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Japanese American Internment Camps:
Resistance and Perseverance

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Professor Bau-Hwa Hsieh
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“As long as I cooperated, I felt I was doing all I could,” said Tatsuro Yada a Japanese American man who was interned in 1942.¹ Members of the Nazi party in Germany were not the only ones who set up concentration camps during World War II, the United States did too. While the horrors committed by the Nazis within their camps surpass the actions taken by the United States within their camps, it is important to remember, that the Nazis were not alone in singling out a demographic of their population and incarcerating them. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 the United States government issued Executive Order 9066, which called for the evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans. The government created a number of internment camps, to house Japanese Americans, many of which consisted of substandard housing and other facilities. Internment had a lasting effect on Japanese American familial structure and hierarchy as well as attempting to limit the ways in which Japanese Americans were able to express their heritage and culture. Many Japanese Americans resisted the limitations placed on their ability to express their culture by restructuring their living areas or by attempting to maintain a traditional Japanese family dynamic during internment. Others within the camps, especially women, embraced the option to break with traditions such as arranged marriages.

First an idea of the scholarly work surrounding Japanese Internment is needed for a foundation of the topic. Then by examining military documents and newspaper articles, an idea of the racial climate can be gained, and a sense of the prejudice and racism that were the root cause of Japanese American internment will be shown. Lastly by examining oral interviews with Japanese Americans who experienced internment first hand, examples of these acts of resistance and the effects of internment can be better analyzed. Combining the oral interviews with the

¹ Tatsuro Yada, interviewed by Taki Masuri, March 8, 1992, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, <https://digitalcollections.ohs.org/sr-960-oral-history-interviews-with-tatsuro-yada-by-taka-mizote>, 24.

works of scholars such as Roger Daniels, who is arguably the leading authority on Japanese American Internment, and Linda Tamura who was not only a student of Daniels' but also wrote a book that used oral histories as its basis, the theme of oral histories telling the story of resistance and change can be expanded. Internment affected not only the generations who were interned but had a lasting impact on the future generations. Examining oral interviews with Japanese Americans who experienced internment first hand reveals examples of their resistance. The effects of internment can be seen by analyzing the conditions of the assembly centers and camps, including Japanese Americans first interpretations of them, the ways that Japanese Americans attempted to either maintain a pre-camp life within the camp or use the new opportunities that internment provided to break with unwanted traditions, and how both age and gender shaped their experiences within camp and the events leading up to their internment.

There has been a lot written on Japanese internment during World War II in a relatively short amount of time. Most of the literature surrounding the internment of Japanese Americans was not written until the mid-1980s when the redress movement was in full swing. The redress movement, as defined by the Densho Encyclopedia, was a series of Japanese American "efforts to obtain the restitution of civil rights, an apology, and/or monetary compensation from the U.S. government... culminating in the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988."² The reason that the redress movement was so impactful in generating new sources about Japanese American internment was the fact that it broke the silence that many of the Japanese Americans who were interned held. Following the movement many Japanese Americans were more willing to discuss their experiences of internment.³ However this does not mean that there was not any literature

² Alice Yang. "Redress movement," Densho Encyclopedia, accessed May 25, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Redress%20movement/>

³ Hansen, "Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation," 628.

about the internment before redress; it was just significantly less than during and after the movement. Some of the first literature surrounding Japanese American internment came out just a year after Japanese Americans were released from the camps.

In April 1947 just over a year after Japanese Americans were released, *American Sociological Review* published Leonard Bloom's contribution to the study of Japanese American internment, titled "Transitional Adjustments of Japanese-American Families to Relocation."⁴ Much of Bloom's research focused on discrimination toward minority groups in America.⁵ The article focuses on WRA (War Relocation Authority) records and data, as well as case studies of the families that were interned.⁶ Bloom uses this to form a picture of the impact that internment had on the families such as leading to divorce in one case study or persecution from their peers in another.⁷ Bloom illustrates the negative impact that internment had on the Japanese American family structure and how internment changed many of the traditional practices that Japanese Americans had. It is likely that Bloom was forced to rely on case studies and WRA documents because for years those were the only sources available on the topic of Japanese American internment.

One of the contributing factors to the limited amount of sources available was that even once released many of the internees refused to talk about their internment for a number of

⁴ Bloom was the second sociologist hired at UCLA, and his research on Japanese American internment during World War II was critical on government policies during the war.

⁵ Kelli Nakamura. "The Managed Casualty: The Japanese-American Family in World War II (book)," Densho Encyclopedia, accessed March 16, 2020, [https://encyclopedia.densho.org/The%20Managed%20Casualty:%20The%20Japanese-American%20Family%20in%20World%20War%20II%20\(book\)/](https://encyclopedia.densho.org/The%20Managed%20Casualty:%20The%20Japanese-American%20Family%20in%20World%20War%20II%20(book)/)

⁶ Leonard Bloom, "Transitional Adjustments of Japanese-American Families to Relocation," in "The American Family and Its Housing," *American Sociological Review*, 12, no. 2 (April, 1947): 201-209.

⁷ Bloom, "Transitional Adjustments," 204.

reasons. A large influence was that compared to the treatment of Jews by Germans, many Japanese Americans felt that their treatment was far less horrific and they therefore had no reason to complain. However, this was not shared by all members of the camps and was mostly exclusive to the older generations known as the *Issei* or first generation Japanese Americans. The *Issei* were the initial generation that immigrated to the United States from Japan. The second generation or *Nisei* were their children that were born in America but were from Japanese ancestry. The younger generation *Nisei*, most often argued they should work with the government through organizations such as the JACL (Japanese American Citizens League) whereas the elder generations argued against cooperation with the government.⁸

Arguably the largest shift in literature regarding the internment of Japanese Americans is the change in sources used to analyze the internment. Once the redress movement began in January of 1987 and many of the Japanese Americans had time to process the events that had happened to them they were ready to come forward with their stories. This presented the shift from looking at primarily data-based documents to oral histories and the stories of the interned people the way they told it.

Since the redress movement it is hard to find any literature on Japanese American internment during World War II without some mark of Roger Daniels' works.⁹ In *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* Daniels divides his book into three main sections. The first provides background on the Japanese American population and the similarities

⁸ Arthur A. Hansen, "Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation," *The Journal of American History*, 82, no. 2 (September, 1995): 630.

⁹ Roger Daniels is Professor Emeritus at University of Cincinnati with a specialization in Asian history. Daniels earned his doctorate in 1961 and has since been very active in academia editing over seventy-five articles and founding the Asian American Experience series. "Roger Daniels," Research Directory University of Cincinnati, accessed March 16, 2020, <https://researchdirectory.uc.edu/p/danielr>

between Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans and the ordeals they faced when first coming to America. The second focuses on the process of internment, life during internment and release from internment. The third section of the book focuses on the redress movement and Daniels' closing thoughts in regards to the overall internment experience. Like Bloom, Daniels focused his initial analysis of Japanese American internment on governmental records such as census data. He also used this data to provide an in-depth background to the racial issues that both Japanese and Chinese Americans faced leading up to the war.¹⁰ By doing this Daniels demonstrated that the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was not entirely for the same political reasons of fear and safety that the American government announced that it was, rather it was another example of white American racism comparable to the treatment of Native Americans and African Americans.¹¹ Daniels also posited that though relations have improved since internment, it is entirely possible for a similar occurrence to happen to Asian Americans or another minority group within America.¹²

Linda Tamura has contributed a number of articles and books to the study of Japanese American internment.¹³ Tamura explored this newfound willingness of Japanese Americans to discuss the events of internment in her book *The Hood River Issei*. Tamura used fourteen oral interviews that she conducted herself to paint a picture of what life was like for *Issei* before and during their internment.¹⁴ Tamura, like Daniels, explored life not only during the internment but

¹⁰ Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993)

¹¹ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 107.

¹² Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 114.

¹³ Tamura is a Japanese American, was a student of Daniels and is Professor Emerita at Willamette University. "Linda Tamura," Densho Encyclopedia, accessed March 16, 2020, <http://encyclopedia.densho.org/authors/Linda%20Tamura>

¹⁴ Linda Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

life leading up to internment. However, she probed deeper than Daniels by looking at what life was like in Japan and the United States for these individuals, whereas Daniels focused on only their time in the United States. Tamura used government documents but she incorporated them into her work instead of basing her work around them like Daniels or Bloom. This makes her work more impactful due to the personal focus and direct interaction that the reader of her work has with the interviewee. By having sections of her interviews as the basis of her book, the reader is placed in the seat of the interviewer rather than just someone reviewing documents. It also allows for a different perspective of internment. By examining the internee's side of internment rather than the documents of the government forcing the internment a new side of the story was being told. One of Tamura's key conclusions about the experience that internment had on Japanese American families was on their willingness to pass on traditions or culture.¹⁵ She stated "The second generation wanting to become as fully Americanized as possible, tended to reject their parents' heritage. Likewise, the third generation seemed to reject their own parents' values, but they also attempted to recapture some of their cultural roots."¹⁶ Tamura also stated that the *Issei* tried to do everything they could for their families to make life easier for them "Balancing their Japanese heritage with newly acquired American customs, they sacrificed for their children's benefit and demonstrated quiet fortitude in the face of racial hostilities."¹⁷

Lauren Kessler's book *Stubborn Twig Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family*, like Tamura's, focused on the life of Japanese Americans in the Hood River

¹⁵ Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 273.

¹⁶ Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 273.

¹⁷ Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 279.

Valley.¹⁸ The difference is that instead of focusing on a large sample size she focused on the Yasui family and what internment meant for them.¹⁹ Kessler examined the generational impact that internment had on Japanese familial structure and cultural identity. One example of this that was mentioned by Kessler was that the *Nisei* wanted to keep their children from feeling the same kind of ostracism that they faced throughout their life, so *Issei* parents refused to talk about internment with their *Nisei* children and practiced as little of their Japanese customs as possible.²⁰ This was likely due to the still fresh psychological wounds from the internment. Lauren Kessler's examination of the Yasui family of Hood River, Oregon provides some insight on typical family life prior to internment. Masuo Yasui was a Japanese immigrant who started a family in America once making a career for himself as a business man.²¹ Being raised in Japan gave Masuo a deep sense of Confucian principals. The principal that Masuro is recorded exhibiting the most was filial piety, or respect for ones elders especially the father.²² Masuo was known for berating his children for even the slightest missteps in his opinion such as "receiving a low grade in school or misbehaving in class; perhaps a child composed a poorly written letter."²³ He viewed any mistake his children made as something that would bring shame to the family and his children knew it. This intense pressure to please their father was a driving force behind the actions of the Yasui children growing up. One of the children stated they felt they had to be next

¹⁸ Kessler is both a writer of over fifteen books and a professor at University of Oregon for over 30 years. Aaron Nelson "Lauren Kessler," University of Oregon, accessed March 16, 2020, <https://journalism.uoregon.edu/lauren-kessler>

¹⁹ Lauren Kessler, *Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1993).

²⁰ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 251.

²¹ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 112.

²² Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 112.

²³ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 113.

to perfect just to please their father with no option of failure.²⁴ The Yasui children had a reason to fear failure. Masuo was known to overreact in his punishments. Once when the children stayed up past their bed time he proceeded to shout and yell at his children to “go to bed” and took his youngest son outside to repeatedly throw “snow at his bare back and chest.”²⁵ Kessler talked briefly about Masuo being raised with the belief that duty to one’s family comes before all else. It is likely that this sense of duty is related to the core values placed on family that are integrated into Japanese culture. This sense of Japanese identity would fade for a time in the Yasui family so much so that Flip and Tom, Masuo’s grandchildren were considered to be “about as exotic as the boy next door.”²⁶ Kessler argued that the hardships Japanese Americans faced during internment made them want to change or hide their culture from their children to protect them from facing the same prejudice or racism that they experienced.²⁷

Arthur A. Hansen progressed Tamara’s theme of analyzing internment and its effects using oral histories in his journal article “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” which focused on the Japanese American Oral History Project that he directed.²⁸ Hansen outlined the timeline of oral histories and their effective use as a source to frame the historiography of Japanese American internment.²⁹ Hansen argued that oral histories had not been properly used in the study of Japanese American internment stating that until recently scholars had been “using oral history to fill factual gaps” and it was not until later that they “began to tackle extra-

²⁴ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 113.

²⁵ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 112.

²⁶ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 250.

²⁷ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 250.

²⁸ Hansen, “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” 625-639.

²⁹ Hansen is an Emeritus Professor at California State University, Fullerton, where he taught History for forty years and founded the Japanese American Project of the CSUF Oral History Program in 1972. “Arthur A. Hansen.” *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed March 16, 2020, <http://encyclopedia.densho.org/authors/Arthur%20A.%20Hansen/>

empirical questions...” using oral histories.³⁰ Hansen also discussed how oral histories have changed as a source. He stated they were originally conducted by Social Scientists and could be broken down into three categories; “the WRA’s Community Analysis Section (CAS), the Bureau of Sociological Research (BSR)... and the Evacuation and Resettlement Study (ERS).”³¹ Hansen also discussed why the Japanese Americans who were interned were so hesitant to disclose their feelings on the internment process for so long. Hansen claimed that the internment was such a horrific and harmful experience which was the main cause for the individuals that were interned not wanting to talk about their experiences that one woman who was interned likened it to women talking about experiencing rape.³² This silence was broken by the redress movement in the 1980s due to Congress beginning the process of passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Hansen stated that since the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that oral histories have flourished in academia.³³ Hansen mentioned the work of both Linda Tamura and Lauren Kessler.³⁴ Hansen’s article supported the idea of psychological wounds that Kessler presented as the key reason for many people’s unwillingness to speak about the camps until after the redress movement began. Kessler stated that Chop refused to talk about his father Masuo’s suicide, which was caused by psychological trauma sustained from the internment, for thirty years after the incident.³⁵

Following the theme of psychological wounds that the internment camps inflicted on the Japanese American population, Valerie Matsumoto analyzed the impact that internment had on

³⁰ Hansen, “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” 625.

³¹ Hansen, “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” 626.

³² Hansen, “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” 628.

³³ Hansen, “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” 630.

³⁴ Hansen, “Oral History and the Japanese American Evacuation,” 630.

³⁵ Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*, 250.

the female population, especially young women who were interned, and how it impacted their education and work, among other aspects of life.³⁶ Matsumoto relied heavily on oral interviews, a number of which she conducted herself, like Tamura.³⁷ Matsumoto also included a number of newspaper articles and scholarly secondary sources for supporting information but her foundation was primarily the oral interviews.³⁸ Matsumoto tackled the changing family dynamic that Kessler built her book around by examining changes in the way that dating and marriage, as well as work and education, were experienced by *Issei* and *Nisei*.³⁹ Some of the shifts, such as being able to pick one's own partner, choosing one's job and education, were a welcome change to the culture especially the new found independence that many of the women had due to the internment. Matsumoto used a quote about a woman having multiple job opportunities ranging from artistry to accounting.⁴⁰ She illustrated her point about women being more accepted in education by quoting an internee that said her father let go of traditions in camp and initially did not want her to leave for college but eventually relented and accepted her leaving.⁴¹ The family dynamic was forever changed during the internment but not necessarily exclusively in a detrimental way. Matsumoto looked at the way that internment affected the family dynamic of Japanese Americans and took an especially close look at the impact that the shifting dynamic had on women within the family.⁴² Two of the major changes to the family dynamic for women that

³⁶ Valerie Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women During World War II" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 8, no. 1 (1984): 6-14.

³⁷ Matsumoto is a professor of History and Asian American Studies at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), has written three books and a number of journal articles. "Valerie Matsumoto," University of California, Los Angeles, accessed March 16, 2020 <https://history.ucla.edu/faculty/valerie-matsumoto>

³⁸ Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women," 13.

³⁹ Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women," 10.

⁴⁰ Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women," 9.

⁴¹ Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women," 10.

⁴² Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women," 9.

Matsumoto pointed out was their ability to work and support their families from a far rather than just domestic work, and their ability to choose their own marriages as opposed to the traditional arranged marriages.⁴³ Rather than only having domestic work as an option women were now finding work in other fields such as “industrial, clerical and managerial occupations.”⁴⁴

Like Matsumoto, Ronald Takaki’s *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* draws from oral interviews and a large amount of secondary source literature.⁴⁵ In his chapter that focused on Japanese American internment titled “Remembering Pearl Harbor: From Internment to Hiroshima,” Takaki discussed the process of internment from the issuing of Executive Order 9066 to the prejudice that Japanese Americans faced due to the war.⁴⁶ Takaki also discussed the “No-No” boys who were Japanese American men who refused to either answer a loyalty question or enlist in the draft or flat out answered “no” to the questions on the loyalty questionnaire.⁴⁷ Takaki focused on the experiences that the Japanese Americans endured during their time at camp from the unacceptable living quarters to the oppression and fear that individuals felt during their internment. Takaki listed one of the main reasons of internment as a way to placate the intense emotions that member of the non-Japanese American public were feeling toward the Japanese Americans within their communities. He also looked at the different generations that were interned and their respective feelings stating that the *Issei* felt a mix of

⁴³ Matsumoto, “Japanese American Women,” 13.

⁴⁴ Matsumoto, “Japanese American Women,” 11.

⁴⁵ Takaki was a Professor of History at UCLA and later served as a chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies at University of California Berkley. Elaine Kim “IN MEMORIAM: Ronald Takaki Professor of Ethnic Studies, Emeritus UC Berkeley 1939 – 2009” The University of California, accessed March 17, 2020, <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/inmemoriam/html/ronalddtakaki.html>

⁴⁶ Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II*, (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 2000).

⁴⁷ Takaki, *Double Victory*, 157.

emotions such as despair, sadness or anger, where the *Nisei* were often too young to understand the situation that they were in.⁴⁸ Takaki closely examined the life of Joseph Kurihara, an American citizen who fought in the U.S. armed forces. Kurihara was a significant example because he was a model American citizen, yet still faced persecution due to his Japanese heritage. This was something that many of the Japanese Americans had to deal with at the time, persecution for nothing other than their heritage.

The internment of Japanese Americans was a terrible experience for many of those involved. The literature and scholarship surrounding it reflect this aspect and how hard the internment was for Japanese Americans. However, three authors chose to examine internment in a slightly different way studying the forms of resistance and resilience of Japanese Americans. Leslie Ito, Allen W. Austin and Dominique Leblond all examined ways in which Japanese Americans made the best of the bad situation they were put in, instead of focusing on the situation and hardships themselves.

Leslie Ito followed in Matsumoto's footsteps by examining sixteen case studies of Japanese American women and the impact that internment had on their schooling.⁴⁹ Along with her analysis of Matsumoto, Ito also drew from other scholars of Japanese Americans during World War II such as Daniels and Kessler.⁵⁰ It may have been a coincidence but she also provided a brief summary of each of her case studies similarly to how Tamura did with her oral

⁴⁸ Takaki, *Double Victory*, 154.

⁴⁹ Leslie A. Ito, "Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 21, no. 3, Identity and the Academy (2000): 22.

⁵⁰ Leslie Ito has her Masters of Arts in Asian American studies from UCLA and is the California Community Foundation program head "Leslie Ito," America for the Arts, accessed March 16, 2020, <https://www.americansforthearts.org/users/4858>

interviewees.⁵¹ Ito used many of the sources that were produced during the redress movement as a framework for her article. She also incorporated a number of new case studies that had not been examined before. While Ito acknowledged the hardships that Japanese American women faced during internment, her focus was on their impact after internment where their experiences were passed on. Ito stated that “Nisei women who were part of the student relocation movement continued to carry their civic and community responsibilities with them by becoming teachers, lecturers, and philanthropists to ensure that the atrocities of concentration camps in the United States would never reoccur.”⁵² Matsumoto focused on the hardships Japanese Americans faced during internment and the positive changes that were made to their lives as a result. Ito’s examination of their schooling also showed that not all of the experiences were negative, stating that some of the women students attributed their success and happiness outside of camps to their white student peers. This is evident from the quote “Nisei women’s positive interactions with their European American peers and faculty served dual function: The Nisei were able to dispel the anti-Japanese propaganda that stigmatized Japanese American community, and European Americans were able to show the Nisei their commitment and desire to help.”⁵³ This perspective is something that is not often seen when examining the events of Japanese American internment. Compared to Matsumoto, who also focused on the advancement that Japanese American women achieved, Ito focused on the effects of the achievements rather than the achievements themselves.

⁵¹ Ito, “Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement,” 17.

⁵² Ito, “Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement,” 16.

⁵³ Ito, “Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement,” 8.

Another author that chose to look at Japanese American internment was Allen W. Austin.⁵⁴ His article “Eastward Pioneers: Japanese American Resettlement during World War II and the Contested Meaning of Exile and Incarceration” focused on the resiliency that the Japanese Americans showed during and after their internment and the resettlement process.⁵⁵ Austin attributed the ability of the *Nisei* to assimilate into white American culture to their citizenship as native-born Americans and the fact that many of the *Nisei* were willing to relocate to other areas instead of their original homes.⁵⁶ One aspect that Austin highlighted about the internment is the mindset of the *Nisei*. He stated that many were willing to accept the resettlement program and make the best of it.⁵⁷ While Austin never downplayed the horrific or unjust nature of the internment he chose to highlight the positive reparations that were attempted to be made to the Japanese Americans by their country had wronged them. His title suggested that Austin believed the resettlement of Japanese Americans to the east was a new and fresh start for Japanese Americans after internment.

Dominique Leblond contributed to the theme of examining internment in a more positive way in her article "The Sacralization of the American Deserts in the War Relocation Authority Camps for Japanese Americans" by looking at how the Japanese Americans interned in the camps succeeded in making the best of the bad situation into which they were forced.⁵⁸ Leblond

⁵⁴ Austin is a Professor of History at Misericordia University, with a focus in immigration history, who has written a number of books and journal articles as well as receiving an award for both his scholarship and teaching.

⁵⁵ Allen W. Austin, “Eastward Pioneers: Japanese American Resettlement during World War II and the Contested Meaning of Exile and Incarceration,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 26, no. 2 (2007): 58-84, 27.

⁵⁶ Austin, “Eastward Pioneers,” 64.

⁵⁷ Austin, “Eastward Pioneers,” 65.

⁵⁸ Dominique Leblond, "The Sacralization of the American Deserts in the War Relocation Authority Camps for Japanese Americans." *American Studies in Scandinavia*. 31, no. 2 (1999): 1-12.

examined the ways that Japanese Americans physically changed the camps they were placed into in order to make them more accommodating. This entailed creating signs out of roots or wood that were carved in traditional Japanese writing and even renovating the rooms that they were given to more closely resemble a traditional Japanese home.⁵⁹ She stated that the efforts to transform the living spaces was likely to create an escape from reality.⁶⁰ Leblond also examined the geographical set up of the camps themselves.⁶¹ Leblond explained that the changes to the camps were intended by the internees to make the camps into something that more closely resembled a small community rather than an internment camp. This would often cause problems for the internees because the guards were afraid that since they were unable to read the writing that this was a way for internees to communicate messages that could be harmful.⁶² Even though it was potentially harmful to the internees to use the traditional written language they chose to because it was a way for many of them to maintain their self-identity. Another way of maintaining their heritage was the way that the internees decorated their living space. Many internees would do what they could to replicate the way a traditional home would look to them, for example some would hang white paper over the windows and walls or often families would carve floral patterns into wood panels.⁶³ Like writing signs in traditional Japanese, this showed the resilience of the Japanese population that was interned and their resistance to giving up their heritage.

Emiko Omori's 1992 film *Rabbit in the Moon* showed an inside look at the internment camps. The film focused on the experiences of interned Japanese Americans through oral history

⁵⁹ Leblond, "The Sacralization of the American Deserts," 5.

⁶⁰ Leblond, "The Sacralization of the American Deserts," 8.

⁶¹ Leblond, "The Sacralization of the American Deserts," 1-12.

⁶² Leblond, "The Sacralization of the American Deserts," 5.

⁶³ Leblond, "The Sacralization of the American Deserts," 7.

interviews.⁶⁴ One of the things that the film brought up is something that ties in well with the historiography of the internment camps, which was that Japanese Americans felt that they had no reason to complain about their internment experience because Jews experienced much worse treatment than they did during World War II.⁶⁵ One of the biggest advantages of this documentary is that it brought the experiences of Japanese Americans to a wider audience. It also highlighted some of the other aspects of camp life that were not talked about in depth in some other sources. An example of this were the various health challenges that babies born in camp experienced compared to the limited number of health challenges they would have likely experienced in a regular hospital.⁶⁶ It also delved into some of the politics behind the camps. The film suggested that the camps were less about the perceived threat of Japanese Americans within the United States, and more designed in order to hold Japanese Americans hostage.⁶⁷ This is something that is not expressed in a lot of sources discussing Japanese American Internment. Calling into question the validity of the camps however is not something that is unique to this source alone. Many other sources argue that the government was not entirely truthful about why Japanese Americans were interned. Internment left its own mark on Emiko's family. Her older sister Chizuko stated that she hardly remembered her younger siblings in camp because she spent so much of her time away from her family.⁶⁸ A more somber impact was the death of her mother.

⁶⁴ Emiko Omori, Chizuko Omori, *Wabi-Sabi Productions*, Production Company, and Furumoto Foundation, Film Distributor. *Rabbit in the Moon*. United States: Furumoto Foundation, 2004.

⁶⁵ Omori, *Rabbit in the Moon*.

⁶⁶ Omori, *Rabbit in the Moon*.

⁶⁷ Omori, *Rabbit in the Moon*.

⁶⁸ Omori, *Rabbit in the Moon*.

Though her mother died almost a year after her release from camp Emiko believed that internment played a large part in the decline of her mother's health due to her dying at such a young age.⁶⁹

A shift in thinking about Japanese American internment that happened around the conclusion of the redress movement was the view of representation of Japanese Americans within the camps. In Emily Roxworthy's article "Blackface Behind Barbed Wire: Gender and Racial Triangulation in the Japanese American Internment Camps" Roxworthy examined the concept of "Southern Jamborees" where interned Japanese American women put on blackface performances.⁷⁰ Roxworthy also looked at how the media and others portrayed and thought about Japanese American women who were these "Southern Jamborees."⁷¹ Roxworthy painted a picture of Japanese American women using something that white Americans had a history of using for entertainment to mock white Americans who were oppressing them the same way that the oppressed African Americans by using black face to begin with.⁷²

Dolores Flamiano examined newspaper articles and magazines that highlight the fear surrounding Japanese Americans and the supposed threat that they posed by remaining free and on a coast close to Japan.⁷³ One of the ideas that Flamiano examined first was the idea of inaccurate representation of the camps.⁷⁴ Flamiano stated that popular magazines such as *Life*,

⁶⁹ Omori, *Rabbit in the Moon*.

⁷⁰ Emily Roxworthy, "Blackface Behind Barbed Wire: Gender and Racial Triangulation in the Japanese American Internment Camps," 57, no. 2 (2013): 123-142, https://doi.org/10.1162/dram_a_00264.

⁷¹ Roxworthy, "Blackface Behind Barbed Wire," 140.

⁷² Roxworthy is a Provost of Earl Warren College, an interdisciplinary undergraduate college. "Emily Roxworthy," UC San Diego, accessed March 16, 2020, <http://theatre.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/phd/EmilyRoxworthy/index.htm>

⁷³ Dolores Flamiano "Japanese American Internment in Popular Magazines," *Journalism History*, 36 no. 1 (2010): 23-35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00947679.2010.12062812>

⁷⁴ Flamiano is an associate professor of Media and Arts at James Madison University also focuses on the theme of representation of Japanese American internment in media. "Dolores Flamiano: Ruth D. Bridgforth Professor of Telecommunications," James Madison University,

New York Times Magazine, among others often painted a picture of life being well in the camp with quotes about how Japanese Americans "were settled comfortably..." or "The women went to great effort to make their homes as attractive as possible."⁷⁵ One of the three main photographers Flamiano studied, Carl Mydans, stated that he empathized with Japanese Americans and that was one of the largest contributing factors to him wanting to properly portray their experiences.⁷⁶ This was something that was uncommon at the time especially for someone working in the media industry. Mydans chose to highlight both the internees' Japanese ancestry but also their United States citizenship, which he did to intentionally make his viewers uncomfortable.

In order to understand Japanese American internment, it is important to know that internment was not the beginning of racist acts towards Japanese Americans it was just the most egregious act. Internment inflicted psychological wounds on Japanese Americans that lasted decades causing many Japanese Americans to attempt to hide their experiences or traditional heritage and culture from their children. Only during the redress movement did the wounds truly began to heal. The break in tradition caused by internment allowed for advances for women in Japanese families such as more agency in dating and marriage, education and employment.

This paper will examine media portrayals and government materials, the perspective of the outside looking in on internment, as it is just as important to understand because it shows a conflicting message of why internment took place and helps illustrate why internment was so unjust. Oral histories will also be examined in order to better understand internment from the

accessed March 17, 2020, <https://www.jmu.edu/smad/about-smad/our-people/flamiano-dolores.shtml>

⁷⁵ Flamiano, "Japanese American Internment in Popular Magazines," 26.

⁷⁶ Flamiano, "Japanese American Internment in Popular Magazines," 32.

perspective of Japanese Americans and the forms of resistance that they showed to internment. These oral histories will answer questions about how Japanese Americans felt about the conditions of assembly centers and camps, the actions taken by Japanese American within the camps in order to preserve traditional ways of life when they were expected to conform to their new reality, and how age and gender affected the ability of Japanese Americans to understand and process internment as well as quantifying their ability to resist interment.

One key to understanding Japanese American internment is looking at how the non-interned population viewed internment. By looking at the way the government and the media viewed and portrayed internment a more well-rounded understanding of the events of internment can be gained. Looking at documents filed by the military concerning the assembly centers and newspaper articles that discuss internment will serve as the main contributing evidence for views of internment from the outside. One of the key factors in the newspaper articles that will be examined is the Dies Group or Dies Committee. According the Densho encyclopedia, the Dies Group was officially known as “The House Committee on Un-American Activities” and was one of the two groups that investigating the WRA. The group was given the name Dies Group because the leader was Martin Dies Jr. a Texas congressman.⁷⁷

Reports made by military personnel designed to report on the status of the assembly centers showed that the military was unsatisfied with a number of aspects of the centers. In particular a report on the Tanforan center, the inspectors, Mary I. Barber and Lt. Joseph W. Brearley, stated dissatisfaction with the dining areas. They stated that the water for cleaning the dishes was dirty and likely impossible to use to actually clean dishes and that the rags the were

⁷⁷ Brian Niiya, "Dies Committee," Densho Encyclopedia, accessed June 5, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Dies%20Committee/>

supposed to clean the dining area itself were unclean and likely dirty.⁷⁸ An interesting note was that throughout the many reports filed to Lieutenant Colonel Ira K. Evens on the status of the assembly centers there was no mention of the living quarters. They reported on the storerooms, the butcher shops, mess halls, and hospital structures but they never discussed the living quarters. This was likely because they wanted to only highlight what was either acceptable or close to acceptable. As stated in the reports the general public was split on the decision to intern the Japanese American population.⁷⁹ This distinction and split was something that can be seen by examining the newspapers during the time of internment as well.

On December 15 1942, a Florida newspaper, *The Key West Citizen* published an article titled “Japanese-Americans Suffer” which stated that the internment of Japanese Americans was a necessary procedure due to the fact that it was impossible to tell if a Japanese American was loyal to the United States of America or if they were loyal to Japan.⁸⁰ The article appeared to sympathize with the loyal Japanese Americans saying that the situation was uncomfortable but that it was “a small price for them to pay if they are, in fact, loyal to the United States.”⁸¹ It was unclear how supportive this article truly was by saying that subjecting “loyal” citizens to living and other general conditions that even the military deemed unsatisfactory was a necessity.

Another newspaper article that was clearly not supportive of Japanese Americans is from *The Associated Press* but was featured in *The Sunday Star* a newspaper that was published in Washington D.C. The article title “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation

⁷⁸ “Army Inspections of Assembly Centers, July 1942,” in Daniels, Roger. *American Concentration Camps: A Documentary History of the Relocation and Incarceration of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945*. (New York: Garland, 1989), 2.

⁷⁹ “Army Inspections of Assembly Centers, July 1942,” 22.

⁸⁰ “Japanese-Americans Suffer,” *The Key West Citizen*, December 15, 1942, 2.

⁸¹ “Japanese-Americans Suffer.”

Camps” detailed a number of issues that members of the Dies Group had with the allowances of recreational activities and input that the Japanese American internees had within the camps.⁸²

One of the biggest issues with the camps that the group raised was “that the conduct and management of the centers is determined on many matters by the Japanese themselves. While a measure of self-government should be allowed the Japanese, it should not extend to the degree indicated.”⁸³ The fact that the group believed that a population that was already stripped of their

most basic human rights and interned is astonishing. Other issues that the group had with the camps were that there was no proper segregation of loyal and disloyal Japanese, that Japanese

Americans were able to practice *Judo*, a traditional Japanese martial art, and that Japanese Americans were able to play traditional Japanese board games like *Go*, a strategy based game.⁸⁴

The article also took issue with the fact that Japanese Americans were not being active enough stating that the government was not providing sufficient work opportunities for the Japanese

Americans “as to properly utilize the available man power in a constructive manner.”⁸⁵ The

article does offer some semblance of support for Japanese Americans with the statement that the

housing was unsuitable for human living due to how over crowded it was and the fact that it

lacked basic privacy.⁸⁶ This however does not excuse the willingness to treat the Japanese

Americans that were interned as free labor or wish to strip them of the little freedom that they

had within the camps.

⁸² “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps,” *The Sunday Star*, June 20, 1943, A-7.

⁸³ “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps.”

⁸⁴ “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps.”

⁸⁵ “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps.”

⁸⁶ “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps.”

Any semblance of sympathy or empathy that the Dies Group showed towards Japanese Americans in “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps” was completely undercut by another newspaper article titled “Report on Jap Activities Made” which was published in *The Wilmington Morning Star* a newspaper that was based in Wilmington, North Carolina. The article outlines a report made by the Dies Committee which stated that any Japanese American who lived on the West Coast and belonged to any kind of Japanese association was spying on the American government and military in order to report details back to Japan.⁸⁷ The article also stated that Japanese were sent over to America and were to be organized into three groups “agriculture, fishing and miscellaneous trades, with each group engaged ‘in spying for the consulate in its own field of work’”⁸⁸ Between wanting to restrict the freedoms of the Japanese Americans that were interned and blatantly stating that any Japanese American who wants to associate with their culture was a spy, it is clear that the Dies Group was anti-Japanese American in all regards. They hid their fear and racism towards the Japanese American population behind a guise of wanting to protect the United States. This is exactly what the Japanese American population resisted when in the internment camps. They did their best to find ways of creating a normal Japanese culture within the camps when the government that was forcing them into camps was actively trying to strip them of their culture and customs.

While the newspaper articles make no mention of age or gender, they do point out a clearly racist view of Japanese Americans. Two of the three articles examined refer to Japanese Americans with a derogatory slur referring to them as “Jap.”⁸⁹ From the different locations that

⁸⁷ “Reports on Jap Activities Made,” *The Wilmington Morning Star*, January 30 1944, 1-2.

⁸⁸ “Reports on Jap Activities Made.”

⁸⁹ “Reports on Jap Activates Made.”, “Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps.”

the papers were published, it can be reasoned that this was a widespread practice across the entirety of the United States and not localized to a single newspaper or publisher. It is also clear from all three articles that Japanese Americans were viewed as untrustworthy during World War II, even the article that is supposedly sympathizing with Japanese Americans during this time stated that “there is no available method to distinguish between loyal and disloyal citizens of Japanese dissent.”⁹⁰ Even though this article is supposedly supporting Japanese Americans during their time of strife it also has no hesitation to continue to perpetuate the fearmongering that was constantly plaguing the media at this time.

From the inspection reports completed by Mary I. Barber and Lt. Joseph W. Brearley a clear bias is shown that the American government was making the assembly centers appear as pleasing as possible. The reports indicated that the food served in the Portland assembly center “was excellent quality” and the standard of the cooking was “slightly better than usually seen in an army mess, because the food was not over-cooked.”⁹¹ It also appeared as though the government was patting itself on the back for attempting to cater to the wants and traditions of Japanese Americans by serving one Japanese meal a day at minimum.⁹² The reports also indicated that many of the centers did not try and serve a Japanese meal each day, rather it was primarily the Portland and Tanforan centers that practiced this.⁹³ It is unclear to what extent the internees appreciated this attempt to keep their normal eating habits. It is possible that should the Japanese meals have not been properly prepared this could have been looked at as more of an insult than a sign of respect but it is not confirmed either way.

⁹⁰ “Japanese-Americans Suffer.”

⁹¹ “Army Inspections of Assembly Centers, July 1942,” 6.

⁹² “Army Inspections of Assembly Centers, July 1942,” 6.

⁹³ “Army Inspections of Assembly Centers, July 1942,” 9.

Much of the media's portrayal of Japanese Americans within the camps takes issue with Japanese Americans showing resistance to the camps or trying to maintain a traditional life during their internment. In "Japanese Americans Suffer" the article mentioned a riot that had recently happened in one of the camps, which due to the time of the articles release of December 15, 1942 it was likely referring to the Manzanar riot which happened December 5, 1942.⁹⁴ It is possible that the event did not have as much in common with pro-Axis Japanese as the media was attempting to make it out to have.

Activities of interned Japanese Americans were controversial in the media during this time, which was likely not helped by the riot. In "Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps" the Dies group listed issues with the activities of interned Japanese Americans. The issues boil down to too much free time and not enough labor production from within the camps.⁹⁵ Japanese Americans were vilified for playing traditional Japanese board games or practicing martial arts. While it is a conceivable concern that martial arts, which the American Government viewed as military training, could be used against the American Government the internees were not only unarmed but also closely guarded.⁹⁶ The other aspect of that issue the Dies Group raised of spending too much time playing traditional games is somewhat absurd. The Dies Group stated that Japanese Americans that were interred should have spent more time working yet hardly a year after raising their resentments of too much free time they argue that it is too dangerous for Japanese Americans to work in their traditional businesses because they are likely spies.⁹⁷ Regardless of the way that Japanese Americans chose to spend

⁹⁴ "Japanese-Americans Suffer."

⁹⁵ "Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps."

⁹⁶ "Dies Group Resents Freedom Given Japs in Relocation Camps."

⁹⁷ "Reports on Jap Activates Made."

their time the Dies Group found a way to take issue with it. Either Japanese Americans were not being adequately used during their internment and were allowed too much free time during a time when they were being interned for their heritage then being further persecuted for attempting to retain and practice that heritage. On the other hand they were being told that they needed to be more productive and work more but the government was afraid that if they allowed them to work then Japanese Americans would engage in espionage and actively work against the American Government.⁹⁸ The Dies Group neither wanted Japanese Americans to work in their traditional workplaces nor wanted to allow them to make the best of the bad situation that their government had put them in.

The racism that was demonstrated in the government and media during internment is clear, Japanese Americans were “bad” because they were Japanese not because there was fear of a viable threat. The government and media made Japanese Americans, who were the victims of discrimination and racism, out to be the “bad guys” and punished them for nothing more than their heritage and ancestry. Japanese Americans did nothing to deserve being interned for years besides being born Japanese American. Regardless they resisted this unfair treatment in a number of ways, and stood strong in the face of blatant racism. The best way to understand how the internees stood strong against their unjust treatment is to look at their experiences and listen to the stories that they told about their time in the camps.

⁹⁸ “Reports on Jap Activates Made.”

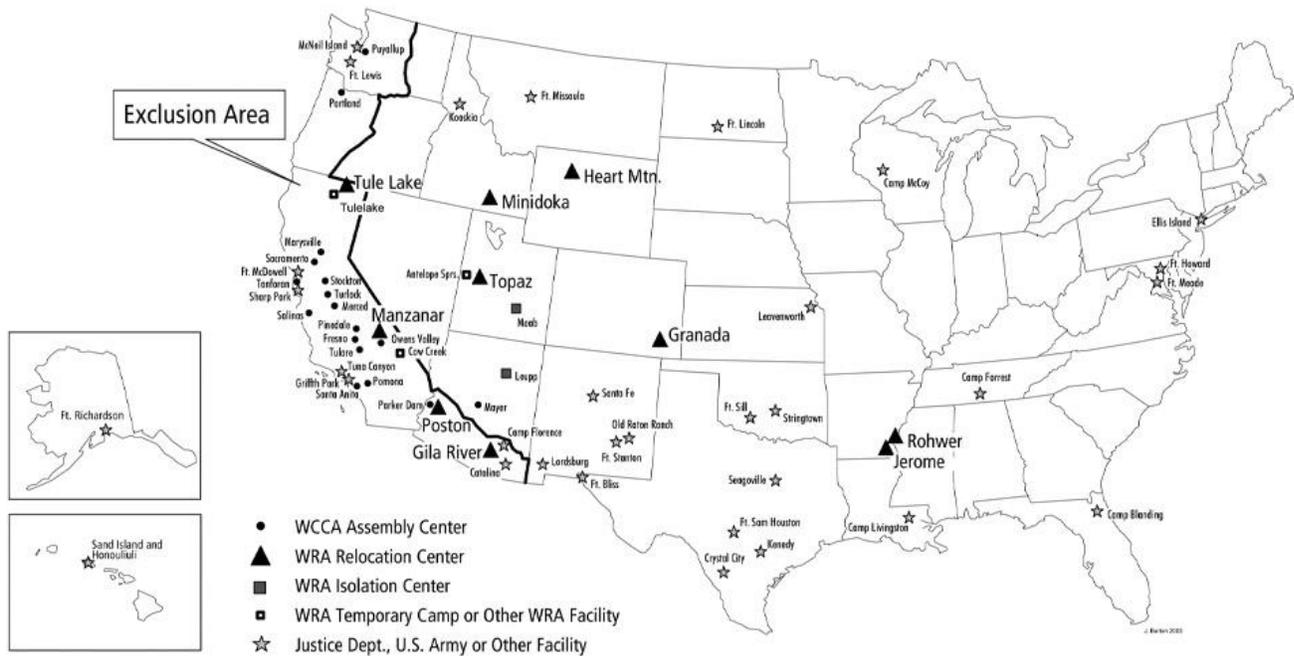


Figure 1: This map shows the locations of the assembly centers and the ten internment camps where Japanese Americans were relocated. Four of the relocation camps were located in California, two were located in Arkansas, and the last four were split between Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Colorado. Roger E. Kelly, "America's World War II Home Front Heritage," CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship 1, no. 2 (Summer 2004) National Park Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), accessed May 31, 2020, <https://home1.nps.gov/CRMJournal/summer2004/article1.html>.

The first question that should be examined when looking at the primary source oral interviews is the individual's first impression of the assembly centers and camps upon arriving there and their feelings about the conditions of the centers and camps that they were forced into. Tatsuro Yada, was interned at Tule Lake in Northern California. When asked what the camp was like he stated that it was still under construction but the living quarters were small and that the laundry and dining areas along with the bathrooms were in the center of the block that they lived in.⁹⁹ Yada also stated "But course it was primitive... we had to get our own cots for our beds. Open room, potbelly stove. And we had to put up partitions between our rooms. So we went

⁹⁹ Tatsuro Yada, 23.

around and scrounged for material to make partitions and things.”¹⁰⁰ This feeling of the living conditions being unsatisfactory is something that is shared by many of the internees.

Nagano John Tomita was also interned in Northern California at Tule Lake, like Yada but he first spent a bit of time in the Walerga assembly center, located in Sacramento, in Central California. At the Walerga center Tomita and his family were tasked with creating their own beds out of straw and according to Tomita there was little to do at the center.¹⁰¹ After spending roughly three months in the assembly center Tomita and his family were transferred to Tule Lake. Tomita stated that his initial few days at Tule Lake were confusing because they were never given information and if they wanted to find something out, internees would have to wonder around and find the answer for themselves.¹⁰² Tomita also made mention of the hot weather and dusty roads that lead to the camp creating issues for the internees, that he was later a main figure in fixing.¹⁰³ From the way Tomita talked about the camp and described his life during internment he does not express the same sense of hardship that many of the other internees express when discussing Tule Lake.

Nancy Ikeda Baldwin was also interned with her family at Tule Lake although she did not stay there the entire internment. Baldwin stated that the camp was large and that it mainly consisted of “many identical barracks, rows of them, all the same, all black.”¹⁰⁴ She also described the geography of the camp as “a long stretch of land border on all sides by a fence with

¹⁰⁰ Tatsuro Yada, 23.

¹⁰¹ John Tomita, interviewed by David Dunham, and Candice Fukumoto, July 25, 2013, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/jacs/tomita_john.html, 19.

¹⁰² John Tomita, 20.

¹⁰³ John Tomita, 22.

¹⁰⁴ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, interviewed by Lu Ann Sleeper, February 27, 2013, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/jacs/baldwin_nancy.html, 6.

guards” that were there to protect them and during her time there she stated that they only had nice weather.¹⁰⁵ Baldwin also experienced two other camps, Rohwer and Jerome located in Southeastern Arkansas, which split her remaining amount of time in the camps between them. She explained that Rohwer was comfortable and uncrowded, which was a stark contrast from the experience of Tule Lake.¹⁰⁶ Baldwin also experienced camp life at the Jerome camp which she talked very little about. She said that Jerome was a much smaller camp than Tule Lake and that the buildings that they stayed in had a hallway, kitchen and bathroom which differed from the more barracks style of housing that was set up in Tule Lake.¹⁰⁷ Jerome may have been a smaller camp but it still housed a large number of internees.

Like Baldwin, Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga was also transferred to camp Jerome after her initial internment. Yoshinaga was originally interned at camp Manzanar, located in Eastern California, which she described as “a desolate area so far from civilization.” where she believed that they were going to execute the internees.¹⁰⁸ Yoshinaga explained how her entire family that was interned, which consisted of six individuals, were all confined to one room much like others have described from their experiences at Tule Lake.¹⁰⁹ One of the biggest differences that Yoshinaga listed between the Manzanar and Jerome camps was the weather, Manzanar had bad dust storms whereas Jerome was hot and muggy all the time.¹¹⁰ The other major difference between the two camps was the administration. Yoshinaga stated that she believes the Jerome

¹⁰⁵ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 6.

¹⁰⁶ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

¹⁰⁷ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

¹⁰⁸ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, interviewed by Tom Ikeda, July 7, 2009, Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-250-transcript-227051602d.htm>, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 13.

¹¹⁰ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 15.

camp ran more smoothly because it was opened later which gave the administration that was running the camp more time to understand the necessities they would need to provide to make the experience better, things such as having a Buddhist and Christian church.¹¹¹ Yoshinaga expressed that her perception of the Jerome camp being a smother operation could also have been due to the fact that she was more accustomed to camp life already from her time in Manzanar.

Ronald Hirano was an interesting case because he himself was never interned, although his family was. They were taken to the Tanforan assembly center in Western California and were later interned at the Topaz internment camp in Central Utah.¹¹² Tanforan was originally a racetrack that was in San Bruno, California. Hirano stated that his parents and other internees were sleeping in the stables that had been for the horses.¹¹³ Like the other camps Topaz had small rooms with little for comfort. The rooms according to Hirano had a wood stove and chimney and his family used blankets to separate the room into sections in order to have a small level of privacy.¹¹⁴ This was a tactic that was employed by many of the different families in many of the camps.

The Maida family who were also interned at the Topaz camp and like Hirano's family, first went through the Tanforan assembly center. Like Hirano, Asako Maida Tokuno, the youngest of the Maida sisters, recalled the living arrangements of the Tanforan assembly center. She said that her family considered itself lucky because they were not staying in the horse stalls

¹¹¹ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 15.

¹¹² Ronald M. Hirano, interviewed by Lu Ann Sleeper, June 6, 2013, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/jacs/hirano_ronald.html, 8.

¹¹³ Ronald M. Hirano, 8.

¹¹⁴ Ronald M. Hirano, 14.

but were put in the newly built barracks.¹¹⁵ The barracks was a long structure with “two apartments on the end were small, for a family of four, two adults and two children. Then probably four in the center, three or four bigger apartments just open... Just clear all the way through. Just open.”¹¹⁶ Tokuno described how her family used ropes and sheets in order to break the larger sections of the barracks up into rooms because there was nothing separating the large open space which allowed them to enjoy larger rooms than they would have otherwise been able to.¹¹⁷ Once the Maida family arrived at the Topaz camp, however things were different. Not only were the rooms smaller but the accommodations were considered to be worse. Tokuno recalled being given a canvas mattress cover and having to go and find straw that they were directed to in order to make their own makeshift bedding.¹¹⁸ The rooms were also much smaller than the Tanforan assembly center and only had a small stove inside.

Unlike the Maida family Sam Mihara and his family were unable to stay together in the same camp throughout the internment. This was not uncommon during internment seeing as how the Hirano family and Yoshinaga family were also split during the internment. Mihara and his father’s side of the family including grandparents were sent to Northwest Wyoming where the Heart Mountain internment camp was located, after being sent to the Pomona assembly center in Southwest California.¹¹⁹ Like many of the other assembly centers the condition of the Pomona

¹¹⁵ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, interviewed by David Dunham, and Candice Fukumoto, November 2, 2013 and November 23, 2013, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/jacs/maida_sisters.html, 16.

¹¹⁶ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 16.

¹¹⁷ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 17.

¹¹⁸ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 19.

¹¹⁹ Sam Mihara, interviewed by Sam Redman, November 8, 2012 by Sam Redman Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/jacs/mihara_sam.html, 16.

center were considered to be “absolutely horrible” according to Mihara. Like the Tanforan center internees were forced to live in horse stalls prior to being relocated to their more permanent internment camp.¹²⁰ Mihara and his family luckily arrived after the stalls were full, and like the Maida family, lived in the temporary barracks that were built. The description of the barracks match that of the same structures that were built for the Tanforan assembly structure. Mihara described the Heart Mountain camp as being a “fairly large compound, large area, surrounded by barbed wire fences. And there were guard towers, nine guard towers...”¹²¹ The rooms that families were housed in depended on the number of people in the family and because the Mihara family had four members they were given a medium room which was twenty by twenty as opposed to the large room that was twenty six by twenty that was supposed to hold up to seven family members.¹²² It is not hard to see why these structures were thought to be unfit or unacceptable by the internees who were forced to reside within them.

The conditions of the assembly centers and camps, and the internees’ initial reactions to them is quite telling. The fact that entire families were crammed into such small rooms with no regard for privacy, combined with the fact that internees were forced to make their own bedding out of hay meant for horses, shows a lack of concern for the wellbeing of Japanese American internees. Japanese Americans often repurposed materials to make more accommodating living spaces by dividing the rooms to create more privacy. The locations chosen for the camps also told a great deal. Most of the camps were located in areas that were removed from society, were Japanese Americans often faced extreme weather. There were two main forms of resistance to internment shown by internees, the first was making their new life within the camp resemble as

¹²⁰ Sam Mihara, 16.

¹²¹ Sam Mihara, 19.

¹²² Sam Mihara, 19.

much of their pre-camp life as possible. This included working in the camps or participating in activities that they would have typically participated in prior to being interned. The second way of resisting internment was to find new opportunities due to internment. This was mainly done by women who were able to break a weakened traditional role as a domestic worker and explore opportunities such as college.

Most internees tried to find a way to make their new lives in camp resemble their life outside of camp as best they could. In Tatsuro Yada's case he became part of the recreation team at Tule Lake. "We had to divide recreation into several different parts. And some took the ladies recreation, the men's recreation, and we split up and I worked in the sports area."¹²³ There were a number of different sports that the internees would participate in, the main three sports were basketball, baseball, and softball. Yada would also go on to work at the Tule Lake School once its construction had been completed.¹²⁴ Yada maintained as much of his pre-camp life as he could during internment by working in positions that he would have been able to hold outside of the camps such as teaching. Yada also left camp in order to farm sugar beets which he had some experience with due to his background as a farmer prior to being interned. Not only did Yada himself maintain his pre-camp life as best he could he was also able to help the other internees around him due to his work as an educator and sports recreational management member.

John Tomita also played a large role in contributing to the everyday life of the internees at Tule Lake. He was the head engineer in charge of building the high school at which Yada would eventually work.¹²⁵ This was a key aspect of maintaining pre-camp life for internees because it gave adults and children the ability to have the same type of day to day activities that

¹²³ Tatsuro Yada, 24.

¹²⁴ Tatsuro Yada, 24.

¹²⁵ John Tomita, 21.

they would have on the outside of the camp. After the school was constructed Tomita changed jobs from engineer to sanitation and was in charge of managing E.coli samples from the milk to make sure that it was viable.¹²⁶ Tomita also helped eliminate some of the other conditions that made Tule Lake a harsh place to survive such as mosquitos and the dust. The first summer he cured the camps mosquito problem, which was caused by the river next to the camp flowing too slowly, by following instruction he found in an old army manual at the camp that detailed a way to deal with mosquitos by mixing woodchips and motor oil in a sack and then attaching it to the shore and putting it in the river next to the camp.¹²⁷ He never stated why this worked in the interview just that once that was done the camps mosquito problem was a thing of the past. He also helped fix the constant dust problem that Tule Lake had, by using calcium chloride. This quote shows the process that Tomita used in order to keep the roads from becoming dusty during the day, “We put the calcium chloride, a couple gallons... into, oh about 300 gallons of water, and then we spread that out on the road... the calcium chloride will absorb the moisture in the evening...and get the road wet. Then during the day it dries up again. But every evening the road gets wet, so the next day, it isn’t so dusty.”¹²⁸ Tomita helped make the best of a bad situation by working not only for himself but for the other internees by creating solutions to problems that they would have never have faced if it were not for internment.

Some families had a harder time maintaining a sense of pre-camp life during internment. Nancy Ikeda Baldwin and her family were one of those families. As a deaf family it was hard for them to interact with their peers.¹²⁹ She stated that she and her siblings were forced to play

¹²⁶ John Tomita, 21.

¹²⁷ John Tomita, 21.

¹²⁸ John Tomita, 21.

¹²⁹ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

games by themselves which caused them to feel lonely due to them being shunned for being deaf.¹³⁰ She described how “parents didn’t approve this, us being Deaf... We were really lonely.”¹³¹ Ikeda also talked about how her father was allowed to leave the camp in order to make mailboxes.¹³² She never stated what her father’s job was prior to internment but it was likely that with four kids either one or both of her parents would have been working before internment. It’s likely that the largest aspect of life that was different for the Ikeda family during internment was that the children were unable to interact with their peers and that their father was no longer around due to making mailboxes out of the state. While being separated from a family member during internment was not necessarily an uncommon experience it was for the Ikeda family. Prior to internment the family was close knit and were often accepted by their community so when interned that all changed.¹³³

Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga maintained her sense of pre-camp life the best she could during internment, however her life was already not what would be considered normal for her. Yoshinaga was married at a young age and became pregnant shortly thereafter and so she was unable to participate in the same type of activities that other internees her age were. While she was having a baby her friends were participating in their final years of high school or having fun at the dances that the camp put on.¹³⁴ Another aspect of camp life that was supposed to help the residents of the camp maintain a sense of normality was Buddhist services. Yoshinaga said that they had regular services which was something that some of the other camps did not have and

¹³⁰ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

¹³¹ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

¹³² Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

¹³³ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 2.

¹³⁴ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 14.

she claims that it made the internees feel more “at ease.”¹³⁵ Yoshinaga also made mention of a more well-known type of resistance to the internment camps that she did not participate in but was aware of and saw happening, the riots. Being in Manzanar she saw the dissatisfaction and frustration of being interned first hand and admits that Manzanar had more dissenters than Jerome which was the other camp at which she spent time.¹³⁶ It is unclear about her personal opinion due to the fact that she stated she “stayed out of camp politics” but she refers to the riots as “so-called ‘riot’” and seems to think of them more as disturbances than actual riots.¹³⁷ It is clear that Yoshinaga did not have the most common internment experience due to personal factors of being a part of two families that were in separate camps as well as taking more responsibilities as a mother than other internees her age would have experienced.

Ronald Hirano also had an interesting experience during internment due to the fact that except from living with his teacher instead of his family his life was relatively unchanged during internment. He continued his schooling and stated that “everything went along as normal.”¹³⁸ For Hirano maintaining his typical life was significantly easier due to him not being interned. He stated that his family talked little about the interment, there was a lack of communication between his parents and himself and that his siblings never mentioned anything about the camps.¹³⁹ His family not talking about the camps could be an example of what Hansen described as silences or unwillingness to talk about camp life that was also seen in Kessler as well. Hirano being able to live with his teacher during internment and having a generally enjoyable time is

¹³⁵ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 15.

¹³⁶ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 16.

¹³⁷ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview II, 16.

¹³⁸ Ronald Hirano, 10.

¹³⁹ Ronald Hirano, 11.

drastically different than many others' internment experience. He did not have to face any of the challenges that his family and so many other Japanese Americans had to face during this time.

Asako Maida Tokuno described her resistance to internment coming from two main aspects, the food which allowed her to maintain a more traditional diet in camp and the new job opportunities available to her. The food was made by the internees and was better than the food that was provided at the assembly center.¹⁴⁰ Tokuno stated that the cooks all tried really hard and that the position was somewhat competitive because it was one of the better paying positions at camp.¹⁴¹ Tokuno stated that while she enjoyed her leisure time at first she eventually wanted to start working and found interest in a nursing aide position that the camp offered training for.¹⁴² The course lasted two weeks and then she stated her position which involved giving shots. She “worked in the men’s ward and the pediatric ward” and was considered to be higher than a nurses’ aide but not a full-fledged nurse.¹⁴³ After Tokuno’s time as a nursing aide she and her other sisters eventually ended up going to Rochester University in New York.¹⁴⁴ Between Tokuno working as a nurses aid and all three of the Maida sisters enrolling in Rochester during internment and being able to leave camp in order to attend, they were able to obtain a sense of a pre-camp life during internment. Both Ito and Matsumoto state how important it was for young women to be allowed to leave camp in order to attend school. Ito also stated how important

¹⁴⁰ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 19.

¹⁴¹ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 19.

¹⁴² Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 20.

¹⁴³ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 20.

¹⁴⁴ Unfortunately a significant portion of the interview where the sisters describe their time at the university is unavailable due to the tape failing and before the interviewers were able to conduct a follow-up interview Meriko Maida fell ill and eventually passed away. Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 40.

women attending college was for the advancement of freedom for Japanese women and mending the racial divide between Japanese Americans and their Caucasian counterparts.¹⁴⁵

Sam Mihara recalled a number of ways that the internees at Heart Mountain tried to maintain their sense of pre-camp life during the internment. He remembered many of his peers who were in high school joining the Boy Scout/ Girl Scout movements because as he stated in his interview “here’s something that you can join, you can learn about new skills, learn about relating to people, and that became extremely important in the camp.”¹⁴⁶ As Mihara stated Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts became an increasingly popular aspect of American culture during World War II so the fact that the internees were allowed to join shows that the kids of the camps were able to participate in the same type of activities that kids who were not in camps would have been able to participate in. Another example of this that Mihara stated is the Heart Mountain School sports that camp kids were active in. According to Mihara the kids in Heart Mountain School sports program would play against other schools in the neighboring area. The nearby schools would have their teams go and play against the Heart Mountain school teams in the camp.¹⁴⁷ High School sports is an everyday aspect of life today and was a typical aspect of life for kids during World War II so the fact that Japanese Americans were able to participate in High School sports against not only themselves in the camps but against outside schools is a big step in maintaining a sense of pre-camp life for Japanese Americans when their life was anything but normal.

Age and gender also play an important factor when examining the experience and ways of resistance that Japanese Americans showed during internment. Both age and gender were

¹⁴⁵ Ito, “Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement,” 8.

¹⁴⁶ Sam Mihara, 21.

¹⁴⁷ Sam Mihara, 22.

dictating factors in what opportunities were available to interned Japanese Americans. Age also plays a key factor in the memories formed about the internment and its experiences, and how internment was perceived while living through it. It also allowed older internees to remember what life was like prior to internment. Tatsuro Yada was twenty four years old when Executive Order 9066 was issued, which ordered the evacuation of Japanese Americans to assembly centers and then the eventual internment camps.¹⁴⁸ By the time Yada was interned he had already graduated from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon and was running his family's farm when the evacuation order was issued.¹⁴⁹ Due to the fact that Yada had already graduated from college the options that he had available to him once he was interned increased. It is likely that had Yada not graduated from college he would not have been able to take the position as a teacher or even participate as a member of the recreational team at Tule Lake.¹⁵⁰ He would likely have still been able to leave camp in order to farm sugar beets because of his family's background in farming.¹⁵¹ Being of an older age Yada was also able to remember more of what happened during internment compared to some of the interviewees that were younger in age. His gender played a role in his internment by defining the opportunities that he had while interned. Though Yada never served in the military it was not due to a lack of trying. Yada wished to serve but was unable to because he failed his physical exam twice.¹⁵²

Another interviewee that was able to more actively resist internment due to his age is John Tomita. Born in 1920 he was twenty one at the time of Executive Order 9066. It is unclear

¹⁴⁸ Due to specific dates of arrival in assembly centers or internment camps not being provided, I am listing the age of interviewees at the time Executive Order 9066 was issued on February 19, 1942.

¹⁴⁹ Tatsuro Yada, 21.

¹⁵⁰ Tatsuro Yada, 24.

¹⁵¹ Tatsuro Yada, 27.

¹⁵² Tatsuro Yada, 25.

because it appears as though the interview was interrupted but Tomita had either graduated from UC Berkley or was currently a student when the evacuation order was given. Regardless this put him in a better position to find work during the camp. It allowed him to have the lead survey position that allowed him to help build the Tule Lake high school and all of the other projects that he did at the camp to help out. Prior to his position as a survey engineer they had offered him a teaching position that he denied because he wanted to learn more and did not think of himself as an educator.¹⁵³ As Ito stated the primary role that women had in the workforce during this time was as educators, it is probable that because Tomita was a man he was able to get the position of survey engineer. Tomita was able to recall much more of the racial tension that was present prior to internment because of his age. He stated that as a college student he tried to register for the draft even prior to the United States entering the war but was faced with prejudice due to his Japanese ancestry and was denied the ability to apply.¹⁵⁴ Prejudice due to ancestry was a common occurrence for Japanese Americans during the time before World War II but depending on the age of the interviewee some may not have recognized it or been aware of it in the same way as some of the older interviewees.

Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga was seventeen when the evacuation order was given. Prior to evacuation she lived a relatively normal Japanese American life as she described her family structure with standard *Issei* parents “Papa was the boss, Mama did all the work, and he had the last word.”¹⁵⁵ Yoshinaga stated that growing up she was either unaware or had not been subject to “racial animosity” until she started high school where she started to “feel the difference

¹⁵³ John Tomita, 15.

¹⁵⁴ John Tomita, 16.

¹⁵⁵ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 4.

between us Asians, Asian Americans, and the white community.”¹⁵⁶ Yoshinaga also stated that due to the racial prejudice against Japanese Americans even before camp that she felt her life would be easier or better if she had not been born a Japanese American, and that for a long time she was in denial of her ethnicity. It was not until years later that she was able to be proud of her heritage as a Japanese American.¹⁵⁷ This shows that even prior to the camps the climate of the United States was so unwelcoming that Japanese Americans who wished to pursue a specific career often felt that it was not an option for them because of their heritage and either started to resent their own heritage or try and suppress it in order to better fit in. While Yoshinaga stated that not all Japanese Americans, *Nisei* in particular, felt like this it is likely that she was not the only member of the Japanese American community to have these feelings.¹⁵⁸ One aspect of internment that was especially hard for Yoshinaga was her giving birth and the feeling that she as she stated, she “didn’t do right by my family.”¹⁵⁹ Earlier in the interview she stated that one of the typical Japanese American traits that was instilled in her as a kid was to not bring dishonor on her family and knowing her family was against her marriage she felt a great sense of regret when having her baby.¹⁶⁰ Later in life Yoshinaga and her husband got divorced which was considered a taboo by her mother. Her mother referred to her as an embarrassment to the family and thought the act brought shame on the family.¹⁶¹ These feelings are something that Yoshinaga might not have felt had she been born closer to internment because she would not have been

¹⁵⁶ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 5.

¹⁵⁷ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 8.

¹⁵⁸ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 8.

¹⁵⁹ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 14.

¹⁶⁰ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 14.

¹⁶¹ Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, 3.

exposed to the same amount of Japanese culture before internment. It is possible to view Yoshinaga's marriage and divorce as a resistance to traditional family values.

Asako Maida Tokuno was eighteen, only a year older than Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga, and her sister Meriko Maida was a week away from her twenty second birthday when the evacuation order was given. Tokuno was a good example of some of the gender issues that a young Japanese American woman might be expected to face during internment. Tokuno was away at college and was regularly corresponding with her parents who were still in camp when she found out about her arranged marriage.¹⁶² Arranged marriages were not uncommon for Japanese American women during this time.¹⁶³ It is unclear if the topic was discussed more in the section of the interview that was damaged because there was no mention of Tokuno being in any relationship prior to the statement that her mother sent her a clipping of her engagement announcement in the Topaz paper.¹⁶⁴ One aspect that she had mixed feelings on was the fact that she was engaged but her fiancée had not proposed, she stated when asked if she was happy about the engagement "Well, I guess, except I thought, I have nothing to show for it yet."¹⁶⁵ It is unfortunate that the interview was damaged because it is hard to tell to what extent the marriage was arranged, whether Tokuno knew her fiancée prior to the arrangement or not. From the remainder of the interview it would appear that Tokuno never got a divorce which differed from Yoshinaga and it is unclear if age made a difference in the two women's relationships. Yoshinaga was young when she got married around the age of seventeen where as Tokuno must have been in her twenties at least. She was not married until after the war was over due to her husband serving in

¹⁶² Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 43.

¹⁶³ Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women," 13.

¹⁶⁴ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 43.

¹⁶⁵ Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno, 43.

the war. Both age and gender play a role on the impact that marriage had on these women as well as their family's traditional values.

Ronald Hirano was significantly younger than the other interviewees that have been examined so far being nine years old when the evacuation order was given. This meant that his perception of events and potentially his ability to remember events might differ from the older interviewees. Hirano stated that he was naïve when it came to reading situations surrounding him being the only Japanese American in his school during the internment.¹⁶⁶ He also stated that he never noticed any racial tensions concerning Japanese Americans prior to the war, believing as a kid that they only began once the war had started. Hirano said that when kids were making fun of him at school for being Japanese American if the kids were Italian or German then he would insult them back.¹⁶⁷ One of the potential reasons that Hirano was unaware of many of the racial tensions prior to the war was because he was deaf and a child. He stated that he had a hard time communicating with his own family and he was unable to hear any radio broadcasts so unless someone was specifically interacting with him he was less likely to notice it than someone who could hear.

The same age as Hirano, Sam Mihara was nine when the evacuation order was signed. His family was targeted particularly harshly due to his father's position at *New World Sun* a newspaper in San Francisco where he grew up.¹⁶⁸ He recalled the FBI searching houses in his neighborhood without warrants searching for what they deemed "suspicious" which consisted of photographs, weapons, knives and anything else they wanted.¹⁶⁹ Mihara said that he could not

¹⁶⁶ Ronald Hirano, 10.

¹⁶⁷ Ronald Hirano, 6.

¹⁶⁸ Sam Mihara, 11.

¹⁶⁹ Sam Mihara, 11.

understand why they would do that nor did he understand that it was a serious infraction on the family's rights because he "wasn't old enough to understand my rights and question whether they should even come in the house."¹⁷⁰ Mihara also helped paint a picture of how the media portrayed Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor but prior to the evacuation order. He stated that he recalled newspaper headlines being increasingly racist toward Japanese Americans with the headlines often including racial slurs such as "Jap", "yellow Devils" or "Nip"¹⁷¹ "Jap" was short for Japanese and "Nip" was short for *Nippon* which is the Japanese word for Japan. Mihara said that he was too young to understand the extent of the slandering that the media was committing against Japanese Americans but as he got older he understood more, but even as a child he knew that there was clearly racial tensions following Pearl Harbor.¹⁷² It is clear that age played a large role in perception but even some of the younger interviewees understood that there were extreme racial tensions following the attack on Pearl Harbor even if the extent of the tensions was not fully known yet.

Nancy Ikeda Baldwin was the youngest of the interviewees examined, at the age of six when the evacuation order was issued. Baldwin says that she did not remember much of her own feelings surrounding the attack on Pearl Harbor nor did she understand much of the situation apart from her parents, aunt and uncle being extremely shocked at the event.¹⁷³ Baldwin also stated that many in the deaf Japanese community were unaware of the situation much like Ronald Hirano's family, saying that they were "innocent and unaware."¹⁷⁴ An aspect of gender differences in camp that Baldwin mentioned is that her father left the family to work in a factory

¹⁷⁰ Sam Mihara, 11.

¹⁷¹ Sam Mihara, 12.

¹⁷² Sam Mihara, 13.

¹⁷³ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 5.

during the internment. She never stated whether her father wanted to leave the camp in order to work in the factory only that he did but her mother was left behind to tend to the children.¹⁷⁵ It is clear from not only Baldwin's interview but also other interviews examined that the female role was either to raise the children or be educated. Meriko Maida and Asako Tokuno left camp to go to school and Akio Herzig-Yoshinaga was not able to participate in many of the activities that her friends were because she was in charge of raising her new born.

Resistance to internment was seen in two main ways, finding a way to create a pre-camp life in the confines of internment, or by being able to capitalize on new opportunities that were presented during internment. Pre-camp life looked different for each individual but aspects such as sports, food and for male's traditional jobs like farming or teaching. For women some of the new opportunities were college attendance or taking on a non-domestic role. Positions such as teaching or nursing were now available to Japanese American women rather than being automatically forced into domestic house work.

Japanese Americans faced many challenges during and even prior to internment. Many Japanese Americans faced racism before the attack on Pearl Harbor and that continued. This was not universal but it was a frequent enough occurrence. Once Japanese Americans were interned they faced many challenges such as, unfit living conditions, the fact that they were forced out of their regular lives and made to adapt to a new life for no other reason than their ancestry, and prejudice from the government and much of the non-Japanese American population. An example of this are the feelings the Dies Group had about the "free time" Japanese Americans had during internment. From the interviews examined it is clear that a large number of Japanese Americans participated in a number of sports and activities that the Dies Group took no issue with such as

¹⁷⁵ Nancy Ikeda Baldwin, 8.

basketball or baseball. The Dies Group did not have an inherent issue with the interned Japanese Americans having too much free time but rather what the Japanese Americans were doing with their free time. The fact that the only activities listed were traditional Japanese activities rather than what could be considered more American activities shows it was not an issue of time management but an issue of race and heritage. Internees fought back against these changes and challenges to their culture in a number of ways.

The first thing that many Japanese Americans did upon arriving in either their assembly center or internment camp, was trying to improve their living conditions. The most popular way was to divide the already unacceptably small living space that each family was given into smaller sections in order to give some sense of privacy. Some of the main ways that interned Japanese Americans maintained their sense of pre-camp life, were by going to school, participating in recreational sports, practicing traditional religions and a long list of other activities that despite their internment they found the ability to engage in. Age and gender is also important to consider when examining the life of Japanese Americans that were interned. Age plays a large role in how internees were able to resist or embrace changes to their culture, what internees were able to remember about their time in the camps as well as what they understood when going through the events in the first place. Gender is important to consider because it shows the changes that were happening to Japanese traditions such as arranged marriages as well as the family dynamic of Japanese Americans. One thing is abundantly clear about the families of Japanese Americans that were interned, they did an amazing job of resisting the racism that was the driving force of internment and the impact that it had on their culture. They resisted and persevered through a trial that few in the world would understand.

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