The Complex Japanese American Experience During World War II: The Internment Camps, the Exceptional Case of Hawaii, and the Japanese American Segregated Military Units

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Abstract
This thesis examines three types of the Japanese American experience during World War II, based on the central premise that there was not, in fact, a single experience. The Japanese American community was not a homogenous group, and different groups in different locations had different experiences during the war. The three particular forms of the Japanese experience considered in this study are: the mass internment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast, Hawaii's large Japanese population's escape from mass internment, and the relative equality found by the Nisei while serving in military units during the war. The incarceration experience victimized people whose only crime was being of Japanese heritage, and is a dark chapter in American history that must be examined. This is an issue that we must understand, because understanding this can help us make sure that it never happens again.

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LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

Senior Thesis

The Complex Japanese American Experience During World War II: The Internment Camps, the Exceptional Case of Hawaii, and the Japanese American Segregated Military Units

By

Malia Ogawa

April 21, 2014

The report of the investigation undertaken as a Senior Thesis, to carry two courses of credit in the Department of History

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Abstract

This thesis examines three types of the Japanese American experience during World War II, based on the central premise that there was not, in fact, a single experience. The Japanese American community was not a homogenous group, and different groups in different locations had different experiences during the war. The three particular forms of the Japanese experience considered in this study are: the mass internment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast, Hawaii’s large Japanese population’s escape from mass internment, and the relative equality found by the Nisei while serving in military units during the war. The incarceration experience victimized people whose only crime was being of Japanese heritage, and is a dark chapter in American history that must be examined. This is an issue that we must understand, because understanding this can help us make sure that it never happens again.
To my mother Margie and father Pat –

To the memory of my Papa, Haruo Ogawa –

And to the memory of my grandmother, Setsuko Kawashiri Speck; they say that a dedication is one of the most exquisite acts of love one can perform, I hope that my work makes you proud.
Acknowledgements

I’d like to thank my family for introducing me to this topic as a child, and especially for bestowing upon me the gift of our incredible family histories.

I also owe a huge thank-you to my amazing advisor of four years, Carol Gayle, who introduced me to the idea of conducting a thesis on this very topic in my freshman year.

And finally, I would like to thank my amazing and supportive friends who actively encouraged me throughout the year and came to my rescue whenever I found myself too overwhelmed. You know who you are.
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“Racism is a refuge for the ignorant. It seeks to divide and to destroy. It is the enemy of freedom, and deserves to be met head-on and stamped out.” – Pierre Berton

“In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.” – Winston Churchill

“Shikata ga nai” – it cannot be helped
Introduction

In 2004, at the age of ten, I won a prize for a short story about my grandmother and her experiences during the Japanese American internment during World War II. I had grown up with my grandmother’s stories of the past and had become aware at a young age of the wartime internment of my Japanese relatives at a young age. Although I was merely an adolescent when the history and legacy of the Japanese American internment first caught my eye, my interest only continued to grow throughout the years. This topic is deeply embedded in my personal family histories because I am half Japanese from both sides of my family, and both my mother and father are half Japanese as well. Thus, I have a number of connections to the various experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Setsuko Kawashiri, the grandmother whose stories I grew up with, was on my mother’s side. Before the war, the Kawashiris lived in California and made a living through farming and other agricultural work. The entire family was evacuated to and interned in Poston, Arizona when Setsuko was 12 years old. My father’s side, however, had quite a different wartime experience from the Kawashiris. The Ogawas were from a noble class of samurai who immigrated and settled in Hawaii, rather than on the West Coast mainland. It was there, in the Territory of Hawaii, that my “Papa” (my paternal grandfather) and his family lived out the war. Nearly all members of the Ogawa family were fortunate enough to avoid the same fate of internment that those Japanese on the mainland were subjected to, except for my great-aunt Chidori. She had already graduated from the University of Hawaii and moved to the mainland before the war, which is how
she found herself behind barbed wire from May 1942 until January 1943. Fortunately, she qualified for the War Relocation Authority’s preferential early release policy. Soon after her release Chidori wanted to help in something more for the war effort, and so she enlisted in the Women’s Army Air Corps (WAAC). She made her mark in history as the first Nisei (second-generation Japanese) woman from Hawaii to enlist. This complex family history helped me discern the multiple aspects of the Japanese American experience during World War II.

This study goes beyond the typical single focus on internment. Rather, it addresses the complexities of the whole Japanese American experience during World War II by exploring three versions of the experience. My three main focuses are: The mass internment of Japanese Americans, the unique case of the Territory of Hawaii, and Japanese American military service in segregated units. The internment still remains my major focal point, as it was one of the largest factors in determining the Japanese wartime experience. But because it was only those from the West Coast of the United States who were evacuated and relocated behind barbed wire, internment does not cover the entirety of the Japanese American experience.

The experience in Hawaii, which was then still a Territory of the United States, was different. The ethnically Japanese population was too large in proportion to Hawaii’s populace and too prominent to allow the kind of mass evacuation and internment policy instituted on the nation’s mainland. Furthermore, merely a few hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, martial law was declared over the Hawaiian Territory and all people living there, which created a military government led by a head military governor. For all civilians in Hawaii, regardless of race, life under martial law became one of restricted rights and hard work for the war effort.
My final major focus is the creation of a segregated but hard-fighting military unit. The Japanese American 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team served in the European Theater during the war. The unit had two main slogans: “Remember Pearl Harbor” and “Go For Broke,” and was highly decorated for its bravery. This group of Japanese Americans was actually empowered by the war. Incidentally, in examining the World War II military history of Japanese Americans, I discovered cultural prejudices and differences between the Hawaiian Japanese and the mainland Japanese. Initially, these cultural differences and stereotypes created a rift between the two groups that fostered anger and aggression. However, once they joined together in combat, those differences evaporated in favor of the bond required by any functioning military unit.

Early in my research into the topic, I realized that much of the material on the Japanese American wartime experience was constructed as protest, condemning the malicious prejudice and acts of injustice toward the Japanese. Frequently, the Japanese Americans were portrayed as the innocent and helpless victims of a vicious racism directed at them by their ignorant Caucasian neighbors and government. Although the Japanese did suffer greatly from wartime hysteria and prejudice, such a portrayal is only one of the many different perspectives from which this topic can be viewed. The fact is, the Japanese Americans were not a homogenous group that had a single experience in World War II. Their experiences varied by location, time, age, and gender. It is vital to recognize and consider these various situations, factors, and viewpoints. This was the manner in which I approached my research and it has shaped my study, which has led me to the recognition of the complexity of the Japanese American experience during World War II.
One example of such complexity would be the change in the way the interned Japanese were treated as the war progressed. During the first months of 1942, following the attack on Pearl Harbor and Japan’s apparently unstoppable victories in the Far East, fear ruled American attitudes toward the Japanese Americans, especially on the West Coast, where there was great economic competition and envy. The frantic general public, egged on by the media, created an “anti-Jap” outcry, which played a great role in the government’s decision to carry out mass evacuation and relocation. Suspicious hostility and stern treatment continued to dominate the treatment of the Japanese Americans by non-Japanese throughout most of 1942. As the tide of the war began to turn, beginning with America’s first major victory against the Japanese, at the Battle of Midway in early June 1942, treatment of the Japanese Americans began to soften. In 1943, as the tide of the war turned even further in favor of the Allies, and the US became increasingly confident in its military endeavors, the government haltingly switched to a more liberal treatment of the incarcerated Japanese Americans. During this year, an increasing number of internees were given conditional early releases from the camps by the War Relocation Authority. Then in late 1943, the government reversed its policy against having any significant number of Japanese Americans in the US Armed Forces and instead established an all-Japanese American military unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

This study looks first at some background information to provide the reader with a general understanding of the historical context. The background chapter includes information on early 20th century Japanese immigration, the origins of anti-Asian sentiments, common Japanese cultural traits, the wide generation gap between the Issei and Nisei, and Nisei biculturalism. My second chapter, the “Period of Moderation,” focuses on the few months between the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941 and President Roosevelt’s signing of Executive Order 9066 in February 1942, which
authorized the Secretary of War power to establish certain areas as military zones and to control the alien population within those zones. These special powers were, however, undefined and it was not clear how they would be applied or to which groups. This chapter also suggests that the government was still groping to find a policy toward the Japanese Americans.

The following chapters of this study are on the mass evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast and their internment in relocation centers. The evacuation chapter opens at the beginning of the evacuation process with the first mass removal of the Japanese from Bainbridge Island, Washington. It continues to detail the hardships the evacuees faced in getting ready to leave their homes – a preparation period of only six days being allowed – and describes a variety of Japanese Americans’ “evacuation day” experiences. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the distinction between an “assembly center” and a “relocation center.” The internment chapter begins with an explanation of the War Relocation Authority (WRA) and its dominant role in the relocation centers. The chapter includes general camp descriptions, layouts, and conditions, a description of daily life and discusses how the internees would spend their time, and provides a brief analysis of the situation of the children in the camps. Throughout there is attention to the theme of the WRA’s policy of Americanization of Japanese internees.

The next two chapters discuss the two alternate Japanese American experiences during the war: the Hawaiian situation and the segregated military service of Nisei soldiers. In Hawaii, tolerant interethnic relations were accepted as a normal part of the diverse Hawaiian society, and even after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the anti-Japanese sentiment that emerged against the Hawaiian Japanese did not compare in any way to the ferocity of that on the mainland. As a US Territory with a large military presence, the
islands of Hawaii were immediately put under martial law and ruled by a military government for the remainder of the war. The chapter on the military documents the great military achievements of the Japanese American military units, the Hawaiian 100th Infantry Battalion, and the later all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which fought in the European Theater of the war. At first, during basic training of the 442nd, conflict after conflict arose between the Japanese of Hawaii and the Japanese from the mainland, but by the time they shipped out to the frontlines in 1944, the two separate cultural groups had resolved their differences and seamlessly worked together as a single military unit.

The final chapter covers the closing of the relocation centers and the successful post-war dispersion of the Japanese across the nation, leading to their integration into American society. It concludes with the 1988 decision to issue an apology and to make monetary restitution to former internees.

I was able to gather a multitude of both primary and secondary sources for my research. Many of my secondary sources have been books I found in the Lake Forest College Library and then the Pritzker Military Library, as well as countless academic journal articles from academic databases such as JSTOR and EBSCOhost. One of the most useful sources throughout writing my entire thesis was *Personal Justice Denied*, an official government report where the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians issued its findings and concluded that the incarceration of Japanese Americans had not been justified by military necessity. As an official government study, it functions as both a primary and secondary source at times, depending on the quotes and citations included in the text.

I retrieved the majority of my primary sources from the Densho Digital Archive, which holds more than 1,500 hours of recorded video interviews and over 12,000 historic
photos, documents and newspapers. Densho is a nonprofit organization with the mission to preserve the testimonies of Japanese Americans and their experiences during World War II. This treasure trove of primary sources includes documents on the Japanese American experience from early 20th century immigration through redress for internment in the 1980s, but focuses especially on the Japanese American wartime incarceration. Aside from the Densho Digital Archive, my remaining primary sources were a variety of memoirs and an assortment of personal memoirs and other materials from my own private family collections.

I would like to conclude this introduction with a brief explanation of the specific terminology used in this study. Two important terms I frequently employ are the Japanese words “Issei” and “Nisei.” Issei refers to the first-generation Japanese who were born in Japan and immigrated over to the States; they could not hold citizenship, as they were “aliens ineligible for citizenship.” Nisei, on the other hand, are the second-generation Japanese; they were American-born citizens and grew up as both culturally Japanese and American. (“Sansei” is the third-generation, to which my parents belong, and “Yonsei” is the fourth-generation that I belong to.)

Throughout my study, when referring to the “camps” that the Japanese Americans were forced into, I only use three terms: relocation, internment, and incarceration. Many of my sources, especially the ones that date back closer to wartime used the term “concentration camp.” This usage is actually technically correct: these were camps to confine an imprisoned population. However, regardless of the technicality, I have made a point to refrain from using that terminology. After the Holocaust, the term “concentration camp” has become synonymous with the Nazi death camps. Although both the Jews and the Japanese were interned solely because of racist and prejudiced beliefs, I refuse to compare the experiences of Japanese internees with the victims of the Holocaust. And
this is why; out of respect for the Holocaust, I refrained from using the term “concentration camp.”
After December 7th, when the United States was “suddenly and deliberately” attacked by the nation of Japan and entered World War II, the US government made the decision to remove all Japanese Americans from the West Coast in the largest mass forced relocation in its history. Although the reasoning behind this evacuation policy was officially “military necessity,” one must consider the real numerable factors that all ultimately contributed to this decision. Prejudice, wartime hysteria, politics and especially fear – fear of sabotage, fear of espionage, fear of fifth column activity – were all instrumental factors responsible for the mass incarceration of both American citizens and their alien parents who, despite long term residence in the United States, were barred by federal law from becoming American citizens.

Roosevelt’s declaration of war inflamed many passions throughout the country, but particularly on the West Coast, where decades of pre-existing fear and prejudice rekindled vicious discrimination against the Japanese. The anti-Asian prejudices of the West Coast, which were particularly heavy in the state of California, initially began as anti-Chinese feelings. The Chinese were the first Asian immigrants to the US and arrived around the same time as the California gold rush of 1849. During the early phases of the economic boom accompanying the gold rush, Chinese labor was needed and welcomed; of course, soon enough the white workingmen began to consider the Chinese as competitors. This economic competition greatly increased after the completion of the trans-continental Union-Central Pacific Railroad in 1869, which had utilized around
10,000 Chinese laborers. Chinese labor was cheap and affordable, implying it was inferior, which only contributed another argument in the white man’s ideology of general Asian inferiority, and became just another point to add to the growing list of American racial prejudices. In 1882, for the first time in its history, laws of strict discrimination began to be legislated against the Chinese at both the state and federal level.

Significant Japanese immigration into the United States did not begin until the late 19th century, around the same time the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. The Issei were the first generation of immigrants, coming primarily from the Japanese countryside, driven from their homes by their nation’s adverse economic conditions. They generally arrived, either in Hawaii or on the West Coast of the mainland, with very little money. Approximately half became farmers, while others went to coastal urban centers and worked in small commercial establishments. Initial Issei occupations were overwhelmingly manual, but the value this group placed in hard work, thrift, respect for education, and social stability instituted a firm foundation for a better economic future.

My Issei great-grandfather, Yasukichi Kawashiri, was one of these immigrants. He came to America with his mother in 1912, at the age of 12, to join his father who had been settled there since 1904. Yasu’s voyage was on a “Kamakura-maru boat,” which was more a cargo ship than a passenger ship, and took a total of 12 days from Yokohama to Seattle. The majority of his fellow passengers were picture brides, who were women from Japan who had been paired up with immigrant worker grooms by a matchmaker using only photographs and family recommendations of possible candidates. During that time, the matchmaking of “mail-order brides” was a commonly practiced Japanese cultural tradition. On arriving in Seattle, Yasu was required to remain there for 18 days in order for officials to check for eye ailments and tapeworms. From Seattle, he took a boat to San Francisco, followed by a train ride to Los Angeles. And then from there he...
traveled to his final destination of White Point, California, to reunite with his father, who worked as a farmer on the Sepulveda Ranch in San Pedro. Yasu’s father worked about 60 acres, farming peas, green beans, squash, cucumber, and tomatoes, and his harvest became the first fresh vegetables shipped from San Pedro to the Los Angeles produce market.¹

Just as most new immigrant groups regularly arrived in America with their own cultural norms and traditions in tow, the Issei brought their foreign customs with them as well. There was a sustaining pride in the Japanese people and their culture, “which honored traditional social values and cohesive group relationships, with particular deference to those in positions of authority and status within the family and the community.”² That, along with the obvious differences of Japanese language and religion, tended to set them apart from the rest of society and promote internal solidarity within the Japanese community; when combined with the hostile nativism of the people of California, the Issei lived in relative isolation from the public and economic life of the West Coast. Ever since the West Coast’s experience with the Chinese immigrants, there existed tenacious anti-Asian prejudices; it did not take long for Anti-Japanese movements to emerge after the first waves of Japanese immigration to the United States.

The Japanese were the logical successors to the Chinese in many fields. Unfortunately the Japanese inherited the hostility faced by the Chinese as well as their jobs. They were of the same race, came from the mysterious Orient, demonstrated fairly similar work habits, spoke an alien language.³

The newly-arrived Japanese quickly became a major focus of California politics in the first decades of the 20th century. Their small numbers and political impotence in conjunction with the racial feelings of many Californians and their deep resentment at the

¹ Yasukichi Kawashiri, Personal History of Yasukichi Kawashiri, Personal memoir, Private family collection.
immigrants’ willingness to labor for low pay, all combined to make the Japanese a convenient target for agitators. The discrimination the Japanese faced existed in a variety of mediums, such as the formation of anti-Japanese organizations, like the Asiatic Exclusion League, attempts at school segregation, consistent denigration by the media, and a growing number of violent attacks upon individuals and businesses. In 1905, the anti-Japanese movement became stronger after Japan’s striking victory over Russia, the first defeat of a Western nation by an Asian nation; Western imperialism and the doctrine of the white man’s burden no longer held supreme dominance over the East, and to many Americans, both the Issei immigrants and the nation of Japan emerged as a new threat.

In May 1905, the San Francisco School Board announced its new policy to remove Japanese students from the regular public schools and send them to the new “Oriental” school so that US-born “children should not be placed in any position where their youthful impressions may be affected by association with pupils of the Mongolian race.”4 Then, on 11 December 1906, under increased public pressure, the school board issued an order barring all Asian children from white primary schools. That blatant act of discrimination on the part of the San Francisco School Board became an issue of international diplomacy. The Japanese government protested this treatment of its citizens and caused serious embarrassment to President Theodore Roosevelt. To maintain good diplomatic relations with Japan, he attempted to negotiate a compromise; he convinced the San Francisco school board to revoke the segregationist order and restrained the California Legislature from passing any future anti-Japanese legislation.5 In 1907, Japan and the US entered into the “Gentleman’s Agreement,” under which Japan agreed not to issue any more workers’ passports valid for the continental United States, and to restrict

4 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 33.
passport issuance to “laborers who have already been in America and to the parents, wives and children of laborers already resident there.” This agreement sharply curtailed Japanese immigration, but did not eliminate it completely.

The persecution of Japanese Americans ferociously increased as the years went by. In 1913, California passed the Alien Land Law, which prohibited the ownership of agricultural land by any “aliens ineligible to citizenship.” In 1920, a harsher Alien Land Act was passed as well, to prohibit leasing and sharecropping for all Issei. Both laws rested on the earlier Asian Exclusion Acts, which legally stated that Asians were aliens ineligible for citizenship. “The law did not permit Orientals to become American citizens, and because they were ineligible to citizenship, they were entitled to fewer rights than other immigrants.” However, some Japanese cleverly found ways around such laws. Yasukichi Kawashiri’s father ran his own farm until World War II by having the land officially leased by a group of Nisei citizens, who owned the lease right. The Kawashiri farm shared its produce with the landowners, running it like an underground sharecropper’s holding (since sharecropping was illegal for Issei as well). It was a mutually beneficial and efficient system, according to Yasu who recalled, “As farmers, we [Japanese] took good care of the land, so the landowners liked them to farm.”

Although the Issei and Nisei generally worked well together, after 1924 a distinct generation gap developed between the two as a side effect of the Immigration Act of 1924, which prohibited any further Japanese immigration. The promise of America was no longer an option for the Japanese.

Farming was the predominant occupation among the Issei, with about half of the Japanese residing in California engaged in agriculture. Agricultural work paid by the

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6 Commission on Wartime Relocation, *Personal Justice*, 34.
7 Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 84.
8 Kawashiri, *Personal History*. 

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piece, which meant that meager incomes at first could be increased by hard work, which was exactly what the Issei did. Their economic advancement was built on hard work, frugality and a disciplined willingness to save and invest.\textsuperscript{9} One of the major elements in the popular protests against the Japanese immigrants was a combination of economic factors and envy. Many of the competing Caucasian farmers were green with envy when they saw that the Issei farmers were becoming successful, especially as they were raising fruits and vegetables in soil that most had considered infertile.

Another underlying feature of anti-Japanese sentiment was increasing fear of Japanese military power. It led to a more militarized version of the general fear of the “Yellow Peril.” After the Russo-Japanese War proved that the Japanese were a force to be reckoned with, rumors began to circulate around California that Japan would organize the wealth and manpower of China to provide and equip armies with the strength to revive the power of Genghis Khan and create a real “yellow peril.” Such rumors said there would be “hordes of Asians overpowering and subjugating a scattered white population strung out along the immense Pacific Coast.”\textsuperscript{10} Now Japan, having shed its out-dated feudal system, was emerging in the East as a reinvented ambitious, authoritarian and imperialist nation, emanating power as the Empire of Japan.

As natives of Japan, the Issei were born into a nation characterized by pride, strong moral convictions, and community cohesiveness that were based on the fundamental themes of family, work, duty and love. The Japanese dedicate themselves to living out their lives in strict adherence to their cultural code and conduct, whose fundamental foundations directly trace back to the ancient Chinese teachings of Confucius. He preached that social order demanded a strict hierarchical structuring of the classes and conformity by all people, who were called upon everywhere “to accept

\textsuperscript{9} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 44.
\textsuperscript{10} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 37.
without question their lots in life and to place highest value in the performance of such duties as filial piety to their parents and loyalty to their overlords.”

Perhaps the most important aspect of Japanese ideology was its emphasis on *giri*, or duty, over feelings, which was the basis of the samurai’s high moral commitment to “duty above all,” and was essential to their code of *bushido*, “the way of the warrior.” Its main concern lay in ideas of honor and loyalty. My own great-grandmother, Momoyo Ogawa, was the adopted daughter of the highly respected samurai, Ryujiro Ogawa, and was therefore raised in a life of high class and privilege. When Momoyo learned about the code of *bushido* as a young child, it made a great impression on her and later came to direct her way of life.

As the Issei immigrated to the United States, early discrimination against the Japanese forced them into segregated living patterns and delayed their cultural assimilation. So the Issei responded by raising their American-born offspring within a distinctly Japanese cultural environment. The Nisei were first taught respect for parents and elders, and then other Japanese virtues such as self-reliance, obligation and hard work. The strict discipline of filial piety, the primary duty of respect, obedience and care for one’s parents and elderly relations, along with *giri* were the most important Japanese cultural norms to respect and honor; obedience and duty were expected of all children, and were taught through observance, not verbal communication. Filial relations in Japan were described in terms of “unambiguous statuses with attached rights and duties.”

Individual choice had little place in Japanese filial relations because duty always took precedence over one’s personal desires and feelings. Priority of duty always

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15 Yanagisako, *Transforming the Past*, 160.
triumphed over individual wishes; emotional restraint and an absence of displays of affection were expected.

The Nisei generation was raised to hold onto and cherish the family, tradition, language, food, and imbedded culture that constituted their Japanese cultural identity. Yet, they were also Americans. The Nisei grew up in a different world than their parents, a world where they lived and identified with a mixed culture that was both Japanese and American. Their lives were largely shaped around the American model, and many came to identify more closely with American values, which greatly contributed to the wide generation gap between the Issei and Nisei. While the Issei had primarily been born and raised in Japan during the Meiji period, when the nation was shifting from an isolated, out-dated feudal system into a modernized state, their Nisei children were born, raised, and educated in the American system, which far surpassed Japan in modernity and economic progress. Because their immigrant parents were aliens, the Nisei were afforded opportunities that were unavailable to their parents. While they were still subject to prejudice and racism in American society, the restricted prospects offered to Japanese Americans in the US still far surpassed the opportunities Japan could have offered. Remarkably, the country of Japan still required the birth of all Japanese boys in the United States to be reported to the Japanese consulate, but not the girls. All boys were required by the Japanese government to be reported so that there would be a record of them in the event that Japan needed to call them for military duty. “But [my great-grandmother Momoyo Ogawa] felt her American born children were better off here…. The boys’ dual citizenship was revoked as their Japanese citizenship was cancelled.”

Although the Issei generation had been decreed “aliens ineligible for citizenship” and

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denied citizenship themselves, they wanted their children to benefit from the bountiful opportunities American citizenship would provide for them.
From Pearl Harbor to Mass Evacuation: A Period of Moderation

“The very ink with which history is written is merely fluid prejudice.” –Mark Twain

December 7 began in the usual way – early morning, blue sky, and the promise of a fine Sunday. Suddenly, without any warning, the peace and silence of morning was shattered by an unexpected wave of low-flying planes bearing the distinct insignia of the Japanese rising sun and America found itself set on a new course through history – one that plunged the nation into a world war and transformed a generation. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor inflicted major loss and damage upon the United States Naval Forces, and delivered to military personnel even greater psychological shock. Young sailors jumped off burning ships, only to struggle in the oil and flames of the waters along Battleship Row. Many were rescued by local Hawaiians who swam out to bring the Americans to shore. One of the rescuers later recalled, “Some were unconscious, some were dead. So I spent the rest of the day swimming inside the harbor, along with some other Hawaiians. I brought out I don’t know how many bodies and how many were alive and how many dead.”

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The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, National Archives. 

That day, the nation suffered one of its worst wartime losses of about 2,340 military personnel and 49 civilians at various locations around Oahu. The greatest loss, 1,177 casualties, was suffered by the USS Arizona alone. The terrible tragedy of Pearl Harbor shocked the general public, and quickly led to feelings of fierce outrage against the Japanese for their violent and unprovoked assault on America. Faced with the real threat of a dangerously aggressive enemy, the nation united in a powerful surge of patriotic solidarity felt throughout the country. “Remember Pearl Harbor!” quickly became America’s new battle cry, to inspire and equip the nation with the sense of readiness and strength required during wartime. It galvanized the country against the enemies of the United States, propelling them into the war on both the European and the Pacific fronts. Pearl Harbor symbolized America’s entry into World War II and became the rallying symbol of American resolve to fight for their victory.

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

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Empire of Japan.” After three difficult years of seeking to avoid conflict and maintain international neutrality, war had become quite unavoidable. Early Sunday morning, 7 December 1941, the Empire of the Rising Sun brought war directly to America’s doorstep. One day later, on 8 December, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his famous “Day of Infamy” speech to the nation. Officially addressing to Congress, Roosevelt sought approval for a declaration of war in his conclusion to the speech: “I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.”

However, the December 7th date destined to live in infamy not only inspired a nationalistic fervor for war, but also set the stage for the prejudiced and controversial decision to intern Japanese Americans. On the eve of Pearl Harbor, the census showed just over 125,000 persons of Japanese birth or ancestry in the continental United States,

20 Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Day of Infamy” speech, December 8, 1941, SEN 77A-H1, Records of the United States Senate; Record Group 46, National Archives.
while another 150,000 lived in the Territory of Hawaii. Of that total, an estimated 40,000 were native-born Japanese immigrant Issei, many of whom had lived, raised their children, and been successfully established in the States for over 25 years. Their Nisei offspring numbered around 70,000, and were predominantly American-born, raised, and educated teenagers and young adults, most of whom were indistinguishable in speech, dress, manner, ideals and attitudes from other Americans of the same age. The census also included one other group of about 70,000 young people known as Kibei, who had been born in America but had received three or more years of education and “indoctrination” in Japan after the age of 13. Later on December 7th, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt immediately issued Presidential Proclamation No. 2525, which declared all Japanese noncitizen Issei as enemy aliens who were liable to restraint. For the Japanese American Nisei, “the attack had suddenly changed our parents into enemy aliens.”

Ironically, despite Presidential Proclamation No. 2525 and after Pearl Harbor, the United States became concerned for the personal safety of the representatives of the Japanese government. It quickly moved to post guards around the consulates:

The State Department pledged full protection for all official Japanese and their establishments in the United States and its territories and at once considered the possibility of exchanging Japanese nationals in the United States, including diplomats and newspaper correspondents, for Americans in Japan.

With approximately 500 Americans in Japan and 5,000 in occupied China at the outbreak of the war, it became vital for the US to secure the safety of the Japanese living in the

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states as means of protection for the Americans who were abroad in either Japan or
China.

After Pearl Harbor, the majority of public opinion took an anti-Japanese track. Many non-Japanese Americans agreed that Japan was their nation’s biggest threat, but the original hostility they directed toward the Empire of Japan tended to turn into hostility against Japanese Americans as well. “Americans had spent a century learning to hate and fear the Japanese, and after the catastrophe of Pearl Harbor they lashed out – half in habit, and half in frustration – at the only available enemy.”26 The weeks that followed December 7th focused on the potential prospects of a West Coast invasion; Californians feared air raids, espionage and sabotage, which they saw as more and more likely. This paranoia produced intense war hysteria, which fueled an alarming atmosphere of fear and panic that “was itself capable of producing a profound public reaction against Japanese nationals and American citizens of Japanese ancestry.”27

One such profound public reaction against the Japanese came from the patriotic organization known as the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West. Through their publication, the Grizzly Bear, they lectured their fellow Californians:

We told you so. Had the warnings been heeded – had the federal and state authorities been “on the alert,” and rigidly enforced the Exclusion Law and the Alien Land Law… had the legislation been enacted denying citizenship to offspring of all aliens ineligible to citizenship… had Japan been denied the privilege of using California as a breeding ground for dual-citizens (Nisei); - the treacherous Japs probably would not have attacked Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, and this country would not today be at war with Japan.28

By assigning the blame for Pearl Harbor and the war to the Japanese Americans, they were able to strengthen their argument for complete Japanese evacuation. In one

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28 Takaki, Double Victory, 146.
particularly vicious call for Japanese removal, the *Los Angeles Times* declared that, “a viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched – so a Japanese American, born of Japanese parents – grows up to be a Japanese, not an American.”

A fierce anti-Japanese sentiment had come to grip the nation as a wartime obsession. The lives of Japanese Americans grew increasingly difficult as they were subject to more and more prejudiced abuse. On the night of December 7th, across the country, Larry Tajiri, a Japanese American newspaperman was walking up Times Square.

We may have been a little ashamed of our faces as we walked through those crowded New York streets on that December night…. We are Americans by every right, birth, education and belief, but our faces are those of the enemy…

In an attempt to prove their loyalty and avoid persecution by the government, many Japanese American families made the heavy decision to part with their significant sentimental and cultural mementos of Japan. They feared that clinging to their Japanese-language books and magazines, as well as family photos and other items of inheritance, would be misunderstood by the American government. Some families decided to bury their ancient and priceless samurai sword heirlooms deep in their backyard, with a sliver of hope that they would still be there after the war. Other families burned other distinctly Japanese items, such as their Buddhist family shrines, ceremonial dolls and Japanese-style clothing.

Another misfortune soon befell the Issei, who could no longer touch their U.S. bank accounts or gain access to any of their money. Following the declaration of war, relations between the United States and Japan had degenerated until their economic relations were completely severed and all alien assets were frozen. Whenever any Nisei needed to visit the bank, they were required to bring their birth certificates as proof of their American citizenship that was not subject to the freeze. Aside from the financial

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29 Takaki, *Double Victory*, 146.
30 Quoted in Girdner, *Great Betrayal*, 3.
problems Issei and Nisei adults faced, painful social barriers sprang up against the
Japanese and primarily affected the youth. One example of the social exclusion Japanese
children faced was illustrated in the memoir of Kay Uno, a little nine-year-old Japanese
girl who was in third grade at the time of Pearl Harbor. She lived six blocks from her
school and would always enjoy her walk there because everybody knew her and always
shouted friendly greetings towards her. But after December 7th, on “Monday, they turned
their backs on me. ‘There goes that little Jap!’ I’m looking around. Who’s a Jap? Who’s a
Jap? Then it dawned on me, I’m the Jap.‘”31 And that was only on her walk to school. At
school, she found that the attack of December 7th had turned her into an object of
prejudice:

After Pearl Harbor, the kids began to shun me. My friends. One person started it,
and then pretty soon it went throughout the school. My classmates were the last
ones to leave me. My teacher and the music teacher were both very supportive all
through the time. When I had to leave, one of them gave me a gift, a gold leaf pin.
It was the first real piece of jewelry I ever had. I still have it.32

Although Kay had lost all her friends because of her race, she was lucky enough to have
kind and supportive teachers who still treated her like a human being, instead of as a
“dirty Jap.”

Fear of Japanese espionage existed in the U.S. well before the war broke out. One
dimension of the fear traces back to the 19th century “yellow peril” scares in Hawaii and
on the West Coast, which originated from fears of being “swamped” by Asian
immigrants.33 The response of Europe and America to a rising Asian power that would
re-order the world from its 19th-century imperialist empires was translated into a fear of
Japanese espionage as the West discovered Japan to be an actual threat. Such fear
culminated in the widespread belief that the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor on 7

32 Inada, Only What We Could Carry, 32.
December 1941 were the inevitable outcome of decades of systematic espionage. In fact, despite widespread pre-war U.S. fears of fifth column sabotage and espionage, such plans had never been in existence – Japanese intelligence agents played absolutely no role in the success of the Japanese offensive on Pearl Harbor. Although espionage could play a crucial role in executing effective military strategy and tactics, and it would seem that it was tactical military intelligence that underpinned Japan’s successful surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Indeed the Japanese had only a few intelligence agents on U.S. soil – and the ones they had were completely useless.

Historian Max Everest-Phillips argues that, “the secret history of facts, fears and fantasies of espionage shaped international ideological tensions and national rivalries between the great powers throughout the twentieth century.” Mere rumors and unreliable assumptions by the West concerning Japanese espionage served as the basis of international relations, and led to the shaping of an Anglo-U.S. security co-operation in Asia and the Pacific. Above all, it created an atmosphere of mutual distrust that ultimately helped lead to the war in 1941.

Western belief in an orchestrated espionage campaign in the inter-war years arose from a dangerous mix of fears, misperceptions and facts known about (both) Japan and the real nature of its limited and fragmented espionage capability. The exaggerated ‘threat perception’ had many roots, from racial prejudice to the new threat to European and American interests in Asia and the Pacific precipitated by Japan’s sudden emergence as a major regional power.

The major threat that the West was anticipating from the Japanese was, in fact, an empty threat that had actually developed from cultural misunderstanding, misperceptions and the never-wavering prejudices the nations had already drawn about each other.

Five years before the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt was already considering the potential imprisonment of certain Japanese aliens and citizens in a

35 Everest-Phillips, “Pre-War,” 244.
concentration camp without due process. On 10 August 1936, Roosevelt wrote a memorandum to the Chief of Naval Operations stating:

One obvious thought occurs to me – that every Japanese citizen or non-citizen on the island of Oahu who meets these Japanese ships or has any connection with their officers or men should be secretly but definitely identified and his or her name placed on a special list of those who would be the first to be placed in a concentration camp in the event of trouble.  

Then, in 1939 while the prospect of war was looming, Roosevelt directed the FBI to begin assembling a list of names identifying all aliens with “suspicious” backgrounds or activities that could be considered especially dangerous in the event of war. Accordingly, after the December 7th attack, the immediate arrests of aliens the FBI believed to be leaders and conspirators began. Most were adult male leaders in their community, who held positions as professionals, businessmen, doctors, and religious leaders. By 9 December, more than 1,200 Issei men had been taken into FBI custody. While the initial roundup included virtually all of the male leadership of the Japanese American community, many were also powerless old men, as well as a couple of hundred elderly veterans.

The few months between Pearl Harbor and the signing of Executive Order 9066, which allowed special military powers, were critical in the decision process for mass evacuation and internment. During this “period of moderation,” a number of government officials were unsure of how to proceed, while others were adamant in their support for Japanese relocation. Ultimately, the decision was made to abandon moderation and seek internment. Under the influences of the “Yellow Fear,” which prompted a great worry about espionage and sabotage, and the issue of loyalty, there was immense popular support by the people of the West Coast for evacuation. Egged on by the media, which had an enormous influence over the general public in encouraging mass hatred for the

36 Takaki, Double Victory, 148.
Japanese, the government leadership decided that evacuation was a precautionary “military necessity.”

As Japan’s victories continued throughout the Pacific, Japanese Americans living in the far-western United States were targeted for suspicion because they lived in an ideal location for communicating with the enemy. Many were convinced that the Japanese Americans would commit acts of sabotage or espionage, as rumors circled the nation about the so-called Fifth Column – an alleged network of Japanese Americans who conspired to aid Japan. This fear of the Fifth Column is documented in the following political cartoon by, of all people, Dr. Seuss, published in early 1942:

![Political cartoon by Dr. Seuss](http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/#ark:bb5222708w)


However, a study conducted by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in 1982 reported, “all of this was done despite the fact that not a single
documented act of espionage, sabotage or fifth column activity was committed by an American citizen of Japanese ancestry or by a resident Japanese alien on the West Coast.” Despite the widespread fear of the Fifth Column, it never actually existed, and not a single case of Japanese disloyalty or sabotage was recorded during the whole war.

The issue of Japanese American loyalty and where their allegiance lay was one of the largest factors in the decision to undertake mass internment. It was hard for the non-Japanese people of America to understand the biculturalism of the Japanese American Nisei. As Americans, their allegiance belonged to their nation, but their racial ties to Japan were exclusively cultural. The Issei felt the same way, because although they were denied citizenship, they had chosen the United States as their home for the past few decades. Yet, the Japanese were still deemed untrustworthy, and it became necessary for all of them to prove their loyalty to the United States of America. In what he believed to be the best compromise, California’s Governor Culbert Olson explained to a group of Japanese American editors,

You know, when I look out at a group of Americans of German or Italian descent, I can tell whether they are loyal or not. I can tell how they think… but it is impossible for me to do this with the inscrutable Orientals, and particularly the Japanese. Therefore, I want all of you present here to pledge yourselves to make a sacrifice for your country, the United States of America. Promise to give up your freedom, if necessary, in order to prove your loyalty.  

In terms of the total mass evacuation and internment of the Japanese, the public lent their popular support for the policy, while Californians were the most in favor of drastic action. Early in 1942, the Golden State’s entire congressional delegation, along with delegations from Oregon and Washington, began to lobby the federal government to take action against the Japanese Americans in their midst. “Most of this furor was inspired by patriotic panic seasoned by California’s long anti-Asian tradition and inter-

37 Takaki, Double Victory, 137.
ethnic animosity.” By January and early February 1942, key agricultural associations, business organizations, service clubs, and patriotic fraternities – motivated by racism, patriotism, military necessity, and economic greed – urged dire action.

A stronghold of anti-Japanese American sentiment was Californian agriculture businesses, for whom “the Oriental had long been an enemy in the eyes of many Californians.” By 1940, the Japanese were producing 10 percent of the value of California farm products, which, in turn, led to an aggressive response from the non-Japanese farmers. Farmers groups wanted to get rid of their competition and steal the valuable farmland from the Japanese by pushing hard for Japanese evacuation. They did not even attempt to hide their greedy intentions from the public as they campaigned for their cause. For instance, the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association admitted such in the *Saturday Evening Post*:

> We’ve been charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons. We might as well be honest. We do. It’s a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown man. They came into this valley to work, and they stayed to take over… If all the Japs were removed tomorrow, we’d never miss them in two weeks, because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows.

Greed and envy were the primary factors pushing agricultural producers to lobby for internment.

All of these factors, assisted by the heavy influence of the media, were instrumental in shaping minds and actions of the internment policy makers. General John L. DeWitt, Commander of the Western Defense Command and Fourth U.S. Army, was one of the key individuals involved in the decision for internment, and his ultimate recommendation for internment led to the issuing of Executive Order 9066. However,

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41 Takaki, *Double Victory*, 146-147.
DeWitt blew hot and cold in his stance on internment. One day he would give assurances that there was little threat of espionage or sabotage. The next he would be demanding the removal of all enemy aliens from his command. In early December 1941, he opposed the mass internment of Japanese Americans because, “an American citizen, after all, is an American citizen. And while they all may not be loyal, I think we can weed the disloyal out [from the] loyal and lock them up if necessary.” Yet, at a press conference about a year later, DeWitt infamously proclaimed “a Jap is a Jap, and it makes no difference if he is an American citizen.” Although he originally opposed mass internment, rising public opinion for Japanese removal and encouragement by other government and military officials who believed loyalty to be bound with ethnic identity turned DeWitt in support of internment.

Various government and military investigations were also conducted at this time to determine how dangerous the Japanese Americans actually were. The reports all seemed to draw the same general conclusion: that Japanese Americans as a group posed no threat. In a report submitted on 7 November 1941, exactly one month before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Curtis B. Munson, the State Department representative sent by Roosevelt to the West Coast, concluded:

[T]here is no Japanese “problem” on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese [in this country]… For the most part the local Japanese are loyal to the U.S. or, at worst, hope that by remaining quiet they can avoid concentration camps or irresponsible mobs. We do not believe that they would be at least any more disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with whom we are at war.

Following the attack, in late January 1942, the Office of Naval Investigation estimated that only about 3,500 Japanese were potential military threats and stated that there was no

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44 Takaki, *Double Victory*, 144.
need for mass action to be taken against the Japanese.\textsuperscript{45} They found that the large majority of Japanese were at least passively loyal to the United States, a view summed up by Lieutenant Commander Kenneth Ringle of the Office of Naval Investigation this way:

First, the West Coast Japanese were... increasingly Americanized and, like most immigrant groups, believed intensely in the United States and its vision of a better life. Second, in spite of their eagerness to be identified as Americans and their record of industry and responsibility, the Japanese on the West Coast were continually subjected to every sort of discrimination – discrimination as brutal and mindless as anything the South ever inflicted on the Negro.\textsuperscript{46}

Yet another investigation took place in January 1942, when the Justice Department caved into military pressure and agreed to stricter controls on enemy aliens – including spot raids on their homes. The FBI raided homes of Japanese residents, questioned them about their loyalty and searched for forbidden items. Attorney General Biddle reported the results of these raids to the president:

\textit{We have not uncovered through these searches any dangerous persons that we could not otherwise know about. We have not found... any evidence that any [dynamite or gunpowder] was to be used in bombs... nor have we found any gun in any circumstances indicating that it was to be used in a manner helpful to our enemies. We have not found a camera which we have reason to believe was for use in espionage.}\textsuperscript{47}

The investigations conducted in relation to potentially dangerous and disloyal Japanese Americans consistently concluded in groundless results, yet all of these were ignored by both military and government officials who continued to pursue an aggressive policy of relocation.

Even with the countless pieces of evidence suggesting Japanese American innocence and loyalty, political leaders, public opinion and the media worked together to turn the general public of America against the Japanese and to call for their removal.

\textsuperscript{45} Takaki, \textit{Double Victory}, 145. \\
During wartime in an American democracy, the safest approach for the government to take, in order to avoid upsetting the public and inciting protest, was to follow the strong theme of public opinion, while the military presented Japanese removal as a defense measure, a means to ensure the country’s protection. The media was very active in manipulating public sentiment. The *San Francisco Chronicle* was especially active in dehumanizing the Japanese through the articles of slander against them that it published. In an article bearing the provocative title “Japanazis or Japaryans,” published on 7 January 1942, the *Chronicle* denounced the Japanese by “clarifying” the racial distinction between the Chinese and Japanese and by comparing the Japanese to Hitler’s Nazis:

> Our Chinese friends dislike to hear the Japanese referred to as “yellow”… They think of the word in its racial significance and remember that the yellow or Mongolian race includes many other peoples than the Japanese…. The point is well taken. And we do the Japanese to much honor by using for them a term which has been made honorable by the Chinese. Call them Japanazis if you please, or better still, Japaryans. That puts them where they belong, in Hitler’s pocket, but call them nothing that puts them in association with the honorable peoples of the yellow race.\(^48\)

Categorizing the Japanese together with the brutal Nazis, transformed them into another class of enemy figures intended to instill fear and terror into the hearts of the American public.

One month later, on 21 February 1942, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published another article entitled “Facts Force America To Stop Pussyfooting.” It said its purpose was to get the public to realize that during wartime, in the fight for survival, it can be necessary to temporarily disregard civil rights for the greater good of country.

The conclusion has been forced that whatever the personal exceptions, and there must be many, Japanese loyalty is primarily to Japan. We do not regard this as a reason to hate Japanese persons, foreign born or of immigrant extraction, who are among us. We would consider it nothing reprehensible if Americans born in Japan and who spent their lives there, and there are many such, remained at heart faithful to the United States in a war to the death…. It is a principle that persons

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\(^{48}\) Inada, *Only What We Could Carry*, 15-16.
of Japanese blood who are loyal to the United States and its ideal can show that loyalty by recognizing necessity. This is a fight for survival. In this fight we cannot pussyfoot. We have to be tough, even if civil rights do take a beating for a time.\textsuperscript{49}

This article was clearly intended as a call to nationalism, especially with its odd notion that acceptance of internment would be a way for the Japanese Americans to prove their loyalty to the United States.

Walter Lippmann of the \textit{New York Herald-Tribune} was another influential voice behind the anti-Japanese American movement. He favored evacuation for reasons of military defense and protection because he believed that the West Coast was a dangerous combat zone:

\ldots the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and from without… It is [true]\ldots that since the outbreak of the Japanese war there has been no important sabotage on the Pacific coast. From what we know about the fifth-column in Europe, this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect… I am sure I understand fully and appreciate thoroughly the unwillingness of Washington to adopt a policy of mass evacuation and internment of all those who are technically enemy aliens. But I submit that Washington is not defining the problem on the Pacific coast correctly… The Pacific coast is officially a combat zone: some part of it may at any moment be a battlefield. Nobody’s constitutional rights include the right to reside and do business on a battlefield. And nobody ought to be on a battlefield who has no good reason for being there.\textsuperscript{50}

Lippmann put forth the same argument used by DeWitt and other policy makers, that the lack of evidence against Japanese espionage only proved that a certain type of well-constructed and efficient sabotage was waiting in the shadows. The fact that absolutely no indication of Japanese sabotage was discovered did not clear the Japanese Americans of any suspicion; instead, it was a sign of the hidden and meticulously organized attack that would inevitably come. Lippmann also argued that the West Coast was already a combat zone, which allowed him to argue for Japanese evacuation in terms of military defense and protection because he believed that the West Coast was a dangerous combat zone:

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\textsuperscript{49} Inada, \textit{Only What We Could Carry}, 22-23.
\textsuperscript{50} Arrington, \textit{Price of Prejudice}, 4.
defense preparedness. He emphasized that nobody had any reason for being on a battlefield if they had no good reason for being there, especially the suspicious and untrustworthy Japanese Americans.

The fear and uncertainty that began on December 7th was fueled further by pressure groups and racism, as well as by Japanese military victories in the Pacific. All of this heated public opinion, as did the media’s crusade against the Japanese Americans during the period of moderation. All these forces came together to work towards a sudden reversal of government policy. The decision to intern Japanese Americans, which came in mid-February, represented the failure of the government to adhere to civil liberties, to recognize and acknowledge the surmountable evidence in support of Japanese innocence, and to deter the control and influence of the media upon the public in dealing with such controversial matters of state.
“Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry”: The Evacuation

“The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.” – Jackie Robinson

On 19 February 1942, the “period of moderation” officially came to an end. On this historic date, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed and issued a US presidential executive order that authorized the Secretary of War to prescribe certain areas as military zones. Although the Executive Order was carefully composed as a generalization, and no specific mention of the Japanese was included in the document, it was issued at a time where the loyalties of all Japanese Americans were being questioned and the leaders of the nation were seriously considering pursuing a policy of Japanese mass evacuation. The target group of Executive Order 9066 was clearly the Japanese Americans, and, consequently, it was the first legal document issued by the government to clear the way for the mass deportation of the Japanese to relocation centers. 51

On 2 March 1942, General DeWitt issued Public Proclamation No. 1, announcing the creation of Military Areas No. 1 and No. 2 as a matter of military necessity. The two designated military areas covered the states of Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona; within these areas were a number of further divisions of smaller local zones. In the press statement released by DeWitt on Public Proclamation No. 1, the general announced that the Japanese – both alien and citizen – would be the first group evacuated; only after all the Japanese were gone would the Germans and Italians then be evacuated as well. By formally declaring this first Proclamation as law, the US

51 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 84.
government had taken its first step in enforcing its policy mass evacuation and relocation.52

Merely two weeks after Public Proclamation No. 1, DeWitt had already begun to usher the first act of civilian exclusion into motion. On 24 March 1942, Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1 of the Western Defense Command announced that he had commanded the following:

all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens, 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 1942.53

The island’s residents were allotted a mere six days to make arrangements and prepare to leave home for an undetermined length of time. On the morning of 30 March 1942, large army trucks lumbered up Island driveways to pick up family groups and transport them to the ferry “Kehloken,” which would then sail to Seattle and deliver them to a waiting

52 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 100-101.
train. At the Seattle waterfront, hundreds of people crowded onto the ferry terminal’s overpass to witness the Japanese Islanders exit the ferry and be led to the waiting train. For many of the deportees, this was one of the most humiliating experiences they had ever been subjected to. As the initial site of wartime evacuation, Bainbridge Island had become the first place where relocation was successfully executed. The Japanese American internment had begun.\textsuperscript{54}

After the Bainbridge Island exodus, DeWitt’s Civilian Exclusion Orders began to appear overnight on electric and telephone poles or placed in windows of public buildings throughout the West Coast. Generally, the Japanese were compliant and cooperative in following the rules and regulations spelled out by the Evacuation Instructions. It was common practice for most adults when they first received the shocking news of evacuation to react with the utmost practicality. An example of such can be seen in the seamlessly illustrated opening scene of Julie Otsuka’s novel, \textit{When The Emperor Was Divine}. The Mother character discovers a sign when out on an errand, approaches it, reads and examines it from top to bottom, and then proceeds to take out a pen and piece of scrap paper in order to takes notes on what she needed to do.\textsuperscript{55} The glaring information in the evacuation notices was usually not taken as seriously by the children as it was by the “grown-ups” of their neighborhood and community. Usually, some of the older children would read the instructions to the younger ones, who did not understand the “big words” used in the text. In a 1998 interview recorded by the Densho Visual History Collection, Fumiko Uyeda Groves recalled the explanation of the evacuation order she was given by an older member of her neighborhood:

Well, first of all one of the first things that was read to me was a curfew that we had to be in, we couldn’t be wandering around in the streets after [eight].

Something like that. And then the other one was the evacuation. And those are two that were posted on the telephone poles. I remember that. And it all kind of happened very quickly. And so as soon as they were posted then people started either selling their, selling the goods out of their homes or trying to think of places to put their belongings because then it said that we would not be allowed, we’d only be able to carry one suitcase or something like that.56

The household – a family or a person living alone – became the basic unit by which the Army organized the evacuees. One of the pertinent points highlighted by the evacuation notices was the instruction to all evacuees to send “a responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone”57 to the local civil control station. There, they were issued tags bearing their family number to be attached to each individual and to every piece of luggage in the family group. Although the evacuees were instructed to bring only what they could carry, they were ordered to carry with them bedding and linen for each member of the family, toilet articles, extra clothing, sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls, and cups for every member of the family.58

In an October 2006 interview for the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection, ex-evacuee Matsue Watanabe recounted her memories of registering as a young girl with her family for mass removal. Before the exclusion order, the FBI had already taken and locked away Watanabe’s father away, leaving her mother with no choice but to assume responsibility as the head of the family. When asked about that day her entire family went down to the local civil control station, Watanabe provided a brief description:

Well, I, I do remember we had to go down to the Anderson Hardware and sign up for, for our numbers and, as a family. And, so we did do that. And there’s, of course a big sign up, up there telling us that that’s what we’re supposed to do.

58 Girdner, Great Betrayal, 135.
And, and I suppose we came home with those little tags that we were to wear when we were taken away. But I just remember that building. And of course I’m accustomed to that building ‘cause the grocery store was right next to it. And we used to go into both the grocery store and Anderson Hardware and also the dry goods store which was across the street from there. So, that whole area is very familiar to me because I was the one that had to do the grocery shopping.  

During the evacuation process, an enormous problem presented itself to the government in the form of handling evacuee property. Problems of property disposal and protection prompted some of the most serious hardship faced by the Japanese, and would continue to haunt both the evacuees and the federal government for years to come. At the beginning of evacuation, some Japanese presumed that upon proper notice the government would pay the transportation costs of their personal belongings and equipment to the point of relocation. However, no official announcement was ever issued, and the government even received word from the Federal Reserve Bank that no such transportation costs would ever be paid. As a result, it appeared that the tactless United States government left the already unfortunate evacuees to deal with the relocation policy’s resulting property issues and complications by themselves.

One of the major issues resulting from the strict regulations laid out by the evacuation policy was a serious number of losses in home, property, and possessions. Because the Japanese could only take what they could carry, they had to sell most of their personal and sentimental possessions. In the six days of preparation provided to them by the government, they had to part ways with items such as their family china and mementos, refrigerators, cars, furniture, radios, pianos, farms and houses. One evacuee recounted:

It is difficult to describe the feeling of despair and humiliation experienced by all of us as we watched the Caucasians coming to look over our possessions and offering such nominal amounts knowing we had no recourse but to accept

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whatever they were offering because we did not know what the future held for us. 61

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston’s autobiographical memoir, *Farewell To Manzanar*, described the secondhand dealers as “wolves” who had been “prowling around for weeks… offering humiliating prices for goods and furniture they knew many of us would have to sell sooner or later.” 62 On the day her family was leaving, one of the sleazy dealers approached Jeanne’s mother with an offer of fifteen dollars for a china set worth at least two hundred. She glared at the man with all her frustration and rage, and without a single word, she took out a dinner plate and hurled it to the ground right in front of his feet. While the man shouted at her about the value of her expensive dishes, “Mama took out another dinner plate and hurled it at the floor, then another and another, never moving, never opening her mouth, just quivering and glaring at the retreating dealer, with tears streaming down her cheeks.” 63 Instead of succumbing to humiliation by desperately agreeing to a cheap little sum of money, Jeanne’s mother honored her pride by smashing her valuable china at the dealer’s feet. It was considered more honorable for the dishes to lay in pieces than in the hands of an unscrupulous merchant.

Fortunately, not all Japanese American evacuees were faced with the same awful fate as Jeanne and her mother regarding their property. A number of non-Japanese remained close friends and kindhearted neighbors to the Japanese throughout the war, and voluntarily worked hard to keep, maintain and preserve their friends’ belongings and property while they were away at camp. Houses were watched, possessions were safeguarded, and crops and fields were harvested – a sign that not all white Americans were filled with deep anti-Japanese sentiment. Perhaps one of the greatest Good

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Samaritan examples was the idealistic young married couple from Bainbridge Island who owned the local newspaper and served as its coeditors and copublishers. Together, Walt and Milly Woodward spoke out against the exclusion and created a means through the printed word for the segregated Bainbridge Island internees to keep in touch with their community. Throughout the war, the Woodwards watched over the possessions of their Japanese friends and continued to speak out against the constitutional violations of the relocation policy. In fact, the local Bainbridge Review was nationally singled out as the lone newspaper to take such a stand. Because of the Woodwards’ indomitable efforts, many former internees chose to return to Bainbridge Island, and at a higher rate than was the case in most other communities. Walt Woodward, in a letter to his friend, Paul Ohtaki, wrote, “when this mess is all over, you people are going to want to come home. You’ll be welcomed with open arms by the vast majority of us.” Later, Paul penned his reflections into an essay, and concluded, “while we were making our plans for the evacuation…the Woodwards were…making plans [to] smooth our return home.”

You see, when American citizens of Japanese ancestry did return to their homes, many of them had to face flaming crosses at night, burned barns and ugly “No Japs Wanted Here” signs. None of that occurred on Bainbridge Island. Our Nisei came home to quiet welcomes and, as we all know, now are respected and integrated members of our community. So that certificate – and the American flag – belong to all our fellow Islanders.

After the six hectic, chaotic and stress-filled days of preparation, the Japanese finally faced the dreaded arrival of “Evacuation Day.” On each appointed “evacuation day,” thousands of Japanese Americans gathered at designated locations, with the numbered identification tags they had been issued tied to their coats and luggage. In full view of the on-looking eyes of the curious non-Japanese public, they were met by armed

soldiers and transported in buses, private cars, and trains to sixteen temporary “assembly centers” throughout the states of California, Washington, Oregon and Arizona. Frank Miyamoto described how he felt on his “evacuation day,” from Seattle to the assembly center known as “Camp Harmony” at the Puyallup Fairgrounds. He said the evacuees felt that they were being herded like cattle and were being dispossessed.

People were asked, well, required to assemble at certain places where they would be moved onto busses and so on. You’ve seen all these pictures of people, the evacuees, getting on busses to be shipped out of their community…. And it was kind of a feeling of people being… that we were cattle being herded together, to be herded out of the community. It was a feeling of – a very distressing feeling – of being forced out of our home, forced out of what was our due rights, to ship onto via busses, to God knows where. We didn’t know where we were going, what we were gonna’ have…. We were told we were being sent to Puyallup, but Puyallup was known simply as the fairground, we had no clear sense of what would be, what would meet us there. So the attitude I believe was one of… That point at which we were loaded on busses and shipped out, I think that was one of the worse points of our experience for us, in that we got the sense of being, as I say, herded like cattle out of our homes and where we felt we had a right to be.

Yet, not all evacuation experiences were as painful. Frank Yamasaki was a teenager at the time of evacuation and was able to discern the irony and dark humor of the entire situation. He described his “evacuation day” from a different and more paradoxical perspective:

There was a bus waiting there and they had military people in uniform and it was kind of ironical that when we got there, they were, we were just a few blocks away, so we just walked there and carried a suitcase – and it was almost like going out to a picnic. Everybody was dressed in their Sunday best. After all, either you wear your clothes or you throw it away. So they had their very best clothes on, and of course, all of a sudden you’re seeing all your friends and all your neighbors…. [With] everybody greeting each other and there was even laughter, and here we’re on the way to be incarcerated.

Generally, adults feared the uncertainty of “evacuation day,” facing it with more anxiety and terror, while teenagers were able to create a more humorous situation.

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68 Frank Yamasaki, Interview by Lori Hoshino (primary) and Stephen Fugita, Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Lake Forest Park, WA, August 18 1997.
Children innocently living in their perfect little worlds of ignorant bliss were not able to grasp the mature nature of the discrimination and evacuation they were being submitted to; they either cried or believed they were embarking on an exciting adventure. For Sumie Suguro Akizuki, a young Japanese American girl from the city of Bellevue, Washington, the train ride that her family took to their assembly center was a marvelous and special journey. She had always wished that someday she would get to ride a train.

I looked up in awe as our school bus took us under the picturesque, historic railroad trestle each day. The irony is that my wish came true on May 20, 1942. The coal-driven locomotive, carrying all of the Japanese families from the East side of Lake Washington, crossed the trestle en route to our incarceration site.\(^{69}\)

Nobody on the train had any idea where they were going, and the men in charge refused to reveal their location. The journey took four days because they only travelled at night; during the day their train was put on sidetracks with the shades pulled down. They had absolutely no idea where they were until they finally arrived in central California at the Pinedale Assembly Center. Sumie was filled with disappointment at her destination, “What seemed like an adventure was not at all like I thought it would be. It was a time of sadness and uncertainty.”\(^{70}\)

The children’s picture book by Yoshiko Uchida, *The Bracelet*, illustrates the entire evacuation experience through the eyes of the protagonist, a second-grade girl named Emi. On her “evacuation day,” Emi was old enough to understand that she was not being sent away on an adventure, and instead was terribly frightened. While waiting for the buses to take them away, Emi’s stomach jumped up and down. She wondered if everybody else was as scared as she was, especially of the armed soldiers assigned to guard the evacuees. “When she saw soldiers carrying guns with bayonets standing at


every doorway, she was so scared her knees began to wobble.”71 She was mature enough to understand the irreversible danger that guns represented and feared that the guards would shoot anyone attempting any kind of escape.

Although many children were alarmed by the armed guards surrounding them, there were occasional moments of goodwill between the soldiers and their child prisoners. Conceivably, the most notable experience was during the first evacuation from Bainbridge Island. Although quite young at the time, Frank Kitamoto was able to recall some memories of that day in an interview for the Densho Visual History Collection:

But he [Frank] said by end, by the end of the time when they were marching us down from the dock to the ferry, he said most of the soldiers were crying… that they had tears in their eyes, and they were carrying kids. You can tell from the pictures they were carrying kids, because a lot of the mothers didn’t have fathers, their husbands with them, they were actually carrying the luggage and stuff for the kids down there. And some of the people who were in their early twenties and late teens at that time said that the soldiers actually, all the way down to California, actually led the group on the train in songs.72

However, not all soldiers had the same bonding experiences with the Japanese American evacuees; kindness was a rare commodity. When Joseph Frisino, an old soldier assigned to guard the internment camps, was interviewed in 2000, he admitted that both he and the other soldiers yearned to shoot the Japanese Americans while ushering them into the camps.

Here was a chance to maybe get into some action against some of these rotten people who have done this. But nothing really untoward happened. It was simply a matter of escorting these people in, but this one, one fellow was saying that he was, he was manning a machine gun on the, on the armored scout car, and was he saying, “I was just watching these people like a hawk, just hoping somebody would do something ‘cause I could fire.” And I mean, he was really gung-ho to fire into these people. And, when he said this, I had no feeling whatsoever of, “Why would you want to do that,” or anything. It just seemed, “Okay, that’s a, that’s a natural way to go, that, you want to hate somebody, if you want to have some revenge, why, this is the way to do it.” But it never, fortunately never happened. But I never, I never realized then that, the background of these, of these

people who were in these trucks. I mean, the Japanese Americans who were in the trucks. So that was my only encounter with that transportation situation. I’m certain that there wasn’t a man in the outfit who didn’t feel exactly like that fellow who was manning the machine gun, that given a chance, they’re gonna fire.  

Rarely do studies of the Japanese American evacuation focus on the experiences of the soldiers assigned to guard the Japanese Americans in both the assembly centers and relocation centers. It may be that such reports are scarce because some of these men had violent thoughts of shooting the internees, regardless of their innocence or not. Why had the United States government made the decision to incarcerate over 110,000 innocent Japanese lives by reason of military necessity? They must be the enemy! It was a time of war.

In 1942, a brochure titled “Questions and Answers for Evacuees: Information Regarding the Relocation Program,” was issued by the War Relocation Authority to provide information clarifying the Evacuation and Relocation policy. Through a list of 71 questions posed in the Q&A format, the WRA addressed every potential question it believed an evacuee could come up with while preparing for relocation. The first page of questions presents the opening topic, “Preparing For Relocation,” and begins with Question 1, “When I am evacuated, where will I go?”

Answer: You will, most likely, first go to an Assembly Center, a temporary stopping place where you and your family will be provided with food, shelter, medical care, and protection until you leave for a Relocation Center, at which there will be permanent housing, work opportunities, educational facilities, and other essentials of a normal community. (In some areas evacuees will go directly from their homes to Relocation Centers.)

A common misconception of those unfamiliar with the entire Japanese American internment experience is that the Japanese Americans were rounded up and immediately

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73 Joseph Frisino, Interview by Jenna Brostrom (primary) and Stephen Fugita (secondary), Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Seattle, WA, June 20-21, 2000.

sent off to the internment camps. This is not true, for the relocation centers were far from ready when the civilian exclusion orders were issued and the people were rounded up. Relocation centers required some time for preparation and construction, and could not be accomplished as quickly as evacuation. Therefore, accommodations quickly had to be found to serve as temporary quarters while the longer-term settlements were being prepared. This was how the temporary, hastily contrived assembly centers came into existence.

On the final page of the WRA’s “Questions and Answers for Evacuees” pamphlet was a list of definitions to “keep in mind.” The first two seek to make the clear distinction between an “Assembly Center” and a “Relocation Center.” The WRA-approved definition given for “Assembly Center” was “a convenient gathering point, within the military area, where evacuees live temporarily while awaiting the opportunity for orderly, planned movement to a Relocation Center outside of the military area.”75 In contrast, the WRA defined a “Relocation Center” as “a pioneer community, with basic housing and protective services provided by the Federal Government, for occupancy by evacuees for the duration of the war.”76 Another definition included to “keep in mind,” was the term “Relocation Area,” which was “the entire area surrounding a Relocation Center, under the jurisdiction of the War Relocation Authority. The relocation lands are Federally owned, are designed as military areas, and are protected by military police.”77

75 War Relocation Authority, “Questions and Answers.”
76 War Relocation Authority, “Questions and Answers.”
77 War Relocation Authority, “Questions and Answers.”
As early as 1942, General DeWitt stated that the “Assembly Center site selection was a task of relative simplicity,” and outlined what he believed to be its four fundamental requirements. First, it was necessary to locate “adaptable pre-existing facilities suitable for the establishment of shelter and the many needed community services.” Second, as there was no time for a long pre-development period, power, light, and water had to be within immediate availability. Third, the distance from the Center of to the evacuee population had to be short, the connecting road and rail net good, and the

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78 Commission of Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 105.
potential capacity sufficient to accept the adjacent evacuee group. Finally, it was essential that there be “some area within the enclosure for recreation and allied activities as the necessary confinement would otherwise have been completely demoralizing.”

Sixteen temporary assembly centers were hastily erected as living quarters, located throughout the West Coast in Washington, Oregon, Arizona and California. All were furnished with barbed-wire fences, guard towers and searchlights.

Eleven of the assembly centers were at racetracks or fairgrounds. Other places chosen included the Pacific International Livestock Exposition Facilities (Portland, Oregon), a former mill site (Pinedale, California), migrant worker camps (Marysville and Sacramento, California), and an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps Camp (Mayer, Arizona). Living conditions at the assembly centers were chaotic and squalid, especially as they were supplemented with army barracks. These barracks were originally designed for temporary use by combat soldiers, not large families with small children or elderly people. At the racetracks, stables had been hastily cleaned out before their use as living quarters, but the stench still remained. One former occupant recalled how,

those stables just reeked. There was nothing you could do. The amount of lye they threw on it to clear the odor and stuff, it didn’t help. It still reeked of urine and horse manure. It was so disgusting for people to live in those conditions. It’s almost as if you’re not talking about the way Americans treated Americans.

Families were crowded into small quarters, usually only 20 ft by 20 ft. Privacy at the assembly centers was next to non-existent, as there were only communal lavatories and mess halls and thin walls in the barracks. As if those appalling conditions were not enough, there were also frequent shortages of food and other material. An appalling and disgusting lack of sanitation was another common feature that characterized these temporary WRA-approved “convenient gathering points.”

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79 Commission of Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 105-6.
80 Burton, Confinement.
81 Inada, Only What We Could Carry, 70.
Fortunately for the evacuees, it only took a few months to finish constructing the relocation centers. Once the Japanese Americans were finally freed of the deplorable conditions of the assembly centers, they no longer had to suffer through the abysmal extent of disgusting and inhumane conditions that their temporary stay at an assembly center provided them with. Although the relocation centers were far from hospitable, they were not of such low quality as the conditions at the assembly centers; in terms of health code violations, the evacuees had left the worst behind them. The Japanese endured the frustrations and inconveniences of the assembly centers for the most part peacefully and stoically because they knew those centers were only temporary and hoped for better treatment at their next location. The inherently traditional traits of strict discipline and quiet endurance were not only greatly honored by the Japanese, but were also used as a means for coping with their unfortunate situation.
Relocation, Internment, Confinement, Incarceration

“I spent my boyhood behind the barbed wire fences of American internment camps and that part of my life is something that I wanted to share with more people.

-George Takei

On 18 March 1942, President Roosevelt took a major step toward systematizing evacuation by signing Executive Order 9102 into law. This executive order established the War Relocation Authority (WRA); a civilian agency intended to supervise the evacuees after their departure from Army assembly centers.\textsuperscript{82} The WRA had been created with the purpose to “formulate and effectuate a program for the removal, from [designated areas] of the persons or classes of persons designated…and for their relocation, maintenance, and supervision.”\textsuperscript{83} Its responsibility was to carry out the long-range job of resettling or re-establishing the evacuated people and it initiated plans for establishing relocation centers “with sufficient capacity and facilities to handle the entire evacuated population for as long as might be necessary.”\textsuperscript{84} Once the evacuees stepped off the buses from the assembly centers, they left Army jurisdiction and came into the custody of this new agency, the War Relocation Authority.

In 1942, the War Relocation Authority published a booklet for its new employees and potential recruits, entitled “Your Job in WRA.” It opened with an idealized introduction of itself: “In joining the WRA, you have enlisted your services in an organization of men and women working toward the solution of a war problem unique in

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\textsuperscript{82} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 107.
\textsuperscript{83} Commission on Wartime, \textit{Personal Justice}, 152.
\end{flushright}
the history of America.”85 It introduced itself as a great and noble organization of people working together to solve a problem. Despite describing itself as a government agency that has been “almost constantly on the battle front of public opinion since it was organized in the spring of 1942,”86 the WRA took a gentle and tolerant approach to the Japanese American relocation problem at hand. Instead of speaking of the dangers presented by the Japanese Americans in the way the Army had, the WRA presented itself as a benevolent organization:

The War Relocation Authority was established primarily to relocate the people of Japanese descent – both citizen and alien – who were compelled by the exigencies of war to move from their homes in the Pacific Coast region during the spring of 1942.87

Through the organization’s distribution of this booklet and several other official publications over the war, the WRA offered the general public a positively constructed picture (with a slight propagandist nature) of the Japanese American relocation.

Much can be discovered through the documents of the WRA. In 1942, the agency distributed a restricted internal document “Prepared for Information of the Staff of the War Relocation Authority” to provide the “background for the relocation program” to its personnel. The document stated the fundamental policies and protocols of the organization in a calm and sympathetic voice. It described the WRA’s three major functions, with respect to the evacuees of Japanese ancestry as follows:

(1) To provide them with an equitable substitute for the lives and homes given up; (2) to reestablish them as a productive segment of the American population; and (3) to facilitate their re-assimilation into the normal currents of American life.88

The stated aim of the WRA was to make life at the relocation centers as close to the standard American view of normal as wartime exigencies would permit. All WRA staff

86 War Relocation Authority, Your Job, 3.
87 War Relocation Authority, Your Job, 3.
and personnel were expected to adhere to the policy that “cooperation, and not paternalism,” were to be the guiding principles of all relationships between staff members and the relocated people. The War Relocation Authority put great emphasis on the notion that “in every way, the evacuees should be made to feel that it is their community and that its ultimate success or failure depends largely on their efforts.” However, “their” communities were to be organized in the accepted American style, and would subtly begin the Americanization of the Japanese internees.

One of the major functions of the War Relocation Authority was to re-assimilate the evacuees into American life. A set of regulations were established to allow the release of selected internees from the camps under controlled conditions, so as to re-establish as many of the evacuees as possible into a private American life outside the relocation centers. The regulations for early release came into effect on 1 October 1942, although they were most widely used in 1943 and especially in 1944. Considering the future of the Japanese Americans in a post-war period, the WRA aimed for their dispersion.

If the American Japanese people are over to assume their rightful place in our national life, free of discriminations and animosities, an effort must be made during the war to prevent the formation of “Little Tokyos” in the future. Because of the widespread public apprehension toward all people of Japanese ancestry at that time, it was necessary for the relocation of individual evacuees to proceed slowly and without attracting any publicity. Within the limits of national security and administrative convenience, the WRA worked through the war toward achieving the gradual emptying of relocation centers and the dispersal of those evacuees about whom there was no question of loyalty. The War Relocation Authority insisted that relocation centers should not be regarded as places of detention or confinement, but as “way-stations on the road to

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89 War Relocation Authority, “Background,” 10.
90 War Relocation Authority, “Background,” 10.
91 War Relocation Authority, “Background,” 11.
individual relocation and re-assimilation into American life.”\(^{92}\) The WRA was determined to use the camps as a tool for the integration of Japanese Americans into American society.

The relocation centers were designed to be self-contained American communities, complete with hospitals, post offices, schools, warehouses, offices, factories and residential areas, although also surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers. As the centers were intended to be as self-sufficient as possible, the residential core was surrounded by a large buffer zone that also served as farmland. The Military Police (MPs) had a separate living area adjacent to the relocation center in order to reduce fraternization. Civilian employees also had separate living quarters available to them at the camps as well. The layout of the ten relocation centers varied, but the major elements were all fairly consistent: in each, the perimeter was guarded by guard towers and barbed wire fences, there was generally a main entrance leading to the local highway and auxiliary routes to farming areas outside the central core.\(^ {93}\)

The relocation centers were located in isolated areas, most in deserts or swamps, primarily on unused or underutilized federal lands. All were in sparsely populated areas, which actually made them some of the largest “communities” in their respective states. The Tule Lake Relocation Center in California, the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho and the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming were all located on undeveloped federal reclamation projects. Both the Jerome and Rohwer Relocation Centers in Arkansas were partially on land meant for subsistence homesteads under the Farm Security Administration. The Colorado River (Poston) and Gila River Relocation Centers in Arizona were both on Indian Reservations and opposed by the Tribal Councils on the grounds that they did not want to participate in inflicting the same type of injustice as

\(^{92}\) War Relocation Authority, “Background,” 11.

\(^{93}\) Burton, *Confinement.*
they had suffered, yet were overruled by the Army and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Central Utah Relocation Center commonly known as Topaz had been part public domain, part county owned, and part privately owned. The Granada Relocation Center in Colorado had been privately owned and was purchased by the Army for the War Relocation Authority. And the Manzanar Relocation Center in California was located on unused land held by the City of Los Angeles for its water rights.\textsuperscript{94}

The plans of the relocation centers were based on a grid system of blocks. Some non-residential areas, such as the administrative area, warehouses or hospital occupied more than a single block. The remainder of the central core was made up of residential blocks separated by empty fire breaks. Each residential block consisted of ten to fourteen barracks, a mess hall, latrines for men and women, a laundry and a recreation hall. Eventually, large sewage systems were built. The designs for the relocation centers were never intended to be permanent – instead, a set of standards and details were developed by the Army that modified the “theater of operations” type buildings to create suitable housing for women, children and elderly people while still meeting the requirements of quick construction, low cost, and restricted use of critical materials.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{94} Burton, \textit{Confinement}.  
\textsuperscript{95} Burton, \textit{Confinement}. 
The barracks at these centers followed standard plans, with different sized apartments to accommodate different-sized families and groups of single people. Each of the barracks had two apartments in each of the following sizes: 16 ft by 20 ft, 20 ft by 20 ft and 24 ft by 20 ft. Each room had a heating unit, a single drop light, army cots, blankets and mattresses. Partitions between the apartments extended only to the eaves and left a gap between the walls and the roof, which created a great lack in privacy and little protection against the environment. The exterior walls and roofs of the barracks
were generally constructed by boards covered with tarpaper on frames of lumber and the
raised floors were simply wooden boards, which quickly shrank and allowed dust and dirt
to fly in all over the barracks.\textsuperscript{96}

In the beginning…every block looked exactly the same as every other block, ‘cause they’re all lined up. And even if you got to the block, all the barracks were all exactly alike. Unless you knew which one you lived in, you could walk into somebody else’s.\textsuperscript{97}

Recreation halls and community buildings were basically the same as the barracks, but were 20 ft by 100 ft and without interior partitions. Mess halls were 40 ft by 100 ft and included a kitchen, store room and scullery. The block latrines and laundry facilities were three separate buildings in each residential block and had no toilet partitions, nor bathtubs, and very little hot water. Administration buildings were similar to the evacuee barracks, but had white clapboard exteriors rather than tarpaper. Staff housing was also equipped with the same exteriors and each unit was divided into self-contained one, two or three bedroom apartments, each with its own kitchen and bathroom.\textsuperscript{98}

Community buildings, such as schools and churches, were left to be constructed by the evacuees during their incarceration. Often entire blocks of barracks were devoted to schools, and the block recreation halls were usually converted to other general community purposes, such as churches or cooperative stores. These communal buildings that were later built and designed by the evacuees were often far more individualized than the rest of the camp barracks, and constructed of far more permanent materials. For

\textsuperscript{96} Burton, \textit{Confinement}.
\textsuperscript{97} Norman I. Hirose, Interview by Tom Ikeda, Topaz Museum Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Emeryville, CA, July 31, 2008.
\textsuperscript{98} Burton, \textit{Confinement}.
instance, the school buildings at Poston in Arizona were built from the widely-available local building material of adobe brick, made by the evacuees.99

The majority of food at all of the relocation centers was provided by local camp agricultural enterprises, with the surplus sent to the other centers. Factories for the processing of agricultural products were common at all of the centers. Most of the centers had hog and chicken farms, and beef or dairy cows were even raised at Gila, Granada, Topaz and Manzanar. However, since it was a time of war, the relocation centers were also subject to the same rationing as the rest of the country. Victory Gardens supplemented the rations and evacuee crews recycled fats, metal, and other material considered vital to the war effort.100

The physical surroundings at the relocation centers had a great effect on everyday life. The identical blocks of flimsy barracks served as a reminder of the evacuees’ lack of freedom, but it was the guard towers, and especially the barbed wire fences, that delineated the difference between inside and outside the camps, between freedom and confinement.

After the camp was built, thirty-six blocks of barracks, they put a five-strand barbed-wire fence all around the residential area of the camp. There were eight guard towers, one in each corner…. Each of them were occupied by an American soldier and a searchlight at night, and a rifle, or machine gun, I guess, with live ammunition. They guarded the camp by day and by night, and at night they would turn the searchlights on and whenever anybody opened the door of their barrack to go somewhere, go out, the searchlights would follow.101

The weather and harsh climate of the camps was another factor that had a major effect on the lives of the internees. The dust, mud, and extreme temperatures came as a great shock to the West Coast residents who were accustomed to more temperate climates. The dust was caused by the massive disturbance of soil produced from the

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99 Burton, Confinement.
100 Burton, Confinement.
101 Sue Kunitomi Embrey, Interview by John Allen, Manzanar National Historic Site Collection, Densho Digital Archive, November 6, 2002.
construction of hundreds of buildings at once. Eventually it did settle, but the harshness of the climate remained the same.\textsuperscript{102}

Inter-generational tension was a major problem in the relocation centers, especially since the Issei and Nisei were such different generations. After Pearl Harbor, the balance of power shifted from the Issei to the Nisei, since most of the former Issei leadership was arrested on suspicion of espionage and collaboration; in their absence, the Nisei inherited their power and influence, both within the family and in general. Once the camps had been set up, most of the Issei were released to reunite with their families in the centers. However, many Issei did not speak English, or were not very fluent, but the use of the Japanese language was restricted; all meetings had to be conducted in English, and all newsletters and other publications were in English as well. Originally, the relocation center directors appointed block leaders from among the internees. But the War Relocation Authority decided that the Nisei should participate in governing their own communities as much as possible. WRA policy called for a community council with one elected representative from each block, an executive committee and a judicial committee. Issei were not eligible to hold an elective office.\textsuperscript{103}

Life in the camps began every day with a siren blast at 7:00 a.m., and an American style breakfast served in the mess halls. Work began at 8:00 for the adults, while school began at 8:30 or 9:00 for the children. Camp life was highly regimented and filled with a constant rush to beat other groups to the large communal areas, such as the lavatories and mess halls for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Camp lifestyle required drastic transformations in routine and outlook, as described by a former evacuee:

\textsuperscript{102} Burton, \textit{Confinement}.
\textsuperscript{103} Burton, \textit{Confinement}. 
When a human being is placed in captivity, survival is the key. We develop a very negative attitude toward authority. We spent countless hours to defy or beat the system. Our minds started to function like any POW or convicted criminal.\textsuperscript{104}

Living in a relocation center meant waiting to see what would happen next, as there was no way to prepare for the future. Personal choices and preferences were denied, such as the choice of where to live or what to eat. There was little reason to work, except to pass the time or to fill immediate community needs. Merely surviving was both physically and psychically draining, and holding a family together without privacy or authority required a full commitment. The best option for internees was to attempt to create and establish the illusion of a normal functioning community, with normal pastimes, as the camps had become busy places. We might see here a manifestation of the Japanese ability to make do in difficult circumstances – an ability captured in the phrase the Japanese used when something difficult must be endured: “Shikata ga nai,” or “it cannot be helped.”\textsuperscript{105}

When the evacuees arrived at the relocation centers, the “education program” was little more than a promise by the WRA that schools would be the first order of business. Since school buildings and equipment had not been part of the original construction of the camps, classes were first held in large barrack-like recreation halls and began later in the year than usual, between 1942 and January 1943. In its report for October-31 December 1942, the WRA described the conditions of the schools:

With no exceptions, schools at the centers opened in unpartitioned barracks meant for other purposes and generally bare of furniture. Sometimes the teacher had a desk and chair; more often she had only a chair. In the first few weeks many of the children had no desks or chairs and for the most part were obliged to sit on the floor – or stand up all day… By the [end of 1942]… it was no longer necessary for many pupils to sit on the floor, but seating was frequently of a rudimentary character. Text books and other supplies were gradually arriving. Laboratory and

\textsuperscript{104} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 169.
\textsuperscript{105} Houston, \textit{Farewell}, 16.
shop equipment and facilities, however, were still lacking. No center had been able to obtain its full quota of teachers.\textsuperscript{106}

Recruiting and training teachers was a constant problem as well. Few evacuees were certified to teach and it was difficult to recruit outside teachers because of the centers’ harsh living conditions, amongst other things. As a result, many evacuees with two or more years of college became “assistant teachers,” and in some cases assumed a full teaching load.

Schooling was provided at four different levels: nursery school, elementary school, high school and adult education. The War Relocation Authority designed a core curriculum set in consultation with the state education authorities where the center was located, and was consistent with the recognized standards of the state. “Education for Relocation and a Broader Participation” was the central theme in the foundation of the curriculum, whose chief aims were to study the democratic ideal and to discover its many implications. The goal was to Americanize camp residents through the curriculum, which was designed to “promote an understanding of American ideals; loyalty to American institutions and training for the responsibilities of citizenship and of family; and for economic independence both on the project and in the communities to which the student might return.”\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{106} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 170.

In the first months of relocation, equipment was minimal and the recreation halls were often used for purposes other than recreation. However, by the winter of 1942, conditions were improving in all the camps, and recreational activities began to flourish. Athletics was one of the major recreations, with baseball as the most popular sport. At some centers, there were as many as 100 teams active at one time, ranging from children to Issei in their sixties. Indoor sports were limited to ones that occupied little space, such as ping-pong, judo, boxing and badminton. Sumo wrestling was also available to those interested in the traditional sports of Japan. At some camps, swimming pools were eventually dug out by the internees so they could enjoy some cool relief during the sweltering hot summers. At Poston, Setsuko Kawashiri recalled,

There was a lot of talent and time in the community. They volunteered to build a swimming pool using a section of the irrigation canal. Boy, did we make use of that! That’s where I learned how to do the “deadman’s float.”

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108 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 172.
109 Setsuko Kawashiri, Poston, Personal memoir, October 1, 1997, Private family collection.
Aside from athletics, the evacuees also diverted themselves with dancing, plays, concerts, and games like cards, chess, checkers, Goh, Shogi, and Mah-jongg. Numerous arts and crafts exhibitions and films were presented in each mess hall and an outdoor theater (a walk-in rather than a drive-in because there were no cars) was even built at Manzanar, where evacuees had the chance to view the most current films. Music flourished, although the camps had few instruments. There were not one but two orchestras at Topaz, and a variety of dance classes were offered, which included tap, ballet, toe and Oriental.  

A dance at the Heart Mountain high school gymnasium in the Fall of 1943 by WRA photographer Hikaru Carl Iwasaki, Fall 1943

The splash of a diver can be seen in Heart Mountain’s swimming hole, dug by prisoners in late July 1943, by Bill Manbo, July 1943.

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110 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 172-173.
111 Hikaru Carl Iwasaki, Photograph of a dance at the Heart Mountain high school gymnasium in the Fall of 1943, The National Archives, photo no. 210-G-G200, from Colors of Confinement, 87.
Most of the relocation centers were equipped with English-language libraries, which continued to grow and expand their branches throughout the entire internment period. By the end of 1943, as the government’s treatment of Japanese Americans became more lax after the US began scoring military victories in the war in the Pacific, most of the libraries had established Japanese-language sections as well.\footnote{Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 173.}

One of the War Relocation Authority’s chief priorities in Americanization was to foster the growth and formation of normal American communities within the camps. Therefore, the WRA enthusiastically encouraged the establishment of local chapters of national American organizations. By the end of 1942, most centers had established chapters of the American Red Cross, YMCA and YWCA, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The usual philanthropic events of scrap metal drives, bond sales, Red Cross drives, and blood donations were held as fundraisers by the relocation centers’ local chapters. Ultimately, these organizations, particularly the YMCA and YWCA, became quite active in helping evacuees to resettle after the war. The WRA’s policy of “Americanization” was the most effective on the Nisei generation, especially with the younger children. Through their eyes, the irrefutable attraction of the American lifestyle was clear. John Tateishi, a former childhood evacuee, recalled:

> In some ways, I suppose, my life was not too different from a lot of kids in America between the years 1942 and 1945. I spent a good part of my time playing with my brothers and friends, learned to shoot marbles, watched sandlot baseball and envied the older kids who wore Boy Scout uniforms. We shared with the rest of America the same movies, screen heroes and listened to the same heartrending songs of the forties. We imported much of America into the camps because, after all, we were Americans. Through imitation of my brothers, who attended grade school within the camp, I learned the salute to the flag by the time I was five years old.\footnote{Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 172.}
Despite the process of Americanization, for many Nisei children interned during the war, the camp experience disrupted their childhood and shook their perceptions of themselves as American children. Classified by the country of their birth as untrustworthy “foreigners” and “Japs,” these children were interned at a pivotal time in their development, and began to question and reconsider their own identities. The mass uprooting of evacuation and the incarceration behind barbed wire radically shaped the young Japanese American children’s easily influenced perspectives on both themselves and on their ways of acting on the world.

We were the children of the camps, prisoners in our own country…. While the rest of America remembers those years of World War II with a sense of pride and nostalgia for a glorious past, for us, the kids of the camps, the experience was very, very different.¹¹⁵

Photographs taken by Bill Manbo of young people interned at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center offer vivid and poignant images of life in the camps. In them, one can see the mixture of Americanized and yet disrupted and imprisoned childhoods

experienced by many young Japanese Americans. Several of the photos show Manbo’s young son Billy, like the one below:

*Billy Manbo Clutches a Barbed-Wire Fence, by Bill Manbo,*

All photographs by Billy Manbo from Eric L. Muller, the editor of *Colors of Confinement: Rare Kodachrome Photographs of Japanese American Incarceration in World War II.*

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Although many of the children were too young to understand the real meaning of the evacuation and imprisonment, or to feel the full impact of the Japanese American situation, they did not live in complete ignorance. In April 1942, ten-year-old Roy S. Tsuboi was working as a crossing guard for his Junior Safety Patrol when suddenly, out of nowhere, an old man charged at him spewing the words, “Dirty Jap!” Grabbing Roy by the collar, he stopped a motorist by yelling, “Take this Jap boy to the nearest police station – I’m making a citizen’s arrest.” Memoirs of those interned as children show a strong sense of what John Y. Tateishi called, “America’s racism against us.” He says he was aware as a child of “white America’s hatred of me because of my ancestry, the fact that even as a child I was viewed with diminished humanity.” Tateishi sums up what he learned as a child this way:

I learned that life is not parceled out equally, sometimes despite what you are but too often because of the way you look or the way you think. I knew (and I can distinctly remember being aware of this) that my confinement was because I was Japanese. I knew, even at the early age of three or four, that I was different from the men who stood in the towers, different from the white faces that stared curiously at the camp and at us from the cars that passed by on the distant highway.

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118 Tateishi, “Memories,” 133.
119 Tateishi, “Memories,” 133.
From the first days of their internment up until the camps were closed, the Japanese internees attempted to create a sense of normalcy through the reconstruction of everyday life. As the months and then years went by within the camps, they grew and developed into what amounted to be totally equipped American small towns. This was especially vital for the developing lives of the children, many of whom were condemned to spend their critical years of development growing up behind barbed wire.
Some children even began to devalue their Japanese heritage, as the many efforts to recreate a “normal” life for the children in the camps and the effects of internment mainly strengthened the children’s sense of identity as Americans precisely because it denigrated their identity as Japanese.

The fact that America had accused us, or excluded us, or imprisoned us, or whatever it might be called, did not change the kind of world we wanted. Most of us were born in this country; we had no other models. As a child of the camps, Jeanne Wakatsuki (the author behind the memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*) was young and impressionable enough to find it easier to accept the negative stereotypes of the Japanese and strive to embody the model of a typical “American” life than to create her own bi-cultural model.

The compulsory evacuation, relocation and incarceration of the Japanese American community forced them to confront their feelings of loyalty. Many Nisei had supported the United States as loyal and patriotic citizens, until their government decided that they were untrustworthy and guilty until proven innocent. Some merely began to sympathize with the Japanese government, but in a few extreme cases, feelings of American betrayal caused formerly loyal citizens to renounce their citizenship. Yet, it was the most difficult for the Issei, who had been classified as “enemy aliens,” and even though they also felt American, often still had feelings of loyalty to the Japanese nation of their birth. A large majority of Japanese Americans remained who continued to feel loyal to their country, even though they had lost their homes and freedom, and sought ways to prove their loyalty to the outside world.

One of the policies of the War Relocation Authority was to determine which evacuees were actually loyal to the United States, and then to find places for them to work and settle away from the West Coast and outside of the relocation centers. Initially,

121 Houston, *Farewell*, 100.
each case had to be investigated individually, which often took months at a time, as each person had to find a job and place to live while simultaneously convincing the government that he or she was not a threat. Eventually, in order to streamline the process, every adult evacuee was given a questionnaire entitled “Application for Indefinite Leave Clearance.” However, these questionnaires had originally been intended for determining the loyalty of possible conscripts into the armed forces, and were tactlessly left unmodified for the general population, which included women and Japanese citizens. An account of this questionnaire summarized the most famous controversial questions, which were Numbers 27 and 28:

Question 27 asked draft-age males: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?

Question 28 was the loyalty question: 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? 

While the first question was relatively straightforward, despite being written for draft-age men, it was the ambiguity of the second question that was particularly inappropriate. For the Issei, who were not even allowed to become American citizens, saying yes would effectively leave them without a country. For some others who had already felt loyal to the United States, it appeared to be a trick question. No one was sure what the consequences would be, and were certainly not prepared for it. However, it became one of the most divisive issues of the entire wartime relocation.

While some of the “no-nos” (those who had answered “no” to both questions) were truly more loyal to Japan than to the United States, there were many cases where people answered “no” as a compromise to keep families together. Others answered “no” as a way of protesting the injustice of the entire relocation rather than suggesting loyalty.

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122 Burton, Confinement.
123 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 191-192.
to Japan. Alternatively, there were some who did not want to imply that they expressed interest in applying for leave, since they were already settled in the relocation centers, which they considered to be a safe haven, and did not want to find themselves forced out into the unknown. Those who answered “yes” to the loyalty questionnaire were eligible to leave the relocation centers, but only if they found a sponsor.

Through this complicated leave process, the overall population of the relocation centers was gradually reduced, and it seemed that the relocation program was working. Over 18,000 evacuees moved out of the relocation centers in 1944, and by the end of the war over 50,000 Japanese Americans had relocated to the eastern United States.\textsuperscript{124}

For the “no-nos” of the camps, the WRA created a new category, labeling them as “disloyals,” to be segregated from the “loyals.” As the Tule Lake Relocation Center in California already housed the highest number of disloyals, the WRA determined that it should become the new segregation center.\textsuperscript{125} Thus, in 1943, the Tule Lake War Relocation Center was converted into a high security Segregation Center to house the disloyal. Within just a few months, the population at Tule Lake rose from 15,276 to 18,789. Additional barracks had to be built, and the camp was expanded so that it actually housed almost 4,000 more people than its originally intended capacity. However, such a high concentration of incarcerated Japanese Americans created discontent, which grew as security increased and additional soldiers were assigned to the camp. A seven foot high chain link fence topped with barbed wire was rapidly added, Army tanks arrived on site, and the number of guard towers surrounding the center was increased from 6 to 28. The

\textsuperscript{124} Burton, \textit{Confinement.}\n\textsuperscript{125} Burton, \textit{Confinement.}
neighboring farm areas were also surrounded by a warning fence, a security fence and 16 new guard towers.\textsuperscript{126}

As a segregation center, Tule Lake was a mix of some “loyals” with no intention of leaving the United States, pro-Japan Japanese Americans who wished to repatriate or expatriate as soon as possible, and many whose feelings fell somewhere between those two extremes. Internal friction between loyal and disloyal groups, as well as with the U.S. Army, resulted in harassment, beatings, riots, mass demonstrations, military intervention, and occupation. Thus, as discontent grew within the Segregation Center, the Army took control of the camp in late 1943 by declaring martial law on 13 November, which lasted until 15 January 1944.\textsuperscript{127}

In 1944, while under martial law, the stockade area was established. It consisted of a 250 ft by 350 ft area enclosed by fences and guard towers. Within the stockade were four barracks, a mess hall, a latrine and Army tents that were used as unheated punishment quarters for some stockade prisoners. To the north of the stockade stood the six cell concrete jail designed to imprison up to 24 men, but at its peak, over 100 men were incarcerated there.\textsuperscript{128}

As an unfortunate circumstance of the government’s relatively new pursuit to form an all-Nisei fighting unit and determine the eligibility of the men by means of issuing the loyalty questionnaire, the loyalty program had escalated into one of the most divisive events of the entire camp history. It broke apart the community of evacuees by forcing each to make a clear choice on their very uncertain future. It was an incredibly difficult issue to make a decision on, as it not only physically divided families and friends, but also divided them philosophically, morally, and emotionally. The internees

\textsuperscript{126} National Park Service, \textit{Tule Lake Segregation Center} (United States of America: National Park Service, date unknown).
\textsuperscript{127} National Park Service, \textit{Tule Lake}.
\textsuperscript{128} National Park Service, \textit{Tule Lake}.
had a choice to make – between the United States of America and their new adjusted
American lifestyles of their camps, or with the Empire of Japan and the grim confinement
awaiting all “disloyals” at Tule Lake Segregation Center.
Hawaii: A Relative Island Paradise of Interracial Interactions

“Aloha ‘oe, aloha ‘oe
E ke onaona noho i ka lipo
One fond embrace,
A ho‘i a‘e au
Until we meet again”
-Aloha ‘Oe (Farewell to Thee) Composed by Queen Liliuokalani

By the time of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, there were already nearly 158,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living in Hawaii – more than 35 percent of the population.\textsuperscript{129} During the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, Hawaii experienced a large influx of immigration from Japan and other various East Asian nations in the Pacific. Between 1885 and 1894, 28,691 Japanese contract laborers migrated to Hawaii, with most deciding to remain in the islands after completing their contracts. Japanese businessmen immigrated over in the 1890’s as well, and they eventually established themselves as leaders of the emerging Japanese community in Hawaii. By 1910, one-fourth of the Japanese in Hawaii were native-born; and by 1940, nearly three-fourths of the ethnic Japanese population was native-born. By the outbreak of World War II, Nisei were becoming integrated into the Hawaiian economy, earning places in the municipal and territorial government, becoming schoolteachers and administrators, practicing law and medicine and working in businesses owned by the old haole (white) families.\textsuperscript{130}

Hawaii was much more ethnically mixed and racially tolerant than the West Coast, as race relations in Hawaii before the war were not infected with the same vicious longtime antagonisms and anti-Asian agitation that existed on the mainland. But that does

\textsuperscript{129} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 261.

\textsuperscript{130} Commission on Wartime Relocation, \textit{Personal Justice}, 263.
not mean that there were not any discriminatory anti-Asian prejudices in the territory. Certainly, interethnic tensions did exist between the various ethnic groups in Hawaii, but the degree of racial hostility and legal, political, and economic exclusion was considerably less than that on the mainland. In fact, there were many instances of positive social interrelationships between the Japanese and members of the other ethnic groups in Hawaii. Through these interpersonal relationships, the islanders came to develop a strong basis of interethnic understanding and trust for one another. “In Hawaii, the spirit of aloha prevailed, and white supremacy never gained legal recognition.”

Lastly, able leaders in the haole community wanted cooperation with the Japanese American community. Hawaii had a “group of influential individuals who were knowledgeable about the Japanese and were careful to treat persons as individuals rather than subjecting them to collective suspicion and fearful attitudes on the basis of their ethnicity.”

At 11:30 in the morning of December 7th, only a few hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Territorial Governor, Joseph Poindexter, issued a proclamation invoking the powers conferred on him by the legislature under the Hawaii Defense Act of 1941; this law gave the governor extraordinary, virtually dictatorial, wartime powers but kept control of the Hawaiian Islands in civilian hands. But then at 3:30 p.m. the same day, Poindexter issued another proclamation that placed the Territory of Hawaii under martial law and suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. Although such a drastic declaration would seemingly be a complete and outrageous violation of the law, it was entirely legal. The 1900 Hawaiian Organic Act explicitly gave the governor that right, and many others in the event of an emergency. According to Section 67 of the Act:

The governor shall be responsible for the faithful execution of the laws of the United States and of the Territory of Hawaii… and he may in case of rebellion or

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131 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 261.
invasion or imminent danger thereof when the public safety requires it, suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus or place the territory or any part thereof under martial law until communication can be had with the president and his decision thereon made known.  

As can be expected, President Roosevelt immediately authorized Poindexter’s suspension of habeas corpus and the imposition of martial law. However, in his proclamation the governor not only proclaimed martial law, which in itself suspended the writ of habeas corpus, but also requested the Commanding General of the Army’s Hawaiian Department to exercise all governmental functions normally exercised by the governor “during the present emergency and until the danger of invasion is removed [as well as] to exercise the powers normally exercised by judicial officers and employees of this territory….”

In a simultaneous proclamation, the Commanding General, Lieutenant General Walter C. Short, declared himself the “Military Governor” of Hawaii and took charge of the government of the Territory. In his proclamation, he made his intentions clear:

In order to assist in repelling the threatened invasion of our island home, good citizens will cheerfully obey this proclamation and the ordinances to be published; others will be required to do so. Offenders will be severely punished by military tribunals or will be held in custody until such time as the civil courts are able to function.

Thus the entire civilian population of the Hawaiian Islands was placed under the control of a military governor whose discretionary powers were absolute. However, after only a few short days, on 17 December 1941, General Short was removed from command of the US Army’s Hawaiian Department as part of an effort to find someone to blame for the disaster of the Japanese attack on Hawaii. Short, along with the Navy Commander in

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Chief, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, became scapegoats of the military; both were accused of being unprepared and charged with dereliction of duty.\textsuperscript{136}

One of the first official acts of the Military Government was to move into Iolani Palace and take over the office of the attorney general. From the elegant comfort of the old royal Hawaiian palace, the Military Governor ruled with “authority over business deals, labor disputes, police, transportation, [and] daily movement of citizens.”\textsuperscript{137}

Hundreds of general orders were issued under the name of the Commanding General, affecting virtually every aspect of civilian life.

Among some of the most intrusive incursions on freedom were a curfew and blackout instituted on the evening of 7 December. The curfew began at eight p.m. and the blackout was total, as it prohibited the showing of any lights between the hours of sundown and sunrise and forbade any civilians to be out on the streets during blackout hours. The Army censored the press (and temporarily closed Japanese language newspapers), radio broadcasts and transmissions, long-distance telephone calls and cables, and all civilian mail. They permanently closed all Japanese-language schools and temporarily closed the public schools, allowing them to reopen two months later with a four-day week so children could work in plantation fields. Hospitals and emergency facilities were under direct Army control, as were food and liquor sales, parking and traffic, and prostitution. The Office of the Military Governor also assumed control of the agencies that regulated war production, labor, and price administration. The Army’s control of labor included wages, working conditions and allocations of workers to industries and firms, which left nearly half the workers frozen in their jobs, with stiff

\textsuperscript{137} Anthony, \textit{Hawaii}, 12.
penalties for absenteeism or switching jobs without permission. The registration and fingerprinting of all civilians on Oahu over the age of six was ordered on 27 December 1941, and in March 1942 the order was extended to include the other islands as well. All residents of Hawaii were required to carry identification cards on their person at all times.

Additional restrictions were specifically directed at enemy aliens, chiefly the Japanese. No Japanese alien could travel by air, change residence or occupation, or otherwise travel from place to place without the approval of the Provost Marshal General. Nor could they buy or sell liquor, be at large during the blackout, assemble in groups exceeding ten persons, or be employed in restricted areas without permission. On 8 December, aliens were required to turn in firearms, explosives, cameras, shortwave receivers, and other items that could be used in espionage. Concern about aliens possessing firearms apparently persisted, for two months later, all American citizens of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry were ordered to turn in firearms, explosives, ammunition, and weapons. Certain areas of Oahu were ruled off-limits to Japanese aliens, forcing many to leave their homes and businesses; many farmers suffered heavy losses when they had to evacuate their property. Japanese fishermen were forbidden to go to sea lest they commit espionage, and many Japanese Americans lost their jobs. They were also soon excluded from the Hawaii Territorial Guard and the Nisei already serving in the army were segregated and shipped to the mainland.

The military governor’s office included an alien property controller, public relations department, personnel, finance, and morale sections. Divisions were also created

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to handle priorities like civilian defense, food control, labor control, materials and supplies control, cargo and passenger control, land transportation control, cold storage control and cloth control. ¹⁴² The Military Governor maintained a public relations section “consisting of a staff of four civilians whose duty it was to give out press releases which were designed to place the military government in a favorable light and to suppress news reflecting dissatisfaction with the regime.”¹⁴³

Perhaps one of the worst situations under martial law was the Army’s control of judicial functions.

In place of the criminal courts of this Territory there have been erected on all the islands provost courts and military commissions for the trial of all manner of offenses from the smallest misdemeanor to crimes carrying the death penalty.¹⁴⁴ For more than three years, these provost courts remained the principal institutions of justice in Hawaii. Civilians brought before them were denied virtually all of the basic constitutional guarantees of due process contained in the Bill of Rights, including the right to trial by jury and freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures without a warrant. Often no written charges were presented and defendants were not permitted to cross-examine witnesses against them, nor to call witnesses in their own behalf. Many of the judges did not have legal training, and, although defendants were formally allowed the right to counsel, the provost judges commonly told them that lawyers were neither necessary nor desirable.¹⁴⁵

Heavy fines and long prison sentences are meted out in many cases for comparatively trivial violations of military orders…. In some instances persons have been found guilty of violating “the spirit of martial law” or “the spirit” of general orders, notwithstanding the act for which they are charged is not prohibited either by statute or military order.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Anthony, Hawaii, 35.
¹⁴³ Anthony, Hawaii, 38.
¹⁴⁶ Anthony, Hawaii, 39.
These trials were among the worst features of the military takeover of the civilian government in Hawaii. The average trial in provost courts took five minutes or less, and of the 22,480 trials conducted in Honolulu’s provost court in 1942-43, some 99 percent resulted in convictions. Several hundred individuals were sentenced to prison, and at least two hundred of them for terms between six months and life; in the first eight months of the war alone, fines totaling more than $500,000 were imposed upon convicted civilians. The provost courts seemed to especially embrace their reputation for being unfair, unjudicial, and unmilitary by making no distinction between juveniles and adults – defendants as young as fourteen years of age were even tried by provost judges! One federal district court judge in Hawaii summarized the entire situation quite bluntly, characterizing the military regime in Hawaii as simply “the antithesis of Americanism.”147

Every general order delivered during martial law in Hawaii involved a criminal sanction, which was apparently quite typical in terms of military standards. The problem here was the fact that military concepts were being applied to civilians, for whom criminal law only played a small part in their affairs. “The military system, however, [was] predicated upon a penal sanction attaching to every order even of the most trivial character.”148

Shortly after the backlash of Pearl Harbor had forced General Short to retire in disgrace, General Delos Emmons assumed the position of Commanding General in Hawaii. He had views very different from disgraced General Short. Emmons appears to have argued quietly and consistently for a policy in favor of the Issei and Nisei of the United States. He held up plans to take radical measures against the local Japanese population by raising practical problems about labor shortages and transportation, and

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147 Scheiber, “Bayonets,” 520.
148 Anthony, Hawaii, 34.
this allowed the pressure to evacuate the Japanese from the Hawaiian Islands to subside. On 21 December 1941, in his first radio address to the public as Military Governor and Commander of the Hawaiian Department, General Emmons assured the diverse Hawaiian public that there was little to no likelihood of any actual case of sabotage. From there, he also sought to personally address and reassure the Japanese American community that the authorities would not take general action against them:

There is no intention or desire on the part of the federal authorities to operate mass concentration camps. No person, be he citizen or alien, need worry, provided he is not connected with subversive elements…. While we have been subjected to a serious attack by a ruthless and treacherous enemy, we must remember that this is America and we must do things the American Way. We must distinguish between loyalty and disloyalty among our people.¹⁴⁹

Immediately after Pearl Harbor, instructions had been given to watch the Japanese in Hawaii carefully. The Navy had insisted on the removal of all Japanese from Hawaii to protect itself against sabotage. And so, plans were made either to deport the Japanese to the mainland, ship them to one of Hawaii’s smaller islands, or place them in camps on Oahu. On 10 January 1942, the War Department sent an inquiry to General Emmons asking his views on the subject of evacuating the island of Oahu. He responded that such a move would be highly dangerous and impracticable; large quantities of expensive and unavailable building materials would be needed for construction of the camps and many additional troops (who were already scarce in numbers) would be required to guard the islands. Moreover, Emmons argued that a mass evacuation of the ethnic Japanese, who provided most of the island’s skilled labor, including a great many Army employees, would severely disrupt Oahu. Over 90 percent of carpenters, nearly all transportation workers and a high percentage of agricultural workers were of Japanese ancestry, and were absolutely essential to rebuild the defenses destroyed by the December ⁷ᵗʰ attack,

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unless replaced by an equivalent labor force from the mainland. Business leaders in Hawaii were also unwilling to permit the mass uprooting of the Japanese because they knew that the evacuation of over one-third of Hawaii’s population would decimate their labor force and destroy the economy of the islands.

Following an on-the-spot assessment, even [Assistant] Secretary [of War] McCloy joined local authorities in discouraging the called-for transplantation which could topple the island economy if undertaken without sending in an equivalent labor force of comparable skill and experience. Additionally, there were not enough ships available to transport Hawaii’s entire Japanese population over to the mainland, nor were there even enough soldiers to guard them.

While stressing the military and logistical difficulties of carrying out an entire mass evacuation, Emmons did agree to a selective evacuation, which would remove those who were considered potentially dangerous in the event of a crisis and “a few hundred who were considered to be contributing nothing to the war effort, including families of some who had been interned.” In compliance with this compromise on evacuation, on Emmons sent the first group to the mainland on 12 January 1942. However, once they arrived on the West Coast, the Justice Department refused to accept them because their arrests had been conducted under martial law. Consequently, they were returned to Hawaii. Yet on 18 March, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued an order to General Emmons that “Japanese residents (either U.S. citizens or nationals) as are considered… to constitute a source of danger be transported to the U.S. mainland and placed under guard in concentration camps.” Accordingly, the War Department then ordered a selective removal of up to 15,000 Japanese “resettlement” areas on the mainland. As many as

150 Commission on Wartime Relocation, Personal Justice, 269.
151 Takaki, Double Victory, 140.
153 Davis, Behind Barbed Wire, 55.
155 Soga, Life, 10.
1,217 Japanese Hawaiians soon were sent to the mainland and were placed in the WRA relocation camps, producing a total of 2,092 Hawaiians removed. Additionally, there were about 300 Japanese evacuees who remained in Hawaii and were interned at the Army’s own Honouliuli Gulch internment camp on Oahu after the Sand Island detention center was closed. The total number of all Japanese Americans from Hawaii who were detained came to be about 2,392 – less than one percent of the entire ethnic Japanese population in Hawaii, and quite minuscule in comparison to those subjected to mass evacuation on the mainland.\textsuperscript{156}

In comparison with the racially-fueled situation on the mainland during World War II, the Territory of Hawaii was in a much more advantageous and exceptional position from that of the mainland. Although the lives of all individuals living in Hawaii were subjugated to the corrupt and Draconian martial law, the majority of Japanese in Hawaii were not subjected to the discriminatory racial treatment of their counterparts on the mainland. They avoided both the camps and the atrocious anti-Asian wrath demonstrated by public opinion on the West Coast because, in a particularly rare occurrence, the ethnic Japanese in Hawaii were too large a population for the government to force a mass evacuation program. For once, the ethnic minority had triumphed over the haole majority.

\textsuperscript{156} Soga, \emph{Life}, 10.
Simultaneously Fighting Prejudice And Nazis: The Legacy of The 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team

“These haole soldiers from the Mainland looked at us and couldn’t tell the difference. They were probably thinking, ‘How come these POWs are wearing American uniforms?’” – Edward Tarutani, 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion

On 28 August 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill mobilizing the National Guard of the United States and other reserve components for a period of one year. The Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department thus officially received word that the Hawaii National Guard units of the 298th and 299th Infantry Regiments would be called to active duty on 15 October 1940. These regiments were comprised of 110 officers and 1,741 enlisted men; a large number of these men were Americans of Japanese descent. The majority of the 298th were recruits from Oahu, while the 299th was comprised of residents from the other Islands of Hawaii.157

After the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor, members of the Hawaii National Guard were called on to guard against possible enemy invasion during the chaotic hours after the attack. As fears of a Japanese attack increased in the early months of 1942, Hawaii Military Governor Delos Emmons decided to form the Nisei members of the Hawaii National Guard into a battalion to be sent to the mainland. The Hawaii Provisional Infantry Battalion was formed in near secrecy and on 5 June 1942, as the Battle of Midway raged, 1,432 men shipped out for San Francisco. After landing on the mainland, they traveled by train to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, where they would train for

the next six months. These men became the original members of the 100th Infantry Battalion and established their unit’s motto as “Remember Pearl Harbor.”

Under typical pre-war Army procedures, battalions were called first, second and third, and were a part of a regiment. But the 100th Battalion was a separate unit, with no sheltering regiment. With the outbreak of the war, the Army began to implement a recently formulated plan for the modern organization of Combat Arms. Under this new system of organization, the Infantry Regiments were reorganized as a headquarters without any organic battalions, but with three Separate Battalions attached. HQ was organized into three Combat Commands that could be dispatched on separate combat actions that they were attached to. One Infantry Battalion would be assigned to a Combat Command, with attachments from the higher HQ reserve. Thus, the 100th as a Separate Infantry Battalion was not attached to any other military organizations and became its own fighting unit.

The 100th was the first US military unit made up entirely of Japanese Americans, although its officers were predominantly Caucasian. It was also an overstrength battalion; instead of four companies, it had six, and instead of the usual eight hundred or so soldiers, it had more than fourteen hundred. Its designation by a unique number, which was usually reserved for regiments and higher units, and as “separate,” indicated its special status in the Army’s tables of organization. The men of the 100th soon had a

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159 “100th Infantry Battalion,” Go For Broke, last modified 2006, http://goforbroke.org/history/history_historical_veterans_100th.asp.
nickname of their own for the outfit. They called it “One-Puka-Puka,” with the word “puka” being a Hawaiian word that was a double entendre for both “zero” and “hole.”\(^{161}\)

The 100\(^{\text{th}}\) would only be assigned to the European Theater. Although several army generals declined to have the 100\(^{\text{th}}\) attached to their command, it was happily accepted by General Mark Clark. Under General Clark’s Fifth Army, the 100\(^{\text{th}}\) joined the 133\(^{\text{rd}}\) Regiment, and became a part of the 34\(^{\text{th}}\) Division, commanded by Major General Charles W. Ryder. Once Ryder received news of the new battalion’s arrival, he promised to stand by the 100\(^{\text{th}}\) under all circumstances, giving it exactly what he gave all his other men. Before the 100\(^{\text{th}}\) Battalion arrived, General Ryder dispatched a self-authored memorandum to his troops with the firm message that the new men were not to be called or referred to as “Japs,” as it was the one name they would not tolerate. Colonel Ray C. Fountain, the Commanding Officer of the 133\(^{\text{rd}}\), shared the same thoughts as Ryder on the need for equal non-discriminatory treatment of the Hawaiians, as with all the other men of the command. In the same style as General Ryder, Colonel Fountain informed his officers and men of the respectful behavior he expected of them on their introduction to the new battalion:

“They are not Japanese,” he said, “but Americans born in Hawaii. They don’t ask any special consideration and we won’t give them anything that isn’t given to all other units. The battalion will be fighting with the rest of us taking its regular turns.”\(^{162}\)

By late September 1943, the 100\(^{\text{th}}\) had landed on the beaches of Salerno, Italy and continued to push the enemy north in the following months. When the Allied armies’ drive up the Italian peninsula was stalled by the German line, the unit was ordered to join the assault on the heavily defended German position of Monte Cassino, which boasted an

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\(^{162}\) Headquarters, 442\(^{\text{nd}}\) Regimental Combat Team, “Narrative History of the 100\(^{\text{th}}\) Infantry Battalion, 2 September 1943-11 June 1944,” file INBN-100-03, National Archives.
elaborate series of minefields and fortified bunkers. There, the 100th and other Allied units suffered horrible casualties. In the case of the 100th, 1,300 men had been in the unit when it entered Italy; after Cassino, there were just under 600 men capable of combat, which earned the battalion the nickname the “Purple Heart Battalion.” From January 1944 to June 1944, the 100th fought ferociously at Monte Cassino, and eventually succeeded in clearing the Allied pathway to Rome.

Monte Cassino was the last campaign that the original 100th Infantry Battalion completed. From that point on, replacements from the new volunteer 442nd Regimental Combat Team began filling its ranks. Upon hearing of the 100th’s outstanding military performance, George Marshall, Army Chief of Staff offered to send the battalion to shape up other American units. He later wrote:

So we sent messages to [American] commanders in Europe and, as I recall… Eisenhower’s staff people declined them. Then I offered them to General Clark

and his reply was, “We will take anybody that will fight.” So I sent this battalion over to him….I will say [this] about the Japanese fighting in these units… they were superb!... They took terrific casualties. They showed rare courage and tremendous fighting spirit….We used them quite dramatically in the great advance in Italy…165

While in the previous year the Nisei who were active in the service before Pearl Harbor had found themselves suddenly released from duty, and all Nisei eligible to serve in the military had been classified as “4-C” enemy aliens, now, with the need for more troops as the war continued, the War Department became open to the idea of creating a Nisei unit, although it believed it should be a segregated unit. Strong lobbying in the US for the creation of Nisei units, as well as the outstanding performance of the 100th, helped lead the War Department to consider creating other Japanese American military units, mainly for use in the European Theater. On 1 February 1943, President Roosevelt approved the proposal of the War Department to “organize a team consisting of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent.”166 FDR finally admitted:

No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country wherever his skills will make the greatest contribution – whether it be in the ranks of the armed forces, war production, agriculture, government service, or other work essential to the war effort.167

And so, the excellent training record of the 100th Battalion and the steady stream of petitions and lobbying by prominent civilian and military personnel helped convince President Roosevelt and the War Department to re-open military service to Nisei

165 “100th,” Go For Broke.
167 Tajiri, Through Innocent Eyes, 105.
volunteers. The first Nisei unit to be created was the 442\textsuperscript{nd} Regimental Combat Team (RCT).

Furthermore, the Office of War Information, President Roosevelt, and the War Department made the decision to call for a Nisei fighting unit in order to use it as a propaganda weapon to counter Japanese and other Axis claims of American racism towards the incarcerated Japanese Americans.\textsuperscript{168} An official booklet published by the War Relocation Authority entitled “Nisei in Uniform,” presented the notion of Nisei fighting in the war from the most extreme Americanized view possible, and used the new unit was to be the 442\textsuperscript{nd} Regimental Combat Team as its focus. From the first page of its booklet, the WRA explicitly made an effort to address and disavow any Axis claims of American racism. The preliminary page was emblazoned with the headline, “AMERICANS, ALL!” and underneath there was a short but powerful introductory paragraph that proclaimed, “every race and nation from which our population has been drawn is represented among the young Americans who are fighting side by side to overthrow the Axis powers.”\textsuperscript{169} It continued on to describe German Americans to smashing the German Nazis and Italian Americans driving the Axis forces from Italy, concluding with the statement that, “men whose parents came from Japan are showing that devotion to America and gallantry in action are not determined by the slant of the eyes or the color of the skin.”\textsuperscript{170}

Representatives of the War Department who were assigned to the relocation centers to raise recruits for the 442\textsuperscript{nd} explained the reasons for the formation of a

\textsuperscript{168} Niiya, “Japanese Americans in military.”
\textsuperscript{170} War Relocation Authority, \textit{Nisei}.
seggregated Japanese unit that the WRA delicately referred to as “a distinctively Japanese American unit in the Army”\(^{171}\):

If your strength were diffused through the Army of the United States – as has already been done with many other Americans of your blood, relatively little account would be taken of your action. You would be important only as manpower – nothing more. But united, and working together, you would become a symbol of something greater than your individual selves, and the effect would be felt both in the United States and abroad. All other Americans would long remember what you had done for the country, and you would be a living reproach to those who have been prejudiced against you because of your Japanese blood.\(^{172}\)

When the call went out for volunteers for the 442\(^{nd}\), the initial goal was for 3,000 volunteers from the mainland and 1,500 from Hawaii. However, it soon became apparent that those quotas were reversed: embittered by their confinement, barely 1,000 Nisei volunteered from behind barbed wire. But in Hawaii, where there had been no mass evacuation, more than 10,000 Nisei stepped forward. The new recruits were sent to Camp Shelby in Mississippi for basic training.\(^{173}\)

The 442\(^{nd}\) Regimental Combat Team included the 522\(^{nd}\) Field Artillery Battalion, 232\(^{nd}\) Combat Engineer Company, 206\(^{th}\) Army Ground Force Band, as well as an Antitank Company, Cannon Company, Service Company, medical detachment, headquarters companies, and three infantry battalions. The 1\(^{st}\) Infantry Battalion remained in the States to train new recruits, while the 2\(^{nd}\) and 3\(^{rd}\) Battalions joined the 100\(^{th}\) Battalion, which was already fighting in Italy. When the much-decorated 100\(^{th}\) Battalion was incorporated into the 442\(^{nd}\) in June 1944, it was allowed to keep its original designation because of its outstanding combat record. Thus, the infantry units of the 422\(^{nd}\) RCT were the 100\(^{th}\), 2\(^{nd}\) and 3\(^{rd}\) Battalions.\(^{174}\)

\(^{171}\) War Relocation Authority, Nisei.
\(^{172}\) War Relocation Authority, Nisei.
\(^{173}\) Niiya, “Japanese Americans in military.”
\(^{174}\) “442\(^{nd}\) Regimental Combat Team,” Go For Broke, last modified 2006, http://goforbroke.org/history/history_historical_veterans_442nd.asp.
The motto of the 442\textsuperscript{nd} Regimental Combat Team was “Go for Broke.” As a gambling term that meant risking everything on one great effort to win big, it was perfect for the Nisei of the 442\textsuperscript{nd} – they were fighting two wars: one against the Axis powers abroad and one against the prejudice of their home turf in America.

The Hawaii-born Nisei, also known as “Buddaheads,” made up about two-thirds of the regiment, while the remaining third were Nisei from the mainland, also known as “Kotonks.” The term “Buddahead” originated as a general term for a person of Japanese descent, but soon came to be associated with Japanese Americans from Hawaii during World War II.\textsuperscript{175} Meanwhile, the Hawaiians derided the mainlanders by referring to them as “Kotonks,” meaning that they were empty-headed. “Kotonk” was said to be the sound that an empty coconut makes hitting the ground, and is still used occasionally in Hawaii today.\textsuperscript{176}

In April 1943, when the islanders and mainlanders arrived for training at Camp Shelby, they immediately began to fight with each other because of their different perspectives based on where they grew up. The Buddhaheads represented the largest ethnic group in a small island community, which was much different from the situation on the mainland. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, the Buddhaheads, like everyone else on the island, responded to the emergency; no one rejected them as they pitched in to aid the wounded, give blood and bury the dead. But in Mississippi they met racial discrimination; when the Hawaii boys used to go out around Camp Shelby to the nearby Southern cities, they would come back and complain, “You know, the American people, they’re very cold. We go to USO, and the girls don’t treat us, say we’re different. We

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\footnotetext{176}{Yenne, Rising Sons, 64.}
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look different. We’re just not accepted. They think we’re Japanese, not Americans.”

They were not accustomed to the prejudice and discrimination typical of the mainland. But the Kotonks were, as they were members of a small minority group who had already experienced severe discrimination on the mainland, especially when their families were locked up in incarceration camps. In fact, most of the mainland soldier had been in the camps themselves. “The army thought yeah, they’re all Japanese Americans, throw them all in together, but they didn’t realize there are differences.”

Most of the conflicts between the Hawaiians and the mainlanders were a result of miscommunication, stereotyping, and differences in culture:

The California boys came in with their “pachuko” haircuts (sliced back ducktail haircuts), those zoot suits, those great big hats and the pants that came down tight around the ankles…. They were fancy, way out dressed and the Hawaii boys came with their bare feet, T-shirts and pidgin English. It was like throwing two roosters in a pen together.

As this quote suggests, language acted in a divisive way between the Hawaiians and the mainlanders. Japanese Americans from Hawaii were raised in the multicultural stew of the plantation economy that led them to speak a variation of the Hawaiian Creole Language, most commonly known as Pidgin English, or just plain Pidgin. According to the Hawaii native Senator Daniel Inouye, Pidgin was “absolutely foreign to the mainlanders because our pidgin was very unique and exclusive for Hawaii.” It was a combination of strange grammatical construction and a mixture of Hawaiian, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, and broken English that originated as the only means of communication between the different ethnic plantation workers. In Hawaii, those who spoke standard English were viewed as “arrogant race traitors who thought they were too

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180 Daniel Inouye, Interview by Tom Ikeda (primary) and Beverly Kashino (secondary), Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Honolulu, HI, June 30, 1998.
good to speak like everyone else.” But for the mainlanders who all spoke regular English, half of the time none of them could recognize what the Hawaiians were saying and the two groups had a difficult time understanding each other at the beginning.

The Hawaiians thought the mainlanders were sullen and snobby, and not confident and friendly. They regarded the mainland group as being only out for themselves and of being overly concerned with what other people thought. One Hawaiian Nisei veteran of the 442nd recalled probing the mainlanders with questions like, “Hey, you mainland guys, something wrong your pupuli [crazy] heads?” and the mainlanders would not understand and ask “what’s wrong with it?” “Aw, you buggas, you sit quiet, never do anything wrong. Don’t go out and get polluted and stuff like that.” Meanwhile, the mainlanders saw the Hawaiians as loud, uncouth and bullying men, who engaged in frequent brawls.

The Hawaiians were also quite prone to jump into fights. Many misunderstandings, especially when fueled by alcohol, turned into fistfights. In fact, that was one of the factors that led up to the mainlanders receiving the name “Kotonk,” because it was the sound their heads made when they hit the floor. Tosh Yasutake, a “Kotonk” veteran of the 442nd, recalled in a 2002 interview how the “Hawaiian fellows” did not take to “being bossed around too much I guess, being told what to do and… any authoritarian type of thing, they really fought it pretty hard and they’re a lot more, they want[ed] to be more independent.” Another distinction between the Hawaiians and mainlanders was how the Hawaiian Nisei tended to stick together in groups:

The local guys are group-oriented whereas on the mainland it seemed like they brought up, you know, each had to fend for themselves type of thing. And if some

\[181\] Niiya, “Buddahead.”
\[182\] Rudy Tokiwa, Interview by Tom Ikeda (primary) and Judy Niizawa (secondary), Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Honolulu, HI, July 2-3, 1998.
\[183\] “442nd,” Go For Broke.
\[184\] Tosh Yasutake, Interview by Alice Ito (primary) and Tom Ikeda (secondary), Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Seattle, WA, November 14, 2002.
Hawaiian got in trouble, especially with some *haole* [white/Caucasian] soldier from the Texas division that wanted to hassle, all the Hawaii guys would jump in, you know. They wouldn’t let the one guy go and fight his own battle; they all jumped in and helped him. Well, eventually, I think the mainland guys got to appreciate that, that if any outsider insulted them or called them “Japs” or anything like that, the Nisei in the 442, as a group, would react and wouldn’t take that kind of crap.\(^{185}\)

Because the friction between the two groups was so bad, the military high command considered disbanding the 442\(^{nd}\) because they thought they could never get the men to fight together overseas as a unit. Therefore, the Army decided to send some of the Hawaii recruits to visit the internment camps in Arkansas. The Hawaiian men previously thought that the Jerome and Rohwer Relocation Centers were little towns with Japanese families, but once their trucks rolled past the barbed wire fence, past the guard towers armed with machine guns pointed at the unarmed internees, past the rough and uniform barracks where whole families were crowded in small compartments and forced to live without any privacy – suddenly the Buddahead understood. Soon after, word of the camps swiftly spread, and the Buddahead gained a whole new kind of respect for the Kotonks. Immediately, the men in the 442\(^{nd}\) became united as one. According to the ex-Buddahead and highly esteemed Senator Daniel K. Inouye,

Overnight the situation in Camp Shelby changed because the word went out like wildfire. The experiment worked. I went back and said, “I got to tell you guys about these Mainlanders. You won’t believe what I’m going to tell you.” And this must have gone on in every hut throughout camp. The next day, you thought you were visiting a new regiment. We were blood brothers. The regiment was not formed when we volunteered, nor when we arrived in Camp Shelby – it was formed after this visit.\(^ {186}\)

From May 1943 through February 1944, the men trained together for combat. They excelled at maneuvers and learned to operate as a fully functional team. In March,

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\(^{185}\) Ted Tsukiyama Interview.  
\(^{186}\) Dorothy Matsuo, *Boyhood to War: History and Anecdotes of the 442\(^{nd}\) Regimental Combat Team* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1992), 73.
General George Marshall inspected the regiment, and in April the regiment packed up. On 1 May 1944, the men finally boarded ships destined for Europe.\textsuperscript{187}

Perhaps the most legendary episode in the history of the 100\textsuperscript{th} Infantry/442\textsuperscript{nd} Regimental Combat Team was its rescue of “the Lost Battalion” in the Vosges Mountains of France at the end of October 1944. As the 36\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division, which included both the Nisei 100\textsuperscript{th}/442\textsuperscript{nd} RCT and the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the 141\textsuperscript{st} Texas Regiment (the soon-to-be “Lost Battalion”), pushed toward Germany in late 1944, they faced some of their heaviest German resistance, as well as the harsh terrain of in the Vosges Mountains of eastern France. On the front lines of the Allied assault, Major General John E. Dahlquist, commander of the 36\textsuperscript{th} Division, pushed the 141\textsuperscript{st} Regiment forward to liberate more French territory. The Texans moved quickly through the trees and, in their haste to recapture more territory, unknowingly separated themselves from their fellow soldiers and found themselves surrounded by German units. The 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion lost contact with headquarters and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalions made little headway in their failed attempts to reach their comrades.\textsuperscript{188} By October, 275 Texans, members of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion, 141\textsuperscript{st} Regiment, 36\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division, were trapped on a steep ridge in the forest east of Biffontaine, cut off from the rest of their regiment and surrounded by Germans.\textsuperscript{189} The Allies attempted to drop food and supplies to the men, but as temperatures fell, rations began to run out and the conditions of the wounded deteriorated. The situation was desperate for the men of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion.

\textsuperscript{187} “442\textsuperscript{nd},” Go For Broke.
\textsuperscript{189} Chang, “I Can Never,” 38.
After two previous attempts to rescue the 1st Battalion failed, Dahlquist turned to the 442nd. The fighting was difficult and the Nisei had to struggle tenaciously for every yard of ground.

[The Germans] were so well entrenched, we had a hell of a time getting through. A lotta’ there we’d have to just crawl, crawl from position to position, stick your head out just a little bit and fire, and keep moving up slowly at a time, yeah. That was really rough fighting.191

By 29 October, they had fought for five long days, but had not made much progress against the heavily entrenched Germans. At some points during the battle the Nisei had found themselves outnumbered by as many as four to one and, due to their high casualty rate, resorted to final attacks of desperation. “We yelled our heads off and charged and

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191 Fred Matsumura, Interview by Tom Ikeda (primary) and Beverly Kashino (secondary), Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Honolulu, HI, July 2, 1998.
shot the head off everything that moved… we didn’t care anymore… we acted like a bunch of savages.”

Finally, on 30 October, after six days of violent and frenzied combat, the 442\textsuperscript{nd} broke through to the Lost Battalion. The Nisei rescued the 211 men who remained of the initial group of 275 Texans who had been surrounded. Many from both units were wounded or killed by mines, sniper fire, heavy artillery and spraying shrapnel. One survivor recalled, “In that battle, just about everybody was injured or killed…. But everybody got injured.” “Our guys were shot up and we could hear them in the forest, crying out for their mothers. Even the Germans… I could hear them crying in the darkness.” The 36\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division suffered staggering casualty rates in the process and those companies that participated in the final push to reach the 141\textsuperscript{st} were reduced on average to less than half their normal full strength after the battle. During the six days the 442\textsuperscript{nd} fought to rescue the Lost Battalion, 54 men were killed and many, many more were wounded and sent to hospitals. At the time the US Army listed the rescue of the Lost Battalion as one of the top ten battles in its history.

One of the best military units within the 442\textsuperscript{nd} Regimental Combat Team was the 522\textsuperscript{nd} Field Artillery Battalion. As one of the fastest, most efficient artillery units in the European Theater, the 522\textsuperscript{nd} supported the infantry by shooting heavy artillery fire from 105mm Howitzers. (A Howitzer was a type of long-range cannon with a barrel that was about 4.1 inches wide.) Yet, the 522\textsuperscript{nd} was not best known for its acclaimed rapid firepower, rather, it was best known for the role it played in the liberation of Jewish

\begin{footnotes}
\item Grubb, “Rescue.”
\item Fred Matsumura Interview.
\item Chang, “I Can Never,” 38.
\end{footnotes}
survivors of the Landsberg-Kaufering Dachau Death March and Dachau sub-camps in the last months of the war in Europe.\textsuperscript{196}

In March 1945, the 522\textsuperscript{nd} Field Artillery Battalion left the 442\textsuperscript{nd} RCT at the Maritime Alps. It became a roving battalion, shifting to whatever command most needed the unit, which was how it came to find itself at one of the slave labor sub-camps of Dachau on 29 April 1945. In a small Bavarian town east of Munich, the Nisei of the 522\textsuperscript{nd} stumbled upon what appeared to be some barracks encircled by barbed wire. Technician Fourth Grade Ichiro Imamura described it in his diary:

I watched as one of the scouts used his carbine to shoot off the chain that held the prison gates shut…. [They saw bodies inside.] They weren’t dead, as he had first thought. When the gates swung open, we got our first good look at the prisoners. Many of them were Jews. They were wearing striped prison suits and round caps. It was cold and the snow was two feet deep in some places. There were no German guards. The prisoners struggled to their feet… They shuffled weakly out of the compound. They were like skeletons – all skin and bones…. \textsuperscript{197}

The Nisei found this camp mostly deserted because Hitler and Himmler had already ordered the camp commanders to march the prisoners south to the Austrian border, away from the advancing Allied armies. The brutal death marches began on 24 April. By 2 May, the death march had reached the outskirts of Waakirchen, near the Austrian border. On that day, soldiers from the 522\textsuperscript{nd} were patrolling near Waakirchen and came across an open field with several hundred “lumps in the snow.” But when the soldiers inspected them more closely, they realized that the “lumps” were people: some had been shot, some were dead from exposure, but hundreds were actually alive – yet only barely.

But it was really sad. They were just so hungry. They were sick then and lot of ‘em without teeth. They were half dead, actually. And they, but they came out of

\textsuperscript{196}“522\textsuperscript{nd} Field Artillery Battalion,” Go For Broke, last modified 2006, http://goforbroke.org/history/history_historical_veterans_522nd.asp.

\textsuperscript{197}“Central Europe Campaign – (522\textsuperscript{nd} Field Artillery Battalion),” Go For Broke, last modified 2006, http://goforbroke.org/history/history_historical_campaigns_central.asp.
camp. And we were told not to feed ‘em because they hadn’t eaten for so long that if we fed ‘em anything that they would have died there anyway.\(^{198}\)

For the next three days, the Nisei soldiers carried the survivors, clad in black and white prison garb, with shaven heads, sunken eyes and hollowed cheeks, into warm houses and barns. The soldiers gave them blankets, water and only tiny bits of food because of their severe malnourishment.\(^{199}\)

Josef Erbs, a survivor of Dachau, never learned the name of his rescuer but remembered his unusual appearance:

> On April 29, a big Oriental man saved my life. I was 18 years old, 76 pounds at the time, barely alive. He picked me up from the ground, inside the camp. His uniform had an emblem – blue, with a white hand and white torch. He was a young Asian man with the American Army. Never before had I seen an Asian man or a black man….\(^{200}\)

That man was saved by a Japanese American, as were many others. After the war, one of the men of the 522\(^{nd}\), Rudy Tokiwa, was fortunate enough to meet and form a warm friendship with a Dachau survivor. Although they had not met at Dachau, Tokiwa’s Jewish friend made a point to thank him, “If it wasn’t for you guys, I wouldn’t be here. Not that, not that you were the one that picked me up or anything. But because of your group of people and what they were fighting for. Because of that, I’m here today. I respect you people and I bow my head to you.”\(^{201}\)

Some have claimed that the men of the 522\(^{nd}\) had participated in one of the “greatest ironies of World War II,” because, as members of a persecuted minority, the Japanese Americans saved members of another persecuted minority, the European Jews. Yes, both minority groups were victims of a blatant disregard for civil liberties and human rights by their governments, but how can anyone even possibly conceive the idea

\(^{198}\) Minoru “Min” Tsubota, Interview by Tom Ikeda (primary) and Tetsuden Kashima (secondary), Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, Seattle, WA, August 18, 2003.

\(^{199}\) “Central Europe,” Go For Broke.


\(^{201}\) Rudy Tokiwa Interview.
that it is acceptable to compare the two? In absolutely no way could the deadly, unimaginable, gruesome and horrifying evils of the Holocaust even compare to the United States government’s treatment of the incarceration of Japanese Americans. The interned Nikkei were never subjected to the cruel treatment that the Jews were, and their incarceration never spawned any of the same damaging and condemning effects of Hitler’s camps that transformed humanity into beaten, destroyed and helpless beings.

What I saw… was too horrible for words to describe. It was pitiful. How could anyone be that cruel to human beings? We didn’t know how important what we were doing was in liberating the death march of Dachau.\textsuperscript{202}

The 442\textsuperscript{nd} Regimental Combat Team is considered to be the most decorated infantry regiment in the history of the US Army for the length of its active service. The 442\textsuperscript{nd} was awarded eight Presidential Unit Citations, originally known as the Distinguished Unit Citation, which is awarded to units of the Armed Forces for extraordinary heroism in action. There were also 21 members of the 442\textsuperscript{nd} who were awarded the Medal of Honor, the United States of America’s highest military honor, awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty.

\textsuperscript{202}“Central Europe,” Go For Broke.
Atonement by Apology And Monetary Restitution

“To undo a mistake is always harder than not to create one originally but we seldom have the foresight. Therefore we have no choice but to try to correct our past mistakes.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

On 17 December 1944, the War Department announced the lifting of the West Coast exclusion orders, and the War Relocation Authority simultaneously announced that the relocation centers would be closed within one year. The initial reactions of the evacuees varied because some immediately returned to the West Coast, while some others vowed to never leave the centers. Alas, some of the first to return to the West Coast encountered violence and hostility and had an immensely difficult time finding housing and jobs. Others had more success across the country, since many feared returning to the hostile West Coast and found refuge in cities like Denver, Salt Lake City and Chicago.

When the closing of the camps was first announced, many were frightened and unsure of how to live their lives outside of the barbed fence wire communities they had come to identify as home for the past three years. They were frightened of how the outside world would treat them since public opinion was one of the leading causes for their mass incarceration. Many were terrified of being thrown together with whites after the segregated life of the camps, while there were even those who felt shame when they were let out of camp. When Jeanne Wakatsuki, the author and leading character in her autobiographical memoir, Farewell To Manzanar, learned of her own release, she was forced to face her future and feared the uncertainty it would bring. She believed that the only thing waiting for her outside the gates of Manzanar was a world filled with hate.
Through her active imagination, Jeanne soon found herself haunted by a nightmarish version of the outside world filled with a hatred that made her sick:

It was the humiliation. That continuous, unnamed ache I had been living with was precise and definable now. Call it the foretaste of being hated. I knew ahead of time that if someone looked at me with hate, I would have to allow it, to swallow it, because something in me, something about me deserved it. At ten I saw that coming, like a judge’s sentence, and I would have stayed inside the camp forever rather than step outside and face such a moment.203

Others were reluctant to leave the relocation centers, not because of their fear of the outside world, but because of their age. There were thousands of the elderly who knew readjustment to outside conditions would be very difficult for them because they now lacked the energy or capital to make a fresh start in a new location of the nation.

Evacuees had to relocate on their own. The WRA provided only the minimum assistance of $25 per person, train fare and meals on route for those with less than $500 in cash. Very few could come back to their prewar holdings, for instance, only about 25 percent of the prewar farm operators still retained their property.204 As might be expected, many of the internees left when ordered, and by September over 15,000 evacuees a month were leaving the various centers. Yet many had no place to go since they had lost their homes and businesses in the relocation. In the end, the WRA had to resort to forced evictions of those reluctant to leave the camps by giving the remaining evacuees train fare to the point of their evacuation in order to make them leave. All the relocation centers were finally closed by the end of 1945 and were left abandoned. On 15 May 1946, the last WRA field office was closed and on 30 June 1946, the WRA was officially disbanded.205

Over 40 years later, in the year 1988, Congress finally apologized for the mass wartime relocation of Japanese Americans by stating that relocation was “motivated

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203 Houston, *Farewell*, 130.
205 Burton, *Confinement*. 
largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.”

Remedial action was recommended and Congress acted to give redress, setting aside $500 million. On 10 August 1988, President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act into law and a “Civil Liberties Act of 1988: Questions and Answers” information packet was mailed to all those interned by the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division’s Office of Redress Administration. My grandmother, Setsuko Kawashiri Speck, received the mailing, which said:

The purposes of the Act are to acknowledge and apologize for the fundamental injustice of the evacuation, relocation, and internment, to make restitution, and to fund a public education program to prevent the recurrence of any similar event in the future.

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Under the Act, the responsibility for making restitution was given to the Attorney General, who in turn established the Office of Redress Administration (ORA). The ORA was charged with identifying, locating, and making payment in the amount of $20,000 to each eligible individual. There were an estimated 65,000 eligible recipients, with payments to be made to the oldest first. Among those eligible was my grandmother, who received a flyer with the headline, “ATTENTION! IMPORTANT NOTICE” as a note of reassurance that she had been verified and was eligible to receive redress under the Act. Starting in October 1990, the ORA was authorized to make up to 25,000 redress payments each fiscal year, in order of birth. Due to her date of birth, Setsuko was not eligible to receive her redress payment until the fiscal year of 1993, and once she received it she allocated it to paying off her family’s mortgage.


208 The Office of Redress Administration, Important notice on the eligibility to receive redress published by the Office of Redress Administration, 1990, Private family collection.
Setsuko was also among those who received checks and letters from the President. Setsuko’s letter came from President George Bush in October 1990. Bush’s letter contained an apology acknowledging that money and words alone could not “restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation’s resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals.”\(^{209}\) Although one could never fully right the wrongs of the past, Bush declared that they could take a stand for justice and recognize the serious injustices done to the Japanese Americans during the war. He concluded the short letter with the apology:

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.\(^{210}\)


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\(^{210}\) Bush, Letter of apology.
Although the war ended over seventy years ago many members of the present Japanese American community seek to preserve their heritage and the dark wartime legacy of internment, and to educate both Japanese Americans and the public at large about that experience. The majority of present-day Japanese American organizations and associations are centered around the preservation and education of the legacy left behind by the camps. For instance, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), as the oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization, still strives today to promote a world that honors diversity through the respect of values such as equality and social justice – values that were denied to the Japanese Americans when they were forced into a life of incarceration behind barbed wire.
Conclusion

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”

The Japanese American experience during World War II was filled with complexities that I would have never discovered without studying the three different aspects of Japanese wartime experience. These various experiences led to varied results. Therefore, in accord with the three main focuses of my thesis, I have drawn three separate conclusions from my research as well.

One of the most prominent results of the wartime experience was the Americanization of the Japanese inhabiting the United States. The WRA specifically pursued an Americanization policy within the Nisei generation of American-born citizens as its main target. But the Japanese themselves, even in the camps, wanted to be Americans – the children played baseball and American games and practice the oath of allegiance. The result was a new kind of cultural amalgamation, combining both Japanese and American identities. Ironically, even after the prejudiced wartime treatment the Japanese Americans had been subjected to, both the Issei and Nisei emerged from the war with an adopted American culture. The entire structure, programs, and community lifestyle of the relocation camps were organized in complete American fashion, and helped conditioned the Japanese internees into embracing the American lifestyle. After the end of the war and the closing of the camps, the Japanese dispersed throughout the country and had to integrate themselves into American society. The Japanese Americans no longer clung to the need to live in segregated Japanese communities as they were
accustomed to do before the war; instead, their wartime experience had prepared them for a more American lifestyle and led them down the path to living a much more culturally American life.

Studying the dual cultural identities of the Nisei generation and the people of Hawaii’s general acceptance of the many cultures that constituted their uniquely interethnic Hawaiian society has led me to see the importance of diversity. As a range of different races and cultures continue to mix with one another and are introduced into our country, it is crucial for us all to maintain an open-mind and consent to embrace such ethnic diversity. Through the successful cultural co-habitation, cultural amalgamation, and the equally successful interracial interactions that dominated the Hawaiian Islands throughout the past three centuries, a more tolerant, progressive, and socially aware environment has been produced. The proof lies in the Hawaiian Nisei soldiers of the 100th and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, who had rarely been targeted with the same cruel and vicious acts of racism that their mainland counterparts had been subjected to and came to accept as a way of life. This report contains countless examples of the terrible actions and detrimental effects that prejudice, ignorance, and discrimination have been produced throughout the world; such was the basis for the Japanese American internment and the Holocaust. In order to form a more educated, peaceful, and morally sound world, society must wholly embrace diversity and adopt an accepting and tolerant worldview.

As demonstrated during World War II, “military necessity” can easily lead to a corruption of our nation’s values. Even a democratic nation that promises “liberty and justice for all” can be seduced by the great powers that could be seized during wartime by the leaders of the nation. The United States of America was a nation whose government abused its powers by justifying its actions as a wartime necessity. The mass relocation and incarceration of over 110,000 innocent Japanese lives was one major violation of
civil liberties that the government pursued, validating it as a “military necessity.” Another was the harsh rule that came to grip the Territory of Hawaii while under martial law. The writ of habeas corpus was suspended, strict laws were heavily enforced, well past what was required, and all civilians were haunted by the very real possibility that they could be dragged into the relentlessly unfair and chaotic provost courts and declared guilty of a crime they had not committed. During times of war, widespread fear and hysteria can lead to a nation ruled by irrationality and corruption.
Appendix: Family Genealogy From The Perspective Of Malia Ogawa

KAWASHIRI FAMILY

Issei Generation

Great-Grandfather Yasukichi Kawashiri (b. 1899)
Great-Grandmother Toshiko Sumi Kawashiri (b. 1905)

Nisei Generation

Great-Aunt Hideko Kawashiri (b. 1927)
Grandmother Setsuko Kawashiri (b. 1929)
Great-Uncle Takashi Kawashiri (b. 1931)
Great-Uncle Kiyoshi Kawashiri (b. 1933)
Great-Aunt Yuriko Kawashiri (b. 1936)
Great-Uncle Shigeru Kawashiri (b. 1938)
Great-Aunt Chiyo Kawashiri (b. 1940)

In the summer of 1942, the Kawashiri family was relocated to the Poston camp in Arizona. They were assigned to block 226, 11A and 11B – two rooms for a family with seven children, plus their grandfather and Uncle Yoshito. During the next three years, the Kawashiris tried to live their lives as normal as possible. They walked everywhere they went; sometimes Setsuko would walk six or seven miles with her Grandfather to go visit her aunt. The Kawashiri children always tried to turn the camp into games by sneaking around in the bushes and shrubs behind their block. Sets was even recruited to take over one of the two 4th grade classes every half-day of school. As time went on, people, especially the young adults, began to relocate to the outside. Uncle Yoshi and a group of his friends first went to Utah, where they worked in the sugarbeet fields, and then went on to Chicago. Shortly thereafter, he was inducted into the Army and served most of his time in Belgium.
Setsuko posing with the leaves of a tree during her incarceration at Poston, Private family collection, date unknown.

The Kawashiri children and a group of their friends in Poston, Private family collection, date unknown.
The Kawashiris were interned for three years; upon entering incarceration, Setsuko was 12, and upon their release in 1945, she was 15. Instead of returning to California, her family moved to New Jersey and lived there for seven years. But in 1950, everyone in the family returned to California, except for Setsuko. At 22 years old, she headed to Washington D.C. to look for a job in the public health service.

Setsuko as a young and ambitious woman in her 20’s, Private family collection, date unknown.

Sets worked in the government’s public health service department for seven years until she married my (non-Japanese) Grandfather, Chicago native Robert (Bob) Speck in 1957.

The wedding of Bob and Setsuko Speck, Private family collection, 1957.
In 1958, one year later, Bob and Sets were living in Virginia when they welcomed their firstborn child, Susan (Susie) V. Speck, into the world. In 1960, they had my mother, Margaret (Margie) L. Speck, and in 1961 had their first son, Robert (Bob) J. Speck. Four years later, in 1965, they had their last child, William (Bill) R. Speck. The Specks lived in Virginia for three more years until they moved to the tropical paradise of Honolulu, Hawaii in July of 1968.
In 1890, at the age of six, my Great-Grandmother Momoyo was adopted into the home of Ryujiro Ogawa and his wife Yei. Under the Tokugawa Shogunate, Ryujiro had served as a samurai at Edo Castle to Ii Kamon No Kami Naosuke, a powerful ally and Chief Minister of the 15th Shogun – Tokugawa Yoshinobu. Ryujiro was seriously wounded in the battle between the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Meiji forces at Ueno-yama. He asked to be killed, but the Meiji officer in charge admired his courage and skill and had Ryujiro taken to his home in Tokyo to be nursed back to health. Ryujiro excelled in Kendo and became a teacher to the young recruits of the Meiji forces and was later appointed to the position of Chief of Police of the Kanagawa Prefecture.
The site of the Ogawa home was above Yokohama bay on Aoki-machi, in the capital city of the Kanagawa Prefecture. In the new Ogawa household, Momoyo lived a completely different life as a privileged young lady. She studied the Japanese traditions of flower arranging, shamisen, kabuki dance, poetry writing, tea ceremony, and needlework. Her mother Yei told Momoyo about the samurai code of honor, *bushido*, which made a great impression on the young child and would later direct her way of life. At age 14, she moved to Tokyo to continue her education at Jissen Girls High School in Akasaka, where she also had private English lessons with Takashima Kaemon’s daughter who was to be married to Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi’s son.
In 1892, Momoyo’s future husband, Toyojiro, left Japan for America’s West Coast. From 1893-1895 he served aboard American naval ships as a mess attendant. On 4 April 1893, he signed on to serve on the USS Hanler and served for seven months until 30 October. On 27 December 1894, he enlisted at Mare Island to serve on the USS Albatross and was discharged on 1 November 1895. During his service, he learned American cooking and received commendations from the ship’s captains.

The 20th century opened in Japan at a time threatened by war with Russia. Momoyo wished she were a boy so that she could join the Japanese Army and fight for her country, but because of her female gender, she decided instead that she could become a nurse and help the soldiers wounded in battle. The ex-samurai class had priority to enter and she attended the Japan Red Cross Hospital School in Shibuya, Tokyo.

After four years of training, she graduated in October 1903 as a part of the 21st graduating class, and hoped to be assigned to a military outfit. Instead, she was sent to the Imperial Palace to be the attendant to a 3-year-old member of the imperial family. Disappointed with her appointment, she resigned after a few months and returned to the Red Cross Hospital. She was then assigned to a Red Cross hospital ship, and served on three different ships for 6 months, each as a first class nurse. Momoyo worked for the naval officers and the fleet admiral, and received several decorations from the Emperor of Japan. She said her most exciting experience was hiding from the imperial Russian fleet among the little islands in the Sea of Japan. On shore, she served in military hospitals.
where they treated both Japanese and Russian soldiers, whose thick beards and long hair were full of lice that had to be shaven clean. The Russo-Japanese war ended in 1905 at the defeat of the Russian military, which had been considered more powerful and modernized than the Japanese. It was the first time the East had defeated a great Western power, and would over time transform the balance of power in East Asia and the strength of Japan as a world power.

On 19 December 1906, Momoyo and Toyojiro were married. Because Momoyo was carrying her adoptive father’s family name, which would otherwise end with her, the name “Ogawa” took priority over Toyojiro’s family name of “Akimoto,” and he had to take the Ogawa name. In February 1907, he left to establish himself in Hawaii. Momoyo and her mother Yei joined him in November, arriving in Honolulu on the steamship “America Maru.”

In 1908, Momoyo and Toyojiro had their firstborn child, Toyohiko (Ed) Ogawa, who was interestingly enough listed as “Edward Ogawa” in the 1940 census. Only a year later, the Ogawa’s first daughter, Kazuyo (Kay), was born in 1909. In 1912 followed another girl, Chidori, with still four more children born after her. Joseph (Joe) was next in 1915, then Yachiyo in 1918, my Grandfather Haruo in 1922, and finally the youngest, Amy, was born in 1924.
The Ogawa family lived in a little house on a small piece of property Toyojiro purchased at 1526 Enos Lane in the Makiki neighborhood of Honolulu. He tore down the existing old cottage to replace it with a 3-bedroom house that he built himself. This house remained the home of the Ogawa family for the next few generations, and it was where both my Papa (Grandfather Haruo) and my father Pat grew up.

Toyojiro was a “Jack-of-all-trades” man who tried many different businesses to make a living – teaching American style cooking to Japanese immigrants so they could find jobs in Honolulu, running a small grocery store, starting a business supplying some military bases with local produce and meats. His last job was as a personal chef for a Schofield Barracks general. Unfortunately, Toyojiro developed tuberculosis at a time when there were no effective medications and the disease was a death sentence. My Great-Grandfather died on 9 August 1924.

On 24 July 1924, just two weeks prior to Toyojiro’s death, Yei died bedridden in her home. Momoyo suffered the deaths of her husband and her mother within two weeks of each other. Then two months later, on 1 October 1924, 6-year-old Yachiyo died in isolation at the children’s hospital, diagnosed with diphtheria.

As a trained nurse, Momoyo became a midwife, and was considered one of the best in Honolulu. She also served as a special nurse at the Japanese Hospital when officials and high-ranking Japanese nationals were hospitalized there. In 1937 the Japan-China war began, and Momoyo returned to Japan for a year to do volunteer work for the Japan Red Cross Hospital, where she was received with a royal welcome.
All of the Ogawa children attended McKinley High School, but Chidori was the first to go to college and earn a degree from the University of Hawaii. This prompted her to move to the mainland in 1935, and it was there that she was still located when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7th. From May 1942 until January 1943, Chidori was interned at Santa Anita Assembly Center and the Heart Mountain Relocation Center. Fortunately, Chidori was able to take advantage of the early release program put forth by the WRA and only spent a short time interned. In a determination to do more for the war effort, she decided to enlist in the Women’s Army Air Corps (WAAC), and became the first Nisei woman from Hawaii to enlist in the military.
Chidori Ogawa dressed in full uniform, History of the Ogawa Family, circa 1944.

Chidori was assigned in Special Services as a librarian. She was Base Librarian at Colorado Springs, Colorado, the headquarters of the 15th Air Force, and then at Andrews Air Force Base, Strategic Air Command Headquarters in Washington D.C. She was discharged after four years in the service, on 2 June 1948.

My grandfather Haruo was only 19 at the time of Pearl Harbor and stayed at home during the war. His military service began with the Korean War, where he boxed in the Army and played both baseball and football against professional teams while on the Army’s travel team. In 1957, he married my part-Hawaiian Nana, Jeanette Hendrickson, and together they had my father, Patrick (Pat) Tadashi Ogawa in 1959.
My Great-Grandmother Momoyo never became an American citizen – once a Japanese, always a Japanese. She was very proud of her heritage but also proud of her children’s accomplishments as American citizens. She received 5 medals in her lifetime, three of which were from the Japan Red Cross. The last medal she received was on 18 February 1974, just a few months before she died at age 89. It was the “Sixth Order of Merit in the Order of Sacred Treasure” and was from the Emperor of Japan for her services in helping senior citizens at Kuakini Medical Center and as a nurse to society.
MY IMMEDIATE SPECK-OGAWA FAMILY

Sansei Generation
Margaret (Margie) Speck Ogawa (b. 1960)
Patrick (Pat) Tadashi Ogawa (b. 1959)

Yonsei Generation
Malia Susan Setsuko Ogawa (b. 1992)
Keoni Patrick Haruo Ogawa (b. 1995)
Nalani Jeanette Toshiko Ogawa (b. 1999)

On the 25th of July in 1987, my parents were married. After both obtaining their Bachelor’s Degrees at the University of Hawaii, they moved to Chicago and attended graduate school together at the Kellogg Business School of Northwestern for their Master’s Degrees in Business. In 1992, I was born. Three years later, my brother Keoni was born, and finally, in 1999, my little sister Nalani was born. All three of us were given Hawaiian first names, after our strong racial and cultural ties to Hawaii. Our middle names were all chosen in honor of one of our family members – Susan for my mother’s sister, Patrick for my father, and Jeanette for my father’s mother. Our parents chose to give us significant Japanese names as well – Setsuko for my mother’s mother, Haruo for my father’s father, and Toshiko for my mother’s grandmother.

Pat and Margie (left), January 2014, and The Ogawa kids in Hawaii – (left to right) Keoni, Nalani & Malia (right), circa early 2000s.
Unfortunately, all four of my grandparents have passed away at the time of this thesis. The last to leave us was the greatest inspiration for this study, my Grandma Setsuko, who died the day after my 21st birthday last year. I hope to honor all four of my grandparents with this piece.

*Haruo Ogawa (left), date unknown, and The final resting place of Haruo and Jeanette Ogawa at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, where the men and women who served in the US Armed Forces are forever honored (right).*

*Bob and Sets Speck (left), Grandma and Nalani on a family visit to Hawaii (center), Margie taking Sets on a walk around the neighborhood (right).*


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