

**Towson University
College of Graduate Studies and Research**

**JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMPS: EFFECT UPON WARTIME
AND POST-WAR MALE AND FEMALE GENDER ROLES WITHIN FAMILY
AND COMMUNITY**

By

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ABSTRACT

JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMPS: EFFECT UPON WARTIME AND POST-WAR GENDER ROLES WITHIN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Holly B. Turner

The purpose of this thesis is to educate readers about a topic that often is overlooked and to provide additional information and offer a new interpretation about the transformation of gender roles from Japanese American men and women who were sent to internment camps during WWII. Much historical literature written on gender and women during World War II in concentration camps has ignored the Japanese American experience. In part, because the gender analysis did not exist in the 1940's, postwar studies are only recently beginning to explore the effects of internment and the impact it had on the Japanese American family. In this study, I find that internment camps created greater levels of equality between men and women that were unprecedented and not in the offing within the Japanese American community prior to their state incarceration. Evidence presented here suggests these changes would have taken place at a much slower pace had the wartime experience been different. Internment and isolation accelerated the change.¹

This research matters because living in a post September 11th world, we must not repeat the same mistakes. The United States was founded on freedom, and to incarcerate a population based on their ethnic ancestry neglected fundamental principles of American democracy. The Japanese American lives were economically destroyed, emotionally

¹ Arai, Ivy D. "The Silent significant Minority" in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century*, Edited by Nicole Ann Dombrowski, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 226.

damaged, and cultural traditions devastated all because of racial prejudice and wartime hysteria. In addition, this paper will explore how families functioned, or did not, and the government impact on families. Japanese Americans were the only ethnic group interned, some may say that this will never happen again, but it happened before, it could happen again.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I. Establishment of Gender Ideals in Japan	7
Tokugawa Period (1600-1868).....	7
Meiji Period (1868-1912).....	8
Chapter II. Gender Roles and Relations in Japanese Communities Prior to Internment ...	12
The Frontier Period	12
The Settling Period	16
The Second Generation Period	22
Gender Roles Reversed	25
Instability leading up to Pearl Harbor	28
Chapter III. Gender Roles and Relations during Internment	30
Executive Order 9066 and Breakup of Families	30
Domestic Abuse.....	35
Communal Living	37
Homosocial Environments Offered Homosexual Possibilities	43
<i>Shikata Ga Nai</i>	47
Labor	49
Leisure Time	56
Educational Opportunities	60
Military Opportunities	64
Weakening of the <i>Issei</i> Family.....	68
Chapter IV. Conclusion	71
Bibliography	77
Curriculum Vita	83

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Japanese Immigration and Population, 1890-1940.....	14
Table 2. Ethnic Japanese, By Generation, 1920-1940	15
Table 3. Japanese Population Characteristics	21
Table 4. Japanese American Students Enrolled in College, 1943	61
Table 5. Japanese American College Students at West Coast/Elsewhere Schools.....	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. “Pictures Brides”	17
Figure 2. “Jap Woman Resents an Insult with Revolver”	19
Figure 3. Age, Sex, Nativity for Japanese Americans, 1940	24
Figure 4. Illustration of everyone Dressed alike During Internment	32
Figure 5. Map of Ten Internment Camps.....	34
Figure 6. A Typical Scene in the Barracks	38
Figure 7. Picture of a Line Waiting for Lunch Outside Mess Hall, Manzanar.....	41
Figure 8. Illustration of the Lack of Privacy in the Communal Bathroom	43
Figure 9. Women Performing Farm Labor, Minidoka.....	51
Figure 10. “Women Volunteer in Labor Shortage”	52
Figure 11. “List of Leisure Activities for Adults”	56
Figure 12. Picture of an <i>Issei</i> Couple Making Jewelry out of Seashells.....	58
Figure 13. Picture of Two Fatherless Families	67

INTRODUCTION

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt stated military necessity as the reason for incarcerating Japanese Americans.² Of the 120,000 innocent people that were interned, two-thirds were American citizens.³ The government mandated United States citizens and their immigrant elders to evacuate their homes and live in camps for up to four years, without due process of law or factual basis.⁴ The mass incarceration of Japanese Americans would have repercussions, such as the effect on gender roles within the family and community. Some family members were separated and put into different camps, mainly *Issei* or first generation males.⁵ There is a lacuna of research and writing on the Japanese American internment experience, with regards to gender roles and the “breakdown” of family. This is attributed to the gender analysis, which did not exist in the 1940’s. The importance of this subject is to inform others on the impact the United States government had on the family unit that were forcibly interned; and to make sure this does not happen again and incarcerate a minority group based on ancestral grounds.

The sources used throughout this paper include a number of primary sources: autobiographies and transcripts of people whom were interned, census records,

² Throughout this paper the term Japanese Americans will refer to Americans of Japanese heritage, either born in Japan or their descendants born in the United States.

³ Conrat, Maisie and Richard. *Executive Order 9066*. (Los Angeles: California Historical Society, 1972), 15.

⁴ Daniels, Roger. *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 50-56.

⁵ Bloom, Leonard. “Familial Adjustments of Japanese-Americans to Relocation: First Phase,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 8, No. 5. (Oct., 1943), 558.

internment camp newspapers, and many oral interviews archived at *Densho*.⁶ Some of this anecdotal evidence, while it pertains to first-hand accounts, the disadvantage could be a selective or distorted memory. There are many secondary sources used as well, such as articles and books. This will make the reader aware; my understanding of their history derives from this consolidated information, which provided me with an examination into the Japanese American internment experience and the effect on gender roles.

The internment of Japanese Americans from 1942 to 1946 impacted male and female gender roles within the Japanese American community. The *Issei* diasporic construction of patriarchal familial relations broke down due to the mass incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were native born American citizens.⁷ Cultural traditions and expectations came to the United States from Japan, but imprisonment altered their customs. Prior to internment, women's ideal roles were shaped by twin ideologies of domesticity; Victorian middle class and "Good Wife, Wise Mother" (*ryosai kenbo*).⁸ Men were ideally expected to serve as leader of the household, to earn an income and provide for the family. The decline of the *Issei* family was the product of age, which was inevitable, and the wartime evacuation and forced incarceration which hastened the process. It was the imprisonment of the Japanese American community that altered irreversibly the population, familial structure, and gender roles.⁹

⁶ Densho is an award-winning nonprofit organization based in Seattle, Washington, which collects video oral histories and documents regarding Japanese American internment in the United States during World War II. The Japanese word *densho* means "to pass on to future generations." The organization was founded in 1996 with a primary goal of collecting personal testimonies from Japanese Americans who were incarcerated in "internment" camps during World War II.

⁷ Conrat, Maisie and Richard, 15.

⁸ Garon, Sheldon. *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 115.

⁹ Matsumoto, Valerie. "Japanese American Women During World War II," *Frontiers: A Journal of*

The Victorian white middle class was the ideal model that the white lower class and other non-white races desired to emulate by economically progressing in hopes of gaining greater opportunities. The model consisted of a professional class family where the father worked and the mother stayed at home tending to the children and the domestic sphere.¹⁰ “In Japanese America, immigrant women concentrated on the construction of ideal domesticity commensurate with the middle-class white model, while their husbands tackled the more public dimension of racial politics, like propaganda, court battles, and economic struggles.”¹¹ Other than some Caucasian women in the South who had servants to manage, women’s economic management and productivity were absent from the American “cult of domesticity” opposite of Japan’s ideal “cult of productivity.”¹² In Japan, the women performing this “cult of productivity” were poor and single until they married, which contributed to Japan’s economic growth.¹³

While *Issei* family ideology was influenced by middle class Victorian norms, the “Good Wife, Wise Mother” was a Japanese ideology that crossed transnationally to America and characterized a submissive and obedient role of women to their husbands. “Traditional Japanese culture expected the women to ‘walk two steps behind a man.’”¹⁴ Unlike the majority of American women who were confined to the home, Meiji women could work outside the home in factories vital to Japan’s economic development, as well as patriotic and charitable activities.¹⁵ However, in America, some Japanese women did

Women Studies, Vol. 8, (1984), 6-14.

¹⁰ Azuma, Eiichiro. *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*, (2005), 7, 8.

¹¹ Azuma, 7, 8.

¹² Bernstein, Gail Lee. *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 172, 173.

¹³ Arai, 214.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 213.

¹⁵ Bernstein, 7.

not work outside the home because they were confronted with a society dominated by racism. Out of necessity, some women performed grueling physical labor doing farm work “to improve land that white often considered worthless” or helped their family’s small businesses succeed (such as a restaurant, a curio, or laundry).¹⁶ Women were expected to dedicate themselves to the needs of their husbands and to the development and well-being of their children as good citizens.¹⁷ This would change during internment with women and men sharing an equal partnership. Pre-1940s, Japanese women and American women were inferior to men and American culture was still dominated by a patriarchal society. It must be noted, challenges with patriarchy did not begin with internment, which will be discussed in Chapter II.

As the *Issei* came to develop a permanent settler mentality¹⁸ in America, they grew to believe that it was imperative for their children to become acculturated to dominant United States culture in hopes of assimilation and acceptance from the white middle class. The *Nisei* knew white America was not going to allow them to conform or welcome them. Milton Gordon has called this “Anglo Conformity,” assimilation to the customs of the Anglos.¹⁹ The *Nisei*, or second generation men sought to reproduce some of the rigid patriarchal structured gender relations adopted from Japan. However, over time, many younger *Nisei* men became relaxed and shared a more equal partnership with their wives. *Nisei* men still held a greater importance because of their income.²⁰

¹⁶ Austin, Allan A. *From Concentration Camps to Camps: Japanese American Students and World War II*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 5.

¹⁷ Ampiah, Kweke. “Noguchi Shika: The Eternal Mother of Modern Japan,” *Japan Forum*, Vol. 12, No. 1. (April, 2000), 78.

¹⁸ The 1924 Immigration Act was the key to this shift, which excluded Japanese immigration altogether.

¹⁹ Sone, Monica. *Nisei Daughter*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1953), xiv.

²⁰ Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko. *Transforming the Past: Tradition and Kinship among Japanese Americans*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 126-129.

Monica Sone first analyzed the *Nisei* in her 1953 study and agreed that the *Nisei* became trapped between two worlds: “the world of the Japanese community, and the world of the larger American Society.” The Japanese world was divided into “that of the *Issei* and that of the *Nisei*.”²¹ The *Issei* possessed permanent alien statuses and culturally were very different from the *Nisei*. The *Nisei* were Americans, but socially were secluded from white American society.²² The Caucasian majority did not accept or recognize Japanese cultural ideals and customs and they remained unassimilated into the community on the West Coast.²³

Eiichiro Azuma’s book *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* described how the Japanese Americans struggled to live “Between two Empires” of Japan and the United States and the attempt to carve out identity and community interstices between these two major powers. In the early twentieth century, labor and racism played a major role in understanding Japanese Americans’ presence in America. This generation was stuck between American and Japanese ideologies, but lived physically in America. Through acculturation the Japanese Americans thought they would become respected whites, but that was not the case.²⁴ Their gender and racial positions made them inferior to white America regardless of their education or profession. Japanese men were stereotyped by Caucasian men as effeminate due to their small stature and exotic facial features.²⁵ Japanese women were stereotyped as docile, silent, and passive due to her confinement in the home and her submissiveness

²¹ Sone, vii.

²² Ibid, xi, xii.

²³ Richardson, Susan B. *I call to Remembrance: Toyo Suyemoto’s Years of Internment*. (New Jersey: Rutgers University, 2007), 121.

²⁴ Azuma, 1-8.

²⁵ Howard, John. *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4, 5.

to her husband.²⁶ One of the reasons the *Issei* did not assimilate because they did not possess the English-language skills. The Caucasian majority resented the Japanese because many of the *Issei* could not speak or write the English language, the *Issei* could not become citizens of the United States, and the Japanese were not of like race.²⁷ It is important to understand challenges for *Issei* and their American born children living in America prior to World War II.

²⁶ Arai, 214.

²⁷ Richardson, 121.

CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHMENT OF GENDER IDEALS IN JAPAN

TOKUGAWA PERIOD (1600-1868)

Many Japanese immigrants to the United States traced their cultural beliefs and practices as far back to the ancestral culture of the Tokugawa period. The Tokugawa era (1600-1868) was the traditional and late feudal period of Japanese history. During this period there were four occupational or permanent hierarchal social classes: samurai, peasant, artisan, and merchant.²⁸ People of one class could not marry people of another class. The basic unit of society was family. A woman's socioeconomic position was defined by her family's social standing. It is important to understand anything associated with gender must focus on men and women's relationship to each other in the family system and toward the public sphere.²⁹

In the Tokugawa home, the *ie* (home), the *ideal* family provisioned for only one child as heir in each generation. "The establishment of the *ie* system institutionalized a gendered division of labor and a power imbalance between men and women."³⁰ Blood relatives, servants, domestic animals, property, ancestors and adopted heirs were all part of *ie*. The *ie* embraced non-kin, as well as blood relatives. According to law and custom, the majority of households were supervised by a male.³¹ Marriage was expected of all women, but childbearing was not a priority. "Adoption of sons, of sons-in-law, and even of married couples guaranteed heirs, as did the custom of designating daughters as

²⁸ Bernstein, 2.

²⁹ Ibid, 2, 3.

³⁰ Sugihara, Yoko and Emiko Katsurada. "Gender-Role Personality Traits in Japanese Culture," *Psychology of Woman Quarterly*, Vol. 24 (2000), 310.

³¹ Bernstein, 3.

heirs.”³² During the Tokugawa period, womanhood was not parallel with motherhood.³³ Through marriage, women succeeded in achieving female gender.³⁴ Although marriage and womanhood were not coterminous, there existed few institutional alternatives for nineteenth century Japanese unmarried women.

Meiji Period (1868-1912)

The Tokugawa regime was defeated in the middle of the nineteenth century with the Meiji era succession in 1868; the Japanese leaders were open to new thoughts and ideas.³⁵ The modernizing and imperial aspirations of the Meiji forced them to improve women’s relationship to life outside the home. A level of reforms improved class and gender relations in Japanese families: Japan reformed by extinguishing the four-class system, promoted industrialization, eliminated feudal privileges, and introduced universal required education.³⁶ The Meiji government believed that they were economically and militarily weak relative to the West, and had to conform if they wanted to prove to the West that they were civilized people and not barbarians. Japanese elite knew it was imperative to create ideal womanly behavior in order to help strengthen the nation. These ideals were former samurai ideals with the important addition of motherhood.³⁷

During the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the Japanese government mobilized its centralized educational system to prepare girls to become the “Good Wives, Wise

³² Bernstein, 3.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, 5.

³⁵ Sievers, Sharon. *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 1.

³⁶ Bernstein, 152, 7.

³⁷ Ibid, 7, 8.

Mothers” (*ryosai kenbo*) so essential to the nation’s strength, prosperity, and moral well-being.³⁸ “Good Wife, Wise Mother” was Japan’s model for a woman popularized by the Education Ministry in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War.³⁹ State propaganda urged women to contribute to the nation through their frugality, their hard work, their care of the old, young, and ill, their efficient management and their responsible upbringing of children.⁴⁰ In 1873, girls and boys were mandated to go to school, but by 1890, a little over 30 percent of girls were in school.⁴¹ By 1890, women contributed to Japan’s industrial economy, “where a work force that was 60 to 90 percent female produced 40 percent of the gross national product and 60 percent of the foreign exchange during the late nineteenth century.”⁴² Either by labor or producing babies women were viewed by the state as extremely important in Japan’s success as a modernizing state.

Reacting to this latest liberal situation, female and male reformers produced the “Popular Rights Movement” which called for new freedoms and rights in the early to mid-1870s.⁴³ A large amount of the women in the movement became known as Japan’s “first wave” feminists. They decided to extinguish the customs in which women were oppressed, and to request legislation to guarantee women’s rights.⁴⁴ However, in 1889, the newly written Meiji Constitution stated, “...women, and especially wives, were under the jurisdiction of the patriarchal family head, and thus had no individual rights within the community of the family nor the independent right of contract that would permit

³⁸ Garon, 115.

³⁹ Bernstein, 38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 152.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 153, 157.

⁴² *Ibid*, 153.

⁴³ Bowen, Roger W. *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan: A Study of Commoners in the Popular Rights Movement*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 107.

⁴⁴ Sievers, 1.

rights in a larger society.”⁴⁵ Even though the “Popular Rights Movement” was short lived, it still represented a democratic sentiment of greater rights for women.⁴⁶

Gender rights were defined under the Meiji Civil Code of 1898, which excluded the idea of rights held equally by separate individuals. The establishment of the samurai ideal *ie* usually reinforced men as head of the household.⁴⁷ By law, the code made apparent women were inferior to men in many ways: Women had to have their husbands consent before entering into a legal contract. If a couple were to divorce the husband had custody of the children; a wife could be criminally prosecuted and divorced by her husband for committing adultery (but not the husband if he were to do the same); a woman could not legally marry under the age of 25 (men under 30) without the head of the household’s permission.⁴⁸ “Women had few rights and were defined primarily by their connection to men, whether husbands, fathers, or sons.”⁴⁹ The Meiji leaders wanted authoritative men leading the household. Women were extremely important to the family and nation state that their roles were to manage the household and educate their children.⁵⁰ This was the dominant state of gender roles in Japan when many of the *Issei* immigrated to the United States.

Modernization brought important liberalizations for women, but growing nationalism demanded a sacrifice of women as well. During the Meiji era (1868-1912),

⁴⁵ Molony, Barbara. *Japan: State and People in the Twentieth Century*. (London: The Suntory Centre, 1999), 28.

⁴⁶ Bernstein, Gail Lee. “Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan: A Study of Commoners in the Popular Rights Movement,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Fall, 1981), 526.

⁴⁷ Bernstein, Gail Lee. *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴⁹ Earhart, David C. *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media*. (New York: An East Gate Book, 2008), 149.

⁵⁰ Bernstein, Gail Lee. *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 8.

the Japanese government started to foster militarism, imperialism, and expansionism under the slogan “Rich Nation, Strong Military.”⁵¹ In 1894-95, Japan fought and defeated China primarily in an effort to gain control of Korea. Then, in 1904-05, Japan defeated Russia over territorial expansion in East Asia. These two successes bolstered the Japanese contention that modernization had been successful in Japan since the Meiji Restoration. At this time, Japan was the only non-Western state to compete with the “advanced industrial empire-builders.”⁵² In order to achieve these triumphs, Japan promoted a build-up of the military, which meant the mobilization of men for the Emperor. It argued that women needed to produce babies for the nation and increase Japan’s population. Vice-Admiral Kamimura said to the few privileged female students at Tokyo Girls’ Higher School, “that their studying to become *wise mothers* or *good wives* was equally as valuable to the nation as was fighting on the sea.”⁵³

The diasporic construction of patriarchy⁵⁴ was brought to the United States and was practiced and reproduced in the *Issei*. Azuma’s study revealed the *Issei* understood and lived their lives via the interethnic, intraethnic, and international social relations they were influenced by.⁵⁵ Patriarchy was internalized by the Japanese immigrants and was asserted on women.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Atkins, Jacqueline M. *Wearing Propaganda: Textiles on the Home Front in Japan, Britain, and the United States 1931-1945*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 81.

⁵² Bernstein, Gail Lee. *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 152.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 159.

⁵⁴ Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property.

⁵⁵ Azuma, 8.

⁵⁶ Cheng, Lucie. “Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service, by Evelyn Nakano Glenn,” *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (Nov., 1987) 783-784.

CHAPTER II

GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONS IN JAPANESE COMMUNITIES

PRIOR TO INTERNMENT

The Frontier Period

During the Meiji Era, Japanese were for the first time allowed by the emperor to emigrate from Japan. As Hisaye Yamamoto notes, “Most Japanese immigrants came to the United States between 1885, the year the Japanese government permitted the emigration of Japanese nationals, and 1924, the year the Asian Exclusion Act was passed.”⁵⁷ With the rapid industrialization of Japan in the last half of the nineteenth century, many laborers had lost their jobs.⁵⁸ They viewed the United States as a place of opportunity and hopes of a brighter future like European immigrants. They were mostly young males looking to make some money and return to their native country or decided to make America their permanent home. However, most *Issei* believed they would return to Japan rather than stay in America prior to 1907.⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ The *Issei* brought their culture to America and tried to create a world that they had left behind. The family structure was based on a rigid patriarchy adopted from Japan. The family was characterized by a strong father symbol and respect for masculine superiority and ancestry. As stated

⁵⁷ Yamamoto, Hisaye. *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories*. (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), x.

⁵⁸ Brimmer, Larry Dane. *Voices From The Camps*. (New York: Franklin Watts, 1994), 17.

⁵⁹ Bloom, 554.

⁶⁰ In 1907, the Gentlemen’s Agreement was an informal agreement between the United States and the Empire of Japan whereby the U.S. would not impose restriction on Japanese immigration, and Japan would not allow further emigration to the U.S.

before, the patriarchal system cultivated anew during the Meiji Reformation linking fathers to the Emperor and families with the nation of Japan.⁶¹

Tomio Moriguchi gave a small description of the rigid *Issei* patriarchal system demonstrated by his father prior to incarceration:

Well, there's no such thing as typical, but he was a *Issei* that – *ganko*, meaning he's a man and his word was supposed to be good, and he – so (sic), I don't want to say unreasonable, but they were, they had their own idiosyncrasy of, of demanding certain things, and expecting certain things. And that's I would say typical of some Japanese men that are raised to be the household, head of the household and expected to carry on and take certain responsibility. He had some of that. And my cousins, male uncles or cousins, they, when they come home they just sit there at the dinner table, and they get served by either wife, or the mother-in-law, or the mother, or daughters.⁶²

Mariguchi's description made evident the male's supreme position in the home prior to internment. Moriguchi's experience suggested men were served by women of all generations.

Japanese immigration began once the Chinese immigration stopped.⁶³ In 1882, President Chester Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act barring further immigration of Chinese laborers.⁶⁴ This law was the first immigration law to discriminate against a group of people based on race. “To keep these figures in perspective, it must be remembered that between 1900 and 1940 the population of the United States grew from 76 million to 130 million and that ethnic Japanese never constituted as much as two-tenths of one percent (0.02%) of the total population or more than two and one-tenth

⁶¹ Khan, Yoshimitsu. “Inoue Kowashi and the Dual Images of the Emperor of Japan,” *Public Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2. (Summer, 1998), 218, 219, 222, 224.

⁶² Tomio Moriguchi interviewed on October 20, 1999. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

⁶³ Daniels, 7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

percent (2.1%) of Japan's population."⁶⁵ Analyzing the Table 1 makes it hard to believe that the Japanese Americans posed a threat to the United States.

TABLE 1

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION, 1890-1940
Immigration of Japanese to the United States

YEARS	NO. OF IMMIGRANTS
To 1890	3,000
1891-1900	27,000
1901-1908	127,000
1909-1924	<u>118,000</u>
Total	275,000

Japanese American Population by Census

YEAR	JAPANESE IN UNITED STATES	JAPANESE ON PACIFIC COAST	JAPANESE IN CALIFORNIA
1900	24,326	18,629	10,151
1910	72,157	57,703	41,356
1920	111,010	94,490	71,952
1930	138,834	119,893	97,456
1940	126,948	112,353	93,717

Source: U.S. Immigration and Census data
Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands are not included

66

The majority of the Japanese settled on the West Coast, mainly in California and Hawaii.⁶⁷ There were roughly 200,000 Japanese who came to Hawaii from 1885-1924.⁶⁸ Many Hawaiians protested the annexation by America, but the islands were lucrative with resources such as sandalwood and sugar and called upon cheap laborers from exotic countries such as Japan.⁶⁹ Christian missionaries and sugar bosses made it possible for the American takeover.⁷⁰ On the islands and on the West Coast the Japanese were forced

⁶⁵ Daniels, 7, 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 8.

⁶⁷ Austin, 4.

⁶⁸ Howard, 35.

⁶⁹ Kubat, Daniel. "Issei: Japanese Immigrants in Hawaii," *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 18, No. 5. (September, 1989), 751.

⁷⁰ Putney, Clifford. "God vs. Sugar: The Gulick Brothers' Fight against King Kamehameha V and the Sugar Planters in Hawai'i 1864-1970," *Hawaii Journal of History*, Vol. 37, (2003), 63, 64.

into residential ghettos, which over time would be called Little Tokyos. With the exploiting of Japanese labor and capital moving across boundaries, the planters began to understand having women available for the men or the ability for them to create a family was the “key tool of labor control.”⁷¹

The Frontier Period ended in 1907 with the Gentlemen’s Agreement.⁷² The Gentlemen’s Agreement “Japan agreed to stop issuing passports to Japanese laborers to come to the United States, and the Americans promised not to legislate against Japanese.”⁷³ The immigration from Japan did not end the growth of the Japanese family. The *Issei* population began to decrease, but the *Nisei* population began to grow and even outnumber their parents.

TABLE 2

ETHNIC JAPANESE, BY GENERATION, 1920-1940

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	FOREIGN- BORN	U.S.-BORN	PERCENT U.S.- BORN
1920	111,010	81,502	29,508	26.6
1930	138,834	70,477	68,357	49.2
1940	126,947	47,905	79,642	62.7

Source: U.S. Census data

74

⁷¹ Howard, 35.

⁷² Bloom, 554.

⁷³ Daniels, 13.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 16.

The Settling Period

As stated before, the single male laborers came to America first and then in 1907 the Gentlemen's Agreement put a halt to Japanese male immigration with a few exceptions. President Theodore Roosevelt wanted to maintain good relations with Japan. Roosevelt negotiated with Japan to restrict passports except to laborers that have already been to the United States and to children, wives, and parents of laborers living in the United States.⁷⁵ Japanese women began coming to the United States; they married Japanese men and gave birth to second generation children ---the *Nisei* generation.⁷⁶

The women were subservient to men and were expected to be a "chaste wife, nurturing mother, diligent homemaker, and guardian of the family's spiritual well-being."⁷⁷ The *Issei* generation women would come to America to meet their husbands. Arrange marriage was traditional in Japan with *Issei* men in America organizing for their future wives to come to the United States. Marriage was typically pre-arranged and uniform within the cultural community or some men even took chances on a "picture bride" prior to incarceration.⁷⁸ Isami Nakao described the experience of the "picture bride" system:

Well, many of the people migrated to America were men and a lot of bachelors and very few women. It was quite unusual to have a family go, but over in Port Blakely there were a number of people with families, but the (sic)...eventually a lot of men wanted to have brides and the way a good many of the women came over were picture brides. A go-between would pick out a prospective bride, and the men would send over pictures of themselves and a lot of it was [Laughs] a lot better looking than they actually were and younger than they actually were. And so the woman

⁷⁵ Brimmer, 19.

⁷⁶ Azuma, 9.

⁷⁷ Earhart, 148.

⁷⁸ Bloom, 552.

came over and sometimes it was not what they expected and some of them went right back to Japan, but many of them stayed and had families and it worked out.⁷⁹

FIGURE 1



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

80

Not to mention many “picture brides” were glad to leave Japan because of their needy relatives depending on them for care. They came knowing that they would be subservient to their husbands. On the other hand, without a doubt women experienced confusion living in the United States and were subjected to racism. If a woman wanted to excel, it became extremely difficult because of her race and primary position as wife and mother.

With the arrival of “picture brides,” many Americans had the illusion that Japan violated the Gentlemen’s Agreement. Farmers were fearful of the continuing emigration from Japan due to agricultural competition; the California state legislature passed the Alien Land Law of 1913. This law forbade land purchases by foreigners who were

⁷⁹ Isami Nakao interviewed on June 18, 1998. Located in Bainbridge Island, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

⁸⁰ 1910 Angel Island, California. Arrival of “Picture Brides.” Courtesy of California State Parks. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

ineligible for citizenship.⁸¹ However, many *Issei* had children born in the United States and the *Nisei* citizens were able to purchase land for which the *Issei* acted as guardians. A land corporation could be established. In 1920, California passed another land law, which closed many of the loopholes in the 1913 Alien Land Law.⁸² This law made it harder for the Japanese to own land. “All rental of land was banned, and aliens ineligible for citizenship were barred from holding stock in corporations owning or leasing farmland.”⁸³ The loopholes in the 1913 Alien Land Law angered Caucasian people; eventually Japanese immigration came to a complete halt with the passing of the 1924 federal immigration law.⁸⁴

Cecilia M. Tsu’s article, *Sex, Lies, and Agriculture: Reconstructing Japanese Immigrant Gender Relations in Rural California, 1900-1913*, examined domestic abuse, in addition, gender imbalance in Japanese American immigrant communities. Tsu discussed Japanese immigrants’ lives in California prior to internment, from 1900-1913. Her main point was Japanese men sometimes resorted to violence if they could not achieve the goal of becoming a successful farmer and raising a family.⁸⁵ In other words, gender, race, and class created tensions among the Japanese American population before internment.

In their new country, Japanese women found new opportunities, but they also confronted forms of aggression from Japanese men. Many Japanese women were highly respected by their husbands and community. Some women had more freedoms and

⁸¹ Brimmer, 19.

⁸² Suzuki, Masao. “Important or Impotent? Taking Another Look at the 1920 California Alien Land Law.” *Journal of Economic History*. Vol. 64, No. 1. (March, 2004), 130.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Brimmer, 19.

⁸⁵ Tsu, 171-175.

options than in Japan, but because of the scarcity of women led some men to harass them.⁸⁶ For example, the 1910 manuscript census displayed 85% of the Japanese population in California were male; hence, there was a sex ratio imbalance.⁸⁷ Japanese men were prohibited by an 1880 state law, which made it illegal for white-nonwhite to marry, which further complicated female companionship.⁸⁸ Due to gender imbalance, men experienced feelings of failure and despair would sometimes lead to extreme behaviors such as rapes, murders, and assaults.⁸⁹

FIGURE 2



Not only gender imbalance, but also class created tension within the community.⁹¹

They anticipated coming to America and becoming successful farmers, in which labor would bring financial security. However, this goal was not achieved by some and they

⁸⁶ Tsu, 171, 177.

⁸⁷ Tsu, 184.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 176.

⁹⁰ "Jap Woman Resents an Insult with Revolver." *San Jose Herald* 20 December. 1913; Image obtained from History San Jose.

⁹¹ Tsu, 193.

would resort to violence. “From 1900 through 1913, the Santa Clara County coroner investigated forty-two Japanese deaths;⁹² of those, he determined twelve were suicides, three murders, three fatalities resulting from self-defense, and the rest from accidental, natural or unknown causes.”⁹³ The evidence suggests lack of female companionship and unsuccessful work; some men took drastic measures to consort with women and even led to violence. Japanese women often experienced unwanted attention as part of their daily lives in America.⁹⁴ Tsu stressed that domestic abuse was present because some men did not have patriarchal power. Whether internment stripped a man of his power or because a man could not achieve power due to his race and class inevitably affected them mentally and emotionally to where they would sometimes resort to violence.

Ben Uyeno described domestic abuse cases within the Japanese American community pre and post internment:

There was one *Nisei* that used to call me up usually on a weekend Friday or Saturday at two o'clock in the morning. He'd come back and he was drunk and he want sex or something, and his wife wouldn't do any of it, wouldn't have any part of it. So he'd get mad and beat her up and after he'd beat her up at one or two o'clock in the morning, she'd call me and say, 'Come up and see me because I'm hurting.' But the thing is that she wanted me to write down details exactly what happened and where the bruises were and so forth.⁹⁵

The interviewer Dee Goto then asked Mr. Uyeno, “Well, how much of it do you think there was in the community?” Mr. Uyeno replied, “Quite a bit, a lot of *Isseis* beat up their wives.” Dee Goto continued with, “How much extramarital affairs and things do

⁹² Four of the forty-two investigations involved Japanese female deaths (two suicides and two murders), while the rest involved the deaths of Japanese men.

⁹³ Tsu, 186.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 187.

⁹⁵ Ben Uyeno interviewed on June 1, 1998. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

you think there were in the *Issei* community? Mr. Uyeno said, “There were some, but there is more beating up than extramarital.”⁹⁶ Dee Goto replied, “This is probably when the men were single, clear back in the teens and things, but I have haven't (sic) heard it so much lately.”⁹⁷ Even so, the affairs would not have justified the beatings. Ben Uyeno supported Tsu's portrayal of domestic abuse in the Japanese American community during times when patriarchy was threatened with men beating up their wives trying to gain or maintain control and power over them. The Settling Period, beginning in 1907 ended with the federal Immigration Act of 1924.⁹⁸ As shown in Table 3, the Settling Period began to see economic expansion, the leveling of sex ratios, and family founding.

TABLE 3

TABLE I. JAPANESE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS¹¹

Year	United States (Continental)	California			
	Population	Population	Sex Ratio (Males/100 females)	Percent Native- Born	Percent of Native-born over 21 years
1940	126,047	93,717	127.7	64.2	31.9
1930	138,834	97,456	137.6	50.3	7.1
1920	111,010	71,052	171.1	28.9	
1910	72,157	41,356	562.8	7.7	
1900	24,326	10,151	1735.6	1.4	

99

⁹⁶ Ben Uyeno interviewed on June 1, 1998. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ The federal Immigration Act of 1924 limited the annual number of immigrants who could be admitted from any country to 2% of the number of people from that country who were already living in the United States in 1890.

⁹⁹ Bloom, Leonard. “Familial Adjustments of Japanese-Americans to Relocation: First Phase,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 8, No. 5. (Oct., 1943), 554. The chart shows the rapidity with which the native-born population came into numerical ascendancy.”

The Second Generation Period

Nisei children grew up integrating both the traditional customs of their parents and the mainstream customs of other non-Japanese children. Older *Nisei* spoke Japanese at home with their parents and English in school and in play. However, many *Issei* decided not to pass on the Japanese language in hopes of their children becoming more Americanized. Speaking English as the primary language helped the some *Nisei* immensely during internment. The *Issei* depended on the *Nisei* to reassure Americans that their support for Japan was not a threat to living and raising children in the United States. Nonetheless, the United States and Japanese tension prior to the war forced the Japanese to give up the idea of biculturalism. After Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, many *Nisei* felt it was their duty to take control away from the *Issei* and guide them to Anglican norms.¹⁰⁰

Lon Kurashige's article *The Problem of Biculturalism: Japanese American Identity and Festival before World War II*, stated that Japanese American assimilationists identified with American culture, but other *Kibei* (a person of Japanese descent, born in the U.S. but educated in Japan) and *Nisei* American citizens were less concerned in unifying with American culture.¹⁰¹ Children exposed to public schools would often be influenced by other "American" children or Japanese children if a *Kibei*. It was easier for native borns, or *Nisei*, to assimilate and become accustomed to the larger American society. The *Nisei* children had a greater opportunity to excel in school than their parents, and were highly encouraged to achieve a good education. Prior to incarceration,

¹⁰⁰ Kurashige, Lon. "The Problem of Biculturalism: Japanese American Identity and Festival before World War II," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 4. (March, 2000), 1652, 1653.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 1634.

Nisei boys and girls were equivalent only up to the high school level. The patriarchal system and financial constraints made it extremely difficult for women to enroll in college. It was not viewed as a cultural norm for women to attend college even though some parents would argue that they expected their daughters to attend college. Many women worked to put their brothers through college reinforcing this idea of men are superior to women.¹⁰²

Mitsue Matsui portrayed her experience when it came to college and the family's attitude towards education: different expectations of sons and daughters. Matsui said, "Well, my intentions were to go there and be admitted to *Josen*. That's women's college and the first thing that my uncles told me was, 'You've had enough education. *Kekkon ni sawaru*.' You know what I mean. [Laughs]"¹⁰³ *Kekkon ni sawaru* is a saying that means might interfere with your marriage. However, when it came to the men in the family Matsui's uncles and father were all in the medical field and wanted Matsui's brother to follow their footsteps. He was not interested even though he received a college education from UC Berkeley. Yet some Japanese American parents knew that achieving a higher degree, regardless of gender, would be essential to climbing the socio-economic ladder in America. There were some Japanese American women that had college degrees pre-internment. For example, Toyo Suyemoto graduated from UC, Berkeley, but she was forced to take a job as a live-in cook and housemaid because, "only menial labor was open for Oriental grads."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ito, Leslie A. "Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945," *Frontiers: A Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3. (2000), 4.

¹⁰³ Mitsue Matsui interviewed on December 12, 1997. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁰⁴ Richardson, xix.

Figure 3 depicts the demographical landscape of the time period and helps the reader understand the cultural conflicts and the problems the *Nisei* faced when confronting the cultural hybrid of American and Japanese traditions.¹⁰⁵ Analyzing Figure 3 reveals there were many foreign born males in the group over fifty years of age. There were a great number of foreign females in the forty to fifty age groups. The thirty to thirty-five level there was an abrupt gap between the native and foreign born groups as the pyramid becomes quite narrow. The discrepancy between age and gender may contribute to the cultural conflict along generational and gender lines. There would have been great traditionalism expected of the *Nisei* from the *Issei*. The *Nisei* were stuck between the expectations from their parents and the expectations to assimilate to the Anglican way.

FIGURE 3

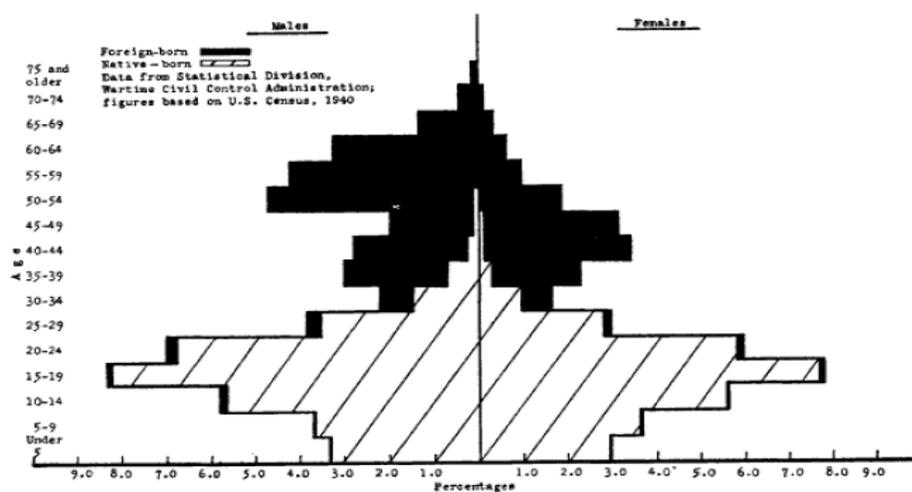


FIGURE 1. Age, Sex, and Nativity for Japanese-Americans of Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington, 1940

106

Though the *Issei* were strict and rarely displayed affection toward their children, the *Nisei* understood their role and development of a strong sense of family

¹⁰⁵ Bloom, 553, 554.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 553.

responsibility.¹⁰⁷ The strength of family and the roles that were assumed by each member would be greatly challenged after the signing of Executive Order 9066 and the forced internment of a people who were characterized by hard work, responsibility, and most importantly family.

Gender Roles Reversed

These next few paragraphs present a situation in history where gender roles were reversed prior to internment. The transcripts between Gordon Hirabayashi and Jeanne Sakata present information that challenges the status quo of men being in charge of the family unit prior to internment. Gordon Hirabayashi was one of three people that resisted internment and ultimately his case went to the United States Supreme Court. The court ruled unanimously against him and sentenced him to jail in Arizona, meanwhile he was in Washington state. The government would not pay for him to be sent to jail; as a result, he hitch hiked the entire way to Arizona. Jeanne Sakata had the opportunity to interview Mr. Hirabayashi over a period of time, in which she asked him about his family prior to internment.

Throughout the transcripts Hirabayashi refers to his mother as the dynamo or an energetic hard working woman. Mrs. Hirabayashi was a clever woman and knew not to overtly challenge the current situation at the time of men as leaders and the decision makers. For example, Hirabayashi remembered when his mother had an idea; she would delicately present it in a certain way:

¹⁰⁷ Matsumoto, 7.

Hirabayashi: And so, if she had a strategy to present, she always presented it as, you know, through not putting it out as, ‘This is my great idea, but this is something my husband and I discussed,’ and so on, and always through the male voice. And you’re putting that forward. If the woman put it forward, it gets squashed right away.

Sakata: Oh.

Hirabayashi: Yeah. They shouldn’t be following a *woman*, you know.

Sakata: So, if she had a lot of ideas about something, would she tend to say, ‘this is my husband’s.’

Hirabayashi: Yeah, or, of course, you know, ‘The men are out on the farm, the men feel this way, you know.’ This sort of thing. So that’s part of the speech etiquette, and part of facing reality. How to get—see, she’s not trying to get points in her own favor, you know, merit badge for her own personal self, she’s trying to get some ideas across, and if she wants to get a certain viewpoint across, you don’t present it as, this--‘I, this female’ is presenting this, you know (laughs), you want to put it forward as identifying a viewpoint that pleased you, or you feel, ‘That was a good view.’ And would quote a neighbor man, or the husband, or various other males as supporting it. And she endorsing it (sic).¹⁰⁸

Hirabayashi recounted that his mother would freely discuss ideas with her husband, but outside she was very careful. Hirabayashi referred to his mother as a “frustrated *Issei* famer’s wife who, in another era, would have been a journalist, professor, politician. She was elected VP of our local Japanese Association.”¹⁰⁹ To have a woman elected as Vice President of the Japanese Association was truly remarkable and ahead of the times during the 1930s. Ms. Sakata asked:

Gordon, how did she get into that position? Did people elect her?

Hirabayashi: Yeah.

Sakata: So, was it mostly men that voted to elect her?

Hirabayashi: *All* of them men.

¹⁰⁸ Transcripts of Jeanne Sakata’s interviews with Gordon Hirabayashi. At the home of Gordon Hirabayashi. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. August, 1995. P 11. Library of Congress.

¹⁰⁹ Sakata, Jeanne. *Dawn’s Light The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi*. 2007. P 5. Library of Congress.

Sakata: Interesting!... Apparently, she spoke out with such intelligence that they saw something—I mean, for a bunch of *Issei* men to elect her to something like—¹¹⁰

It must be noted that this happened in the beginning of the 1930s where women gained the right to vote roughly 10+ years prior. To have a woman in a position as Vice President was really significant and unusual in the Japanese community. As Ms. Sakata previously stated for a bunch of *Issei* men to vote for her was unbelievable considering she was a just a farmer's wife.

As written earlier, Mr. Hirabayashi referred to his mother as the dynamo:

Hirabayashi: Yeah, she's the fire, the, you know, there's two kinds of thing a fire produces. Heat. Fire produces light, too. And Dad was the light and he was the anchor, the Rock of Ages, so to speak. One time, Ed was telling me this. He was a little bit disgusted that Dad took Mom's hot temper where she just raked him over the coal about something, and took it calmly, and he said to Dad, 'Dad, how come you take that kind of abuse without saying anything?' And he said, 'Well, your mom gets very emotional. So when she's real excited and emotional like that, I just let it go in here and it goes out here.' (Laughs) And he just said that and he didn't make a big issue of it. He didn't defend himself or anything, he just said, that's the way he handles it, and she got it out, so she was calmer, and he says, 'No use making a big stinko over that, you know, everything is fine.' He adapted.¹¹¹

The relevance of this information is important because it highlights the aspect that some Japanese families where the women were seen as equal and even the decision makers of the house. Mrs. Hirabayashi was in charge of the home, but was very careful not to reveal this too much outside the house. It can be assumed the man Ed was a family friend that intimately saw the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Hirabayashi. This was a rare case, but certainly noteworthy considering it was a male dominated society at the time.

¹¹⁰ Transcripts of Jeanne Sakata's interviews with Gordon Hirabayashi. At the home of Gordon Hirabayashi. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. August, 1995. P 23. Library of Congress.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 17, 18.

Instability leading up to Pearl Harbor

As stated earlier, in 1907 the Gentlemen’s Agreement was an informal agreement to ease tensions between Japan and the United States. This Agreement stated that Japan would no longer issue anymore passports to laborers and the United States promised not to legislate against the Japanese.¹¹² The Gentlemen’s Agreement reduced anxieties between the two countries for a while and allowed Japanese women and children to legally immigrate and reunite with the men. The Gentlemen’s Agreement came to an end when the Immigration Act of 1924 was passed targeting Eastern and Southern Europeans and Asians from immigrating to the United States by only allowing a very small percentage entering the United States.¹¹³ The Japanese were excluded from this small percentage because Calvin Coolidge amended the bill to bar all “aliens ineligible to citizenship.” “Japan got her quota, but no Japanese person could use it!”¹¹⁴ In Japan there were massive protests and in the United States, George Kennan called these events the “long and unhappy story” of the Japanese and United States relations in the decades prior to World War II.¹¹⁵

Caucasians established discriminatory laws against the Japanese, particularly the *Issei*, based on hatred and fear. By law the *Issei* could never marry a white American citizen, own land, or work in certain jobs.¹¹⁶ Even though the *Issei* could not own land, there was fear and competition from farmers.¹¹⁷ When Executive Order 9066 was issued,

¹¹² Daniels, 13.

¹¹³ Ibid, 15.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 15, 16.

¹¹⁶ Dower, John W. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 49.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, Greg. *By Order of The President*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University

many farmers were happy to see their competitors eliminated. By the end of 1941, Japanese Americans controlled 42 percent of the commercial truck crops grown in California, 22 percent of the nation's total.¹¹⁸ "Though they tilled only 3.9 percent of the state's farmland, they produced as much as 90 percent of California's artichokes, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, peppers, spinach, strawberries, and tomatoes."¹¹⁹

Caucasian farmers were among the first to call for the evacuation of Japanese Americans and highly resented them for their successes. Many believed that the Japanese were incapable of assimilating and viewed as less than human.

In 1940, Japan aligned with Germany and Italy which confirmed the "threat." The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, created a widespread panic of the "yellow peril" and anything and everything Japanese was despicable. Persons of Japanese ancestry living in the United States could potentially align with Japan and turn on the United States was a real fear. In a sense, it was patriotic to become suspicious of the *Nisei* and *Issei*. Calls for the incarceration of the Japanese were favored by white America and all that was needed was the authorization by President Franklin Roosevelt.¹²⁰

Press, 2001), 9.

¹¹⁸ Renteln, Alison Dundes. "A Psycho-historical Analysis of the Japanese Internment," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Nov., 1995), 625.

¹¹⁹ Renteln, 625.

¹²⁰ Brimner, 20, 21.

CHAPTER III

GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONS DURING INTERNMENT

Executive Order 9066 and Break Up of Families

Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942 and subsequently ordered military commanders to round up and intern all Japanese Americans with at least one-sixteenth Japanese blood on the West Coast.¹²¹ On March 31, 1942 the first civilian exclusion orders appeared.¹²² The heads of Japanese families had to report to control stations to obtain instructions for relocating. A number replaced the family surname. The families could only bring what they could carry, a maximum of 100 pounds per person.¹²³ Some families had two weeks, while others only had 48 hours' notice to liquidate their possessions and properties.¹²⁴ Many people out of fear destroyed anything that might link them to the emperor of Japan, for example, Japanese records that Bill Nakagawa's mother loved.¹²⁵ Yoshihiko Fujikawa described what he saw, "It was during these forty-eight hours that I witnessed unscrupulous vultures in the form of human beings taking advantage of bewildered housewives whose husbands had been rounded up by the FBI within forty-eight hours after Pearl Harbor. They were offered pittance for practically new furniture and appliances: refrigerators, radio consoles, etc., as well as cars and many were falling prey to these people."¹²⁶

¹²¹ Arai, 216, 217.

¹²² Brimner, 36.

¹²³ Arai, 218.

¹²⁴ Brimner, 36.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 36, 37.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 37.

The signing of Executive Order 9066 hastily carried out the incarceration of innocent Japanese Americans. “Wartime arrests and incarceration uprooted both patriarchal structure within the family and the power held by Japanese community leaders.”¹²⁷ Some *Issei* or first generation men were relocated to camps that were different from where their families had been placed. In 1943, according to hearings before a subcommittee of the committee on military affairs, there were 4,700 persons sent to detention centers. The majority were *Issei* males, also heads of household.¹²⁸ There was a sense of fear that these men were loyal to the Japanese Emperor and at any moment they could lash out on the United States.¹²⁹

The loss of the patriarchal head would certainly force adjustments in the family and often were extremely difficult. “The statistical support for this statement lies in the fact that 45.6 percent of all *Issei* in the four Western states were listed as family heads by the 1940 census, whereas 6.0 percent of *Nisei* were so listed.”¹³⁰ Men placed in detention awaiting hearing were not temporarily there. For example, in January, 1943, 2,000 men were sent to internment camps and defined as disloyal. The rest of the 300 men were still waiting hearing almost a year after Executive Order 9066.¹³¹

In addition to the vigilant soldiers with exposed bayonets, Japanese Americans were numbered. “The procedures of incarceration humiliated and dehumanized women evacuees. Fumi Ihsida at the Tanforan center felt disgusted at being tagged ‘like criminals.’” The camps deprived women of their femininity as well by treating men and

¹²⁷ Ito, 6.

¹²⁸ Bloom, 558.

¹²⁹ Roucek, Joseph S. “American Japanese, Pearl Harbor and World War II,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 12, No. 4. (Autumn, 1943), 640.

¹³⁰ Bloom, 558.

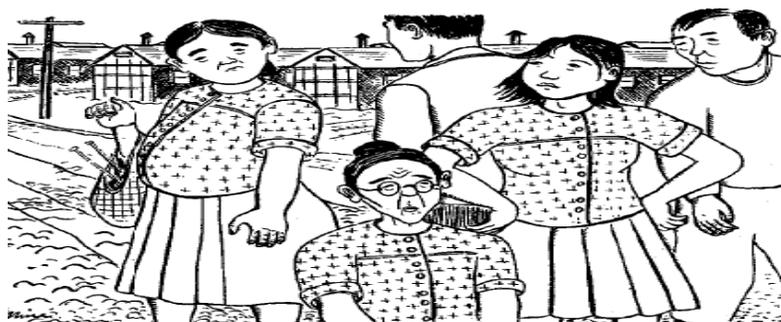
¹³¹ *Ibid.*

women as equals. There was no distinction in the showering rooms, and clothes issued to the internees ranged from navy pea coats to army surplus jackets.¹³²

Monica Sone remembered her experience when her mother came home with her clothing allotment. She said, “It’s too bad we aren’t all males.”¹³³ Monica and her sister began to protest hysterically when they saw what their mother brought home. Monica said, “We were all going to look like members of the Internal Security staff since these clothes were exactly what Father and his friends wore on patrol duty.”¹³⁴ Monica’s brother replied, “Oh, women! Why should you care what you look like in camp?” Monica responded, “We haughtily announced we would rather freeze than lose our femininity.”¹³⁵

Mine Okubo described a similar but different experience as Monica. In Okubo’s autobiography *Citizen 13660*, “In Tanforan we had ordered our clothing allotment from the Sears, Roebuck summer catalog. These clothes, with many substitutions, now began to arrive. Everyone was dressed alike, because of the catalog orders and the G.I.

FIGURE 4



136

¹³² Arai, 214.

¹³³ Sone, 196.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Okubo, 153. Okubo drew this picture in her autobiography. She illustrated that everyone was dressed alike during internment.

clothes.”¹³⁷ Upon arrival at Tanforan Assembly Center, women were asked to sit on the bench, while the men had to line up and were searched for contraband. When Okubo rejoined her brother, she asked him what they made you do? He said, “They made us strip,” which completely humiliated him.¹³⁸ Men felt emasculated by internment as a result of their inability to provide for the family and control their own actions.

The autobiographical *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston recalled Wakatsuki Houston’s experience of the FBI coming and taking Jeanne’s father away:

He didn’t struggle. There was no point to it. He had become a man without a country. The land of his birth was at war with America; yet after thirty-five years here he was still prevented by law from becoming an American citizen. He was suddenly a man with no rights who looked exactly like the enemy.¹³⁹

Mr. Wakatsuki was truly stuck in the middle of two countries. He was demoralized in front of his family. In Japanese culture a man was supposed to represent dignity and honor, but this experience dehumanized him. His character was robbed when the FBI took him and his civil rights away and questioned him about his loyalty to the United States.

With the man of the house absent or rendered less authoritative, many responsibilities laid upon the women and children to evacuate and “take control.” For example, Stan Yamashita’s father was arrested by the FBI asked, “Without the head of the family, how does a mother with three children move out of a house where they have

¹³⁷ Okubo, 153.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 30, 31.

¹³⁹ Wakatsuki Houston, Jeanne and James D. Houston. *Farewell to Manzanar*. (New York: Random House Inc., 1973), 8.

lived for years?”¹⁴⁰ They only had roughly 48 hours to vacate, therefore, women and children had no other choice but to obey. The account of Mr. Wakatsuki, like the majority of Japanese men, experienced their patriarchal power being stripped away.

FIGURE 5



JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMPS

141

Men were heads of the house economically, culturally, and traditionally. After incarceration, men were no longer leaders of the family, which had a profound impact on them. Mr. Wakatsuki eventually joined his family in Manzanar after nine months in Fort Lincoln, but he returned a changed man. He became an “alcoholic” by making sake out of rice which frustrated the family even more to see their once proud father breaking down from internment.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Brimmer, 36.

¹⁴¹ Map of ten internment camps during the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II.

¹⁴² Wakatsuki Houston and Houston, 53.

Domestic Abuse

It can be suggested that there was domestic abuse as well from the patriarchal breakdown during internment. Tsu's argument and model suggested the breakdown in patriarchal relations can help explain patterns of domestic abuse. As stated earlier, Tsu's main point was Japanese men sometimes resorted to violence if they could not achieve the goal of becoming a successful farmer and raising a family in the early 1900's.¹⁴³ During incarceration, the men were not able to provide or properly nurture their family like they were before. The emergence of domestic abuse paralleled with the domestic abuse Tsu was referring to, due to the men not being able to achieve patriarchy power.

Mr. Wakatsuki was drinking all day, when his wife returned he demanded to know where she had *really* gone or was she seeing another man. "He yelled and shook his fists and with his very threats forced her across the cluttered room until she collided with one of the steel bed frames and fell back onto a mattress."¹⁴⁴ Wakatsuki Houston and Houston described in their book that the children witnessed their father going crazy like this often. Even at one point he violently was on the verge of beating his wife with a cane when his young son Kiyō punched him in the face.¹⁴⁵ Mrs. Wakatsuki was saved, but Kiyō ran because he was afraid of what his father might do to him. This showed for a short time that Kiyō remembered the power his father had prior to internment and may have felt ashamed by dishonoring his father. Before imprisonment, Kiyō would have more than likely become compliant to his father or conquered. On the other hand, Kiyō would probably never have been put into this situation because his father was not an

¹⁴³ Tsu, 171-175.

¹⁴⁴ Wakatsuki Houston and Houston, 68.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 69.

“alcoholic” outside of internment. Mrs. Wakatsuki was assimilating to her new surroundings and keeping the family together, in contrast, Mr. Wakatsuki was falling apart and becoming weaker.

Eventually Kiyō came back and apologized to the once resilient head figure as Mr. Wakatsuki accepted. This account demonstrated the “alcoholic” father plummeting deeper into depression and resorting to violence due to the anguish of internment. The children and mother were usually submissive to the patriarch. However, Kiyō cracked and stood up to his father because in that moment of his father’s weakness, he needed to become strong and protect his mother.

Toru Saito discussed the reluctance to talk about abuse in the Japanese American community. Interviewer Martha Nakagawa asked if abuse was going on in the camps and after:

Nakagawa: Well, Toru, you're, you're unusual in the sense that you're very open about being abused as a child at home. Japanese American families don't really talk about that publicly.

Saito: Right.

Nakagawa: Do you think there was a lot more of that going on in camp and outside after?

Saito: Well, as an, as an adult, when I worked at the clinic I learned that among Asians there's a lot of wife beating going on, but of course they don't advertise that. I always thought I was the only one until I found out there are other... I heard of one case where this guy told me his father never spoke to him, never. Never spoke, never acknowledged him and it screwed him up. And I said, well, that's sad, but... and I was happy, I was kinda relieved in some ways to know that I'm not the only one that, but I never heard of a case where somebody was livin' like I had to live. Life was so painful. I just kept saying I'd rather kill myself. This life, this life is too hard to live every day.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Toru Saito interviewed on December 1, 2010. Located in San Jose, California. Densho

Mr. Saito does not indicate if the abuse was going on during internment or not. One can conclude some women and children were abused by the man of the house in Japanese communities. Saito and Nakagawa both recognized abuse was something that was not talked about, but was prevalent as discussed and reinforced by Wakatsuki Houston, Tsu, and Uyeno.

Communal Living

Life in the camps had a dramatic impact upon the family unit and gender roles across all generations. Many women were freed from traditional domestic chores because of the communal setting in the camps and the separation of their families. Camp life was opposite of the traditional home that was maintained by generations of Japanese women. In addition, the lack of traditional or quality food, for example, apricots on top of rice lessened the role of women, since they could not cook for the family.¹⁴⁷ Wakatsuki Houston said, “The Caucasian servers were thinking that the fruit poured over rice would make a good dessert. Among the Japanese, of course, rice is never eaten with sweet foods. Few of us could eat such a mixture. But at this point no one dared protest. It would have been impolite.”¹⁴⁸ Woman’s role of not being able to prepare food, but also not being able to preserve her ethnic integrity by food must have been difficult.¹⁴⁹ Surely, the women were reminded of their oppressed living conditions, but on the other hand, they were liberated from their wifely duties. For example, author Monica Sone’s

Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁴⁷ Wakatsuki Houston, 30.

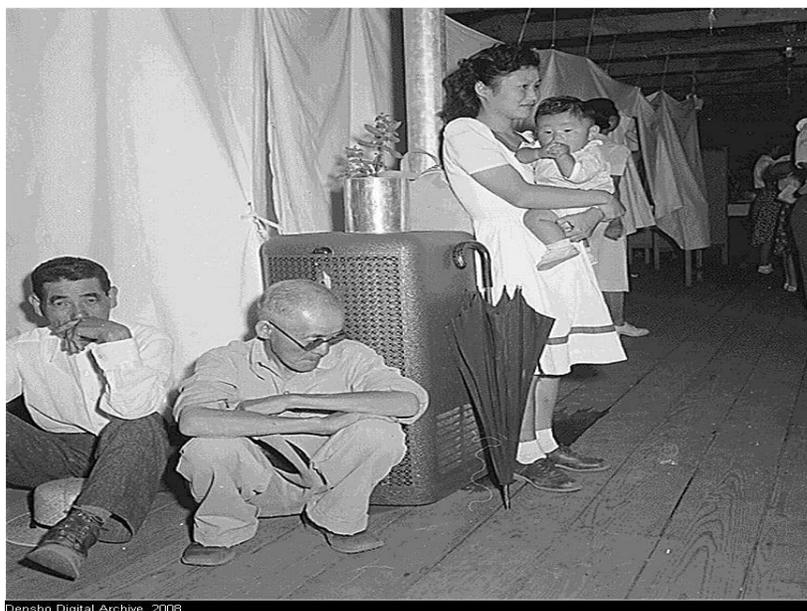
¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 18.

¹⁴⁹ Arai, 224.

mother said, “The government gave me the first vacation of my life and no one’s going to interfere with it.”¹⁵⁰

The internees lived in a one room “apartment” with no toilet or running water. There was no furniture, but the men often made furniture from scraps they found from building projects. Manufacturing furniture gave men a feeling of worthiness because they were able to provide again. These “apartments” ranged in size from 15 by 20 feet to 24 by 20 feet. Each barrack varied, but usually contained four to six one-room “apartments.” These rooms would house a family or a group of individuals with eight people at the most living in one room. Some rooms had partitions or a sheet hanging from the ceiling, but often would not extend to either the ceiling or floor, leading to complaints about privacy. One internee at Manzanar, California recalled: “They used cheap pine wood. The knots would fall off so we could see in the neighbor’s room, and we could hear the shocking sound of voices, complaining, arguing bitterly.... and I

FIGURE 6



151

¹⁵⁰ Sone, 184.

couldn't shut it out."¹⁵² Tension from living in tight quarters was compounded by the harsh environment that camps were located in. Any of these camps faced hot summers with terrible dust storms and very cold winters. Due to the discomfort of the barracks many used the facilities only for sleeping, forcing inhabitants to congregate together in large social areas, further diminishing the sense of home.¹⁵³ Many couples were forced to share and sleep in the same area as their parents, children, and extended relatives. The hardships of not having privacy effected gender roles and generational roles.

George Takei also known as Mr. Sulu in the television series *Star Trek* spent his childhood years at Rohwer, Arkansas, and Tule Lake, California internment camps. He explained the frustrations of his mother's subjugated living situation directly across from the mess hall:

Mama hated it. She didn't like the loud clanging and banging from the kitchen that began in early morning with the preparation of breakfast and continued on until the last cleanup after dinner. She didn't like the idea of people lining up just outside our windows three times a day, every day. But most of all she complained bitterly about the smell that blew across from the kitchen-the lingering aroma of mass cooking, combined with detergents and other chemicals from the dishwashing and the acrid smell of disinfectants from the hosing down of the floor after dinner. 'Stink terrible,' was Mama's simple summation of the problem.¹⁵⁴

This was one of many examples of the living situation in an internment camp.

Internment liberated women from the domestic field, but they were subjected to the hardships of no privacy as clearly stated by Takei.

¹⁵¹ June 30, 1942. Manzanar incarceration camp, California. "A typical interior scene in one of the barrack apartments at this center. Note the cloth partition which lends a small amount of privacy." Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁵² "In Desert Camp, Life Behind Barbed Wire." *The Washington Post* 6 December.1982.
<<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁵³ Daniels, 67.

¹⁵⁴ George Takei quoted from Hohri, William, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Patricia Wakida., *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience*. (Berkley, California: Heyday Books, 2000), 122.

During mealtime, the large communal mess halls strengthened family disunity as members ate separately. Meal time became another gendered space in the camps. Prior to internment, fathers and husbands sat as patriarchal head of the dinner table and household.¹⁵⁵ Throughout incarceration, fathers ate with other men, mothers with small children, and older children with their peers.¹⁵⁶ Frank Yamasaki described what happened to his family relationship, “In our family, I didn’t even see my brother, he was off playing with his friends and I was off with my (sic), and Dad was off playing his *go*. Everyone sort of went their own and they, they were able to do whatever they desired.”¹⁵⁷ The key point was parents did not have total control of their children due to internment. Okubo reinforced this statement with, “Table manners were forgotten. Guzzle, guzzle, guzzle; hurry, hurry, hurry. Family life was lacking. Everyone ate wherever he or she pleased. Mothers had lost all control over their children.”¹⁵⁸

The children had the freedom of moving from mess hall to mess hall which eroded the authority and dignity of the parents. Figure 7 demonstrated the long line internees would have to wait before they could eat. Men were reading to pass the time and it was a hot day because all the people were in the small amount of shade provided by the barrack. Okubo described her experience, “Line-ups here and line-ups there describes our daily life. We lined up for mail, for checks, for meals, for showers, for washrooms, for laundry tubs, for toilets, for clinic service, for movies. We lined up

¹⁵⁵ Howard, 102.

¹⁵⁶ Matsumoto, 8.

¹⁵⁷ Frank Yamasaki interviewed on August 18, 1997. Located in Lake Forest Park, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁵⁸ Okubo, 89.

FIGURE 7



159

for everything.”¹⁶⁰ Figure 7 depicted what Mrs. Takei endured and her frustrations as an internee.

On December 12, 1942, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* produced an article from a *Nisei* mother about her frustrations of the lack of facilities for children and the trouble they were getting into. The *Heart Mountain Sentinel* was the official bulletin of Heart Mountain internment camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming. She said, “The problem of juvenile delinquency and petty theft is growing serious due to the lack of adequate wholesome recreation and the fact most of the workers have not yet received their pay.”¹⁶¹ Frank Isamu Kikuchi reinforced this and provided an explanation to why this might had been occurring, “family life was gone because there’s nothing to go home for except four walls and nothing to sit on, nothing to enjoy yourself with, no reading

¹⁵⁹ July 1, 1942. Manzanar incarceration camp, California. “Part of a line waiting for lunch outside the mess hall at noon.” Photographer Dorothea Lange. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁶⁰ Okubo, 86.

¹⁶¹ “I’d Like to See...A *Nisei* Mother Advocates More Facilities for Children.” *Heart Mountain Sentinel* 12 Dec. 1942. P 4. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 21, Shelf No. Np 2452). <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

material, no radio, so your entertainment would be your friends.”¹⁶² Clearly, not only adult men and women were being affected, but adolescents as well.

Patriarchal and parental authority generally was breaking down. It was difficult for mothers to keep a close eye on the children because they sought after adventures in the dense population of imprisonment. Martha Nishitani explained in an interview how she was exposed to the *Issei* and how different they were compared to the *Nisei*. She said, “Well, they, primarily, I felt that they didn’t like us very well. They didn’t approve of us dancing. Well, it’s just that—I think it was a chance for the young kids to kinda get away from their parents, too, so they weren’t—they didn’t have to buckle under to them so much.”¹⁶³ Children start to go wild because they were bored, and the loosening of the family structure, and had more freedom and time to do so.

Many Japanese women were terrified of this communal setting with hundreds of strangers opposed to the comfort of their home. Prior to incarceration, the family ate together with the father sitting at the head of the table as he would give the order for everyone to eat reinforcing his superiority. Their family life usually centered around the dinner table. Women and men felt secured in their homes, but internment created confusion, emotional stress, and overcrowding in an environment that no one would feel comfortable in. Okubo recounted her experience:

At first, the nearest washroom, shower, and latrine were located far away from us, on the other side of the race track. There were separate places for men and women, but confused men and women strayed into both places. The washrooms and the shower rooms were equipped for cold and hot water but the hot water was almost always used up, or the boiler had blown up during the night. The sewage system was poor. They were

¹⁶² Frank Isamu Kikuchi interviewed on November 6, 2002. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁶³ Martha Nishitani interviewed on May 15, 1998. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

always digging up the camp to locate and fix the stoppages and leaks in the pipes. The stench from the stagnant sewage was terrible. Many of the women could not get used to the community toilets. They sought privacy by pinning up curtains and setting up boards. At first the women were very self-conscious and timid about using the showers. The men's showers were in one large room but the women's showers were slightly partitioned.¹⁶⁴

FIGURE 8



165

Homosocial Environments Offered Homosexual Possibilities

When discussing or reading about Japanese American internment most people do not think of homosexuality. John Howard's *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* discussed intimate same sex relationships in Jerome and Rohwer concentration camps. Howard notes, "It was easier for men to find friends and partners in the dense, confined, sex-segregated camps, where new

¹⁶⁴ Okubo, 71, 74, 75, 78.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 75. Okubo drew this picture in her autobiography. She illustrated the lack of privacy in the communal bathroom.

opportunities for same sex intimacies were created.”¹⁶⁶ Due to internment, Howard states gender roles were more complicated and complex than one would think.

Throughout the book Howard discusses a Mississippi born philanthropist Earl Finch. It can be assumed Finch was gay and took a liking to Japanese men. Howard presents Finch’s sexuality in a way that is open for interpretation. He never showed interest in women, he lived and took care of his disabled mother; he never dated and remained a bachelor throughout his life.¹⁶⁷ At this time, society feminized Japanese men and Finch was attracted to this minority group.¹⁶⁸ The Japanese in the south were subjected to racism, but with Finch’s whiteness and business expertise, he became known as the “benefactor” of the 442nd regiment.¹⁶⁹ He completely supported and helped the Japanese when everyone else was turning their backs on them. In Hattiesburg, Finch bought housing and rented to the Japanese,¹⁷⁰ he also organized all-male road trips, rodeos, and rural activities.¹⁷¹ While helping the Japanese, J. Edgar Hoover’s Federal Bureau of Investigation was investigating him for “unnatural acts.”¹⁷² One could ask was Finch’s desire to help these men purely philanthropic or perhaps sexual? Finch said, “I do it because I like these boys.”¹⁷³

Howard provided a new interpretation of gender and sexuality in the camps. He suggested that men had an easier time in forming relationships especially in environments

¹⁶⁶ Ogawa, Dennis M. “Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow, by John Howard,” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 97, No. 2. (Sept., 2010), 559.

¹⁶⁷ Howard, 5, 6.

¹⁶⁸ Coon, Lynda L. “Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow, by John Howard,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 1. (Spring, 2010), 74.

¹⁶⁹ Howard, 5.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 227.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁷² Coon, 73.

¹⁷³ Howard, 3.

that were often sex segregated.¹⁷⁴ The “breakdown” of family, juvenile delinquency, the loosening of parents with their children paved way for greater sexual exploration. In the Rohwer internment camp there were sixty-seven same sex clubs, twenty “mixed groups.”¹⁷⁵ There was humorous GI drag cross-dressing choreographed shows. For example, in Arkansas there was a comedic performance that was filmed titled *Parody of Leaving for Camp, Performed Outdoors*. The play consisted of all males, in which they entered the stage in suits and tags with their family numbers. “Soon, a conspicuously tall man appeared cross-dressed in a skirt and top, with broad-brimmed hat, carrying a handbag. Referencing the overstated incarceration baby boom, he pushed a stroller along...Hardly frail; however, the actor stumbled along in his high heels with a broad, manly gait.”¹⁷⁶ Many men without realizing were breaking away from social norms. One could suggest men were emasculated by internment.

There were women as well that sought independence in camps and dreamed of freedom outside. At Jerome concentration camp there were sixty-eight single women.¹⁷⁷ Single ladies were usually roommates. There were single white War Relocation Authority women employees that some Japanese ladies found inspirational. Haru Miyazaki wrote to her Jerome teacher Virginia Tidball after she received her first paycheck, “Good night, pleasant dreams. Take care of yourself. I think you have the most beautiful wavy hair and blue eyes I’ve ever seen. Haru.”¹⁷⁸ Miyazaki would remain single for the rest of her life. Reading between the lines these women embarked on new

¹⁷⁴ Masatsugu, Michael K. “Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow, by John Howard,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 22, No. 3. (September, 2011), 650, 651.

¹⁷⁵ Howard, 117.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 118.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 103.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

found employment opportunities because of internment.¹⁷⁹ This was a moment during the war that brought these two people together for this intimate relationship that would not have occurred if it was not for internment. Tidball represented a single white woman that was able to move freely. Miyazaki due to her class and racial position could not move as freely, but she helped create new limits for Japanese women because of her employment opportunity. “In both cases, mobility resulted largely from new financial gains. Wages for women, white and Japanese Americans, enables new ways of living and loving, without marriage.”¹⁸⁰

In Europe, homosexuals were targeted and sent to death camps. In Japanese concentration camps many were able to find new ways to interact with people of the same sex. For example, Masao Asahara and Jack Yamashita developed a new found relationship. Asahara came to Jerome with his family, while Yamashita came with his wife and their two children, but separated upon arrival. Howard does not specify if these two were lovers, but they enjoyed each other’s company and bodies. In September 1943, Asahara and Yamashita stayed up late talking and partying.¹⁸¹ They went outside to be alone and away from Yamashita’s roommate. Yamashita and Asahara were half way undressed and kissing when they were spotted by a white security guard. The security guard, C. R. Felker first assumed that “some boy was kissing his girl good night.”¹⁸² He drove up and realized they were both men. Yamashita explained that they were celebrating Asahara’s future departure and they had drunk a lot and that he bought the

¹⁷⁹ Lee, Erika. “Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow, by John Howard,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*. Vol. 30, No. 3. (Spring, 2011), 116.

¹⁸⁰ Howard, 104.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 114.

¹⁸² *Ibid*.

booze on the outside.¹⁸³ Considering alcohol was illegal in camps one could face jail time if caught.¹⁸⁴ However, given this situation the two men would rather take the punishment for alcohol rather than “unnatural acts.” Felker arrested them for drunkenness and threw them in jail for the night and they had to pay a \$10 fine.¹⁸⁵ Relationships were important and internment made it easier for men to explore their sexuality. Given the dense confinement of camp some men embraced the new opportunity of developing intimate relationships with other men that potentially would not have happened in other spatial areas prior to internment.

Shikata Ga Nai

Shikata ga nai translated means “it cannot be helped.”¹⁸⁶ This common phrase was used during internment. This situation of internment was beyond the Japanese Americans’ control and made it difficult to maintain self-respect. This was difficult to do, but even more grueling when one wanted to use the bathroom. Wakatsuki Houston described it as:

An open room, over a concrete slab. The sink was a long metal trough against one wall, with a row of spigots for hot and cold water. Down the center of the room twelve toilet bowls were arranged in six pairs, back to back, with no partitions. My mother was a very modest person, and this was going to be agony for her, sitting down in public, among strangers.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Howard, 114, 115.

¹⁸⁴ “Arrest Three Men For Making Rice Gin.” *Manzanar Free Press* 29 Jan. 1944. P 1.
<<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁸⁵ Howard, 115.

¹⁸⁶ Hohri, William, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Patricia Wakida. *Only What We Could Carry*. (California: Heyday Books, 2000), 423.

¹⁸⁷ Wakatsuki Houston, 31, 32.

It must be noted that for many Japanese Americans internment was a cultural shock. Many Japanese Americans had never been exposed to so many other Japanese Americans. Many felt overwhelmed in such a close knit area with a dense population. Certainly, the barbed wire fences and armed guards did not help ease the tension. Even though most of the internees were strangers, they shared the same feelings of shame and loss of identity because of their heritage. “Incarceration caused deep psychological trauma, shame, anxiety, and hardship. Perhaps most importantly, imprisonment foreshortened or foreclosed the most basic human freedoms: speech, association, choice, mobility, and self-determination.”¹⁸⁸

To understand these feelings of indignity, psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl coined the term logotherapy in his memoir *Man's Search for Meaning*. Logotherapy means to strive to find meaning in one's life. Frankl said it is not the physical abuse, the poor living conditions, lack of food, but “it is the mental agony caused by the injustice, the unreasonableness of it all.”¹⁸⁹ Frankl continued, “The majority of prisoners suffered from a kind of inferiority complex. We all had once been or had fancied ourselves to be ‘somebody.’ Now we were treated like complete nonentities.”¹⁹⁰ Japanese Americans were wrongfully detained as potential enemies despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Internment created long-term psychological effects, in which the term *Shikata ga nai* was used to describe the experience. As stated earlier, some camps offered “Americanization” programs to downplay their Japanese heritage. Many expressed mixed emotions from shame and bitterness to some felt it was deserved, but as Frankl noted, the dream to be “somebody”

¹⁸⁸ Howard, 68.

¹⁸⁹ Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1946), 24.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 62.

could be achieved if there was meaning behind it. This was why many of the Japanese Americans sought after military opportunities, educational goals, job openings (that were now available to women) to pursue the hopes of becoming “somebody” outside of internment.

The number one value that the *Isseis* had passed on to the *Niseis* was “do not dishonor the family name.” Rae Takekawa described the values and principles she grew up with, “Oh, yes. Well, I think one of the main things was that you just didn’t do anything to dishonor the family name. I think that was probably one of the main points, and we learned that quickly. You don’t do things that will be a black mark on the family name, and, of course, we never dared.”¹⁹¹ The Japanese Americans were at odds because they were all considered “dishonorable” by the United States government. These people were imprisoned and tagged “disloyal” without even a trial. The family’s surname was replaced with a number. *Shikata ga nai*, there was nothing they could do.

Labor

As stated earlier, Japanese men prior to WWII embraced the traditional role as provider and head of the household. They came to America seeking opportunity and took pride in their own fortune either by farming or owning small businesses. Internment put them at odds with this traditional gender role. No longer were men the breadwinners for their families as the government provided clothing, food, and shelter. Employment within the camps offered a moderate opportunity for men to engage, at least to a lesser

¹⁹¹ Rae Takekawa interviewed on May 8, 1998. Located in Vancouver, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

degree in the role of worker, but not provider. However, some men could provide by building furniture as stated before or cooking in the mess halls gave them some sense of esteem. Some could work by teaching or other professionals such as doctors. The internees could not exceed \$19 a day, which was at the top of the pay scale.¹⁹² There were other jobs too that were essential and useful to camp operations such as agricultural production and internal protection. Each of these internment camps were small communities resembling that of the larger society.

The homogenous community of Japanese women and men were not racially discriminated against for employment. However, Caucasian workers received better pay and lived in better housing than the Japanese. Camp administrators preferred young English speaking citizens over the older Japanese speaking immigrants. Women's domestic chores decreased in the camps. The Japanese lived in a cramped one room "apartment" that required less cleaning. These "apartments" did not have kitchens so the people ate at the communal mess hall. The work that took place at the mess hall was collectivized and waged on the War Relocation Authority pay scale. Prior to internment, the women would not be paid for their work in the kitchen. The mess halls created a new gendered division of labor. For example, Tokio Yamane and Taro Dakuzaku had the skills and were considered chefs of the mess hall in Jerome. Women would serve the meals and wash the dishes. Women were being paid for their service in the "kitchen" and brought home an independent income.¹⁹³ Internment decreased women's domestic chores since they had employment opportunities outside the home. The division of labor was to the advantage of women.

¹⁹² Arai, 228.

¹⁹³ Howard, 99.

On November 26, 1942, the *Communique* produced an article about women's work on landscaping. The *Communique* was the official bulletin of Jerome internment camp in Denson, Arkansas. "The Center's landscape project of laying walks between the barracks has been enhanced by the presence of women workers. According to Bryan Stearns, maintenance head, women are equal to men when it comes to digging, picking, and wielding heavy tools if not better."¹⁹⁴ This proved that Japanese American women

FIGURE 9



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

195

were more than capable of performing a man's work. This further demonstrated the breakdown of patriarchy as men and women were viewed as equivalent to one another in the work force.

Volunteer seasonal workers were the first allowed to temporarily leave. These workers found employment picking fruit and beets, and turkey plucking.¹⁹⁶ In 1943,

¹⁹⁴ "Women Work on Landscaping Job." *Communique* 26 Nov. 1942: 12.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 1, Shelf No. Np 2452). <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁹⁵ 1940s Minidoka Incarceration Camp, Idaho. "Workers are all women, five of whom are on the left side with one standing and two women squatting on the right. Other women are working in the back. Incarcerates raised livestock and grew produce such as potatoes, cabbages, and beans for camp consumption." Courtesy of the Wing Luke Asian Museum, the Hatate Collection. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

¹⁹⁶ Okubo, 186.

roughly a year after evacuation, the War Relocation Authority was allowing some *Nisei* to return to life outside incarceration. If cleared by the FBI, the *Nisei* were allowed to permanently leave as long as they could prove they had a job and a place to live.¹⁹⁷ The War Relocation Authority checked jobs and place of destination before an evacuee left to verify he or she was telling the truth.¹⁹⁸ There were farm shortages, which gave the *Nisei* an opportunity to find employment, men and women.¹⁹⁹

On September 14, 1942, the *Manzanar Free Press* had a small article about women volunteering because of the labor shortage.²⁰⁰ The *Manzanar Free Press* was the official publication of the Manzanar internment camp. Even though these women were

FIGURE 10



wrongfully detained, they wanted to volunteer because more than likely they felt it was their duty to help out during the war. Outside camp, many men were fighting in the war

¹⁹⁷ Sone, 216.

¹⁹⁸ Okubo, 206.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 205.

²⁰⁰ "Women Volunteer in Labor Shortage." *Manzanar Free Press* 14 September, 1942. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 9, Shelf No. Np 2452). <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²⁰¹ "Women Volunteer in Labor Shortage." *Manzanar Free Press* 14 September, 1942. P 1. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 9, Shelf No. Np 2452). <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

and women were being called to help in the factories. As a result, this left many farms unattended. As stated earlier, by the end of 1941, Japanese Americans controlled 42 percent of the commercial truck crops grown in California, 22 percent of the nation's total.²⁰² It was apparent the lack of farm workers was becoming painful, Japanese women volunteered. The article does not indicate if the women were single or married. Nonetheless, they took it upon themselves to get on a bus and help the nation.

Alice Ito interviewed Tokio Hirota, Toshio Ito, and Joe Matsuzawa asking them about working outside camp, labor crews, and topping sugar beets during internment:

Matsuzawa: The labor situation was getting kinda tight. You know, all the male people were in the service, and no one to take care of things that, well, the war effort. That was mostly done by 4-F²⁰³, or women, or old people.

Alice Ito: So tell me about your experience, and how did you decide to go out, and what did you do?

Matsuzawa: Well, at that time, it's like I said, they were hurting for labor and so, somebody had the bright idea of well, if we've gotta feed 'em why, let 'em work. So that was the mentality they had. Farmers on the outside got together and said, "Well, we could use those people." They contracted people out of the camps to go and work the stoop labor type of work, out on the farms. And so, lot of 'em took the opportunity to go out, get out and stretch their legs, stretch a little bit. And it was hard work. We went out on a beet topping contract in Utah.²⁰⁴

The hiring of Japanese helped the businesses out of an employee shortage as written about Tokio Hirota, Toshio Ito, and Joe Matsuzawa. It also assisted the government by doing away with a needless expense. The employment helped the Japanese Americans by proving their patriotism considering the government would not

²⁰² Renteln, 625.

²⁰³ Classification as unfit for military service.

²⁰⁴ Tokio Hirota, Toshio Ito, and Joe Matsuzawa interviewed on May 21, 1998. Located in Bellevue, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

release them if they were not patriotic. There were other places across the United States that were recruiting Japanese for work during internment. On May 4, 1943 the *Gila News Courier* had a list of outside employment opportunities. The *Gila News Courier* was the official bulletin of Gila River incarceration camp in Rivers, Arizona. For example, there were four job openings for men as slitting machine operators in Wisconsin; Five openings for men in a paper company in Wisconsin; There was a truck farm offer in Kansas City for a farm family; A couple wanted for a farm in Naperville, Illinois; Lastly, a job opening for a maid who can cook for two adults in Boston, MA.²⁰⁵ The unimaginative decision so many Japanese would have to endure was unfathomable with regards to where to settle once they were liberated. One then could ask how bad an internee wanted to be released and what were they willing to do? Inevitably some liberated men and women would have to say good-bye to friends and family while others could be “lucky” and perhaps move to an area with their family.

On July 11, 1944, the *Gila News Courier* had an article stating the labor shortage in Buffalo, New York needs machinists and mechanics. After this paragraph reads there are twenty-five *Nisei* in Buffalo. “There are also a brother and sister who are *Issei*... Several are students at the University of Buffalo; one girl is a secretary for the YWCA.”²⁰⁶ This was interesting considering the employer wanted to make clear to the Japanese that there were other Japanese in the area. Not only did this article discuss job opportunities for men, the sentence “one girl is a secretary for the YWCA” or Young

²⁰⁵ “Outside Employment.” *Gila News Courier* 4 May. 1943. P 3. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 9, Shelf No. Np 2452). <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²⁰⁶ “Many Opportunities Offered in Buffalo Labor Shortage.” *Gila News Courier* 11 July. 1944. P 3. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 8, Shelf No. Np 2452). <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

Women's Christian Association would make this appealing to independent women as well to go east, not just men.

The internees at Jerome Concentration camp had to work cutting wood for the camp. Men had to fell the trees. Then they had to cut the wood to transport it back to the camp, "along with women back in the camp, chop it up for use in each apartment's coal- and wood-burning stove."²⁰⁷ The work performed by unskilled, to semi-skilled to skilled labor the War Relocation Authority pay scale was graded \$12 to \$16 to \$19 per month.²⁰⁸ The top of the pay scale could never exceed \$19, even for doctors, because a soldier's base pay was \$21 and the government did not want to make the general public angry.²⁰⁹ The working conditions were terrible and as winter set in the Caucasian supervisors wanted the Japanese to work even harder. The prisoners went weeks without resourceful tools, they had to use axes and handsaws before camp administrators purchased efficient tools such as chain saws. Women were performing a man's work such as chopping wood. Cutting wood was a new employment opportunity women never had before and they received the same pay as a man.²¹⁰

Laundry was another domestic chore performed by women pre-internment. Before internment, women would perform this duty usually alone or maybe with a child. During incarceration, women shared this chore with family and friends. Laundering required several steps, which reduced the amount of time to complete the duty. Such steps included: collecting water, heating water, making soap, hanging the clothes,

²⁰⁷ Howard, 177.

²⁰⁸ "WRA Pay Scale Announced Here." *Manzanar Free Press* 4 June. 1942. P 1. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 9, Shelf No. Np 2452) <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²⁰⁹ Howard, 178.

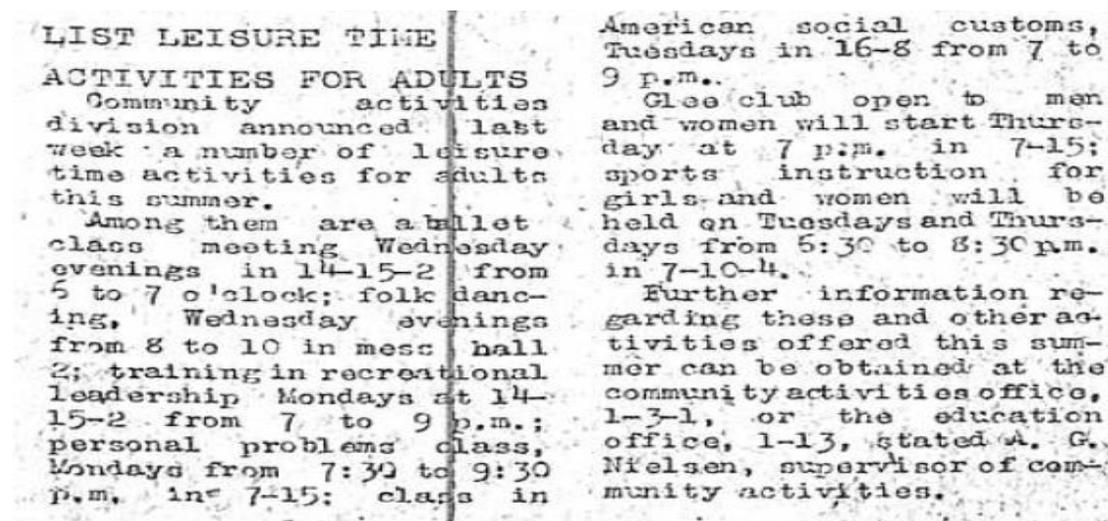
²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 100, 101.

gathering, folding, and ironing.²¹¹ The communal mess halls and wash house were extremely important to sustaining camp life and the Japanese whose labor preformed it.

Leisure Time

On July 5, 1944, the *Manzanar Free Press* newspaper wrote a list of leisure time activities for adults. The list included ballet classes, folk dancing classes, training in recreational leadership classes, personal problems classes, American social customs classes, and glee club.²¹² This was quite the list of activities considering there were courses to help Japanese Americans become better at recreational leadership even though many would probably figure that out on their own without instruction. There was a personal problems class available at Manzanar. The American social customs class was

FIGURE 11



213

²¹¹ Howard, 100.

²¹² "List Leisure Time Activities For Adults." *Manzanar Free Press* 5 July, 1944. Courtesy of the Library of Congress (Library of Congress microfilm, Reel No. 9, Shelf No. Np 2452).
 <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²¹³ Ibid.

more than likely to give the internees the skills they would need to survive outside of camp by Americanizing them. Men, women, and children needed to adhere to the standards and assimilate to the white middle class norms:

Martha Nishitani explained how internment affected work for *Issei* women.

Well, for the better, I would say my mother, because she worked hard all her life from six o'clock in the morning she was up watering the greenhouse. And late at night, she was busy in the greenhouse. And it wasn't easy work. So now in camp, there wasn't anything for her to do really, so she spent her time sewing... But I think that it was time for her to get some rest and to have some social work with other Japanese women because she was stuck out in Lake City and she didn't go to Japantown very often. So I think it (...), socially it was good for her.²¹⁴

Gordon Hirabayashi discussed with interviewers Becky Fukuda and Tom Ikeda

the loss of control and liberation of *Issei* women:

Hirabayashi: Lot of the *Isseis* lost control, particularly of women. Girls growing up, dating and going to dances and so on. Some of 'em never, the only time they went to dances were when schools had it. Or they went out saying, "I'm going out with my girlfriends." And then the girls would join up with boys. They had their ways of escaping the controls to some extent. I remember in high school, making group dates and saying, "Well, we'll come over and pick you up then." "Oh, don't come to the house. Go over to so-and-so's house. We're gonna meet there. That's where my folks think we're having a party," and so on. So that kind of things existed, so that this *Issei* woman said, "You know for the, for the average wives, *Issei* wives, the camp life was a picnic. For the first time we had a chance to go to a knitting class, and cooking classes and discussion groups. We didn't have time for that. We had to, we learned our knitting by, out of necessity, transforming older members of the family's clothing to the next one," and so on. They seldom had fresh, new clothes. And they said it was a real hard life, the *Issei* women. And so they, for the first time they didn't have to worry, they didn't have to worry about where their groceries were coming from and so on. And, "As bad as the restrictions were in camp, we women really had a picnic compared to what we were going through."

Fukuda: Yeah.

²¹⁴ Martha Nishitani interviewed on May 15, 1998. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

Hirabayashi: So that was one picture, and I can, I can relate to that.²¹⁵

These were two stories out of many stories that women experienced freedom of association and ethnic community than ever before. Nishitani's mother worked hard all her life and then internment liberated her from her strenuous labor practices. Nishitani's mother and other *Issei* women were resting, socializing, and sewing which they never had the time or the freedom to do so prior to internment.

Figure 12 demonstrated an *Issei* couple making jewelry out of seashells. They would wake up early in the morning and dig for seashells, which would then be bleached, painted, and sold to camp personnel. Tule Lake was drained in the early twentieth

FIGURE 12



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

216

century and that was why seashells were present.²¹⁷ This was one leisure activity out of many that some internees would participate in. The internees had time and used the

²¹⁵ Gordon Hirabayashi interviewed on April 26, 1999. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²¹⁶ 1943. Tule Lake incarceration camp. Courtesy of Bain Family Collection. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

natural resources available to them and created art. Prior to internment, this couple would not have had the time to make jewelry.

Some Japanese would turn to alcohol and gambling because of internment even though the War Relocation Authority banned alcohol.²¹⁸ Just like with Prohibition, the ban on alcohol drove the consumption and distribution underground. Arrests for public drunkenness were common as written about Masao Asahara and Jack Yamashita earlier as well as gambling arrests. The older and younger Japanese purchased alcohol inside camps as well as outside. The alcohol could be illegally produced inside. Some Japanese that had a day pass outside of camps would purchase alcohol. For example, in Topaz, Mine Okubo said, “The rules were becoming much less rigid. Block shopping was introduced, whereby a resident of each block was permitted to shop in the near-by town of Delta for the rest of the block.”²¹⁹ One could speculate that “block shopping” could also entail secretly purchasing alcohol. Men and women would both participate in the trade. In Arkansas, punishments were severe with violators sentenced to jail. “The official’s flip, indifferent attitude demonstrates that even older female prisoners would pay the price for their sins, whereas officials in dry southern states like Mississippi bent the rules so a soldier could have a drink and play the slots.”²²⁰ Clearly, the boredom in camps could lead to men, women, and children participating in illegal activities such as alcohol and gambling.

²¹⁸ Howard, 158.

²¹⁹ Okubo, 202.

²²⁰ Howard, 158.

Educational Opportunities

In concentration camps, it was mandatory for children to go to school. Prior to internment some children would have to stay home and help out on the farm or another family business. Girls attending school had better opportunities than before because boys would usually receive preferential educational treatment. Caucasian school teachers would have Japanese aides and trainees to help teach state curriculum guidelines. However, many of the children would use the phrase “Waste Time,” and complain about the teacher turnover because many would relocate outside the camps. Teachers would argue that the students have become rowdy and disrespectful.²²¹

The teachers would encourage Americanization and patriotism. Many Caucasian women were extremely eager to teach at the camps. The yearly salary for a War Relocation Authority teacher was \$2,000, which was a higher pay than most teachers received outside the camps.²²² The school children would salute the flag every day and recite *Pledge the Allegiance* to the United States flag. Graduation had begun with *The Star Spangled Banner* and *America the Beautiful*. Many children would dress in red, white, and blue for the occasion.²²³ “The 1943 high school yearbook was dedicated to Japanese American men serving in the segregated 442nd Regimental Combat Team: those ‘valiant defenders of the American Way.’”²²⁴

During this tumultuous time, a college education became almost as accessible to women as men. In 1943, the WRA granted some men and women the choice to leave for

²²¹ Richardson, 183.

²²² Howard, 97.

²²³ Ibid, 152, 153.

²²⁴ Ibid, 153.

a college education if cleared by the FBI and had been accepted into colleges.²²⁵ Nearly one-third of the first 400 students to leave camp for college were women, signaling a revolution in terms of gendered culture for women.²²⁶ “Many of the colleges favored Japanese American female students over male students because they believed that women attracted less suspicion of espionage and wartime paranoia.”²²⁷ Again, these

TABLE 4

Table 2. Japanese American Students Enrolled in College as of August 10, 1943, by Camp

Camp	Enrolled prior to August 25	Accepted/Would Enroll for Fall 1943 Term
Minidoka	169	39
Tule Lake	116	19
Poston	114	16
Gila	99	18
Granada	94	19
Topaz	88	20
Heart Mountain	75	15
Rohwer	55	5
Jerome	42	6
Manzanar	38	7
	<u>890</u>	<u>164</u>
Nonevacuee students	632	5

Source: “1,613 Nisei Students Enrolled in Colleges,” *Granada Pioneer*, 25 August 1943, 6. The total to be enrolled according to the figures is 1,691, which does not match the number in the headline. The figures, despite this problem, still provide a general idea of student resettlement from each camp. ²²⁸

creative anxieties were based on fear, not reality. Table 4 stated that many colleges favored women over men in the education institution reinforcing women’s growing independent position outside of camps. Both women and men had a stigma attached to them, but men were viewed as a greater threat further stripping them of their dignity.

The *Nisei* were also the first to leave for college. From 1942 to 1945, there were 5,522 *Nisei* enrolled in college on the East Coast and Mid-West. Roughly 39% of the

²²⁵ Sone, 216.

²²⁶ Arai, 226.

²²⁷ James, Thomas. *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans 1942-1945*. (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 127-28.

²²⁸ Austin, 96.

Nisei attending college were women.²²⁹ This was astounding giving the tumultuous time period. Many internees were looking for any reason to get out of camp. Many knew that it was imperative to receive a good education in hopes of obtaining a good job, which would promote upper class mobility. These statistical figures proved that the internment of Japanese Americans led to a change on the importance of education regardless of gender. However, *Nisei* women given the opportunity to pursue their own goals surely reinforced their new life of self independence from the patriarchal structure and liberation of camp life. May Y. Namba said, “It was a very satisfying experience”²³⁰ when she graduated college. The *Nisei* generation understood the injustices of war and knew that if they wanted to become part of the middle class America in the future that an education was essential.

Gordon Hirabayashi described what was communicated to him by his parents with regards to his education:

Well, I think, I think it was their view—and they’re not—they didn’t have a patent on this idea. This was quite common among many Japanese families. That if you’re going to rise above the unskilled labor profession, if you’re going to get into anything that may be a significant level above working on the farm with whatever lack of skills you have, you have to, you (sic) have to learn something different. And education was looked at as one of the opportunity sources. And so...²³¹

Mr. Hirabayashi continued with how his mother was the one that really stressed him going to college and his father endorsed and agreed with his mother.

²²⁹ Ito, 2.

²³⁰ May Y. Namba interviewed on October 21, 2004. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²³¹ Gordon Hirabayashi interviewed on May 25, 1999. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council played a major part in relocating college students from concentration camps to colleges away from the West Coast. The War Relocation Authority director, Milton S. Eisenhower urged its creating on May 29, 1942.²³² Prior to internment, in 1941, there were 3,252 Japanese students enrolled in college on the West Coast and 278 students outside the West Coast.²³³ The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council helped more than 4,000

TABLE 5

Table 1. Japanese American College Students at West Coast Schools and Elsewhere, 1941

Geographical Region	Number of Students
California	
University of California at Berkeley	485
Los Angeles City College	265
University of California at Los Angeles	244
Sacramento Junior College	224
San Francisco Junior College	145
Pasadena Junior College	123
University of Southern California	113
San Jose State	111
Other	857
	<u>2,567</u>
Oregon	
Oregon State College	41
University of Oregon	27
Other	64
	<u>132</u>
Washington	
University of Washington	458
College of Puget Sound	32
Other	63
	<u>553</u>
West Coast total	3,252
Other states and regions	
Arizona	7
Rocky Mountain states	73
Midwestern states	119
Southern states	11
Mid-Atlantic states	48
New England states	20
	<u>278</u>

Source: O'Brien, *College Nisei*, 135-37.

234

incarcerated students be released to pursue higher education at more than 600 schools during World War II.²³⁵ There were a total of 630 Japanese American students that

²³² Austin, 1.

²³³ Ibid, 11.

²³⁴ Ibid, 12.

²³⁵ Ibid, 1.

managed to directly enroll in college and never had to spend time in an internment camp.²³⁶

Many Japanese women pursued a college degree, which was not easily accessible prior to internment. Women for the first time were experiencing a sense of freedom and not expectations. Those who decided to relocate for educational purposes had to consider family obligations; meaning the preservation of family and caring for elders and other relatives. Also, many women had free time which they never really had before. They began to knit, sew, carve, paint, and attend class and women's clubs.²³⁷ Prior to internment many Japanese American women had to carry the duty of the family and self-sacrifice. During internment women were liberated and began to step out of the traditional family structure of husband and children first, wife second. However, education was extremely stressed on the younger generations to assimilate and acculturate to American society. Women also began to pursue careers outside the home such as teaching, secretarial, clerical, and factory jobs, but it was not easy.

Military Opportunities

During the initial internment process, Japanese American men of draft age were forbidden to serve their country unless they were already in the military. They were classified as 4-C, enemy aliens.²³⁸ However, in early 1943, Japanese American men were

²³⁶ Austin, 14.

²³⁷ Arai, 226-227.

²³⁸ *PBS Online*. 1 September 2011. *Fighting For Democracy*. 1 September 2011.
<http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_war_democracy_japanese_american.htm>.

allowed to serve in the military again.²³⁹ *Nisei* men were the only ones that were able to join the military. It must be noted that the last internment camp did not close until 1946, but there were ways to leave the camp. Many stayed at the camps because they were too scared to leave or did not want to be separated from their families if given the option. Some men left to pursue an education or even took group leaves for work on the railroad or farm. Due to the labor shortage, the United States needed all the help they could get even if it was from the “enemy.” Many men who felt insecure and detached from the family unit sought out ways to regain lost honor through military service.²⁴⁰

In 1943, Japanese men were allowed to volunteer for the military in a racially segregated unit, the 442nd Combat Unit.²⁴¹ The first *Nisei* unit to go off to war in August, 1943 was the 100th Infantry Battalion.²⁴² However, before these men could fight and die for the United States, the very country that incarcerated them, they had to prove their loyalty. The War Relocation Authority and U.S. War Department tested the Japanese about their loyalty to the United States, which became known as the “loyalty questionnaire.” Question 27 and 28 were extremely confusing and of great concern for the Japanese. Question 27 asked: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered? Question #28 asked: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of

²³⁹ *PBS Online.*

²⁴⁰ Arai, 229.

²⁴¹ United States Department of the Interior. War Relocation Authority. *Nisei in Uniform.* Washington: GPO, 1943. Print. P 6.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

allegiance to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?²⁴³

The Japanese were terrified that family members answering "no-no" to questions #27 and #28 would have to be sent to a separate camp from those answering "yes-yes." Also, people that answered "no-no" might be expatriated to Japan even if they did not want to go. Consequently, some Nisei who desired to answer "yes-yes," instead answered "no-no" to avoid being separated from their parents who had responded "no-no." The *Issei* and women were generally not expected to serve in the military, but had to answer the questionnaire. "These two questions...caused the breakup of many families [and] tore the camps apart. Bloodshed and violence were their aftermath, all because of bureaucratic stupidity."²⁴⁴

Rudy Tokiwa explained to interviewers Tom Ikeda and Judy Niizawa about attending a meeting to decide how to answer the so called "loyalty questions" whether to serve in the military:

Tokiwa: And so then the volunteering came out. We never talked to our parents or anything like that. But the group got together. All of us young guys, we got together and went out, down in the mesquites. Evening time, we went down there to talk about, what should we do? Either way you look at it, just seems a little foolish. Then we had the meeting. For a while, in fact, for quite a while in the meeting, everybody was saying, "Aw, the hell. Why in the hell should we go out, fight for a damn country that locks us up?" And so there was some of us like, the more I thought of it, the more I kept feeling, you know, we're not gonna go to Japan. And if none of us volunteers, that's gonna give Roosevelt all the ammunition he needs. See, in them days, I didn't know who was in back of puttin' this 442nd together. So that was one of the things I brought up. And I said, "All right, say nobody volunteers out of any of the camps. I says, (sic) "What can Roosevelt say?" Everybody says, "Well, he can say that we're more loyal to Japan than the United States." So I say, "Well, do you guys

²⁴³ Howard, 200.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

plan to live here all the time? Do you plan to go back to Japan after this is over?" Some of 'em were saying, "Nah, I couldn't, I wouldn't be able to make it in Japan. I can't hardly (sic) speak Japanese." And all this came up. Finally, everybody started saying, "Well, if we plan to settle in this country, we better be able to prove ourselves." And that's when it came out to be that we would all volunteer.

Ikeda: So the whole group ended up volunteering?

Tokiwa: Yeah, damn near the whole group.²⁴⁵

There were roughly 33,000 Japanese American men that served in the army during World War II. It must be noted in July 1943, there were *Nisei* girls that joined the Women's Army Corp as well as others that served as Army nurses.²⁴⁶ With the men off to war, this left thousands of women to take on the responsibility of mother and "father." The community's importance was on men fighting in the war often overshadowed the large responsibilities of women on the home front.²⁴⁷ Figure 13 depicted two

FIGURE 13



248

²⁴⁵ Rudy Tokiwa interviewed on July 2 & 3, 1998. Located in Honolulu, Hawaii. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²⁴⁶ United States Department of the Interior. War Relocation Authority. *Nisei in Uniform*. Washington: GPO, 1943. Print. P 23.

²⁴⁷ Arai, 229.

²⁴⁸ April 15, 1942. Manzanar, California. "Families of two Shinto priests who were interned on December 8, 1942, immediately upon declaration of war. The mother at right has nine American born children and has been in the United States ten years. The mother on the left has been in this country two

fatherless families. There were nine American born children in the picture; neither of the women spoke English.²⁴⁹ This was one of many hardships of women not having their husbands around, not being able to speak English, and having to care for several children. The fathers in this instance were *Isseis*, they would likely be absent because they were in detention camps awaiting their hearings, they would not have been eligible to fight.²⁵⁰ Families separated because of war inevitably progressed the further breakdown of the patriarchal system. With the fathers absent, women were left to perform dual roles of parenting.

The Weakening of the Issei Family

The weakening of the *Issei* family was unavoidable, and the wartime removal and mandatory incarceration accelerated the process. “Dependence on the government for the essential of life-food, clothing, shelter, and income meant a breakdown in family discipline.”²⁵¹ The times were changing and the United States unified to become under one category, American. In time, the older generations would die off as the younger more assimilated generations would continue to take over. For many *Issei* there had become a great amount of leisure time that they had never really experienced before. Towards the end of internment many *Issei* were content or may have accepted what was being forcefully imposed on them. They were aging and the government was paying for

years, and neither speak English. These evacuees and others will be leaving for the assembly center within a few days, and later transferred to War Relocation Authority centers for the duration.”

<<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Bloom, 558.

²⁵¹ Kitano, Harry H.L. *Generations and Identity: The Japanese American*. (Massachusetts: Ginn Press, 1993), 122.

everything so many were just kind of “sitting back,” where the *Nisei* generation in many ways took over and it was much easier for them because they fluently spoke the English language. “The decision making gradually shifted from the first generation to the second.”²⁵² Internment was more difficult for the *Isseis* and older *Niseis* because many held on to the Japanese values that they had grown up with where the younger generations readily accepted and welcomed change.

Imprisonment not only altered gender roles, but generational roles as well. May K. Sasaki described the breakdown of family structure in camp and the tensions between her father and brother. She said:

Yeah, I think that occurred in a lot of places there. The *Isseis* used to be the leaders of their family, but once this whole thing came about, they didn’t have the ability to speak the language, so that the people in the leadership positions in camp became largely the older *Niseis*. So the *Isseis* had to take a lower role, which was kinda hard for them.²⁵³

Some *Issei* even resented the *Nisei* because of their foreign status. Clearly, not only gender roles were being affected, but age groups as well.

Interviewer Chizu Omori asked Hiroshi Kashiwagi “do you think that the *Issei* were affected differently than the *Nisei* in this experience?” Kashiwagi responded:

I think they were affected a little differently because they lost so much more. We lost our future, you know, in a way, but they lost whatever they had. And the more they had, you know, the more they lost. We didn’t have very much but what we had meant a lot to us, so it’s the same...so they, they lost a lot. Although many felt that they were free to take it easy for, for the first time in their life, so in a way that was good for them, but I don’t know, I think they lost a lot, cause they had worked so hard.²⁵⁴

²⁵² Richardson, 172.

²⁵³ May K. Sasaki interviewed on October 28, 1997. Located in Seattle, Washington. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

²⁵⁴ Hiroshi Kashiwagi interviewed on October 1, 1992. Located in San Francisco, California. Densho Digital Archive. <<http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx>>.

Nonetheless, all internees were affected one way or another; each person had lost something whether property, the people that they loved, honor, or their previous life in general. Towards the end of internment, many *Issei* were saying *yoko-nai* (not right) or *warui* (bad or wrong) for their children.²⁵⁵ Many hoped to return to California, and many thought they could go back to their previous neighborhoods. It was hard for some to accept that new people moved into their old homes after they were incarcerated. Some *Issei* even thought the government would reimburse them for all that they lost, but that was not case. The *Issei* lost so much, but they were willing to relocate, again, so their children could achieve what was denied to them.

²⁵⁵ Austin, 180.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It took a few months to intern the Japanese, but releasing them took roughly four years. The exclusion order was revoked by the War Department, effective on January 2, 1945.²⁵⁶ By January 1945, before the liberating effects of the Endo decision²⁵⁷ kicked in, the internment population had dropped to just under 80,000. “At the beginning of August 1945, the month before when the war with Japan ended, there were fewer than 58,000 inmates. By December 1, 1945, every camp but Tule Lake had been emptied: there were 12,545 detainees still there; and as late as March 1, 1946, it still held 2,806.”²⁵⁸ Before internment, the father was authoritative, the mother submissive, and the children obedient. During internment, the father’s patriarchal power as head of household lost much of its working character. There became a loosening of family structure and loss of function, such as, there was no household routine, little work to do, and suddenly there were hardly any decisions to be made.

The *Issei* were barred from citizenship and were not allowed to lead the community in camps. Due to their lack of English, they had to depend on their children to deal with the Caucasian administration. In retrospect, the younger *Nisei* withdrew from the conservative Japanese cultural traits and in a sense took over from the *Issei* and helped lead the family through internment.²⁵⁹ Each person became a free agent, and teenagers removed themselves from parental supervision, sometimes only returning to the

²⁵⁶ Richardson, 184.

²⁵⁷ In their decision, the Supreme Court ruled that, regardless of whether the United States Government had a right to exclude people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast during World War II, they could not continue to detain a citizen that the government itself conceded was loyal to the United States. This decision helped lead to the re-opening of the West Coast for resettlement by Japanese-American citizens following their internment in camps across the United States during World War II.

²⁵⁸ Daniels, 72.

²⁵⁹ Bloom, 558, 559.

barracks to sleep. The children became independent and in the process some lost respect for their elders. The *Issei* and older *Nisei* were concerned with the decay of manners of the children. The parents lost control over their children and the family unit was immersed into communal living.

Prior to internment, the *Issei* enforced a rigid sexual division of labor.²⁶⁰ Women did not earn an independent income and were under the authority of their husbands. Women were often not allowed to form relationships outside the family. During internment the doors opened for women to pursue jobs that normally would have been reserved for men such as supervisory, clerical, and specialist positions. Internment created employment for women and helped them move up the economic ladder. A man joining the military could have torn his family a part; a woman's choice to work could cause even more distress. Men and women employed in the same jobs received the same wage.²⁶¹ Children, men, and women often ate at separate gendered mess halls. Men no longer sat as patriarchal head of the dinner table nor did they have control over women's whereabouts and potential incomes. Incarceration created a complete "family breakdown."

Many *Nisei* that were dependent on their parents became independent because of internment. Some joined the military to prove their loyalty to the United States. It must be mentioned that the segregated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, became the most decorated regiment in the history of the United States Armed Forces.²⁶² The *Nisei* experienced far more freedoms and social roles than what their parents experienced.

²⁶⁰ Kurashige, 1643.

²⁶¹ Arai, 226.

²⁶² Daniels, 64.

During and post internment the older *Nisei* generation practiced the *Issei* model as the younger *Nisei* assimilated to American norms.²⁶³

The Japanese American communities regardless of gender would continue to overcome struggles after internment. Women would continue to face racial and gender discrimination.²⁶⁴ Leslie A. Ito argued, “That women continued to play an important role as preservers of Japanese culture, regardless whether they returned to the Nikkei community or stayed in the East and continued to acculturate.”²⁶⁵ The Japanese had their rights stripped away and were imprisoned because of the blood running through their veins. They experienced fear, confinement, bigotry, violence, and the loss of property and relationships in which words in this paper cannot interpret the experience. Returning to American society was not easy for the 75,000 Japanese Americans still imprisoned in 1945.²⁶⁶ The relationships and bonds formed had to have been the hardest thing to do when it was time to separate and resettle. Not to mention Franklin Roosevelt favored the “one or two families per county” plan to appeal to the other Americans so they would not be upset with too many Japanese Americans moving to their towns.²⁶⁷ Katsuto Nakano said, “We must avoid grouping together and practice assimilation... The main part of gaining opinion is up to the evacuee.”²⁶⁸

Issei parents and *Nisei* children remained close after evacuation. The majority of parents had to depend on their children because the *Issei* lost their farms, businesses, and homes. They were too old to start over again. After internment, the *Nisei* did not have to

²⁶³ Kitano, 122-124.

²⁶⁴ Austin, 170.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Daniels, 72.

²⁶⁷ Austin, 132.

²⁶⁸ Howard, 225.

return to little Tokyos of their parents.²⁶⁹ The *Nisei* were taught to obey their parents, but internment forced them to become more vocal and self-sufficient.²⁷⁰ Women were able to speak up and say they wanted to relocate to the East or Mid-West where their friends had relocated opposed to returning to the West Coast.²⁷¹ The *Nisei* were still close to their parents, but many chose to make decisions for themselves, such as, military, educational, or career opportunities.

Depending on where a family would relocate played a role in how the white middle class would define Japanese Americans. Some *Nisei* wives moved to the segregated South because that was where their military husbands were stationed. Quite a few were subjected to racism and violence. A white woman by the name of Arnice Dyer married Herbert Sasaki, a Japanese American and they lived in Purvis, Mississippi. In 2005, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote in Mrs. Sasaki's obituary that the Ku Klux Klan had burned a cross in her yard as a result of her interracial marriage.²⁷² Not only in the South, but even in Michigan Japanese Americans experienced racism. The Japanese American community in Kalamazoo preferred to work at night to hide their Japanese faces. Julia Dakuzaku worked at a bakery during the daytime in which white Americans saw her and protested the bakery. The bakery offered Julia to work night shift, but she refused and they fired her. Unfortunately, Julia Dakuzaku committed suicide as a result of hatred and racism.²⁷³ Post internment, many Japanese Americans went through an isolation period from Anglo America.

²⁶⁹ Okubo, X.

²⁷⁰ Richardson, xxxix.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 197.

²⁷² Howard, 226, 227.

²⁷³ Ibid, 228-231.

In 1945 and 1946, the Japanese American internment camps closed leaving behind a history unknowable to future Americans except in writing. There were *Sansei*, or third generation in the camps, but the majority were very young and did not understand the magnitude of internment and the impact on gender roles. The experience of internment in a way reversed the gender roles. Men had their power stripped away where women were being empowered during internment. Men were weakened by the lack of control over their families and women were experiencing a sense of independence that they had never experienced before. Due to internment, the rigid patriarchal structure collapsed and women were being liberated. It would not be fair to say that *all* women were liberated, but they had greater opportunities than before. It can be argued that in time this would have happened with the younger generations assimilating to American culture, but internment accelerated the process. It is important to understand American society as a whole reverted back to the traditional roles after the War ended in 1945. The men came home and integrated back into the workforce and women returned to the homes and bore children which would become known as the Baby Boom Generation. These traditions would continue until the 1960s when the young people began to rebel against the conservative customs of the time in which American society would enter a social revolution.

This research will enhance our understanding of what happened to a group of people who were forced into incarceration and how gender roles evolved. There were gains and losses. The breakdown of patriarchy benefited women, but it was imposed. *Nisei* women took advantage of the loosening family bonds to pursue a higher education or career. Japanese men felt emasculated because of their low wages for menial tasks and

loss of power over their families. It was the incarceration of the Japanese American community that transformed irreversibly the population, familial structure, and gender roles.²⁷⁴

After internment, many remained silent and did not talk about imprisonment. It was not until the Civil Rights Movement, where younger *Nisei* and *Sansei* began to seek an apology and compensation from the federal government. It would not be until 1988, the Japanese Americans finally won the legislation redress.²⁷⁵ The government formally apologized and gave individual payments of \$20,000 to each surviving internee as well as an educational fund.²⁷⁶ This was an important and proud achievement for the Japanese Americans. It showed they could fight for fair and equal treatment and in this case, justice. The Japanese Americans began to appreciate their ethnic identity and pride replaced shame.

²⁷⁴ Matsumoto, 6-14.

²⁷⁵ Takezawa, Yasuko I. "Children of Inmates: The Effects of the Redress Movement Among Third Generation Japanese Americans," *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 1. (Spring, 1991), 40.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 46.

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CURRICULUM VITA

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EDUCATION

Towson University, Towson, Maryland
Masters; Social Sciences

July 2007- December 2011

- *HIST 565 Immigrants & Immigration in the United States*: Compared social, cultural, and economic history of selected ethnic groups and their relationship to the dominant culture.
- *HIST 592 Asian American History and Culture*: This course took an intersectional approach paying particular attention to how communities have formed in relation to various constellations of age, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, nation, race, religion, and sexuality. Asian American community histories contextualized within the broader scope of U.S. and global politics and cultural history.
- *POSC 583 Politics and the Cinema: Hollywood, Washington, and U.S. Foreign Policy from World War II to the War Against Terrorism*: In-depth investigation into the structures, institutions, theories, and practices of international relations.
- *SOSC 600 Interdisciplinary Approaches to Global Problems*: Explored comparative frameworks of global issues looking at economic integration, urbanization, and environment with a concentration on water.
- *SOSC 601 Geographer's View*: Used maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context. Explored the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.
- *SOSC 602 Comparative History and Historiography*: Analyzed the history of WWI and WWII with a focus on gender, race, location, population, employment, birth rates, politics, religion, and economics.
- *SOSC 603 The Economist's Perspective*: Studied economic concepts and tools such as cost and benefit, supply and demand to facilitate logical thinking about complex social issues.
- *SOSC 604 East Asian Security Issues, 1945-Present*: Focused on post WWII East Asia challenges of civic development, diplomatic relationships, and military infrastructure by the major powers, i.e., United States, Japan, the People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union.
- *SOSC 605 American Politics in the 21st Century*: Examined the structure of American government, the connection between theory and practice in the American political system, the principles and social forces that inform governance in the United States, and some of the major policy questions that it confronts.
- *SOSC 606 Sociological Insight*: Examined research theories and methods for studies in sociology. Sharpened skills needed for graduate thesis design, data collection and data analysis.
- *SOSC 897 Social Science Master's Thesis: Japanese American Internment Camps: Effect Upon Wartime and Post-War Male and Female gender Roles within Family and Community.*

Towson University, Towson, Maryland
Bachelor of Science; Social Sciences

August 2001- May 2006

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

M & T Bank

February 2010-Present

CRE Valuation Researcher

- Complete Commercial Evaluations utilizing M&T Bank forms by valuing real estate assets such as commercial and residential properties. This encompasses the following duties that include but are not limited to: market data collection, site inspections, photographs, researching comparable sales, and writing reports.
- Prepares and generates routine accounting reports using Excel, Access, and/or other departmental software.
- Prepares disbursements and billings for approval and payment. Prepares expense vouchers and maintain financial expense records.
- Serves as a liaison between managers, bank personnel, and outside appraisers; responding to questions and/or issues on organizational and departmental matters.
- Establishes and maintains good record keeping and filing management for appraisal department.
- Approves employee time and attendance sheets for MD, VA, & DC appraisal departments.
- Performs clerical duties that include, but not limited to, the composition of correspondence, reports, memos, management letters, and other communications; ensuring accuracy and preparation in a timely and professional manner.

**The Traffic Group, Inc.
Technician I**

June 2009- February 2010

- Geocoded addresses and translate them into longitude and latitude.
- Analyzed surveys to determine population travel and incomes to influence the price of a future toll.
- Conducted origin-destination studies through automatic license plate recognition (ALPR).
- Counted traffic (vehicles, pedestrians, bikes, etc.) passing a point or intersection used in a traffic impact study.
- Used forms and queries in access to log survey information such as Global Positioning System data, track invoices, and traffic census.

**Sojourner Christian Academy
History/Government Teacher**

August 2008-June 2009

- Taught 9th-12th graders at a diverse, remedial college preparatory urban school.
- Educated mostly socially/economically challenged students.
- Designed curricula for U.S. History and Government courses geared toward specific age groups and ability levels.
- Instructed great morals and ethics.
- Facilitated student / teacher communication.
- Taught academic, social, organizational, and study skills to high school students.
- Prepared objectives and outlines for courses of study.
- Demonstrated superb classroom management skills.

INTERNSHIPS

Baltimore City Police Department - Quick Response Team (S.W.A.T.)

September 2004 -January 2005

- Practiced tactical skills.
- Performed firearms and urban combat training.
- Secured sensitive information.
- Filed administrative office work.
- Took an active role in training process.
- Firearms training administrative paperwork for officer qualification.

Baltimore City Police Department - District Detective Unit

February 2005 - May 2005

- Assisted in detective investigations.
- Engaged in community policing.
- Filed sensitive information.
- Participated in evidence gathering.
- Administrative duties to include developing PowerPoint slides.
- Participated in surveillance techniques.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Baltimore Animal Welfare Alliance

October 2010

United Methodist Church Disaster Relief: Katrina efforts- Gulfport, MS

June 2008

Sandtown Habitat for Humanity: Baltimore, MD

July 2007

Catholic Charities (Our Daily Bread): Baltimore, MD

July 2007

Center for Addiction and Pregnancy: Baltimore, MD

July 2007

United Methodist Church Disaster Relief: Helped with Katrina efforts- Moss Point, MS; Pascagoula, MS

June 2007

Vacation Bible School- Vancleave, MS

June 2007

Special Olympics: Towson, MD

June 2007

Samaritans Purse: Assisted with Katrina efforts- Kiln, MS

January 2007