gallup Independent*, 17-18 May 2008; “Memorial Plaque to Honor Joe Hayashi,” Honolulu *Advertiser*, 100th Infantry Blog, 16 September 2008; “WWII Nisei Troops Pay Tribute to Torrance’s Medal of Honor Winner Ted Tanouye,” Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL Newsletter, November 2005, Go For Broke National Education Foundation Archives; “Photos of Fort McCoy Signs Needed,” *Puka-Puka Parade* (July 2008), 5.

classes were forced to relocate to Camp Savage and later Fort Snelling, Minnesota, both of which now have memorials or exhibits commemorating the role of the MIS in the war effort. A small plaque was erected at Camp Savage in 1993 and the Visitor's Center at Fort Snelling features exhibits on the camp during WWII.

Who should be remembered?

By the 1980s, the social climate in the US had so changed that the Nisei war memorials began to shift from small local tributes to more national collective efforts, though this shift did not occur without some controversy. In 1989, the 100th/442nd/MIS World War II Memorial Foundation was created in LA with the goal of developing a memorial to Japanese American veterans and to perpetuating education about the significant role of the Nisei in WWII. An international design competition in 1990 received 128 applicants, from which they selected the design of Roger M. Yanagita, a local architect who was inspired by the experiences of the veterans themselves. The winning design featured a circular granite slab that gradually angled up from the ground to a height of six feet. The rounded rise was reminiscent of not only the hilly terrain in which the Nisei fought across Europe, but also the uphill struggle that the Japanese Americans had faced in the US during the twentieth century. The chosen site for the memorial was a plaza that housed the Japanese American National Museum, a hotel, and an office building.⁴³

The design and location were solidified in early 1991 and a fund raising campaign was already underway, but the actual content of the monument was still very much under

⁴³ "Deadline Set for WWII Veterans' Memorial Designs," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 March 1990; Gary Libman, "Dispute Simmers as Design is Picked for War Memorial in Little Tokyo," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 January 1991.

consideration. One group of veterans wanted to list the names of all Japanese American veterans and their officers, living and dead, that fought in WWII, while another group pushed for a memorial honoring those who had died in service, not only during WWII, but also during the Spanish American War, WWI, the Korean Conflict, and Vietnam. Those who supported the focus on WWII felt that the contributions of the soldiers during that war were particularly significant due to the mass relocation, the demonstration of loyalty, and the courageous battle record.⁴⁴

According to veteran Robert Hayamizu, the idea of a monument paying tribute to surviving soldiers was, “a vision of supreme grandeur by living leaders...who espouse such an immodest concept of martyrdom and immortality for themselves.” Another like-minded citizen felt that listing the names of the living was not indicative of their heritage and that, “In the Japanese culture there’s no room for people patting themselves on the back. You don’t put up a monument to yourself and put your name on it.” In contrast, retired Col. Young Oak Kim, the Korean American officer of the 100th/442nd RCT, felt that the inclusion of the names of *everyone* who fought would guarantee that future generations would remember their contributions. He claimed, “It will stop the average person and make him wonder why all those names are up here...Fifty to 100 years from now, people may forget what the Japanese community did, but the sheer size of this list is a way of making people think about it.” Other supporters of the inclusive list made the argument that the “successful fighting record of the troops had a lot to do with how the American government and the people perceived us after the war. These are people who definitely made a difference.” The debate ranged between a tribute to all Japanese

⁴⁴ Gary Libman, “Battle Zone: Veterans’ Groups Disagree About Who Should be Listed on a Proposed Monument to Japanese-American Soldiers,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 June 1990.

American veterans in honor of their supreme sacrifice or a living testimony to the large numbers and unique struggles of the Nisei who fought during the Second World War.⁴⁵

By the time the design was selected, the two sides were still battling but had reached at least one small conclusion. Regardless of whether the names of the living were included, the names of all Japanese Americans who had died during military service in all past wars would be inscribed on the monument. One local citizen wrote an editorial recommending a compromise – a monument that listed the names of all Japanese Americans who fought in World War II on a “centerpiece,” with the names of others who had died in other engagements on separate aspects or pieces of the memorial. According to the author, the main significance of the monument was to commemorate the extraordinary suffering and the courageous action of the WWII Nisei generation, therefore others who had died in service who had not been through quite such harsh circumstances could take a secondary position. Though the author seemed to think a compromise was acceptable, another observer commented that asking the battling veterans to compromise was easy for outsiders, but not the actual veterans involved because they “feel so strongly about it.”⁴⁶

Eventually the group promoting an all-inclusive list won out. The ground-dedication ceremony was held on November 10, 1995, the groundbreaking took place on April 5, 1998, and the “Go For Broke” National Monument was unveiled and dedicated in Little Tokyo on June 5, 1999. 1,500 people gathered for the ceremony, which revealed the monument inscribed with 16,000 names, surrounded by a grassy circle and topped

⁴⁵ Quoted in Libman, “Battle Zone”; Quoted in Libman, “Dispute Simmers”; Quoted in Libman, “Battle Zone.”

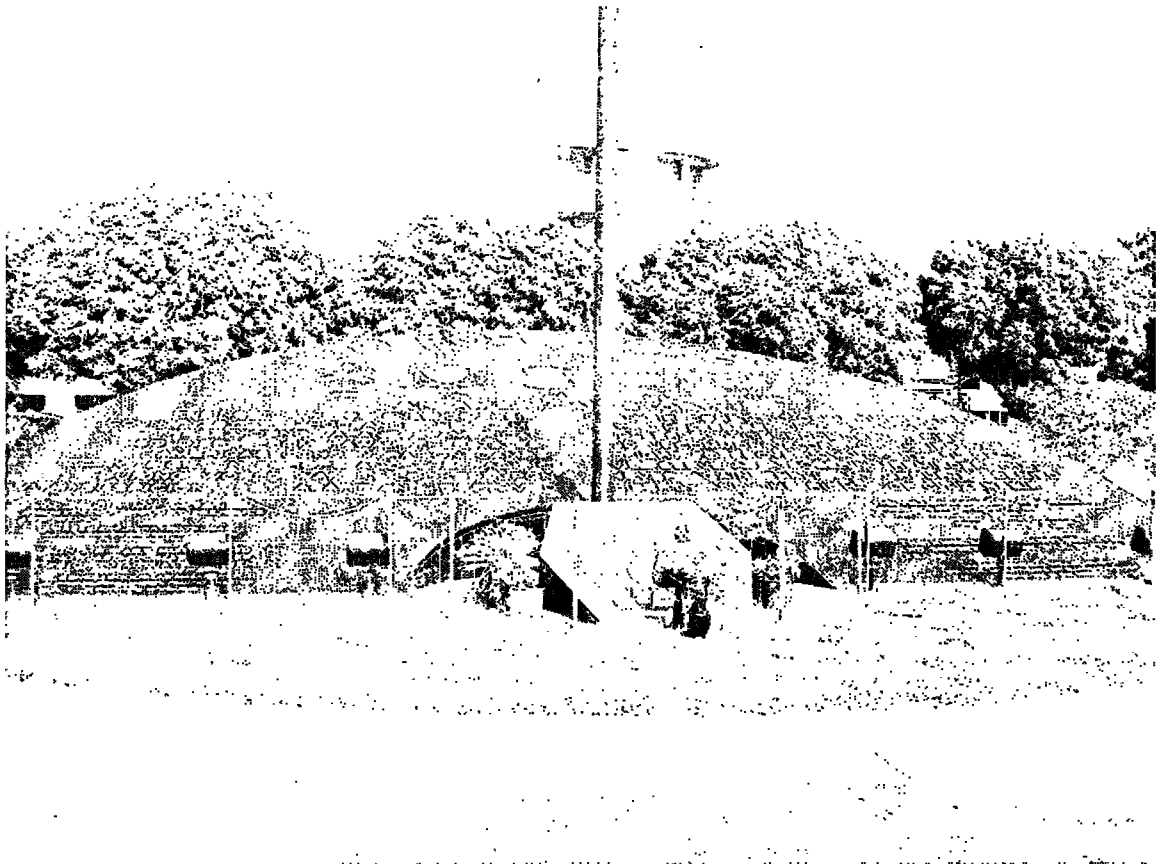
⁴⁶ “Veterans at War,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 June 1990; Quoted in Libman, “Battle Zone.”

with an American flag. The main inscription, written by 100th Infantry veteran Ben Tamashiro, reads,

Rising to the defense of their country, by the thousands they came – these young Japanese American soldiers from Hawaii, the states, America’s concentration camps – to fight in Europe and the Pacific during World War II. Looked upon with suspicion, set apart and deprived of their constitutional rights, they nevertheless remained steadfast and served with indomitable spirit and uncommon valor, for theirs was a fight to prove loyalty. This legacy will serve as a sobering reminder that never again shall any group be denied liberty and the rights of citizenship.

A number of pillars on the grounds surrounding the monument acknowledged major donors and listed the Medal of Honor recipients, while a nearby kiosk featured an interactive display with interviews and information relating to the service of the Japanese American soldiers and the creation of the monument. According to Col. Kim’s page, “You build a monument to tell a story or to make a statement....” While the monument no doubt tells a story and makes a statement, there is no way for visitors to know of the debate that went into the memorial’s creation without research on the subject.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *The Unveiling of an American Story* (Los Angeles: Go For Broke Foundation, 1999).



Go For Broke National Monument
Photo by Author, November 2007

Though the Go For Broke Monument has become one of the most recognized and respected monuments to the Japanese American community and the affiliated Go For Broke National Education Center now has hundreds of interviews as part of their Hanashi Oral History Project, the story does not end with the dedication of the Monument. In 1998, the Americans of Japanese Ancestry World War II Memorial Alliance (the Alliance) was created to erect a memorial in honor of the Japanese Americans who were killed in military service to the United States. The Alliance grew out of the opposition to the all-inclusive veteran's memorial and within two years they had completed their goal of creating a monument to honor Japanese American fatalities of all US wars.

Mike Tsuji, the architect of the memorial, wrote that he had first become interested in architecture while serving with the 442nd RCT in Italy where he saw the Ponte-Vecchio and other beautiful structures in Florence. Through the benefits of the GI Bill, he attended college and was later selected to design the memorial for those killed in action. In a brief history and explanation of the memorial he said,

Fond memories of many whom unfortunately were killed-in-action inspired me to persevere, and also invigorated me with much-needed energy and guidance, when such help was needed. It is hoped that in future years, the Alliance's effort will remind everybody about the respect and love it had for all those who did not come back, and that the names of these courageous men will never be forgotten.⁴⁸

The chosen design was comprised of four large concrete and granite panels inscribed with the names of over 800 Nisei killed during WWII as well as a smaller panel with the names of thirteen Japanese Americans killed on the USS *Maine* and during Granada and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The monument was built in the Memorial Court of the Los Angeles Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC) where two memorials honoring the fallen Japanese Americans of the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War already stood. Like the evolution of the Go For Broke Monument, the Alliance recently joined with the Japanese American Living Legacy organization to gather Japanese American oral histories and to educate the public about the role of Japanese American soldiers in all recent US wars through their "Echoes of Silence" CD.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Mike Tsuji, "Americans of Japanese Ancestry World War II Memorial Alliance," received from Jim Yamashita, November 1, 2001.

⁴⁹ Tsuji, "Americans of Japanese Ancestry"; Caroline Aoyagi-Stom, "Telling the Untold JA Stories," *The Pacific Citizen*, 6 April 2007.



Americans of Japanese Ancestry World War II Honor Roll
Photo by Author, November 2007

Ironically, both memorials are within blocks of one another in the heart of Little Tokyo, Los Angeles. Both hold memorial services and coordinate with their affiliated educational organizations to preserve and pass on the individual stories of Japanese American veterans. These debates once again exemplified the complexities within the community and revealed the variety of perspectives that existed beneath the umbrella of the mistakenly stereotyped homogenous community. In addition, the debates revealed a concern for whether they would be remembered by later generations, and if so, in what manner? Questions of wording, significance, and content would all impact the impression that visitors of the Go For Broke Monument and the Memorial Court would receive and consequently pass on. Were Japanese Americans compliant with the

evacuation order? Was the service of the Japanese American soldiers particularly honorable because of the mass confinement? Should a memorial simply pay tribute to the fallen or make a political statement? These and other questions influenced the creators of the various monuments because of the understood impact that their answers would have on future visitors.

National Monument

In 1987, the Smithsonian Institution opened a new exhibit entitled, "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution." The location within DC just off the National Mall inspired many to consider the idea of a national monument commemorating the heroic actions of the 100th Infantry/442nd RCT and MIS linguists, which would join the company of such memorials as the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, and many others. The idea originated with controversial character Mike Masaoka, who soon incorporated the "Go For Broke National Veteran's Association" (GFBNVA) with the goal of memorializing all the "Nisei who had died in military service."⁵⁰

Four years after the exhibit's debut, Representative Norman Mineta and Senator Daniel K. Inouye introduced bills in their respective Congressional House asking for a memorial on federal grounds to honor the Japanese American veterans. The National Capital Memorial Commission rejected this appeal on the grounds that the Commemorative Works Act had declared that there would be no more memorials for specific military units or ethnic groups on federal property. In response, the GFBNVA

⁵⁰ *Patriotism, Perseverance, Posterity: The Story of the National Japanese American Memorial* (Washington D.C.: National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, 2001), 16-18.

changed their wording to request “a memorial on Federal land in the District of Columbia or its environs to honor Japanese American patriotism in World War II.” With the new purpose, the bill passed the House on July 28, 1992 and the Senate on October 7, 1992, and President George H. W. Bush signed Public Law 102-502 on October 24, 1992. The following year, the GFBNVA sponsored a search for leaders for the development process and in 1994, the 14 selected, led by Chairman William Marumoto, met in California and officially renamed themselves the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF).⁵¹

The memorial was estimated to cost \$8.5 million but eventually ran to almost \$12 million due to delays and additions to the original design. Within the first two years of fund raising, the NJAMF had received donations of every size from over 20,000 donors across the country. The Los Angeles area donated \$3 million, Chicago \$2.8 million, Seattle \$1.5 million, the Northeast \$350,000, and \$800,000 from Washington, D.C., as well as numerous other donations and locations. In a remarkably short period of time, the funds were raised to begin construction and the groundbreaking ceremony took place on October 22, 1999. Despite the best efforts of the NJAMF, led by Executive Director Cherry Tsutsumida and the construction crew, it soon became clear that the memorial would not be completed by the planned date of November 9, 2000. In light of the ceremony plans that were already in place, the NJAMF instead decided to hold the dedication as planned and add an additional grand opening event in the spring after all final details were in place.⁵²

⁵¹ *Patriotism*, 19, 22, 24-25.

⁵² *Patriotism*, 166, 145, 174.

As the monument entered the development phase, numerous voices emerged to support and oppose the monument's construction, design, and even its existence. *Washington Post* columnist Benjamin Forgey described the project as "a commemorative monument whose time has arrived," and referred to the planned monument as "redemptive and contemplative," "long overdue," in a "location [that] is all that could be desired." The site chosen was a triangular piece of ground bordered by New Jersey Avenue, D Street, and Louisiana Avenue between Union Station and the Capitol Building. The design incorporated a tall sculpture by Nina Akamu featuring two bronze cranes, one stretching upwards and one trapped amidst barbed wire. A walkway entered on Louisiana Avenue and guided the visitor along a path surrounded by tall walls inscribed with various historical locations, events, and quotations. An Honor Wall featured the names of over 800 Nisei servicemen who died during WWII, and a large bell at the end of the wall could be rung to pay tribute to the fallen. The center of the memorial space was a large pool of water with boulders scattered throughout and a gentle waterfall cascading over one side. The entire site was surrounded by Cherry Blossom trees providing some separation from the noise of the city as visitors followed the pathway through the memorial to its exit back onto Louisiana Ave.⁵³

As Forgey described it,

...the site is close, though not too close, to the actual and symbolic core of the democracy – the Capitol itself is about 600 yards away. The position is not central, but it isn't hidden away. It is not a podium from which you can screech about the importance of a cause. Rather it is a place where you can be quietly insistent.⁵⁴

⁵³ Benjamin Forgey, "A Place to Reflect on a Civil Wrong," *The Washington Post*, 20 September 1997.

⁵⁴ Forgey, "A Place to Reflect."

The design, by Davis Buckley, incorporated various Japanese images, such as the cranes and the bell, while invoking the US confinement with the barbed wire and the inscribed names of each confinement site on the tall stone slabs. Its founders hoped that the memorial would be a “place for inspiration, for meditation, for learning about the price and power of freedom and a reminder that the Constitution’s promise requires vigilant defense.” They also felt that such a monument, in the heart of the nation’s capitol, was an acknowledgement of the significance of the Japanese American story and an admittance of wrong by the government.⁵⁵



National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism
Photo by Author, May 2008

On the surface, it hardly seems possible that within the culture of late twentieth century America anyone would have a problem with such a memorial, but a deeper

⁵⁵ *Patriotism*, 4-6.

examination of the monument's origins and development reveals yet again the complexity within the Japanese American community. The battle over the creation of the National Japanese American Memorial (NJAM) also reveals the power attributed to memorials in shaping public understandings of history and memory.

One of the first debates emerged over the definition of what constituted a memorial. Was it a site to honor the dead? Or was it meant to pay tribute to heroic deeds or inspirational people? Based on these ideas, only part of the NJAM – the Honor Wall – fit the bill for a national memorial. The entwined and repressed cranes and the statistics of confinement hardly qualified. According to an article in the *National Review* by prominent historian Stephen Ambrose, “memorials are supposed to be put in place to honor men and women who acted in some positive way for the good of the nation. They are not erected to praise or acknowledge those who were abused.” He continues by asking, if we are to have a memorial to the Japanese Americans, why not also to other groups “who were abused, degraded, and discriminated against?” He cites African Americans, Chinese Americans, German Americans, and Native Americans among those who also would deserve such a memorial but concludes that none of these groups *should* have a memorial dedicated to them and their suffering. One cannot help but wonder how survivors of the Holocaust would feel about the concept that their suffering deserves no remembrance.⁵⁶

Despite the fact that Ambrose is a well-established historian, his article makes it clear that he is unaware of much of the Japanese American history that he references in order to make his claims. In one instance he writes, “No one proposed, much less acted

⁵⁶ Stephen E. Ambrose, “A Terrible Idea: The Memorial to the Japanese-Americans,” *National Review*, 22 November 1999.

on, the idea of ridding the United States of Japanese-Americans.” The Hood River American Legion Post incident disproves this statement, and while they were exceptional in their erasure of honor rolls names, it must be remembered that one-third of the letters that the post received were in favor of their actions and their earlier resolution calling for the eventual deportation of all Japanese Americans in the country did not garner opposition – it was only the honor roll act that earned national attention. However, this was still a fairly radical position even in 1944 America, and a general historian may be forgiven for being unaware of such grass roots movements.

Unfortunately, he was also unaware of or misinformed on the subject of the Japanese American military experience. His only statement regarding Nisei service reads,

Despite the mistreatment, many young Japanese-American men volunteered for the U.S. Army and went into the 442 Regimental Combat Team, which fought in Italy and became one of the most decorated front-line units of the war. (Regrettably, the Armed Services failed to fully use their skills as language interpreters in the Pacific.)⁵⁷

Admittedly, the records of the linguists remained confidential for some years after the end of the war, but by the time of this particular article in 1999, numerous books, articles, and documentaries had recounted the brave service of the MIS linguists in the Pacific Theater.⁵⁸ There was also no mention of the 100th Infantry, which served longer than the 442nd RCT, and the statement ignores the fact that the 442nd RCT fought in France and Germany as well as Italy. He may make a case that “memorial” means different things to different people, but ignoring or misrepresenting facts is not the best way to convince

⁵⁷ Ambrose, “A Terrible Idea,” 30.

⁵⁸ Some examples include, Joseph D. Harrington, *Yankee Samurai: The Secret Role of Nisei in America's Pacific Victory* (Detroit: Pettigrew Enterprises, Inc., 1979) and Stanley L. Falk and Warren M. Tsuneishi, *MIS In the War Against Japan: Personal Experiences Related at the 1993 MIS Capital Reunion*, “The Nisei Veteran: An American Patriot” (Washington D.C.: Japanese American Veterans Association, 1995).

people to see one's perspective. Fortunately for the NJAMF, his opposition, which came just after the groundbreaking for the memorial, did not prevent its creation.

The more divisive issue that arose regarding the development of the memorial revolved around the inscriptions that were chosen to represent the Japanese American experience to future generations that visited the memorial. As drafts of the panel inscriptions intended to impart information and quotations to visitors began to circulate amongst Board members, National Park Service employees, and Commission of Fine Arts staff, opposition emerged regarding the creative process, historical facts, and representation of the Japanese American community.

According to two members of the board of directors of the NJAMF, Francis Y. Sogi and Yeiichi (Kelly) Kuwayama, the Executive Committee of the NJAMF failed to follow certain voting and discussion procedures when making decisions regarding inscriptions to be placed on the memorial. In one particular instance, Sogi and Kuwayama claimed that an issue that was previously thought to be decided was brought up behind closed doors and settled by the Executive Committee without proper approval by the Board of Directors. Another Board Member, Dr. Rita Takahashi reiterated the previous claims and additionally complained that the NJAMF did not allow for enough community involvement and frequently allowed members to cast votes despite known conflicts of interest. In response to the emerging issues within the NJAMF, various members and concerned individuals created the JA Voice website to post relevant documents, garner signatures on opposition petitions, and inform the public about the debates surrounding the memorial.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Francis Y. Sogi and Yeiichi (Kelly) Kuwayama, "Japanese Americans Disunited: How a Memorial to Unify the Japanese American Community Became a Symbol of Disunity," (pamphlet), 4; Rita Takahashi,

There were two basic issues under debate: the always-controversial Mike Masaoka and historical accuracy. In 1940, as chairman of the Intermountain District and board member of the National JACL, Masaoka wrote a statement to fill a blank page on a program for the upcoming Salt Lake City District Convention. It read, in part,

I am proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today...Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people.⁶⁰

This statement became known as the Japanese American Creed and was officially adopted by the JACL on May 9, 1941. Early the following year, Masaoka testified before Congressman John H. Toland's Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration of the House of Representatives, which was basically a "platform for those advocating the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast," though it was certainly not presented to the public as such.⁶¹ In his testimony, Masaoka stated,

With any policy of evacuation definitely arising from reasons of military necessity and national safety, we are in complete agreement. As American citizens we cannot and should not take any other stand. But, also, as American citizens believing in the integrity of our citizenship, we feel that any evacuation enforced on grounds violating that integrity should be opposed.⁶²

Following Masaoka's testimony, Congressman John J. Sparkman asked him, "But in the event the evacuation is deemed necessary by those having charge of the defenses, as loyal Americans you are willing to prove your loyalty by cooperating...Even at a sacrifice?"

"Open Memo to: National Japanese American Memorial Foundation Board of Directors," 11 July 2000 (JAVoice).

⁶⁰ Mike Masaoka and Bill Hosokawa, *They Call me Moses Masaoka: An American Saga* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1987), 50.

⁶¹ Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 85.

⁶² Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 88.

To which Masaoka responded, "Oh yes, definitely...." In his autobiography, Masaoka claimed that in the days following EO 9066 as he became aware of the intention and ability of the government to relocate the entire Japanese American population from the West Coast, he felt as though he had "no choice but to cooperate."⁶³

Since the earliest days of the relocation Masaoka has been remembered as being compliant and even complicit with the Executive Order by some members of the Japanese American community. Many see the JACL in the same light, which has led to decades of mistrust towards the organization, which too frequently is incorrectly assumed to speak for the entire Japanese American community. In light of Masaoka's statement and controversial standing within the Japanese American community it should come as no surprise that the Executive Committee's decision to include a quote by him on the NJAM would be contentious. The "quotation" read, "I am proud that I am an American of Japanese ancestry. I believe in this nation's institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future." Beside the statement was his name and the description "civil rights advocate."

Almost immediately there was concern over the misquotation of Masaoka's statement, the inclusion of any statement by him at all, and the description of him as a civil rights advocate. As many pointed out, Masaoka and the JACL encouraged obedience of all government regulations at the start of the war and even went so far as to attack Minoru Yasui's decision to question and test the legality of the curfew order, a test which eventually reached the Supreme Court. According to Sogi and Kuwayama, anyone who advocated immediate and direct compliance with an order without question could

⁶³ Mike Masaoka, Testimony before the Tolson Committee, *JA Voice*; Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 93.

not be considered a civil rights advocate since, "Doubts and reservations about the conditions of citizenship are at the core of civil rights advocacy."⁶⁴

In response to the opposition that emerged against the inclusion of the Masaoka quote, many recommended removing the names associated with the quotations altogether. Senator Daniel Inouye, a veteran and Senator whose words were also to be inscribed on the memorial, as well as the 100th Infantry and 442nd RCT Veteran's Clubs among others suggested that removing all or some of the personal quotations and names would eliminate the controversy. The 100th was opposed to the use of Masaoka's quote because of untrue statements he had made in the past regarding the formation of the 442nd RCT that removed much of the credit due to the state and people of Hawaii and attributed it to himself. The 442nd RCT Veteran's Club echoed the 100th, adding only that they also distrusted his claim to have first used the "Go For Broke" slogan.⁶⁵ Sen. Inouye's objection was less out of dislike for Masaoka or the quote and more out of a desire to find a solution. In response to his desire to remove *all* names, including his own, one Hawaii newspaper quoted him as saying, "I don't think my name is all that important. I hope this matter is settled soon. It's not good." In a press release of May 30, 2000, JA Voice reported that former JACL national president Clifford Uyeda, professor and author Ron Takaki, the Honolulu JACL, the Japanese American Historical Society of Southern California, the Manzanar Committee, and Asian American representatives of San

⁶⁴ Sogi and Kuwayama, "Japanese Americans Disunited," 8.

⁶⁵ "Go For Broke" was a Hawaiian gambling slang meaning "put it all in" and was in use by the Hawaiian soldiers before the mainland Masaoka claimed to have applied it to the unit.

Francisco State University and Stanford University had all voiced their opposition to the Mike Masaoka quote.⁶⁶

Despite the divisions that emerged in the public and even on the Board of Directors, the inscription and label were included on the monument upon its completion. The only concession made by the Foundation regarding the Masaoka quote was to remove the title, "Japanese American Creed," since it implied that it was representative of the entire Japanese American community, which it obviously was not. According to National Park Service representative John Parsons, the final statement regarding the inclusion of the quote read in part,

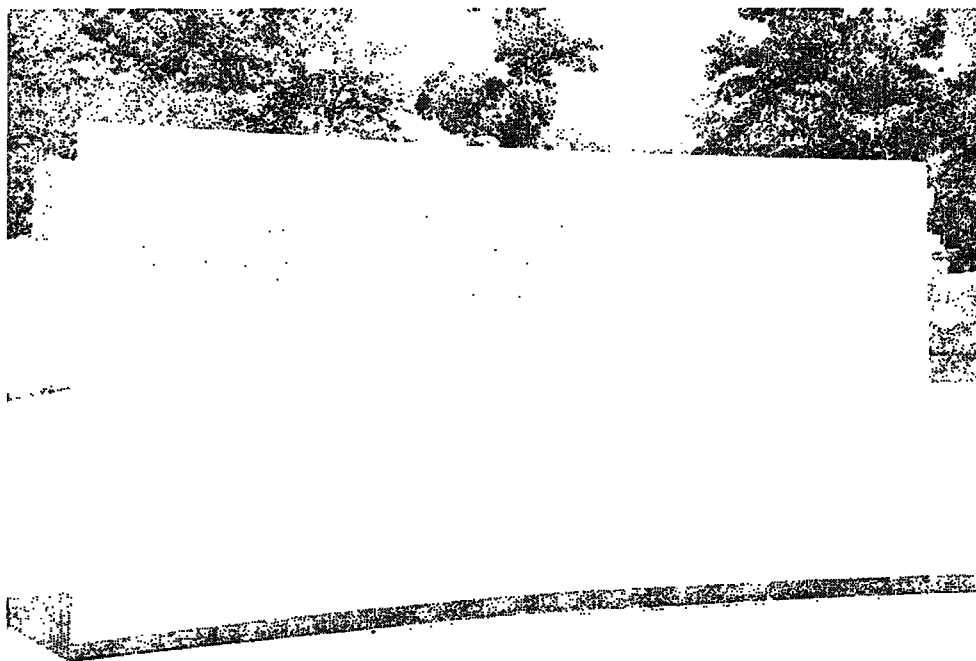
...it is clear to us that the current controversy surrounding him is not going to be resolved if his name is removed from the Memorial. The Memorial has simply heightened a debate which has been ongoing for many years and will continue into the future. Further, it is evident to us that no one would contest that Mr. Masaoka was an important national figure in this story.⁶⁷

Interestingly, the official history of the NJAMF includes two footnotes in the midst of the discussion of the Masaoka controversy. One states that NJAMF editorial board member Kaz Oshiki opposed the discussion of the controversy in the official history at all and that "such a lengthy discussion of one controversial issue is neither appropriate nor deserving, particularly since the final inscription does include the Masaoka quotation." The other footnote, found at the end of the four page section relating the controversy briefly states that Sogi and Kuwayama had published the pamphlet, "Japanese Americans Disunited," to voice their opposition to the Masaoka quote. The footnotes and the debate itself make

⁶⁶ Letter, Club 100 to Mr. John Parson, NPS, 9 February 2000, JA Voice; Letter, 442nd Veterans Club, 9 December 2000, to NJAMF, JA Voice; Letter, 442nd Veterans Club, 11 July 2000, to NJAMF, JA Voice; Gregg K. Kakesako, "Inouye Suggests Removing all Names From Japanese American Memorial," Honolulu *Star-Bulletin*, 1 June 2000; Press Release, 30 May 2000, JA Voice.

⁶⁷ *Patriotism*, 124-125.

it clear that support for the memorial's design was far from unanimous, but the debate over Masaoka was only half of the controversy surrounding the monument's text.⁶⁸



Mike Masaoka Statement on the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism
Photo by Author, May 2008

Many of the same people, including both Sogi and Kuwayama, as well as author and lead plaintiff in the suit against the US for redress, William Hohri, also spoke out against what they deemed to be historical inaccuracies within the monument inscriptions. The panels that presented a brief history of the wartime confinement and military service of Japanese Americans began,

On February 19, 1942, 73 days after the United States entered World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which resulted in the mass removal of 120,000 Japanese American men, women and children from their homes in the western states and Hawaii.

⁶⁸ *Patriotism*, 121, 125.

The first two inaccuracies were found within this first paragraph. While 120,000 is the commonly cited number of how many Japanese American were confined, it is not accurate to say that 120,000 were removed from the West Coast. Only around 110,000 were removed while the other 10,000 were newborns and POW parolees and their families. But perhaps the most glaring inaccuracy was the false statement that the mass removal included citizens from Hawaii. 1,500 Japanese Americans were interned in Hawaii, but they were not subject to the mass evacuation and relocation of citizens as were the mainland Japanese Americans.⁶⁹

The second paragraph reads,

Allowed only what they could carry, families were forced to abandon homes, friends, farms and businesses to live in ten remote relocation centers guarded by armed troops and surrounded by barbed wire fences for three years or more. In addition, 4,500 were arrested by the Justice Department and held in internment camps, such as Santa Fe, New Mexico and the family camp in Crystal City, Texas, where 2,500 were held.

This paragraph was less inaccurate than simply confusing. The 2,500 attributed to Crystal City were also part of the 4,500 arrested by the Justice Department and part of the larger 120,000 count. In addition, Crystal City was not unique as a "family camp," it was simply a camp for Issei POWs and their families who were not deemed eligible to return to the WRA camps.⁷⁰

Another issue of accuracy on the historical panels, according to Sogi and Kuwayama, is found in the last statement, which reads,

In 1988, President Ronald W. Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act which apologized for the injustice, provided minimal compensation and reaffirmed the nation's commitment to equal justice under the law for all Americans.

⁶⁹ Sogi and Kuwayama, "Japanese Americans Disunited," 6.

⁷⁰ Sogi and Kuwayama, "Japanese Americans Disunited," 6.

Opponents argued that the Civil Liberties Act did not in fact “reaffirm[ed] the nation’s commitment to equal justice under the law for all Americans.” This is technically true based on the wording of the Act, though perhaps less so in spirit. The Act apologized for the mass relocation and confinement, acknowledged the injustice, approved funds for future education and monetary redress, and added credibility to the nation’s fight against injustice in other nations. While the Act followed through on the recommendations of the Committee on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, it did not make a statement regarding the country’s dedication to legal equality.

The final accusation of inaccuracy arose over the panels listing the camp names and their populations. According to Sogi and Kuwayama, the stated populations only added up to 112,581, which is far short of the stated 120,000. In addition to the previously discussed inaccuracies, the opposition raised numerous other concerns that were eventually fixed or removed, including inaccurate postal locations for the camps. Early drafts also referred to 10,000 soldiers that volunteered out of the camps when in fact they volunteered in Hawaii and the original description listed only the 100th/442nd RCT and the MIS and did not mention the separate, but also Nisei, 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion. It is interesting that the NJAMF took some comments into consideration while disregarding others. In many cases, the opposition attributed this lack of concern to an early statement made by the NJAMF chairman Melvin Chiogioji, who said, “I don’t give a damn what the inscriptions say, let’s just get it over with.”⁷¹

Although the inaccurate statements on the memorial seem to be enough cause for alarm, there is a much more serious overriding issue that was raised by author Hohri. There are too many inscriptions to be quoted here, but a brief summary of the historical

⁷¹ Sogi and Kuwayama, “Japanese Americans Disunited,” 6.

description includes EO 9066, life in the camps, the service of the Nisei soldiers, the formation of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, and the passage of the Civil Liberties Act. As mentioned earlier, tall slabs list the names, locations, and populations of the ten WRA camps, and one long portion of the wall lists the names of the soldiers who died in military service. Various quotes from Presidents Reagan and Truman, Congressman Norman Mineta, Robert Matsui, and Spark Matsunaga, Senator Inouye, writer Akemi Dawn Matsumoto Ehrlich, and of course, Mike Masaoka cover the other walls telling of the lessons learned from the relocation, the bravery of the soldiers, and the strength of democracy.

What is conspicuously missing is any mention of names like Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, Mitsuye Endo, and Minoru Yasui, the Japanese Americans who took their protests to the Supreme Court. There is no mention of the Fair Play Committee or James Omura and the others who opposed the draft for a group of people who were unconstitutionally confined behind barbed wire. One professor saw the narrow perspective and the inclusion of Masaoka's quote as an attempt to "homogenize Japanese Americans during World War II as dutiful victim/citizens," which he described as "historically inaccurate" and "an insult to their memory." He described the memorial as a "testimony to the rigidities of text-book histories," while Hohri feared it was "as much a memorial to betrayal and falsified history as it is to patriotism."⁷²

There are any number of issues at debate within the creation and design of the National Japanese American Memorial, in part because of the potential power and significance of memorials. To have words literally written in stone lends them a sense of

⁷² Mitziko Sawada, Letter to Terry Carlstrom, NPS, 31 march 2000, JA Voice; Commentary, William Hohri, JA Voice.

authority and permanence. As one observer who wrote an editorial in the *Sacramento Bee* regarding the NJAMF controversy stated it, the “recent eruption...will have a broader impact since it will determine the words, and thus the historical perspective, etched on an \$11 million national memorial in Washington, D.C..” Executive Director of the NJAMF Tsutsumida, recognized the significance of the debate over words as well when she wrote a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, claiming, “Often, memorials are created not only to preserve the past but also to help shape the future.” Representatives on both sides of the issue clearly recognized the fact that whatever depiction of the relocation and military service covered the panels of the National Memorial, that would be the version handed down to visitors for generations.⁷³

Medal of Honor

While organizations fought on both the East and the West Coast, another national tribute to veterans began to take shape behind the closed doors of the Military Awards Branch and the U.S. Army Center of Military History. In the 1990s, the 50th anniversary of various WWII events approached, bringing the memory of the war to the forefront in national politics, culture, and academics. Preparations began for the first National WWII Memorial; debate erupted over the Smithsonian Institution’s display of the *Enola Gay*, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima; and even movies like *Saving Private Ryan* kept the events of the war in the spotlight. In the post-1960s and 1970s political atmosphere, a reexamination of the war now necessarily included a reexamination of the overlooked minorities that had participated. The Women in

⁷³ Judy Tachibana, “59-Year-Old Dispute Still Simmering for Japanese Americans,” *Sacramento Bee*, 8 March 2000; Cherry Tsutsumida, “Today’s Sensibilities Don’t Apply to Voices from the Past,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 2000.

Military Service for America Memorial was dedicated in the hemisphere at Arlington Cemetery, the National Security Administration's Cryptologic Museum featured an exhibit on the Navajo Code Talkers of WWII, and Moton Field became the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site.

Amidst the analysis of minority roles during WWII, it became apparent that of the 422 Medals of Honor awarded during the war, some groups, such as Hispanics and Native Americans, were well represented, but others, like African Americans and Japanese Americans, were noticeably underrepresented. In 1993, African American veterans and the Congressional Black Caucus persuaded the Army to reconsider the recommendations for black soldiers' Congressional Medals of Honor (CMH). At the conclusion of the study, researcher Daniel K. Gibran had found that not one officer had nominated an African American soldier for a CMH, but of the others who were awarded lesser medals nine Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) recipients, and one Silver Star recipient were eligible for reconsideration. Upon review by the Senior Army Decorations Board, seven of the ten were upgraded to CMHs. On January 13, 1997 President Bill Clinton presented seven Medals of Honor, six posthumously, to the recipients and their families.⁷⁴

In light of the review provided to African American veteran's files, Japanese Americans, led by Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii, started a movement for the reexamination of the case of Richard Sakakida, an intelligence informer in the

⁷⁴ James C. McNaughton, Kristen E. Edwards, and Jay M. Price, "'Incontestable Proof Will be Exacted': Historians, Asian Americans, and the Medal of Honor," *The Public Historian* Vol. 24, No. 4 (Autumn, 2002), 14-15.

Philippines during the war.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, it was soon determined that Sakakida was ineligible for the honor of a CMH because it is specifically intended for those who display valor during combat situations and his role as a spy did not qualify as combat. Instead, the Secretary of the Army presented him with a Distinguished Service Cross. The following year, Senator Akaka expanded his review and Hawaiian Representative Neil Abercrombie introduced bills calling for all former Military Intelligence Service personnel of WWII and the Cold War to be considered for medals on the grounds that their service was previously confidential and therefore barred from nomination. As a result, 31 awards were presented under the National Defense Authorization Act of 1996 and in 2000, the Military Intelligence Service received a Presidential Unit Citation largely due to Akaka's efforts to recognize the previously unknown contributions of intelligence servicemen.⁷⁶

Akaka also included an amendment in the Defense Authorization Act that required the Army and Navy to conduct a review of Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander's medal nominations from the Second World War. The review focused on recipients of the DSC and the equivalent Navy Cross, and relied purely on contemporary evidence and nominations with no further research, oral histories, or current evidence to be taken into account. This decision was made to ensure that the only issue at question was whether the officers responsible for reviewing the original

⁷⁵ For more information on Sakakida's remarkable experience see, Richard M. Sakakida with Wayne S. Kiyosaki, *A Spy in Their Midst: The World War II Struggle of a Japanese American Hero* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1995).

⁷⁶ McNaughton, "Incontestable Proof," 16.

recommendation had displayed any race prejudice, regardless of any other considerations that may have arisen in the interim.⁷⁷

The veterans themselves were of significant help during this process. They researched individuals at the National Archives prior to the start of the official investigation, they provided the names of fellow soldiers who they thought had been nominated for or had received the DSC, and they helped advertise and spread the word of the efforts of the researchers to put them in contact with relevant organizations and individuals. As would be expected with any project that resembled “revisionist” history, the emergence of the story in mass media venues like *USA Today* led to some criticism. There were charges made that the review cheapened those who had already received the CMH, while others saw it as a political tool that pandered to minorities and resembled affirmative action. Even fellow CMH recipients seemed unconvinced of the propriety of the investigation when lead researcher James McNaughton spoke at their national Legion of Valor convention.⁷⁸

Despite the opposition, historians conducted research into the National Archives, veteran’s organizations, and unit histories and submitted individual personnel files of all DSC recommendations to the Senior Army Decorations Board for consideration. The Board determined that of the 47 submitted, 19 Japanese American DSC recipients were eligible for upgrades to the CMH. One additional soldier who had been nominated for the DSC but received the Silver Star was also added, so the final decision determined 20 were to receive the CMH, along with one Chinese American and one Hispanic-Filipino officer. At a ceremony on the White House lawn on June 21, 2000 President Clinton

⁷⁷ McNaughton, “Incontestable Proof,” 17.

⁷⁸ McNaughton, “Incontestable Proof,” 24

presented seven medals to their recipients and 15 to family members of those who received the awards posthumously. According to Clinton, "It is long past time to break the silence about their courage, to put faces and names with the courage, and to honor it by name." McNaughton claimed that the most significant legacy of the additional CMH awards was that, "America's memory of World War II became more diverse," through the inclusion of Asian Americans and African Americans in our nation's highly revered Hall of Heroes.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The creation of monuments and memorials that honored the Japanese American soldiers began even before the war was over in European cities and US camps, yet the motivation, creators, and locations revealed significant differences between the perspectives of the two regions. With no concern for skin color, the townspeople, city officials, and even national leaders of Italy and France endorsed the creation of monuments to honor the sacrifices and accomplishments of the Japanese American soldiers. The existence of these memorials and the continued traditions of remembrance and reunion reflect the level of appreciation felt by the Europeans, and the unique relationship between the dual liberators.

According to one historian, "A national war memorial, if it successfully expresses the mood of a people, sets the theme for many city, town and village memorials."

Unfortunately for the Nisei soldiers, the national government did reflect the mood of its

⁷⁹ David Stout, "21 Asians Receive Medal of Honor," *New York Times*, 14 May 2000; McNaughton, "Incontestable Proof," 31-32; "Clinton Awards Medal of Honor to 22 Asian American World War II Veterans," *CNN*, 21 June 2000; McNaughton, "Incontestable Proof," 33; Rudi Williams, "22 Asians Inducted into Hall of Heroes," *Armed Forces Press Service*, 28 June 2000.

people through its lack of a national memorial dedicated to the Japanese Americans – a negligence that was reflected in cities across the nation. Those memorials that did emerge were created by the returning veterans themselves and did not demonstrate any of the appreciation or respect felt by the Europeans. It was not until the latter decades of the twentieth century when the social and political atmosphere had changed and public awareness increased regarding the injustice of the mass confinement that larger foundations with membership spanning the nation began to take part in commemorating the veteran's service. Though many of these movements faced division within their own ranks, the creation of the NJAM and the awarding of the additional Medals of Honor reflected the ability of the Japanese American community to mobilize successfully and the ability of the US to admit wrongs and make amends for past injustices.⁸⁰

Though war memorials had emerged locally early in the years after WWII, they still took decades to reach the national level. Museums, historic sites, reunions, and popular culture representations faced the same uphill battle to reach national recognition that the Nisei had faced in the creation of their national memorial. While returning veterans were honoring their fallen comrades, the camps that had housed their families and friends were quickly dismantled, sold, farmed over, or simply ignored, resulting in decades of neglect. Many locals chose to forget their role in the confinement of American citizens, while detainees themselves were more interested in moving on with their lives than returning to the site of their confinement. However, as the climate changed towards the veterans, public awareness of the evacuation also gradually increased leading to more interest in the preservation of relevant sites. Through the efforts of numerous dedicated individuals, the subject of the WWII relocation was

⁸⁰ Whittick, *War Memorials*, 12.

preserved and interpreted at each of the ten War Relocation Authority camps by the end of the twentieth century.

Chapter Four: Camp Preservation

Though war memorials began to appear in both Europe and the US in the early decades following the war, other forms of remembrance took far longer to emerge. Some of the subsequent places that became sites of memory were the camp locations themselves. Just as each camp had its own community structure and organizations during the war, the life of the camps varied dramatically after the war as well. Land ownership, geographic location, and local population all significantly impacted what happened to each site in the years following the closing of the camps. One aspect, however, that they all shared was an initial lack of interest in their preservation as sites of memory or remembrance. As was the case with museums and academic research, the widespread interest in preserving both the history of the confinement and the sites themselves did not emerge until decades after the war.

One of the most compelling aspects of the camp preservation movements that gradually emerged was that each of them was led or inspired by one individual or local organization. In some cases, local residents took the lead in preserving and interpreting the sites, regardless of whether they were closely associated with the camps. At other sites, former detainees were the leaders of such movements; and in some instances, historically minded residents or organizations recognized their importance and educational significance and helped save the sites. Also, as is often the case, many of the sites had one or more of these categories involved in its preservation. Regardless of the original motivations or the leadership of each group, they were all dedicated to the idea

that the sites were significant and that they deserved some amount of recognition, preservation, and interpretation for future generations.

Although each camp has a unique story of post-war development, this analysis will focus on only three locations: the Arkansas camps, both Jerome and Rohwer; Granada, Colorado; and Manzanar, California. Jerome and Rohwer were cared for by local residents who had little or no connection to the wartime camps. A local historically minded teacher in Granada, Colorado made a dramatic difference in the preservation of the site of Amache with the help of high school students, while a former detainee took the lead in the preservation of Manzanar. Through these three sites, one is able to see the motivations and efforts of individuals and organizations that are representative of the various ways in which each of the sites has come into being.

Jerome and Rohwer, Arkansas

Jerome and Rohwer, Arkansas are now two of the least preserved sites, but they have two of the most dedicated individuals caring for what is left of the property and related artifacts. Jerome was the last camp to open on October 6, 1942 and ironically it was also the first one to close. The site was very swampy and humid and much of the detainee's industry revolved around farming and a sawmill that produced materials for the camp. After reaching its peak population of 8,497, Jerome closed on June 30, 1944 after only 634 days, and its detainees were sent to the nearby Rohwer. The site was converted into a Prisoner of War (POW) camp for Germans and housed soldiers, a German general, and SS troops. Nearby Rohwer Camp opened September 18, 1942 and peaked at 8,475 detainees. The camp included over 10,000 acres, half of which was

swampland during the spring, though canals and ditches helped to contain and drain much of the water. Rohwer closed on November 30, 1945 and only one Japanese American family remained in Arkansas after the war.¹

In 1943, a young lady named Rosalie lived in the town of Tillar, Arkansas, just north of McGehee and west of the Rohwer War Relocation Authority (WRA) Camp.² When she left home that year to attend college she was unaware of the presence of the camp or its detainees, but after she married in 1949, she occasionally took her children to play near the cemetery that was created by the detainees at Rohwer. Her new mother- and father-in-law had been friends with Project Director Raymond Johnson, but they never spoke about the camps. After the war an auction had sold off much of the property and structures from the camp to returning veterans and locals. As a result, the site itself gave few clues as to the community that had lived there for over three years, with the exception of the small cemetery with headstones and monuments which bore Japanese names. Her children had attended school in the old camp school buildings for three years, but still few people in the area, Mrs. Rosalie Gould included, knew much about Rohwer.

Mrs. Gould later moved to the town of McGehee and eventually became the President of the Women's Chamber of Commerce. In 1981 the President of the Chamber of Commerce approached her and asked her to host a dinner for former detainees from the Rohwer camp that were returning to dedicate a new monument. While she told him

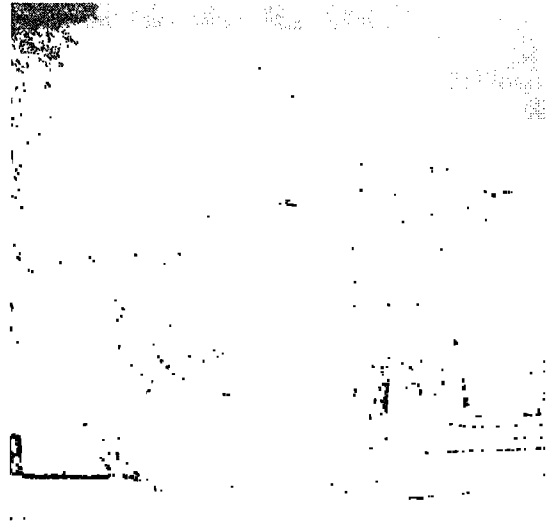
¹ Brian Niiya, ed., *Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, 1993), 192-193; Jeffrey Burton, et. al., *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Tucson: Western Archaeological and Conservation Center, 1999), 156; Niiya, *Japanese American History*, 297; Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 247.

² Quotes and personal history of Rosalie Gould from Interview with author, November 16, 2006, McGehee, Arkansas.

that she was more than willing to host a dinner, she also told him that she had no idea what he was talking about. She soon learned about the camps and that detainee Sam Yada and his family still lived in Arkansas and had raised the money and interest for a new monument in the cemetery honoring those soldiers from Rohwer who had died during WWII. At the dedication ceremony she met many former inmates, family members, and staff members, including George Sakaguchi, whose parents were confined at Rohwer, and Mabel Rose Jamison "Jamie" Vogel, the former art teacher at the camp, both of whom became lasting friends of Mrs. Gould.

Many of the attendees at the monument

dedication expressed concern over the care of the cemetery. The other eight camps outside of Arkansas had large Japanese American populations in the surrounding area, but the upkeep of Rohwer and Jerome was financially and logistically difficult for just the Yada family to maintain. Mrs. Gould was more than willing to take up the cause and she approached the county judge who was not able to help her but directed her to a local organization called Green Thumb, which agreed to send workers to the site to care for the grounds. Two years after the dedication, Mrs. Gould became mayor of McGehee and, at the same time, she learned that Green Thumb shut down and she was in need of caretakers once again. Reaching into her own pockets, she began to pay city workers



The monument dedicated in 1981 with two war-era monuments in the background
Photo by Author, November 14, 2006

after hours to take care of the property, and for the twelve years that she presided over the town, the site was well kept. After her retirement she again approached the county judge, who agreed to use the county workers to continue the maintenance of the property.

During her time as mayor she became more interested and involved in the Japanese American history and the preservation of the site and the story. In 1992, she and George Sakaguchi obtained National Historic Landmark status for the site and they also sponsored a large reunion for the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the camp. Through their coordination, over 400 people attended and celebrated with a fish fry, for which their three buses received full police escorts to and from their hotel. She later attended the opening dedication of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles as an honored guest and has attended numerous other reunions in various locations around the country, including Branson and St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago, Illinois; Torrance, California; and Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

As she met between 2,500-3,000 Japanese American community members, many began to tell her of the wonderful items that they had in their possession from their time in camp. Soon, Mrs. Gould's home became a collection of artifacts, documents, photographs, and various other items from the war years of the Rohwer and Jerome camps. Due to her friendship with Mrs. Gould, the art teacher, Jamie Vogel, willed all of the art that she had saved from camp to Rosalie to add to her growing "museum." In addition to her artifact collection, Mrs. Gould also has a

One small corner of Ms. Gould's collection
Photo by Author, November 16, 2006



number of books on the subject of Japanese American history and multiple plaques and photos commemorating her role in preserving the history of Rohwer. Though numerous people have tried to thank her or honor her for her years of dedication and involvement, she says, "Really, I'm the one that's benefiting because see, I've made all these great friends and that's what's so great! And...it's nothing I'm doing! They were the ones that went through it and I'm just keeping all this stuff and happy to do it." Her humility, friendliness, and generosity are sincere when she says that the people she has had the opportunity to meet are "the most wonderful people in the world."³

As her collection of artifacts grew, her home became a private museum and library for the many researchers who have visited her in McGehee. She estimates that around 2,000 former camp detainees have come to see the items, almost twenty graduate students have researched her collection from schools including the University of Maryland, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Southern Illinois, and of course the University of Arkansas, Little Rock.⁴ According to Mrs. Gould, she is happy to have such visitors in her home, though she does prefer for them to call before showing up at her door. When she was mayor and began collecting all the artifacts, she approached her city council about turning an old depot in town into a museum of the camp. At the time, she "started a firestorm," but she said that her reunions, dedications, and busloads of people have lately convinced more locals that there is the potential for an economic benefit from such a museum. Though she reported that there has been some more recent talk of a museum at the cemetery site, little progress has been made. For now, Mrs. Gould continues to hold on to the items to make sure they are available to

³ Rosalie Gould, Interview.

⁴ While I was visiting, she told me that she had a number of high school history students visiting the next day and a group from Hawaii was arriving the following week.

anyone who wants to see them instead of being locked away behind closed doors in a museum or library where they would be accessible only to researchers. Though West Coast museums have expressed an interest in obtaining her collection, she hopes it will stay in Arkansas because “that’s where it needs to be.”

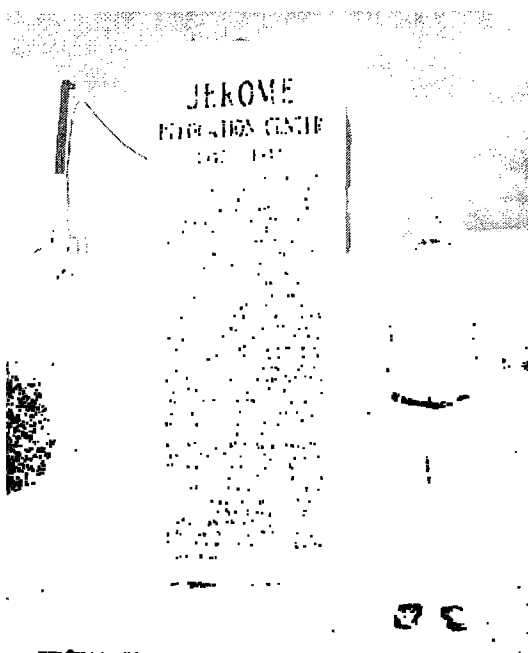
About twenty miles south of Rohwer on Highway 165 in Chicot County, Arkansas sits a tall stone monument marking the site of the Jerome WRA Camp. As a young boy, John Ellington and his family lived just a few miles from this site on a piece of property his grandfather had homesteaded in the 1930s.⁵ When the Executive Order confined the Japanese Americans, it was decided that one of the camps would be in their county; and his grandfather, who was a carpenter, helped build the camp buildings and continued to work in it for the duration of the war. Hundreds of migrant workers came from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to help build the camp and the local economy benefited from the additional customers who sought food, board, and recreation in McGehee.

The young Mr. Ellington frequently played with the inhabitants of the camps frequently and many visited with him at his house as well. He got his haircuts from the camp barber and he knew the layout of the camp like the back of his hand. After the war, the structures at Jerome were auctioned off just as at Rohwer, and in 1953 Mr. Ellington and his brother began clearing much of the forested land for farming. Many of the concrete foundation slabs were buried over and he even remembered burying the pumps of the camp’s fuel station. One object that he never cleared, however, was the smoke stack from the hospital building, which he left in the middle of a field so that anyone who

⁵ Personal information on John Ellington from Interview with author, November 15, 2006, Dermot, Arkansas.

returned would recognize it. In 1959, he purchased land that had once comprised the majority of the camp and he leases even more of the original site and has farmed it for years.

Unlike Mrs. Gould, Mr. Ellington was well aware of the history relating to the local camps but they both faced a similar lack of interest in the history for many years after the end of the war. When George Sakaguchi and Sam Yada began to raise awareness of the camps, Mr. Ellington was a huge part of the process as he spoke to some of the local schools and frequently attended the reunions and group visits when they came to either one of the Arkansas sites. Mr. Ellington spoke with Mr. Sakaguchi about his plans to create a small aluminum sign to mark Jerome, but they decided to raise funds for



John Ellington beside the permanent
Jerome Memorial
Photo by Author, November 15, 2006

the more permanent and official stone memorial that sits at the site today. Like Mrs. Gould, Mr. Ellington's interest has frequently caused him to reach deep into his own pockets to provide hospitality, information, and, in one instance, bags of rice from his company with a special label describing the history of the Jerome Camp.

He too has traveled in his years of involvement with the Japanese American

community, and he speaks fondly about the people he has had the opportunity to meet.

He felt honored at past events to discover that many former Jerome and Rohwer detainees were attending only when they found out that he was as well and with his friendly and

warm manner it is not surprising that he has gathered as many friends as he has. He enjoys talking to people that stop to look at the monument and he can relate a number of stories of visitors and former inmates that he has shown around the property and befriended in his lifetime. He is humble about his contribution to the preservation of the Japanese American story, though he admits, "I guess I've probably taken more time with [Jerome's visitors] than anyone else."⁶

Mr. Ellington and Mrs. Gould welcome hundreds of people that seek their knowledge every year.⁷ They both enjoy the opportunity to meet so many people and to preserve and protect sites that were significant in so many people's lives. They spoke about the relocation as a "black moment" in our history, and they were each pleased with the fact that more people seem to be aware of the history than when they first began to share the story. Though the sites of Rohwer and Jerome are significantly changed, Mr. Ellington can drive visitors around the property and point out the original layout, the location of rows of barracks, the spots where kids swam in the canals, and even the site of the guard towers and fence lines. Mrs. Gould spoke of the detainees and their experiences and showed me the artwork from the students in the camp; and it was clear through her knowledge of the subject, her treatment of the items in her possession, and even her willingness to open her home to strangers that she is honored to share the responsibility of passing on the stories of the Japanese Americans to future generations of Americans.

⁶ John Ellington, Interview.

⁷ John Ellington and Rosalie Gould both welcomed me into their homes and their lives for the brief time that I visited with them. Mr. Ellington assured me that it was normal for folks in that area to "adopt" people that visit and I learned enough about both of them to know that other researchers and visitors have undoubtedly received the same treatment over the years.

Though Mrs. Gould and Mr. Ellington have shared the bulk of the task of presenting Arkansas' relocation camp history with the local residents and visitors for decades, in 2004 they received some outside help in the form of *Life Interrupted: The Japanese American Experience in World War II Arkansas*, a program co-sponsored by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and the University of Arkansas, Little Rock (UALR) and paid for by a generous Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation grant. *Life Interrupted* featured a number of traveling museum exhibits at various sites around Little Rock including the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, the Central Arkansas Library System, UALR, and the Statehouse Convention Center. One of the highlights of the *Life Interrupted* project was a symposium held at UALR September 23-26, 2004. Over 1,200 people attended the conference, which featured prominent speakers, various excursions to the camps and local exhibits, and numerous educational lectures and activities.⁸

According to the website created in conjunction with *Life Interrupted*, the main goal of the project was “to educate – to tell people of all ages about the injustices committed during this time and how these acts changed the lives of all Americans.” To forward this goal, a major product of the three-year process was the creation of curricula for local teachers to incorporate the history of the Arkansas camps and the experience as a whole into classroom lessons. Today teachers across the country can download lesson plans and resources through the permanent UALR links for information, curriculum, and photos relating to the Japanese American experience in Arkansas. Mrs. Gould and Mr. Ellington both played a large part in the celebration and success of *Life Interrupted* and

⁸ *Camp Connections: A Conversation about Civil Rights and Social Justice in Arkansas*, Program, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, September 2004; http://www.ualr.edu/lifeinterrupted/conference/events_program.pdf.

have continued to play a local role in interpreting and preserving the sites for the ever-increasing numbers of visitors and researchers who have learned of Jerome and Rohwer through local, state, and national efforts.⁹

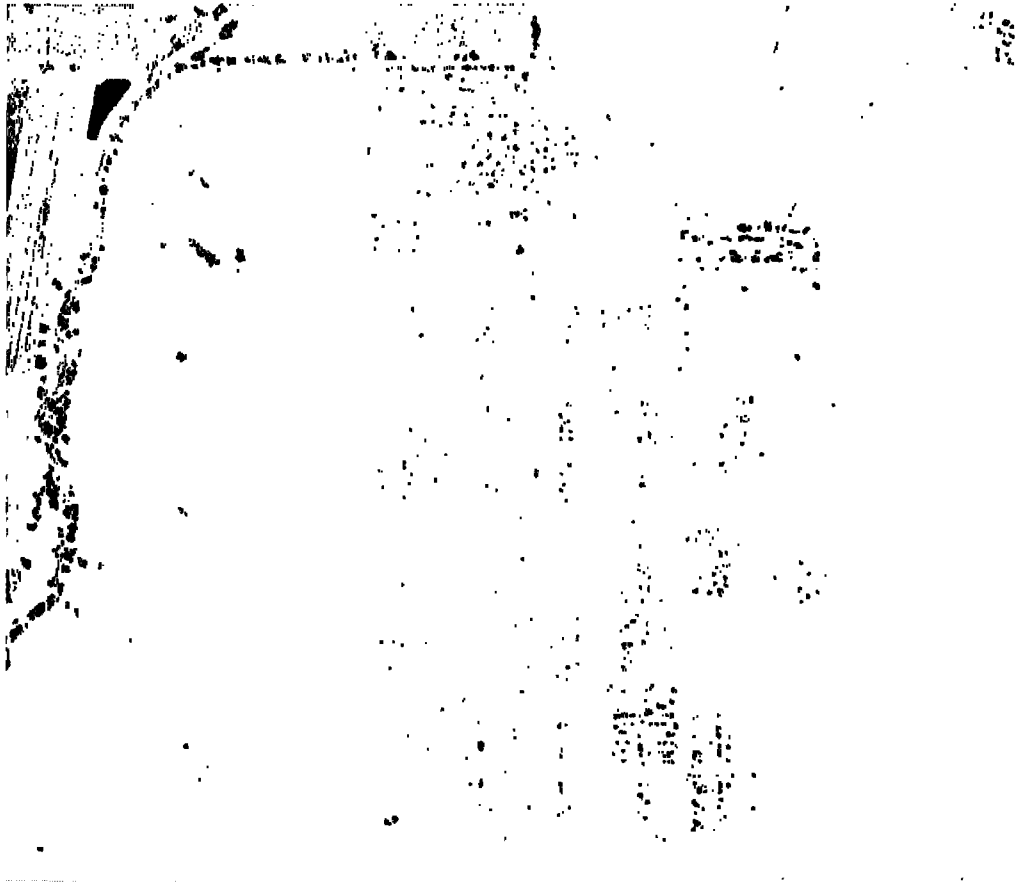
Rosalie Gould and John Ellington are just two of the many people who are interested in and dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of local camp sites. Delta, Utah High school teacher Jane Beckwith is the founder and president of the Topaz Museum Board that has worked to preserve the site of the Topaz camp and also to establish a museum in nearby Delta to more fully interpret the history of the relocation and Topaz. Former detainee and local resident Mas Inoshita still provides free access and tours of the Gila River Camp outside Phoenix, Arizona. Though he lives in San Jose, hours south of the site, Jimi Yamaichi is dedicated to preserving the camp at Tule Lake and also serves as part of the Tule Lake Committee, which sponsors regular pilgrimages to the site. No one individual or organization has done more than another amongst the various sites, but each one certainly has a unique story with different motivations, experiences, and varying levels of success.

Amache, Colorado

One of these unique individuals who has gone out of his way to share the history of the relocation with young students is John Hopper, history teacher at Granada High School in Granada, Colorado. During WWII, this town was home to the Amache WRA camp, which opened on August 27, 1942 and had the lowest population of the ten camps with only 7,318. Granada included a silk screen shop that produced 250,000 training posters

⁹ <http://www.ualr.edu/lifeinterrupted/html/> - "Education" Link;
<http://www.ualr.edu/lifeinterrupted/curriculum/index.asp> .

for the Navy during the war. When the camp closed on October 15, 1945 many of the structures were sold, but most of the concrete slabs remained at the site making it “remarkably intact” compared to many of the other camps. An aerial view of the camp gives some idea of the original layout whereas many other sites have been obscured by farmland.¹⁰



Aerial view of the remains of the Amache Camp, Granada Colorado
Google Earth Maps

The town of Granada purchased the central portion of the camp for \$2,500 while the buildings and outlying properties were sold and/or leased to local farmers and organizations. Today one of the camp’s wells is used by the town for drinking water and parts of the land have been used as a small fairground and the town landfill. For decades

¹⁰ Niiya, *Japanese American History*, 150-151.

the deserted site was primarily a gathering spot for local teens to visit and drink together until the 1960s when the Vista Nueva labor camp complex was built on the site of the camp's hospital to house migrant workers.¹¹

After the war around 2,000 Japanese Americans remained in Colorado, particularly in the Denver area, and by the year 2000 there were 18,676 Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) in the state. As these numbers grew in the years following the war, community organizations developed amongst the Japanese Americans and some of these eventually took an interest in the Granada site, which was three hours southeast of the capital city. In 1979, Denver resident and former Amache inmate, Hank Okubo, founded the Denver Central Optimist Club comprised of Japanese Americans in the region. Four years later they approached the town of Granada for permission to erect a memorial to the thirty-one Amache men who died in military service during WWII. Though the city council and the mayor Lawrence McMillan eventually approved the monument, there was a delay of several months over the desired word choice of "concentration camp" and the implication that it was an involuntary relocation and confinement. The compromise reached resulted in the very neutral inscription that reads,

Amache Remembered: Dedicated to the 31 patriotic Japanese Americans who volunteered from Amache and dutifully gave their lives in World War II[;] To the approximately 7000 person who were relocated at Amache and to the 120 who died there during this period of relocation August 27, 1942 October 15, 1945.

The same year that the Optimist Club erected this memorial, they also began sponsoring annual pilgrimages to the site to remember their lost loved ones and to do their part in cleaning up the site.¹²

¹¹ Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 113; Jonathan Shikes, "Forward into the Past: At Camp Amache, a School Project Reopens an Ugly Chapter of Colorado History," *Denver Westword*, 13 September 2001.

Perhaps the single greatest advancement to the preservation of Amache came in 1991 with the hiring of John Hopper as the history teacher at Granada High School. As a native of Las Animas, about forty-five minutes west of Granada, Mr. Hopper had grown up hearing about the camp from his mother who worked with a former inhabitant. During his second year at the school, he approached his principal for permission to direct a class research project on Amache. He and his students began by tracking down former camp detainees and significant local residents for oral histories, but their involvement and dedication to the site continued to grow from there. Through the efforts of Mr. Hopper and his students, the Denver Optimist Club, and the California-based Amache Historical Society, the site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 and became a National Historic Landmark in 2006. In addition, the Colorado Preservation Inc. listed Amache as one of its most endangered sites in 2001 and two years later the town received over \$72,000 from the State Historical Fund and other organizations to conduct an archaeological survey of the camp site.¹³

Mr. Hopper and his students, who formed the extra-curricular Amache Preservation Society (APS), have now taken the lead in preserving, restoring, and interpreting the Amache Camp and the stories of its former inhabitants. They have conducted extensive research at numerous state and university libraries and they have created their own museum and archive of documents, photos, newspaper articles, and artifacts. In 1997, when they formed the APS with a \$2,500 Colorado Council on the

¹² Gil Asakawa, "Speaking Out for the Past," *Denver Post*, 16 February 2003; Shikes, "Forward into the Past;" Frank Iritani and Joanné Iritani, *Ten Visits: Accounts of Visits to all the Japanese American Relocation Centers* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum).

¹³ Shikes, "Forward into the Past;" Asakawa, "Speaking Out for the Past;" John Wright, "Secretary Norton Announces Designation of Two Colorado Sites as National Historic Landmarks," Department of the Interior Press Release, 10 February 2006.

Arts grant, they also created a wooden scale model of the camp to use as an educational tool. They frequently travel to local organizations, schools, and even universities to talk about the history and current preservation of the site. As the students share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others they also learn significant skills themselves, including research techniques, public speaking, and numerous others.¹⁴

In addition to their off-site work, the students have also devoted their time and physical labor to maintaining and interpreting the camp itself. The students wrote and created over seventy wooden signs labeling various parts of the camp and they intend to erect more permanent and more informative signs in the future. They found and restored one of the original gardens and koi ponds and they have spent a great deal of effort on the upkeep of the camp cemetery. In addition to other maintenance projects, they erected a fence to keep out wandering cattle and they even ran a water line from the town to run sprinklers in the arid environment so that the cemetery area has a park-like feel in the midst of the otherwise desert-like camp.¹⁵

Though the students and Mr. Hopper have made an incredible difference at Amache, their actions have not come without some opposition. The majority of this opposition, however, is directed not at the students themselves but at the federal government. The distrust between Granada and the government actually dates back to the creation of Amache, when the WRA condemned 10,500 acres that was home to over fifteen privately owned farms and ranches that employed and housed numerous local residents and families. Though the owners were paid when they were forced off their property, the action still left many unemployed and forced to find a new home. To add

¹⁴ Shikes, "Forward into the Past;" Personal observations from my visit to Amache in July 2008 as part of the Enduring Communities Conference in Denver, Colorado.

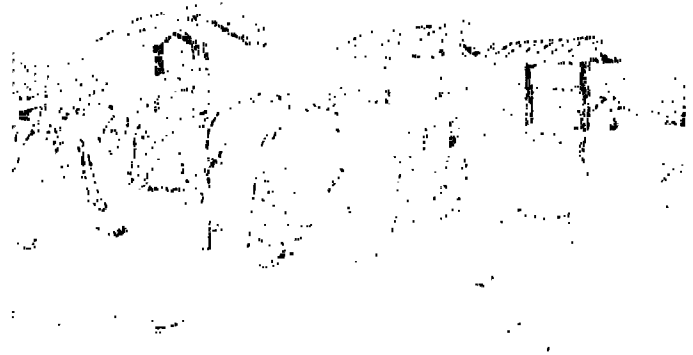
¹⁵ Shikes, "Forward into the Past."

salt to the wound, their lost property was bought by the city or auctioned to the highest bidder after the war so there was little chance to recover their pre-war homesteads. During the war, some Granada residents were also frustrated by what they saw as significantly better facilities within the camp compared to those outside. Rationing did not always affect the government-run camp as hard as it did local residents and many services like the schools, hospitals, water and sewer systems, and the movie theater were far better than those found in Granada. While this complaint ignores the fact that regardless of how nice their movie theater was, the inhabitants of Amache did not have their own freedom, it still created bitter feelings in some Granada citizens. With the national and state recognition of the Amache site through the Landmark, Historical Register, and Most Endangered status, local residents began to fear increased federal controls similar to those they had dealt with in the past. For the Optimist Club and the APS, the outside recognition and funding is certainly helpful, and in many cases necessary to complete their projects, but they too hope to keep control within the hands of the local organizations to ensure continued local support and involvement.¹⁶

¹⁶ Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 101, 106; Shikes, "Forward into the Past."

Despite some obstacles, the effectiveness of Mr. Hopper's APS is unquestionable.

The difference at the site even between 2007 and 2008 was remarkable, with an inaccessible and uninviting entrance being converted into a picnic area with paths, interpretive waysides, a new monument, and other features.¹⁷



Visitors read new interpretive signs at the Amache Camp
Photo by Author, July 2008

Though almost every camp site has a group or groups dedicated to its maintenance and preservation, the APS is truly influential and inspiring given the age and lack of personal connection to the camp of those involved. Their incredible effectiveness is proof of the change that motivated, capable, and well-led young people can bring about despite limited resources. In a subject like Japanese American history with such an emphasis on education and the importance of preserving and passing on the story to future generations, John Hopper and his students have made significant strides towards this goal and should serve as a model for other organizations and teachers everywhere.

Manzanar, California

On March 22, 1942, barely a month after EO 9066, Manzanar opened as an assembly center before transferring to WRA control and officially opening as the first

¹⁷ When I visited the site in March 2007 with my fiancé, we had to stop at a local convenience store to pick up a key that would allow us inside the gated area of the camp site. Unfortunately the key did not work, but we were able to gain admittance by following another vehicle in through a separate gate. After driving around the site for some time we found ourselves locked in and had to remove several strands of barbed wire, which had clearly been removed previously by others, in order to leave.

relocation camp on June 1, 1942. The camp peaked at just over 10,000, inhabitants including the residents of the only orphanage in the ten camps, the Children's Village. Manzanar was the scene of a riot on December 5, 1942 caused by tensions between those seen as "*inu*," or informers, and those who were critical of the camps and more broadly the JACL. The detainees lived within sight of Mt. Williamson and Mt. Whitney, which made the camp both scenic and extremely cold in the winters, while its presence near Death Valley resulted in extremely hot summers as well. The camp housed a camouflage net, garment, and mattress factory as well as a cabinet shop until its closing on November 21, 1945.¹⁸

Even before the Japanese Americans came to the Owens Valley in 1942, the property that became Manzanar had been the site of two communities that had each suffered due to forces beyond their control. The Paiute Indians had irrigated and cultivated the land of the Owens Valley for centuries prior to the arrival of western settlements in the 1860s. An extraordinarily harsh winter in 1861-1862 increased tensions between the Indians and the new arrivals; and in 1863 the military forcibly removed the Paiutes to a reservation at Fort Tejon, though many eventually returned to the area and became a crucial labor force in the Valley. By the late 1800s, mining opportunities in the area had run their course and the settlers worked to improve irrigation and transportation to support agriculture and cattle enterprises. During the early twentieth century the Owens Valley boasted hundreds of acres of orchards, many of which were a product of the new community of Manzanar, the Spanish word for "apple orchard." Unfortunately, a lack of water in the city of Los Angeles forced city officials to look elsewhere for a consistent water supply. In 1905, the Los Angeles Department of

¹⁸ Niiya, *Japanese American History*, 223-224.

Water and Power (DWP) began to buy property and water rights in the Owens Valley and soon built an aqueduct to supply water to the large city south of the Valley. Eventually LA owned the rights to much of the previously settled land and agricultural companies, which they managed until the last families left Manzanar in 1934 resulting in the gradual deterioration of many of the orchards.¹⁹

When the Japanese Americans were forced onto the land after the start of the war, they helped care for what remained of the neglected orchards. During the war the federal



The remains of the early twentieth century orchards on the site of Manzanar today.
Photo by author, April 2007

government leased the property from the LADWP, but when the lease expired on June 30, 1946 there was much debate over what to do with the structures remaining at the site. The 22 WRA administration buildings

became the Manzanar Housing Project for returning war veterans, and many of the

other buildings were sold to locals or demolished. In 1947, the local Inyo County Veterans of Foreign Wars leased the camp auditorium to use as a clubhouse and meeting hall until 1951 when it was converted to a garage for the Inyo County Roads Department. Between 1956 and 1972, various parts of the camp were used as a county

¹⁹ Manzanar National Historic Site Website, <http://www.nps.gov/manz/historyculture/index.htm>; Larry Van Horn, "American Indian Links to Manzanar," *Cultural Resources Management* 5 (2001), 16-18.

airport, a camp for the Nevada National Guard, a drag racing strip, and an elk hunting ground for the California Department of Fish and Game.²⁰

The interest in preservation at Manzanar arose in 1969 when a UCLA group of approximately 150 people, primarily young Sansei and *Yonsei*, or fourth generation Japanese immigrants, drove north to clean up the camp site and commemorate the relocation in what became the first Manzanar Pilgrimage.²¹ Nisei Sue Kunitomi Embrey participated in this journey, and her dedication to the preservation of Manzanar and the sharing of its history soon became legendary. Born Sueko on January 6, 1923, Mrs. Embrey was relocated with her family to Manzanar just one year after graduating from high school. While behind barbed wire she worked in the camouflage net factory and served as editor of the camp's newspaper, the *Manzanar Free Press*. She left the camp for Madison, Wisconsin in 1943 and later moved to Chicago, Illinois before returning to the West Coast in 1948. During the 1960s and 1970s she earned her B.A. in English and her M.A. in Education and worked as a school teacher for years. She was also constantly active in political and activist circles advocating rights for minorities, workers, and women.²²

Her participation in the 1969 Pilgrimage was a turning point for Mrs. Embrey that inspired her to undertake a "35 year endeavor to raise awareness of the enduring consequences of Executive Order 9066." In 1971, she and Warren Furutani, a youth

²⁰ Harlan D. Unrau, *The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry During World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center* (Washington D.C.: US Department of the Interior, 1996).

²¹ Actually two Issei Buddhist ministers Rev. Sentoku Maeda and Rev. Soichi Wakahiro had been traveling to the site every year for 25 years to pay their respects to those buried at the cemetery, but the 1969 pilgrimage was the first large-scale reunion or ceremony held at the site since the closing of the camp in 1945.

²² Diana Meyers Bahr, *The Unquiet Nisei: An Oral History of the Life of Sue Kunitomi Embrey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

director for the JACL who helped develop the first pilgrimage, created the Manzanar Project, which became the Manzanar Committee, an organization dedicated to educating the public about EO 9066 and to earning California State Historic Landmark status for Manzanar. According to their nomination paperwork, Manzanar deserved such distinction because it was the first of the WRA camps, it was the closest to LA, which had a significant Japanese American population, and it included a cemetery and monument of archaeological and historical importance. In January 1972, the California Department of Parks and Recreation declared Manzanar to be State Historic Landmark #850 and a dedication ceremony with over 1,500 attendees was held in conjunction with the 1973 Pilgrimage. Four years later, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board also declared Manzanar to be an LA City Historic Landmark.²³

Through the continued education and preservation efforts of Mrs. Embrey and the Manzanar Committee, the camp began to receive more recognition as a historically significant site; and in 1985, Manzanar became a National Historic Landmark. Unfortunately, the efforts of Mrs. Embrey did not come without opposition from the local community. Some local residents were angered by the use of the provocative term “concentration camp,” while others wanted a site that would depict all layers of Owens Valley history without focusing on three years of struggle. Local workers kept unlisted phone numbers because of the number of threats received against their lives and the property, and the local newspaper received so many letters that they eventually refused to print anymore. The LADWP’s ownership of the property also caused additional issues,

²³ Bahr, *Unquiet Nisei*, 101; Unrau, *Evacuation and Relocation*. For more information over the debate surrounding the State Historic Landmark Plaque, see the Preface.

as they refused to relinquish control of the site until they received adequate compensation in return.²⁴

Despite opposition, Mrs. Embrey and her colleagues were excited to receive the news of Public Law 102-248 signed by President George H.W. Bush creating the Manzanar National Historic Site on March 3, 1992. The pilgrimage that year welcomed over 2,000 attendants who marked the creation of the Historic Site and the 50th Anniversary of the EO 9066. However, due to budget delays and the battle with the LADWP, the National Park Service did not receive the official title to the property until 1997, and by 1998, the staff of the site was still only two people. A grant from the Eastern California Museum allowed local teacher, Richard Stewart, to offer tours of the site, but otherwise there was very little to entice visitors during the early years of the site's development. According to a 1998 count, its close proximity to Yosemite National Park and Death Valley already drew between 18,000 and 25,000 visitors each year but the Park Service hoped to increase the numbers with the creation of a visitors center within the original auditorium, the relocation of original camp barracks back to the site, and the construction of a replica guard tower.²⁵

Though opposition, negotiations, and budget constraints delayed the development of the site, Manzanar National Historic Site came into its own in the first years of the twenty-first century. According to a Fact Sheet available at Manzanar, the site now

²⁴ Bahr, *Unquiet Nisei*, 129; Martin Forstenzer, "Plans to Honor Manzanar Create Divided Camps," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 December 1993; Martin Forstenzer, "Bitter Feelings Still Run Deep at Camp," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 April 1996; Todd Purdum, "U.S. Starts to Dust Off a Dark Spot in History for All to See," *New York Times*, 20 June 1998; Paul Feldman, "DWP, U.S. Snag Blocks Monument," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 June 1991.

²⁵ Purdum, "U.S. Starts to Dust Off"; Forstenzer, "Bitter Feelings Still Run Deep."

employees over a dozen people, visitation in 2003 was an estimated 57,000, and their annual budget in 2004 was nearly \$1 million.



The Interpretive Center in the former camp Auditorium at Manzanar, California
Photo by author, April 2007

In 2004, the \$5 million Interpretive Center opened, and the following year on September 17, 2005, the site dedicated the replica guard tower. In honor of Mrs. Embrey and her decades of hard work, the 2,500 visitors at the 2004 grand opening celebration gave her a well-deserved standing ovation. Sadly, the honor came none too soon as Mrs. Embrey passed away in May 2006. The following year's pilgrimage was titled, "One Life...Legacy for All," in her honor and the afternoon ceremony included tributes by numerous friends, family members, and colleagues who spoke about her hard work,

dedication, and determination to share the story of the relocation through education and preservation.²⁶



Building markers like these inform visitors about the layout and composition of the original camp.
Photo by author, April 2007

By 2007, the site had numerous options for visitors, especially compared to the other camp locations. The visitors center had a bookstore and gift shop, plus a video on Manzanar, a scale model of the camp layout, and numerous exhibits on the

pre-war history of Owens Valley, EO 0966, and life in the camps. There were many hands-on opportunities for children and visitors of all ages including a National Park Service Junior Ranger Program, tactile exhibits on toys and living conditions in the barracks, and identification tags that could be used to track the wartime experience of specific Manzanar inhabitants. Park rangers offered various programs, some of which toured the site while others remained in the visitor's center, and the staff members were dedicated to capturing oral histories from the numerous former detainees that visit the site every year. Visitors can also take a driving tour of the site, stopping at various wooden markers that coincide with a written description of barracks, blocks, latrines, the hospital, the cemetery, and other sites around the camp. Taking into consideration the amount of the central residential portion of camp that is included in the site, the number of physical landmarks that are still visible, and the interactive opportunities of the visitor's center,

²⁶ "Manzanar National Historic Site Fact Sheet," National Park Service, Manzanar, California; Manzanar Pilgrimage Program, "One Life...a Legacy for All: Sue Kunitomi Embrey," Manzanar Committee.

Manzanar has more to offer than the other camps, though its NPS affiliation, proximity to high Japanese American populations, and relative nearness to other historical sites certainly accounts for much of its success.

Conclusion

Though the success of Manzanar may be more visible and tangible at this point in time, every one of the ten camps has had concerned citizens, local residents, and former detainees fighting for its preservation and for the education of future generations. Some sites had organizations and strong leadership that allowed significant strides to be made, while others might have struggled with a lack of local interested population or local opposition. Regardless of variances, the fact that the story of the wartime confinement has made it out of local homes and into the national consciousness is undeniable, though there is still progress to be made. Through the efforts of people like Rosalie Gould, John Ellington, John Hopper, Sue Kunitomi Embrey and many others, the personal experiences of Japanese Americans are being remembered and discussed at the local, state, and national level in classrooms and at various historic sites across the country. The stated goals of the Manzanar Committee were education and preservation, which are the most common goals of all the individuals and organizations that are involved at Japanese American sites. Two experiences that served as proof that these goals are being realized at the national level were the passing of Public Law 109-441 in 2006, which approved funding for the preservation of the camps, and the Enduring Communities project culminating in the "Whose America, Who's American?" Conference of July 2008.

In 1992, when Congress passed the legislation that created the National Historic Site at Manzanar, they included a call for a theme study of Japanese American confinement sites that would,

...identify, evaluate, and nominate as national historic landmarks those sites, buildings, and structures that best illustrate or commemorate the period in American history from 1941 to 1946 when Japanese Americans were ordered to be detained, relocated, or excluded pursuant to Executive Order Number 9066, and other actions.²⁷

The result of this theme study was the 1999 publication, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites*, which reflected thorough field work and archival research into the confinement sites across the country and presented a brief history of each site, a summary of existing structures, and a discussion of current interpretive efforts. In 2001, this summary was followed by the *Report to the President: Japanese-American Internment Sites Preservation*, which testified that,

Each of the Relocation Centers has distinctive resources that illustrate different aspects of the Internment story. Some have structures still standing, while others have no more than a few concrete slabs and the memories of those interned there to mark their existence. Some have significant resources committed toward preservation and interpretation, while others have virtually nothing to document the grave injustice done to the Japanese-Americans imprisoned at these sites. Recognizing the distinctiveness of each of the sites, the Department will work closely with national, State and local organizations to provide additional protection to these historically significant resources. The Department will focus on increasing the level of Interpretation, Historic Recognition, and Consultation for the sites. In addition, DOI will continue to coordinate with any ongoing or proposed legislative efforts for specific sites.²⁸

At the same time, the National Park Service also evaluated some of the camps, specifically Minidoka, Manzanar, Granada and Tule Lake, as part of the World War II Home Front National Historic Landmark Theme Study to determine eligibility for NPS

²⁷ Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 3.

²⁸ *Report to the President: Japanese-American Internment Sites Preservation* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2001), "Recommendations and Proposed Actions."

affiliation, Landmark status, and historical significance. Unfortunately for Tule Lake and Granada, they received no official funding or status change at that time, but Minidoka became a national monument and Manzanar received a significant amount of funding for their visitor's center.²⁹

Perhaps the single most significant result to come out of the increased national attention was the movement for a Congressional mandate to preserve and fund all the sites that coalesced into Public Law 109-441, signed on December 21, 2006 by President George W. Bush. The bill, supported by the Japanese American National Heritage Coalition and the National Japanese American Political Action Committee, created a program under the auspices of the National Park Service in which local individuals, organizations, tribal councils, and other involved entities would work together with the NPS to research, preserve, and interpret the confinement sites of the Japanese Americans during WWII. The law referred primarily to the 10 WRA camp sites plus Crystal City, Texas and Honouliuli, Hawaii, and designated \$38 million dollars to be spent on the grant program. The NPS has since held numerous public and online meetings to gather suggestions and opinions, which they summarized by saying, "Many respondents expressed their hope that projects will leave a legacy for future generations through the preservation of both the physical confinement sites and the stories of internees' experiences during World War II." As of this writing, the \$38 million has yet to be appropriated by Congress, but the NPS is actively establishing guidelines for the programs and continuing to hold listening sessions to ensure that the public, including

²⁹ Shikes, "Forward into the Past."

former detainees, has an active voice in the decision making process surrounding the legacy of the confinement sites.³⁰

In recognition of the new Public Law, many of the governing bodies that oversee the care of the sites held an All-Camps Meeting at the “Whose America, Who’s American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice” Conference in Denver, Colorado during the first week of July 2008. The conference was part of the Japanese American National Museum’s program entitled, “Enduring Communities: The Japanese American Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah,” a three-year project to encourage schools in these five states to include the Japanese American experience as part of the standard school curriculum. The conference included sessions on a variety of subjects, local museum exhibits and excursions, activities aimed at children and young adults, and even shopping in the “Community Marketplace.” The Enduring Communities Conference, including the All-Camps Meeting, speakers, lectures, and events were incredibly rewarding for attendants, yet the significance of the conference was reflected more in what it represented than its educational content.

³⁰ “House Passes Bill to Preserve 10 Camps of Internment,” *New York Times*, 6 December 2006; National Park Service, “What We Asked and What We Heard,” *Public Law 109-441: Preservation of Japanese American Confinement Sites Newsletter* Vol. 1, No. 2 (December 2007), 2.



The Enduring Communities Conference brought together an incredibly varied demographic through its lectures, exhibits, and excursions, which included a trip to the Amache Camp for a memorial, pictured above.
Photo by author, July 2008

Though the conference offered a great opportunity to study the representation of Japanese American history and education in Colorado, the national implications of the conference itself were far more informative. The Japanese American community is far from homogenous and is in fact composed of numerous communities, separated by generations, geography, and life experience. This conference and its two predecessors, the All-Camps Summit in 2002 and *Life Interrupted* in 2004, represented a coming together of many of these small communities in a way that few other events can. It was an opportunity to see representatives of numerous camps, military units, organizations, and academies from all walks of life and from literally around the world, gathered in one place to share their thoughts, goals, and experiences with others.³¹ The conference symbolized the national and even international recognition that the WWII confinement has now received through a process that started at the grassroots level with individuals and local organizations that were committed to a cause. The passage of Public Law 109-

³¹ In fact, even my attendance at the conference as a twenty six year old Caucasian student from Houston, Texas showed the variety of attendees.

441 and the Enduring Communities Project represented a significant achievement for education and preservation of the Japanese American legacy, and though the struggle to preserve this story is by no means finished, these efforts have revealed its historical and contemporary significance so that the story can no longer be ignored as it was for so many years after the war.

Though the legislation and educational conference represent national recognition of the significance of such sites, the primary players in camp preservation remain at the local level. Rosalie Gould, John Ellington, John Hopper, and the late Sue Embrey have counterparts at each of the other six camps that actively seek to preserve, interpret, and educate the public on the World War II Japanese American experience. These individuals helped bring an end to the silence and neglect shared by all the camps sites after the war and have inspired and led others to do the same. As many of these camps became significant historical sites, attention began to focus on not only the camps, but also the interpretation of camp history in local, state, and national museums. The creation of these museums and exhibits represented a significant step in the effort to remember and commemorate the WWII confinement and military service and to create a broader public understanding of the Japanese American experience.

Chapter Five: Exhibiting Change

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the traditional museum became a subject of great development and debate. The cultural institution moved beyond the “cabinet of curiosities” to an influential realm of interactive exhibits, controversial topics, and professional leadership. Through this professional, social, and academic development, the museum has earned increasing respect and authority as one of the most significant stewards of public memory. According to French historian Pierre Nora, one of the foremost leaders on the study of memory,

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being dormant and periodically revived...Memory, in so far as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it...Memory installs remembrance within the sacred...Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects...¹

If memory is as malleable as Nora suggests, then the museum, as a foundation of memory, becomes susceptible to the debates and shifts within public memory.

Two major changes occurred in the latter years of the twentieth century that caused the importance of the museum in shaping memory to become a significant object of study. First the field of public history went through a period of professionalization, with increased state and federal protection and funding for historic sites, educational opportunities for museum studies and historic preservation, and the support of the National Park Service, the National Council of Public History, and other prominent

¹ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter – Memory (Spring, 1989), 8-9.

organizations.² This widespread emergence of the professional public history field coincided with changing trends in the academic realm and the development of social history, which was often labeled revisionist history. By the 1970s, the study of history began to include previously ignored topics like the daily life of average people; and newly raised issues of race, gender, and class complicated history.³ One historian wrote,

A new generation of historians who were intellectually and politically shaped by the civil rights, antiwar, and feminist movements emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. This new generation advocates a “new” kind of history – one that explores long-neglected subjects like women, blacks, peasants, and workers; one that critically reexamines the centers of power and authority around the world; one that reaches beyond the confines of the academe.⁴

While issues such as feminism, gender, and race had emerged in the academy during the 1960s and 1970s, there was a long-standing separation between the academy and historic sites so that many of these topics began to appear in museums only during the last decade of the twentieth century following the public history professionalization movement. Examples included new museums such as the National Museum of the American Indian established in 1989 and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center begun in 1995, which shed light on the previously neglected history of Native Americans and runaway slaves. Other older historic sites like Colonial Williamsburg adapted their interpretation to include the formerly unrepresented populations of women, slaves, and peasants.⁵

² Phyllis K. Leffler and Joseph Brent, eds., *Public and Academic History: A Philosophy and Paradigm* (Malabar: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1990), 21.

³ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 116;

⁴ Roy Rosenzweig, ed., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), xi.

⁵ For more information on the changes at Colonial Williamsburg, see: Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002); Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

When social history did emerge in public sites, it was often accompanied by debate, protest, and opposition from the public and, on occasion, the academic historians as well. The debate over the exhibit of the *Enola Gay* at the Smithsonian Institution in 1995 was perhaps the most publicized, but similar arguments have occurred over the presentation of Native American and African American history as well as other areas of contentious history. As historian David Thelen explained, "Since people's memories provide security, authority, legitimacy, and finally identity in the present, struggles over the possession and interpretation of memories are deep, frequent, and bitter."⁶ Despite these ongoing debates, many within the historical profession feel that,

museums must not retreat from wrestling with the difficulties of diversity . . . Embracing controversy in exhibitions allows museums to expand and to alter their traditional role in American society . . . As safe havens, museum exhibits can be forums that stimulate debate and understanding, arenas that allow audiences to better comprehend the complexity and ambiguity of the past and help them wrestle with the difficult issues of race, class, and gender.⁷

Museum debates represented the transfer of academic questions and debates that had previously been discussed primarily within the somewhat protected realm of the academy, to a public forum.

The public nature of historic sites made them significant as places of memory and identity, which in turn made them an intriguing and important area of historical analysis. According to the Smithsonian Institution's website, over 20 million people visited the Smithsonian museums in 2004, with an additional 18 million visiting their affiliated museums. While not every historic site can boast the attendance of the Smithsonian, it is still important to recognize the influence that historic sites have through the sheer number

⁶ David Thelen, ed., *Memory and American History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), xvi.

⁷ Lonnie Bunch, "Embracing Controversy: Museum Exhibitions and the Politics of Change," *The Public Historian* 14, No. 3 (Summer 1992), 65.

of visitors that pass through their doors every year. According to one study, 81% of US travelers in 2002 were considered “cultural heritage travelers,” or people who visit sites that allow them to “experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.” Given the number of historically minded travelers in the US and around the world, as well as the level of authority granted to historic sites and museums, such sites must consider a number of questions in their development: With what version of history do visitors leave? Whose story is being told? Whose story is being left out?⁸

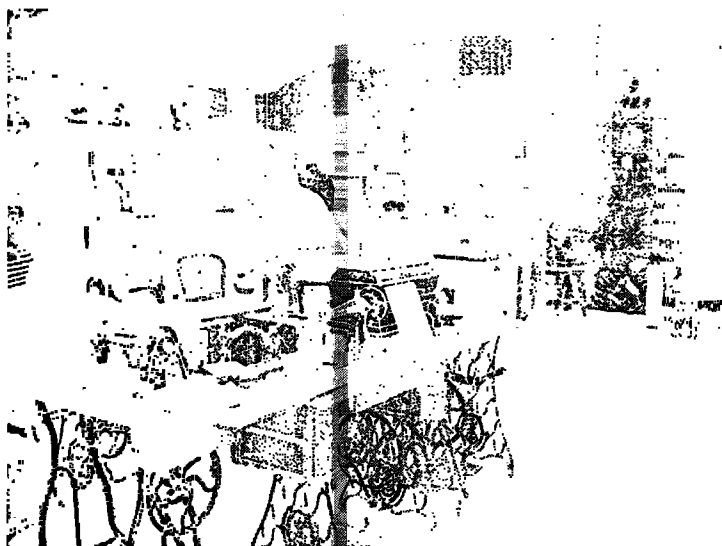
The professionalization of public history and the social history movement affected all levels and fields of academic study and have reached numerous historic sites around the country forcing historians and staff members to consider these and other questions as they create new exhibits and update preexisting ones to accommodate new perspectives and information. These same trends that were felt in institutions around the country had a significant impact on sites relating to the Japanese American experience. “Cabinets of curiosities” added new artifacts to their collections and incorporated new perspectives on the confinement; new exhibits were developed to inform visitors about the WWII injustices; and entire new museums were created to preserve and share the story of Japanese American history in the US. These changes were revealed across the country at various types of institutions ranging from local museums to the Smithsonian Institution, and their impact has been equally as far reaching. Through the efforts of individuals who fought to pass on the history of the Japanese Americans during WWII, future generations of Americans can enjoy both permanent museum displays and traveling exhibits in places

⁸ <http://www.si.edu/about/>; The National Historic Trust for Preservation, Cultural Heritage Tourism Website, <http://culturalheritagetourism.org/resources/research.htm>; <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/heritage-tourism/> .

like the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California and the Ellis Island National Monument in New York. The existence of such cultural institutions and the Japanese American exhibits therein, will remain as proof of the determination of veterans, former detainees, family members, historians, and community members alike to ensure that their story was not forgotten.

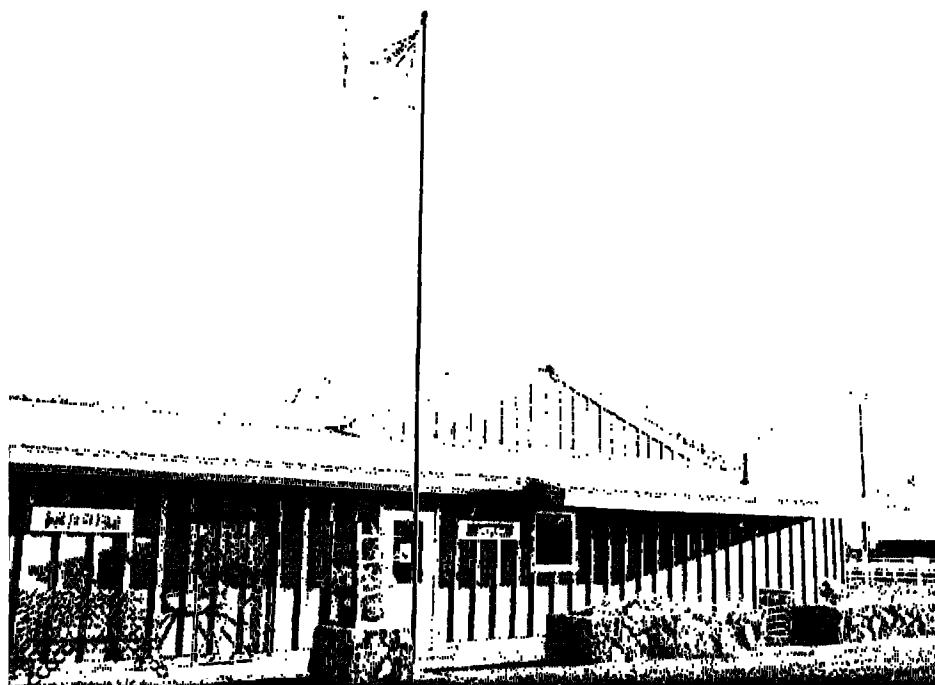
Local Museums

Generally speaking the Japanese American museums and exhibits fall within three categories: local museums, related exhibits within unrelated museums, and subject specific museums. Of the ten War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps, six have a nearby museum that dedicates either all or part of its collections and displays to the history of the Japanese American confinement. These museums are the Eastern California Museum in Independence, California, north of Manzanar; the Jerome and Minidoka Counties Historical Societies near the Hunt Camp in Idaho; the Great Basin Museum of Millard County, Utah, just miles from Topaz; the Homesteader Museum of Powell, Wyoming, east of Heart Mountain; the Tule Lake – Butte Valley Fairgrounds and Museum in Tule Lake, California; and the local Granada



Homesteader Museum, Powell, Wyoming
Photo by Author, June 27, 2007

Museum in Granada, Colorado.⁹ In most cases these local museums began as the classic “cabinet of curiosities” style of museums filled with retro household items, old jukeboxes, antique clothes, and random assortments of items from significant local residents. Some of these museums have since moved into a more modern and professional style while others retain their provincial focus and charm. Regardless of their presentation or professionalism, however, many of these local museums deserve credit for their willingness to deal with a topic that many other historic sites, textbooks, and even local individuals would prefer not be addressed. While each of these museums merits its own attention for their unique stories and institutional histories that they represent, this analysis will provide a general overview of their development, as many followed similar trends.



Tule Lake-Butte Valley Fairgrounds Museum
Photo by Author, November 9, 2007

⁹ Gila River had such an exhibit in the Gila River Arts & Crafts Center, but it closed in 2008.

The decades following the war represented a time of forgetting the confinement of Japanese Americans rather than remembering it. The removal of physical reminders aided this attempt, as returning veterans, homesteaders, and developers purchased and moved or destroyed many of the structures that had comprised the camps during the war. In most cases, few or no Japanese Americans remained in the surrounding areas after the camps closed so most of the remaining local citizens had little vested interest in the Japanese American experience after the war. In addition, as social movements of the 1960s and 1970s presented the confinement as an injustice, many locals and former administrative officials felt the need to defend the Executive Order to justify their own compliance with the confinement on the basis of wartime necessity.¹⁰

As historians, community members, and former detainees became increasingly vocal about the WWII Japanese American experience, their desire to preserve and pass



Manzanar Exhibit at ECM, California
Photo by Author, April 2007

on the legacy of the confinement naturally turned to museums, one of the most traditional forums for historic interpretation and study. Interested individuals began campaigns to include the confinement history at local museums or to start their own local institutions solely dedicated to the

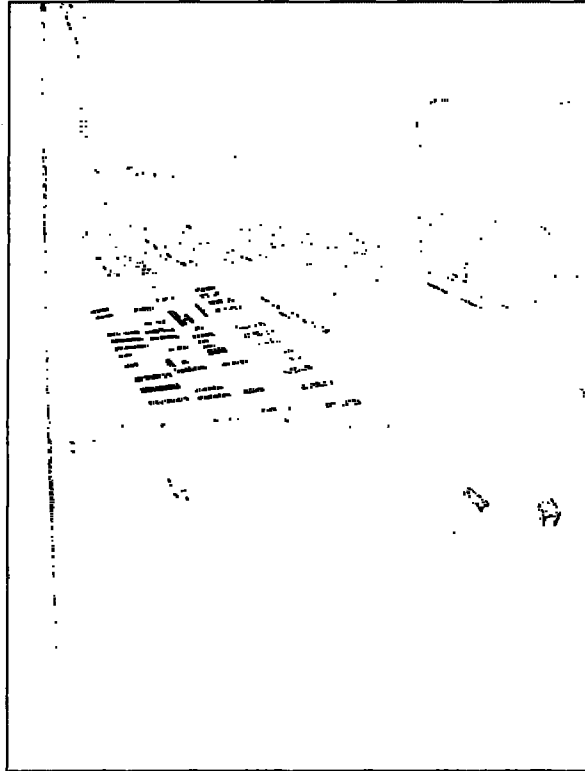
experience of a particular camp. In the 1970s, former Manzanar detainee Shiro “Shi”

¹⁰ For more information on this transformation, see Chapter Two: Awakenings.

Nomura visited the Eastern California Museum, which dated back to 1928, and discovered that though it was less than ten miles from the site of Manzanar, the museum contained very little information on the confinement. For the next two decades, Nomura and his wife Mary collected items and created display panels to portray the history of the camp. In Colorado, local teacher John Hopper and his high school students of the Amache Preservation Society created a museum to collect and preserve the numerous items that former detainees and local residents had donated to the students to educate future generations. Jane Beckwith of Delta, Utah served as a board member of the local Great Basin Museum and has worked hard to present the history of the Topaz Relocation Camp both within the museum and at the camp site itself. Through the efforts of individuals like Nomura, Hopper, Beckwith and many others, local museums near the WRA camp sites now frequently present the history of the confinement. The Jerome and Minidoka Historical Societies in Idaho, the Tule Lake-Butte Valley Fairgrounds Museum in California, and the Homesteader Museum of Powell, Wyoming all have entire exhibits and historical research information available to visitors who are interested in the Japanese American confinement history.¹¹

¹¹ "The Manzanar Exhibit," Eastern California Museum Informational Brochure (Independence: Eastern California Museum); Jane Beckwith, Interview with author, 30 June 2007.

These museums are representative of the movement towards the inclusion of social history in historic sites, and, in many cases, they also reveal evidence of the professionalization of the field. For instance, the Tule Lake museum now features professionally designed and constructed information panels amongst their more traditional handmade items, and they have also included numerous hands-on exhibits featuring documents and other tactile displays and an audio tour option. Many of the museums, including Tule Lake, the



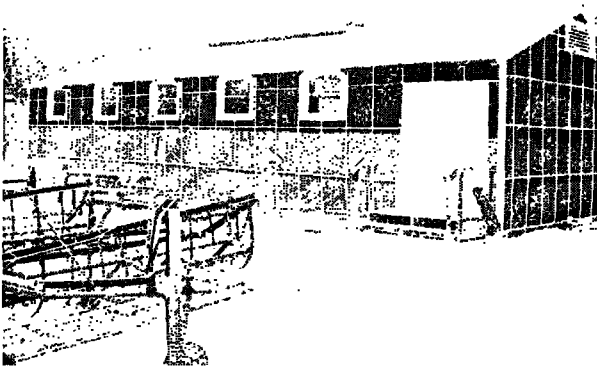
Mural of the Tule Lake Camp at the Tule Lake-Butte Valley
Fairgrounds Museum
Photo by Author, November 9, 2007

Homesteaders, Great Basin, and the

Jerome County Historical Society, have also moved away from displaying a jumble of unrelated items to more focused separate exhibits depicting the confinement experience at each camp.

One of the ways in which many of these museums have attempted to more accurately and thoroughly present the history of the confinement is through the preservation and interpretation of the barracks that housed the detainees in the camps. Thanks to a California Civil Liberties Public Education Fund grant, the Tule Lake Museum features an original guard tower and barrack that has been furnished to portray both Japanese American confinement and post-war remodeled homes. The Great Basin

Museum has also obtained half of an original barrack and has interpreted it partly to



Half-Barrack at the Delta Great Basin Museum
Photo by Author, June 30, 2007

represent wartime living conditions and

partly to serve as a museum in itself,

featuring a model of the camp, original handcrafted furniture, and photos. The

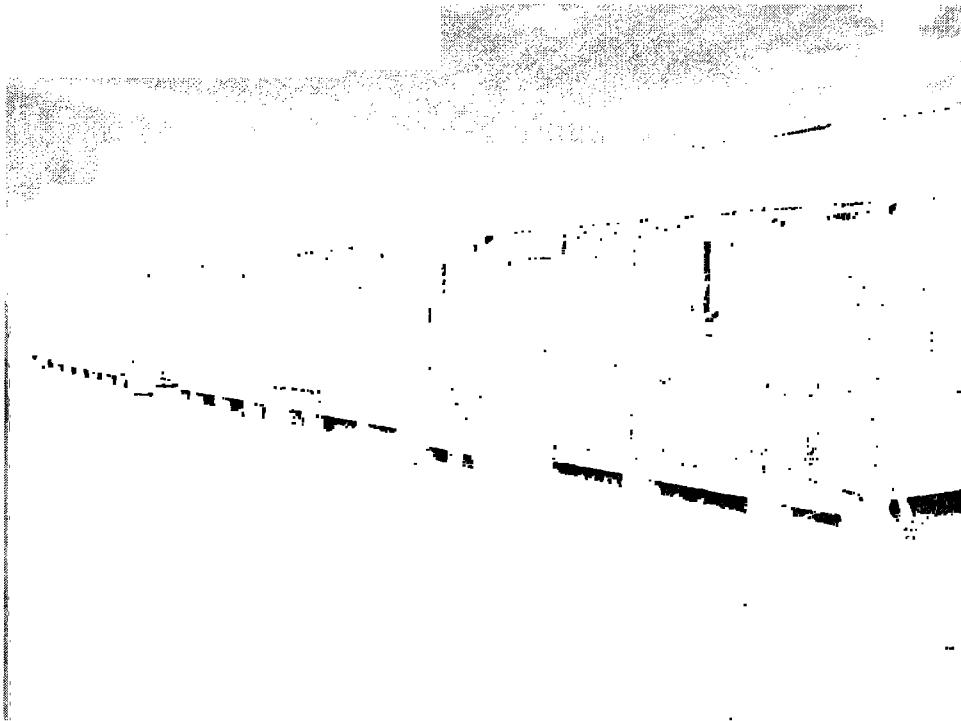
Jerome Historical Society also restored a

barrack, which became part of the Idaho

Farm and Ranch Museum (IFARM) and

currently includes original furnishings,

documents, and photos to tell visitors about life inside the Hunt Camp.



IFARM Barrack, Twin Falls, Idaho
Photo by Author, June 23, 2007

Despite the efforts at modernization, inclusion, and professionalization, many of these local museums face a huge obstacle simply due to their location. The camps were

not located near major cities; rather they were situated in remote and often desolate locations. To use Heart Mountain as an example, the largest city nearby is Cody, which is about twelve miles away and boasts a population of just over 8,800. Powell, Wyoming, home of the Homesteader Museum, which is on the other side of Heart Mountain from Cody, had a population of fewer than 5,500 in 2006. While Heart Mountain has the advantage of being reasonably close to Yellowstone National Park, the site itself features an interpretive park, but it is not well-marked or well-advertised. Similarly, the Homesteader Museum in Powell is advertised as focusing primarily on early settlers and the Shoshone Reclamation Project and receives only approximately 3,400 visitors each year. While the Homesteader is a wonderful museum with excellent information and both rotating and permanent exhibits, its location limits awareness and visitation. Unfortunately, this is a problem shared by not only the local museums that depict the Japanese American history, but also the sites of the camps themselves.¹²

Other Museums

Despite the provincial nature of the local museums near each camp site, the museum depiction of the confinement has slowly spread beyond the camp locales through numerous exhibits in museums around the country, perhaps the most famous of which was the 1987 “More Perfect Union” exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History (NMAH). Through exhibits such as this one at sites as prominent as Ellis Island and as varied as the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet*, more visitors

¹² Cody Community Profile, Cody Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.codychamber.org/live-in-cody.cfm?id=15>; Powell Community Profile, Powell Chamber of Commerce, <http://powellchamber.org/docs/CommunityProfile.pdf>; Rowene Weems, Director; Phone conversation with author, November 13, 2008.

than ever before from around the world have been exposed to the story of the WWII confinement and military service of the Japanese Americans.

One unique aspect of the inclusion of Japanese American exhibits within larger unrelated institutions is that it allows for far larger and more geographically diverse audiences to view the information compared to the local museums near the camp sites. The earliest such exhibit was a 1944 show at the New York Museum of Modern Art displaying Ansel Adams's Manzanar photographs following his publication of *Born Free and Equal* (1943).¹³



Ansel Adams photo of Merritt Park, Manzanar, California

Unfortunately, as was the case with general preservation and education efforts relating to the Japanese American story, very little widespread information emerged until the latter

¹³ Gerald H. Robinson, *Elusive Truths: Four Photographers at Manzanar* (Nevada City: Carl Mautz Publishing, 2002), 24. More information on Ansel Adams and other WRA photographers can be found in Chapter Seven: Artistic Commemoration.

decades of the twentieth century. By the 1990s and into the 2000s, exhibits featuring the history of the wartime confinement of Japanese Americans and of the service of the 100th/442nd RCT were displayed in museums across the country. One permanent exhibit is “Hawaii’s Japanese Americans” at the US Army Museum of Hawaii in Honolulu; and temporary exhibits have included “Courage Untold” at the White River Valley Museum in Auburn, Washington (2007- 2008); “Uprooted: Japanese Americans During World War II” at the California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts in Sacramento, California (ongoing); “Unlikely Liberators” at the Holocaust Museum of Houston, Texas (2005); “Undaunted Courage, Proven Loyalty: Japanese American Soldiers in World War II,” at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History in Little Rock, Arkansas (2004-2008); and “America’s Concentration Camps: Remembering the Japanese American Experience,” at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York (1999).

One of the earliest and still most well known exhibits was “A More Perfect Union,” which went on display at the NMAH in 1987, ironically as part of the nation’s celebration of the bicentennial of the Constitution. It began with early immigration and traced the history of Japanese Americans in the US through the wars into the ongoing movement for justice during the 1980s using text panels, photos, artifacts, and first-person oral history excerpts. According to the curator, Thomas Crouch, the exhibit’s trajectory and timing during the bicentennial was purposeful to show America’s “tentative steps” towards “a more perfect union.” One reviewer pointed out that, “the target audience for the show is not primarily Japanese American; the message is directed toward everyone.” While certainly all museums that display Japanese American exhibits are not as highly visited as the Smithsonian, the varied demographics of visitors,

regardless of their numbers, provides the strongest benefit of such scattered museum exhibits.¹⁴

A perfect example of the highly diverse locations that have now presented the Japanese American story is the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* located in Alameda,



Co-Creator and Founder of the FFNV, Lawson Sakai in the Nisei exhibit aboard the *USS Hornet*
Photo by Deborah Salyers, November 7, 2007

California. Two local veterans, Lawson Sakai and Brian Shiroyama, and the Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans (FFNV) worked with the staff of the *Hornet* to create a small museum exhibit onboard the ship

focusing primarily on the WWII experiences of the Military

Intelligence Service (MIS) and the 100th/442nd RCT. The exhibit includes a series of artifacts, text, photos, and documents as well as a video that viewers can watch to learn the history of the Japanese American military service. Though the *Hornet* has no specific significance in Japanese American history, the exhibit provides a learning opportunity to visitors who may have no awareness of the Japanese American story.¹⁵

Organizations like the National Japanese American Historical Society work to provide traveling exhibits to numerous sites around the country, but one of the newest and most effective venues for reaching diverse audiences is the internet. Following the

¹⁴ Sandra C. Taylor, Review: "A More Perfect Union," Thomas Crouch, curator, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., *The Public Historian* Vol 10 No. 3 (Summer 1988), 93;

¹⁵ Lawson Sakai, Interview with Author, November 7, 2007, Alameda, California; "The USS Hornet Project," Brochure, *USS Hornet*.

end of the run for “A More Perfect Union,” the Smithsonian developed an online exhibit that continued to provide virtual visitors with the information, photographs, and oral history transcripts from the exhibit. The University of Washington used their special collections items to create the online exhibit, “Camp Harmony,” which tells the story of the Seattle Japanese American experience during the early months following the EO 9066 and their confinement at the Puyallup Fairgrounds Assembly Center, nicknamed “Camp Harmony.” Similarly the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco includes an exhibit entitled “Internment of San Francisco Japanese,” detailing the experience of the local community. While these online exhibits preclude the hands-on benefits of actual museum visits, they also have significant benefits that “real” museums cannot provide. Accessibility is perhaps the most obvious, as interested visitors from around the world can visit such sites without leaving the comforts of home or paying the price of travel, but the availability of information is another significant benefit to such virtual exhibits. The San Francisco site includes multiple transcribed San Francisco newspaper articles, and the Camp Harmony exhibit includes transcriptions of every Camp Harmony newsletter and numerous other excerpts, documents, and photos. The inclusion of such detailed textual documents in a physical exhibit would not only be sensory overload for visitors, but also it would be logistically impossible due to the limitations of space and ill-advised considering the aesthetic result among other concerns.¹⁶

One of the most comprehensive digital resources available for researchers, students, teachers, or anyone interested in the Japanese American experience is Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project. Based out of Seattle, this organization derives

¹⁶ Rosalyn Tonai, Interview with Author, November 6, 2007, National Japanese American Historical Society, San Francisco, California; <http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/experience/index.html>; <http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/Exhibit/>; <http://www.sfmuseum.org/war/evactxt.html>;

its name from the Japanese word “*densho*,” meaning to pass something on to the next generation. When the company began in 1996, their goal was to collect oral histories, particularly from the aging Issei and Nisei who had faced discrimination and confinement during the first half of the twentieth century and through the war. They have since expanded to include the preservation of primary resources as well, and their collection now includes over 600 hours of interviews and 9,500 photos, documents, and newspapers. Their website also features multiple curriculums and a section with general information on the context of the evacuation, a glossary of significant terms, a timeline of relevant events, and other resources. The entirely digital and public nature of this website has the ability to reach an incredibly widespread and diverse audience that would otherwise not have access to such depth of information without a great deal of financial and logistical problems. Though most museums, large and small, already have some online presence, the accessibility and availability of information so readily provided by the internet will only increase the number and extent of such sites in the future.¹⁷

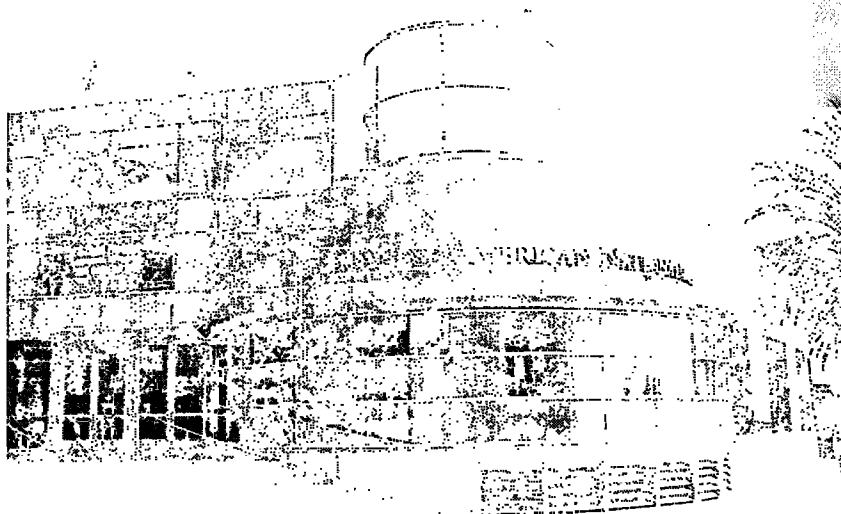
National Museums

The third type of museum that presents the Japanese American story to visitors is subject specific museums, most prominently the Japanese American National Museum, but also the San Jose Japanese American Museum, the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle, and others. These museums gradually emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century along with other museums like the National Museum of the American Indian, the Arab American National Museum, and the currently developing National Women’s History Museum and the National Museum of African American History and

¹⁷ www.densho.org

Culture. These museums mark a turn away from the traditional focus of history on white men and the significant events they brought about, and instead shine a light on some of the hugely significant yet historically underrepresented American citizens. As the social historians of the 1960s and 1970s attempted to recapture lost voices, the museum professionals of the 1980s and 1990s aimed to present these newly discovered stories to the public through accurate, innovative, interactive, and technologically advanced museums such as these.

The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) emerged through the efforts of individuals in Los Angeles who were interested in preserving the history of the Japanese American experience. The museum incorporated in 1985 and acquired the abandoned Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Little Tokyo as their home. After years of collecting items and raising funds under the leadership of Executive Director Irene Hirano, the doors of JANM opened in 1992. It later expanded into a brand new space



The Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles
Photo by Deborah Salyers, November 8, 2007

next door to the original Temple, and has sponsored numerous exhibits both within its walls and at various sites around the country. The original Temple building is now home to the National Center for the

Preservation of Democracy, a project of JANM that sponsors educational opportunities, exhibits, and workshops to increase the understanding and awareness of the role of individuals in creating and shaping democracy.¹⁸ North of Los Angeles, in San Jose, the local Japanese American community joined together to create the similar, though smaller, Japanese American Museum of San Jose. It began in one room in 1987 and later expanded into a 3,400 square foot former doctor's home before the current expansion project, which will provide a brand new 6,400 square foot home for the museum complete with permanent and rotating exhibit space, a resource room, and gift shop.¹⁹

Another subject specific museum is the Wing Luke Asian Museum located in the International District of Seattle, Washington. Named after a Chinese immigrant who became a prominent civil rights lawyer and political leader in the Pacific Northwest, the museum attempts to interpret the multi-faceted and diverse communities of Pacific immigrants including Korean, Tawain, Indian, Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese Americans. One of their most compelling aspects is their dedication to a "Community Based Exhibition Model," which fosters a close relationship with community members and incorporates local history through collaboration with those whose story is being represented. All discussions, meetings, and decisions are public and take into consideration the opinions and contributions of the community members. Though this approach frequently requires more time, patience, and compromise, museum staff members Ron Chew and Michelle Kumata feel that it results in a more authentic exhibit,

¹⁸ "History of the Japanese American National Museum," Japanese American National Museum Brochure, <http://www.janm.org/about/history/>; <http://www.ncdemocracy.org/>; For more information on the Japanese American National Museum, see Akemi-Kikumura-Yano, Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, and James Hirabayashi, eds., *Common Ground: The Japanese American National Museum and the Culture of Collaborations* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005).

¹⁹ Jimi Yamaichi, Interview with Author, November 12, 2007, San Jose, California; http://www.jamsj.org/capital_expansion/info/new_jamsj_info.htm.

helps train future museum staff members, and provides a sense of ownership and empowerment to those involved. The museum's strategy is clearly successful as they recently expanded into a new building eight times larger than their previous home, yet they are unique not only in their subject matter but in the fact that "instead of being led by curators, [they] are led by communities."²⁰

These museums each receive thousands of visitors per year and present a depth and breadth of knowledge regarding the Japanese American experience that is hard to find elsewhere. Visitors can not only study the exhibits displayed for the public and purchase educational items in the gift shop, but also they can take advantage of the numerous resources held within each institution's resource center. Frequently visitors can receive their information or a guided tour directly from a former detainee or WWII veteran. Though these museums have the potential to attract an audience that is specifically interested in the subject as opposed to drawing in unsuspecting visitors, their appeal is still far-reaching and the widespread educational potential found within their walls, on their website, in their traveling exhibits, and in their educational outreach offerings is enormous.

Conclusion

The existence of museums and exhibits like those discussed here reveal a great deal about both the Japanese American community and the American public more broadly. Many sought to ignore, suppress, and even forget the confinement and military service of Japanese Americans during WWII, but in light of changing racial attitudes of

²⁰ www.wingluke.org; Michelle Kumata, Interview with Author, March 21, 2007, Wing Luke Asian Museum, Seattle, Washington; Regina Hackett, "Wing Luke Asian Museum's New Building is a Great Leap Forward," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 28 May 2008.

the American public and the determination of the Japanese American community, the subject could not continue to go unnoticed. The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s touched the Japanese American community just as they touched the rest of the country. Historians realized that it was impossible to discuss American history of the twentieth century without discussing Japanese American history – Their role in settling the land of the West Coast, their groundbreaking legal battles, and even their struggles could not be ignored. Their determination to be heard forced recognition of what had been done to them during the war, and yet also, what had been done to atone for the nation's wrongs through the Redress Movement of the 1980s. It became clear that the Japanese American story was an American story that told of the farmers, professionals, and families, and how they overcame their struggles.

Americans gradually came to recognize the significant impact of not only the Japanese Americans but various other minority groups within their citizenry as museums across the country began to portray their story. Though museums themselves are no more free from biases and subjective perspectives as the individuals that create them, the inclusion of previously unrepresented populations is a significant step towards better understanding and cultural awareness. The fact that a community that was once confined based on the color of their skin was represented within the country's premier cultural institution, the Smithsonian, as well as numerous other museums and historic sites around the country, proves the power of individuals in preserving history and the power of a nation to admit a wrong. Pierre Nora's assertion that memory is malleable is played out in the shifting public memory surrounding the confinement of Japanese Americans. The

individuals who held on to their private memories for decades have now helped shape the public memory regarding this significant episode of American history.

As the camp sites emerged as viable historic sites, nearby museums also began to portray their local Japanese American history, and larger museums followed suit. Today visitors may still have to travel out of their way to reach the camps or the various museums that depict the history of the confinement and military service, but they will find more to enjoy upon their arrival than they would have even twenty years ago. This increase in facilities such as museums, visitor's centers, recreated barracks, and camp tours has led to an increase in not only public visitors, but also organized groups of Japanese American visitors celebrating pilgrimages and reunions. These visits have helped create shared experiences within the Japanese American community and have revealed the importance of both place and community in the creation of public memory and commemoration.

Chapter Six: Community

Memories can be public as well as private, and they serve to legitimize the past and the present. Public history exhibits, monuments, statues, artifacts, national historic parks, commemorations, and celebrations can foster the myths that create a common history that allows for divergent groups to find a common bond. Therefore, a shared history and the creation of community become a very complex set of interactions. Elements of the past remembered in common, as well as elements of the past forgotten in common, are essential for group cohesion.¹

There could be no truer words for the Japanese American community than these of historian Paul Shackel, who wrote that shared memories bind communities together. Though the group may be diverse, a shared history can bridge those differences to create common ground on which to gather. Exclusion Order 9066 and the post-war resettlement scattered the Japanese American community across the country, but official and unofficial gatherings have taken place in numerous cities as community members attempted to remember and recover from the upheaval of the wartime evacuation. The shared experience of confinement created a unique bond, which stemmed from negative circumstances, but also provided a sense of community that spanned across geography and generations. Reunions, pilgrimages, and local neighborhood communities, or Japantowns, have developed in the years since the evacuation as a way of maintaining ties and remembering their common history.

Reunions

Reunions, particularly of Japanese American veterans, have taken place since the war's end. Members of the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT)

¹ Paul Shackel, ed., *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 3.

built their own clubhouses, formed their own Nisei American Legion Posts, and created numerous local groups to maintain contact with their fellow soldiers. Such organizations exist from the West Coast to the East and represent thousands of veterans. Though many of these groups have existed for years, the prevalence of various organizational reunions is a relatively recent occurrence that reflects the age of the veterans, the increasing ease of travel and communication, and the emerging public interest in and praise for their service. Many of these reunions share the same features including memorial services, educational components such as speakers or historic site visits, and of course, reminiscing. To examine these various aspects of reunions, this section will discuss the 65th Anniversary reunion of the 442nd RCT in Honolulu, Hawaii March 28-30, 2008.

It would be hard for any visitor to fit in on the Hawaiian Islands without adopting some amount of the colloquial pidgin dialect including words such as “aloha” and “mahalo” rather than “hello” or “thank you.” One of their most descriptive phrases, however, was “talk story.” This could perhaps be defined as a combination of “shooting the breeze” and “reminiscing,” but it is a Hawaiian term that was used frequently during the weekend of the Reunion. Sponsored by the Sons and Daughters of the 442nd RCT, the reunion brought together over 1,000 veterans and family members with a desire to “talk story.” The weekend began with a special tour of the Hawaii State Capitol building, including the House and Senate Chambers. Following the visit, many State Representatives and Senators including Karen Leinani Awana, Jerry Chang, Ken Ito, Jon Riki Karamatsu, John Mizuno, and David Ige attended a reception to honor the veterans and to present certificates to Lawson Sakai, President of the Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans (FFNV), and to the 442nd Club for their roles in keeping the story of the 442nd

RCT alive. The meeting room was extremely crowded, but it was a wonderful tribute to the veterans in attendance that so many busy state representatives took the time to honor the Nisei for their contributions to the war effort.²



State Senator Carol Fukunaga speaking to the gather veterans
Hawaii Capitol Building, Honolulu, Hawaii
Photo by Author, March 28, 2008

That afternoon and evening, the Kapiolani Community College (KCC) sponsored a series of events that focused on the veterans and displayed the various methods by which local historians were preserving the story of the Nisei. The KCC Lama Library hosted an exhibit, which detailed the formation and history of the 442nd RCT as well as some of its less familiar units, including the Antitank Company, the 232nd Combat Engineers, the Medics, and the 522nd Artillery. Artifact displays and text panels showed the uniforms and unit insignia of the troops and described the combat history from

² <http://442sd.org/home.html>.

Hawaii to Camp Shelby and on to Europe. A separate display provided the Medal of Honor citations for the 21 Nisei who have received the nation's highest military honor.

One of the most unique projects featured at KCC that afternoon was described by Shari Tamashiro, a "Cybrarian," or online librarian, who works with the Hawai'i Nisei Story website.³ This project is a collaboration between the Hamilton Library of the University of Hawaii, which serves as a repository for a number of documents and artifacts relating to the Hawaii Nisei soldier's experiences, and KCC, which agreed to create and maintain a website utilizing the Hamilton Library's collections to allow greater public access to the information. Visitors to the webpage can read about the experiences of local Nisei women on the homefront, members of the 1399th Engineering Battalion, the 100th Infantry, the 442nd RCT, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), and the Varsity Victory Volunteers (VVV). Each individual's section features video clips, photographs, and oral history interview transcripts, all of which provide personal stories as well as background information and context for the events described. As Tamashiro described the online project and showed the audience the various stories within the website, she mentioned that many of those featured, including Shiroku "Whitey" Yamamoto and his wife Amy, Herbert and Sue Isonaga, Ronald Oba, and Katsugo Miho, were actually there in the audience. The presence of the veterans lent authority to the project and demonstrated the belief that many of the Nisei veterans share that it is important that their story and their experiences not be forgotten.

The highlight of the afternoon for most of those gathered in the small library was the veterans panel – a true example of talking story. Six men, Ted Tsukiyama, Leighton "Goro" Sumida, Don Shimazu, Genro Kashiwa, Ronald Oba, and Bert Nichimura, sat for

³ <http://nisei.hawaii.edu/page/home>.

over two hours and told of their personal experiences as members of the 100th Infantry, 442nd RCT, and the MIS. Oba, a cook, told the audience how the Nisei frequently tried to improve their dull rations with anything they could find in the surrounding area. While fighting along the Arno River in Italy he saw men harvesting onions, tomatoes, and cabbages and raising chickens; and many of the soldiers would spend their own money to purchase eggs and other items from locals. According to Oba, the 442nd RCT was the only unit that received fresh food on the front lines because they were the only cooks who were willing to take the risk to deliver it to them. Kashiwa told of a fellow soldier who earned the nickname, “Roll Down the Mountain Joe” for falling once while attempting to capture German prisoners and again while trying to escort them back to command headquarters. Shimazu reported having been “disappointed” by the Siegfried Line and argued that it was not that impressive despite reports to the contrary. As a member of the 522nd Field Artillery, he moved into Germany with numerous other unit’s artillery but he claimed that the 522nd was always one of the best and frequently destroyed their intended target before the other units even fired their first rounds. There are always caveats to be considered when listening to oral histories – time can alter and fade memories, but as Tomashiro said when she introduced the veterans, “Nothing beats the original. You can watch videos, you can watch a movie, but it cannot compare to actually listening to the stories from the guys themselves.”⁴

The evening’s activities concluded with a presentation by professional storyteller Alton Chung. He easily portrayed numerous characters and had wonderful accents, facial expressions, and gestures that really conveyed the emotion and energy of his stories. In this particular instance he told of veterans and what they might say at the dedication of a

⁴ Shari Tomashiro, Presentation, Kapiolani Community College Lama Library, March 28, 2008.

monument in honor of Ted Tanouye, one of the Nisei Medal of Honor recipients from Torrance, California. He personified various soldiers and captivated the audience for an hour relaying true accounts of 100th/442nd RCT experiences during the war. His stories were part of a larger production entitled, "Okage Sama De," which means, "I am what I am because of you" in Japanese. According to Chung, stories are important because they reveal who people are; therefore, by dedicating his stories to the veterans and by sharing their stories with others he ensures that his audiences will know of the debt owed to all veterans.⁵

The weekend activities continued the following day with a Family Fun Day at the Disabled American Veterans Keehi Lagoon Memorial Park. Hundreds gathered to enjoy the Asian buffet, barbecued hotdogs and hamburgers, desserts, and shaved ice. 442nd RCT merchandise on sale as were a number of handmade items contributed by many of the veterans and their wives. Children's arts and crafts projects were available and Master Ukulele artist Roy Sakuma attempted to teach the audience how to play the ukulele. It was a relaxed atmosphere in which to talk story, visit with friends and family, and enjoy a beautiful afternoon in Honolulu.

The climax of the reunion was the Sunday afternoon banquet at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballroom. Tables filled the lobby bearing information on local Japanese American resources and selling merchandise and books about the Nisei veterans. The text panels from the KCC exhibit about the 442nd RCT were on display, and professional photographers were even on hand to take family or company shots. The celebration began with a formal roll call of the veterans by company and unit led by SGM Glen Gomes of the current 100th Battalion/442nd Infantry Regiment of the US Army

⁵ Alton Chung, Presentation, Kapiolani Community College Lama Library, March 28, 2008.

Reserves. Handmade yellow leis identified all the veterans, and family members led each company in bearing the appropriate banner or flag. After the National Anthem and brief introductions, Col. Russ Park, US Army Retired, Program Ambassador for the Freedom Team Salute, made a presentation to the veterans expressing the thanks of the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff for the contributions of the Nisei veterans. As part of the day's ceremonies, each veteran present received a signed certificate and letter of thanks and an official decal and lapel pin to recognize them for their outstanding service. Following the Freedom Team Presentation, the invocation was offered by MIS veteran Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani and lunch began.

During lunch the gathering enjoyed the presentation of a special commemorative cake on behalf of the Sons & Daughters of the 442nd RCT and presented by the President, Eileen Sakai. The audience was also treated to the storytelling of Alton Chung, who reprised his performance of "Heroes" accompanied by Dr. Bernice Hirai on the Koto, a Japanese stringed instrument. Following the story, Senator Daniel K. Akaka received an Honorary Membership into the 442nd RCT Veterans Club from Club President William Thompson.

The keynote speaker of the banquet was Hawaiian Senator Daniel K. Inouye, veteran of the 442nd RCT. His speech told of how 85% of eligible Japanese Americans in Hawaii volunteered for the 442nd RCT and how the "buddaheads" from Hawaii fought with the "katonks" from the mainland at Camp Shelby. He recounted the first time he saw the relocation camp at Rohwer, Arkansas with barbed wire fences and guard towers confining fellow Japanese Americans, an experience that made him ask himself, would I have volunteered if I had been confined? He told of the horrors of war that he witnessed

in Italy among the civilians and of the desire to bring honor to their families that he and his fellow soldiers shared as they faced battle. He spoke of his feelings when he killed in combat and of his and his comrades' excitement at the opportunity to prove themselves in the rescue of the Lost Battalion. He related the results of a recent report that placed the Japanese Americans at the top of many categories such as wealth, income, and education, and he hoped that the sacrifices of the Nisei soldiers had somehow helped accomplish this success. He concluded by stating that this would not be the last of the reunions because "our work is still not finished. If we were successful in opening doors for our kids and our grandkids, then I hope that we can somehow convey that spirit to our sons and daughters so they in turn can carry that spirit on, the spirit of helping each other, the spirit of compassion, the spirit of acceptance." His speech received both praise and a standing ovation.⁶

Sen. Inouye holds a special place for many Japanese Americans, especially those from Hawaii, because of his honorable military service, his sacrifice for his country, and his years of respected political leadership. Yet mixed with the reverence is a certain level of familiarity - many fellow 442nd RCT veterans refer to him simply as "Danny." Sen. Inouye referred to the gathered veterans at the reunion as a "great bunch of guys," and rather than setting himself apart from the crowd, he sat with his comrades at the Easy Company table amidst all the veterans. The Senator could barely enjoy his lunch as he was constantly visited by both VIPs and average Joes, almost all of whom he greeted by

⁶ Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, Speech, 442nd RCT 65th Anniversary Reunion Banquet, March 30, 2008, Honolulu, Hawaii.

name and obliged with signatures, photos, and sincere warmth. It was easy to see why he was not only a respected politician, but also an adored comrade.⁷

Following Senator Inouye's remarks, attendees watched the video "Remembrances – A Tribute to Our Dads," created by the students of local Noelani Elementary School before retiring the colors and concluding the ceremony. The event was no doubt a memorable one for many, veterans and family members alike, as many children and even wives of veterans reported that they heard stories they had never heard before while their fathers and husbands were surrounded by their fellow soldiers. The young men of the current 100th Battalion/442nd Infantry Regiment Reserves unit also reported that they felt closer to the older veterans than before after having served in combat, because of their similar experiences. The entire weekend was an extended opportunity to "talk story," which provided a catharsis for the veterans and both entertained and educated those who were listening. Gatherings such as these provide a sense of assurance to the veterans that their sacrifices were not in vain and that their stories will not be forgotten.

The reality of Shackel's statement regarding both remembering and forgetting in common was evident within the Japanese American community even at such an event as the 65th Anniversary Reunion. Regardless of the close campaign history shared by the 100th Infantry/442nd RCT during the war, the two organizations still maintain separate celebrations one year apart to honor their foundation, and they each have separate clubs and organizations. Though both organizations invite members of all Japanese American veterans groups to their large celebrations, the majority of attendees represent the

⁷ Norman Ikari, Interview by author, March 16, 2002, Gaithersburg, Maryland. In a lucky coincidence, I sat at the table with Sen. Inouye, his fiancée Irene Hirano, President of the Japanese American National Museum, and also Medal of Honor recipient, George Sakato, and his daughter Leslie.

organizing group. In addition, most reunions are sponsored by individual units and local chapters of organizations such as the VFW or American Legion, and even within a large combined reunion such as the 65th Anniversary, the weekend is divided by unit and company. The primary group that participated in the Capitol Building tour on Friday morning was Lawson Sakai's Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans (FFNV), while many of the individual companies and units of the 442nd RCT, 100th Infantry, and MIS held separate gatherings Saturday evening. Though these divisions in no way diminish the shared experiences and common bonds that do exist within the Japanese American community, it does reinforce the need to refute the common homogenous stereotypes frequently applied to Japanese Americans and to further analyze how these distinct groups have created shared memories.

Perhaps the greatest division within the Japanese American community is one that dates back to the war years – the difference between *buddaheads* and *katonks*, or Hawaiians and mainlanders. During the veteran's panel at KCC, Bert Nishimura told the audience that almost no one in Hawaii questioned the loyalty of the local Japanese Americans, and this viewpoint has been substantiated by much of the literature on the subject. The fact that there was never a widespread movement to confine the entire Japanese American community on the islands speaks volumes about the acceptance of Japanese Americans in Hawaii (and also calls into question the legitimacy of a military necessity argument on the further away mainland with the smaller population). The Nisei military volunteers from the islands far outnumbered those from the mainland and the treatment of those that enlisted varied dramatically as well. Just as the experience was different for the Hawaiians and mainlanders during the war, the treatment of their history

in the years since has varied as well. Hawaii never suffered a mass exodus of Japanese Americans like the West Coast and therefore the community flourished in the years after the war as the returning veterans never faced the same repression as those on the mainland. The 100th Infantry and 442nd RCT Clubs emerged almost immediately; Japanese Americans were well-represented in politics; and the heroics of the veterans have been celebrated through exhibits and memorials since the war's end. By choosing to commemorate the 65th Anniversary Reunion of the 442nd RCT in Hawaii, the men of the unit were not only returning to their origins, but also they were recognizing the differences between the mainland and the islands and subtly choosing to celebrate the Hawaiian experience over that of the katonks.

Pilgrimages

As is seen in the decision to celebrate the 442nd RCT in Hawaii every year, the location for a gathering can be just as significant as the shared experiences of those that gather. The site becomes even more significant when it is at the center of the gathering itself, as is the case with camp Pilgrimages. Begun officially in 1969 with a pilgrimage to Manzanar led primarily by UCLA students, pilgrimages are now regularly planned events at each of the ten camp sites. These events frequently combine exhibits, lectures, social gatherings, interfaith religious services, guest speakers, and memorials and bring together hundreds and even thousands who seek community, healing, closure, and remembrance. As Joanne Doi has shown in, "Bridge to Compassion: Theological Pilgrimage to Tule Lake and Manzanar," pilgrimages affect multiple generations, bring together various religious groups, and "evoke layers of meaning, memory, mourning,

healing, and ongoing commitment for reconciliation and justice.” Much more than reading books, watching films, or visiting museums, participating in a pilgrimage represents a very personal interaction with history and memory at the site of which it was created.⁸

Each site now regularly celebrates a pilgrimage, but this particular analysis will focus on the 2007 Minidoka Pilgrimage, which was preceded by a Civil Liberties Symposium at the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls.⁹ Though the school was a small local institution, the speakers were nationally renowned experts on the subject of Japanese American history, particularly pertaining to the legal and political ramifications of the relocation. Dr. Greg Robinson, author of *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (2001) and professor of history at the University of Quebec-Montreal spoke first on the unique role of President Roosevelt in EO 9066 and what influenced his decisions. He was followed by Dr. Tetsuden Kashima, a former detainee, professor at the University of Washington, and the author of *Judgment Without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment During World War II* (2003), who spoke on the investigations and legal precedents prior to the relocation. Other speakers included Tom Ikeda, director of Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project and Judge Michael Gillette of the Oregon Supreme Court. In addition to the large-scale lectures, the events

⁸ Joanne Doi, “Bridge to Compassion: Theological Pilgrimage to Tule Lake and Manzanar,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, April 2007), 20-21, 25, 26.

⁹ In the course of my research, I had the opportunity to attend pilgrimages to Minidoka, Topaz, and Manzanar during the summer of 2007. Of these, I will focus primarily on my experience at Minidoka for three main reasons. First, Minidoka included multiple activities over multiple days, which allows for a lot of discussion and analysis. Second, the events of the weekend, including museum visits, lectures, and the memorial service are aspects of many of the other pilgrimages as well, which makes Minidoka a reasonably representative pilgrimage. And finally, despite a lack of family connection or shared heritage, the Minidoka group was very excited about my research and my interest in the subject and as a result, I was “taken in” and made to feel like part of the group. This allowed me greater opportunities for conversation with other attendees and provided a more personal experience.

of the Symposium also featured smaller workshops for teachers, an exhibit on the history of the relocation, and a one-act play, "Nisei," which depicted the true story of how the playwright's grandparents met at a dance in the Minidoka camp.

There were three aspects of the symposium that stood out as being indicative of the emerging significance of such events and the history they preserve. First, the prominence of the speakers involved was impressive and representative of the increasing interest in the subject. In addition to those already mentioned, the program also included attorneys, professors of education and law, and a medical doctor. Interestingly enough, of the ten keynote speakers, only four were Japanese American and only four worked in a way that was directly related to Japanese American history. The diversity showed how many people have begun to recognize the importance of Japanese American history for the nation as a whole, not just for the immediate community. Second, this diversity spread beyond the leaders and speakers to the attendants as well. For example, three attendees were Betty, Darcy, and Penny who were local residents with no personal connection to the Japanese American camp or history. They were simply interested in the subject as well as in the preservation of the site so when they heard about the symposium they attended. Education credit was provided for any students or teachers that registered, which certainly increased the numbers in the audience, but a number of people ranging from journalists to housewives attended simply because of an interest in the subject.

Finally, the conference reflected a trend that can be found in almost every museum, website, foundation, or memorial related to Japanese American history, and that is the importance of education. Within the Japanese American community there is a

sense of urgency towards the preservation of their history which frequently translates into a strong emphasis on education. For instance, during the symposium, Professor of Education Linda Tamura, who has also written on the Japanese American experience, presented a workshop for educators to learn various methods for teaching Japanese American history. The presence of a Densho representative was also telling as this organization is one of the most effective and convenient teaching and research tools available on the Japanese American experience. Their archives, which are entirely digital and available to anyone who registers online, include 600 hours of interviews, almost 10,000 photographs, scanned images of every camp newspaper from every camp and assembly center, and numerous other documents relating to the relocation, the redress movement, the military service, and many other subjects.¹⁰ The focus on education at this symposium and at other events as well reveals both the importance of education within the Japanese and Japanese American culture and the growing recognition of the significance of the subject to American history.

Though the symposium at the College of Southern Idaho was perhaps longer and more in-depth than those offered during other pilgrimages, the introduction of speakers and educational opportunities is a common thread shared by many of the other camp's pilgrimages as well. As part of the 2007 Topaz pilgrimage, the local Delta Public Library of Delta, Utah hosted the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit, "Between Fences," which discussed the various uses and meanings of fences, including those of barbed wire that surrounded the relocation camps during the war. In addition, author Klancy de Nevers presented a brief lecture on her book, *The Colonel and the Pacifist: Karl Bendetsen, Perry Saito, and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War*

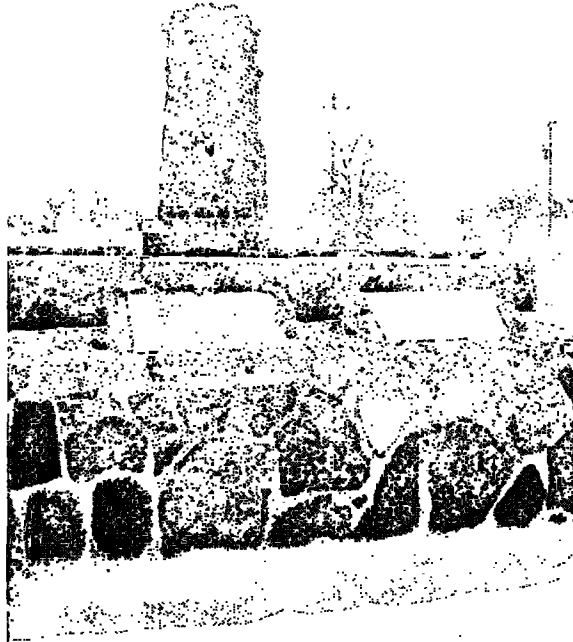
¹⁰ <http://www.densho.org/densho.asp>. For more information on Densho, see also Chapter Five.

II (2004), and the local theater presented “American Pastime,” (2007) a Hollywood film set in Topaz that depicted local racial tensions, camp life, and the role of baseball in the camps. Manzanar’s pilgrimage also featured Junior Ranger Programs for kids, tours of the site, and interactive discussions aimed at younger attendees to encourage educational growth on the subject. Though the mediums and venues varied from site to site, all Pilgrimages include some aspect of education as part of their events or missions.

After the Civil Liberties Symposium, the Minidoka Pilgrimage turned its focus to the site itself and the people involved. On Friday evening June 22, 2007, the entire pilgrimage group met at the local Rock Creek Park and received identification tags like those used during the relocation. During this dinner, many attendees reminisced and shared their motivations for attending. According to former detainee, Masuko Oyama, who had been at Minidoka as a teenager, she had no desire to remember much about camp as “it wasn’t a happy time.” In contrast, her husband Albert said it was “not too bad a situation for a young teenager” because they had little to lose, lots of free time, and a lot of new friends. Their opinions were both fairly common as many younger detainees had better memories of camp than adults, but they still recognized that there was little to celebrate while behind barbed wire.

Boise State University history professor and local expert on the Japanese Americans in Idaho, Dr. Robert Sims, also attended the event. Dr. Sims explained that the interest in the preservation of Minidoka had emerged in the 1970s primarily from the nearby Pocatello and Blackfoot Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) chapters who created a 73 acre site with a simple commemorative plaque. The redress movement increased interest in the site, as did memorial services held during the 1980s prior to its

being listed as an Idaho Centennial Site in 1990, at which time additional plaques were added to the remaining structures.¹¹



Remains of the Minidoka Guard House and Registration area with plaques listing the camp honor roll of servicemen and describing the layout of the camp. Photo by Author, June 20, 2007.

Unfortunately, local preservationists and former detainees have faced a number of issues relating to the preservation of the Minidoka camp. First, was the common issue of the lack of remaining structures at the site. In addition to the landscape features such as a garden and the canals that the detainees built during their confinement, only the ruins of a waiting room and guard house, a firehouse, a root cellar, and some concrete slabs remain of the original 600 buildings. A second common problem was local reaction to preserving the camp, which was not always positive as local residents argued over land use rights and whether it was appropriate or necessary to preserve such a site. According to Dr. Sims, the “essential debate” is whether people should commemorate such negative

¹¹ Dr. Robert Sims, Interview with Author, June 22, 2007, Twin Falls, Idaho.

sites; but, as he wrote, revisiting negative parts of our past “is not intended to reopen old wounds, but rather to shed light on those experiences. Perhaps by doing that we might better understand ourselves as well.”¹²

One problem that is unique to Minidoka is the local dairy farming industry. According to local resident Betty Silfer, Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO), or large dairies, have moved into the area from California with tens of thousands of cows in each facility, which raises environmental concerns over water and air quality as well as animal rights concerns due to the treatment of the animals within. At the time of the pilgrimage, South View Dairy of Big Sky Farms was attempting to establish a new 13,000 cow CAFO within two miles of the Minidoka site, which would significantly impact the environment of the surrounding area. The Jerome County Commissioners refused the request to build the CAFO in the fall of 2007, but upon appeal the CAFO was approved. Part of the provision for approval requires the Dairy to create a pull-off area for buses and visitors to Minidoka and to protect the canal that runs through the area, but the Japanese American community and preservationists are still concerned about the impact such an operation will have on their interpretive plans for the future. In part because of the threat of the CAFO, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the Minidoka camp site as one of their 11 Most Endangered Sites of 2007, claiming that “the proposed facility would likely cause foul odors, harm air and water quality, and create elevated noise and traffic near Minidoka.”¹³

¹²Jeff Burton, Mary Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard W. Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Arizona: Western Archeological and Conservation Center, 1999), 203-208; Dr. Robert Sims, “Japanese Americans in Idaho,” in Roger Daniels, Sandra Taylor, and Harry Kitano, eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 110.

¹³“Jerome County Commissioners Give Final Approval for Feedlot Near Minidoka,” *Pacific Citizen*, 3 October 2008; National Trust for Historic Preservation, 11 Most Endangered Sites 2007,

Despite the challenges to preserving the camp, the National Park Service and the Friends of Minidoka organization have continued to move towards their interpretive goals for the future of the site. According to the General Management Plan of 2006, the NPS intends to recreate an entire residential block, restore or recreate a guard tower, stone reception building, the Honor Roll, and other aspects of the original entrance, and to provide a number of off-site offerings as well. Although the CAFO approval has disheartened some, many of the original plans are still underway. Superintendent Wendy Janssen reported that a number of interpretive wayside panels are currently under construction with the goal of having them in place prior to the June 2009 pilgrimage. The Friends of Minidoka are also working to recreate the Honor Roll and to raise funds for a National Issei Memorial to be placed on the site, and a local graduate student is in the process of identifying and researching remaining barracks through the surrounding communities to determine the possibility of returning them to the site. In addition, on May 8, 2008, the site was officially renamed the Minidoka National Historic Site and the boundary was expanded from 73 to 292 acres. Through a grant from the Parks as Classrooms program, Minidoka and Densho have also worked together to create a new curriculum guide that will present the history of Minidoka and the Japanese Americans to local 4th and 5th grade students. The fight against the CAFO also continues as various organizations including the Friends of Minidoka and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are filing a lawsuit to prevent the creation of the CAFO facility. The amount of support being given to the site via friend's groups, local citizens, and national

organizations reveals the increasingly prevalent desire to preserve and interpret the confinement sites and the history they represent.¹⁴

One piece of the camp that has been preserved is a recovered barrack building that is available for visitors to see at the Jerome County Historical Society's Idaho Farm and Ranch Museum, or IFARM. According to tour guide, Francis Egbert, the IFARM is an attempt to preserve local agricultural history through the restoration and demonstration of old farm equipment and the preservation of numerous significant local structures, including the 1920s Lickely Ranch barn, house, and carriage house; a local church; Jerome County's first jailhouse; and an original barrack from Hunt Camp. The Camp's history is particularly important to IFARM because of the significant role that the camp inhabitants played in the local agricultural community during the war years while so many of the regular farmers were serving in the military.

The barrack building at IFARM had been used in a labor camp after the war and siding and sheet rock were added, but these have since been removed. Local preservationists have attempted to use old photographs to restore the barrack to its original condition and they have sparsely furnished some parts of it with items such as a stove and beds that are representative of wartime conditions. Eventually, they intend to create a classroom in the center of the barrack to provide space for educational programs on camp life. Currently, display cases show artifacts from the camp and newspapers and photographs are hung around the rooms to present a brief history of the camp and its preservation over the years.

¹⁴ National Park Service, *Minidoka Internment National Monument General Management Plan* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 2006), 63-69; Wendy Janssen, Phone Interview with Author, 5 December 2008.

One of the most interesting aspects of the pilgrimages that was evident during the group visit to the IFARM was the cross-generational impact that they have on the attendees. Of the 200 that joined the weekend pilgrimage to the IFARM and the Minidoka site, only about one-third were former detainees – the others were primarily family members.¹⁵ As the group spread throughout the barrack building, small circles of attendees frequently gathered around the older visitors and listened to them share their experiences and memories of their



Kaoru Suwabe (center) talks to others about her memories of the barracks.
Photo by Author, June 23, 2007

own barracks and lives during the war. Kaoru Suwabe stood in the middle of a group and told of how they used to hang Army blankets to give more privacy, and May Namba said the beds had been set similarly to how they were arranged but that it had been far more dusty and muddy in the camps than at IFARM. Though the existence of the barrack as part of IFARM is a wonderful opportunity for visitors to see the layout and harsh construction of the camp buildings, participation in events like the pilgrimage allows far more opportunities to absorb personal experiences and testimonies from those who lived it.

Pilgrimage attendees also visited the site of Hunt Camp itself. Two large signs mark the turnoff from the highway, though if visitors do not know what they are looking for, they are likely to drive right past the few structural remains of the camp. Currently

¹⁵ Dr. Robert Sims, email, December 16, 2008.

there are no facilities available to visitors at the site beyond the plaques that commemorate the camp and those who lived there, but the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Park Service Visitors Center is temporarily performing double duties and housing the staff that works both sites. During the pilgrimage, NPS representatives including Annette Rousseau, the interpreter, and Neil King, the previous superintendent were present with other seasonal employees and rangers. They presented a brief talk to the group describing the proposed plans for interpretive wayside panels and the reconstruction of the residential block and they answered questions from the attendees.

Highway sign marking the location and turn-off
for the Hunt Camp outside Twin Falls, Idaho
Photo by Author, June 20, 2007

Rousseau spoke near the entrance while King positioned himself outside the barn, which was once a firehouse for the camp. The pilgrimage group had the opportunity to walk between the two locations where they could also see the remains of a memorial garden, an adapted barrack being used as storage, and the proposed location for the recreation of residential Block 22. Though the walk was difficult for some of the older members of the group, it was a good opportunity to view the site and talk with family members about the changes since they were detained.

One of the most informative, entertaining, and touching experiences of the entire pilgrimage was the lunch that followed the visit to the site. This time was allotted for “sharing memories” on the schedule, and it epitomized the Hawaiian “talk story” concept as former detainees, family members, and unrelated attendees shared their memories and feelings regarding both the camp and pilgrimage experiences. Dale Watanabe, who had just lost his uncle, remarked how moving it was to see where his late relative had lived and worked for three years during the war: “you can study something but to actually

physically go to the space brings it to a whole other level.” Mary Woodward, the daughter of a newspaper editor from Bainbridge Island who was sympathetic to the Japanese Americans, said the visit had been an emotional one for her, and that “it’s so important that something like this be available.” Sharon Seymour had been intrigued with the story of the camp in which her mother lived since she had first learned of it in the sixth grade. She publicly thanked her mother for everything that she had gone through and said that she felt closer to both her mom and her own daughter after having attended the pilgrimage together, even though she had studied it and presented to schools on the subject for years. Keith Yamaguchi said that he attended the pilgrimage with his daughters as a way to “gain information” about the experience and that the visit had caused his daughters to wish that their grandmother was still with them so they could learn more about her time in camp.

Many of the former detainees also shared experiences, good and bad, from their time in camp. The eldest woman in attendance was Fumiko Hayashida, 96, whose picture with her young daughter during the evacuation of Bainbridge Island had become famous. She told the group that she had been pregnant during the relocation and that her doctor offered to let her stay in Seattle, but she chose to go with her family so her baby was born in Manzanar where they went prior to being sent to Minidoka. According to Ms. Hayashida, the camp doctors were very good to her; some of the young boys from Bainbridge Island built her a crib for her newborn; and despite the harsh conditions, she was happy that her family had stayed together. Though only a small fraction of those in attendance actually spoke, it was an incredibly emotional, funny, and informative afternoon for those that had the privilege of attending.

Following the sharing time, many attended the performance of the play "Nisei", before boarding the buses again and heading for the Prescott Ranch, the owners of which had agreed to host a barbecue dinner for the pilgrimage attendees. The entertainment began with a presentation by Kawa Teiko, a local group from Ontario, Oregon, Twin Falls, Wilder, and Boise, Idaho. Their performance was followed by speeches from Idaho Congressional Representative Maxine Bell, NPS Superintendent Neil King, and Floyd More, National Director of the Japanese American Citizens League, all of whom discussed the importance of legislation to preserve sites like Minidoka. Dan Sakura of the Conservation Fund, which is helping to acquire additional land for the site, and Jim Azumano of the Friends of Minidoka also spoke on the importance of the history and the role of organizations like the Friends and the NPS in the preservation of the site. The evening concluded with a performance by the Yoshida-Andrews Sisters, a Portland singing group that performed many favorites of their namesake and other contemporary artists, including "In Apple Blossom Time," "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy," and "Sentimental Journey."

The climax event of the pilgrimage at Minidoka, as well as those at Manzanar and Topaz, was the memorial service or closing ceremony. Mistress of Ceremonies Emily Momohara, a photographer and member of the Friends of Minidoka, began the service with an introduction of many of the leading players within the Friends of Minidoka, the Pilgrimage Committee, and the National Park Service. As the audience sat gathered around the remains of the memorial garden, members of the Seattle and Oregon Nisei Veterans Committee and American Legion presented the colors and a gun salute. Reverend Brooks Andrews of the Seattle Baptist Church delivered an invocation and

spoke briefly about his father, Rev. Emory Andrews, who was the pastor at the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church during the war. After the relocation order, the elder Rev. Andrews had followed his congregation to Minidoka where he continued to hold services, perform weddings and baptisms, and generally minister to those within the camp. He made almost 40 trips from Minidoka to Seattle during the war to check on businesses, bring items left behind, visit the sick, place flowers on congregant's graves, and even provide government escorts for bodies being returned to Seattle for burial. He wrote over 800 character recommendations for resettlement and even took some of the detainees into his own home to care for them. According to his son's presentation, Minidoka was "sacred ground, holy ground; and we bless this ground by our visitation."

After Rev. Andrews, Neil King spoke of the efforts to preserve the site whose history was "very personal, yet somehow [it] affects us all." He praised how far they had come in their efforts from the publication of *Confinement and Ethnicity* in 1999 to the All Camps Summits, the special resource studies, and the creation of organizations like Densho. He posed the question, 'where do we go from here?' and urged those in the audience to "be the voices for the past." He especially challenged the youth present to take up the baton of education and share the story with future generations. Dr. Frank Kitamoto, President of the Friends of Minidoka, spoke after King and told of his own family's experience of evacuation from Bainbridge Island to Manzanar and Minidoka. His mother had told his sister that they were on vacation, which he described as the "worst vacation ever," and he mentioned numerous locals who had helped the Japanese Americans during their years of struggle before reiterating Rev. Andrew's sentiment that the site was "sacred ground." The ceremony continued with a reading of the honor roll

by George Azumano, a veteran and member of the Portland Nisei Veterans Committee.

This list included the names of the 73 men who enlisted or were drafted from Minidoka that were killed during the war. The final activity of the ceremony was the pinning of origami frogs to a model of a Hunt Camp barrack building. According to Japanese tradition, the frog represents both good luck and a safe return so



Origami frogs cover a model of a Hunt Camp Barrack
Photo by Author, June 24, 2007

the Friends of Minidoka hoped that such symbolic representation would guarantee a prosperous year and a return to the site in future years.

Though the pilgrimages are frequently an educational experience, they are often far more significant as a means of creating shared memories and community. With the exception of Tule Lake, each WRA camp contained families from the same geographic locations. For instance, Minidoka was populated primarily from Washington and Oregon, therefore many of the detainees knew one another even before their arrival in camp. Thus, the camp experience actually built on an already established community and added the memories of what has been called the single most defining event of Japanese American history. The reenactment of such an experience through a pilgrimage, shared with friends, spouses, children, and grandchildren only increases the sense of community and passes on the memories and identity that developed during the war years.

Nihonmachis, or Japantowns

In 1942, EO 9066 forced the removal of Japanese Americans from already established communities across the West Coast. Although many of these families were relocated to the same camp, their post-war resettlement was far less unified. Since the West Coast remained off-limits to the Japanese Americans until late in 1944, those who resettled earlier in the war had no option but to relocate to a new city and state. This diffusion was actually a purposeful attempt by President Roosevelt to avoid the recreation of large Japanese American enclaves, which he argued increased discrimination and prejudice towards the group. Despite the obstacles faced in returning to previous West Coast communities, the last decades of the twentieth century witnessed a revitalization of “Japantowns” in cities such as Seattle, Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco. These cities within a city helped create and perpetuate Japanese American community, identity, and memory in much the same way that reunions and pilgrimages do, and therefore merit a brief analysis here.¹⁶

Though the US was once home to numerous “*Nihonjin machi*” or “Japanese people’s towns,” this discussion will focus on the origins of the San Francisco Japantown as a representative example of their development and will briefly mention some of the current efforts in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Seattle.¹⁷ After the first Japanese immigrants arrived in San Francisco in 1869, they worked to establish themselves as students or businessmen; and by 1909, the city was home to 545 Japanese-

¹⁶ Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 176; Dirk Johnson, “War Legacy: Japanese-American Diaspora,” *New York Times*, 14 August 1995.

¹⁷ For more information on various Japantowns, see The Japantown Task Force, Inc., *Images of America: San Francisco’s Japantown* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005); Alice Murata, *Images of America: Japanese Americans in Chicago* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2002); and David Takami, *Divided Destiny: A History of Japanese Americans in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

owned businesses. Though they initially settled near Chinatown, the 1906 earthquake destroyed much of their district forcing relocation to the site of the present-day Japantown in the Western Addition centered on Post and Sutter Streets between Laguna, Webster, Geary, and Bush Streets. A number of social and religious organizations grew up around the area to support the members of the community, and by 1898, San Francisco was the headquarters for the Buddhist Church and various other social organizations that had spread to the countless other emerging Japantowns in the western states.¹⁸

At the onset of World War II, San Francisco's Japantown was the home of over 4,700 Japanese Americans and was the oldest such establishment in the country. Prominent leaders of this community were arrested following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Exclusion Order forced the removal of the entire Japanese American population just four months later. Most of the families from San Francisco went to Topaz, Utah primarily via the Tanforan Racetrack assembly center. Business owners held "evacuation sales," and attempted to find honest workers willing to watch over businesses until the return of Japanese Americans after the war.¹⁹ Within weeks of the exclusion orders, the streets of Japantown were empty. This same scenario played itself out in Japantowns along the West Coast as businesses, homes, and belongings were deserted under the mandates of the exclusion order.²⁰

¹⁸ The Japantown Task Force, Inc., *Images of America: San Francisco's Japantown* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 7-9.

¹⁹ For more information on the often-untold story of the many Caucasians who cared for Japanese American's property during the war years, see Shizue Seigel, *In Good Conscience: Supporting Japanese Americans During the Internment* (San Mateo: Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc., 2006).

²⁰ Japantown Task Force, *San Francisco's Japantown*, 39, 55.

Though San Francisco's Japantown managed to rebound in the years following the war, the same cannot be said for many of the smaller communities that had existed in states across the west. Today there are only three Japantowns still in existence in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose, though Seattle, Washington is also attempting to revitalize their historic Japantown within the city's International District. Unfortunately, the communities faced a number of obstacles in rebuilding, including of course, the exclusion order, but also urban renewal projects, corporate buy outs, and increasingly high housing rates. San Francisco faced an urban renewal project in the 1960s that resulted in the eviction of over 50 businesses and thousands of residents to create places like the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center that catered to businesses and tourists rather than locals. In the 1970s, the Japanese American community attempted to counter the negative effects of development and beautify the Japantown area through the work of architect Rai Okamoto and artist Ruth Asawa, who created a "River of Cobblestones" anchored by two fountains and featuring numerous benches and sculptures on the Buchanan street pedestrian mall. The Japanese American population of San Francisco's Japantown is now estimated at less than 1,000 due in large part to the encroachment of developers who have significantly increased the cost of living in the area. Today Little Tokyo, the Japantown of Los Angeles, is worried about similar problems as outside investors have recently purchased two large hotels and a shopping center that constitute a large part of Little Tokyo.²¹

In response to concerns over the future of Japantowns, many organizations and individuals are taking a lead role in movements to preserve the history and culture that

²¹ Japantown Task Force, *San Francisco's Japantown*, 73, 80-85; Roslyn Tonai, Director of San Francisco's Japanese American National Historical Society, Interview with Author, November 6, 2007; Gwen Muranaka, "Meeting Held to Discuss Little Tokyo's Future," *Rafu Shimpo*, 1 November 2007.

makes Nihonmachi so unique. Beginning in 2006, the organization “Preserving California’s Japantowns” emerged as a project of the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council funded by the California Civil Liberties Public Education Fund to document the history of 43 pre-war Japantowns across the state of California. The study has produced a bibliography on the relevant resources and has spawned related projects to create detailed maps of the historic Japantowns and the farming communities throughout the state. Under the leadership of historian Donna Graves, the group hopes to document the historic resources and preserve the remaining evidence of the Japantowns themselves for the education of current and future generations.²²

In Seattle, the movement to restore and preserve the remnants of the city’s Japantown is a priority for Jan Johnson, owner of the Panama Hotel, which was Japanese owned until 1985 when she purchased it. In the early 1930s, Seattle’s Japantown peaked at around 8,500 residents, but the depression and public housing projects significantly decreased this number in the years preceding the war. Though development and neglect have affected both the Japantown and the entire International District, many argue that Seattle’s Japantown is actually the most historically intact of those remaining on the West Coast. Johnson’s Panama Hotel is one piece of this history as it formed a center of the early immigrant community by boarding low income residents until the beginning of the war. The basement housed a *sentō*, or public bathhouse, that was popular for the community and is still intact, though in need of restoration. Perhaps one of the most unique aspects of the Panama is a huge collection of suitcases and trunks in the basement

²² Caroline Aoyagi-Stom, “Beyond ‘The Big Three’ Japantowns,” *The Pacific Citizen*, 20 October 2006; For more information on Preserving California Japantowns and their related studies, see their website: www.californiajapantowns.org and www.japantownatlas.com.

that still today holds the unclaimed belongings of Seattle's Japanese American residents who were removed following the exclusion order. To honor and remember the evacuation, Johnson has constructed a clear opening in the floor of the tea house that occupies the first floor of the hotel to allow visitors and patrons to see into the basement and the sea of luggage below.²³

Though Johnson recognizes the importance of the evacuation through the luggage display and various newspaper articles that are framed on her walls, the focus within the hotel and especially the tea house is on the early community of the Japantown. Johnson argues that the significance and impact of the wartime exclusion order can fully be understood only if one is aware of the extent and strength of the Japanese American community that existed prior to the war. Therefore the walls of the teahouse display various photos from the early decades of the twentieth century showing Japanese American business owners and families in and around the Seattle area. One wall boasts a large map on which she labels homes and businesses as they existed in 1940 just before the area was deserted and largely became part of Chinatown. Her front window displays more photos, documents, and artifacts as well as current ads for community events. It is her desire that the Panama, in conjunction with other organizations like the Wing-Luke Asian Museum that is also located in the heart of Seattle's Japantown, can work together to draw more interest into the neighborhood and its preservation.²⁴

²³ Trevor Griffey, "Preserving Seattle's Japantown," *Preservation Seattle* (September 2003); Jan Johnson, Interview with Author, April 4, 2007; Vanessa Ho, "Efforts Aim to Revive Seattle's Japantown" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 28 February 2005.

²⁴ Jan Johnson, Interview with Author, April 4, 2007, Seattle, Washington. For more information on Seattle's unique Japanese American history, see: David Takami, *Divided Destiny: A History of Japanese Americans in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Gail Lee Dubrow, Donna Graves, Karen Cheng, *Sento at Sixth and Main: Preserving Landmarks of Japanese American Heritage* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); and Robert Sadamu Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle: The Campaign for Japanese American Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

The efforts at preserving Japantowns and using such sites as an educational tool are slowly coming to fruition in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose, and will no doubt result from the California study as well. Detailed interpretive signs and historical markers exist in Los Angeles and San Jose to tell visitors about the significance of certain structures and of Japantown itself. Walking tours through these areas are included in many of the tourist books for Los Angeles and San Francisco, and the Japanese American Museum of San Jose offers guided tours of their Nihonmachi. Self-guided and guided tours such as these can reveal the extensive community that existed in such Japantowns and demonstrate the integral economic, political, and social role that the Japanese Americans played in the surrounding communities as well.²⁵

Though heritage tourism is an economic benefit that each of the existing Japantowns seeks through walking tours, special events and exhibits, and historical signs, the benefit for locals is equally or more important to the community members. The Wing-Luke museum attempts to tailor each of their exhibits to the specific community members that it depicts through a “community based approach” to the creation and development of their exhibits. Roslyn Tonai of San Francisco’s Japanese American National Historical Society hopes that their Japantown can have a “renaissance” and bring new young community members into the area permanently to rekindle the sense of community that once existed. Social and religious organizations still cater to the local community and bring Japanese Americans together for church, cultural arts classes, language schools, and various other activities in each of the Japantowns. Japanese-

²⁵ Jimi Yamaichi, Interview with Author, November 12, 2007, San Jose, California. In November 2007, Jimi Yamaichi led me on an extremely informative tour of the San Jose Japantown that was both educational and entertaining as he included a number of stories from his childhood in the town prior to his forced removal to Tule Lake, California.

themed festivals, memorials, and remembrance ceremonies bring locals and visitors alike together in cities across the country regardless of whether there is a defined Japantown. Though the populations are smaller, the communities are more diverse and scattered, and many of the physical structures are different, Japantowns still exist everywhere as the heart of the Japanese American community where identities and memories are developed and shared and the “group cohesion” that Shackel spoke of is formed.²⁶

Conclusion

Reunions, pilgrimages, and Japantowns affect not only those who fought in the war, lived in the camps, or currently live in a Japantown, but also those who seek to learn about the experiences either as a student or as a young Japanese American seeking his or her heritage. The camp sites themselves are important because of the memories that they evoke for those that lived there and for the educational benefits of immersing visitors in a historic event. Similarly, the opportunity to talk with those who lived through experiences at reunions or pilgrimages provides a more personal version of history than any student is likely to find in a textbook. But while the development of these sites and events followed much the same trajectory as other preservation and remembrance efforts in the twentieth century, few other efforts are as significant within the current community’s identity and culture as the reunions, pilgrimages, and Japantowns. As the site of shared memories and experiences, Japantowns and the camp sites contribute a great deal to Shackel’s idea of the creation of community. Though each individual’s experiences were different, the common threads keep the community close; and these

²⁶ Michelle Kumata, Wing-Luke Asian Pacific Museum, Interview with Author, March 21, 2007, Seattle, Washington; Roslyn Tonai, Interview with Author, November 6, 2007.

threads are only strengthened through the recognition of shared memories at pilgrimages, ceremonies, community events, and reunions. While many commemoration sites like monuments and museum exhibits focus on passing on the story, those mentioned here are far more personal and significant to the WWII generation. Many other preservation efforts appear to be in a positive forward-moving phase, but it will be interesting to follow the future of pilgrimages, reunions, and Japantown development as the elder Issei and Nisei generation is lost.

One method of commemoration that has resulted from the emergence of memorials, museums, and community events like pilgrimages and reunions is popular culture, or artistic commemoration. Though many veterans and detainees expressed themselves artistically during the war years, the widespread dissemination of such mediums did not emerge until the late 20th century as the story of the confinement gained acceptance and interest in the public arena. An analysis of these artistic depictions reveals much about the trend of Japanese American commemoration during the last seventy years and also provides some indication of the future of public representation.

Chapter Seven: Artistic Commemoration

“One single Anne Frank moves us more than the countless others who suffered just as she did but whose faces have remained in the shadows. Perhaps it is better that way; if we were capable of taking in all the suffering of all those people, we would not be able to live.”

Primo Levi, writer and Auschwitz survivor

The previous chapters have discussed a series of monuments, memorial ceremonies and events, and various museums that relate to the Japanese American World War II experience. While these are the images conjured when one thinks of memorials or commemoration, they are not the only sites of remembrance.¹ In many ways, other less traditional forms of memorials have preserved and shared the Japanese American story far more than the stone tributes in cemeteries and parks around the world. Novels, art, and film are three mediums that have the potential to reach a broader audience and to share more information than localized monuments or ceremonies and therefore they “memorialize” the story to a far greater extent than perhaps we realize. Yet these artistic forms of commemoration could only reach broad distribution after the earlier forms of representation had helped pave the way for the widespread public dissemination of popular culture interpretations of the Japanese American experience. Through an analysis of various artistic representations of the WWII Japanese American experience and how these have become memorials, this section will shed light on the significance of Japanese American artistic and popular culture commemoration as the culmination of remembrance efforts.

¹ Dr. Arthur Hansen, Interview by Author, November 14, 2007, University of California, Fullerton.

Novels

For centuries, the novel has served as a medium for entertaining, educating, expressing political and social criticisms, and reflecting current public opinions. Various aspects of Japanese American history and experiences have been depicted in novels over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century, but in many ways those that have made the biggest impact have been children's novels. These stories have worked their way into the larger movement to remember the Japanese American experience and are particularly representative of the focus on education that is found within most of the Japanese American organizations, museums, historic sites, and foundations.

The single most popular and widespread novel to relate to this subject matter is Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's, *Farewell to Manzanar* (1972). While this is basically a memoir of Houston's experiences in camp, she and her husband James D. Houston wrote the story as a novel to "write about the life inside one of those camps...." The story follows a young girl as her father is arrested by the FBI and her family is sent to live in Manzanar after President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. She describes the hardships of camp life as seen through the eyes of a young child and she tells the sad but unfortunately common story of family tensions that developed as a result of the camp experience and the emotions stirred by the confinement. The book informs readers about various events that occurred in Manzanar, including the December Riot and the loyalty questionnaire, and it continues with her story and her attempts to fit back into society even after she leaves camp.² The book's easy-to-read prose, historical accuracy, and compelling story have combined to make *Farewell to Manzanar* an enduring testimony to the WWII camps that has become required reading in many classrooms across the

² Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995, reprint of 1973, ix.

country. It also inspired a made-for-television movie four years after the publication of the book starring Greta Chi, Akemi Kikumura, and Yuki Shimoda.

Though Houston's work has become the most well known, Yoshiko Uchida has been far more prolific in producing entertaining yet historically informative children's novels on the Japanese American experience. As a young woman, she and her family were detained at Tanforan Racetrack and Topaz, Utah, an experience that later influenced many of her writings. During the course of her lifetime, Uchida wrote almost 40 books, some autobiographical, some adult fiction, but mostly juvenile fiction. In 1952, she received a grant from the Ford Foundation that allowed her to study Japanese children's literature and folk tales, and many of her earliest works focused on these subjects, but she later moved towards writing about the Japanese American experience through the eyes of young children. According to one review, Uchida "does not hold back from painful truths," as many of her books, including *The Bracelet* (1996), *Journey Home* (1978), *The Invisible Thread* (1991), and others dealt with the emotional turmoil and trauma caused by the mass relocation of Japanese Americans during WWII. Though many of Uchida's books deal with difficult subjects, their overarching positive lessons and engaging characters have made them popular and lasting favorites, particularly in Asian American children's literature.³

Japanese American children's literature has followed much the same trend that other commemorative efforts have followed in the latter half of the twentieth century, in that their numbers started out small but are now more numerous. In an article written in 1981, the author listed 12 Asian American fiction books and 18 books of folktales, while

³ "Yoshiko Uchida, 70, A Children's Author," *New York Times*, 24 June 1992; "83 Receive Grants for Foreign Study," *New York Times*, 6 October 1952; Kyoko Mori, "You're Never Too Old to be Homesick: Two Books by Japanese-Americans About the Need to Belong," *New York Times*, 14 November 1993.

a current bibliography of both Asian American fiction and folktales maintained by Rutgers University lists over 100, the majority of which were published in the 1980s or after. Ken Mochizuki's *Baseball Saved Us* (1993) relates the importance of sports teams within the camps; Steven A. Chin wrote *When Justice Failed: The Fred Korematsu Story* (1993) to tell the important story of Korematsu's Supreme Court Case to a younger audience; *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 1359 Mirror Lake Internment Camp* (1999) is a fictionalized telling of one boy's experiences in a camp during the war and is part of the larger "My Name is America" series published by Scholastic Press to teach about numerous historic events through the fictional experiences of young children; Joanne Oppenheim tells the story of the camps through a California librarian and the letters written between her and her former students in the much praised *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference* (2006). Even the popular "American Girl" series includes a lesson on the Japanese American confinement in *Brave Emily* (2006), which is set during WW II.⁴

The increasing availability of Japanese American related children's books is indicative of two connected trends within the community. The first is the traditional emphasis placed on education in both Japanese and Japanese American culture. From this comes the second trend, which is an increasing effort to educate the public beyond

⁴ Aoki Elaine, "Turning the Page: The Appropriate Use of Asian American Children's Literature in the Classroom," (Olympia: Washington Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1981), 8-10; Kay E. Vandergrift, "Powerful Asian-American Images Revealed in Picture Books," Rutgers University, School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies, <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/professional-development/childlit/ChildrenLit/asian.html>; Ken Mochizuki, *Baseball Saved Us* (New York: Lee and Low Books, Inc., 1993); Steven A. Chin, *When Justice Failed: The Fred Korematsu Story* (New York: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1993); Barry Denenberg, *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559 Mirror Lake Internment Camp* (New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999); Valerie Tripp, *Brave Emily* (Middleton: Pleasant Company Publications, 2006).

the Japanese American community about their experiences during the war. All events, pilgrimages, museums, and conferences include education of the broad public as part of or the main focus of the leading organization's mission. The proliferation of children's literature reflects this desire to share their story as such books appeal to many children, whether Asian American or not. According to one article written by a Caucasian teacher, the use of Japanese American children's literature can provide students with "a sense of actually living through this period of history, and they can understand the feelings of prejudice and of being forced away from their homes and communities simply because of their race and ethnicity."⁵

As the broad applicability of this literature has been realized in recent years, more opportunities have appeared for teachers to take advantage of such books as teaching materials. Many of these publications include brief history lessons providing more detailed information on the mass relocation in the back of the books, while others include study guides with questions and discussion topics for classroom settings. In one case, Jay Cravath, the head of education for the Colorado River Indian Tribe (CRIT) whose land once housed the Poston, Arizona Relocation Camp, wrote a guide for his teachers on the book *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata, which described life in the camps. His guide provided additional context and background information on the confinement and particularly their local camp at Poston, while providing specific classroom activities and discussions for the CRIT students that would make the lessons more relevant. Children's literature is only one medium in which such educational guides have emerged as almost

⁵ Susan Potucek, "Using Children's Literature to Make History Come Alive: Discussing Prejudice and the Japanese Internment," *The History Teacher* Vol. 28, No. 4 (August 1995), 568.

all major Japanese American organizations and foundations feature curriculums, in-class speaker programs, and other resources for teachers on their websites.⁶

As students across the country read accounts of the Japanese American experience, in many ways the books themselves serve as memorials to the thousands of people whose stories they represent. A young reader in Iowa may never visit the Japanese American National Museum and may not see the remnants of the baseball diamond at Manzanar, but he can read Mochizuki's book and gain an understanding of a period in history when an ethnic group's rights were denied and they were forced to find a sense of comfort in everyday activities like baseball, a sport to which the Iowa student can no doubt relate. While national museums and organizations can provide a depth of information that one children's book cannot, the broad availability and appeal of children's literature can provide the opportunity for distribution that the museum cannot.⁷

Photography & Art

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, cameras became contraband for Japanese Americans along with radios and many other electronic devices. As thousands were herded into camps, the first images that emerged were only those sanctioned by the

⁶ Jay Cravath, Interview with Author, November 20, 2007, Poston, Arizona; For online educational opportunities on the Japanese American experience, visit the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation Website

http://njamf.com/home/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=27; the Japanese American National Museum <http://www.janm.org/education/>; the Go For Broke National Education Foundation <http://www.goforbroke.org/learning/learning.asp>; and the Densho Digital Archive <http://www.densho.org/learning/default.asp>.

⁷ The ability of children's books to reach audiences not previously touched by Japanese American history was proven to me by a six year old that I babysit. When she asked what I studied, I hesitated at the thought of attempting to describe my project to one so young, but I started first with a quick lesson on the confinement of Japanese Americans during the war. I was amazed to hear her pick up the story and tell me what had happened, as she had learned from her *American Girls* book. This knowledge from a young girl in Texas would have been far less likely even twenty years ago before the current proliferation of movies, novels, academic history works, and children's literature existed.

government and photographed by the War Relocation Authority's (WRA) approved photographers. Detainees turned to sketches and watercolors to depict their landscape and surroundings, though in at least one instance, that of Toyo Miyatake, the rules were broken and a handmade camera was constructed using a lens smuggled into camp. Even the official photographers had rules – they could not photograph the guard towers or the fences surrounding each camp. Many of the official WRA photos that depict the evacuation and life in the camps were taken by such prominent figures as Clem Albers, Dorothea Lange, and Ansel Adams, yet the accuracy of their depictions is called into question by the restrictions placed on them. How many photos were lost because WRA officials forbade their being taken, and what subjects can never be recaptured? Despite the limitations, photographers like Adams and Lange managed to imbue their images with emotion, irony, and subtle rebellion. For instance, when Adams was forbidden to photograph the guard towers, he instead took photos *from* them, ensuring that later viewers would still know of their existence. These photos, as well as many of the other artistic mediums that the detainees themselves turned to as a means of depicting their surroundings, remain today as some of the only visual evidence of the camps between 1942 and 1946. Certain images and artistic representations have become synonymous with the study of the Japanese American confinement, and in many ways serve as two dimensional memorials to remind future generations of the hardships endured during the war.

Unlike other forms of remembrance like museums and pilgrimages, the photos and artwork that commemorated the Japanese American experience existed in limited venues for public consumption before the war was even over. An exhibit of Adam's

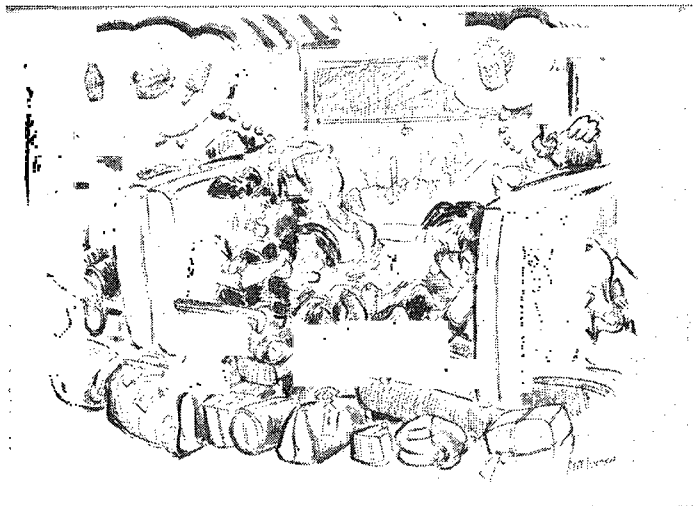
Manzanar photos was displayed at the camp itself in 1944 before traveling to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and a number of his photographs and accompanying texts were published the same year as *Born Free and Equal*. Many of Miyatake's pictures were featured in the Manzanar Yearbook as well as a later publication entitled, *Toyo Miyatake Behind the Camera, 1923-1979* (1984). Though these images existed in internal and external exhibits, magazine and newspapers articles, and other publications, the regulations placed on photographers by the WRA resulted in the creation of thousands of images that showed little to none of the actual hardships and injustices endured by those confined. In many cases the landscapes are beautiful, the Japanese Americans are smiling and laughing, and camp life seems to consist of gardening, sports games, and other fun activities.⁸



Ansel Adams photo of football practice at Manzanar
Photo from Library of Congress, American Memory Ansel Adams Collection

⁸ Gerald Robinson, *Elusive Truth: Four Photographers at Manzanar* (Nevada City: Carl Mautz Publishing, 2002), 24, 44; Sylvia Danovitch, "The Past Recaptured? The Photographic Record of the Internment of Japanese Americans," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives* Vol. 12, No. 2 (1980), 92; Ansel Adams, *Born Free and Equal* (U.S. Camera, 1944); Toyo Miyatake, *Toyo Miyatake Behind the Camera, 1923-1979* (Bungeishunju, 1984).

While in some cases the photographers attempted to capture some of the emotion and ironies of the relocation through the juxtaposition of armed guards overseeing the transportation of the elderly and infirm and other contradictions, in many ways the artistic representations of the detainees themselves convey more of the negative side than the photographs. The first book written by a Japanese American about the experience of relocation and confinement to be published was based on a series of such drawings by artist Mine Okubo, who was working for the Federal Arts Project when the exclusion order was issued. She taught art to students within the camps and worked as an art editor for the camp newspaper and a literary magazine published within Topaz, where she was confined. After she left to work for *Fortune Magazine* in 1944, friends saw her ink sketches done on rice paper and recommended she publish them. Two years later, Columbia University Press published *Citizen 13660* (1946), which featured her drawings and written commentary on life in Topaz.⁹



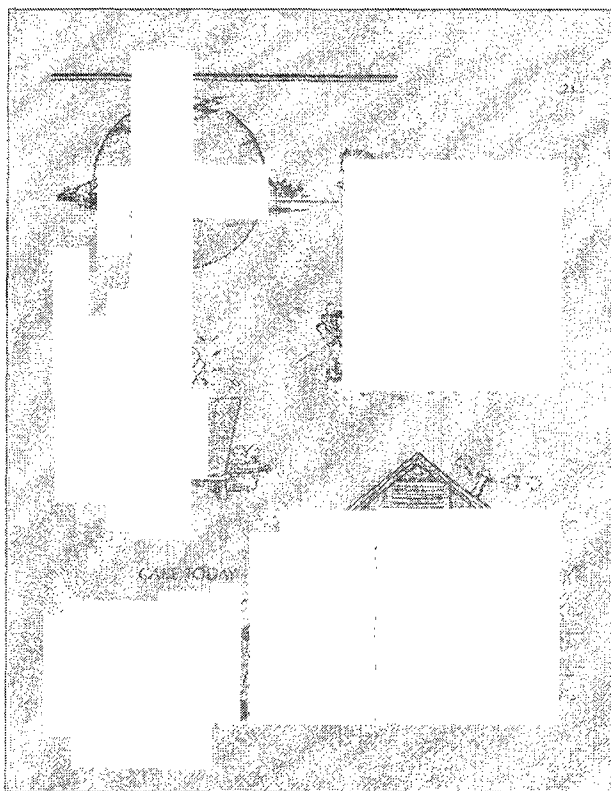
Jack Matsuoka cartoon depicting the hot and cramped ride to camp.
Poston Camp II Block 211: Daily Life in an Internment Camp

As a teenager, Nisei Jack Matsuoka was confined at Poston, where he began recording his experiences through hundreds of small cartoon sketches. He rediscovered the drawings years after the war's end and arranged

⁹ Lawson Fusao Inada, ed., *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2000), 87; Mine Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946).

for an exhibit at the Japan Trade Center in San Francisco where he received mixed reactions to his artwork from visitors. When he realized that many viewers were unaware of the existence of such camps, even when they lived in the states in which they were located, he sought publication of a collection of his drawings with written commentary to help share the story. Today *Poston Camp II Block 211: Daily Life in an Internment Camp* (2003) is an excellent source for humorous and emotional, yet accurate depictions of life within one of the relocation camps. Similarly, the booklet *Li'l Dan'l* emerged from Rohwer, Arkansas where the title character was frequently featured in the camp newspaper, the *Rohwer Outpost*. After the first year in camp, the newspaper staff printed *Li'l Dan'l: One Year in a Relocation Center* as a yearbook for the detainees. It has since been reprinted and is useful as a brief, entertaining, and educational look at the obstacles the Japanese Americans faced and the various methods they developed to deal with them. Whether humorous or touching, these and other artists' depictions of life in camp serve as both educational materials and memorials to those who endured the hardships revealed within the images.¹⁰

¹⁰ Jack Matsuoko, *Poston Camp II Block 211: Daily Life in an Internment Camp* (San Mateo: Asian American Curriculum Project, 2003); *Lil Dan'l: One Year in a Relocation Center* (Rohwer Outpost, 1989).



Li'l Dan'l representation of camp life.
Li'l Dan'l: One Year in a Relocation Center

Though in many cases photographic and artistic representations were far more available to the public from an earlier date than other forms of commemoration, in other cases these images remained hidden from the public eye for years following the closing of the camps. Many of the photos taken by the WRA photographers were labeled “Impounded” and were never seen by the public during the war and sometimes, for years after the war ended. Recently, two historians, Linda Gordon and Gary Okihiro, have sifted through the thousands of WRA photos at the National Archives, 97% of which have never been published, and have selected a number of Lange’s photos to publish in *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment* (2006). The analysis provided about both Lange and the Japanese American exclusion accompany 104 photos, many of which have never been viewed by the public. The book

as a whole acts as both an historical account of the war years and a social commentary on the injustices related to the confinement and its associated censorship.¹¹

Despite the subjective and limited nature of the photographs and drawings that emerged from the camps, their portrayal of Japanese American experiences during the war years serves as a touching tribute to those forced to relocate. As opposed to written texts, object displays within a museum, or a stone memorial, the image's most lasting contribution to the commemoration of the confinement is to put faces to a seemingly faceless whole. As one historian wrote,

Probably the most important function of the [National Archives WRA Collection] photographs as historical documents is in translating a political event into human terms. We no longer think of the evacuation of 110,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast in abstract terms. We see those people who had gone to church, looked lovingly at their land, hung out their last wash, and sold their possessions waiting in lines to board trains and buses. Executive Order 9066 now has a face – it has 110,000 faces.¹²

The WRA Collection of photographs at the National Archives features over 12,000 photographs documenting the evacuation, relocation, and resettlement of Japanese Americans during WWII. Countless art exhibits, published collections, and digital resources present the photos and artistic representations of the war experience and serve as memorials that personalize history more than their stone and marble counterparts.

Film

In much the same way as children's literature and art, motion picture film also has the ability to reach large numbers and appeal to a broad audience. The earliest example, "Go For Broke!," stood alone for many years as a popular culture depiction and memorial

¹¹ Linda Gordon and Gary Okihiro, eds., *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

¹² Danovitch, "The Past Recaptured?," 100.

tribute to the heroic actions of the Nisei soldiers in the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Recent decades have seen the production of numerous documentary and oral history-based films that portray the story of the Japanese American war experience; but there has also been an increase in the number and quality of mainstream movie references to the confinement and military service. Spencer Tracy's 1955 "A Bad Day at Black Rock" has now been joined by "American Pastime" (2007), "Come See the Paradise" (1990), and "Little Iron Men" (in progress).¹³ Featuring prominent actors like Gary Cole and Dennis Quaid, these movies have brought the story of Executive Order 9066 to national audiences, many of which were likely unaware of the full extent of the story.

Debuting at the Cannes Film Festival in 1990, "Come See the Paradise," written and directed by Alan Parker, follows the troubled love story of Irish-American Jack McGurn and Japanese American Lily Kawamura, played by Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita respectively. Forced to elope due to her father's objections, Lily and Jack marry and settle in Seattle until Jack is arrested for his part in labor union unrest. Lily and their young daughter return to Little Tokyo, Los Angeles just in time to learn her father has been arrested in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. After his release, Jack joins the Kawamuras in LA, but he is unable to go with them to camp because of his parole restrictions and is soon drafted into the army. Lily and her family move from the assembly center to a permanent camp where her brothers and father are involved in some of the tensions that arise between various groups within the relocation center. Jack visits them in camp before they are finally released, and Lily, her daughter, and Jack are reunited and free at the end of the movie.

¹³ For information on the upcoming film, visit www.littleironmen.com.

Though its reception and reviews were not overwhelmingly positive, “Come See the Paradise” has much to offer as an educational tool on the Japanese American experience.¹⁴ The natural development of the storyline provides numerous small pieces of information on terminology like Issei and Nisei; discriminatory laws regarding citizenship, land ownership, and miscegenation; and Japanese American culture. In addition, the scenes that depict the preparations to leave Little Tokyo, the evacuation to the assembly center, and the eventual removal to the permanent camp are both poignant and historically accurate. Scenes of family members destroying Japanese items, of armed guards searching all luggage as they arrived, and of using boxes and towels to try to create some sense of privacy in the shared latrines are all based on personal accounts and documented experiences of Japanese Americans during the war. Through the Kawamuras, the film addressed many of the situations that affected the detainees including the loyalty questionnaire, internal rioting, accusations of JACL informants, segregation at Tule Lake, resettlement through work programs, draft resistance, and many others. Though the sappy love story and sometimes overly dramatic acting may not recommend this film to everyone, it certainly has a great deal of educational value as a visual representation of the evacuation and the struggles that it caused for the Japanese American community.

Similarly, “American Pastime,” directed and co-written by Desmond Nakano, is occasionally predictable, but it does an excellent job of portraying life within the camps during the war. The story focuses on the Nomura family, mother, father, and two sons, Lane and Lyle. Though the sons had promising futures before Pearl Harbor, the Exclusion Order forces the younger son, Lyle to lose a baseball scholarship resulting in a

¹⁴ Janet Maslin, “Plenty is New Under the Sun at Cannes,” *New York Times*, 20 May 1990.

great deal of bitterness. Through his role in a camp jazz band, Lyle soon meets Cathy, the Caucasian daughter of minor league baseball player and camp guard, Billy Burrell, played by Gary Cole. The two fall in love, but their relationship is forbidden by both sets of parents, especially after Lyle gets in a fight with a local while in town picking up items for the camp. The fight injures his arm but Lyle is inspired to return to baseball after his father arranges for a game between the detainees and the local town's baseball team. Meanwhile, Lane joined the 442nd RCT and returns after the rescue of the Lost Battalion having lost his leg in the battle. When Lane attempts to get a haircut before returning to the camp he is refused by the local barber, the same man who had injured Lyle. Lane keeps the incident to himself, but a camp guard witnesses it and tells Lyle, further motivating the younger brother to ensure that they beat the town team, on which the barber plays. Finally, the day of the game arrives and the teams place a bet on the outcome: if the camp team wins, their prize is a haircut for Lane. If the town wins, the camp will pay them \$2,500 dollars, which they had raised by collecting quarters from detainees. In dramatic fashion the camp team wins the game, Lane receives his haircut, and Lyle and Cathy tentatively make peace with one another's families.

While "Come See the Paradise" portrayed much of the evacuation and removal process, the strength of "American Pastime" is in its representation of camp life. The bitterness of Lyle, the voluntary enlistment of Lane, and even the formation of the camp team by their father are all actual experiences recounted by Japanese American detainees. Various local townspeople reveal a balanced perspective of both discrimination and sympathy towards the camp residents, and their respect increases as casualty lists reveal the high losses among the Japanese American troops. It is not surprising that the film

accurately portrays such emotions and events as the co-writer/Director, Desmond Nakano is the son of Lane Nakano, 442nd Veteran and star of the 1951 film “Go For Broke!” The story is fictional, but the characters of Lane and Lyle are based on his father’s family, as are the experiences of the sons both within the camp and in the military service. The barber shop situation also mimics the real-life experience of Senator Daniel Inouye, who returned from war after losing an arm in combat and was turned away from a San Francisco area barbershop.¹⁵ The accuracy of the film is also aided by the use of actual wartime footage showing the evacuation, life within the camp, and the heroics of the 442nd RCT. The characters are likable, and touches of both humor and emotion make for an enjoyable film; but its real strength lies in the honest depiction of camp life and the bitterness and discrimination faced by those within.

Bainbridge Island & “Snow Falling on Cedars”

In 1999, another movie appeared in Hollywood that depicted the Japanese American confinement through the memories of a young woman and her family who are embroiled in a murder investigation in the 1950s on the fictional Island of San Piedro. David Guterson’s 1994 novel, “Snow Falling on Cedars,” and the film of the same name are both loosely based on the real experiences of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island, located across the Puget Sound from Seattle, Washington. In many ways, Bainbridge and “Snow Falling on Cedars” provide an interesting confluence of history; education; art; and memorials, both traditional and nontraditional, and how they interact in the preservation and interpretation of the story of the Japanese American relocation.

¹⁵ Daniel Inouye, *Journey to Washington* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1967), 207-208.

Bainbridge Island is 10.5 miles long and 3.5 miles wide and is located in the Sound just west of Seattle. It was originally inhabited by the Suquamish Indians for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 18th century. In 1792, the British arrived under Captain George Vancouver of the *HMS Discovery* and Lieutenant Peter Puget of the *HMS Chatham*, though neither of these men stayed permanently. In 1841, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes discovered that the area was an island and not the peninsula that the previous explorers had thought, and he named it Bainbridge Island after Commodore William Bainbridge, a hero of the War of 1812. By the late 1800s, settlements had emerged on the island, primarily centered around a number of large sawmills that were constructed along the shores to take advantage of the amount of timber and the nearby waterways for transportation. The Island's Port Blakely sawmill was said to be the largest in the world at the time of its construction, and its size and success soon attracted a number of immigrants and new settlers in search of work. In the 1860s trading posts emerged and a number of stores soon followed to provide goods for both inhabitants and visitors who came to the Island in the late 1800s to enjoy summer residences and resorts.¹⁶

The sawmills, trading posts, farmland, and shipbuilding industry attracted a very diverse population that included Native Americans, Brits, Swedes, Norwegians, Croats, Japanese, and Chinese immigrants. One author described Bainbridge as an "island oasis for immigrants" as this diversity on such a small insular island resulted in a far more tolerant and integrated community than was often found elsewhere along the West Coast

¹⁶ National Park Service, *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial, Nidoto Nai Yoni: Final Study of Alternatives/ Environmental Assessment* (National Park Service, 2005), 9, 16-18; Minority History Committee of Bainbridge Island School District No. 303, *They Cast a Long Shadow: A History of the Nonwhite Races on Bainbridge Island* (Bainbridge Island: Minority History Committee of Bainbridge Island School District No. 303, 1975), 23-24.

in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Japanese were accepted first as sawmill employees, where they constructed their own *Nihonmachi*, or Japantowns, with churches, bathhouses, barbershops, and Japanese newspapers from Seattle. As the timber industry lost its steam and both the Port Blakeley sawmill and the Japanese village suffered from fires, many Issei turned to farming, gardening, and canning. According to one study, Japanese settlers on the Island farmed 500 acres of strawberries and controlled 80% of the agriculture on Bainbridge. Unfortunately, despite the relatively accepting community, the Japanese Americans were still limited in their opportunities by land ownership, naturalization, and immigration laws.¹⁷

On December 7, 1941, the 276 Japanese Americans living on the Island received the news from Pearl Harbor with concern and approached the co-editors of the *Bainbridge Review* newspaper to seek advice. Walt Woodward and his wife Milly suggested that they end the Japanese language schools as they were often viewed with suspicion and they recommended voluntary enlistment in the military to help prove their loyalty. On December 8, they published the first and only "Extra" edition of the *Review* to inform local readers about the attack in Hawaii and to urge calm towards their own local and loyal Japanese American population. Despite their editorial, rumors soon emerged that Island strawberry fields were planted to direct Japanese bombers towards Bremerton Naval Yard and that Japanese Americans were stockpiling dynamite to destroy significant installations in the area. Bainbridge and the surrounding environs were home to not only Bremerton, but also the Fort Ward radio interception station, the

¹⁷ NPS, *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, 19-21; Mary Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors: The Walt and Milly Woodward Story* (Bainbridge Island: Fenwick Publishing Group, Inc, 2008), 28-29; Minority History Committee, *Long Shadow*, 31, 35, 45.

radio tower at Battle Point, Boeing Aircraft Company, the Seattle and Bainbridge Island shipyards, Sand Point Naval Air Station, and the Naval Torpedo Station at Keyport.¹⁸

Due to the strategic importance of the area, the FBI saw fit to arrest 34 Japanese Americans from the Island in early February, 1942, 11 of whom were eventually sent to Department of Justice internment camps. The following day, the Woodwards published another editorial urging continued calm and condemning the idea of a mass removal due to both the economic and personal losses such an order would cause. Unfortunately, EO 9066 was signed less than two weeks later; and on March 24, 1942, young Army soldiers arrived on the Island to post Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1 ordering the removal of all Japanese Americans from the Island. Six days later, on March 30, the 227 Japanese Americans that remained on the Island became the first of many to be forcibly removed from their homes and confined in Manzanar, California. The local high school lost almost one quarter of their students to the evacuation including 13 seniors who missed their prom and graduation while confined at camp.¹⁹

From the earliest days of the evacuation, many Bainbridge Islanders made it clear that they did not support the evacuation. Fellow residents attempted to care for farms, pets, businesses, and homes in their absence, though this still did not always ensure that those detained had a life to which they could return. The local high school even remembered their Japanese American seniors despite their distance by sending signed yearbooks and a copy of the commencement address to the thirteen seniors in camp and also by leaving thirteen empty chairs at their graduation ceremony to remember their classmates. Undoubtedly the most vocal and legendary supporters of the confined

¹⁸ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 44, 45, 47; NPS, *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, 23-24; Minority History Committee, *Long Shadow*, 73.

¹⁹ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 52, 54, 55, 57, 63.

Japanese American community were Walt and Milly of the *Review*. They promoted one of their employees, Paul Ohtaki from janitor to “camp correspondent” and through his constant communication, the *Review* published a weekly article on births, deaths, marriages, baseball scores and other important news from Bainbridge Islanders who were confined. Even after the group from the Island was moved from Manzanar to Minidoka in early 1943, Ohtaki and others kept the Woodwards informed of their lives so that they would not seem like strangers when they returned to the Island. Throughout the war, the *Review* remained the first and only newspaper to vocally oppose the evacuation and support the return of the Japanese American community even while numerous surrounding cities were passing resolutions aimed at preventing their return.²⁰

The welcoming stance towards the Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island is often seen as different from their reception elsewhere, and a lot of this is attributed to the efforts of locals like the Woodwards. According to written sources and local residents, Bainbridge Island never faced the same amount of opposition, due in some part to the positive “principal public voice” of the local newspaper. For the most part, minor vandalism and theft were the worst problems faced by the returning detainees, but there were a few outspoken opponents on the Island. Local resident Lambert Schuyler engaged in a public debate in the pages of the *Review*, arguing with other locals and the Woodwards themselves over the return of the Japanese Americans. He formed the “Live and Let Live Legion” to discourage their return and attracted 200 people to his first meeting, which Milly and Walt covered in their paper praising the freedom of such groups to assemble and voice their opinion. The second meeting attracted only forty people (including Walt), and after a straightforward article on the racist message

²⁰ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 63, 77, 86, 84.

presented at the meeting, the organization died altogether. The Woodwards lost some readership and advertisements due to their vocal support, and there was occasional racism aimed at the returning detainees, but for the most part, Bainbridge Island stood out as a welcoming home for the estimated 200 Japanese Americans that returned to the Island after the war.²¹

The Island was also unique in that its local community recognized the significance of not only the World War II experience, but also the role of their Island as the first to be evacuated long before other communities, schools, organizations, and individuals. In 1952, the Japanese American residents of Bainbridge formed the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) to spread information related to the confinement, support the Japanese American community, and encourage diversity and cooperation. They have since worked to gather oral histories, create exhibits, collect artifacts and photos, and create educational programs to share with both local and distant schools and organizations. Their exhibit, "Kodomo No Tame Ni – For the Sake of the Children," has traveled across the US extensively and their President, Frank Kitamoto, a local dentist who was detained as a child, frequently travels to share educational programs with others. In addition, local residents have honored both the Woodwards and an early Japanese American Issei, Sonoji Sakai, by naming two schools after them. In 1992, the school board also welcomed the seniors of the class of 1942 to participate in the graduation ceremonies that they had missed fifty years earlier. The local story has

²¹ NPS, *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, 29; Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 96, 104-107, 114, 118; Clarence Moriwaki, Interview with Author, March 23, 2007, Bainbridge Island, Washington.

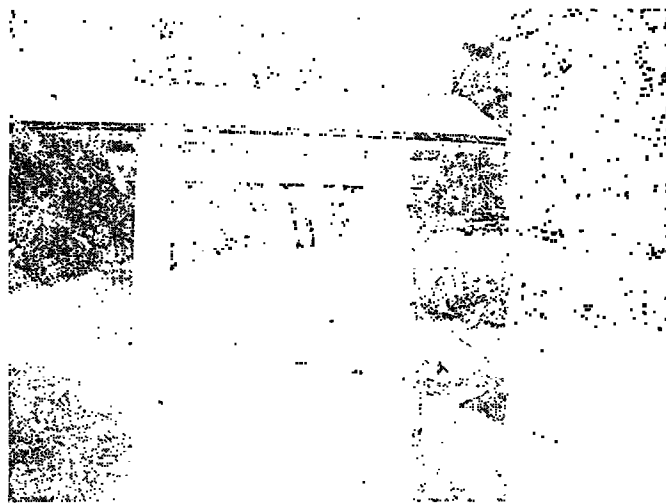
even been the subject of many documentaries including the PBS special “Visible Target” and “After the Silence.”²²

In 2000, the Interfaith Council of North Kitsap County and BIJAC joined forces to create a memorial to commemorate the struggles of the Japanese American community and to pay tribute to those in the community who had supported them. Titled, “Nidoto Nai Yoni,” or “Let it Not Happen Again,” the stone and plaque memorial was dedicated on March 30, 2002 near the site of the Eagledale Ferry Dock, from which the 227 Japanese Americans had departed exactly sixty years earlier. While planning this memorial, the local organization also decided to seek a much larger and more complex site in which to remember the evacuation and inform visitors of the story. In cooperation with the City of Bainbridge Island, the Parks and Recreation Department, and other local organizations, the newly created Bainbridge Island World War II Nikkei Internment and Exclusion Memorial Committee is currently in the process of raising funds for an interpretive and commemorative site at the Eagledale Ferry location. Led by local residents Clarence Moriwaki and Frank Kitamoto, the group sought and received Public Law 107-363, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study Act of 2002, which required the Secretary of the Interior to “carry out a special resource study regarding the national significance, suitability, and feasibility of designating as a unit of the National Park System the property commonly known as the Eagledale Ferry Dock...” and to present a report within one year.²³

²² For more information, see the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Website, www.bijac.org; NPS, *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, 32-33; Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 124-125, 127; Clarence Moriwaki Interview.

²³ NPS, *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, 33-34; Public Law 107-363, “Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study Act of 2002,” 107th Congress.

While awaiting news on whether they would be incorporated into the National Park Service (NPS), the Memorial Committee proceeded with their plan to create a memorial park on eight acres of the Joel Pritchard Park, which was once a creosote plant and had since become a superfund cleanup site and outdoor recreation park. Local renowned architect Johnpaul Jones held workshops to help design the site, and the Committee purchased the first 22.5 acres for \$4.9 million. In 2005, the National Park Service published their Study of Alternatives/Environmental Assessment and recommended that the Bainbridge Island site be included as part of the Minidoka National Historic Site. The following fall, members of the national Timber Framers Guild came together to build two entrance gates and a pavilion for the future site. Using traditional Asian techniques and hand tools, the members built the structures out of Alaskan cedar and were cared for during their two week stay by local restaurants and members of BIJAC.²⁴



Entrance gate built by the Timber Framers Guild at the site of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial.
Photo by Author, March 23, 2007.

Based on the recommendations of the study, Representative Jay Inslee and Senator Maris Cantwell, both from Washington, introduced bills to designate the Bainbridge Island Memorial as part of the NPS. Former Island resident Fumiko Hayashida, who is the oldest Bainbridge survivor of the evacuation, traveled to Washington DC to testify before Congress on her experiences during the relocation and

²⁴ NPS, *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, 34-35; Clarence Moriwaki Interview; Rachel Pritchett, "Japanese-American Internment Memorial: Members of the Timber Framers Guild Brought Their Building Expertise to Bainbridge's Project," *Kitsap Sun*, 25 September 2006.

confinement in Manzanar and Minidoka. Hayashida and her young daughter Natalie were the subjects of what has become an iconic photo taken on the Island during the



Fumiko Hayashida and her daughter
Natalie, Bainbridge Island,
March 30, 1942.

evacuation. No doubt in part because of her testimony, Congress approved both bills and President George W. Bush signed the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Monument Act in 2008 designating the Island site to be a satellite of the Minidoka National Historic Site in Idaho. Today visitors can see the work of the Timber Framers, the original Nidoto Nai Yoni stone memorial, the location of the original ferry dock, and acres of preserved and

landscaped wetlands as well as the future site of the interpretive center and “Memorial Wall,” which will tell the story of the local Japanese American population and their experiences.²⁵

Despite the widespread support for the memorial and its NPS affiliation, the Japanese American community has faced some isolated opposition to the construction of the memorial, the presentation of the Bainbridge Island history more broadly, and specifically a special course in the local curriculum. According to Moriwaki, during the public comment period of the deliberation for NPS affiliation, one opponent sent out a mass mailing urging locals, political leaders, and many others to register their negative views with the NPS. In response, Moriwaki distributed his own mass mailing resulting in nearly 1,000 positive opinions outweighing the negatives by 99%. In addition, there is a

²⁵ Tristan Baurick, “Fed Funds Favored for Memorial” *Bainbridge Island Review* 21 May 2005; Matthew Daly, “House Approves Bainbridge Island, WA., Internment Memorial,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 6 February 2007; Charles Pope, “U.S. House OKs Internee Memorial for Bainbridge,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 7 February 2007; Bainbridge Island Japanese American Monument Act; Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 136-137; Clarence Moriwaki Interview.

local group called “Friends of Historical Accuracy,” which continues to argue over the facts of the relocation regarding the validity of the military necessity perspective, the conditions in the camps, and the existence of disloyals within the ranks of the Japanese Americans. While this is by no means the only organization of this sort, their actual impact on local events, federal legislation, and public opinion seem to be fairly limited.²⁶

In one particular instance on the Island, local residents opposed a curriculum created by Bainbridge teacher Marie Marss through a grant from the Washington Civil Liberties Education Program. Her curriculum, “Leaving Our Island,” debuted in sixth grade classes on the Island in February 2004 at Sakai Intermediate School. Opponents argued that the lessons were “propaganda,” used inaccurate and loaded terms such as “concentration camp,” drew unfair comparisons to the contemporary War on Terror, and presented only one perspective. In response to the criticism, the local school board agreed to review aspects of the curriculum including the context for President Roosevelt’s decision and current comparisons; but according to Bainbridge Island Principal Jo Vander Stoep, any revised curriculum would still present EO 9066 as a mistake because, “There are some things that we can say aren’t debatable anymore.” Though the curriculum was eventually dropped as a cohesive unit as part of a restructuring of the overall school curriculum in 2007, aspects of the lessons are still taught in local schools on Bainbridge Island. As stated by numerous sources, the overwhelming attitude of Bainbridge Island residents during and after the war as well as

²⁶ Clarence Moriwaki Interview; For more information on the Friends of Historical Accuracy and other such organizations, please see: www.bainbridgehistorians.org; and www.internmentarchives.com.

in regards to both the memorial and the curriculum is a unique one of acceptance of the Japanese American community and disapproval of the wartime decisions.²⁷

Inspired by the complex and compelling history of Bainbridge Island, local resident David Guterson wrote *Snow Falling on Cedars*, which drew from the rich history of the Puget Sound region for its characters and plot. Published in 1994, *Cedars* is set on San Pedro Island, a fictitious location in the Sound that mimicked the small, insular community of Bainbridge. The plot centers on Ishmael Chambers, son of the late local newspaper editor and embittered World War II Marine Veteran who lost his arm during the invasion of the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll. While the background and details are primarily filled in during flashbacks, the present-time story focuses on Chamber's reporting of the trial of local Japanese American fisherman Kabuo Miyamoto, who is accused of murdering fellow gill-netter Carl Heines over disputed property. Kabuo's wife, Hatsue, was Chamber's childhood friend and high school sweetheart who had ended their relationship after her family's forced evacuation to Puyallup Fairgrounds and later Manzanar, California. As the trial unfolds, Guterson reveals details about his character's backgrounds, the events on the night of the alleged murder, and the emotional struggles that Chambers faces when he realizes that he holds the key to Miyamoto's, and therefore Hatsue's, fate.

Guterson's novel is a captivating read and achieves both literary success and historical accuracy. In the literary sense, Guterson's ability to bring each character to life through detailed flashbacks of even minor characters and his attention to the minutiae of

²⁷ "Bainbridge School Course on Internment is Under Fire," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 3 September 2004; Florangela Davila, "Debate Lingers Over Internment of Japanese-Americans," *Seattle Times* 6 September 2004; Danny Westneat, "Some Things Are Not Debatable," *Seattle Times* 8 September 2004; Editorial, "Renouncing Mistake Correct Thing to Do," *Seattle Times* 14 September 2004; Tristan Baurick, "Japanese-American Internment Lesson Dropped from BI Curriculum – For Now," *The Kitsap Sun* 24 October 2007.

the life and environment of San Pedro easily creates a realistic world in the imagination of the reader. Though every character, including Chambers, may not always be likeable, they are somehow more real for their flaws. His descriptions of the snowstorm that hits the waters and forests of San Pedro during the trial and the reaction of the townspeople to both the trial and the inclement weather provide a backdrop that gives the story a classic or timeless feel that evokes in the reader the sense that it could have happened in their own lives. As summed up in one review, "Readers seem to like Mr. Guterson's old-fashioned attention to such details, his ability to find big truths in mundane places, his insistence on authenticity and his way of supplying every character with a complete history."²⁸

Though the story itself takes place in the course of only three days in the mid-1950s, the book portrays decades of history in the lives of Chambers, his parents, Hatsue and Kabuo Miyamoto and their families, as well as many others on the Island. Through extensive research into salmon fishing, strawberry farming, the Japanese American relocation, World War II, and numerous other subjects, Guterson attains a level of historical accuracy that is both praiseworthy for its accomplishment and enjoyable to read. In the course of his writing, he read numerous oral histories from Bainbridge Japanese Americans to understand the evacuation and the anti-Japanese movements of the time, and according to his own acknowledgements, he spoke with experts on fishing, the legal system, and ships and read many books on similar subjects as well. His understanding of the bitterness faced by many veterans also reflected his depth of research and understanding, and as one reviewer wrote, "the story of how the war had

²⁸ David Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Linda Matthews, "Amid the Cedars, Serenity and Success," *New York Times* 29 February 1996, C4.

affected each of them and their community” was as much a main plot thread as the love story of Ishmael and Hatsue and the murder mystery of Kabuo’s trial. Throughout the entire novel, Guterson’s research reveals itself through his knowledgeable descriptions and scenes without falling into digressive lectures.²⁹

His historical accuracy is perhaps best portrayed in regards to his inspiration, Bainbridge Island. Chamber’s father Arthur, the local esteemed and fair-minded editor, was purposefully based on Walt Woodward; and the Japanese American experience largely mirrored that of the Island. While San Pedro was fictional, the environment, local industries, and community mindset was clearly inspired by that of Guterson’s home of fifteen years. The fictitious Island’s diversity, as shown through resident’s names and backgrounds, the rumors of strawberry field arrows, the relationship of the local Japanese American community and the Chambers family, and even the detailed history that Guterson provides regarding the immigration of Japanese to San Pedro, were all clear reflections of Bainbridge Island’s unique history and residents. Again, Guterson recognized his debt to his local community in his acknowledgements, thanking the Woodwards, BIJAC President Kitamoto, and the Bainbridge Historical Society while also citing numerous books on both Japanese American history and the history of the Island. Thus, in many ways, Guterson’s book is a tribute to the Island and its unique history as much as it is a literary exploration of emotions, racism, and community.

Upon its release, *Snow Falling on Cedars* was greeted with enthusiasm. In 1995, Guterson received the highly coveted PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and the novel was on the Bestseller list off and on for over six years. It sold over two million copies; and

²⁹ Mathews, “Amid the Cedars,” C4; Susan Kenney, “Their Fellow Americans,” *New York Times* 16 October 1994, BR12; Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, xi-xiii; Rick Lyman, “A Film Director and a Novelist of Like Minds,” *New York Times* 19 December 1999, AR30.

within its first two years, it had already been through 22 printings. Due in part to its literary success, Universal Pictures solicited screenwriter Ron Bass to convert the novel into a script, and director Scott Hicks read Guterson's novel and spoke to the Creative Artists Agency about bringing it to film. As Hicks faced the onslaught of numerous other offers in light of his newfound success following the release of "Shine" (1996), the project was placed on the backburner until Guterson himself contacted Hicks to discuss the possibility of a movie. Hicks visited the Island and later brought Guterson to Montana to work out the details of the script, the style of the film, and the cinematography.³⁰

Though Hicks had earned fame with "Shine," his film about pianist David Helfgott, he had begun his career working largely on documentary films, which drew him to the realistic and historically accurate aspects of the *Cedars* storyline. The film starred Ethan Hawke as Ishmael Chambers, Rick Yune as Kazuo³¹ Miyamoto, and Youki Kudoh as Hatsue Imada Miyamoto. It also starred prominent actors Max Von Sydow, James Cromwell, Sam Shepard, and Richard Jenkins as defense attorney Nels Gudmundsson, Judge Fielding, newspaper editor Arthur Chambers, and Sheriff Art Moran respectively. Filming took place in the US and Canada, including the Puget Sound areas of Port Townsend and Whidbey Island, as well as the San Juan Islands.³²

According to his notes on the screenplay, Hicks intended the film to be a "gradual revealing of the truth," to reflect the book's "cumulative emotional effect of its layering

³⁰ Mathews, "Amid the Cedars," C1, C4; Marcia Biederman, "A Prize, But Not Always a Path," *New York Times* 19 July 1998, CY9; Lyman, "A Film Director," AR30.

³¹ Though I can find no explanation as to why, the defendant's name was changed from Kabuo to Kazuo for the movie.

³² Ronald Bass, *The Shooting Script: Snow Falling on Cedars* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1999), 128-130; 162; 135, 139, 144.

of detail like the drifting snow of the blizzard itself.” This is largely achieved through Guterson and Hick’s use of complex flashbacks that slowly inform the readers of not only the background stories of the characters, but also the crucial details of the ongoing trial storyline. Despite the similar approach, Guterson’s character development is far more successful than Hick’s, resulting in both less personal attachment to the characters for movie audiences and in some cases, different characterizations in the movie than in the book. For instance, one reviewer wrote, “Hatsue’s character is, for all purposes, a vacuum, an empty vessel waiting to be filled with stereotypical content...,” yet her character is unique, determined, and complex in the novel. Perhaps the single greatest weakness in comparison to the book, however, is the less cohesive and clear use of flashbacks to contribute and develop the storyline as opposed to simply evoking emotions in the viewer.³³

The artistic cinematography, time limitations of film, and flashback style resulted in less information and depictions regarding the evacuation and relocation of the Japanese Americans; but the sensitivity and the time period of the film – the 1950s – allowed more exploration of the emotions involved in their departure and especially in their return and resettlement within the Island community. The movie still provides an introduction to the evacuation, which reveals a certain amount of forward thinking, however one criticism about the film is the focus on a white main character, with whom audiences can more readily identify than a Japanese character. According to one review, moviegoers must “consider the extent to which Asian Americans are absent or present in popular media,

³³ Bass, *The Shooting Script*, 143, 128; Keith Aoki, “Is Chan Still Missing? An Essay About the Film *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1999) and Representations of Asian Americans in U.S. Films,” in Rennard Strickland, Teree E. Foster, and Taunya Lovell Banks, eds., *Screening Justice – The Cinema of Law: Significant Films of Law, Order, and Social Justice* (New York: William S. Hein & Company, 2006), 689.

and specifically why filmmakers seem to assume a mainstream audience needs a white character as an avenue into any story about an Asian American or, for that matter, any minority community?" He points to Quaid's character in "Come See the Paradise" as another example of this trend, and it is easy to see similar lead Caucasian characters in "American Pastime" and even the earliest film on the subject, "Go For Broke!" Despite his other criticisms, the reviewer concludes, "To its credit, *Snow Falling on Cedars* attempts to offer more than a merely superficial portrayal of events and characters largely missing from contemporary U.S. histories of the time period..." Regardless of any shortcomings, both the *Snow Falling on Cedars* book and film presented a frequently ignored subject to a broad audience, many of whom may never visit a camp site or other Japanese American site, and therefore both serve as non-traditional memorials to the World War II Japanese American experience despite their popular culture origins.³⁴

Conclusion

Bainbridge Island is a unique site not only in Japanese American history, but also in the representation of Japanese American history. The memorial that is underway at the site of the Eagledale Ferry will stand as a traditional tribute to the struggles of the local Japanese American community, the patriotism of those who served in the military, and the men and women of the local community who stood up for the Japanese Americans in the face of prejudice. By placing the memorial at the historic site, developers hope to bring history to life through the recreation of the original dock and pathway leading to the water. The same cedar tree that looms over the dock in historic photos has been saved through emergency shore restoration and is now listed on the National Register of

³⁴ Aoki, "Is Chan Still Missing?" 691, 692.

Historic Trees to ensure that it is protected for generations to come. Visitors in the future will be able to enjoy the natural beauty of the parkland, the interactive offerings of the interpretive center, the simple yet exquisite workmanship of the timber framers pavilion and entrance gates, and the tribute and storyline of the memorial wall.³⁵

Yet Bainbridge Island also represents a unique convergence of “non-traditional” memorials that bring historic characters to life. The iconic photograph of the young mother holding her daughter has come to represent the struggle, emotion, and injustice of the relocation and confinement of Japanese Americans. In a personal tribute to these touching photos, Hicks not only recreated the images in the movie *Snow Falling on Cedars*, but also he brought the young mother, now in her 90s, along with her daughter to play extras in the evacuation scene. The dispute over the curriculum in Bainbridge Island schools reflects the controversy that has surrounded the introduction of the subject of the WWII confinement into schools across the country. Both the novel and film of *Snow Falling on Cedars* represent the emergence of the Japanese American story into popular culture and provide both an educating and entertaining method of memorializing and passing on the historical subject. Such photos, artistic depictions, books, and films



Fumiko Hayashida and her daughter Natalie as extras over fifty years after their original photo.

³⁵ Clarence Moriwaki, Interview.

reach a broad audience, educate the public about a little known event in its nation's history, and in many ways commemorate the events by aiding future generations in their understandings of the experiences of World War II just as traditional monuments do.

Conclusion

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 resulting in the forced relocation and confinement of 110,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast of the United States. For the next four years these detainees, almost two-thirds of whom were American citizens, remained behind barbed wire fences under the watchful gaze of guard tower spotlights and military police with no charges, no chance at a trial, and no explanation beyond their ethnic heritage. Thousands of Hawaiian and mainland Japanese Americans served with the famed 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team or served as translators and linguists in the Pacific Theater as part of the Military Intelligence Service. During the course of the war, many of those confined eventually resettled in cities around the nation harvesting sugar beets, working in factories and businesses, or attending college. Through the efforts of four Supreme Court challenges, the evacuation and West Coast exclusion were eventually lifted and by 1946 all the camps had closed scattering their inhabitants across the country.

Within years after the end of the war, the physical remains of many of these camps had been destroyed, reused, or distributed throughout the surrounding counties. Japanese Americans attempted to rebuild their lives and communities despite the loss of personal property, businesses, and family heirlooms. Veterans returned home to much initial fanfare in Washington D.C., but to quiet discrimination or apathy elsewhere. Feeling shame for their years of confinement, Japanese Americans kept their experiences to themselves rather than vocalizing their questions or grievances, and other Americans were happy with this silence. The “military necessity” argument of the evacuation

appeared shallow in light of the lack of evidence or charges against any Japanese Americans for sabotage or espionage. The civil rights violation against American citizens did not reflect well on a nation that had so recently fought for democracy and freedom around the world. The subject of the brave service of the soldiers was praiseworthy, but it was difficult to discuss without alluding to the camps from which they enlisted or were drafted. The film "Go For Broke!" emerged in 1951 as a tribute to these men and it met with a great deal of acclaim, but even its success could not overcome the silence that persisted on the subject for the next few decades.

Gradually the Civil Rights Movement brought about new concepts of equality and justice and led to legislation integrating schools and the military and allowing for the naturalization of greater numbers of immigrants. The entrance of Hawaii into the United States introduced a number of Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) into the political arena, and numerous elections on the West Coast also began to result in Japanese American representatives. The academic, professional, and financial success of many Japanese Americans resulted in the "model minority" myth during the late 1960s, which stereotyped the community as a homogenous mass, but reflected a begrudging acceptance and respect as well. This myth was soon called into question as numerous Japanese Americans took part in protest movements across the nation during the political and social unrest of the 1970s, resulting specifically in increased representation in the academy. The social and political changes combined with political leadership and individual empowerment eventually led to the movement for monetary redress and an apology that culminated with the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

As the Japanese American community gained a voice and recovered from the period of forgetting, their focus turned towards the future and the preservation of their story through memorials and education to ensure that such silence never occurred again. In the years immediately following the war, returning veterans paid homage to their fallen friends through numerous local memorials and tributes, and grateful townspeople in Europe honored them as well. Towns and villages across Italy and France erected many monuments to the men of the 100th/442nd RCT and a relationship of reciprocal liberation soon resulted in group pilgrimages to both Europe and Hawaii. Yet while Europeans had no inhibitions regarding the skin color of their liberators, Americans still largely ignored the service of the Japanese Americans forcing them to build their own tributes rather than to receive national attention. However, through the efforts of organizations like the Go For Broke National Education Foundation and political leaders like Senator Daniel Inouye, the story of the Japanese American military service reached the national level through the creation of the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism and the belated awarding of twenty Congressional Medals of Honor.

As Japanese Americans gained increasing amounts of political and social acceptance and the story of the confinement began to emerge, interest in preserving the site of their struggle surfaced as well. Led almost entirely at the grassroots level by dedicated and passionate individuals, movements appeared at every major camp site to preserve or interpret the site in some way to ensure that future generations would recognize the significance of the location. Through the hard work of individuals like John Ellington, Rosalie Gould, Jane Beckwith, John Hopper, Jimi Yamaichi, Mas Inoshita, Jay Cravath, and many others, a memorial or complete historic site emerged at

each of the ten War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps, as well as many of the internment camps. Monuments honor the soldiers from camp, interpretive signs inform visitors of the history, and in some cases, visitor centers present exhibits and resources to many thousands each year. Through the efforts of these individuals, many of the camp sites have achieved national recognition through National Landmark status, and all of them will soon receive federal funding through Public Law 109-441, which approved \$38 million for the preservation of the confinement sites. Though these sites are geographically and often environmentally desolate, their preservation is an important step towards remembering the injustice and racism that led to the confinement.

Despite their isolated locations, the camps still held the potential to attract visitors, and therefore economic growth to their local regions. As movements to interpret and save the camps emerged, they were frequently followed by efforts within local museums. Six of the ten camps eventually had a nearby museum with exhibits and information relating to the confinement and military service during the war. In addition, exhibits on the subject began to appear in various museums across the country bringing the story off the West Coast and away from the sites themselves and into regions where it was less familiar. Entire museums dedicated to the subject were created in the latter part of the twentieth century, again bringing recognition of the significance of the subject to not only Japanese Americans but also Americans more broadly. Small local museums; large subject-specific museums; and exhibits, both tactile and online, provide educational opportunities, pay tribute to the struggles and sacrifices of the Japanese Americans, and often have the opportunity to reach a far broader audience than the camp sites themselves.

As the camps and their associated museums gained attention, former detainees formally organized increasing numbers of pilgrimages to the camps. Reunions among veterans became more frequent during this time as well as the scattered and aging World War II Japanese American generation sought a renewed sense of community. Eventually every camp had a regularly scheduled pilgrimage and numerous veteran organizations across the country held local and national reunions. In addition, preservationists among the Japanese American community attempted to save and revive the Japantowns, or *nihonmachi*, that had existed in numerous West Coast cities prior to the evacuation. These gatherings and community based organizations all share similar missions as they attempt to preserve relevant sites, educate the public and future generations about the confinement and military service, and honor their comrades through memorial services. These efforts also have reached the national level through mass gatherings of dedicated individuals and organizations that hope to introduce the subject into state educational curriculums and ensure the sites themselves endure.

Each of the steps toward the interpretation of the Japanese American WWII experience has helped pave the way for the most public form of memorialization, the popular culture, or artistic medium. As academic and cultural institutions began to discuss the confinement and military service in the latter part of the twentieth century, the story eventually reached the public and became part of common representations such as novels, artwork, and films. Numerous publications and exhibits now display art from inside the camps to audiences around the world, while photographs that were labeled “impounded” are available to researchers at the National Archives. Novels, and especially children’s novels, on the subject of Japanese American history and culture

abound and provide a very accessible medium for the education of school children around the country. Many films have also reached a broad audience and have introduced visual representations of the evacuation, confinement, and military service that were largely unavailable since "Go For Broke!" These artistic memorials have the potential to disseminate the history of the Japanese American experience to a broader audience than do museums, monuments, and historic sites and therefore represent the achievement of truly national and public commemoration.

Throughout these efforts at remembrance, numerous themes regarding the Japanese American community have emerged. First and most significant is the focus on education. While education is important within the community itself, the organizations, museums, historic sites, and foundations that are dedicated to the Japanese American experience consider broad public education to be a major, if not the main, aspect of their mission statement. Though the educational focus is cultural in origin, its emphasis represents a deep desire to ensure their story is not forgotten and therefore their injustice does not happen again. The ability of a nation to have silenced a community both during the war years and after is a situation that Japanese Americans do not want repeated. The focus on education can be seen in the creation of curriculums, the children's programs available within many related museums, historic sites, and organizations, and the teaching components included in all major gatherings and events such as pilgrimages, reunions, symposiums, and conferences.

Though education is a common undercurrent found throughout the efforts at memorialization, there is otherwise not a lot of homogeneity within the Japanese American community. Stereotypes have long portrayed the Japanese as a mass of like-

minded citizens, yet this is far from reality among Japanese Americans. In fact, each individual's experiences, motivations, and perspectives contribute to complex personalities with varying opinions and desires. Throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century, numerous situations reflected these divisions and disproved the homogenous label. Who should be honored in a memorial, the living or the dead? Which term is appropriate, concentration camp or relocation camp? Should redress come in the form of a lawsuit or legislation? Does the Japanese American Citizens League represent the viewpoints of the Japanese American community? These and many other questions revealed deep seated divisions among the community based on individual experiences and perspectives. While opposing groups were often able to work towards a common goal, the underlying diversity is indicative of a far more complex group than most Americans perceived.

In many cases, it was ironical that this individualism led to successful efforts to remember the Japanese American experience. This analysis could not possibly describe or even list all of the people responsible for bringing about change, but suffice it to say, their contributions were immense. Each camp site has one or two personalities that are consistently mentioned in reference to that camp and its preservation. Museum exhibits were frequently the result of dedicated former detainees who donated their own time and personal belongings to further the interpretation of their story. Though many large movements ultimately achieved successful commemoration, their origins could most often be traced back to one individual who saw the need and attempted to fill it. Even redress, which encompassed numerous organizations, various states, and multiple mediums, began largely with one man.

This individual strength reveals the most significant aspect of the decades-long fight for remembrance by the Japanese American community. At no point was this a top-down effort, yet through grass roots organizing and individual dedication, a diverse community overcame a nation's unspoken decision to forget its history and ensured the national public recognition of wrongdoing and reparation. Though returning veterans once had to create their own memorials to their fallen comrades, by 2000 the government had placed a lasting tribute on the National Mall within site of the Capitol Building. After their usefulness had run its course, isolated camps were destroyed, deserted, and neglected for decades, yet today the government has promised \$38 million towards the restoration, preservation, and interpretation of these sites. The period of forgetting is significant to this story because it reflects a nation's desire to suppress its more unpleasant histories and it makes the remembrance all the more important. The effort put forth by members of the Japanese American community during the latter half of the twentieth century overcame the forgetfulness of a nation, ensured the remembrance of their struggles and sacrifices, and made Japanese American history into American history.

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- Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, www.bijac.org.
- California Japantowns, www.californiajapantowns.org .
- Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project, <http://www.densho.org> .
- Eastern California Museum, <http://www.countyofinyo.org/ecmuseum/> .

Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans, www.ffnv.org/home .

Friends of Historical Accuracy on Bainbridge Island, www.bainbridgehistorians.org.

Go For Broke National Education Foundation, www.goforbroke.org .

Great Basin Museum, <http://www.greatbasinheritage.org/gbmuseum.htm> .

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Sons and Daughters of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, <http://442sd.org/home.html> .

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<http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/Exhibit/>.

Wing Luke Asian Museum, www.wingluke.org .

Appendix 1: Glossary

Buddaheads – (Hawaiian) Hawaiian Japanese Americans

Haole – (Hawaiian) Caucasian

Inu – (Japanese) literally dog, used for informants within the camps

Issei – (Japanese) first generation Japanese American immigrant

Gaman – (Japanese) perseverance

Katonks – (Hawaiian) mainland Japanese Americans

Kibei – (Japanese) Japanese American immigrant that returned to Japan for his/her education

Kodomo No Tame Ni – (Japanese) for the sake of the children

Les Hawaien – (French) affectionate term for the Japanese American soldiers

Nidoto Nai Yoni – (Japanese) Let it not happen again

Nihonjin machi – (Japanese) Japanese people's town

Nihonmachi – (Japanese) Japantown

Nisei – (Japanese) second generation Japanese American immigrant

Okage Same de – (Japanese) I am what I am because of you

Pidgin – Hawaiian dialect combining English, Japanese, and Hawaiian

Sansei – (Japanese) third generation Japanese immigrant

Sento – (Japanese) public bathhouse

Shikata ga nai – (Japanese) it can't be helped

Yonsei – (Japanese) fourth generation immigrant

Appendix 2: Acronyms

ADL – Anti-Defamation League

AJA – Americans of Japanese Ancestry

AJC – American Jewish Committee

APS – Amache Preservation Society

ATIS – Allied Translation and Interpreter Service

BIJAC – Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community

CAFO – Confined Animal Feeding Operation

CMH – Congressional Medal of Honor

CRIT – Colorado River Indian Tribe

CWRIC – Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians

DSC – Distinguished Service Cross

EO 9066 – Executive Order 9066

FFNV – Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans

GFBNVA – Go For Broke National Veterans Association

IFARM – Idaho Farm and Ranch Museum

INA – Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952

JACCC – Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (Los Angeles)

JACL – Japanese American Citizens League

JANM – Japanese American National Museum

KCC – Kapiolani Community College

LACCRR – Los Angeles Community Coalition on Redress/Reparations

LADWP – Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

MIS – Military Intelligence Service

MISLS – Military Intelligence Service Language School

NCJAR – National Council for Japanese American Redress

NCR- National Committee for Redress (JACL)

NCRR – National Coalition of Redress/Reparations

NJAHS – National Japanese American Historical Society

NJAM – National Japanese American Memorial

NJAMF – National Japanese American Memorial Foundation

NPS – National Park Service

NVC – Seattle Nisei Veterans Committee

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

ORA – Office of Redress Administration

RCT – Regimental Combat Team

SERC – Seattle Evacuation Redress Committee

SNCC – Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

TWLF – Third World Liberation Front

UALR – University of Arkansas, Little Rock

VVM – Vietnam Veterans Memorial

VVV – Varsity Victory Volunteers

WRA – War Relocation Authority