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Vocational Education Programs Within the Internment Camps and Impact on the Educational and Vocational Trajectories of Japanese American Women

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by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my mother, Muoi Tang Nguyen (September 23, 1955 - March 23, 2011), and in honor of my father, Hien Khac Nguyen. Your love and belief in your children have led us all to great achievements. Special thanks to my siblings, who have supported me in this long journey: LynnAnn Brewer, Lee Nguyen, Diane Nguyen, Jonathan Don Nguyen, and Mary Ann Nguyen.

To my two sons, Tyler and Austin: Your appearance in this doctoral journey has made me a proud mother scholar. My love for you both has propelled me in this journey.

To my love, my husband, Hai Tran: Your support and belief in me have pushed me to new heights in our life together. Your love has sustained me in this long journey. A thank you seems inadequate for the love and support that you have given in this endeavor and in our life. Thank you.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

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Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Education
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This dissertation study used an intersectionality framework to examine the experience of Japanese American women in their educational and vocational trajectories before, during, and after internment. The study explores how the vocational education program and employment opportunities in internment camps changed the educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women. Prior to the war, Japanese American women had limited educational and vocational options due to the Jap Crow infrastructure on the West Coast. During internment, Japanese American women accessed vocational education and employment experience in the camps. A move away from the Jap Crow and a wartime labor shortage enabled them to access employment that had been unavailable to them, including professional and semiprofessional jobs. After internment, as Japanese Americans moved back to the West Coast and into professional and semiprofessional employment, there were indications of the breakdown of Jap Crow.

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CHAPTER 1

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAJECTORIES OF JAPANESE AMERICAN WOMEN

Taj Shigaki, a woman who lived through the internment of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans, including herself and her family, reflected on her life trajectory in her memoir:

> Perhaps it took a year of my life when education was disrupted. And perhaps I lost a husband and family that I might have had, had life proceeded in the course it was going before Pearl Harbor. But I gained an education beyond my expectations back then. And more importantly I gained a world view that continued existence in Southern California may not have made possible. . . . Minnesota was a breath of fresh air because I felt accepted and not put down. I was in many situations because I was a novelty, and as such, doors were opened for me. Once permitted in I made the most of opportunities to be my own person and to help others discover that our differences need not be barriers . . . we are comfortable and adjusted, so we can do our own thing with freedom and no sense of restraint.[1]

While Shigaki is casual in her dismissal of not getting married or having children, she clearly believes that her education and lifestyle were possible only due to her move to Minnesota. She believes that her life following internment improved her educational trajectory in a way that would have been unattainable had she stayed in California. Prior to the war, Shigaki attended Los Angeles City College and transferred to University of Redlands when it seemed that internment was imminent. After spending four months at the Poston internment camp in Arizona, Shigaki continued her education at Denison University in Ohio and eventually graduated from Newton Theological School in

[1] "Taj Shigaki" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 277-278.

Massachusetts. Eventually, she also received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Minnesota. Her first position after this degree was as Assistant Superintendent of Women's Reformatory. Shigaki continued to work for Minnesota's Department of Corrections for the next twenty-five years and retired as an Assistant Director of Personnel and Affirmative Action Officer.

As Shigaki recounts her life in Minnesota, there are a few clues to what life was like prior to internment. In her new life, she felt accepted and not put down, which would imply that she did not feel accepted and felt put down in her life in Los Angeles County prior to internment. Shigaki also talks about having a sense of freedom to live life with no sense of restraint in Minnesota, contrasting her life in southern California. Shigaki's move away from the West Coast enabled her to gain an education and have a life that was not possible in her pre-war life. Shigaki lived a full and happy life as a professional working woman in Minnesota by her choice. Yet it was a choice that emerged due to the forced move away from California after a brief stay in the Poston Internment Camp.

Research Question

As an anecdote, Shigaki's narrative of her life raises many questions: How did the forced relocation from the West Coast impact Japanese American women with regard to their educational and vocational trajectories? What were the educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women prior to World War II (WWII)? What vocational education programs did the internment camps offer in comparison to the programs that existed outside of camps? How did vocational education programs and employment experience in the internment camps change their educational and vocational

trajectory in this time period? How did the educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women change after WWII?

Historiography

This dissertation explores these questions via two fields of study that have not been in dialogue with one another: research on Japanese American internment and research on vocational education. In the former, the experiences of women have been under researched. In the latter, vocational education has been examined extensively in relationship to minoritized communities, including African Americans, Mexicans Americans, and Indigenous communities. Research pertaining to the vocational education of Asian Americans often focuses on immigrants; thus, research pertaining to U.S.-born Asian Americans is underrepresented. Scholars have not talked about Asian Americans in relation to vocational education outside of the immigrant narrative. My research in this dissertation, focusing on the *Nisei* during internment, offers an intervention by examining second- and 1.5-generation Asian Americans who were born in or brought at a young age to the United States. This project expands the scope of existing research on vocational education by examining professions that would be considered middle class or "white collar," whereas some scholars on vocational education have tended to focus on "menial" or manual labor types of employment. In examining professions that are not typically associated with vocational education, this research considers both transgressions and confinements of race, gender, and class. Vocational education may be the only available avenue of training due to race and gender discrimination, and it can also be an avenue to "white collar" professions. Within this research, vocational education courses are defined

as courses relating to an occupation. This definition of vocational education encompasses both the manual labor type of courses such as dairying or poultry but also academic courses such as business mathematics or accounting. If the course is related to an occupation, it is considered to be vocational education.

Internment serves as an interesting context because, prior to internment, women's labor was either unpaid as a way to sustain family-run businesses or paid but constrained because of discrimination.[2] Even then, wages from paid labor typically were used to sustain the family financially.[3] With internment, Japanese American women were forced into camps, where there was an abundance of time without responsibilities for cooking for their families and a much smaller space to clean due to the setup of the camp.[4] The ease of enrolling into vocational courses and the fee-free nature of this education were factors in making vocational education easier to access. Most courses were scheduled so that one could work and take courses; courses were geographically easy to access, as all were on site in the internment camp. With the severe financial losses that most families suffered due to the chaotic way in which internment happened, families were particularly motivated to ensure that their daughters and sons were able to find jobs once they left the camp; the vocational education program figured into the push for education and training for vocations. The vocational education programs were free of fees for the incarcerated,

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[2] Valerie J. Matsumoto *City Girls: The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18.

[3] Matsumoto *City Girls,* 18-20.

[4] Matsumoto *City Girls,* 151-152.

who suddenly had both time and opportunity to explore vocational opportunities. By offering vocational education and employment experience, the camps changed the educational and vocational trajectories of some Japanese American women. Due to the convenience of vocational education in the camps, forced incarceration with few alternative activities, a wartime labor shortage, and the move away from entrenched discrimination on the West Coast, some Japanese American women gained access to opportunities that had been unavailable to them.

As I discuss the vocational education programs in the internment camps, I examine the literature on vocational education. Within this historiography, I discuss the erasure of women from Asian American historiographies in both theory and practice and what this means for the research that has been done to fill this void. I also discuss the positionality of Asian Americans compared to other racial groups in the United States and how vocational education research replicates this positionality. I discuss why the internment is a useful site for this research. Very little has been written about vocational education and Asian Americans, outside of general comments on foreign-born immigrants. In this research, vocational education is discussed in relation to second-generation Japanese Americans. The dissertation research focuses on five concepts: (a) centering of Japanese American women into the historical narrative, (b) centering how Japanese Americans were impacted by racism, (c) gender norms in Japanese American culture, (d) anti-Asian racism related to geography, and (e) the validity of vocational education and camp employment as a form of education.

It is important to center women in this research due to the exclusion of women in historiography. In doing so, I attach importance to the role that gender plays in historiographies. Second, by centering the role of race in discrimination, I examine discrimination in housing, social affairs, education, and employment to understand the constraints that Japanese American women faced in both their educational and vocational trajectories. While racism is one facet of identity, an intersectional perspective is needed due to the role of gender in Japanese American culture. For many *Nisei* women living on the West Coast, where there were strong and established anti-Asian organizations, geography played a role in available employment opportunities due to racialized norms and practices in hiring decisions. This research also examines vocational education and employment experiences in the camps as a form of education that impacted Japanese American women as they moved forward in their own educational and vocational trajectories. Unpacking these historical contexts leads to understanding the discrimination that affected Japanese Americans, the constraints of ancestry and gender due to their unique familial expectations, and how those constraints affected Japanese American women in their educational and vocational pursuits.

The historiography on Asian American history reveals erasure of women from those narratives. Generally, historiographies have focused on the story of the immigrant men who came to the United States and Hawaii as sojourners seeking temporary employment and wealth with an end goal of returning to their homeland. When authors speak of the experiences of women, they do so in limited ways or omit them entirely. Historian Gary Okihiro notes this phenomenon: “The exclusion of Asian American

women on the 'pages of paper' is not without meaning or effect. Their omission serves to bolster a system of male dominance, a system of privilege and oppression."[5] The omission of Asian American women from the narrative, whether deliberate or an oversight, is an example of gender privilege in the historiographies.

While some historians discussed the experience of women, most did not commit the stories of women to their overarching narratives. Okihiro's analysis of women's historiographies contains an important claim to "recentering women which also resurrects gender as a prominent social category, perceives social change as a product of gender relations, and posits a new chronology that reflects more faithfully the position of women within the social formation."[6] Due to the erasure of Asian American women from the larger overarching narratives, some historians have specifically focused on the experience of Asian American women within their research.

Some of the stories and experiences of Asian American women, specifically Japanese American women, are reflected in those literatures that focus on women. Leslie Ito's *"*Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945*,"* Shirley Jennifer Lim's *A Feeling of Belonging: Asian American Women's Public Culture, 1930-1960,* Evelyn Nakano's *Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1890-1990,* and Valerie Matsumoto's "Japanese American Women During World War II" and her book *City Girls, The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* are representative

[5] Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1994), 64-65.
[6] Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams,* 79.

of research that has examined the experience of Japanese American women.[7] These articles and books show that the authors felt that the experience of Japanese American women deserved to be examined.[8] The erasure of women from the narratives means that some historians were able to "recenter" the stories and experiences of Japanese American women into their research. As these scholars re-center the experiences of women in these historiographies, these key literature pieces provide important context for understanding the experiences of women in the time frame of this study: pre-war, during war, and after war years.

These four historians all found that Japanese American women faced many challenges due to both racism and patriarchy. However, in facing this oppression, the women utilized a range of strategies to overcome challenges. For example, Japanese American women who attended the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), an educational privilege, still encountered a segregated social space, including the segregated Greek life system. While reminiscent of public spaces on the West Coast, a segregated Greek Life space was another space of segregation for Japanese American women students. Japanese American women who encountered racism in many facets of

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[7] Leslie A. Ito, "Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (2000): 1-24; Shirley Jennifer Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging: Asian American Women's Public Culture, 1930-1960* (New York University Press, 2006); Matsumoto *City Girls: The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920-1950*; Valerie J. Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women During World War II," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (1984): 6-14; and Mei Takaya Nakano, *Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1880-1980* (Berkeley: Mina Press Publishing and National Japanese American Historical Society, 1990).

[8] Ito, "Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945;" Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging*; Matsumoto *City Girls: The Nisei Social World*; Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women During World War II;" and Nakano, *Japanese American Women* and Nakano, *Japanese American Women: Three Generations.*

their life utilized their agency in this case to create their own Greek organization as both a social space and a way to access institutional funds. Chi Alpha Delta, the first Asian American sorority, was established at UCLA in 1928 "as a haven against racism."[9] Since white sororities "had a monopoly on scholarship funds," an institutional privilege, Japanese American women decided to create a Greek letter organization that allowed them equal access to scholarship funds and a safe space to socialize.[10] That Japanese American women students combatted discrimination by creating their own Greek letter organization speaks to their agency to create social institutions that affirmed both their race and gender, in this case an Asian American sorority.

Other young Japanese American women who faced a segregated social scene in Los Angeles took action by creating a lively social scene with many social clubs and service organizations as spaces in which to socialize and support one another.[11] These social structures demonstrated that Japanese American women had exercised agency in creating their own social spaces in response to discrimination faced in social scenes at large. The creation of these organizations showed the resiliency of Japanese American women to combat racism in their social lives, where it was still the norm. It also illustrated their sense of agency in creating social institutions that affirmed their race and gender.

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[9] Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging*, 13-14.
[10] Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging*, 13-14.
[11] Matsumoto, *City Girls.*

Against this backdrop of Japanese Americans dealing with racism on the West Coast came the start of the war against Japan following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. With American soldiers now fighting against Japanese soldiers on the Pacific front, Japanese Americans faced many complications, including being challenged to demonstrate loyalty to the United States and distinguish themselves from the enemy. As a result, Japanese American women's experiences reflected both their race and gender during World War II. The politicization of their existence and bodies was constantly under scrutiny at the intersection of heritage and gender. This politicization of their bodies speaks of the unique experiences of Japanese American women.

The portrayal of Japanese American women in mainstream society during and after the war was an important part of their identity as they navigated their educational and vocational trajectories. This was in part due to their status as ambassadors for the Japanese Americans community in the Midwest and East Coast during the war years. Ito argues that the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council's (NJASRC) goal of helping Japanese American students to go from internment camps to college campuses was motivated by the goal of creating "model representatives or ambassadors for the incarcerated Japanese American community."[12] Ito argues that Japanese American women were viewed as less threatening than Japanese American men, whom white Americans were unable to distinguish from Japanese soldiers. Therefore, Japanese American women were more likely than men to be admitted to college. While her

[12] Ito, *"Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945."*

argument is valid, the admission of women was also impacted by the gendered nature of men disproportionately going into the armed forces. Ito's notion of Japanese American women being the ideal representative for the Japanese community was supported by other scholars, including Valerie Matsumoto and Ellen Wu. This view of Japanese American women during WWII is a prelude to both Wu's and Lim's representations of how Japanese American women were portrayed as nonthreatening to the American public after WWII, following the racial hysteria in the war years.

The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origin of the Model Minority Myth by Ellen Wu explores the role of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), a contested organization purporting to speak on behalf of the Japanese American community in the United States.[13] Many Japanese Americans did not agree that the JACL represented their interests.[14] After WWII, the JACL undertook a public relations campaign that portrayed Japanese American women as asexual patriotic mothers who had sacrifice to send their sons to war.[15] Similarly, historian Shirley Lim's *A Feeling of Belonging: Asian American Women's Public Culture, 1930-1960* explored how Japanese American women at UCLA portrayed themselves as "racialized others" through traditional Japanese attire to gain public approval in a campus-wide talent contest.[16] Both the JACL public relations campaign and the UCLA college students created an

[13] Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).
[14] Wu, *The Color of Success.*
[15] Wu, *The Color of Success.*
[16] Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging.*

environment in which being Japanese American was accepted by the dominant white post-WWII society. This rehabilitation of the image of Japanese American women was a start to repairing the image of the community and a way to ensure safe resettlement of a group that had been forced to leave their homes.

While Japanese American women were the model representatives for the community, that did not stop erasure of their experiences from the overarching narratives on Asian American history. Central works that focus on the larger overarching history of Asians in the United States, including Sucheng Chan's *Asian Americans: An Interpretative History*, Shelley Sang-Hee Lee's *A New History of Asian America,* Erika Lee's *The Making of Asian America: A History,* Ronald Takaki's *Strangers From a Different Shore,* and two books by Gary Okihiro, *The Columbia Guide to Asian American History* and *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in America,* all demonstrate the erasure of women in Asian American historiographies.[17] With the exception of Sucheng Chan and Gary Okihiro, the erasure of Asian American women in the meta narratives is notable. Sucheng Chan devotes a chapter to the experiences of women but focuses on their roles in family formation, rather than their own experiences and stories.[18] The erasure of women from Asian American historiographies and the scrutiny of Japanese American

[17] Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991); Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2015); Gary Y. Okihiro, *The Colombia Guide to Asian American History* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2005); Gary Y. Okihiro *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture*; Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014); and Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1989).

[18] Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History.*

women's bodies demonstrate how Asian American women faced oppression in unique ways different from the experiences of Japanese American men.

Anti-Japanese sentiment on the West Coast was a well-established norm in the pre-war years.[19] Historian Michi Weglyn's *Years of Infamy, The Untold Stories of America's Concentration Camps* (1976) makes the case that anti-Japanese groups and white agricultural farm interests convinced the government to round up Japanese Americans. While building her case, Weglyn proves that racism motivated the government's decision, not the officially stated reason of military necessity.[20] This act of systemic racism rested on a strong foundation of anti-Japanese sentiment on the West Coast and provides context for understanding the state-sanctioned removal of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Weglyn's research, published a generation after internment, was the first to gather an archive of government documents that confirmed the intent to disenfranchise the Japanese American community through internment as a mechanism.[21] The forced removal of Japanese Americans resulted in severe financial losses associated with the quick dispersal of property and businesses.[22] These financial losses were a strong motivator for incarcerated Japanese Americans to

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[19] For anti-Japanese sentiment see Mathew M. Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940s Interracial America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), Valerie J. Matsumoto, *City Girls,* & Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy, the Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1976).

[20] Weglyn, *Years of Infamy.*

[21] Weglyn, *Years of Infamy.*

[22] John Nobuya Tsuchida ed., *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), xx-xxi.

have their daughters and sons leave camps to earn higher wages to help the family's financial situations.

Anti-Japanese hate on the West Coast was a well-documented phenomenon.[23] Historian Mathew Briones describes both de jure and de facto racism as *Jap Crow*, a system that both segregated and oppressed Japanese Americans on the West Coast prior to the internment. His exploration of oppression on the West Coast provided valuable context for understanding the systemic structural challenges that Japanese American women faced in their educational and vocational aspirations. His book *Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940s Interracial America* chronicles the life of Charles Kikuchi, a Japanese American social worker.[24] The book explores the interracial relationships between Japanese Americans and other ethnic groups, including Filipinos, Mexicans, and African Americans. Kikuchi was forced to enter an orphanage due to his family situation; eventually, due to filial piety, he joined his family in the Gila River internment camp. Filial piety, or a sense of obligation to one's family, was defined as the responsibility of children to repay the sacrifices that their parents had made for them.[25]

Briones decenters whiteness in research by studying the experiences of Japanese Americans in relation to communities of color. In studying these complex relations between communities, Briones illustrates the racism that Kikuchi encountered from both

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[23] For anti-Japanese sentiment see Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow,* Matsumoto, *City Girls,* & Weglyn, *Years of Infamy* & Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*.

[24] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow.*

[25] Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 33.

white people and people of color. Briones defines Jap Crow as an oppressive system of racialized practice in residential, social, educational, and vocational settings that ensured that Japanese Americans understood their inferior position in relation to the white population. Jap Crow oppressed Japanese American women in their educational and vocational experiences in the pre-war years.

While Jap Crow outlined the racialized social practices, cultural values discussed in Eileen Tamura's *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* and Mei T. Nakano's *Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1890-1990* were important to the experiences of Japanese Americans who grew up in the United States.[26] This cultural values framework provides an insightful analysis of the role of patriarchy in the Japanese American family and how cultural values related to family, honor, and education influenced the behaviors of Japanese American women. An awareness of cultural expectations and values, the manifestation of patriarchy, and the impact of these systems on Japanese American families shed light on the constraints that women faced and their impact on educational and vocational trajectories. These discussions of patriarchy in the pre-war years provide essential context to understanding how the breakdown of some components of patriarchy in the camps enabled Japanese American women to pursue educational and vocational goals.

The *Issei,* the first generation of Japanese Americans, strongly believed in education as a way for their children to combat racism in the United States. Tamura

[26] Nakano, *Japanese American Women* and Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*.

discusses the role of education for Japanese immigrants, who were influenced by the samurai culture of lifelong learning in Japan. Inspired by this devotion to learning, Japan built a voluntary system of temple schools where both boys and girls attended, resulting in a literacy rate of fifty to sixty percent in 1870.[27] This system of education allowed many Japanese immigrants to the United States to be quite well educated upon arrival. The *Issei* generation believed that education was key to their children's future vocational and economic opportunity.[28] The cultural importance of education to achieve vocational success in the United States was essential to understanding the context for why Japanese Americans were so strongly motivated to ensure that their children were educated and trained for future vocations as they left incarceration.

While education was essential for Japanese Americans, another equally important cultural value was the concept of filial piety, described as "among the highest ideals" in Japanese cultural values.[29] Filial piety, or a sense of obligation to one's family, was defined as the responsibility of children to repay the sacrifices that their parents had made for them. This included obedience to parental decisions regarding major life choices, such as education, vocation, and marriage.[30] While historian Greg Robinson observed that the *Nisei* generation or the second generation Japanese Americans had values of individuality due to attendance in public schools and notions of mainstream values that were counter to

[27] Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation and Ethnic Identity*, 34-35.
[28] Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation and Ethnic Identity*, 34-35.
[29] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 105.
[30] Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation and Ethnic Identity*, 33.

filial piety, this sense of filial responsibility still guided many Japanese American women in their decisions with respect to their education and vocation.[31] This sense of filial responsibilities meant that, for many Japanese American women, their responsibility to repay their family obligations and put family first called for a sacrifice of their personal ambition and goals in life. Nakano also discussed another cultural value related to filial responsibility of self-sacrifice on the part of mothers.[32] This sense of obligation to one's family extended throughout a woman's lifetime; from her role as a daughter to her role as a mother, there was an expectation of deferring to family when younger and then sacrificing for the family as a mother. In this sense, filial piety and responsibility were grounded in patriarchal values around expectations of women's roles in the family.

Along with filial piety, cultural values such as a sense of duty, obligation, shame and not being a disgrace to the family for not being successful influenced many Japanese American women. Nakano discussed how the concept of shame and disgrace relates not only to oneself but also to one's family, the community, and the entire nationality. In fact, the Japanese American community utilized this very fear of bringing shame to one's family to control their children's behaviors. Cultural values, including notions of putting family above self, duty and obligation, and not bringing shame to one's family, were the foundation for the cultural upbringing of all Japanese Americans. Both filial piety and sense of shame relating to self, family, and community were cultural values that provide

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[31] Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2000).
[32] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 38.

an understanding of the sense of obligation that many Japanese American women carried as they pursued education and employment opportunities.

As Japanese American women explored educational and vocational opportunities, they faced not only racial constraints by society but also patriarchal expectations from within the Japanese American community. These patriarchal discussions set the foundation for understanding the breakdown of some patriarchal norms in the camps, which is central to the overarching argument. The breakdown in patriarchy in camps is a key contributing factor for Japanese American women and their pursuit of education and employment. These patriarchal expectations in the pre-war years centered on family structures that affected wives and daughters. Prior to internment, family life revolved around the role of the father as the hierarchical head of the family and breadwinner. This established patriarchal family system was a norm in many Japanese American families in the pre-war years. Historian Eileen Tamura describes how patriarchy in Japanese families arose from Confucianist values brought from Japan. These cultural values included "unquestioned obedience to fathers, wives to husbands, and younger siblings to older brothers, especially the oldest brother."[33] A strong sense of patriarchy was centered on the father and husband, with a special role for the eldest son as an authority figure to other siblings.

Mei Takaya Nakano also discusses patriarchy in Japanese American families through a discussion on family structure and male dominance. She found that "absolute

[33] *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*, 33.

authority lay vested in the eldest male, the patriarch . . . all family members were required to obey the eldest male and accord him preferential treatment." Nakano also found that the eldest son was right behind the father in this "preferential treatment," since he was heir to the family and the one to continue the family line.[34] These values were demonstrated in a family dinner through observation of how family members were served. Sociologist Harry H. L. Kitano echoes this observation: "Father is served first, then sons in descending order or ages, sisters and finally mother."[35] This insight provides an informative view into understanding the role of daughters in the family and illustrates the patriarchal structure in Japanese American families.

While daughters held low status in the household, they had upward mobility if they contributed to the family income.[36] Thus, daughters gained some mobility in the family structure if they gained paid employment. This research based on oral histories and memoirs indicated that families counted on their older daughters to contribute to the family's financial situation. Mothers built strong relationships with their sons and wielded considerable influence once the sons became head of household.[37] Regardless of patriarchal family structures and preferential treatments for sons, women also had some level of agency within this family experience. The reality of Japanese American women in their everyday lived experiences provided a more nuanced understanding of the ways

[34] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 34.
[35] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 36.
[36] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 35.
[37] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 35.

in which they navigated both racist and patriarchal structures as they pursued their educational and vocational goals in the pre-war years.

For the entire Japanese American community, however, this patriarchal system was radically disrupted with the arrest of male leaders immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.[38] The loss of established community leaders came at a critical time of advocacy and action for the community. Furthermore, most families lost their primary breadwinner. The loss of the male head of household meant that wives and children had to step into leadership roles to guide the family in decisions regarding family assets while also trying to keep the family together in the internment camps.[39] On an individual family level, wives and children had to step in to make decisions regarding housing, personal belongings, and/or family businesses. On a community level, the loss of male leaders came during the critical time period just before internment orders were handed down, while anti-Japanese sentiments were at high levels.

The breakdown of the heteronormative family structure continued in camps due to limited accommodations, with little family gathering space and staggered meal times that did not accommodate family meals together.[40] Having meals together is a central part of family time, but the long waiting times at the large mess halls and the inability for some incarcerated residents to walk to the mess halls meant that family meal time did not

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[38] Ito, *"Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945,"* 6.
[39] Ito, *"Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945;"* Matsumoto, "*Japanese American Women During World War II;"* 6*;* and Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 146.
[40] Matsumoto *City Girls*, 152.

happen.[41] The physical constraints did not allow geographic space for a family to be together.[42] With the breakdown in family structure, missing community leaders and fathers, both the patriarchal structures and family structure changed in the camps. This disruption meant women no longer were obligated to prepare meals and clean and thus were free to pursue other interests, which is discussed in Chapter 3. Despite the disruption in patriarchal norms, many daughters felt pressured to stay in the camps due to a sense of filial piety to take care of their parents, while sons left the camps for the armed services, employment, or college.[43] This pressure for daughters to continue to take both physical and financial care of the family was reflected in many memoirs and oral histories of Japanese American women.

Ironically, women actually achieved gender pay equity while incarcerated in camps, another indication of the disruption in the patriarchal system. Women achieved this goal through a three-pronged pay scale created and implemented by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) that did not differentiate by gender. Pay ranged from $12 a month for apprentices to $19 a month for doctors, teachers, and other professionals.[44] The pay scale significantly shifted family dynamics from a system in which fathers were the breadwinners to mothers and daughters contributing on an equal level. While the pay was artificially low for all internees, the lack of gender distinction in pay was notable. For

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[41] Matsumoto *City Girls*, 152.
[42] Matsumoto, "*Japanese American Women During World War II."*
[43] Ito, *Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement,* 6; and Matsumoto *City Girls*.
[44] Matsumoto *City Girls*, 155.

example, nurses could expect annual salaries of $1,300, while engineers could expect annual salaries of $3,000.[45] The highest salaries in the camp were $19 a month or $229 a year, not near the monthly salaries of professionals outside the camps.[46] This pay structure enabled daughters to achieve a certain level of financial independence. With male community leaders gone and wage equity in camps, Japanese American women had basic needs of food and shelter met and now had access to and time to explore new job opportunities and vocational educational and training. With these new employment opportunities and experience and forced relocation away from Jap Crow on the West Coast, Japanese American women forged new educational and vocational paths.

While patriarchy was one facet of the Japanese American women's experience, other cultural institutions were responsible for transmitting heteronormative structures that promoted heterosexual relationships and gendered assumptions in the Japanese American community. *Concentration Camps on the Home Front* by John Howard discusses the experiences of those who were imprisoned in the two concentration camps in Arkansas, critiquing the heteronormative and patriotic lens that typified research on the internment. Howard's exploration of race, culture, families, sexuality, and gender in the Arkansas camps contributes much to understanding the perspective of the internees. Howard outlines examples of gender nonconformity in his study of women leaders in the

[45] Gerard Giordano, *Wartime Schools: How World War II Changed American Education* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), 29.
[46] Matsumoto *City Girls*, 152.

internment camps and the challenges of potential same-sex relationships in the camps.[47] *Growing up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture Among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49* by historian David K. Yoo explores the tension surrounding different cultural institutions, such as schools, newspapers, and religion, and how these institutions became contested sites for different generations of Japanese Americans and between Japanese Americans versus white Americans in the WRA.[48] Yoo posits that certain Japanese Americans who collaborated with white administrators from the WRA used these cultural institutions as a means of indoctrinating and policing young Japanese Americans.[49] Both of these books contribute to an understanding of the context of heteronormative and patriarchal structures that constrained Japanese American women both in and outside the camps.

Just as Japanese American women's experiences have been omitted in Asian American historiographies, this erasure is echoed in educational historiographies. Education provided a key role in the lives of Japanese Americans before, within, and after incarceration, precisely because education was a mechanism for combatting discrimination. This was no less true for Japanese American women. Research on the schooling of Japanese Americans has included traditional education, from Kindergarten through higher education. An overview of research on traditional education of Japanese

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[47] John Howard. *Concentration Camps on the Home Front Japanese Americans in the Home of Jim Crow* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[48] David K. Yoo, *Growing up Nisei: Race, Generation and Culture Among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-1949* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 2000).

[49] Yoo, *Growing up Nisei.*

Americans during the WWII era reveals tensions among various attitudes toward the purpose of education. In some scholarship, schools are taken for granted as sites of cultural indoctrination into the white mainstream culture. For Japanese American families, education could be a tool for acculturation toward success. However, Japanese American parents did not want their children to acculturate into white America at the cost of losing Japanese culture.

For my overview of K-12 education historiographies, I select two particular monographs to illustrate this tension: Thomas James's *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945* and Yoon Pak's *Where I Go I Will Always Be a Loyal American: Seattle's Japanese American Schoolchildren During World War II*. Their research found schools to be sites of cultural assimilation.[50] James argues that schools were utilized to indoctrinate American values of democracy and patriotism in Japanese American children, a method used by the WRA to control children in the camps.[51] Pak's analysis of civic education curriculum in Seattle school systems contributes to understanding how education systems coped with children from various backgrounds before the war by focusing on cultural tolerance.[52] Both James and Pak explore traditional Kindergarten through Grade 12 education with Japanese American students before and during internment. Traditional education on the West Coast in the pre-war years and in

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[50] Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1987), and Yoon K. Pak, *Wherever I Go, I Will Always Be a Loyal American: Seattle's Japanese American Schoolchildren During World War II* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001).

[51] James, *Exile Within.*

[52] Pak, *Wherever I Go, I Will Always Be a Loyal American.*

schools in the internment camps was an integral part of the experiences of Japanese American students in this time period.

Publications on Japanese Americans in higher education during WWII include Allan Austin's *From Concentration Camps to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (2005), Robert O'Brien's *The College Nisei* (1949), and Gary Okihiro's *Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II* (1999).[53] Austin focuses on the development of the NJASRC, which helped students to navigate the process from camps to campuses. His research, while important, is more of a case study on a particular organization rather than a focus on students and their trajectories. O'Brien's book, on the other hand, is full of quantitative data on the number of students who left the camps for campus, their majors, and their institutions. This serves as a valuable primary source for understanding the student demographics of those who left camps for college. Although small in number, these college students served as a significant source of inspiration to the younger generation in the camps. Okihiro's book provides rich descriptions of the stories and lives of *Nisei* college students. He discusses gender differences in college majors, with women typically going into fields such as nursing, general business, dietetics, music, sociology, and anthropology.[54] This information provides a foundation for understanding

[53] Allan W. Austin, *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Robert O'Brien, *The College Nisei* (New York: Pacific Books, 1949); and Gary Okihiro, *Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999).
[54] Okihiro, *Storied Lives*, 63.

vocational career trajectories and the gendered nature of career aspirations for these college students, in this case Japanese American women.

Following this overview of K-12 and higher education research, I move to research on vocational education, in which Asian Americans have been strikingly absent as subjects of study. This dissertation examines key publications on vocational education, including several books and a dissertation: *American Education and Vocationalism: A Documentary History 180-1970; American Education, Democracy, and the Second World War; Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor; Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools; Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946; The 'Girl Question' in Education: Vocational Education for Young Women in the Progressive ERA; The Negro Problem;* "Vocational Education During the Great Depression and World War II: Challenge, Innovation and Continuity," and *Wartime Schools: How World War II Changed American Education.*[55] While each of these publications addresses aspects of vocational education, including gender, race, and class, as a whole they provide a

[55] Charles Dorn, *American Education, Democracy, and the Second World War (*New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946* (New York and London: Teacher's College, 1999); Marvin Laverson and W. Norton Grubb, *American Education and Vocationalism: A Documentary History 1870-1970* (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 1974); Audre Roger O'Coin, "Vocational education during the Great Depression and World War II: Challenge, innovation and continuity" (University of Maryland College Park, 1988), Capitalization as noted by O'Coin; Jane Bernard Powers, *The 'Girl Question' in Education: Vocational Education for Young Women in the Progressive Era (*London and Washington D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1992); John L. Rury, *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor, 1870-1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

comprehensive understanding of how vocational education has served communities of colors in ways that have constrained opportunities.

Vocational education research has focused on different racial groups including African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Indigenous populations in the United States. When scholars have studied Asians in the United States, they have located immigrants, not U.S.-born Asian Americans, as their subjects of study. There is no existing research on the history of vocational education pertaining to Asian Americans. To fill this absence, the current research focuses on the adult and vocational education programs in the Gila River Internment Camp in Arizona during WWII. In addition to contextualizing the research within scholarship about the Japanese American community as I do above, it is important to place the subject of study within a larger history of vocational education in the United States. Discussions about vocational education, from their inception, have been both racialized and gendered. In the following section I outline how the foundation of vocational education has been informed by constructions of who is assumed to be "other."

Discussions of the historiographies on vocational education have focused on the role of class and race, typically with a focus on African Americans. When scholars discuss vocational education students, they are usually discussing poor people, Black people, immigrants, or Indigenous people—people who have been "othered." This is why, as I start the discussion on the history of vocational education, I start with a conversation on vocational education with African Americans. The historiography on vocational education was defined by African Americans from a racial perspective and

provides a solid understanding of the role of vocational education with minoritized communities, critical to understanding the context of the current research with another "othered" community, Japanese Americans. Booker T. Washington was foundational in discussing vocational education and African Americans. As the founding father of vocational education for Black people, Washington expressed views on vocational education that are instrumental to understanding the experiences of communities of color and this specific type of education. Washington's chapter on "Industrial Education" in *The Negro Problem*, published in 1903, outlined his belief in education for recently freed African Americans, which serves as a valuable primary source.[56]

In addition to Washington, there were many other stakeholders who were invested in education for recently freed African Americans. The Black common school in the South was a coeducational space with a variety of different goals including literacy, home training, and industrial training.[57] This generally meant an emphasis on reading and writing, with a focus on literacy. In these common schools, African American girls had higher levels of attendance and literacy than boys, likely a reflection of employment opportunities in farm work for men.[58] Against this backdrop of common schools and goals of literacy, the push for vocational education for African Americans began.

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[56] Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, Paul Laurence Dunbar Charles W. Chestnutt, and others, *The Negro Problem (*New York, New York: Humanity Books, 1967).
[57] Tyack & Hansot, *Learning Together*, 54-55.
[58] Tyack & Hansot, *Learning Together*, 55-56.

Vocational education in the African American community has a strong and established historiography, focusing on the role of moral and social enrichment and on work ethic. In addition to Washington, many white people were involved in vocational education for African Americans. The concept of Black industrial education was established the post-Civil War era with the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, established in 1868 by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a white man. The Institute, from which Washington graduated, was a founding site of vocational education.[59] Hampton focused on a strong work ethic to make up for ex-slaves' "deficiencies."[60] This need to instill a strong work ethic was rooted in a deficit perspective that ex-slaves needed to be "fixed." Accordingly, Hampton was not designed primarily to train African Americans for skilled labor but rather to work to improve their moral compass.[61] Boys trained in blacksmithing, farming, shoe making, and harness repair, while girls learned how to make and mend clothes, wash, iron, cook, and set the table.[62] These courses were for vocations that were deemed appropriate for African Americans, specifically domestic work for girls. This type of work would make African Americans industrious and "fix" their "moral deficiencies," thereby accomplishing Hampton's mission. However, other institutions shifted from a goal of moral redemption to one of skill acquisition for economic reasons.

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[59] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work,* 13.
[60] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 13.
[61] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 14.
[62] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 14-15.

Washington later founded the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, which focused on industrial education but with noticeable differences from Hampton. Tuskegee focused on empowering the community by hiring African American instructors, a noted change from white instructors at Hampton. Washington also focused on economic opportunity for African Americans and ensuring skills that would allow them to earn a living, versus Hampton's moral imperative.[63] Washington outlined his belief in the value of manual labor through this quote:

> It has been necessary for the Negro to learn the difference between being worked and working–to learn that being worked meant degradation, while working means civilization; that all forms of labor are honorable, and all forms of idleness disgraceful.[64]

Within this quote, Washington's distinction between *being worked* and *working* is important in that working is a choice that ties to civilization. His belief in working by choice to earn a living influenced his views on education.

Washington's focus on a practical education versus a liberal arts education is seen throughout his writing: "There were many young men trained in foreign tongue but few in carpentry or in mechanical or architectural drawing. Many were trained in Latin, but few as engineers or blacksmith."[65] Washington was not against liberal education but strongly believed that vocational education was important for African Americans from both a skills acquisition perspective and an economic perspective. This economic

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[63] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 14.
[64] Washington, "Industrial Education," in *The Negro Problem, 9.*
[65] Washington, "Industrial Education," in *The Negro Problem*, 13.

imperative was the basis for his belief in industrial education for African Americans training this group for available jobs, a result of a racialized job market. As a strong proponent of vocational education, Washington believed in the practicality of training students to be able to make a living through manual labor. Washington clearly believed in the value of "every-day practical things of life, upon something that needed to be done, and something which they will be permitted to do in the community of which they reside."[66] This particular quote regarding demonstrates that Washington understood that African Americans in the South were limited in job prospects due to discrimination in the job market. This contributed to his strong support for creating an "independent class of black artisans," as a way of advancing economic opportunity for African Americans.[67] He wanted to ensure that African Americans could use vocational education as a means to financial independence and a degree of success.

While Washington was focused on vocational education in the African American community, Kliebard explored the history of manual labor as a form of moral training, with a focus on the role of class. Kliebard's focus on class was clear: "Manual training was seen as especially beneficial for those segments of American society that were believed to require remedial treatment for one reason or another."[68] Essentially, Kliebard argues that certain groups perceived to require "remedial treatment" were from the lower class. While manual training for the lower class eventually changed to vocational

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[66] Washington, "Industrial Education," *The Negro Problem*, 17.
[67] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work,* 16.
[68] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 13.

education, there was always a moral and social enrichment component, primarily associated with poor people, immigrants, and communities of color, although notably and never explicitly Asian Americans. Kliebard found that advocates of vocational education wanted replacement of the liberal education curriculum to make it more relevant to the entire student population, which was rapidly becoming more diverse due to immigration.[69] Kliebard's research on vocational education provides a broad contextual foundation for understanding this type of education in the United States and the role of class in an intersectional approach.

While class has always been a mitigating factor in vocational education in the United States, wars create wartime economy and thus create shifts in the role of vocational education. WWII, the focus of this dissertation, was no different. Charles Dorn's *American Education, Democracy, and the Second World War* is a case study in the role of education in building the defense industry. His research examines educational institutions from nursery schools to universities and the role of the defense industry in every aspect of those educational institutions.[70] While Dorn's research centers on northern California, the lessons from those institutions reverberate far beyond that region. His research on nursery schools and the role of child care on women working in the defense industry is particularly important to understanding the role of women in the wartime economy. This multifaceted approach to examining education and the defense

[69] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 71.
[70] Dorn, *American Education.*

industry provides a foundation for understanding how education evolved into vocational training and support for the defense industry during a wartime labor shortage.[71]

In a similar fashion, Audre Roger O'Coin's dissertation, "Vocational Education During the Great Depression and World War II: Challenge, Innovation and Continuity," explores vocational education in a shorter time frame with a focus on the role of the federal government programs, including the National Youth Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps. These two work relief agencies trained unemployed workers during the Great Depression and the WWII period.[72] He also discusses the defense worker training program that went through transition to the war worker program as WWII started in 1941.[73] O'Coin provides a solid foundation of understanding of the role of the federal government in vocational education and defense work training. The current study builds on this research by exploring the role of the WRA, a government agency, in providing vocational education in the internment camps for Japanese American women. Gerard Giordano's *Wartime Schools: How World War II Changed American Education* explores how war influenced schools through a different focus, examining educators' influence in schools and the balance between liberal and conservative forces in education.[74] His examination of the role of schools in training students for wartime careers, wartime

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[71] Dorn, *American Education*, 7.

[72] Audre Roger O'Coin, "Vocational education during the Great Depression and World War II: Challenge, innovation and continuity" 317-337.

[73] O'Coin, "Vocational education during the Great Depression and World War II: Challenge, innovation and continuity," 338-362.

[74] Giordano, *Wartime Schools.*

curriculum, and wartime propaganda in schools is of particular interest to this research. Giordano includes sections devoted to understanding the experience of women, African Americans, persons with disabilities, rural youth, and student workers.

The move toward vocational education as one of skill acquisition and ensuring that education was relevant to all students, not just an elite few who were college bound, was widespread due to the role of class in this education. William E. Anderson, a Milwaukee superintendent and proponent of vocational education in Milwaukee's common schools, argued in 1883,

> That boys who were to come lawyers, doctors, theologians, or journalist received ample preparation for those professions, but those who would be bridge builders, draughtmen, mechanical or civil engineers, or merchants find that the whole bent of instruction is to them disqualifying.[75]

A liberal education would not prepare so many students to pursue other fields of work such as those listed above; everyone deserved an opportunity to be prepared for future vocations. This argument that education should serve everyone, not just the educational elite, would guide the industrial education movement for the next few decades.

The demand was to make the curriculum relevant to a rapidly increasing and diverse population. This was interpreted as adding a curriculum that trained students for their eventual social and occupational roles.[76] The push to educate everyone for their future social and employment role increasingly aligned to the social positions of the poor, immigrant, and minoritized populations in the United States to gain job skills for

[75] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 16.
[76] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 71.

employment in fields in which they could realistically find work. As the nation moved toward a first and then second world war, the imperative to train more students for future employment continued in schools.

During WW II, schooling evolved to support the nation through vocational training and the defense industry. Vocational curriculum during WWII was closely related to national security, with school administrators working with military and industrial leaders to prepare students for work in areas with a critical shortage.[77] The close relationship between schools and the wartime defense industry provided workers during a wartime labor shortage; unemployment went from ten percent to two percent.[78] A vocational skill-based curriculum could be taught by untrained instructors, addressing the severe shortage of trained teachers.[79] The wartime labor shortage also affected schools and the availability of instructors, as well as the curriculum. The National Education Association promoted a range of activities such as service clubs and gardening clubs to prepare skilled workers for wartime needs and to promote patriotism.[80] These types of activities demonstrate the link between schooling and the wartime labor industry. Public schools trained clerical workers for the federal government and for participation in the Cadet Nurse Corp Program, which encouraged students to consider nursing careers and tracked their high school coursework to expedite their training, both areas with a shortage

[77] Giordano, *Wartime Schools:* xxii & 27.
[78] Dorn, *American Education*, 7.
[79] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 150.
[80] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 7.

of trained workers.[81] These training programs provided trained workers for the wartime economy, a necessary function of schools at the time.

Many schools were adjusting to the wartime environment and the push to support the country through the vocational education program and training to fill the wartime labor shortage. A Los Angeles superintendent emphasized the transition from a traditional to skill-based curriculum as evidence of the district's commitment to the war effort. Competency in reading, arithmetic, and language, along with subjects such as typing, conversational Spanish, mathematics, reading, writing, speaking, and manual skills, was essential to the curriculum.[82] Reading, writing, and manual skills were important for employees in the wartime economy. Schools were an exercise in work experience and offered flexible scheduling to accommodate student workers. Many school districts shifted to a six-day school week to ensure that students could be released to help with the harvest or planting. School districts in the city operated to allow students to work in industries. More than one third of students in Chicago schools worked, and Los Angeles students worked more than a million hours a week.[83] These are examples of how schools shifted and evolved to meet the needs of the nation by addressing the wartime labor shortage.

In vocational education, there have been several factors at play, including race and class, as well as gender. For women in the early 1900s, education, schooling, and

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[81] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 28.
[82] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 149.
[83] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 68.

vocational training were an exercise in gender expectations of the time, reflected in both their own families and the employment field. Home economics was foundational to vocational training for women. As industrial education evolved, it included traditional female skills such as dressmaking, millinery, and cooking.[84] While gendered expectations were reflected in the training, vocational education skills provided women marketable skills that would help them to find future employment. These programs provided a limited basis for entry into the job market by young women. However, other factors also impacted their ability to pursue schooling to support their future vocational endeavors.

In his book *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor, 1870-1930* John L. Rury examines vocational education as it pertains to women in the United States, while Jane Bernard Powers examines *The "Girl Question" in Education: Vocational Education for Young Women in the Progressive Era*. For young women from communities of color and from immigrant families, many variables influenced their schooling and employment, including family size and birth order, which influenced whether their wages were needed to help their families. Family size and birth order had effects on educational attainment by young women from large families.[85] Rury notes,

> Daughters born first in large families often had to assume responsibilities for their younger sisters and brothers, whether it meant caring for them at home or getting

[84] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 131.
[85] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 59.

> a job to augment the family income, and this sometimes meant that they did not go to school.[86]

Family responsibilities both inhibited educational attainment and influenced vocational aspirations when the need for wages to sustain the family overcame one's personal desire for schooling. While wages and birth order affected a women's education, there was still a likelihood that she would experience some form of vocational education in schools, specifically home economics courses such as cooking and sewing.

Home economics was considered the "female counterpoint to industrial education" in many public schools across the country; it was a foundational course for female students in vocational education.[87] While men had industrial education, women were educated in domestic affairs. Teaching women about domestic affairs and the domestic sciences was a goal for many domestic feminist advocates.[88] These advocates for traditional schooling for women stemmed from belief in the role of women in the domestic sphere. However, home economics was a female equivalent to manual training for males.[89] This belief in training girls in the science of the home while training boys in manual work was a defining aspect of gender in vocational education. Booker T. Washington noted,

> It is discouraging to find a girl who can tell you geographic location of any country on the globe and does not know where to place dishes on a common

[86] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 59.
[87] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 135.
[88] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 135-136.
[89] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 136-137.

> dinner table. It is discouraging to find a woman who knows much about theoretical chemistry and who cannot properly wash and iron a shirt.[90]

For women, in this case specifically African American women, knowledge of how to run a household was of utmost importance in the patriarchal view of important knowledge to be taught in schools. This was reflected in home economics curricula, with sewing and cooking as a foundation. Over time, home economics evolved to include conditions in the home such as household economics, nourishment, family relations, and personal hygiene.[91] These types of coursework were foundational to the widespread form of vocational education for women from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

While gendered by design, home economics also provided a racialized course of study for many girls from immigrant backgrounds and communities of color. Kliebard found that

> home economics as a program of studies accelerated racial, ethnic, and class differentiation as well as differentiation by gender. . . . A pervasive pattern of discrimination, limited English proficiency in some cases, and restricted educational opportunities may have made home economics one of the very few educational opportunities for these girls [referring to girls of color specifically Black, Hispanic, and immigrants in 1922].[92]

For some people, vocational education programs offered a promise of upward mobility, but for many, vocational education reflected societal restrictions on employment. For immigrant women and women of color, home economics was a

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[90] Washington, "Industrial Education," in *The Negro Problem*, 16.
[91] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 139.
[92] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 137.

racialized educational option reflecting the realities of employment discrimination in the workplace, where many were limited to domestic work.

Rury also found similar patterns of racialized education with African Americans with Memphis's Black High School curriculum, which offered three years of home economics or three years of shop work. These courses included training for manual work, factory or service work and domestic service.[93] These limited educational options for people of color and racial restrictions in hiring practices illustrated how vocational education and employment accessibility were layered through both race and gender, creating challenging conditions, in this case specifically for African American women and more generally for women of color. Similarly, Powers found segregated and inequitable conditions for home economics courses and academic tracking where African American girls were tracked into domestic science courses versus more rigorous academic training. This was reflected in curricula in which Black girls were required to take domestic science courses while those courses were electives for white girls.[94] While some would argue that vocational education simply reflected discriminatory hiring practices that were a reflection of society, others would argue that school practices continued to ensure this discrimination. This question provides important context to understanding the constraints that women of color faced in their educational and

[93] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 191.
[94] Powers, *The 'Girl Education Question' in Education,* 89-91.

vocational pursuits, which is related directly to my argument on the changed trajectories of Japanese American women.

Gender- and race-based employment in pre-war years was a norm that impacted the types of employment that were accessible to women of color. For many women in the United States, employment was a means of social mobility and a marker of social class. Social constructs that Rury used in his research included class, foreign birth, immigrant status, and racial categories of Black, Latina, or white.[95] For many women, contributing wages to the family was an important consideration and a relationship existed between this and the types of employment available to them.[96] Rury's research focuses on the relationship between schooling and employment and the division of labor based on these constructs.

One area in which women accessed employment was the clerical field, which was a rapidly growing field in the early 1900s. The clerical field had a work force that was 97.5% men in 1870, with only 6% women a decade later, in 1880.[97] However, by 1910, the percentage of women had increased to 35%; by 1917, there were 138,048 women in high school clerical courses.[98] The rapid shift in gender dynamics in the clerical field was reflected in vocational education and training for girls. This trend continued when commercial courses in high schools in the 1930s registered a 2:1 ratio of girls to boys in

[95] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*.
[96] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*.
[97] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 138.
[98] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 138.

shorthand courses and a 3:1 ratio in bookkeeping courses.[99] Clearly, the clerical profession was shifting to a vocation dominated by women. This was also reflected in stenography, where 85% of the students were female in 1927.[100] While women were now shifting to the clerical space, clear delineations of this work were defined by both race and class.

Higher pay, a short work week, and a clean and quiet environment provided much different working conditions than a factory or a house, which was why it was a more desirable form of employment for certain groups of women, primarily those from lower classes or communities of color.[101] However, despite one's vocational aspiration, there were also realities of the job market. "If vocationalism [sic] offered women new opportunities in employment, its effects were determined by the realities of local labor market."[102] Training to work in the clerical field did not necessarily translate to finding a job that required that training. Therefore, even with training, the majority of clerical positions were obtained by middle-class white women, while women of color and immigrant women worked in manual labor.[103] The clerical field in the pre-war years primarily employed white native-born women.

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[99] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 151.
[100] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 122-123.
[101] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 208-209.
[102] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 209.
[103] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 215.

With the low number of immigrant women and minoritized women in clerical work, it was no wonder that clerical jobs were a sign of social mobility.

> For those girls [fathers in unskilled work], the prospect of a job in an office held the promise of substantial social mobility. Clerical workers earned considerably more than women in unskilled industrial labor, and being a form of skilled labor itself, office work carried a great deal more prestige as well (status enhanced, no doubt, by the relatively short work week and the relatively quiet, clean work environment characteristic of clerical jobs).[104]

Despite these vocational aspirations of social mobility, this did not match the lived reality of many girls. Schools did not function as a vehicle of social mobility for immigrant and women of color. Rury found that, despite the promise of upward mobility, few women improved their social standing, and the primary beneficiaries of commercial education in high schools were middle-class white women; many women of color and immigrants had dropped out of school to work to support their families.[105] Therefore, vocational training, specifically clerical training in the public schools, served only a small group of white women.

As vocational education for women evolved, war clearly proved to be a disruptor of patterns of racialized and gendered education and training for communities of color. Even prior to WWII, the U.S. Commissioner of Education stated that "increasing employment needs will call shortly for the recruiting and training of minority workers including many more women for the defense jobs."[106] The Commissioner understood that

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[104] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 207.
[105] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 208-209.
[106] Studebaker, 1942, 164 as quoted in Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 57.

meeting the wartime labor shortage was essential to defense goals of the United States. Needed labor was more important than past racialized hiring practices. However, while training minority workers, getting them hired was another issue.[107] African Americans did make some wartime progress in being hired in both the armed forces and the private sector, despite challenging conditions. However, many African Americans still faced systemic discrimination in the employment sector.

Against this background of racialized employment patterns, women played a critical role in the wartime labor economy during WWII. With more than four million women entering the manufacturing workforce, 49% percent of factory and shipyard workers were women, new to the work force.[108] These data confirm the gender demographics of the wartime labor economy, with almost half of the workers women new to employment with an opportunity to earn income for their families while men were away on the war front. Women played a critical role in the wartime labor economy.

For many women, the opportunity to work during a wartime labor shortage opened up many opportunities. A quarter of the women in the workforce had left lower-paying jobs.[109] Many who had left low-paying domestic positions were African Americans who were escaping racial oppression in the South to pursue opportunities in cities in other parts of the country in the defense industry.[110] This racial shift that occurred

[107] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 61.
[108] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8.
[109] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8.
[110] Dorn, *American Education*, 9.

when Black women left domestic work for defense jobs and better financial opportunities created job openings for other racial groups. “More than half of blacks who took jobs in the defense industries were women.”[111] These numbers reflect the racialized realities of racism and patriarchy facing women of color. This job shuffle also led to the domestic labor shortage discussed in Chapter 3, which translated to job openings for Japanese American women who needed to have a job secured before leaving the camps.

The pattern throughout the historiographies reflects an erasure of women, whether in Asian American history or vocational education history. This in and of itself is a reflection of patriarchy in the historiographies, where the experiences of men are presented as the norm and the experiences of women are an oversight. As a result, metanarratives in Asian American history discuss the experiences of men while touching on only a superficial level the experience of women.

This dissertation brings two bodies of literature into conversation: historiographies focused on the Japanese internment and historiographies on vocational education. By focusing on these two historiographies and understanding how vocational education impacted Japanese Americans in the internment camp, a different and more nuanced understanding of the vocational experience will be examined with a population that has been understudied: Asian Americans. By centering on the experiences of women, this research presents a unique way of understanding how the internment changed the educational and vocational trajectory of Japanese American women in the 1940s and

[111] Dorn, *American Education*, 9.

beyond. Through exploring the publications focused on Asian American history and the history of vocational education, with a focus on gender and cultural values, this historiography provides a strong foundation in understanding the role of cultural values and patriarchy in limiting the experience of Japanese American women. The changed trajectories of these Japanese American women was due to a combination of factors: severe financial loss in the communities and disruption of a patriarchal system that enabled girls and young women to leverage the vocational education and work experience in camps and obtain employment in other parts of the country without an established Jap Crow system.

Theoretical Frameworks

As the overview above demonstrates, understanding the evolution of vocational education in the United States requires viewing race, class, and gender as interconnected. With regard to Japanese American women, their experience with oppression, as well as their strategies of resistance, must be understood as interconnected. Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality serves as a useful theoretical framework for examining the experiences of Japanese American women's educational and vocational trajectories before, during, and after WWII. Crenshaw's critique of legal cases in which Black women's identities were relegated on a single axis framework as either women or Black was constraining:

> Yet they often experience double-discrimination-the combined effects of practice which discriminate on the basis of race and on the basis of sex. And sometimes

> they experience discrimination as Black Women—not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as Black Women.[112]

As Black women, their experiences are not solely the result of discrimination from racism and sexism; rather, they experience the impact of both racism and sexism simultaneously. This experience is different from that of separate racism or sexism or the addition of both of those experiences. As a result, "the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take into account intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black Women are subordinated."[113]

The single-axis framework presents the notion of essentialism: "that there is a single woman's experience or a Black person's, or any other group's experience that can be described independently from other aspects of the person—that there is an 'essence' to that experience."[114] One cannot separate out parts of one's identity. A Black woman cannot reflect only on her experience as Black without reflecting on her gender; at the same time, she cannot separate her Black identity in reflecting on her experience as a woman.

While the focus has thus far been on both race and gender, class is another salient identity. In reflecting on Crenshaw's original work, Trina Grillo states that strands of

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[112] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," Univeristy of Chicago Legal Forum (1989), 150.

[113] Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," 140.

[114] Trina Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House," *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* (1995): 19.

identity cannot be separated and that identities are not additive.[115] Thus, race, gender, and class are the three identities that are at the core of this intersectional lens that I bring to this research on Japanese American women, who were discriminated against for being Japanese and for being women. Utilizing an intersectionality framework allows full analysis of the experiences of Japanese American women who are constrained by both racism and gendered expectations related to patriarchy.

In addition to Crenshaw's legal theory concerning identity, historian David Garcia's concept of "mundane racism" is helpful in understanding the day-to-day experience of racism in communities of color in southern California. While Garcia does not explicitly discuss the concept of intersectionality, his research shows an intersectional lens in examining both race and class for Mexican Americans in Oxnard, California.

Garcia's racial framework guided his research in *Strategies of Segregation: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality* with the Mexican American community in Oxnard, California. This framework provided a useful intellectual lens for this research that examined the Japanese American community on the West Coast, which extends beyond one city in central California to provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of race and the relationship of class. In Garcia's framework, his research centered racism as a way of understanding historical inequities in the community that he examined. His conceptualization of "mundane racism," which he defines as "the systemic subordination of Mexicans enacted as a common-place ordinary way of conducting

[115] Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House," 19.

business in and beyond schools,"[116] informed this research. This concept of "mundane racism" is extended to the Japanese American community, while this research focuses on the racial hierarchies and practices that are normalized everyday practices and understood by both white and Japanese residents on the West Coast in the pre-war years, during the war years in camps, and in the slow dismantling of these practices post war.

Of Garcia's four strategies of segregation, three were particularly relevant to this research: (a) establishing racial hierarchy, (b) building an interconnection between residential and school segregation, and (c) omitting a rationale for segregation.[117] These three strategies provide relevant insight into understanding residential segregation on the West Coast and the complicated racial hierarchy on the West Coast, with its diverse population that extended beyond the Black/white racial binary. Garcia's framework offers many parallels between the discrimination that Mexican Americans encountered in Oxnard and that experienced by Japanese Americans elsewhere on the West Coast.

In Oxnard, the racial hierarchy was clear in educational, residential, and social discrimination against Mexican Americans. Similar to the housing segregation in Los Angeles, the use of housing covenants in Oxnard restricted Mexican Americans from buying houses in certain areas of the city, regardless of their financial status.[118] In geographic areas where houses were not covered by housing covenants, there were other

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[116] David G. Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 5.

[117] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 4-5. The other two strategies include building an interconnection between residential and school segregation and constructing a school-within-a-school model of racial separation.

[118] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 39-54.

systems in place to ensure segregation. Ernie, one of Garcia's sources, recalled, "We couldn't buy downtown. It was like a rule that was there that you didn't sell to Mexicans. It wasn't a written rule. You couldn't buy on F Street and all the nice places."[119] These unwritten restrictions on accessing housing in nice areas served multiple purposes: ensuring that housing and school segregation and made Mexican Americans feel inferior to their white counterparts, who could access housing in neighborhoods with paved streets, street lights, and homes with electricity, indoor running water, and telephone service.[120] By ensuring that Mexican Americans had access only to inferior housing through segregation, white Americans asserted superiority in the racial hierarchy of the city.

Housing segregation was directly linked to school segregation in Oxnard. An hour away in Los Angeles, similar segregation occurred with many minoritized communities, including Japanese Americans. While Garcia's research in Oxnard found that Japanese Americans (a little more than one percent of Ventura County's overall population in 1927) attended schools with White students, most *Nikei* students attended segregated schools.[121] Even when they attended integrated schools, dominant society found ways to ensure understanding of the racial hierarchy, discussed in Chapter 2.

Social discrimination was another key area of disparate treatment in Oxnard, where barriers against Mexican Americans were both "real and perceived and raced and

[119] As quoted in Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 52.
[120] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 48.
[121] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 31.

classed."[122] Unlike the African American experience, there was no need for signage indicating "whites-only" policies in restaurants and retail stores on the west side. As Antonia recalled, "You just knew that were couldn't go in. Or you *shouldn't* go in, because they were not going to wait on you anyways." White businesses practiced an acceptable form of segregation in business by simply not serving the communities of color in Oxnard. To fill the void due to the white business owners' discrimination of Mexican American customers, entrepreneurs from the community created a small area in Oxnard where Mexican businesses, including a general store and bakery, "catered to the Mexican clientele and contributed to affirming Mexican culture on the east side of the city."[123] These Mexican American businesses "represented a tradition of independence and entrepreneurialism in Oxnard." This ethnic enclave was a place where Mexican Americans could go and know that they would always get service and a safe place to conduct commercial transactions. The conditions that Mexican Americans encountered in Oxnard had striking similarities to the experience of Japanese Americans in the pre-war years, particularly the creation of an ethnic enclave, discussed in Chapter 2.

While many scholars have discussed racial inequities in the Japanese American community, Briones is the only scholar who labelled this discrimination as *Jap Crow* in his book title.[124] While never explicitly defining the term in his book, Briones discusses the structural discrimination that Japanese Americans encountered daily. In this

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[122] As quoted in Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 52.
[123] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 52.
[124] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow.*

dissertation, Jap Crow is defined as an oppressive system of racialized practices in residential, social, educational, and vocational settings to ensure that Japanese Americans understood their inferior position in relation to the white population. Jap Crow denied Japanese Americans' access to desirable housing and neighborhoods, employment that matched their educational credentials, and respect and dignity in everyday life.

While most of Jap Crow was implemented through systems of social interactions, laws and legal court rulings protected this system, including anti-Japanese land laws an legal support for racial housing covenants. Japanese Americans were an economic threat to white farmers, who, along with racist nativist groups, pushed anti-alien land laws to ensure that Japanese Americans could not own land. Since immigrant Japanese Americans were ineligible for citizenship, these laws made it more difficult for them to pursue their livelihood: farming.[125] Thus, the goals of neutralizing an economic competitor would be realized. Racial housing covenants on the West Coast created a legally enforceable way to ensure segregation in the mid-1940s in law and in practice until well into the 1960s. These laws and legally binding covenants were only some of the ways in which dominant society ensured subjugation of communities of colors on the West Coast.

The examination of Garcia's study of Mexican Americans in Oxnard and his focus on "mundane racism" in everyday life and Briones's notion of Jap Crow to illustrate the ways in which discrimination limited the lives of Japanese American in the

[125] Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore,* 208-209. Japanese immigrants were ineligible for citizenship due to not being Caucasian.

pre-war years provided valuable theoretical lenses for this dissertation research on Japanese American women with respect to their educational and vocational pursuits before, during, and after the war. Utilizing a theoretical framework of systemic and everyday racism provides a useful lens for understanding the constraints that Japanese American women faced as they pursued educational and vocational opportunities in the camps and, later, outside the camps.

Utilizing a theoretical framework that encompasses an intersectional approach toward race and gender while examining patriarchal cultural values, this study sheds insight into the unique constraints that Japanese American women faced in both their educational and vocational trajectories. Anti-Japanese sentiments in the pre-war years already made life difficult for the community. Japanese American women's experiences were also constrained by their gender through patriarchal expectations from their community. This intersectional lens allows examination of how racialized structures in dominant society constrained Japanese American women in their educational and vocational trajectories. Limited by patriarchy in both dominant society and Japanese American society, Japanese American women's unpaid and paid labor opportunities were largely limited to menial domestic labor or work in the ethnic economy.

Primary Sources, Archives, and Methodology

With an intersectional lens, I examine the racism that Japanese American women encountered as they navigated educational and vocational spaces. I utilize both primary and secondary sources to understand why the WRA devoted financial and geographical resources to the vocational educational program in the Gila River internment camps. I

examine change in social structures from the time before the war to the time afterward to understand change over time in the trajectories for certain Japanese American women. These primary sources are critical in historical research due to their role in understanding what has happened in the past; secondary sources are utilized to verify data from primary sources. With both primary and secondary sources, qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to understand patterns and trends in the data, all with a focus on understanding how the internment experience opened up opportunities for Japanese American women in their educational and vocational pursuits in the postwar years.

Several primary sources were used, including letters, memoirs, newspapers, and oral histories from archives in the study of vocational education in the camps to ensure historical accuracy. Three primary archival sources were used: (a) Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project, (b) the Japanese American National Museum, and (c) the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History Center at California State University, Fullerton. In addition, I examined published memoirs, transcribed oral histories, and camp newspapers. Materials from the archives, along with the published primary sources, provided a rich variety of materials. The newspapers in the collection from Densho were published during the internment, while the oral histories and memoirs were recorded or written following internment. Utilizing materials created during the internment and afterward, this research captures both the censored information from the internment camps and the uncensored reflections of internees afterward.

The *Gila News-Courier*, a camp newspaper for the Gila River Internment Camp, provided a rich source of information on vocational education and employment both

inside and outside of the camps. Gila River Internment Camp was built on land that was owned by Pima and Maricopa tribes, who leased 16,500 acres of land to the federal government.[126] The camp was actually comprised of two camps (Butte and Canal), three and a half miles apart, with 12,348 incarcerated residents.[127] Gila River Internment Camp was not known as an exceptional camp, as were Manzanar or Tule Lake camps, where civil unrest was particularly acute, which makes the findings more representative of the experience of the 120,000 internees. This lack of exceptionalism made Gila River Internment Camp representative of the ten internment camps operated by the WRA.

The *Gila News-Courier* was a purposeful data selection site to ensure that the records were representative of the internment camp experience for many Japanese American women. I examined every issue from January 1, 1943 to September 5, 1945. I used the articles, editorials, and job advertisements extensively in the discussion of the vocational education and employment programs in the internment camps. The newspaper clippings illuminated the formation of the vocational educational training program, camp employment in the camp, and staffing outside the camps. The newspaper illustrated the push for Japanese American internees to leave the camp to relocate in other areas of the country for their much-needed labor due to the severe wartime labor shortage.[128]

Due to the labor shortage, numerous job ads targeted Japanese Americans. An analysis of these employment advertisements in the *Gila News-Courier* was conducted to

[126] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 139.
[127] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 139.
[128] See discussion from the vocational education section within the historical essay earlier in the chapter.

understand the categories of work and employment trends as the war progressed and their impact on Japanese Americans and the types of work that were available to them. Although camp newspapers were censored by the WRA, they were still a valuable source of information for insight into a vocational education program focused on training internees and understanding the conditions of employment in the wartime economy. As primary sources created during the time frame of the internment, the newspaper articles and advertisements served to provide real data in the time period.

To balance censored information from the newspaper, which was subject to WRA review, I examined oral histories and memoirs in which former internees provided an uncensored perspective of their memories and experiences of camp. These stories provided a longitudinal perspective on the impact of internment on Japanese American women's lives, as they were typically published later in their lives as reflections. While these oral histories and memoirs are a rich source of information, I interpreted the information through a perspective that acknowledges the malleable nature of memory. Historian John Tosh wrote,

> Memory is neither fixed nor infallible: we forget, we overlay early memories with later experience, we shift the emphasis, we entertain false memory and so on. In important matters, we are likely to seek confirmation of our memories from an outside source. Collective memory is marked by the same distortions, as our current priorities lead us to highlight some aspects of the past and to exclude others.[129]

[129] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History.* Fifth ed. (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2006), 2.

Oral histories recorded after the internment camps are malleable, and the political nature of redress and reparations and the injustice of the camps may overlay some of the memories from the Japanese American women who were studied. Despite this, oral histories were integral to the research as it looked at long-term impacts of educational and vocational trajectories over a lifetime. The oral histories allowed participants to reflect on long-term impacts of the internment on their lives as they were collected later in life. A discourse and text analysis of the materials was performed on the oral histories and written transcripts to understand the messages that were communicated in the context in which they were communicated. This included an understanding of the cultural and social norms of the era, including both individual and structural sources of racism. To ensure research integrity and breadth of comprehension of the findings, this study was performed using several sources of primary and secondary materials.

Twenty-five oral histories from the Japanese American Oral History Project Collection at the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History were examined. The interviews were a mix of transcribed oral histories and oral recordings. The oral histories allowed examination of entire life trajectories, including education and vocation. Within these oral histories I then mapped out these individual women's pre-war educational trajectories, vocational aspirations, and changes after the war. Day-to-day activities, including education activities, leisure, vocational classes, and employment in the camps, were also analyzed. This longitudinal approach to the data generated a comprehensive view of how the internment interrupted the lives of Japanese American

women and the impact of that interruption on their long-term educational and vocational trajectories.

The Japanese American National Museum's (JANM) Hirasaki National Resource Center published *Re-Gen-Er-a-Tions Oral History Project: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era,* a collection of transcribed oral histories of Japanese Americans from Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.[130] An analysis was performed on sixteen interviews with Japanese American women.[131] Also, two transcribed interviews from *Too Long Been Silent: Japanese Americans Speak Out* were investigated with an analysis on education and employment in three distinct time periods: pre-war, during the war, and post war.[132] Including the oral histories from the Oral History Center at California State University, Fullerton, the JANM, and the two transcribed interviews, forty-three oral histories were reviewed in data analysis.

In addition to archival sources, Japanese Americans have written in various publications memoirs discussing their lives in the internment camps and the impact on their lives during and after internment. *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* focused on the experiences of fourteen Japanese American women

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[130] *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000).

[131] See appendix for list

[132] Roger W. Axford ed., *Too Long Been Silent: Japanese Americans Speak Out* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Media Publishing and Marketing, 1986).

who permanently resettled in Minnesota.[133] Other memoirs included sixteen memoirs from *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps.*[134] These two sources of memoirs provided thirty additional data sources. Similar methods of inquiry and examination were used on all of the memoirs to understand lifetime impacts of internment. All memoirs and oral histories that were examined are listed in the Appendix.

Newspaper articles, oral history interviews, and memoirs provided the bulk of primary sources for this research. The evaluation of the role of vocational education, training, employment in the camps, and the impact of these programs on Japanese American women is based chiefly on these primary sources. In total, more than seventy-three oral histories and memoirs and almost three years of newspaper issues were scrutinized. Seventy-six newspaper articles are directly quoted in this dissertation. These primary sources, along with the secondary sources, paint a rich portrait of the educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women.

Language and Terminology

Language and power are related, and the power of language is particularly important in this dissertation focusing on Japanese American women's educational and vocational trajectories. Current research has shown an evolution in language regarding

[133] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota*. (see appendix for list of memoirs consulted)
[134] John Tateishi ed., *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1999). (see appendix for list of memoirs consulted)

how these camps that held Japanese Americans during WWII were labeled and portrayed. Historian Mathew M. Briones reflected on the importance of this terminology.

> However, these terms [internment camps]—as widely propagated by the U.S. government—were consciously chosen to diminish the experiences of incarcerated Japanese Americans and blunt the language used to describe the severity and truth of these experiences. . . . To be clear, internment camp legally refers to the incarceration of "enemy aliens by the government in times of war, a term which does not appropriately encompass the dehumanizing nature of Japanese American incarceration (throughout North America) which explicitly included citizens and non-citizens.[135]

It is the writer's belief that the internment was an unconstitutional, unjust, and harsh incarceration. Further, Briones clearly pointed out that the language used regarding the internment diminishes the experience and its impact. This dissertation uses language that reflects historian Alice Yang Murray's thoughts regarding this terminology:

> While I agree that places like Manzanar and Tule Lake fulfill the dictionary definition of a "concentration camp," I personally can't accept the designation. The term "concentration camp" may once have been a euphemism for a Nazi "extermination camp," but I think that over time the two kinds of camps have become inextricably linked in the popular imagination. In other words, I believe the meaning of the term "concentration camp" has changed over time. During World War II, officials and commentators could say Japanese Americans were confined in concentration camps without evoking images of Nazi atrocities. I don't think that this is true today.[136]

With the thoughts of both of these historians in mind, this dissertation uses the terminology of *internment camps* and *incarceration* to reflect fully the harsh living

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[135] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow,* 17.

[136] As quoted in Roger Daniels, "Words Do Matter: A Note on Inappropriate Terminology and the Incarceration of the Japanese Americans," in Louis Fiset and Gail Nomura, eds. *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 183-207.

conditions of these camps, with their barbed wires and guns directed at residents, while also acknowledging the history of the Holocaust.[137]

Additional language and terminologies, including Japanese words, are used in this dissertation to clarify the information. For example, words that delineate different generations of Japanese Americans, including *Issei* (first generation), *Kibei* (born in the United States but educated in Japan), *Nisei* (second generation), and *Sansei* (third generation) are used to distinguish the experiences of those who were incarcerated. *Nikkei* is another term that refers to Japanese Americans. This dissertation does not make the distinction between citizens and noncitizens based on the U.S. Supreme Court *Ozawa* decision in 1922, which declared the *Issei* ineligible for naturalization.[138] Even if the *Issei* desired citizenship, they could not become citizens of the United States. Throughout the text, all Japanese words appear in italics.

Organization of the Dissertation

In examining the educational and vocational trajectories of *Nikkei* women, this research utilizes rich and varied sources to explore systemic discrimination on the West Coast and its impact on Japanese American women and their educational and vocational trajectories in the prewar years in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I discuss the adult and vocational education programs in the internment camps and the types of employment that Japanese American women obtained in the war years. Chapter 4 focuses on the

[137] For conditions within the camps see Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 51-52 among many other publications.
[138] Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore,* 208-209. Japanese immigrants were ineligible for citizenship due to not being Caucasian.

relationship between increased labor demands and decreased discrimination, changed trajectories, and employment in the mainstream economy in the war years and afterward. Chapter 5 presents concluding thoughts, research implications, and new directions for future scholarship on the experiences of Japanese American women.

Chapter Summary

Taj Shikagi, like other Japanese American women, faced racial oppression from the dominant society but gained a newfound sense of freedom in her move to Minnesota. Her move away from the West Coast enabled her to pursue an education and a professional career that she did not think was possible while she was in California. Utilizing the three theoretical frameworks from Garcia's notion of mundane racism, Briones's Jap Crow, and a cultural framework focused on Japanese values discussed by Tamura and Nakano, this dissertation explores the discrimination that Japanese American women such as Shikagi faced in pre-war and post-war years and its impact on their educational and vocational trajectories. By bringing together two separate bodies of literature, Asian American history and vocational educational history, a rich conversation can be had to shed light on this underexamined population in vocational education in the time period around WWII. The education and vocational trajectories of these Japanese American women following internment changed due to a combination of several factors: the severe financial loss of the community due to internment, disruption of a patriarchal system in the camps, and vocational education and employment in the camps that enabled girls and young women to leverage the vocational education and work experience in camps and obtain employment in other parts of the country, notably areas without an

established Jap Crow system. As a result of all of these factors, Japanese American women found access to new areas of employment, working in professional and semiprofessional roles in the mainstream economy.

CHAPTER 2

JAP CROW IN HOUSING, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

Alice Kikuchi was twenty-three years old when she and her family were interned at Gila River Internment Camp in Arizona.[139] Despite her stellar academic record, she had had limited employment opportunities before internment. Profiling Alice's life, Mathew Briones says of Alice's job prospects, "Although she had graduated at the top of her class at Vallejo High in California] and completed a course in secretarial work, Alice, like Mariko [her sister] had been forced into domestic service to help support the family."[140] Her family's expectation of using her wages to sustain the family financially was part of a system of patriarchal values in which women were expected to support the family through both paid and unpaid labor. In this case, Alice had to work for the good of the family instead of for her personal vocational ambitions. With her academic record, she should have been able to continue her education and pursue other lines of work. However, even with higher education, Kikuchi's vocational prospects were extremely limited due to racial discrimination in the job market. Domestic work was one of the few areas of work that Japanese American women could access in the mainstream economy. Constrained by both family and a racist society, Kikuchi's experiences were very much a norm in WWII experiences of *Nikkei* women on the West Coast.

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[139] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow,* 21 & 108.
[140] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow,* 52.

This chapter focuses on the educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women in the years before the war (1930–1942) and during internment. I focus on how housing, social, educational, and vocational discrimination contributed to Garcia's construct of "mundane racism." This "mundane racism," which Japanese Americans faced on a daily basis on the West Coast was an ever-present part of the Jap Crow structure that limited Japanese Americans' vocational aspirations, regardless of their educational credentials. Jap Crow was an oppressive system of racialized practices in residential, social, educational, and vocational settings that ensured that Japanese Americans understood their inferior position in relation to the white population. This unwritten Jap Crow policy, enforced through de jure and de facto discrimination, affected many Japanese American youths who were unable to access employment that matched their educational credentials prior to WWII.[141] The first section of this chapter examines the role of housing discrimination and segregation and the second section discusses social discrimination. The third section identifies how Japanese American children pursued educational opportunities, and the fourth section analyzes employment discrimination.

Housing Discrimination

Housing discrimination was a norm in cities throughout the West Coast, where more than 120,000 Japanese Americans lived, primarily in three states: California, Oregon, and Washington.[142] The Los Angeles area is a useful example for examining

[141] For a discussion on Jap Crow see Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*. For a discussion on anti-Japanese discrimination see Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging;* Matsumoto, *City Girl;* and Yoo, *Growing up Nisei.*
[142] Leonard Bloom and Ruth Riemer, *Removal and Return: The Socio-Economic Effects of the War on Japanese Americans* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949).

residential discrimination, as almost thirty percent of the Japanese Americans within the United States lived in Los Angeles country and eighteen percent live within city limits.[143] In Los Angeles County, new housing developments reflected white superiority and segregation that withstood legal challenges until 1948.[144] Residential segregation was built into the design of the Los Angeles subdivisions, which practiced wholesale racial housing covenants.[145] In turn, this was one of the defining ways in which Japanese Americans experienced racism in southern California. While the focus is on the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County, I present corroborating evidence from other areas of the West Coast, including other cities and rural areas as well.

I am indebted to Scott Kurashige's analysis of the building of Los Angeles neighborhoods in *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*, which is an instrumental text in illustrating how many white residents used housing to establish racial superiority by building new housing developments that allowed only white buyers through racially restrictive housing covenants for entire developments.[146] The housing situation in Oxnard, California, sixty miles away, was similar to that about which Garcia writes in reference to Mexican Americans, and the inability to access nicer homes with amenities was a tool of white

[143] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race.*
[144] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race.*
[145] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race.*
[146] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race.*

oppression for Japanese Americans in Los Angeles County.[147] While the bulk of Kurashige's work on segregation was focused on Los Angeles County, my primary sources indicate that the phenomenon of housing segregation was applicable throughout the West Coast. Scholars such as Briones and Kurashige found that white residents used other forms of intimidation and segregation to drive Japanese Americans out of existing neighborhoods and restricted people of color to less desirable neighborhoods.

Japanese Americans were less likely to buy homes than other minorities, such as African Americans.[148] This was likely due to Japanese Americans' inability to gain U.S. citizenship.[149] In *Tako Ozawa v. United States* (1922), the U.S. Supreme Court declared the *Issei* ineligible for naturalization based on their status as non-Caucasians.[150] Japanese Americans faced other legal hostilities, including alien land laws that made it difficult for many of them to own land to farm, another means for white farmers to stifle their economic competitors.[151] These strong anti-Japanese sentiments were reflected in laws and court rulings that limited and discriminated against Japanese Americans legally.

Many Japanese Americans hesitated to enter into legal negotiations to buy houses, particularly from white homeowners, knowing there might not be legal means of occupying their homes.[152] When they did buy homes, Japanese Americans had limited

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147 Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 47-50.
148 Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 49.
149 Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 51-52.
150 Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore,* 208-209.
151 Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore, 188-195 &* 203-208.
152 Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 49.

options because white homeowners believed that their interests were best served by excluding people of color from their neighborhoods. For example, segregated neighborhoods were an important part of racial identity and assumed superiority for many whites in Los Angeles, similar to the situation in Oxnard.[153] Kurashige found that whites were most concerned with neighborhood demographics, more so than the public spaces in the city, which were generally integrated. "Residential restrictions proved far more ubiquitous."[154] These legally protected, segregated, and integrated public spaces in Los Angeles were meant for white residents to assert dominance over communities of color, including Japanese Americans. The prime space to do so was the housing market.

Suburban racism in Los Angeles included housing covenants in both new developments and existing neighborhoods. They served to legalize segregation of racial minorities into geographic areas in the city. According to Kurashige,

> Racial restrictive covenants prohibiting non-whites from inhabiting houses provided the crucial instrument to advance residential segregation during the interwar years. Designed to evade the Fourteenth Amendment, restrictive covenants, unlike racial zoning were attached to specific privately-owned properties and deemed to be the actions of individuals rather than state.[155]

Japanese American families had little legal recourse against housing covenants in existing housing or new housing developments. Housing covenants that covered entire new housing developments delimited access to the suburban ideal of homeownership exclusively to white residents of Los Angeles. Kurashige argues that these new

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[153] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 47-50.
[154] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 32.
[155] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 27.

communities were "the greatest progenitors of residential segregation."[156] During a time of growth for the city, Japanese Americans' inability to move out of crowded segregated areas was a form of legalized oppression through racial housing covenants.

Even when people of color wanted to carve out their own suburban oasis in the county, white residents would not allow it. For example, when African Americans wanted to create their own housing development in an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County next to the city of Gardena, called Gordan Manor, white homeowners in the area vigorously fought this development. Kurashige argues, "The Gordan Manor debacle demonstrated the high degree to which white suburban interest believed their economic and social well-being required exclusion of people of color."[157] Not only were people of color excluded from living in many areas of the city and county; white residents actively suppressed communities of color from building their own suburban developments. Access to new homes was reserved for white residents, which served as an indicator of racial superiority in the minds of many whites at the time. Minorities, regardless of socioeconomic status, were not allowed access to the suburban dream of new neighborhoods with manicured lawns and a play yard for children. As mentioned earlier in the discussion on housing segregation in Oxnard, this was a purposeful choice that was part of establishing and maintaining racial hierarchy through access to nicer homes.[158] Japanese Americans knew that their inability to gain access to nicer homes,

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[156] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 52-54.
[157] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 32.
[158] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 47-50.

regardless of class status, was another form of oppression by white residents and they understood their subjugated place in society.

Even when housing covenants were not in play, white residents used intimidation to drive Japanese families out of certain neighborhoods during the 1920s. A Japanese man who was married to a white woman bought a home in the Belvedere neighborhood of Los Angeles. He and his wife were nonetheless the target of white intimidation. Ultimately, white residents burned the family's house while they were away. Left behind were coal, tar, feathers, and ropes—items typically used by the Ku Klux Klan as a warning that lives were in danger if the residents did not leave.[159] To further assert this white dominance, an assistant district attorney of Los Angeles justified the white residents' actions by saying that the Japanese homeowners had invited the violence by moving into a white neighborhood. The sheriff's response to a complaint from the Japanese consul was that, despite hating Japanese Americans, he would maintain the peace.[160] Such a reaction from the assistant district attorney and sheriff are indicative of the strong anti-Asian sentiment in southern California and the reality that Japanese Americans had little legal standing to challenge entrenched oppression from those in positions of power.

Wealth did not protect George Shima, one of the wealthiest Japanese American men, from racism. Known as the Potato King for his vast farming operations with more

[159] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 52-54.
[160] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 52-55.

than 10,000 acres of potato fields and an estate worth fifteen million dollars when he died in 1926, Shima bought a house in an attractive area of the city of Berkeley. Local newspaper headlines announced "Yellow Peril in College Town" and "Jap Invades Fashionable Quarters." Meanwhile, protestors led by a classics professors pushed Shima to move to an "Oriental" neighborhood.[161] While Shima, with his immense wealth, was not constrained by racialized housing covenants, his white neighbors were still able to vocalize their disgust with his moving into "their" neighborhood through their protests and news reports. Not surprisingly, regular Japanese Americans looking for housing outside of the segregated areas such as the "Oriental" neighborhood encountered great difficultly.

With such overt hostility, it is not a surprise that some Japanese Americans chose to live in ethnic enclaves. Rose Honda, in an oral interview with the JANM, remembers Japanese Americans living together for safety.

> Before the war it was a Japanese American community [West Los Angeles], I think being together as a community, they felt safer and with support. Certainly, they faced many prejudice and discrimination before [the war]. The other feeling was that Japanese families were not able to purchase property east of Sepulveda, so the Japanese stayed west of Sepulveda.[162]

These examples illustrate the Jap Crow system and the unspoken norms that both white and Japanese Americans understood. The invisible boundaries that instituted de

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[161] Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore,* 192.

[162] Rose Honda, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000), 68.

facto housing segregation were enforced with approval by and support from authority figures.

Japanese American women have recalled strong residential segregation in Los Angeles and other parts of the West Coast in the pre-war years. Mary Nisi Ishizuki, a native Angeleno, recalls how certain parts of Los Angeles, such as Brentwood and Bel Air, were completely off limits to Japanese Americans.[163] Japanese Americans knew that they would not be accepted as tenants or as home buyers in many parts of Los Angeles. As a result of these invisible boundaries, Japanese Americans were separated into residential ethnic enclaves. Ernie, one of Garcia's sources recalls, "We couldn't buy downtown. It was like a rule that was there that you didn't sell to Mexicans. It wasn't a written rule. You couldn't buy on F Street and all the nice places."[164] These invisible boundaries were similar to those in Oxnard, where they were part of the norm that was encoded into peoples' everyday lives, like mundane racism.[165] It was not questioned or challenged; it was just accepted by everyone, both white residents and residents from communities of color. Other Japanese American women, such as Amy Okagaki and Esther Stone, whose oral histories were transcribed in *Too Long Been Silent: Japanese Americans Speak Out*, recall being from mixed neighborhoods with Japanese, Italians,

[163] Matsumoto, *City Girl*, 23-24.
[164] As quoted in Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 52.
[165] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*, 5, & 47-50.

Chinese, and Filipinos.[166] The integration of neighborhoods for people of color was clearly seen in the racial demographics of these integrated areas.

Awareness of housing segregation in Los Angeles County and other areas of the West Coast is important to understanding the experiences of Japanese Americans in the United States, as thirty percent of the population lived in Los Angeles County.[167] As seen through reports of the structural nature of residential segregation, the evidence demonstrates the discrimination that Japanese Americans faced in their daily lives, based on where they were permitted to live. These residential boundaries were an indicator that their ethnic origins mattered more than their class and financial means in the choice of residence.

Social Discrimination

Not only did housing discrimination create racially segregated neighborhoods; cities with a significant Japanese American population also normalized social segregation. Valerie J. Matsumoto's *City Girls: The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* and Shirley Jennifer Lim's *A Feeling of Belonging: Asian American Women's Culture, 1930-1960* discuss a parallel social network for Japanese Americans in Los Angeles. These social structures included separate YMCA leagues, social clubs, and college sororities.[168] These social networks were created due to discrimination against

[166] Amy Okagaki and Esther Stone, "Amy Okagaki and Esther Stone" in *Too Long Been Silent: Japanese Americans Speak Out* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Media Publishing and Marketing), ed. Roger W. Axford, 95.
[167] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return,* 8.
[168] Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging,* and Matsumoto, *City Girl.*

Japanese Americans. Outside of the parallel social structures, white residents tolerated Japanese Americans only in certain parameters, typically in subservient scenarios. White residents needed to establish a clear racial hierarchy, similar to the establishment of White superiority in relation to Mexican Americans in Oxnard, but this time in relation to Japanese Americans in the Los Angeles area.[169]

A flyer illustrated opposition to the establishment of a Japanese Presbyterian church in a White neighborhood with this sentiment:

> JAPS
> You came to care for our lawns,
> we stood for it
> You came to work in truck gardens,
> we stood for it
> You send your children to public schools
> we stood for it
> You moved a few families in our midst
> we stood for it
> you proposed to build a church in our neighborhood
> BUT
> We DIDN'T and WE WON'T STAND FOR IT
> You impose more on us each day
> until you have gone your limit with us
> WE DON'T WANT YOU WITH US
> SO GET BUSY JAPS, AND
> GET OUT OF HOLLYWOOD[170]

The flyer details subjugation of Japanese Americans by white residents in this Hollywood neighborhood in very clear terms. Japanese Americans were allowed into the neighborhood as gardeners, farmers, students, or even a few resident families, if they

[169] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation*
[170] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 23.

were not bound by housing covenants. However, the building of a social structure that would draw more Japanese Americans into the city, such as a church, was not acceptable. The flyer also illustrates how Japanese Americans navigated their roles in this subjugated position and accepted service positions that white residents identified as opportunities for Japanese Americans. The message that Japanese Americans as gardeners and farmers were acceptable is an example of White residents' assumption that Japanese Americans would remain a minor and powerless component of their city. Kurashige explains, "The message was crystal clear, like the 'Negro,' 'the Japs,' were welcome in Southern California as long as they confined themselves to the proper social and geographic spaces defined by whites."[171] This racial hierarchy plays out throughout this chapter, with many other examples that confirm the ways in which Japanese Americans were dehumanized and made to feel lesser by their white counterparts.

These attitudes and thoughts of white superiority, status, and entitlement influenced many Japanese American children and youths, who learned to believe that they held a lower place in society than their white counterparts. One youth recounted, "With White skin, one can have education and positions and better jobs and more comfortable homes. They have more freedom to enjoy life without being humiliated anyways."[172] This young person's thoughts reflect those of many who have recounted feelings of limitations due to their Japanese American appearance and heritage, similar to

[171] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 23.
[172] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 67. No further details on the youth provided.

Taj Shikagi's feelings of oppression cited in Chapter 1.[173] They were not allowed to consider themselves or behave in a way that was equal to being white, such as being allowed to have better jobs or more comfortable homes.

The market for leisure activities was also highly segregated under the Jap Crow structure. Matsumoto describes, "Like the pre-war job and housing market, the beaches, eateries, hotels and public amusement were not equally accessible to racial-minority people in southern California."[174] For example, dining, a social activity for Japanese Americans of financial means, was an area of discrimination. Katsumi Hirooka Kunitsugu, whose oral interview was printed in the JANM *REgenerations* project, recalls how her parents, despite having the economic means, would go only to restaurants in Little Tokyo to avoid discrimination outside of the ethnic enclave. "They didn't tell you to get out. They just never came around to take your order."[175] Mary Nishi Ishizuka, who earlier discussed residential segregation, recalls her parents eating out only in Little Tokyo for fear of being discriminated against at other eating establishments.[176] Both Ishizuki's and Kunitsugu's parents understood the "mundane racism" encoded into the informal practice of not serving Japanese Americans in restaurants. This was simply another everyday reality of being snubbed in social and public places. Race trumped class

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[173] Shigaki, "Taj Shigaki" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* 277-278.
[174] Matsumoto, *City Girls*, 24.
[175] Katsumi (Hirooka) Kunitsugu, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000), 126.
[176] Mary Nishi Ishizuku to Valerie Matsumoto, August 4, 2009. Quoted in Matsumoto, *City Girls*, 25.

in the Jap Crow system, where Japanese families, regardless of financial means, were reminded of their place in the racial hierarchy.

Even outside of Los Angeles, in areas with more integration, segregation was normalized on a day-to-day basis. Mary Mariko Ogura wrote about experiencing racism in social settings in her memoir, *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota.* Ogura attended a primarily white school in Sunnyvale, a predominantly white suburb of Seattle; her parents, of economic means, were active in the school parent-teach association. "Even though we got along well in the community, we experienced the same discrimination as other Japanese. We were not allowed to swim at the public beaches in the area."[177] Class privilege did not protect Ogura from discrimination; it was a part of everyday life for many Japanese Americans on the West Coast.

Japanese American women who faced racism from white residents and the dominant society also faced internal pressures in their own communities related to responsibilities to maintain Japanese culture through food, music, and performance. Community and family expectations for Japanese American women to be cultural ambassadors for the Japanese American community were in part due to the patriarchal structure discussed in the theoretical section in Chapter 1. Cultural ambassadors are those who perform roles in cultural ceremonies in the community. Japanese American women were cultural ambassadors through their leisure activities, essentially traditional Japanese cultural activities. Matsumoto reports that Japanese American city girls often learned

[177] Mary Ogura, "Mary Mariko Ogura" *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 71-73.

odori (traditional Japanese dance), cooking, calligraphy, *kebana* (flower arrangement), tea ceremonies, and playing musical instruments such as the *koto* or *shamisen* (Japanese stringed instruments).[178] These were more than just lessons to maintain their parents' culture. They were an unwritten expectation in Japanese American communities. Matsumoto argues that *Nisei* women were agents of culture though their dual role in the adaptation of mainstream culture and the maintenance of elements of Japanese culture.[179] This was in part due to the ethnic community's expectation of the girls' performance in cultural ceremonies in the civic and educational community activities, which included wearing the kimono and performing traditional song and dance.[180] Although the girls' enthusiasm varied in these cultural pursuits, "their parents' generation, the *Isseis* took pride in their daughters' performance of [traditional] song and dance at Japanese weddings, *kenjinkai* (prefectural association) picnics, other community events."[181] Learning elements of Japanese culture, girls were expected to perform their art in and for the community. These examples illuminate the role of the *Nikkei* girls in maintaining Japanese culture for the broader community.

Rose Honda recalls taking cultural classes and lessons despite the family's limited financial means. Honda's cultural training included *ikebana* (flower arrangement), *odori* (Japanese dance), watercolor painting, and piano. These were seen as signs of being able

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[178] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 18.
[179] Matsumoto, *City Girl*.
[180] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 50.
[181] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 19.

"to cultivate accomplishments that would signal their middle-class female status."[182] Despite the financial cost, Honda's mother ensured that Honda was enrolled in these classes, in addition to other activities, such as sewing, knitting, crocheting, piano, ballet, and tap dancing. "Girls' cultural performance reflected favorably on a family's social status in the ethnic enclave."[183] Community status in a culture focused on image was an important motivator for families to demonstrate that their daughters came from a cultured background and would play an important part in the community's goal of maintaining their heritage. For Japanese American girls, their status as community cultural agents was a role embraced by their community and their families. Thus, many Japanese American parents invested time and money to ensure that their daughters retained these cultural elements from their homeland, including community cultural performances.

Expectations for Japanese American women to maintain their family heritage and culture through preparing foods, playing classical Japanese music, or arranging flower for cultural festivals was just one additional form of duty based on gender and part of the work load to meet the family's and community's patriarchal expectations. These women dealt with racialized oppressive practices in day-to-day life on the West Coast. While segregation was not encoded into law as it was in the South, discrimination was protected by those in power, de jure segregation through racialized housing covenants was a norm, and racialized practices were encoded into everyday life through unspoken norms and

[182] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 21.
[183] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 19.

rules in social situations, essentially ensuring segregated social lives. Class privilege did not protect wealthier Japanese Americans from racism, whether in their choice of dining out, going to the beach, or having fun at clubs, dances, and other social activities.

Discrimination in the School House

Education was not immune to discrimination. This situation was also in part related to housing discrimination, which impacted the education of young Japanese Americans and the relationship between housing discrimination and accessibility to quality education. Facing fierce discrimination, first-generation Japanese American immigrants believed that their children could use education to better their place in society. Although some Japanese American children attended integrated schools, many were relegated to segregated schools in the areas where they resided. Children in rural areas or in areas without a significant Japanese American population, such as Oxnard, attended schools with white children.[184] However, many Japanese American children in cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle attended schools that were designated for children of color through residential segregation. Regardless of rural or city status, Japanese American school children experienced discrimination both in and out of schools.

For Asian Americans, the struggle to gain access to education dated back to 1884, when Chinese parents Joseph and Mary Tape sued the San Francisco school board over exclusion of their daughter from public schools. When the California Supreme Court ruled in their favor, the legislature quickly passed legislation mandating segregated

[184] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation.*

schools.[185] In October 1906, the San Francisco Board of Education passed a resolution requiring Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students to attend the Oriental School. In reality, the resolution was targeting the ninety-three Japanese American students who were attending twenty-three schools throughout the district. This resolution created an international incident, as the Japanese government asserted that the Board's segregation order was a violation of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 1894.[186] As part of a 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order limiting Japanese immigration to the United States from Hawaii, Canada, and Mexico, while the San Francisco school board rescinded an order for segregation of Japanese children in schools while still segregating Chinese and Korean students.[187] However, this order was applicable only to San Francisco; as further evidence showed, segregated schooling still was the case for some Japanese American children.

Education was an important component of the lives of the majority of Japanese American children born to a group known as *picture brides*. Japanese American women who came the United States as picture brides were introduced to their husbands via pictures, and the married couples met upon the women's arrival in America.[188] Many of these women had completed a high school education before immigrating to the United

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[185] Okihiro, *The Colombia Guide to Asian American History*, 19.
[186] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections: Memoirs*, xv.
[187] Okihiro, *The Colombia Guide to Asian American History,* 18 & 182, & Tsuchida ed., *Reflections: Memoirs*, xvi.
[188] Okihiro, *The Colombia Guide to Asian American History*, 18.

States.[189] As they entered these arranged marriages, many became strong influences in their children's education, due to their own levels of formal education.[190] They focused on their children's education to combat pervasive discrimination that their families faced in the United States.[191] Esther Suzuki, whose memoir was published in *Reflections*, recalls that her mother, Tomae, possessed a teaching certificate and strongly believed in education for her three daughters.[192] Her father, Tokichi Suzuki, also had a strong influence on his children's educational aspirations. Suzuki internalized this message:

> Education has been the single most important factor stressed by our parents. From the day my father escorted me to the front of the Kindergarten class and entrusted me to the teacher with the three words, "Please, you teachum her English," I have been on a one-track course.[193]

Both of her parents wanted Suzuki to succeed educationally; in particular, her mother's level of education influenced her daughter's educational ambitions.

Having experienced discrimination upon their arrival, the *Isseis* believed that their children's success would be realized through educational attainment, which led many parents to pursue a quality education for their children. Ruth Nomura Tanbara describes how her family moved to a neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, where she attended highly rated elementary and middle schools.[194]

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[189] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections: Memoirs*, xviii.
[190] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections: Memoirs*, xviii.
[191] John Tsuchida ed., *Reflections,* xviii.
[192] Esther Suzuki, "Esther Torri Suzuki" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 94-95 & 99.
[193] Suzuki, "Esther Torri Suzuki," 95 & 99.
[194] Ruth Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 4-5.

Mary Mariko Ogura's family was one of the first to settle in Sunnydale, a suburb of Seattle: "Although there were 27 Japanese American families in the community, the neighborhood we grew up in was almost entirely Caucasian. I attended public school, mostly with Caucasians, graduating from Highline High School."[195] Although Ogura's family owned the land on which Highline High School was built and was active in the school community, Mary still experienced discrimination. "We were teased and taunted as 'Japs' or 'Chinks.'"[196] Ogura's example illustrated that, despite being of a higher socioeconomic class and living in an area without explicit housing segregation, they were not immune to discrimination.

More commonly, however, the majority of Japanese American students attended ethnically diverse city schools. Yoshi Uchiyama Tani's memoirs reflected on an educational experience in Seattle that was more typical of educational life for a Japanese American living in the city prior to WWII. Tani went to an integrated school with a strong Jewish population and later went to Garfield High School, "a large high school with a diverse student body from all walks of life and ethnic background."[197] Tani's experience was very much a norm for students in cities on the West Coast, according to primary evidence such as memoirs and oral histories that recorded that Japanese American children attended local neighborhood schools that served communities of

[195] Ogura, "Mary Mariko Ogura," 73.
[196] Ogura, "Mary Mariko Ogura," 71-73.
[197] Yoshi Tani, "Yoshi Uchiyama Tani" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 134-135.

color. This was likely a result of housing segregation and other sanctioned segregated conditions.

Educational quality was a factor for Japanese American children, even in rural environments. In the farming community of Walnut Grove, California, Haruko Kuramoto Hashimoto's daughter recalled her mother having attended segregated schools in her childhood.[198] The "Oriental School" was described as a "firetrap," which spoke to the underfunded nature of segregated schools for students of color that was representative of the time.[199] Financial resources were allocated unequally between schools and programs for white students and those for students of color. For example, white children were bused to schools, while Asian children walked to their schools.[200] Mary Tsukamoto recalled in her oral history her experience as a student in segregated elementary and middle schools in Elk Grove, California.[201] The only point of educational integration in Elk Grove was the high school—only because the city could not afford two high schools.[202] If the city could have afforded two schools, they would have had segregated schools. In 1939, the Japanese American Citizens League approached the school board and requested that schools in the community be integrated, and this request was

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[198] Linda van Dooijeweert, "Haruko Kuramoto Hashimoto" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 432.
[199] van Dooijeweert "Haruko Kuramoto Hashimoto," in *Reflections,* 222-223. See also Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation.*
[200] van Dooijeweert, "Haruko Kuramoto Hashimoto," in *Reflections,* 222-223.
[201] Mary Tsukamoto, "Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome" in *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984). ed. John Tateishi, 3-4.
[202] Tsukamoto, "Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome," 3-4.

approved.[203] While in this case school integration was approved, there were likely decades of segregated and unequal schooling between white and Japanese American students in Elk Grove, which may have been representative of other rural school districts throughout the West Coast.

Even after integration, many Japanese American high school students experienced harassment because of the strong presence of the Native Sons and Daughters of the West, a group of white California-born men and women who wanted to preserve California's pre-Gold Rush and early statehood history in the community.[204] This organization promoted many anti-Japanese sentiments in the region.[205] Along with the American Legion, the group was well-known as one of the anti-Asian nativist organizations.[206] Tsukamoto recalled being one of nine students who qualified for an oratorical contest sponsored by the Native Sons of the West. However, she was not allowed to participate due to her ancestry.[207] Despite her excellent oratorical skills, Tsukamoto was discriminated against in the school contest. This blatant discrimination in schools was just another example of the everyday "mundane racism" that Japanese Americans experienced daily in the pre-war years.[208] Both the inequity in school funding and blatant

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[203] Tsukamoto, "Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome," 4.

[204] For anti-Japanese sentiment, see Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow;* Matsumoto, *City Girls;* Weglyn, *Years of Infamy;* & Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*.

[205] For anti-Japanese sentiment and hate groups, see Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow;* Matsumoto, *City Girl;,* Weglyn, *Years of Infamy;* & Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*.

[206] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 52.

[207] Tsukamoto, "Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome," 4.

[208] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation.*

discrimination within school walls showed how racism against Japanese Americans manifested in the education system.

Japanese American students experienced discriminatory treatment from their classmates outside of schools, demonstrating how "mundane racism" manifested in their social lives. Haruko Sugi Hurt, who grew up in Gardena, a city in Los Angeles County, recalls her experience with a fellow white student, Rosemary.

> I would walk out to Western Avenue, and I'd come home with this girl, Rosemary. She was very nice and all, but she never, ever invited me—Her home came first. I said goodbye to her as I had to come further north to come to my place. She was very nice but she would never invite me into her home or anything like that. And I never even thought to invite her to visit me either. [It] just never occurred to me. It was the way we accepted things, that they would have their own life outside of school. In school, they were friendly, but there were absolutely no social contact-at least from my experience-non-Japanese families and their children. . . . Only Japanese, except in school situation, no social contact. And I wasn't concerned too much this. This was the way things were.[209]

Rosemary clearly knew that her family would not accept her inviting a Japanese American girl to her house and Hurt clearly knew and understood the boundaries of their relationship. In reviewing historian Garcia's notion of "mundane racism," Hurt's acceptance of the normality of race relations in certain geographic spaces exemplified the normalization of racism in southern California in the pre-war era. Tolerance for Japanese Americans was extended only to certain interactions in the school spaces. Outside of

[209] Haruko (Sugi) Hurt, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000), 126.

these spaces, the norms of society were reflected in Japanese Americans' subservient position in the racial hierarchy, with white residents being superior.

These integrated educational spaces made discrimination outside of school particularly harsh for some students. Hurt recalls the sense of humiliation that she felt when she explained how her white classmates treated her like a stranger outside of the school.[210]

> The girl got out [of a car], and it was a classmate that I've known and gone to school with all these years. So I said, "Hi Alice!" And she looked at me and she went like this (narrator turns face in disgust). She didn't want to talk to me. She didn't want to have anything to do with me, I could tell. She just jerked her head away and walked away. This was a girl that I said hello and spoke to all these years going to school. See outside of the school the Caucasian families didn't want to have anything to do with us.[211]

While in the earlier example Hurt realized the boundaries of those relationships, in this example Hurt had to endure humiliation and scorn, a reminder of her subservient position, not worthy of even an acknowledgement but rather disgust from a classmate outside of school. These types of indignities forced Japanese Americans to realize that whites considered themselves superior in social spaces outside of school and served as a reminder of the racial hierarchy.

Even for those students who excelled in the K–12 system and had financial means and family support to attend college, discrimination did not stop at the college campus. Mabel Ota, valedictorian at Calexico High School, recalled having to stay at a YWCA in

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[210] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 126.
[211] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 126.

Boyle Heights due to housing discrimination in the dormitories at the University of California, Los Angeles.[212] Housing segregation was applicable even in university-controlled housing. UCLA was where Japanese students created Chi Alpha Delta, the first Asian American sorority, due to the segregated Greek system.[213] These instances of racism and discrimination in higher education were the norm in the pre-war years on the West Coast.

Hurt's and Ota's experiences illustrate the intersection of social and housing discrimination in educational institutions from K-12 to higher education. However, Ota as a college student was an exception, as many other Japanese American girls faced limited opportunities to pursue higher education. Families with limited financial resources were more likely to direct those funds to their sons rather than to their daughters.[214] Research shows that family size and birth order affected a daughter's educational participation.[215] Smaller families could afford more schooling, while larger families struggled with this; younger children may have benefitted from having older siblings who were working and contributing to the family's finances.

Class was a defining factor in whether a young woman could participate in schooling.[216] Dire financial situations in their families meant that girls were expected to

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[212] Mabel Ota, "Mabel Ota—Poston" in *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984), ed. John Tateishi, 108.
[213] Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging*, 13-14.
[214] Matsumoto, *City Girls*, 21.
[215] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 56.
[216] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*, 56.

prioritize their families over furthering their own education, as seen with Alice Kukuchi, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Despite having an older sister who worked, Kikuchi's family was so poor that her wages were needed to sustain the family's finances. Haruko Sugi Hart also recalls in her oral history that her mother needed her income to support the family during the Great Depression.

> I must say after I graduated high school, I wanted to go to college. That was my intention. My mother said, "You know, we are too poor to afford you college. And we been looking forward to you graduating high school so you could go to work and help us with the income."[217]

Despite Hurt's desire to attend college, her mother enrolled her in a sewing class and Hurt made dresses for the Kurata Department Store to contribute to her family. She later turned to domestic work to support her family with her wages.[218] Hurt's family's class standing and family size likely impacted her decision to forego college to support the family financially. Hurt set aside her educational aspirations for the sake of the family, another example of how the good of the group, in this case the family, superseded a young woman's individual ambition. It was also an example of filial responsibility to defer to her elder, in this case, her mother, regarding educational pursuits.

Even in rural environments where families farmed, labor by girls was still needed and expected by their families. Mary Tsukamoto called to mind that her labor was needed on the strawberry farm, where all family members were needed to help with the crops. It was only through a teacher's request to her father that Tsukamoto was allowed to attend

[217] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 130.
[218] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 130.

the College of the Pacific. The personal nature of the teacher's request, along with a $150 scholarship, enabled Tsukamoto to become a college student.[219] It was clear, in this example, that family expectations constrained Japanese American girls with expectations of financial contribution to the family and stifled their educational aspirations. In this case, a teacher intervened to convince her family to allow her to achieve her individual desire to pursue higher education. While a few Japanese American girls utilized their agency to pursue an education, many others simply gave up their dreams for the sake of the family.

For many Japanese Americans, their parents, and in particular their mothers wanted to ensure that they had access to quality education in the hopes that this could make their lives easier, despite rampant anti-Japanese discrimination. However, as these students entered segregated schools with inequitable funding, they encountered discrimination on systemic and individual levels. For many students who were able to achieve in school despite an uneven playing field, family finances often constrained their educational trajectories as the need for their wages superseded their desire to further their education.

Employment Discrimination and the Ethnic Economy

Despite high rates of educational attainment, Japanese Americans were not able to live up to the vocational success of their white counterparts due to discrimination in the job market during the pre-war years. Discrimination and community needs led Japanese

[219] Tsukamoto, "Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome," in *And Justice for All*, 4.

Americans to create their own ethnic economy in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.[220] For Japanese Americans working for white employers, opportunities were generally limited to domestic labor and gardening.[221] While there were employment opportunities available in the ethnic economy in working for small family businesses, those opportunities were limited. Vocational aspirations of both *Issei* and *Nisei* women were constrained by racism in workplace hiring and patriarchal family expectations. In this section I discuss the ethnic economy, two areas of work for Japanese Americans in the mainstream economy, and indicators of racial discrimination in the job market. I also analyze a patriarchal system that maximized the woman's unpaid labor to the family while expecting her wages to support the family financially. These systems took advantage of Japanese values of filial piety, where children were expected to repay their parents for their self-sacrifice by listening to them in major life decisions such as career and education.[222] For Japanese American women who were oppressed through both race and gender, finding employment was a challenging experience.

Several factors contributed to the ethnic economy for Japanese Americans on the West Coast. For the *Issei*, facing limited job opportunities, self-employment was sometimes the only option to be able to support their family financially. Discrimination in everyday interaction, "mundane racism," was another factor in the ethnic economy.[223] In

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[220] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow,* Matsumoto, *City Girls*, & Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore.*
[221] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return*.
[222] Nakano, *Japanese American Women* & Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity.*
[223] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation,* 5.

the 1920s, retail establishments in Los Angeles came under control of larger white-owned businesses that contended that Jim Crow policies (Jap Crow policies) were necessary to retain a white clientele.[224] Briones argues that this was likely one factor that contributed to the development of Japan Town, with its Japanese-operated stores, hotels, restaurants, banks, pharmacies, and professional offices."[225] Japanese Americans who needed to shop for everyday goods, deposit money in bank accounts, or see a doctor needed a safe place to conduct these everyday activities without fear of discrimination due to being Asian, or specifically Japanese American. With white-owned businesses, there was always a chance that this would happen. Similar to La Perla in Oxnard, these ethnic enclaves were places of cultural affirmation and comfort, representing independence and entrepreneurialism.[226]

These ethnic enclaves supported a thriving ethnic economy, a subset of the American economy that was comprised of minority-owned businesses. For many Japanese Americans, this was a way of life, a place to shop, socialize, and stay connected to their community. Japanese Americans turned to entrepreneurism to combat discrimination in the labor market and as a way to advance economically.[227] Japan Town in downtown Los Angeles and the International District in Seattle were prime examples of ethnic enclaves within a thriving ethnic economy. They served the minoritized

[224] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 31.
[225] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 131.
[226] Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation,* 52.
[227] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race, 68.*

community in a way that mainstream economy would not, such as supplying Japanese groceries and products. The businesses provided both goods and services, including professional services, to Japanese American clientele. Areas such as Japan Town offered Japanese Americans "a sense of being part of a broad, protected, supportive, self-contained, Japanese ethnic economy."[228] Tani, for example, recalls living in the Japanese business district in Seattle, where established Japanese physicians, dentists, and pharmacists catered to Japanese American patients.[229] Kurashige argues that, in Los Angeles, the African American and Japanese American economies intersected as Japanese doctors and dentists advertised their services in the *California Eagle*, a newspaper for African Americans in Los Angeles.[230] Due to segregation in the cities, Japanese American professionals served communities of color in the ethnic enclaves and engaged in collaborative interracial business relations.

In addition to businesses in the ethnic economy, Japanese Americans found two areas of businesses to serve white clientele in the mainstream economy: gardening and grocery and produce stands. These servile roles played into the racial hierarchy narrative well. Kurashige explains,

> Although whites regularly refused the *Issei* as neighbors, most had little trouble in accepting them as merchants and servile labor especially in the quest of the suburban ideal. Catapulted by white residents' voracious appetite for manicured lawns and inexpensive labor, Japanese Americans became almost synonymous

[228] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 131.
[229] Tani, "Yoshi Uchiyama Tani" in *Reflections,* 131-132.
[230] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 72.

> with gardening in Southern California. More *Isseis* toiled as gardeners than any other line of work during the interwar years.[231]

Not only were Japanese Americans excluded from the suburban ideal via racialized housing covenants; they were allowed in only as a way for whites to maintain manicured lawns and gardens.

Another area where Japanese Americans served white residents was the Japanese fruit stand or grocery store. "Japanese produce stands and groceries become another ubiquitous symbol of suburban Los Angeles," according to Kurashige.[232] This was due in part to farming infrastructure that Japanese Americans had built that competed with white farmers, inspiring the anti-Japanese land law mentioned earlier in the chapter. "Over the course of the interwar years, one thousand *Issei* produce retailers built a twenty-five million dollar industry serving as the direct source of employment for several thousand Japanese Americans."[233] This multi-million-dollar industry existed to provide easy access to food at a time that pre-dated the local grocery store and refrigerator and proved to be a crucial source of employment for many Japanese Americans.[234] Twenty percent of all Japanese Americans in Los Angeles worked at a fruit stand.[235] With around one third of the Japanese American total population in the Los Angeles county lines, this was a significant source of employment. This was in part due to both discrimination and design.

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[231] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 69.
[232] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 69.
[233] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 69.
[234] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 69.
[235] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 31.

In this multi-million-dollar industry, a majority of the twenty percent working in fruit stands were English-speaking *Nisei's*, hired to appeal to white customers.[236] By utilizing second-generation Japanese Americans with English-speaking skills, the businesses theoretically offered better customer service to white customers, thereby increasing business success. However, another factor in why so many Japanese Americans worked in a Japanese-owned industry was discrimination in the mainstream economy's hiring process.

Regardless of educational attainment and language skills, Jap Crow employment discrimination ensured that many Japanese Americans worked in the ethnic economy. According to Kurashige, "One study done on the eve of World War II found that one of every four *Nisei* produce workers had at least some college education."[237] Hundreds of students with college coursework were unable to find work that was meaningful to their education due to a discriminatory job market. Jap Crow discrimination limited the places where Japanese Americans could work, regardless of their educational credentials. In the pre-war year of 1940, many *Nisei* either could not find or were denied work in white-owned businesses, with only five percent reporting to white employers in Los Angeles.[238] Remaining *Niseis* were self-employed or worked for other Japanese Americans businesses such as laundries, groceries, barbershops, hotels, flower shops, or Japanese art

[236] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 69.
[237] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 36.
[238] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 36.

shops.[239] Briones found that, even in the city of Los Angeles, with more than 30,000 Japanese Americans, there was not a single Japanese firefighter, police officer, mail carrier, or public school teacher.[240] For many Japanese Americans, the only employment was in the ethnic economy.

These numbers show the magnitude of anti-Japanese discrimination in hiring practices for the city, relegating Japanese Americans to the ethnic economy. Working in the ethnic economy was not limited to the Los Angeles area, as Ruth Nobura Tanbara recalls. Due to the discriminatory job market, Tanbera worked in Oregon as a typist for the S. Ban Company, a Japanese import and export firm.[241] "I recall when I completed my B.S. degree (1930) in Home Economics for teaching, I was denied the opportunity to teach in the public high schools because of my heritage even with a better than average scholastic standing."[242] Regardless of her educational credentials, Tanbara could not work in the field in which she was educated: home economics. She eventually accepted a position to teach Japanese school children after being denied the opportunity to teach in the public schools in the mainstream economy.[243] After her initial position in teaching, Tanbara continued to work in the ethnic economy in multiple positions, including the Japanese consulate and Japanese Wholesale Grocers Association. She eventually created a business making and selling hand-stitched leather gloves, an example of ethnic

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[239] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 69.
[240] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 36.
[241] Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara" in *Reflections*, 8.
[242] Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara" in *Reflections*, 8.
[243] Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara" in *Reflections*, 13-15.

entrepreneurship.[244] Her employment in the ethnic economy illustrated how a college degree would not overcome employment discrimination in the mainstream economy.

As many Japanese Americans turned to the ethnic economy for work, the impact of running these businesses disproportionally affected Japanese American women. Briones argues,

> To survive and sometimes prosper economically, most Japanese immigrant households thus relied on self-exploitation, characterized by the employment of unpaid family labor in both agriculture (whose unpaid laborers outnumbered wage earners) and small businesses. These arrangements, however, not only forced students to choose between school and family businesses (or try to juggle both); they also put great strain on husband/wife relationships. More ever despite woman's critical contribution to the economic health of the community, political authority in the community primarily rested in the hands of male leaders.[245]

For both mothers and daughters, family businesses expected their unpaid labor to support the family. This put a strain on the relationship between family members in an already constrained relationship due to patriarchy. Women were expected to contribute to the economic benefits of the business and community while failing to reap the benefits of that labor due to patriarchy in the community. Broom and Riemer found that unpaid family labor was a clear burden on women, except for unpaid farm work, which was geared to men. Women in unpaid roles significantly outnumbered their male counterparts in clerical, sales, nursery, and service work roles.[246] The unpaid labor of women and children was a critical part of the family's financial solvency, while the difficult choice to

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[244] Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara" in *Reflections*, 13-15.
[245] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race,* 77.
[246] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return,* 19.

contribute to the family or to aspire to a vocation was complicated for many Japanese American women. Both Tsukamoto and Hurt noted (in the education section) that they were expected to contribute to the family through both unpaid labor and wages.[247] While Tsukamoto gained higher education, Hurt gave up her educational aspiration to contribute to family finances in the pre-war years.[248] Hurt was only one example of Japanese American girls who were constrained in their educational and vocational aspirations due to patriarchal family expectations and filial responsibilities to repay parents.

Due to family expectations of families that all members would contribute wages, Japanese American women were constrained by filial responsibility to contribute to family finances and forced to find whatever work they could obtain to fulfill these family obligations. As Matsumoto asserts, "Through their continuing role in the family economy, women supported Japanese value of filial piety and obligation, through their choices were limited by racial discrimination and Depression era stringencies."[249] Economic survival and advancement were dependent on work by all family members.[250] As a result, children such as Fumiko Fukuyama Ide and her brothers were expected to help the family business. She and her brothers cleaned their father's hardware store and deposited the store earnings at the bank weekly. Ide, unlike her brother, also had

[247] "Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome" in *And Justice for All*, 4.
[248] Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome" in *And Justice for All*, 4; And Hurt, *REgenerations,* 130.
[249] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 50.
[250] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 18.

responsibilities to help her mother by stitching hems and sewing belts for her mother's dressmaking business. These collective efforts sustained their extended family.[251]

Expectations of repaying the family for their sacrifices meant that Japanese American women had to contribute to the family through their wages, regardless of their own educational and vocational trajectories.

> We can't afford college. We have been looking forward to having you help us economically. We thought if you learned how to sew, you might be able to find a job doing that. They didn't think [of it] in terms of my working in an office. That was something that didn't occur to them because there were few opportunities like that.[252]

Hurt's mother illustrates the perceived vocational constraints on Japanese American women and the types of jobs to which they felt they could gain access. Her belief in her daughter's vocational constrains were supported by Rury's research, which found that clerical positions were more than ninety percent occupied by native-born white women, typically from middle-class backgrounds.[253] While Hurt aspired to clerical work, this was likely possible only in a very limited capacity in the ethnic economy.

In the pre-war years, many Japanese American women aspired to feminized fields of secretarial work, nursing, teaching, librarianship, dressmaking, millinery, and cosmetology, yet very few became professionals.[254] Based on analysis of Broom and Riemer's data, less than half of one percent of Japanese American women were in

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[251] Fumiko Fukuyama Ide to Valerie Matsumoto, August 14, 2009. Quoted in Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 18.
[252] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 130.
[253] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 120, 207,209.
[254] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 79.

professional or semiprofessional occupations.[255] Briones found that Japanese Americans in Los Angeles and San Francisco worked either as domestic workers or in the ethnic economy for other Japanese employers.[256] Despite their vocational aspirations, employment discrimination limited the jobs that many Japanese American women obtained. Mary Oyama summarized that looking for a job in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles was difficult but that looking outside of Little Tokyo was even worse.[257] Oyama noted that, while finding work in the ethnic economy was difficult for Japanese American women, finding a job in the mainstream economy was next to impossible.

Even exceptional students who navigated hiring discriminatory practices to be hired into professional positions did not escape the job market unscathed after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Having graduated from UCLA in 1939, Mabel Ota first worked as a cashier and then took the civil service examination for a position in the Fingerprint and Identification Bureau in the city of Los Angeles. However, shortly after Pearl Harbor, she was transferred to the Jefferson Branch library and was terminated six weeks later. "They didn't give me a reason but I knew why. It was because I was Japanese."[258] Fighting the odds, Ota was an exceptional case of finding employment in the mainstream economy, but anti-Japanese discrimination still drove her out of the civil service position that she had worked so hard to obtain.

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[255] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return*, 4. Based on calculations on from both Native and Foreign born Japanese American women data from Table 4.
[256] Yoo, *Growing up Nisei,* 4.
[257] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 23.
[258] Ota, "Mabel Ota—Poston" in *And Justice for All*, 108.

For Japanese American women, vocational opportunities were few and far between, including servile roles such as domestic service with white employers or various types of employment in the ethnic economy. The creation of the ethnic economy, in part due to job-related discrimination, became a space of shared solidarity between Japanese Americans, regardless of class differences. It was a space of creation of wealth and jobs for the community and an opportunity for employment for many community members.

Chapter Summary

Prior to WWII, Japanese American women faced discrimination in housing, social life, education, and employment. Discrimination and segregation were normalized in everyday life on the West Coast through both formal and informal practices. Both de facto and de jure discrimination ensured that Japanese American women understood the limits of their vocational aspirations, regardless of their educational credentials. Through housing and social segregation, white Americans asserted their presumed racial dominance and excluded people of color to establish a racial hierarchy in which whites were superior to Japanese Americans, regardless of class. Family expectations and societal restrictions on vocational opportunities constrained Japanese American women's ability to provide for their families through wage work, while their unpaid labor to family businesses helped the family financially. Japanese American women faced obstacles because of their ancestry and their gender in a deeply patriarchal and racist system. Discrimination meant that every member of the family was expected to contribute to family financial survival. The resulting ethnic economy created limited employment

opportunities for Japanese Americans outside of servile positions such as domestic work, gardening, or working at a grocery or fruit stand. These factors constrained the educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women during the pre-war years and limited available types of employment.

CHAPTER 3

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES BEHIND BARBED WIRE

Figure 1
Amache High School, 1945, With Teacher Marguerite Anderson

In a photo dated 1945, rows of Japanese American women are seated, each with her own desk and typewriter, engaged in a vocational education class (Figure 1). The teacher, Marguerite Anderson, oversees their work. What is not shown is that this class was conducted behind barbed wire, as most internees were still incarcerated in camps. The war, internment, and the education programs created in the internment camps created new spaces in which Japanese American women trained for future vocations. While the WRA, which instituted these programs, had motives for doing so, the agency may not

have anticipated the post-war results of the programs and their long-term impact on the Japanese American community.

While this chapter presents a discussion of vocational education and employment experiences in camps, the overarching argument in the dissertation is that several factors, including these vocational education programs, contributed to the changed trajectories of these women. This included disruption in the patriarchal system, including loss of male leaders due to arrest, severe financial loss associated with the internment, disruption of family unity in the camps, vocational education in the camps, wartime labor shortages, and the move away from the West Coast and Jap Crow. While these were contributing factors to changed life trajectories, the focus of this chapter is on the role of education, which played an important role in the internment experience due to the role of schools in the assimilation of students and preparing internees for life after camp.[259]

While scholars such as Thomas James and Yoon Pak discuss the K–12 system and while Allan Austin, Leslie Ito, Robert O'Brien, and Gary Okihiro examine Japanese American students who left the internment camps for college, the adult and vocational education programs in the internment camps are an underexamined area of the education process.[260] I define *vocational education* as courses related to an occupation. In this chapter I examine a variety of courses in the vocational education program in the camps,

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[259] For a discussion on education in the internment camps see Austin, *From Concentration Camp to Campus;* Ito, "Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942-1945;" O'Brien, *The College Nisei*; Okihiro, *Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II;* Pak, *Wherever I Go, I Will Always Be a Loyal American*; and James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945*.

[260] Ibid

including in Adult School and Night School, informal courses where vocational skills were taught, and the traditional K–12 schools. These informal but structured educational programs were integral to the goals of the WRA. These programs allowed the WRA to address three needs: training internees for staff positions, training internees to meet the needs of a wartime labor shortage both in and outside of the camps, and training internees for post-camp relocation.[261] These three needs shaped the vocational education program and limited internees' access to types of training as they were incarcerated in the camps.

During WWII, educational institutions quickly realized that vocational education was particularly valuable in supporting the wartime defense industry, so vocational education programs quickly pivoted to support the evolving labor needs of the wartime economy.[262] This was in part patriotic and in part practical in ensuring that the war effort had enough employees. In particular, the Los Angeles area public schools cultivated patriotic expression and trained students in skill sets needed to be a good employee or soldier, including reading, writing, mathematics, and science.[263] The education system in Los Angeles County is a particularly noteworthy site for comparison because almost thirty percent of the overall Japanese American population in the United States lived there prior to internment.[264] Japanese American students would have received this kind of wartime education had they not been incarcerated. Thus, in the camps, the WRA created

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[261] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8. Additionally, the wartime labor shortage was noted throughout multiple articles within the *Gila News-Courier*.
[262] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 150.
[263] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 149.
[264] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race.*

a vocational education program that was skill based, meaning that courses could be taught by untrained instructors. This was a consequence of a severe nationwide shortage of trained teachers, particularly in rural areas, which was where the camps were located.[265] With such a shortage, the WRA was particularly motivated to train internees to teach in both the traditional and vocational education programs. The focus on patriotism and academic skills was similar in vocational education programs in schools outside of the camps and the programs inside the camps.

This chapter focuses on the vocational education program and employment experiences in one internment camp, Gila River. An analysis of the vocational education program sheds light on six areas: (a) the popularity of the program, (b) vocational education or cheap labor, (c) gender and women in camps, (d) embedding of vocational training in camp schools, (e) structural access to civil service positions, and (f) training for professional and semiprofessional employment. Japanese American women's educational and vocational trajectories changed over the course of the war due to two factors: the vocational education program and employment opportunities in the camps and the wartime labor shortage.[266] These factors enabled women internees to train for vocations that they would pursue after leaving the camps. The vocational education program was designed to alleviate both the internal camp labor shortage and the national wartime labor shortage. With this vocational training, along with other factors mentioned

[265] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 150.

[266] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8. Additionally, the wartime labor shortage was noted throughout multiple articles within the *Gila News-Courier*.

earlier—severe financial loss for families, disruption of patriarchal norms, decrease in women's workload due to the camp experience, the wartime labor shortage, and the move away from the West Coast's Jap Crow system—Japanese American women gained access to work in fields that had been unavailable to them in the pre-war years.

While the WRA offered adult and vocational education to all internees, the benefits of the education program had a different impact on women than on men due to the intersection of oppression from racism and patriarchy.[267] As discussed in Chapter 1, the intersection of race and class created an intersectional identity that created a unique experience for the education of Japanese American women in camps and determined the types of employment that they were able to access during and after the internment. Vocational training for Japanese American women included courses in domestic arts, pattern drafting, typing, and stenography, courses similar to the offerings outside of camp; other tracks in vocational education, such as teacher training and medical training (including nursing) were different from vocational education outside of camps. This was in part due to the nature of incarceration, where training had to be brought into the camp because internees did not have the freedom to leave the camps to attend training at institutions of higher education or hospitals. These vocational education and training opportunities resulted in Japanese American women being trained and ready to work in civil service, clerical, professional, and semiprofessional positions. Due to these factors and the impact of the vocational education programs and the wartime labor shortage,

[267] Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics."

Japanese American women found employment in a variety of professional and semiprofessional positions in the mainstream economy, a noted change from the pre-war years.

This chapter examines the vocational education in camps and how these programs opened access to a variety of training opportunities for professional and semiprofessional employment. I draw from the *Gila News-Courier,* a Japanese American newspaper supported and sanctioned by WRA officials as the official newspaper in the internment camp; each household received the newspaper twice a week. While the paper was censored, its articles and advertisements were informative and offered readers facts, figures, and announcements about the goals and ambitions of the vocational education program. As evident in seventy-six newspaper articles, editorials, and job advertisements cited in this dissertation, the vocational education program provided varied training opportunities for a variety of professions. This dissertation also cites seventy-three oral histories and memoirs by internees that provide insights from the women with an uncensored perspective. Together, these primary sources provide rich understanding of the role of adult and vocational education programs in changing the vocational and educational trajectories of Japanese American women during and after WWII.

An Immediately Popular Endeavor

Many Japanese American women living in camps did not have to shoulder the domestic responsibilities of a household. With a small space to maintain, meals provided, and a lack of work on family businesses or farms, they had time to pursue their own

interests in the confines of the camps.[268] Therefore, the growth of the program was not surprising, considering its community nature. As more people with time on their hand considered their options, the opportunity to learn was a strong draw. The rapid growth of the adult and vocational education programs in the camp offered Japanese American women internees a way to occupy their time while investing in learning valuable job skills that would help them to become employable both in and outside of the camps. According to the *Gila News-Courier* reporters, on September 26, 1942, the Canal Adult Secondary School had a total enrollment of 486.[269] That enrollment increased by fifty percent to 704 students in just two months.[270] This rapid growth of enrollment of the program was indicative of internees wanting to fill their time in camp and their interest in the coursework. The most popular classes were pattern drafting, with more than 200 students, and English language, with 180 students.[271] Women making clothes for their family members likely fueled growth in the pattern drafting course. The *Issei* generation no longer had to work and had time to take English courses, which likely fueled growth in English language instruction. By 1943, fourteen subjects were offered at the Gila Adult School.[272] The subjects indicated the varied interests of the internees, as well as the WRA's need for trained employees. The pattern of growth in enrollment continued, with

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[268] Matsumoto *City Girls,* 18-20.
[269] "Costume Designing Class Has Largest Enrollment," September 26, 1942, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 8.
[270] "Evening Class Entrants High," December 12, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[271] Evening Class Entrants High," December 12, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[272] "Evening Class Entrants High," December 12, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

more than sixty-nine students attending the first course session on dairying during the open enrollment period in January 1943.[273] The camp dairy needed employees; hence, the in-camp training for needed workers. Regardless of the goals of the program, the explosive growth in enrollment and continued interest in classes and training were indicative of the popularity of the vocational education program in camps.

As the vocational education program continued to expand, the program's popularity encouraged the WRA to expand its curricular offerings. The *Gila News-Courier* noted,

> At Gila, the program has grown from an enrollment of 300 on October 7 [1943], to over 1900 by the end of the year. Currently one of every four adults at Gila is an active participant in at least one learning group. Demand has raised the number of subjects from five to twenty; the number of group leaders from nineteen to forty-three. And adult education is still growing because it's effective.[274]

The expansion of the program shows that many internees were taking advantage of vocational education opportunities. The age demographic of the students is also important, as seen in the following call for students, which argued, "We are never too busy to revise old skills or develop new ones, nor too learned to explore the general field of knowledge."[275] These programs reached internees from young adults to those in their elder years as the WRA continued to expand the program by embedding vocational training in the camp's traditional K–12 schools.

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[273] "Numerous Job Openings for Young People Given," January 12, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[274] "Phenomenal Growth," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1. Caps in original quote.
[275] "Adult Education," August 10, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.

Vocational Education or Cheap Labor

The WRA had an evolving and overlapping agenda for the vocational education programs in the internment camps. Originally, their goal was to keep internees busy and to provide a sense of productivity versus idleness to stave off discontent from being unjustly incarcerated. Initially, the WRA focused the program on arts, crafts, and other leisure activities. For instance, the initial adult education course offerings included landscape design and painting.[276] While these courses were enjoyable and helped to pass time, they did not have a vocational element. However, the WRA quickly realized that training internees to work in low-paying staff roles to run the camps offered significant financial savings. Japanese Americans in the camps were paid significantly less than their white counterparts for the same positions, which is discussed later in this chapter. The WRA agenda shifted from teaching internees skills for positions in the camps to teaching employable skills for post-camp life. This shift in the approach to the vocational programs is a critical component for understanding why the WRA allocated limited financial funds to the adult and vocational education program.

In addition to enrolling in courses to keep occupied, internees took jobs in the camps as a way to earn minimal income. Gladys Ishida Stone recounts in her memoir,

> After a month of feeling bitter and very depressed, I decided to take a job as a recreation worker at the fabulous salary of $16 a month! [sarcasm] This decision was good therapy for me and it filled my time and kept me busy.[277]

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[276] "Evening Class Entrants High," *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), December 12, 1942, 4.

[277] Gladys Ishida Stone, "Gladys Ishida Stone" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 317.

Stone's decision to obtain employment as a way to pass time is indicative of fulfilling the WRA's goal of civil obedience in the camps through keeping internees busy. The camp salary structure was artificially low, with monthly salaries set at $12 for unskilled labor, $16 for skilled labor, and $19 for professionals.[278] As a comparison point, nurses could expect annual salaries of $1,300 while engineers could expect annual salaries of $3,000 outside the camps.[279] Internees took jobs in the camps to stay occupied rather than to earn a meaningful salary.

Young internees often took the first available job, even if it was a mismatch of their abilities and the job requirement. Newspaper reporters directly observed and reported on the mismatch of many Japanese Americans who were employed in camp positions that did not utilize their education, training, or skills. An article calling for qualified instructors for the night school noted,

> We are aware that there are a number of people who are capable of teaching night school material but are wasting their time in relatively unimportant positions. If you believe in America in the future of the *Nisei*; if you believe that people deserve a chance, then you see the importance of the Adult Education classes; and that the vacancies in instructor's positions must be filled immediately.[280]

The WRA attempted to rectify the underutilization of skilled internees and noted that the administration was happy to see the younger generation released from mess hall positions to positions that would better utilize their education and skill set.[281] The WRA

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[278] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 155.
[279] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,,* 29.
[280] "Headed for Failure?" *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), May 6, 1943, 2.
[281] "Opportunities for Youth," *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), October 10, 1942, 2.

needed educated and trained internees to take professional positions such as vocational educational instructors due to the focus on preparing internees for occupations after internment camps. A skill-based curriculum meant that trained teachers were not necessary for this type of education.[282] Therefore, anyone who could teach a certain skill set was needed in the vocational education program, in part due to the growth of the program, discussed later.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that many informal classes started in the temporary assembly centers. However, in the internment camps, the WRA set up more formal programs, called for instructors, and set up physical spaces for classes.[283] This investment of resources happened for multiple reasons. The rapid growth of the program was due in part to the WRA's recognition of the program's potential to help internees to relocate outside of the camps and relieve nationwide labor shortages.[284] While the WRA program curriculum offered some leisure classes, many course offerings became vocational in nature in October to December 1942, signaling the shift from a leisure-based program to one focused on vocational training. By the beginning of 1943, six of seven courses were specifically focused on jobs that the WRA needed to meet internal camp labor needs, such as scientific farming, dairying, poultry raising, and cosmetology.[285] The WRA's pattern of utilizing the vocational education program to develop employees with skills

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[282] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 150.

[283] Based on author's analysis within the *Gila News-Courier.*

[284] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8. Additionally, the wartime labor shortage was noted throughout multiple articles within the *Gila News-Courier*.

[285] "New Evening Classes Offered," January 5, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.

that were needed in the camp expanded to six new courses, including dairying, irrigation, and pork production. The repeat of the dairy course indicated a need for workers in the camp dairy. The WRA planned future classes in seed production, woodworking, and farm machinery. These practical courses developed skill sets that were needed to run the camp, a cost-saving efficiency measure.

In addition to cost savings for the WRA, vocational training met the WRA's labor needs in the camps, as well as labor needs on a national scale. As the war continued, a labor shortage emerged as men left the nation to fight in the war. Charles Dorn notes that more than half of the thirty-one million men who registered for the draft served in the armed forces. The most severe labor shortage in the United States occurred from 1940 to 1944, especially in the defense industry. The unemployment rate dropped from ten percent to under two percent, the lowest percentage ever recorded.[286] Motivated by the severe wartime labor shortage, the WRA goal was to relocate Japanese Americans out of the camps to meet needs in the mainstream economy, particularly in fields with labor shortages. This can be seen in the stated goals of the Night School:

> Greater emphasis will be placed on vocational training under the new program. It will serve two main purpose: (1) provide employment skills for the evacuees which will aid them in securing jobs out of the center, preferable in critical and essential occupations.[287]

[286] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8.
[287] "Night School Emphasizes Resettlement Education," April 15, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.

Essential to this push to train internees for labor outside of camps was the goal to relocate Japanese Americans to other parts of the country, including the East Coast and Midwest, to meet the wartime labor shortage, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The WRA's course offerings in its vocational education program evolved to address the national wartime labor shortage.[288] In this way, this part of the vocational education program in camps mirrored vocational educational programs outside of the camps, all with the national goal of supporting the wartime labor effort.[289] Eighteen of twenty-two new classes in the Adult Night School, part of the vocational education program, offered training in accounting, advanced mathematics, architectural drafting, art, cooking, cosmetology, dairying, family relations, farm production, fashion art, fine arts, landscaping, leadership training, pattern drafting, psychology, radio repairs, shorthand, woodworking, and "Americanization English."[290] Some of these classes led directly to job training and skills in various types of employment, as "Americanization English" and cooking leading to domestic positions, cosmetology led to openings for beauticians, and pattern drafting led to positions as seamstresses in factories. Courses such as "Americanization English" also had a patriotic angle or "scholastic nationalism," similar to the goals seen in life skills coursework developed by community members

[288] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8. Additionally, the wartime labor shortage was noted throughout multiple articles within the *Gila News-Courier*.
[289] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 28 & 152-153.
[290] "Canal Adult Education. February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1-2.

outside of camps.[291] In the midst of war, even in incarceration, patriotism was expected and encoded into the vocational education curriculum both in and outside of camps.

The transition from leisure courses to vocational training continued in September 1943, with fifteen of the seventeen courses offered by the WRA vocational in nature. Some courses, such as Americanization English, were to the *Issei* generation.[292] These courses not only taught students vocational skills related to domestic work but also helped the *Issei* to find employment through discussions on "methods of finding work, [and] transportation problems."[293] The course was designed to suggest to older Japanese Americans strategies to find work and understand the logistics of restarting life in a new city after camp. The classes were also designed to help the *Issei* to assimilate to American society after leaving the camps, through discussions of the "various phases of the United States Constitution."[294] By teaching about the Constitution while also teaching skills for adjusting to life in a new area of the country, these courses had a decidedly Americanization and patriotic element.

While the English or Americanization courses, which were one small part of the vocational education program, were geared to the *Issei* generation, much of the focus of the vocational educational program was devoted to the *Nisei*. Dr. Joseph Samler, WRA

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[291] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 150.
[292] "One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Five Are Already Learning," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1-2.
[293] "Americanization Class Will Hold Many Discussions," February 17, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[294] "Americanization Class Will Hold Many Discussions," February 17, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.

Director of Vocational Education, spent three days at the Gila internment camp, discussing the vocational training in agriculture, bookbinding, commercial mechanisms, and cosmetics.[295] That time clearly demonstrated the importance of this program for the WRA. In October 1943, Samler's visit to the camp demonstrated the continued commitment to building a vocational program that ensured that Japanese American internees were being trained to work in the wartime economy. The new agenda for the vocational education program included multiple sections of vocational courses and no leisure courses.[296] The transition from leisure courses to a vocational program focused on producing trained employees for camp needs and the wartime labor economy needs.

This was confirmation of the shift to vocational training as a goal of the program due to wartime labor needs. A *Gila News-Courier* article noted, "An increasing number of *Nisei* are going into war plants. Military and naval authorities have demonstrated their increased confidence in resettlers by approving their employment in a variety of war industries prior to individual clearance."[297] Having Japanese Americans work in the defense industry indicated that, for both the government and employers, Japanese Americans were not disloyal but could contribute to the war efforts as Americans first and foremost. The need for their labor was more important than their ancestry. With the labor shortage, the WRA's intentional shift of the vocational educational program

[295] "Samler to Discuss Job Training During Visit," October 23, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[296] "Three Drafting Classes Open," October 26, 1943, 4; and "Butte," October 30, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[297] "C. I. Service Open to Nisei," June 22, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

allowed a younger generation of Japanese Americans in the camps to leave and pursue work in critical areas of the defense industry.

While the WRA's shift in goals of the vocational education program was initially unstated, new course offerings illustrated Vocational Director Samler's commitment to the amended program goals. He discussed the development of an apprentice program with training in fields such as mechanics, woodshop, metal shop, and clerical office practice.[298] The clerical office practice course was geared to secretarial work, a female-dominated field.[299] These course offerings were very similar to what was offered in vocational programs outside the camps, which also emphasized skills in mechanical operations.[300] An article titled "Night School Emphasizes Resettlement Education" confirmed that vocational training was the new impetus for the education program.[301] This change focused on education of internees after they left the camps to resettle in the Midwest and East Coast. This official shift was important as it documented the WRA's goals in training internees for employment both in and outside of the camps.

> Greater emphasis will be placed on vocational training under the new program. It will now serve two main purposes: (1) provide employment skills for evacuees which will aid them in securing jobs out of the center, preferably in critical and essential occupations; and (2) provide workers necessary for the day to day operation of the center.[302]

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[298] "Vocat'l Director Arrives Wednesday," December 31, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[299] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 120, 207,209.
[300] Giordano, *Wartime Schools,* 150.
[301] Night School Emphasizes Resettlement," April 15, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.
[302] "Education," April 15, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.

With this documented shift from leisure to vocational training that reflected the broad goals of the educational program, the WRA's goal of decreasing the financial cost of operating the camps was realized through training internees to work in the camps while also training them for post-camp life in the wartime economy.

While the WRA had its own goals for the vocational education program, the interned community also bought into the concept of staying busy and ensuring that the younger generation had employable skill sets. The view of education as a vital part of the community was seen in an excerpt from a *Gila News-Courier* newspaper article: "Adult education has its finger on the pulse of the community as perhaps no other activity has or can have, and that those who are part of adult education may be increasingly recognized for their training in meeting community problems."[303] This quote demonstrates how education was perceived as a community institution to solve community problems. While the K–12 camp schools were run by the WRA, the vocational educational program was a community institution, according to these newspaper clippings. In describing the education program, the newspaper wrote,

> To know how to fit that education to the needs of his community, the Adult Educator must KNOW that community, be a part of it, live it [,] and with it—and for it. That is what YOUR Adult Education has striven every moment to do.[304]

[303] "and a final word to the SERIOUS," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1. Capitalization in original quote.
[304] "and a final word to the SERIOUS," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1. Capitalization in original quote.

This was an example of the point of view of adult education being a community institution to solve community problems by using community members as adult educators in the process.

Vocational Education: Liberating or Constraining for Women?

The gender element in vocational education is reflected in the historiography. In camps, vocational education offered courses that were distinctly gendered, with many courses geared for women. While some courses, such as dairying and poultry raising, appealed to both men and women, other courses, such as Americanization English, cosmetology, sewing, clerical skills, and accounting were geared to women.[305] These courses helped Japanese American women to train for employment in a variety of fields both in the camps and outside of the camps.

As the vocational education program in Gila expanded, internees quickly realized that the program served many more women than men. In an effort to appeal to the larger Japanese American community, the *Gila News-Courier* posted the following:

> Adult Education is not cannot be a dull gray collection of prissy old maids and effeminate males. It is no longer restricted to stuffy classrooms. It can be everywhere; it can be everything. A BILLBOARD can be adult education. A PAMPHLET can be adult education. An ARGUMENT can be adult education. As well as classes and seminars and project groups. And to know how to fit that education to the needs of the community, be a part of it, live it, and with and for it.[306]

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[305] Rury, *Education and Women's Work* & an analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ) from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.

[306] "and a final word to the SERIOUS," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1. Capitalization in original quote.

The direct attack on the gendered nature of the acceptance of WRA education programs by the Japanese American community is seen in the first line of this quote, which challenged the notion of who could and should attend these programs. In an effort to draw more participation from the community, the writer made an assumption that only "prissy old maids," and "effeminate males" had the time and inclination for education, which was designed to stir the emotions of the community. This view, with its claim that only effeminate men pursued traditional classroom education, was an attempt to attract male internees to the educational program; however, it did so at the expense of women (and men who did not fit a certain masculine norm). In this article, the WRA targeted those who did not identify as "old maid" or "effeminate male"—essentially, all other males and young and married females. The heteronormative attack on male students who allegedly did not conform to male standards of behavior also demonstrated how the WRA policed masculinity through its vocational program. Gender policing was prevalent throughout the program, with many course offerings specifically calling for one gender. In addition to the gendered attack on women, the reporter expanded the definition *education* by discussing ways in which information can be transmitted: a billboard, a pamphlet, or even an argument. By broadening the definition of education, the administrators were reaching out to internees of various abilities.

Vocational courses included costume designing, sewing, and pattern drafting, where students learned skills for both personal and vocational use.[307] The popularity of

[307] Costume Designing Class Has Largest Enrollment," September 26, 1942, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 8 & "New Semester," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.

the vocational education program demonstrated a strong desire for employable job skills among the internees, especially in the female-dominated field of pattern drafting. Pattern drafting provided both a practical personal skill and a skill required of a seamstress and those working in fabric or sewing factories—female-oriented professions.[308] Job listings in the *Gila-News Courier* revealed the high demand for seamstresses or sewing factory workers.[309] To respond to this demand, additional sewing and pattern drafting courses were offered.[310] The acquisition of vocational skills such as pattern drafting led to employment opportunities outside internment camps for many Japanese American women, including skills that they could use in camp to make clothes for their families. These courses illustrate how course offerings were distinctly gendered in nature, in this case designed for Japanese American women in the camps.

Other courses geared toward women included Americanization English classes geared for the *Issei* generation.[311] These courses included skill sets for domestic work while helping the *Issei* through practical steps of moving to a new city and domestic work.[312] Domestic work was a female-dominated field, and job listings indicated a

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[308] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 190.

[309] Job listing numbers compiled from an analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ) from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.

[310] . "Adult Ed," July 22, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.

[311] "One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Five Are Already Learning," February 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1-2.

[312] "Americanization Class Will Hold Many Discussions," February 17, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.

demand for employment.[313] As Nakano notes, most domestic positions had been held by women in the pre-war years.[314] This was reflected in job listings, which typically targeted domestic girls and/or women.[315] Examples of job ads read as follows: "A girl, preferably Episcopalian, for housework in Minneapolis, Minnesota; $40 monthly," "Girl with experience for domestic work at Winnetka, Illinois," and "Woman around 30-35, single, for domestic work for family of 3 in Denilworth, Illinois."[316] Analysis of the job listings in the *Gila News-Courier* showed that domestic positions were second most in demand, named in 208 of 1,405 ads.[317] The only job category with a higher demand was unskilled labor.[318] The demand for domestic staff was high due in part to the wartime labor shortage as Black women left these jobs to pursue higher-paying opportunities in the defense industry.[319] This created an opportunity for Japanese American women to leave camps for domestic employment.

In addition to domestic employment, vocational education courses trained Japanese American for other female-dominated fields. The *Gila News-Courier* reported that the need for business courses led to addition of several new classes, including

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[313] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return,* 2. In the 1940 census, Japanese American domestic workers were five times more likely to be female then male.

[314] Nakano, *Japanese American Women.*

[315] Analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ) from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.

[316] "Help Wanted," November 14, 1942, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3 and "Classifieds," January 28, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

[317] Job listing numbers compiled from an analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ) from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.

[318] Job listing numbers compiled from an analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ) from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.

[319] Dorn, *American Education,* 9.

courses in bookkeeping, typing, shorthand, accounting, and business law.[320] Several of these specific course offerings—typing and shorthand—were in female-dominated employment fields. Both Kliebard and Rury document the transition of the clerical workforce from one that was primarily male to a clearly female-dominated profession.[321] In private clerical schools, the majority of students were women.[322] The continued growth of courses offered in private and public schools increased the number of women pursuing clerical careers in the early 1900s.

These clerical skills, including typing and shorthand, were in demand in both the private and public sector, including in the internment camps. The high demand for those with clerical skills was seen in the number of job postings in the *Gila News-Courier* for shorthand, typing, and dictation during WWII, with twenty five percent of the job listings for clerical staff.[323] In "Nation Needs Office Workers," which documented this labor shortage, the *Gila-News Courier* noted that the U.S. civil service needed more than 6,600 additional stenographers and typists due to the extra workload from the war effort. As a result, Lyston S. Block, Personnel Officer in the Gila River internment camp, recommended that internees take classes to become proficient in stenography and typing.[324] While there were no gender specifications for enrollment, these courses taught

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[320] "Commercial Classes Added to Night School Program," June 22, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.
[321] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 138.
[322] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 221.
[323] Job listing numbers compiled from an analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ) from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.
[324] "Nation Needs Office Workers," February 19, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.

skills for vocations dominated by women.[325] Block noted the opportunities for internees to work and earn money while still learning.[326] The nearly one hundred job listings in the *Gila News-Courier*, in addition to this editorial, demonstrated that clerical positions and the demand for female labor increased steadily during the war and created opportunities for women to train for employment in the camps.[327]

For Japanese American women, their identities as both Japanese American and women were not the sum of their experiences with racism and sexism but rather were at the intersection of those identities as they went about their lives as both students and employees in the camps. As Grillo posits,

> The lessons of anti-essentialism and intersectionality are that the oppressions cannot be dismantled separately because they mutually reinforce each other. Racism uses sexism as its enforcer. Homophobia enforces sexism by making people pay a heavy price for departing from socialized gender roles.[328]

In this way, Japanese American women had unique intersectional experiences as they obtained vocational education and training.

Embedding Vocational Training in Camp Schools

Even as the course offerings provided gendered options for students in the vocational education programs serving adults, this experience was reflected as the vocational education program expanded into K–12 schools; vocational education was for

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[325] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 120, 207, 209.
[326] "Nation Needs Office Workers," February 19, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[327] Job listing numbers compiled from an analysis of the *Gila News-Courier* from October 21, 1942 through July 29, 1944.
[328] Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House," 27.

everyone else in the camps. The growth of the program was not surprising, considering its community nature. As more people with time on their hands considered their options, the opportunity to learn was a strong draw. As vocational education continued to serve both women and men, as well as boys and girls, the program expanded into the traditional K–12 schools in the camp.

With the wartime labor shortage, the WRA was motivated to ensure that student internees coming of age were trained for work both in the camps and when they left the camps. The most efficient way to train students was to embed programs into K–12 camp schools. The WRA also wanted to ensure resettlement of Japanese Americans in the Midwest and East Coast through training them to have employable job skills when they left the camps. Most important, students in the vocational program were an important source of cheap labor for the WRA in their capacity as apprentices. By embedding vocational education into the camp schools, the WRA met the goal of training students to meet the camp labor shortage as older internees left camps.

The first sign of vocational training in camp schools came in a newspaper call for teachers with woodwork experience.[329] Dr. Monika Kehce, a vocational advisor, announced the new vocational training program in the high school, which started with thirty-two boys and twenty-one girls. These students trained as domestics, dieticians, beauty shop personnel, sales clerks, secretaries, bookkeepers, butchers, carpenters,

[329] "Urgent Call for Teachers," September 21, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.

sanitary workers, engineers, lab technicians, photographers, and barbers.[330] The expressed goals of the vocational program was to help students to obtain job skills for relocation. While there were fewer girls in the program, seven of the thirteen training areas were female-oriented professions: dietetics, domestic work, beauty shop, sales, clerking, secretarial, and bookkeeping.[331] This particular coursework in the camps was similar to vocational education course offerings outside of the camps.[332] The structural embedding of the vocational courses in the camp schools provided a ready supply of students. With a strong foundation of fifty-three students and teachers and school financial resources available, the vocational education program quickly scaled up classes on an as-needed basis to meet camp labor demands.

High school-trained apprentices from the vocational programs were utilized to meet labor shortages in internment camps. An employment supervisor, William Russo, noted,

> A handful of high school boys who are learning the dairy trade as apprentices helped the dairy through its labor shortage crisis. . . . This is the beginning of an apprenticeship program which will give eventually as many as 100 school children learning trades through actual practice.[333]

Using the guide of interactional learning or learning by doing, the schools were actively starting the pattern of using student labor to help run the camps, a cost-saving

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[330] "Vocational Training Given," September 21, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3 & for female oriented professions see Rury, *Education and Women's Work*.

[331] Kliebard, *Schooled to Work*, 150-151 and 215.

[332] Dorn, *American Education*, Giordano, *Wartime Schools &* Rury, *Education and Women's Work.*

[333] "Apprentices Help in Crisis," October 14, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3 and "Dairy Needs More Workers, Women as Well As Men," March 16, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

efficiency. While it is unclear whether the apprentices were paid, even if they were paid, it was at camp salary, which was artificially low, with monthly salaries set at $12 for unskilled labor, $16 for skilled labor, and $19 for professionals.[334] As a comparison point, an ad for a busboy's job, considered unskilled labor, paid $75 a month.[335] Another example can be seen when the WRA placed students directly into the camp nursery, "which will give the students a chance to learn the basic knowledge of horticulture and get some actual nursery experience."[336] In this way, students were a captive audience for a vocational training program and a source of free or low-cost labor to run the camp infrastructure, such as the dairy.

While the dairy and nursery programs were geared to men, this pattern of using student labor was applicable to Japanese American women in camp. The night school offered apprentice training in five areas, including office practices, the one area geared toward female students, advertised as a hands-on interactive learning process.[337] These interactive learning experiences provided a way for the students to work in the camp and provided free or low-cost labor under the guise of vocational education. Students who had taken at least one course in typing could work under an experienced office supervisor

[334] Matsumoto, *City Girl,* 155.
[335] "Outside Employment," April 8, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.
[336] "Night School Offers Five Apprentice Training Fields," November 18, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[337] "Night School Offers Five Apprentice Training Fields," November 18, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

while continuing to take advanced courses in stenography and accounting.[338] Because stenography was a female-oriented field of work, it directly impacted young Japanese American women during their high school years.[339] These vocational opportunities provided a learning experience for the students and an opportunity for them to gain important employment experience in the camps in an area with a labor shortage while also theoretically equipping them with skills to find work when they left the internment camps. While internee students were working in the camps, students were also working outside the camps in the wartime labor industry, a commonality of programs in and outside the camps.[340]

The embedding of vocational training with camp schools served two purposes: a ready supply of students for needed vocational jobs in the camp and a cheap source of labor after the students were trained. By embedding vocational training in schools, there was always a ready supply of students and a vocational training program that could respond quickly to labor demands of the camp as the labor landscape shifted with internees leaving camps. In addition to embedding vocational training in schools, the WRA focused on hiring Japanese Americans in federal jobs for which they were suited, specifically for their language skills.

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[338] "Night School Offers Five Apprentice Training Fields," November 18, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[339] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*.
[340] Giordano, *Wartime Schools.*

Structural Access to Civil Service and Defense Jobs

Another unique aspect of the camp experience was how the WRA created structural access to civil service and defense jobs. Prior to the internment, employment options and opportunities on the West Coast were not easily available to many Japanese Americans due to the Jap Crow infrastructure. Japanese Americans were unable to gain civil service positions such as mail carriers, firefighters, police officers, or public school teachers.[341] However, the wartime labor shortage created a situation of convergent interests in which the federal government needed Japanese Americans on both the war front and the home front.[342] The United States was fighting Japanese soldiers who spoke the Japanese language. Thus, the army needed Japanese language instruction and translation. It was in the interest of the federal government to employ "loyal" Japanese Americans to meet their wartime labor needs: translating documents, serving as interpreters for prisoners of war, and teaching the Japanese language to military members. With the majority of the Japanese American population incarcerated in camps, the federal government reached out to Japanese Americans for essential roles critical to national defense.

The WRA facilitated the hiring process of internees by sending camp staff to become trained Civil Service Examiners. In addition, the WRA used parts of the camp infrastructure, such as the newspapers, to advertise federal positions and allowed the

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[341] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 36.

[342] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8 & Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown V. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Additionally, the wartime labor shortage was noted throughout multiple articles within the *Gila News-Courier.*

Civil Service to utilize space in the camps to administer the Civil Service Exams. This was evidence of structural support by a federal agency, the WRA, to help Japanese Americans to gain access to federal jobs as language instructors, translators, and clerical staff to meet critical national defense needs.

The WRA's initial step to ensure federal government access to potential Japanese American employees took place when the Gila Center applied for camp staff to be appointed as examiners for the U.S. Civil Service.[343] With internal camp staff administering the exams in the camps, the WRA created the first part of a pipeline that would fill federal jobs with Japanese American internees. In addition, the WRA secured permission for Japanese American evacuees who were lawyers to take civil service exams administered by the Board of Legal Examiners of the Civil Service Commission.[344] More and more barriers to federal jobs were broken as the WRA provided access to federal examinations and publicized the hiring processes in the *Gila News-Courier*.

The WRA utilized camp newspapers as a means of outreach and information source for these types of employment. Although the paper was operated by Japanese Americans, it was supported and sanctioned by WRA officials as the official newspaper of the camp, ensuring that every household received a copy. The paper was an important source of information for Japanese American internees at Gila. The WRA used the

[343] "Federal Civil Service Test Held Here," January 23, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.
[344] "Legal Position Open to Nisei," May 25, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.

newspaper to disseminate information to the community through advertisements for civil service examinations, civil service employment opportunities, and important information on the federal employment process. Together, these articles and advertisements were designed to ensure maximum exposure to job candidates who were qualified for positions in the Civil Service.

Information included the steps that a job candidate would need to take to ensure eligibility for federal positions. For example, a civil service advertisement stated, "Civil service employment in Washington D.C. is almost certainly obtainable to any qualified applicant who has already received an E.D.C. clearance. . . . Persons who are qualified but lack clearance are urged to send necessary paperwork."[345] Another advertisement noted the need for a birth certificate and Social Security card to work in defense factories.[346] WRA officials cleared *Nisei* internees for work in "vital war plants."[347] These articles indicate that Japanese American internees were needed to meet wartime labor shortages. From 1940 to 1944, the unemployment rate dropped from ten percent to less than two percent and there was a desperate shortage of workers.[348] Japanese Americans in the camps were a source of employees who could help with this shortage.

Japanese Americans who spoke Japanese had a unique language skill that was very much in demand at the time. Fighting a war against an enemy who spoke a different

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[345] "C. I. Service Open to Nisei," June 22, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[346] "Leave Clearance Defense Work Open to Nisei," August 12, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.
[347] "Leave Clearance Defense Work Open to Nisei," August 12, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.
[348] Dorn, *American Education*, 7.

language posed unique challenges—challenges that could be met partly by Japanese Americans. A call for "qualified aliens" to provide Japanese language instruction indicates how the federal government's need for people with Japanese language skills opened opportunities for internees.

> Latest rulings from Washington reveal that aliens are eligible to apply for a position with the Federal government agency to transliturate place memos occurring on Japanese map into the Hepburn Romaji system. Desired qualifications, in addition to a thorough knowledge of Japanese characters and English language, are a college degree in engineering, and journalistic or professional background.[349]

For educated Japanese Americans, long used to working in the ethnic economy, this was an opportunity to work for the federal government in the mainstream economy, an opportunity long denied to them. An article described how the U.S. Army recruited *Issei, Kibei,* and *Nisei* generation translators, Japanese typesetters, and radio operators to work for the government in domestic and international locations.[350] It made sense for the federal government to recruit native Japanese American speakers (*Issei*) and those who had been educated in Japan (*Kibei)*. Some former internees had already been accepted as instructors at the University of Michigan's Army Language School.[351] This specific newspaper article indicated to internees that some had already navigated federal hiring standards and left the camps for better wages and freedom. These newspaper articles

[349] "Qualified Aliens Wanted," January 7, 1942, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.
[350] "U.S. Army Wants Japanese Workers," September 18, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.
[351] "Gilans to Teach at Army School," September 14, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.

transmitted information and helped to build a pipeline for Japanese Americans who wanted to work for their government.

Regardless of the desire to help their country, internees could not easily leave the camps for interviews or other job-related activities. Therefore, another mechanism for facilitating the federal job process was to have in-person recruitment and testing in the camps. Since Japanese Americans could not leave the camps, the WRA brought recruiters and examiners to the camps to facilitate the process of recruiting and hiring Japanese Americans into federal service. Sergeant James Schneider and his wife, both described as speaking "excellent Japanese," were scheduled to interview candidates and give language examinations to hire five or six people for immediate service.[352] Advertisements are clear examples of how the WRA publicized information for internees to access job opportunities to work for the federal government. As a result of outreach efforts, forty-two Japanese Americans took the Civil Service examinations in June 1943; the demand required another testing session in two weeks.[353] This was a clear example of convergent interest where Japanese Americans wanted government jobs with better wages and freedom from incarceration and the federal government needed Japanese Americans with language skills to help with the war effort.[354] The on-site administration of the examinations, recruitment events, and interviews demonstrated how the WRA facilitated

[352] "Schreider to Interview Applicants for Civil Service Jobs," January 13, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.
[353] "Take Civil Service Exams Next Test in Two Weeks," June 24, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[354] Convergent interest is a concept described in Bell, *Silent Covenants.*

access for Japanese Americans to federal jobs in the midst of the wartime labor shortage. While the language and translation jobs in the military were primarily geared to men, the demand for these services allowed the recruitment and hiring infrastructure to be built in camps.

The same infrastructure for recruitment and hiring was used when the demand for clerical and accounting staff in the federal government increased. Both the federal government and private sector were experiencing shortages of office employees. The need for skilled clerical and accounting staff led the WRA to increase vocational training in shorthand, accounting, and typing.[355] In addition to the vocational training in the camp educational programs, the WRA facilitated access to the Civil Service examination. A newspaper article announced that Civil Service examinations were scheduled for clerical positions, such as typists and clerk-stenographers, predominantly female-dominated positions.[356] The WRA's vocational education program trained Japanese American women for the needed federal clerical positions. In addition, the WRA administered the Civil Service examinations in camps. These practices ensured that internees obtained skills that the federal government needed through the adult and vocational education programs, which played a vital role in creating a pipeline of Japanese American federal employees for the war effort.

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[355] "New Shorthand Courses Begin," September 28, 1943, 5; and "Civil Service," June 17, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.

[356] "Civil Service," June 17, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1 & Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 120, 207, 209.

For Japanese American internees, the choice between staying incarcerated in cramped living conditions or working for the federal government motivated some to leave camps. Japanese-speaking internees offered a unique and needed skill for the federal government. With a vested interest in hiring Japanese-speaking employees, the WRA created pathways to this employment track through a variety of actions: training camp staff to administer the Civil Service examination and administering the test in camps, using the *Gila News-Courier* for information dissemination on job hiring, facilitating in-person recruitment and language testing, and providing clerical training and Civil Service testing for this type of federal employment. As a result of these actions, the U.S. government hired employees to provide an in-demand skill set, including Japanese language skills and clerical skills.

Professional and Semiprofessional Vocational Training

In addition to access to federal jobs, the WRA's facilitated vocational educational programs that offered both semiprofessional and professional employment training. Access to training in professional and semiprofessional roles differed significantly from vocational education outside of camps, due in part to the unique aspects of the incarceration, where training had to be brought into the camp. This training was also a substantial shift from the general employment patterns of Japanese Americans on the West Coast before internment. Prior to WWII, Japanese American professionals were able to work only in the ethnic economy by serving Japanese Americans and

communities of color.[357] However, in camps, Japanese Americans could obtain vocational training in semiprofessional and professional roles and find employment on the camp payroll.[358] As the WRA relocated Japanese Americans to other parts of the United States that did not hold an established anti-Japanese sentiment, Japanese American internees utilized their vocational training and camp employment experience to find employment in semiprofessional and professional roles in the mainstream economy. Communities in the Midwest and East Coast accepted Japanese American professionals and semiprofessionals to work in the mainstream economy, a marked change from pre-war employment conditions and Jap Crow on the West Coast.

As Japanese American medical professionals who had worked in the ethnic economy moved into internment camps, they continued in their professional capacities as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and nurses. Some relocated out of the camps and found work in other parts of the country in the mainstream economy, likely due to labor demands and financial reasons. Physicians in camp could earn a maximum of $19 dollars a month, while a resident physician outside of camp could earn from $125 to $150 a month, with maintenance (generally room and board) included.[359] Nurses could earn $60 to $75 with room and board.[360] These two examples are illustrative of the financial incentives for trained professionals to leave the camp. Room and board was also

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[357] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*.

[358] Dorn, *American Education*, 7-8. Additionally, the wartime labor shortage was noted throughout multiple articles within the *Gila News-Courier*.

[359] "Job Offers," May 25, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.

[360] "Job Offers," July 1, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.

particularly important in most major cities, which were experiencing housing shortages.[361] The financial incentive to leave camp was very strong for professionals who were educated and trained, and room and board made the transition much easier.

Japanese American women trained and worked in camp hospitals, eventually leaving the camps due to the demand for their skill set in the mainstream economy.[362] Nursing was a field that was professionalized, requiring education and training; it was widely considered a female-dominated field.[363] This was particularly important for Japanese American women and their vocational aspirations. As nurses left camps for higher salaries, there was an acute shortage of nurses in the camps.[364] This meant that the vocational training program in camps was utilized as a training ground for these medical professionals. While nurses were also being trained outside of the camps, the primary and secondary sources reviewed for this study did not show those sources housed in a vocational education program in schools but rather in hospitals.

Even as recruitment and training of students occurred in full force in the camps, there were numerous job advertisements and articles recruiting student nurses for training outside of the camps. The *Gila-News Courier* reported that Baltimore City Hospital in Maryland had twenty openings for Japanese Americans, with favorable sentiments.[365] The "favorable sentiments" comment meant that internees were unlikely to experience strong

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[361] This was widely observed in numerous articles throughout the *Gila News-Courier.*
[362] This was widely observed in numerous articles throughout the *Gila News-Courier.*
[363] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 117.
[364] "Shortage of Nurses Acute," December 18, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[365] "Opportunities for 20 Student Nurses in Baltimore," June 1, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.

anti-Japanese sentiment, which was common in the pre-war years on the West Coast.[366] Another article announced that Garfield Hospital in Washington, DC, was ready to accept young *Nisei* women into their nurse training program beginning in mid-September 1943.[367] Clearly, these examples show that medical training occurred in the hospitals, unlike the nurse training in camps, which was housed in a traditional vocational education program. The recruitment material demonstrated that demand for nursing during the war years was so strong that Japanese American nurses who had been previously relegated to hospitals that served communities of color now found employment in mainstream hospitals—a radical change in their vocational trajectories.

As nurses continued to leave camp due to the strong demand for their skill sets, the vocational education program implemented professional and semiprofessional training for other types of medical workers, including certain female-dominated career paths such as nursing aide, dental aide, and dietary aide.[368] These medical aides were in high demand due to the wartime shortage.[369] Similar to the nursing shortage, Japanese American women were trained and employed in camp and then left to work in the mainstream economy. The vocational training program was utilized as a training program for these professions. There were frequent advertisements in the *Gila News-Courier* for students interested in courses to become dental aides and nurse aides classes for those

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[366] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*.
[367] "Nursing Class Open to Nisei," August 21, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.
[368] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 117.
[369] This was observed in numerous articles throughout the *Gila News-Courier.*

between eighteen and fifty years old.[370] The wide age range was an indication of the flexibility for those entering the field due to the demand for employment.

The continuous recruitment for medical training for students was illustrated as the camp newspaper reported completion notices for twenty-two dietary aides graduating and forty-four nurse's aides, along with three dental aides.[371] These primary sources indicate that vocational training for the medical field employees was heavily utilized by internees and that employment in the camp hospitals was a way to gain valuable work experience. These students used both the vocational training and subsequent camp employment to accept job offers as they left the camps. Vocational training in the medical field in the camps was translating to semiprofessional and professional employment for Japanese American women in female-dominated positions such as nurses, nursing aides, dental aides, and dietary aides.

Another area of professional employment was teaching, another female-centric line of work.[372] Teaching required a higher level of education and teachers were among the best educated among occupational groups.[373] Teachers were needed to educate Japanese American children in camps. About 30,000 of the 120,000 internees were

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[370] "New Dental Lecture Class," December 19, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2; and "Nurse's Aide Class Open," June 29, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[371] "Ceremony for Nurses' Aides," August 10, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3 & "Dietary Aides Receive Honors," September 16, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[372] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 117.
[373] Rury, *Education and Women's Work,* 117.

school-age children.[374] Thus, there was a great need for teachers.[375] Initially, the WRA brought in one hundred white teachers; however, their retention was quite low due to the hostile camp structure.[376] Teaching Japanese Americans in the camps was not a popular position and desolate conditions made the position difficult and undesirable.[377] This led to a shortage of certified teachers, leading the WRA to look in the camps to train Japanese American college graduates and college students as assistant teachers in the camp schools. Japanese Americans teachers offered the WRA a cost-efficient labor supply because the camp salary structure paid these teachers just $19 a month, well below market rate for manual labor.[378] With the teaching shortage, the push to train internees who had some college education to become teachers was critical for the WRA.

The first part of vocational training for teachers was seen in an article in which V. W. Marshall, a professor of teacher training at Arizona Teachers College, offered a teaching credential to those with a four-year college degree.[379] The camp newspaper advertised recruitment efforts to induce college students to enroll in teacher training courses. Even with this teacher training, the shortage of educators remained and standards quickly changed to accommodate that need. One advertisement in the *Gila News-Courier* stated that the Canal Education Department needed four or five internees with at least two

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[374] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections,* xxi.
[375] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections,* xxi.
[376] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections*, xxi.
[377] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections,* xxi.
[378] Tsuchida ed., *Reflections*, xxi.
[379] "Teaching Opportunities," September 23, 1942, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

years of college training to be trained as teachers with an experienced training teacher.[380] The initial effort in October 1942 was to hire teachers who possessed a college degree. However, that standard changed by January 1943 to two years of college coursework. The changes in these standards indicate the shortage of qualified and interested internees for teaching and the downgrading of standards to address the shortage. This teaching shortage in the camps was a mirror of the national shortage of teachers, particularly in rural areas.[381] The WRA's appeal for prospective teachers continued into the next month.[382] It showed that standards were lowered for teachers who were recruited to teach Japanese American children, illustrative of perhaps the teacher shortage or the lack of care regarding who was qualified to teach these children.

While exact numbers are not known, this analysis found that, typically, in the camp schools, white teachers were head teachers and Japanese American teachers served as assistant teachers, a reflection of the racial hierarchy of the time. However, as the war progressed and the wartime labor shortage became more acute, there were cases in which head teachers were Japanese American. The *Gila News-Courier* reported one such instance, as Louise Takeda was the lead teacher for a fifth-grade classroom and Tsuruye Narasaki took charge of the nursery classroom.[383] These head teacher roles and assistant teacher roles and teacher training programs supported Japanese American women as they

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[380] "Classes to Train Teachers Open," October 21, 1942, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1; and "School Teachers Wanted Now," January 19, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[381] Giordano, *Wartime Schools*, 150.
[382] "Need for Teachers Voiced in Canal," February 2, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[383] "New Teachers," April 10, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.

obtained teaching positions outside of the camps when they relocated to other parts of the United States. An example of this was an ad in the *Gila News-Courier* recruiting a Japanese American teacher who either already possessed a teaching certificate or could pass a state examination to teach at a school with students between the ages of three and thirteen years.[384] Prior to the camps, Japanese Americans were unable to obtain employment as public school teachers in the mainstream economy; now, they were being trained in the camps and utilizing this training to find employment as teachers outside of the camps.[385] Access to vocational training for teachers in the camps, along with a wartime labor shortage, allowed many Japanese American women access to professional employment in public schools to teach white children, a noted change in trajectories from those described in Chapter 2.

Japanese American women in the medical and teaching work force benefitted from free vocational training in the camps and parlayed this education and training into professional and semiprofessional employment in the mainstream economy outside of the camps. The wartime labor shortage opened opportunities for them to move into professional and semiprofessional medical and teaching roles in the mainstream economy, where they served white patients and students in the Midwest and East Coast. These positions benefitted Japanese American women financially, as the positions paid market rate versus the camp structure pay, which enabled them to take care of their

[384] "√√ and Pick," November 20, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[385] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 31.

families and significantly as they relocated to other parts of the United States. In particular, the semiprofessional and professional tracks of vocational training differed significantly from vocational training outside of the camps. Vocational training outside of the camps typically did not cover careers such as teaching or nursing. This type of training occurred in camps due to incarceration and the need to bring training to camps. Outside of camps, people could move about freely to receive desired vocational training. However, in camps, education had to come to the incarcerated. This was the likely reason why vocational education in the camps encompassed these professional and semiprofessional roles.

Chapter Summary

This project expands the scope of existing research on vocational education by examining professions that would be considered middle class or white collar, whereas scholars on vocational education have tended to focus on "menial" or manual labor or clerical types of employment. Training for professional and semiprofessional employment in the camps differed from vocational programs outside of the camps, in particular in nursing and teaching. In examining professions that are not typically associated with vocational education such as teaching, nursing, and medical aide, this research considers both transgressions and confinements of race, gender, and class. The WRA played a significant role in creating structural access to civil service roles for Japanese Americans, a unique aspect of the camp experience. Against the context of forced incarceration, vocational education in the camps was one of the few spaces where Japanese American women could train to gain employment for white collar professions

as they looked to rebuild lives after camp. Japanese American women, whose opportunities were narrowly constrained by their educational and vocational options in the pre-war years, were freed from patriarchal expectations of meal preparation; cleaning a smaller home afforded time to pursue vocational education in the camps, providing an opportunity for upward educational and vocational trajectories. Access to civil service positions as stenographers and typists, as well as professional positions such as nursing and teaching, opened many opportunities for Japanese American women to work in the mainstream economy as they moved to other parts of the country, including the East Coast and Midwest, away from the West Coast's Jap Crow system.

CHAPTER 4

UPWARD TRAJECTORIES AMIDST CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

In 1940, four hundred and thirty Japanese Americans women were employed in professional positions. In the space of a decade, by 1950, seven thousand seven hundred ninety Japanese American women were in professional categories of employment, according to census reports.[386] This explosive growth in the number of Japanese American women in professional roles in one decade raises many questions. What changed in those ten years that fueled this growth? What were the conditions that fueled this growth? What role did the internment and forced relocation of Japanese Americans to other parts of the country outside of the West Coast play in this demographic change?

In this chapter I explore answers to these questions, including the role of employment experiences and vocational educational programs in the camps. From the time Japanese Americans were forced into camps, they were not allowed to live in West Coast areas. Japanese Americans who were allowed to leave the camps generally relocated to the Midwest and East Coast. As a result of moving away from systemic racism on the West Coast, Japanese Americans accessed employment in the mainstream economy in professional and semiprofessional roles, an opportunity long denied to them on the West Coast in pre-war years. There were indications of decreased discrimination, including increasing numbers of Japanese Americans with white employers, improved

[386] U.S. Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Nonwhite Population by Race," Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, 2, 7, 98-99 & U.S. Census Bureau, "Employment and Personal Characteristics Minoritized Populations," United States Census of Population: 1950, 3B-37-3B-41. Figures from the 1950 was on a 20 point scale and adjusted to a 100 point scale.

interracial relations with white friends, and integrated schools. In the war years, these indicators of decreased discrimination were observed in the Midwest and East Coast areas. In the post-war years, decreased discrimination on the West Coast, specifically in California, was a sign of the breakdown or perhaps takedown of Jap Crow, an interrelated struggle with African Americans and Jim Crow in the Los Angeles area.

Move to the East Coast and Midwest: Away From Jap Crow

Anti-Asian racism was firmly established and structural in nature on the West Coast in the pre-war years as described in Chapter 2. As Japanese Americans were forced to relocate to other parts of the country, they moved into areas where there was not an established racialized hierarchy in place for Asian Americans. While discrimination on an individual level was present everywhere in the country, the move away from the systemic discrimination on the West Coast opened opportunities for Japanese Americans. As Robinson notes,

> One clear area of division between the West Coast and the rest of the country was the level of race-based harassment and bias. To be sure, Nisei in many areas faced insults or were refused service in stores, and job discrimination was widespread throughout the country. However, both anecdotal evidence and records testify to more widespread patterns of ethnic-based hostility and exclusion by West Coast whites, which remained unchanged into the post-war period.[387]

While discrimination was the norm for many Japanese Americans as they left the camps and resettled in other geographic areas, differences in experience exist in the regions of the East Coast and Midwest. Historian Greg Robinson's comparative case study of three sites of Japanese resettlement (Detroit, Los Angeles, New York City), *After*

[387] Robinson, *After Camp,* 47.

Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics, and articles and editorials from the *Gila News-Courier* highlight differences in resettlement experiences based on geography. Both Detroit and New York City had significant Japanese American populations but the *Nikkei* experiences in those two cities were profoundly different. Detroit and Washington had had a complicated history with African Americans. In the next section I explore the geographic regions and the experiences of Japanese Americans in those cities.

On the East Coast, New York City already had a thriving Japanese American community, with 5,000 to 6,000 people by the 1920s.[388] With no organized hate groups or anti-Asian laws such as anti-miscegenation laws, Japanese immigrants married and settled into the community.[389] Articles in the *Gila News-Courier* highlighted New York City as a site for relocation with employment opportunities available to Japanese Americans. The staff writers described the city as a multicultural "home of so many racial varieties, that no one is going to be concerned about a few thousand Japanese Americans coming here to live and work."[390] The statement portrayed a multicultural city where Japanese Americans would be tolerated among the other minority groups. Another article highlighting New York City as a resettlement site cited a former internee, Kathleen Ineri, who was working as a secretary in the New York Relocation Office.

> Take New York. There is such a mixture of people of all nationalities here, no one pays any attention to you. Employment opportunities are limitless, defense work,

[388] Robinson, *After Camp,* 53.
[389] Robinson, *After Camp,* 53.
[390] "New York," August 26, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.

> especially, and skilled and professional. For the skilled, it would be so much better to come here instead of going out to work as unskilled farm labor or domestics.[391]

By utilizing language such as "multicultural" and "a mixture of people of all nationalities," the reporters were making the argument that Japanese Americans need not fear discrimination. This text illustrated New York City as a land of opportunity and safe place for internees and highlighted professional opportunities available to Japanese Americans due to the labor shortage.

Robinson noted that New York was better equipped than other cities to deal with recent arrivals, with a strong system of settlement houses and charities to help those who were resettling and a thriving Japanese American community that welcomed those who were leaving incarceration.[392] An article highlights vocational opportunities in the medical field in New York: "The hospitals need as many doctors, nurses, interns etc., as can be provided."[393] As Japanese Americans moved to New York City, they initially took manual labor positions as domestic workers, gardeners, bell hops, and laundry workers.[394] However, as the war progressed, Japanese American women obtained other types of employment such as nursing, stenography, and secretarial work.[395] This vocational progression is an indication of upward career trajectory for some *Nikkei* women. The New York experience was one of Japanese American acceptance into a multicultural city.

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[391] "New York," August 26, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.
[392] Robinson, *After Camp,* 53.
[393] "New York Offers Plentiful," August 7, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 3.
[394] Robinson, *After Camp,* 56.
[395] Robinson, *After Camp*, 56.

Unlike New York City, New England was touted as a permanent relocation site that did not have a vibrant Japanese American community. However, the area had numerous and varied employment opportunities and an ideal community sentiment.[396] According to Roger F. Clapp, relocation supervisor for Boston, "New Englanders are friendly and cooperative and judge outsiders on their own merits . . . [they] have high regard for the civil rights and individual feelings of others."[397] The language about civil rights and individual feelings was affirming to Japanese Americans, who had been incarcerated without due process. The notion of merit was a distinct difference from the Jap Crow structure on the West Coast, where discrimination was rampant, appealing to Japanese Americans. The newspaper articles noted the WRA's relocation policy of moving Japanese Americans to other parts of the country through discussions of the benefits of moving from the Jap Crow structure on the West Coast. In starting over in a new area of the country, Japanese Americans were absorbed into the existing economy of the region rather than seen as an economic threat, as they had been on the West Coast. Regardless of that, working in the mainstream economy as professionals and semiprofessionals was still a change from the pre-war years, where many Japanese Americans had worked in the ethnic economy.

While cities and areas on the East Coast welcomed Japanese Americans to fill jobs, a more segregated city closer to the South was another option for internees. In an

[396] "New Eng. Ideal for Relocation," August 28, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.
[397] "New Eng. Ideal for Relocation," August 28, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5.

article titled "More Job Offers Than Candidates," Harold Mann, the War Relocation Officer for Minnesota, noted that the reception of recently settled Japanese Americans had been very favorable in Washington, DC.[398] J. E. Pennery, a WRA field relocation officer for Washington, in an interview with the *Gila News-Courier,* noted that "practically all *Nisei* live in the nicer part of town" and that Washington traditionally had less racial discrimination. Pennery's use of the phrase "the nicer part of town" suggests that housing segregation for Japanese Americans was not a serious issue. While Washington may have been less hostile to Japanese Americans, there is a history of segregation of African Americans in that city.[399] This is indicative of the beginnings of racialized hierarchies in these cities as Japanese Americans moved to these areas. Pennery explicitly stated, "There are no unemployment problems with the evacuee group."[400] The promise of comfortable housing in good neighborhoods was a change from the legalized housing segregation for Japanese Americans on the West Coast.[401] Decreased discrimination in employment was seen: "Capability, more than color or race is the prime requisite."[402] While this is perhaps a bit of an embellishment, as the goal was

[398] "More Job Offers Than Candidates," November 30, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

[399] Sabiyha Prince *African Americans and Gentrification in Washington, D.C.: Race, Class and Social Status in the Nation's Capital* (London and New York: Routledge , 2016).

[400] "Abundance of Jobs for Relocators Says Pence," December 9, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1-3.

[401] While Washington D.C. may have been less hostile to Japanese Americans, there is a history of segregation with African Americans in the same city. See Prince *African Americans and Gentrification in Washington, D.C.*

[402] "Abundance of Jobs for Relocators Says Pence," December 9, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1-3.

to relocate Japanese Americans to other parts of the country, the notion of merit was a signifier of a lack of structural racism in employment.

In the Midwest, Detroit was had similarities with Washington with regard to discrimination against African Americans. Detroit was home to only 103 Japanese Americans, according to the 1930 census; most were farm workers.[403] However, in the 1940s, slightly more than 3,000 Japanese Americans resettled in Michigan, with most in the Detroit area, with 534 more enrolled in the military language school at the University of Michigan.[404] Detroit was the fifth-largest resettlement city in the country, according to WRA records, as of the 1943-1944 year, with the population composed of ninety percent *Nisei*.[405] Japanese American employment included domestic work, gardening, and office work, including stenographer and secretary, and blue collar work in the automobile industry.[406] By 1945, Japanese Americans were in skilled work, including dental lab technician, social work, and government work with the city and the state, again a pattern of access to better-paying employment.[407] Similar to other cities, work in mainstream economy was one sign of changed trajectories. The upward vocational trajectories of some Japanese Americans were notable.

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[403] Robinson, *After Camp,* 49.
[404] Robinson, *After Camp,* 49.
[405] Robinson, *After Camp* 48.
[406] Robinson, *After Camp,* 50.
[407] Robinson, *After Camp,* 50.

While some Japanese Americans had an upward trajectory, Detroit had a complicated history of race, with prominent Ku Klux Klan activity and 1943 riots with tension between the African American and white communities.[408] Race riots in June 1943 left 34 dead and 675 seriously injured, with white civilians and police assaulting and killing African Americans. While some Japanese Americans felt welcomed in Detroit, it is not a surprise that both anecdotal and WRA records in the city documented widespread educational and employment discrimination. Detroit was an example of the nuances in relocation experiences of Japanese Americans.

New York City, New England, Washington, and Detroit were four areas of the country where Japanese Americans relocated as they were allowed to leave incarceration. These cities highlighted the complicated racial hierarchies of the country as Japanese Americans moved into these areas. Japanese Americans were neither Black nor white. Where would they fit into this complicated racial hierarchy? Certainly, there were indications of decreased discrimination and lack of organized structural racism in these areas. In that sense, the move away from the West Coast allowed some Japanese Americans opportunities for upward career trajectory.

Indicators of Decreased Discrimination

While anti-Japanese sentiment on the West Coast before the war was at fever pitch, the rest of the country did not share those sentiments. Few citizens outside of the West Coast had any interactions with Japanese Americans and therefore no one to whom

[408] Robinson, *After Camp,* 51.

to direct their anger, since the majority of Japanese Americans lived on the West Coast.[409] As the war progressed, signs of decreased overt discrimination were documented through job advertisements in the *Gila News-Courier*, which solicited Japanese Americans for employment opportunities. While this was a sign of decreased overt discrimination, it is important to realize that convergent interest was a factor in this context, where the wartime labor shortage created a situation where Japanese American labor was needed and it was in the best financial interest of employers to fill roles with these people.[410] Employers needed to fill employment positions and thus wanted to ensure that their communities were portrayed as being tolerant of Japanese Americans. In addition to the language in job advertisements that implied decreased discrimination, Japanese American women noted a lack of discrimination in their oral histories and memoirs due to the move away from Jap Crow.

Decreased discrimination and a strong need for employees occurred in part due to a severe wartime labor shortage. The unemployment rate dropped from ten percent to less than two percent between 1940 and 1944, the lowest ever recorded.[411] The demand for labor was higher than ever and competition for employees was fierce. As a result, employers were creative in recruitment, targeting Japanese Americans in the camps through advertisements in camp newspapers. Using language in the job announcements as text for analysis would yield rich understanding of both the political landscape of the

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[409] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return*, 10.
[410] Bell, *Silent Covenants.*
[411] Dorn, *American Education*, 7.

country and how language was utilized as a signifier that labor was more important than Japanese ancestry. Robinson affirmed that the need for labor was more important than ancestry when he noted that, even though New York city mayor Fiorello La Guardia was openly hostile to Japanese Americans in the city at the time of bombing of Pearl Harbor, "he was willing to experiment with hiring fifty Japanese Americans for "hospital helper" positions to reduce a desperate hospital worker shortage."[412] The juxtaposition of not protecting Japanese Americans from being fired from city jobs when they needed them most in December 1941 and simultaneously accepting laborers in the medical field, where there was a severe wartime shortage, demonstrates the nuanced ways in which discrimination against Japanese Americans played out.

Labor patterns shifted significantly during WWII for other minoritized populations, including African American women. These patterns had an impact on other minoritized groups, as well. African American women who had previously worked in domestic positions shifted to better-paying defense work, which resulted in a shortage of domestic workers. African American women in domestic work decreased from sixty percent to forty-five percent from 1940 to 1944, while their participation in industry increased from six percent to eighteen percent in the same time period.[413] This shortage of domestic workers created opportunities for Japanese American women, who typically had to show proof of an employment offer before leaving the camps. It is in this context

[412] Robinson, *After Camp,* 57.
[413] Dorn, *American Education*, 9.

that the first signs of decreased discrimination are seen, based on an analysis of text in advertisements for domestic workers. In the intimate relationship between employer and employee, where employees typically resided in the employer's house or property, the need for labor had to overcome any personal discrimination that an employer felt about employing Japanese Americans. While domestic advertisements were not a sign of changed trajectories, as Japanese Americans had been doing this type of work before the war, the language in the advertisements was an indication of decreased discrimination.

Advertisements for domestic workers highlighted the nondiscriminatory nature of employment in an appeal for domestic staff. An advertisement for a domestic *Issei* couple in Nevada specifically stated, "Employers have lived in the Hawaiian Islands and have Japanese friends," which underscored their familiarity and affinity with Japanese Americans.[414] In a similar fashion, one job advertisement stated, "Employer is prominent attorney who employed Japanese for 15 years"; another advertisement noted, "Employer has lived in Japan."[415] These words signified to internees that their Japanese American heritage was welcome in those homes. Other advertisements were more discrete in their appeal for internees, mentioning the presence of Japanese Americans in the existing workforce or in the geographic region.[416] By mentioning Japanese Americans in these job advertisements, employers were communicating that needed employees would not be the

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[414] "√ And Pick," March 25, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.

[415] "√ And Pick," May 13, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4; and "Outside Employment," June 22, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

[416] "√ And Pick," April 29, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4; "√ And Pick," May 2, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5; "√ And Pick," May 16, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ 2; and "√ And Pick," June 1, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.

first of their ancestry in the community and that there were like people with whom to build community.

Other signs of decreased discrimination and segregation were seen in advertisements for farm jobs. Typically, advertisements for family men needed for farm jobs noted educational opportunities for children. One noted that "children can go to the town school," while another in New York stated, "public schools available for the children."[417] School integration is notable due to the de facto school segregation in Los Angeles and other large cities on the West Coast in the pre-war years and integration in smaller and rural communities, where limited resources led to integration.[418] Other advertisements for farm workers, such as one in Omaha, underscored the "congenial environment" of the community by noting that newly employed Japanese Americans would join with a local community of several hundred other Japanese Americans.[419] While these job advertisements were designed to entice internees, they also hinted at decreased discrimination against Japanese Americans through integrated educational opportunities for children in rural farming communities and other communities that did not have established segregated educational facilities. While integrated schools were a norm in rural communities on the West Coast in the years before the war, the fact that integrated schools were highlighted signified a lack of organized discrimination in these

[417] "√√ And Pick," November 18, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 5; and "√ And Pick," January 27, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[418] See Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow* & Matsumoto, *City Girls.*
[419] "√ And Pick," March 30, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

communities, unlike that on the West Coast.[420] Without organized anti-Japanese groups in the Midwest and East Coast, Japanese Americans were allowed into the communities as members rather than as outsiders.

Similar to integrated schools, favorable work conditions were a common feature in many of the job advertisements designed to fill vacancies in the private sector. A spinning mill factory in Rochelle, Illinois, for instance, wanted to hire ten young women. The job advertisement stated, "The attitude of the 300 other plant workers is favorable towards Japanese Americans."[421] For Japanese Americans who had lived only on the West Coast, the thought of moving somewhere else was daunting and the fear of discrimination was a real and valid concern. The language in the advertisements was designed to alleviate some of those feelings. A freight handling company explained that the "plant sentiment was very good" in Ohio.[422] Again, this highlighted that their labor was needed and that their ancestry would be overlooked. An advertisement for work in a war plant in Omaha, Nebraska, stated, "The management and the Caucasian employees of the plant have voted unanimously in favor of employing Japanese Americans to work with them."[423] The language was designed to entice Japanese Americans to move to certain areas to alleviate the wartime labor shortage by highlighting a lack of overt discrimination.

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[420] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow.*
[421] "√ And Pick," March 14, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.
[422] "√ And Pick," March 28, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 2.
[423] "√ And Pick," July 20, 1944, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 4.

While the language in the newspapers indicated decreased discrimination, the internees reflected on this in their memoirs and oral histories as they left the internment camps for other parts of the country, specifically the Midwest. Many of the internees were treated as individuals as they moved to areas where people did not have preconceived notions of Japanese Americans. Due to the decreased discrimination and wartime labor shortage, they found upward mobility in vocational opportunities in other parts of the country. Huruko Sugi Hurt reflected the following in her oral interview with the JANM publications on her time in the Midwest.

> But the people were friendly [in Chicago], and they had no preconceived notions about how to treat us. There were very few Japanese before the war there, so most people didn't know much about Japanese or Japanese Americans. So they were friendly, and treated us like they would treat anyone else. It was quite a different story from here in Southern California, or in California as a whole. . . . So we felt very welcomed. . . . Away from the West Coast, people were very kind and liberal, because they didn't have the kind of historic experience with Asians. . . . This was a refreshing experience.[424]

While it is not explicit, Hurt's statement speaks to the move from the sanctioned hate on the West Coast (Jap Crow) and how this led to better treatment for her and other Japanese Americans in the Midwest.

Similar to the sentiments mentioned in the articles highlighting various geographic regions, Hurt alludes to individualism and the meritocratic notion of being judged for oneself—American ideals. Similarly, Mary (Nishi) Ishizuku recalled,

> The Nebraskans didn't know whether we were Chinese, Japanese, or whatever, I always told my friend, it was the first time I felt that people accepted me for what I was, and they didn't have any preconceived notions about Japanese. It was a better feeling than we ever had in California. People [in California] either disliked

[424] Hurt, *REgenerations*, 147, 150-151.

> us, or had preconceived notions about Japanese, or they bent over backwards to help us. Whereas, in Nebraska they just took us as Americans—at least I felt that way with the students. We were invited to their homes. That, it itself, was a revelation.[425]

Ishizuku's experience of being invited into the homes of her white classmates was in direct contrast to that of Rose Honda, who recounted how her white school friends never once invited her to their house despite years of friendships in the school. This noted exchange between Japanese Americans and whites Americans was another indicator of the decreased discrimination that Japanese Americans experienced in the time after their release from internment.

The move away from the Jap Crow structure opened many opportunities for Japanese Americans in the Midwest and likely the East Coast, as there was a need for their labor in a changing labor landscape. With African American women leaving domestic work for higher-paying jobs in the defense industry, there were opportunities for Japanese American women to leave the camps for newly opened domestic jobs. Employers' language in job advertisements specifically noted that the employee would be welcomed into employers' homes and properties. Farm jobs announcements noted integrated schools, while private sector employment notices touted favorable job sentiments as indications of decreased discrimination to convince Japanese Americans to leave camp and work where their labor was needed.

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[425] Mary (Nishi) Ishizuku, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000), 220.

Work in the Mainstream Economy

Work in the mainstream economy as a sign of success ignores the nuance of this complicated economic issue. The dismantling of the ethnic economy and the economic loss that Japanese Americans suffered as a result of internment are examples of systemic racism in which white agricultural interest groups were able to wipe out economic competition through the federal government. However, one unintended consequence of internment was that Japanese American women found professional and semiprofessional roles in the mainstream economy. Could this be seen as an upward trajectory? What is certain is that, as they moved into the mainstream economy, there were more opportunities for these women in professional capacities. This was in part due to the ethnic economy having limited capacity to support professionals from colored minorities. The ethnic economy had limited capacity to support professionals, where Japanese American professionals did not have enough Japanese American clients and had to serve other communities of color. For example, Japanese American physicians and dentists advertised their services in African American newspapers in Los Angeles.[426] When Japanese American obtained employment in the mainstream economy, there was much room for growth in professional employment.

While increased opportunity for Japanese American women in this period was an unintended positive consequence of internment, the destruction to the Japanese American community from mass incarceration cannot be exaggerated. While the financial

[426] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race, 72.*

ramifications of the immediate financial loss can be quantified, the psychological losses of losing family businesses and a lifetime of effort cannot be quantified.[427] The loss of an entire ethnic economy cannot be quantified and the psychological toll on a community that prioritizes group pride and collective group loss was heavy.[428] Collectively, the community's pride in its economic success was gone with incarceration. Therefore, even the success of some Japanese American women in their educational and vocational trajectories must be understood against the devastation of the ethnic economy. In essence, there was no ethnic economy to which to return.

Many Japanese American women aspired to work in female-centric fields such as teaching and nursing but could not find employment in the mainstream economy due to Jap Crow limitations on the West Coast prior to WWII.[429] Therefore, their work was generally limited to the ethnic economy or domestic work.[430] However, this changed during and after the war as Japanese American women found employment in the mainstream economy. Employment included such female-dominated fields as dietetics, teaching, and social work.[431] Work in the mainstream economy was a sign of the increased vocational options during and after the war. This was in part due to the forced

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[427] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return,* 124.
[428] Bloom and Riemer, *Removal and Return,* 124.
[429] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow* & Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*.
[430] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow* & Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*.
[431] Rury, *Education and Women's Work*.

move away from the West Coast and Jap Crow, as well as the need for employees in the wartime labor shortage,

With decreased overt discrimination and the wartime labor shortage, Japanese American women and men utilized their education to gain access to professional careers in the mainstream economies in other parts of the country.[432] Japanese Americans achieved professional success in many economic sectors. Being the first of anyone of one's ancestry to hold a certain employment position was a sign of transformation. While there was a cultural value of not bringing shame or disgrace on oneself, family, or community, there was also a value in bringing pride to the family and community through accomplishments in accord with values of filial piety and devotion to one's community.[433] The community rightfully celebrated members who broke boundaries by being the first Japanese American to be employed in a given profession. Patrick Noda, Sue Yokota, Taj Shigaki, and Hisako (Inamura) Koike were examples of Japanese Americans breaking employment boundaries; they represented a trend by shattering visible ceilings in professions and settings in the Midwest. All parlayed their education and the wartime labor shortage to gain access to positions that had been unavailable to them prior to the war. Their stories represent an improved vocational trajectory for Japanese Americans as they gained access to employment in the mainstream economy.

[432] Dorn, *American Education*, 7.
[433] Nakano, *Japanese American Women,* 38.

As Japanese Americans moved into work in the mainstream economy, many were the first Japanese Americans to break employment boundaries in the public and private sectors. One such communal achievement was noted in the *Gila News-Courier,* reporting on the first and only Japanese American high school principal in the country at the time, Patrick Noda. Noda was appointed as principal of a school in Galt, Iowa, a school with twenty high school students. While the superintendent had expressed concern that the school board would not hire Noda, he found no objections from the school board or the community to Noda's appointment.[434] Noda's position was noteworthy because of the prestige afforded to educators. The appointment was a significant decision due to the need for public approval of hiring decisions. While Galt was a small rural community, the absence of objections to Noda's hiring suggests that skilled and educated labor was more important to the Galt community than his Japanese American ancestry. The wartime labor shortage opened opportunities for Noda and other Japanese Americans men and women.

Another woman who broke boundaries was Taj Shigaki, mentioned in Chapter 1, who recounted in her memoirs her life in Minnesota. Shigaki built a career of more than twenty-five years in the Corrections Department in Minnesota. She felt a kinship with those who were incarcerated, based on her own experience in the camps. She started as an Assistant Superintendent and was offered increasing job responsibilities as she worked up to the position of Director of Staff Training, where she was the only woman in a

[434] "Nisei Appointed Principal of High School in Iowa," December 23, 1943, *Gila News-Courier* (Gila, AZ), 1.

managerial position in the department's Central Office.[435] Shigaki broke through gender norms for all women in Minnesota's correctional facilities. Her employment opportunities as she worked alongside white male counterparts as a manager would have been unimaginable in the pre-war Jap Crow structure in California. Her entire life path was an example of changed vocational trajectories following WWII as she recounts rather casually,

> Perhaps it took a year of my life when education was disrupted. And perhaps I lost a husband and family that I might have had, had life proceeded in the course it was going before Pearl Harbor. But I gained an education beyond my expectations back then. And more importantly I gained a world view that continued existence in Southern California may not have made possible.

Shigaki lived a full and happy life as a professional working woman in Minnesota. Her choice came into existence because of the forced move from California after a brief stay in the Poston Internment Camp. However, her employment trajectory in management in the public sector was a noted change from conditions described in Chapter 2.

While Shigaki found opportunities in government work, other Japanese American women turned to the academy. Just before internment, Gladys Stone sat for entrance examinations to Stanford University but could not matriculate because of the internment. With help from the NJASRC, she attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. After graduation, she gained a Master of Arts degree from the University of Chicago and a PhD in Far Eastern Studies from the University of Michigan. Stone entered the academy and held several academic appointments at universities before retiring as

[435] Shigaki, "Taj Shigaki" in *Reflections,* 277-278.

Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls.[436] Her employment in the mainstream economy as a professor demonstrated how some Japanese American women achieved vocational success, a changed trajectory from working in the ethnic economy or in menial labor before WWII.

From public sector work in education and correctional facilities, the discussion moves to employment in the private sector. Mary Mariko Ogura's sister, Sue Yokota, left Tule Lake Internment Camp and moved to St. Paul, Minnesota on August 1, 1943. While what we know about Yokota comes from her sister's memoir, Ogura's pride in her sister was well documented. Through a contact, Yokota became the first Japanese employee at Brown and Bigelow, a calendar company.[437] She was also the first Japanese American woman at the company, an intersection of race and gender.[438] This hire was particularly notable, as Ogura had experienced employment discrimination in the same city job earlier in July 1940 as she noted many companies exercising hiring restrictions against Japanese Americans.[439] Clearly, some changes had occurred in St. Paul between 1940, when Ogura experienced employment discrimination, and 1943, the year of Yokota's hiring. This was likely due to the severity of the wartime labor shortage.[440] The need for labor overrode concerns about Japanese heritage and people's perceptions of Japanese Americans had

[436] Stone, "Gladys Ishida Stone" in *Reflections,* 327-329.
[437] Ogura, "Mary Mariko Ogura" in *Reflections*, 82.
[438] Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," 139-167.
[439] Ogura, "Mary Mariko Ogura" in *Reflections*, 78.
[440] Dorn, *American Education*, 7.

changed in the three years between Ogura's employment discrimination situation and Yokota's hiring as the first Japanese American at Brown and Bigelow.

Maya Mitsuye Oye Uemura was a college student at Willamette College in Oregon when internment interrupted her education.[441] Her experiences in the internment camps motivated her.

> I was more determined than ever to complete my college education, because I felt there was so much about the world that I didn't understand. It also became clear to me that one's personal possessions could easily be taken away and would then mean nothing, but that one's thoughts and ideas could never be taken away.[442]

Uemura pursued a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology and psychology from Ohio Wesleyan University, determined to finish her education and study people's mental state, based on her own incarceration.[443] She reported that the postwar period bought about many unexpected changes in her life, including a Master's degree from Ohio State University.[444] Uemura's educational and vocational trajectory changed following internment. She altered her college major and profession based on her camp experiences in order to pursue a career in working with people in social work.

Another woman who pursued work in the mainstream economy in the private sector was Yoshi Uchiyama Tani. As a twenty-year old junior majoring in dietetics at the University of Washington, Seattle, Tani entered the camps and quickly found work as a

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[441] Maya Mitsuye Oye Uemura, "Maya Mitsuye Oye Uemura" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 344.
[442] Uemura, "Maya Mitsuye Oye Uemura" in *Reflections*, 365-366.
[443] Uemura, "Maya Mitsuye Oye Uemura" in *Reflections*, 352.
[444] Uemura, "Maya Mitsuye Oye Uemura" in *Reflections*, 353.

dietician at the Camp Harmony detention center in western Washington.[445] When Tani left the camp for work as a stenographer, her education and camp work experience as a dietician financially supported her family as Tani's husband pursued an ophthalmology residency in the mid-1950s.[446] Her ability to provide for her family was a disruption of patriarchal norms, where family life revolved around the father as the figurehead and breadwinner. Tani's ability to provide for her family while her husband was in training provided temporary reprieve from that patriarchal structure. Her entry into the workforce as a professional dietician in the mainstream economy was in part due to the wartime labor shortage but also due to her professional work experience in the camps. In the pre-war years, she likely would have been unable to find meaningful work related to her education. However, following release from incarceration, she found professional work related to her education and experience, building a life-long career. Tani continued to work professionally in many medical settings, including hospitals.[447]

For Kimi Yanari, already an exceptional case in the pre-war years working as a legal secretary for a white-owned law firm in Stockton, California, the internment interrupted a promising career. However, Yanari was resourceful and found work as a stenographer to leave camp. She later went to work for a prestigious law firm in Minnesota.[448] Yanari's legal secretarial position involved work with several lawyers who

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[445] Tani, "Yoshi Uchiyama Tani" in *Reflections,* 139.
[446] Tani, "Yoshi Uchiyama Tani" in *Reflections,* 139 and 145.
[447] Tani, "Yoshi Uchiyama Tani" in *Reflections,* 134-135.
[448] Kimi Yamada Yanari, "Kimi Yamada Yanari" in *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (Taiwan: Pacific Asia Press, 1994), ed. John Tsuchida, 166.

moved into roles such as supporting a future Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Warren Burger. Although her career had been interrupted, her employment in the law firm was indicative of a racially integrated workplace.[449] Further, her employment at a prestigious law firm working with aids to a future Supreme Court Justice was indicative of the normalization of working for white employers, a noted change from 1940, when only five percent of Japanese Americans reported to white employers.[450] While Yaniri had been part of the five percent in the pre-war years, her continued employment in the Midwest is part of the changing narrative on employment for Japanese American women. Few women of color worked in a professional clerical position in the pre-war years.[451] Yanari's legal secretarial role was indicative of the change in Japanese Americans' vocational trajectories that led them to work in mainstream economy in the private sector in the Midwest, a departure from ethnic economy work in pre-war years.

Ruth Nomura Tanbara's story was illustrative of the experiences of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Prior to internment, Tanbara was an educated professional working in the ethnic economy. Like many others described in Chapter 2, she found that her college credentials did not help her to obtain employment as a home economics teacher in public schools because of her Japanese ancestry.[452] As a result, she turned to the ethnic economy for work. She left the West Coast before internment because of the

[449] Yanari, "Kimi Yamada Yaniri" in *Reflections,* 169.
[450] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 36.
[451] As outlined in Chapter 2, most roles included domestic work, gardening, or produce stand workers.
[452] Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara" in *Reflections,* 61-62.

impending evacuation orders. After resettling in the Midwest, Tanbara obtained employment as Director of Adult Education at the YWCA in St. Paul, Minnesota.[453] Only by moving from the West Coast's established Jap Crow structure was Tanbara able to find work that closely aligned with her education and work as a professional in the mainstream economy.

Meanwhile, Esther Torrii Suzuki was about to head to the Minidoka internment camp in Idaho but was released two hours prior while still at the Portland Temporary Detention Center. She left to study sociology at Macalester College, which enabled her to pursue a career as a social worker.[454] Suzuki's experience in the detention center motivated her to study sociology and enter a vocational career.

These stories are part of an overarching narrative of Japanese American women who moved to the Midwest, found work in the mainstream economy, and integrated into the community, at least vocationally. However, the narrative must include note of the decimation of the ethnic economy and the systemic racism that took away the economic wealth of Japanese Americans, a racialized act of destruction. Against this context, moving into areas without an established ethnic economy, many Japanese Americans had no choice but to attempt to find work in the mainstream economy. Their efforts to break boundaries as the first of their heritage to obtain employment was commendable. The

[453] Tanbara, "Ruth Nomura Tanbara," in *Reflections,*34.
[454] Suzuki, "Esther Torri Suzuki" in *Reflections,* 103-104.

move away from the West Coast opened opportunities to obtain employment as professionals in the mainstream economy.

Back to the West Coast and Jap Crow

For many former West Coast Japanese American women, the move away from California and established discrimination during the war years led to opportunities for them. However, this research also explores the role of Jap Crow on the West Coast, specifically California, and the experiences of Japanese American women who returned to the West Coast. This exploration contributes to a national overview of the experience. In the stories and indicators, there were signs of the breakdown or perhaps takedown of Jap Crow. This was an interrelated struggle with African Americans and Jim Crow in the Los Angeles area.

There was a complicated racial hierarchy in California with Japanese Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and white Americans. Carey McWilliams, a government employee, author, and journalist, stated, "It was a foregone conclusion that Mexicans would be substituted as the major scapegoats when Japanese Americans were removed.[455] While the background of this move is interesting, what is most important to this study are the multiracial alliances between Mexicans and African Americans in response to violence from white American civilians and police officers during the war years, which changed the racial landscape in California, specifically in Los Angeles County.

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[455] As quoted in Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race.* Original Source McWilliams, *North From Mexico*, 206-216; Acuna, *Occupied America*, 254-56, November 1942, February, 9 and September 1943.

The buildup of the wartime industry was an opportunity for African Americans in Los Angeles to fight against discrimination in job hiring, certainly a norm in Jim Crow on the West Coast. Through a coordinated campaign, strategic leadership, and strategic patriotism, African Americans fought discrimination in hiring through an argument that the discrimination was unpatriotic to the war effort. Americans needed everyone to give their best, and discrimination in hiring was unproductive for the war effort, particularly in the defense industry. African Americans fought this campaign in the unions and the schools, putting forth a multipronged approach to developing a pipeline of trained workers. Their advocacy in bringing more than one thousand residents to a Los Angeles Board of Education resulted in creation of defense industry training programs at Jefferson High School within weeks of the demonstration. As a result of the campaign, Black defense industry employment reached 30,000 in 1943.[456] This notable change indicated change in employment patterns related to race in California in the war years.

It is against this racial context that one can understand the conditions for Japanese Americans as they returned to their homes following incarceration. Esther Nishio was the first Japanese American allowed to return to the West Coast, which sheds light on the changing racial landscape of southern California. Other Japanese Americans, including Dorothy (Okura) Yonemitsu, Katsumi Kunitsugu, Rose Honda, Haruko Sugi Hurt, found employment in the mainstream economy in professional roles. In the stories of these four women are rich descriptions of the changing racial climate in southern California.

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[456] Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race, 144.*

Esther Nishio was the first Japanese American to be allowed to return to the Western Defense Command on September 12, 1944, to attend Pasadena City College.[457] Her case was a test of whether the climate was right for Japanese Americans to return to the West Coast. Once her return to California was publicized, anti-Japanese groups predictably organized on the West Coast. These anti-Japanese "organizations like the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons and Daughters of the Golden West," protested at Pasadena's City College school board meetings and in newspapers. Nisho experienced discrimination and violence, described in her oral history.

> But I did run into ordinary citizens, and they would spit at me or call me Jap or something in that order. . . . And there was one little old lady in particular who[m] I would run into at the bus stop. She would always call me, Jap, and [say] Get out of here! And one day she slapped me.[458]

Even as Nishio encountered assault and discrimination, she received many letters of support, including from members of the armed forces. "A lot of servicemen would write to me and they would encourage me . . . and they said they had fought for the rights of people like us. And they didn't want anybody interfering with citizen's rights.[459] In fact, two soldiers, one from the East Coast and one from northern California, were so concerned for her safety that they traveled to Pasadena to ensure her protection. They left

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[457] Esther (Takei) Nishio, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000), 324-326.

[458] Nishio in *REgenerations*, 329-330.

[459] Nishio in *REgenerations*, 329.

when she reassured them that she was physically safe.[460] These soldiers and their attitudes were indications of changing sentiments regarding Japanese Americans, from being seen as the enemy to being seen as Americans.

The support by the armed forces was critical in turning the tide of hate in the anti-Japanese groups, including the American Legion, and in the American public on the West Coast. A letter sent to Nishio on September 23, 1944, captured this sentiment.

> Dear Ms. Takei, I am on a night watch at this moment and can find no other paper on which to write than this scratch pad. I am sure you will not mind. I have just read in tonight's paper of the attempts being made by, no doubt sincere but, misguided Pasadena citizens to deprive you of your constitutional rights of your attendance at PJC. I note that great stress is laid in this newspaper account on the somewhat irrelevant fact that many of those persons interested in your banishment have "relatives in the armed services." And I am myself. I am of course, not empowered to speak for anyone but myself, but I surely have at least as much justification to speak for the services as do people who do not wear the uniform at all. This is what I wish to say.
>
> We in the service are aware that war is being waged not only upon us as a people, but also upon our form our government, our democracy. We are, therefore, defending not only our geographical boundaries, but our ideas as well. The attack upon our ideas moreover, is not confined to military theaters alone, but is worldwide, and occurs daily in the United States itself.
>
> It is of little consequence that the attack is often made by well-meaning citizens who do not realize what is that they do. Indeed, such an attack upon an American constitutional government and a Constitution guarantee is quite apt to be the most dangerous and hard to parry off all attacks.
>
> Such is the case in Pasadena, I believe. Therefore, I hope and write to you to express the hope that you will be of good cheer and stand fast in your own little battle zone. Your importance as a person is nothing. In a larger sense your importance as an example of what can be done or also cannot be done to an

[460] Nishio in *REgenerations*, 331.

> American citizen. With my very best wishes, I remain your friend—his name is blocked out. Chief Yeoman, USNR.[461]

This letter is emblematic of the shift in thinking of some white Americans, including West Coast residents who had formerly been complicit in the Jap Crow structure. Everyone deserved freedom to live their lives, including Japanese Americans.

Aside from the servicemen, other white Americans took a role in desegregation in southern California, including Dr. Harold Alexander, an ophthalmologist, who befriended all *Nisei* students at Pasadena City College. Nishio recalled that "he broke the door down to let us go to places that were not open to us. I recall he took us many times to attend concerts at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium."[462] Esther also remembered her friend from Gila River Internment camp, who was out about town with Dr. Alexander.

> I can't go there with you. I'm not allowed to go in. They don't allow Japanese go to in there. He said, "Never mind. I've got my uniform on. You're with me, we're going in." She said that he took her in there and they went dancing.[463]

Segregation was being challenged by white soldiers who returned from the war. While the breakdown of Jap Crow structures on the West Coast was a gradual process, these examples point to signs of decreased discrimination, which ultimately led to greater mobility for Japanese Americans in the work place, in contrast to conditions described in Chapter 2, with the strong Jap Crow structure.

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[461] As recounted in Esther (Takei) Nishio in *REgenerations*, 339.
[462] Nishio in *REgenerations*, 340.
[463] Nishio in *REgenerations*, 340.

As other Japanese Americans returned to the West Coast, their stories are important to understanding changes in employment patterns. Dorothy (Okura) Yonemitsu, who recounted her story in an interview for the Japanese American National Museum REgenerations project, was one such women whose vocational trajectory changed. Her father owned a florist business in Los Angeles and, as was typical of a family business, her mother was the accountant and their three daughters helped to run the business. While it was not explicitly stated, their labor was likely unpaid labor. With her mother's emotional support and encouragement, Yonemitsu attended and graduated from UCLA in 1940. Similar to others mentioned in Chapter 2, her challenge was to find employment. "The real problem would be how to find a job. Even with a UCLA diploma, I was not in the market yet for a social work job."[464] Before she found a social work position in Los Angeles, war broke out and she was forced into the camps. At Heart Mountain internment camp, she found employment as a social worker, conducting home visits and responding to domestic and children issues.[465] This professional work experience in the camp was important to her long-term vocational trajectory.

From Heart Mountain, Yonemitsu attended the New York School of Social Work, which two years later became the Columbia School of Social Work. The Friends Service Society, a group helping Japanese American students, was instrumental in helping her to

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[464] Dorothy (Okura) Yonemitsu, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* vol. 3 (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and the Japanese American Resource Center/Museum, 2000), 286.

[465] Yonemitsu in *REgenerations,* 290.

afford school tuition and living expenses. Yonemitsu graduated with a Master of Social Work degree and went on to work in social services at New York Hospital, a part of the Cornell Medical Center.[466] As she gained experience in social work, her experiences were broadened, which enabled her to be a competitive candidate for work in the mainstream economy. That work experience, along with her graduate degree, were likely critical factors in helping her to gain employment in the mainstream economy. She continued in the profession after moving back to San Diego in 1951, working in hospital settings; she eventually advanced to a director role.[467] Yonemitsu is an example of a Japanese American woman whose camp employment experience propelled her long-term vocational trajectory. Her work in the mainstream economy is a testament to changed trajectories for Japanese American women who had previously worked in the ethnic economy or in menial labor.

Katsumi Kunitsugu, a Los Angeles native whose oral interview was transcribed in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era*, was a high school student at Roosevelt High School, planning to attend college. While Kunitsugu already harbored writing aspirations, her time at Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming gave her actual employment experience in that area. In the internment camp, she was managing editor of the school newspaper and wrote for *The Heart Mountain Sentinel*, the camp newspaper, following graduation. Kunitsugu left

[466] Yonemitsu in *REgenerations,* 290.
[467] Yonemitsu in *REgenerations,* 290.

Heart Mountain to study journalism at the University of Wisconsin, one of the leading programs for journalism at the time, and continued her career as a newspaper reporter for another two decades.[468] While Katsumi was not in the vocational education program, her work experience in the camp managing the school newspaper and then reporting for *The Heart Mountain Sentinel* were key factors in her educational and vocational trajectories following internment. She worked for a Japanese American newspaper, *Crossroads* after internment; her time in the camp shaped her professional career as a journalist.[469] Katsumi's vocational trajectory was heavily influenced by her educational and employment experiences in camp.

For some women, it was a vocational change; for others, their educational trajectory changed completely after internment. For example, Haruko Sugi Hurt, prior to internment, was not able to attend college due to family financial constraints. Due to a lack of college education, Hurt worked in the sewing industry in the ethnic economy and then in domestic work.[470] After a brief incarceration at Rowher Internment Camp in Arkansas, Hart obtained permission to leave for a domestic position in Chicago. Once in Chicago, she found work with the federal government and eventually joined the Women's Army Corp just before WWII ended. Hart used G.I. Bill benefits to obtain bachelor's and master degrees from the University of Southern California after the war.[471]

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[468] Kunitsugu in *REgenerations,* 243 & 253.
[469] Kunitsugu in *REgenerations,* 259.
[470] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 147-155.
[471] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 155.

Being in Chicago and working for the federal government had influenced Hurt to join the Women's Army Corp, which enabled her to gain access to an education that she could not have afforded before the war. Her educational trajectory completely changed following internment. With her college and graduate education, Hurt worked as a teacher at an adult school, a noted departure from the unskilled work at which she was employed before internment.[472] Both her education and employment trajectory showed an upward arc in the years following internment.

For others leaving the camps as they were coming of age, the racial climate to which returned on the West Coast was slowly starting to change. Rose Honda graduated from Manzanar High School in 1945 and, after incarceration, returned to Los Angeles County. Upon return, she attended Santa Monica College. Shortly afterward, she applied to become a student aide with the Santa Monica Board of Education. Honda described her trepidation in applying. "I was scared. I think of I was scared in terms of, well, will they really accept me? Or will they hire me? I kind of had that feeling, because I was Japanese."[473] Regardless of her fears, which were certainly valid, given the hostile conditions to which Japanese Americans returned on the West Coast, she was hired as a teacher's aide. After graduation from Santa Monica College, Honda was hired as a full-time teacher and worked there thirty-nine years, retiring as Director of the John Adams Childcare Center. Honda's employment as a teacher in Santa Monica was indicative of

[472] Hurt, *REgenerations,* 167-168.
[473] Honda, *REgenerations,* 100.

the change in employment discrimination in the Los Angeles area. This marked change from conditions described in Chapter 2 would have been unthinkable in the Jap Crow era, when there was not a single public school teacher in the greater Los Angeles area where more than 30,000 Japanese Americans resided.[474] The culture in the Los Angeles area changed and Honda's vocational trajectory was indicative of the breakdown of Jap Crow in southern California.

Hisako (Inamura) Koike was in junior high school when the internment occurred; she returned to San Diego afterward to finish high school, as she discussed in her oral history interview with JANM. She attended San Diego State University, majoring in education. Following graduation, she received three job offers from schools in the San Diego area. She accepted a position with the San Diego City School District. It was reported that she was the first Japanese American hired in that school district.[475] Koike described teaching physical education to a "primarily all white Caucasian" student population.[476] Honda was in Los Angeles County and San Diego was about one hundred twenty miles away. Only six years after the end of internment, Koike was teaching white students in San Diego. Her role in teaching white students illustrated the breakdown of Jap Crow on the West Coast.[477] Both Honda and Koike taking on professional positions

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[474] Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow*, 36.

[475] Hisako (Inamura) Koike, Transcript of oral history in 1998 in *REgenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* vol. 2 (Los Angeles, CA: Japanese American National Museum in collaboration with the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego, and Japanese American Resource Center and Museum, 2000), 184-185.

[476] Koike in *REgenerations*, 185.

[477] Koike in *REgenerations*, 185.

as educators in southern California indicated the change in racialized practices on the West Coast.

For all of the Japanese American women discussed in this chapter, internment interrupted life and changed trajectories, whether through education or vocation. In these narratives, there was an indication of the breakdown of Jap Crow and a changing landscape of racialized hierarchies in southern California, as well as nationally. The presence of white soldiers in confronting discrimination and segregation served as indications of the breakdown or takedown of Jap Crow, specifically on the West Coast.

Chapter Summary

In revisiting the explosive growth in the number of Japanese American women in professional employment and the questions that this raised, this chapter outlined conditions that influenced growth and the role of internment and forced relocation. Nationwide, the number of Japanese Americans in professional roles grew from 430 to 7,790 from 1940 to 1950; the clerical field grew from 2,175 to 28,840 in the same time period.[478] While the period of internment was from 1942 to 1946, the legacy of education and employment in the camps lasted far beyond those four years. Because of the disruption in patriarchal patterns and the decreased obligation of time for preparing meals and cleaning enabled Japanese American women to take classes in the vocational

[478] U.S. Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Nonwhite Population by Race," Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, 2, 7, 98-99 & U.S. Census Bureau, "Employment and Personal Characteristics," United States Census of Population: 1950, 3B-37-3B-41. Figures from the 1950 was on a 20 point scale and adjusted to a 100 point scale.

education program and to work in the camps as they gained valuable skills and employment experience. They took advantage of the wartime labor shortage and moved away from Jap Crow on the West Coast, taking jobs in the mainstream economy on the East Coast and in the Midwest. With decreased discrimination and the need for labor, Japanese American women gained access to jobs to which they had no access previously. Japanese American women who were discussed in this chapter and those who were reflected in the census data experienced upward educational and vocational trajectories, in part due to the vocational education programs and camp employment experiences. As they gained access to professional employment in the mainstream economy in female-leaning careers such as teaching, dietetics, and social work, their educational and vocational trajectories changed following internment.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF OPPRESSION

A Story To Tell

Homeless, we were once,
Forced out from our West Coast homes –
But there were those who proclaimed,
we looked like the enemy.
Barbed wire fences –
On the outside, stood armed guards –
Prisoners, were we –
Yet, we managed to survive,
Unbroken, like the bamboo.
Justice did prevail –
World War II is history,
Freedom lost, regained,
Minnesota, "Home sweet home" –
We have a story to tell.
(Yoshi Uchiyama Tani)[479]

Yoshi Uchiyama Tani's poignant poem is a beautiful portrayal of the experiences of Japanese Americans in internment. Torn from their homes on the West Coast by racist ideologies, Japanese American women were resilient in spite of an unjust incarceration—strong as bamboo, unbroken. Despite the challenges of being ripped from their homes and incarcerated, these women defied the odds by building their lives and forging their stories in their new homes. Despite being called the enemy in their own county and treated as prisoners of war behind barbed wire fences, they regained their freedom, both physically and philosophically. In Tani's case, her life trajectory took her to Minnesota, a

[479] Tani, "Yoshi Uchiyama Tani" in *Reflections,* xli.

changed trajectory from her life in Seattle before the war and freedom from the oppressive restrictions on her life from Jap Crow.

Tani's life as a Japanese American woman whose life was interrupted by the internment evoked my interest in courses taught by Dr. Margaret Nash called History of Education and Education and Gender. She gave students an option to write a longer final term paper for both courses versus two individual papers. Thus began a paper on how the experiences of women differed from the experiences of men in internment camps. This spark of curiosity evolved over the years with discovery of the primary sources found in person and digitally. Fortunate to live in southern California, I collected primary sources from the JANM and the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History Center. Digitally the in-depth resources of Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project provided rich information in camp newspapers from Gila. As I reviewed both types of archives, I was led to study vocational education. The original research questions centered on the long-term educational and vocational trajectories of Japanese American women.

Newspaper articles on education and employment provided extensive data on education, specifically vocational education in the camps. Against this backdrop, the dissertation study started to form in unanticipated ways. As a result, the study required refinement of research questions and the historiography, which changed based on the journey in the archives. As the questions evolved, the role of race was a prominent factor in structural racism via Jap Crow, the role of interracial relationships generally with

whites and at times African American, and the effects of WWII on the economy and wartime labor shortages. All of these factors found a home in this dissertation.

Despite not intending to examine vocational education, I found a rich community-based program of learning in camps for internees of all ages and both genders. As a result of patriarchy, the women's experience differed from that of men in that their unpaid labor to maintain households was a communal experience maintained by the WRA. The vocational education program was free of charge, allowing women to explore their interests and, in the process, gain employable skills. The employment experiences in the internment camps played an important role in helping Japanese American women to obtain employment after camp and guided many professional careers for years to come. For many of the women discussed in this dissertation, incarceration had an impact on their long-term trajectories through improved educational outcomes and increased income potential due to access to professional and semiprofessional careers in the mainstream economy, first in the Midwest and later as some moved back to the West Coast, specifically to southern California. This change in vocational trajectories demonstrated the breakdown of the Jap Crow discriminatory practices on the West Coast.

Vocational education during WWII encompassed more than preparing workers for the defense industry, which disrupts the current narrative in vocational education history. Japanese American internees in the camps were trained for a wide range of professions that were experiencing a wartime labor shortage: secretaries, stenographers, teachers, nurses, nurse's aides, and dental aides. These fields were clearly vocations outside of the defense industry. Vocational education inside the camps differed from

vocational education outside of the camps by offering both professional and semiprofessional career paths. This study of Asian Americans in vocational education in a historical setting brings together two bodies of research: Asian American history and the history of vocational education. These two fields have not been in conversation prior to this study.

This dissertation provides nuance in research on the internment, finding an improved life trajectory for some Japanese American women and establishing that the vocational education program in camps and the camp employment experience had long-term impacts on their career paths. While the original injustices of the internment camps prevail, this research challenges researchers to continue to identify other unintended outcomes from the internment that will lead to nuanced understanding of the impacts of internment on the Japanese American population.

Left Behind

While many Japanese American women improved their life trajectories after the internment, this was not the case for all women. Two women's stories emerged in which the life trajectory took a downward turn. Margie Fujiyama's educational opportunities diminished due to internment and a continued sense of filial responsibility. Hannah Holmes, a deaf woman, had a clearly altered life path because of the interruption in her education due to internment. While both of their stories were in the minority in this research, it is important to note that not all women had an upward educational and vocational trajectory following WWII.

Margie Fujiyama had planned to attend college. As she finished her last two years of high school in the Poston internment camp, she focused on commercial subjects: shorthand, typing and bookkeeping. She left the camp's business secretarial school in direct response to her parents' hesitation to have her attend college in a town where they did not know anyone. She was able to attend business secretarial school in St. Louis only because a family friend live there.[480] Graduation from college rather than secretarial school would have changed the types of employment for which she would be eligible. Unfortunately, her oral history did not reveal her life trajectory after the war.

While there was not much information on Fujiyama, I inadvertently found much information on Hannah Holmes in the oral histories archives at California State University, Fullerton. Holmes's identity as a deaf Japanese American woman meant that her experience at the intersection of her identities made her an exceptional case in the 120,000 internees. Despite the exceptionalism of her story, it is an important one. Her internment experience was one of disrupted education, as she testified before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians:

> I want the commission to know how Japanese children were excluded from every public institution for deaf, blind, and the handicapped on the West Coast of the United States. I want the commission to know how our educational needs were neglected by the War Relocation Authority.[481]

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[480] Margie Fujiyama to Susan Fowler. June 11 and 12, 1973. Japanese American Evacuation Oral History 1383. Oral History Center at California State University, Fullerton.

[481] Hannah Tomiko Holmes. Memo to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1-2. Japanese American Evacuation Oral History 1383. Oral History Center at California State University, Fullerton.

As a 13-year-old student at the California School for the Deaf, Holmes was forced to leave the school for Manzanar internment camp on May 28, 1942, where her education was at first nonexistent and then marginal at best.[482] Holmes testified, "Although some education was offered to non-handicapped children at Manzanar, including classes through high school, children who suffered from handicaps had to do without. In my own case, I had no education or training at all."[483] Depending on their needs, some children received some educational service but others received none.

Holmes's educational memo written by her "teacher," E. Thomas, discusses her education at Manzanar. In a scant page and a half, it describes how she was asked to lip read despite her training in sign language at the California School for the Deaf. Starting in May 1943, she met with a teacher for three hours every week.[484] Hannah had no education from May 28, 1942, to January 1943, a period of eight months. Hannah went from being a full-time student at what she considered to be the best deaf school in the country to no education in the internment camp, despite her own and her parents' efforts to continue her education.

Holmes's year at Manzanar left her without an education. In describing her experiences, she states, "I felt terribly isolated from the other children at Manzanar. I could not communicate with them. Somehow, I managed to work at the camouflage net

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[482] Axford ed.. *Too Long Been Silent,* 36.

[483] Hannah Tomiko Holmes. Memo to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 4-5. Japanese American Evacuation Oral History 1383. Oral History Center at California State University, Fullerton.

[484] E. Thomas. Memo on Hannah Holmes education from the War Relocation Authority. Part of Hannah Holmes folder at the California State University, Fullerton's Center for Oral and Public History

factory, and I tried to continue my education on my own by reading a lot."[485] Holmes's resilience enabled her to get a camp job with the camouflage net factory, where she could work despite her deafness, and to further her education through continued individual actions, such as gaining access to the library.

Even after Holmes's family was released from incarceration, she experienced challenges as she enrolled in the Alexander Graham Bell School in Chicago. Unfortunately, this was not the best school for her because of their approach to teaching lip reading versus American Sign Language, in which she had been trained previously. Holmes was finally able to continue her education as the first *Nisei* to enroll at the Illinois School for the Deaf in September 1944. However, this step was too little and too late after missing two critical years of education. The realities of going from what she considered one of the best schools for the deaf, the California School for the Deaf, which prepared students for Gallaudet College for the Deaf, to the Illinois School for the Deaf two years later meant that she was not prepared to take college exams.[486] This was a direct result of being forced to leave her school due to internment orders:

> With no college education, I was not happy with the work I was doing and was never satisfied with myself as a second-class citizen. I was trapped in low-paying jobs which offered me no chance for advancement. While in Chicago, I worked as a candy-packer, seamstress, file clerk, painter, and radio assembler.[487]

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[485] Hannah Tomiko Holmes. Memo to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 5. Japanese American Evacuation Oral History 1383. Oral History Center at California State University, Fullerton.

[486] Hannah Holmes, "Hannah Takagi Holmes" in *Too Long Been Silent: Japanese Americans Speak Out* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Media Publishing and Marketing), ed. Roger W. Axford, 36-37.

[487] Holmes, "Hannah Takagi Holmes," in *Too Long Been Silent,* 38.

The institutional oppression and neglect of Holmes's education had a profound negative impact on her educational and life trajectory.

Both Holmes's and Fujiyama's stories show that, while some Japanese American women experienced upward vocational and educational trajectories, there are clearly nuances in that narrative. While both of these stories were not the norm in this research, the experiences raise questions for future research on the experiences of Japanese Americans in internment and their impact on their lifelong trajectory.

In the Spotlight

At the beginning of this research, I was motivated to study one particularly exceptional Japanese American woman, Miné Okubu. Even before internment, Okubo was an exceptionally talented artist working under Diego Rivera in San Francisco. She was already starting to establish her name in the artistic community and likely would have kept moving forward in this career.

My interest in Okubo arose because of a recent gift from her family to the Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties at Riverside City College, consisting of more than 8,000 pieces of art, professional papers, and personal memorabilia. As one of the first scholars with access to this collection, I learned about this inquisitive woman whose life was defined by years of incarceration and whose artwork reflected that period in her life.

Forever known and associated with her artwork around the internment, Okubo is best known for her depiction of life behind the barbed wire in her drawings for Citizen 13660 and artwork for a *Fortune* magazine article depicting the incarceration. *Fortune*

magazine offered her employment as a commercial artist, which allowed her to be released from incarceration and resettle in New York City.[488]

Okubo's life was a contradiction in point. On the one hand, as a rising artist, she secured employment and left the camp, moving to New York City. She was a commercial artist for a while, earning a living through her skill set. However, after a time, Okubo resisted the commercial aspect of art to pursue her own artistic passions. Supported by a few individuals, Okubo staged exhibitions, taught, and created artwork that fed her soul. Certainly, the internment defined her art, but her life's work was so much more than the internment.

Limitations of the Study

While the 110,000 to 120,000 Japanese Americans in the internment camps were a small number of people relative to the population of the United States, their incarceration provides important and unique insights into minoritized experiences in the United States. Data are limited to available sources of information, including memoirs and oral histories. While memoirs and oral histories of the women are a rich source of information, only community members who volunteered provided their stories. While Margie Fujiyama's story of a downward educational trajectory was an outlier in this research, there is likely a large number of Japanese American internees who continued to stay silent on the internment experience until death.

[488] Betty La Duke, "On the Right Road: The Life of Miné Okubo," *Art Education* 40, no 3 (1987): 42-48.

This dissertation study operated off a gender binary with men and women or male and female in the patriarchal framework of heteronormativity. While some women in the study might not have fit into the heteronormative framework, all operated in patriarchal structures. In this gender framework, there is still much room for additional research.

This research argues that impacts of the internment, sociopolitical conditions, and the wartime labor shortage created conditions for some Japanese American women to have an upward educational and vocational trajectory. However, the impacts of this upward trajectory must still be understood in relation to the damage done to the ethnic economy. The upward advancement of some Asian Americans in this time period does not negate the severe damage of the internment to Japanese Americans.

New Directions for Research

While this research revealed improved educational and vocational trajectories for some Japanese American women, questions remain. Hannah Holmes may have been an exceptional case, but her story provokes questions about how students who had special needs and physical handicaps were treated and whether this treatment mirrored that of society. How were those with special needs who were marginalized by society affected by this wartime incarceration? How did the intersectionality of their identities in race, ability, and, for some, gender influence them in ways different from those of other internees? While there was one government report in the WRA records on the education of students with special needs, more research should be done on this topic.

While memoirs and oral histories were a rich source of information, questions should be asked of those who did not participate in such projects and how their

experiences affect the state of research on internment and the experiences of the Japanese Americans. Questions of class and socioeconomic status could identify other mitigating factors to add nuance to understanding the internment experience.

While the cases of exceptional Japanese Americans have been examined, what of those who were unexceptional in life? How can one measure the impact of internment on those who consciously chose to stay silent and did not participate in oral histories, memoirs, and other ways of recording their experiences in the camps? What of those who lived ordinary lives or those from a low socioeconomic class? What were their stories and the impact of interment on them? What are other ways to capture the stories of those who chose not to voice their stories?

Further research can illuminate more about America's complex racial landscape during WWII. Both Kurashige's and Briones's research de-center whiteness and focus on interracial relationships between minoritized groups. Both focus on relationships between Japanese Americans and African Americans. Kurashige briefly discusses the role of Mexican Americans taking the place of Japanese Americans as scapegoats. David Garcia touches briefly on Japanese Americans as the model minority in his research in Oxnard. I also touch briefly on the shifting racial landscape in this time period. However, in-depth research on the shifting racial landscape both nationally and in California would illuminate how groups shifted in a racialized hierarchy with whites at the top of the pecking order. Particularly as the rest of the country's demographics continue to shift, research on the history of California's racial landscape can shed insight into how to respond to these demographic changes as other parts of the country continue to diversify.

The focus on binary gender norms in this study was extremely limiting. John Howard's book provided a nice critique on heteronormativity and gender nonconformity in the camps and provided examples of possible same-gender relationships. The internment camps would be an ideal site for examination of gender policing for those who refused to conform to patriarchal ideals. All of these ideas point to thinking about race and gender in new ways.

Conclusion

What happens when two bodies of literature are brought into conversation with each other? How does this create an intersection in the existing research to offer a different lens through which to view it? What happens when Asian Americans are seen through a non-model minority lens to understand the nuances of their experiences? Should vocational education of Asian Americans, particularly Southeast Asian refugees, be examined? Would that history of Asian Americans and vocational education differ from those in the current study? What type of racialized oppression did those groups face and how did they deal with those challenges?

In the current divided racial climate of the United States, with many acknowledging the role of systemic racism in the foundation of the country's judicial system and others denying that systemic racism exists, it is important to elevate the discourse on understanding the systemic nature of racism to examine how minoritized groups are affected. What does the federal government's ban on diversity training and critical race theory mean for student communities of color? While systems of oppressions

have historically oppressed all minoritized groups in the United States, manifestation of oppression differs according to the minoritized group.

It is not enough to focus on the history of those who have been marginalized. Researchers must critically self-reflect on their role in the process, their motivations, and the role of this research in the field. How can the field acknowledge the lens that researcher bring into the work? All historians have some type of theoretical orientation, whether or not it is acknowledged. As an Asian American woman, I was interested in the experiences of fellow Asian American women, in this case the experiences of Japanese American women. I spent seven years exploring their stories and now I leave with the words of one of them. It seems fitting to return to the words of Taj Shigaki referenced in the beginning of the dissertation.

> Minnesota was a breath of fresh air; I felt accepted and not put down. I was in many situations in which I was a novelty, which opened doors for me. Once permitted in, I made the most of the opportunities to be my own person and to help others to discover that our differences need not be a barrier. In the process, I hope that I bridged the gap of understanding with individuals and groups who might not have exposed themselves to outsiders.[489]

[489] Shigaki, "Taj Shigaki" in *Reflections*, 280.

APPENDIX

SOURCES

Oral and Transcribed Interviews Consulted From the Lawrence De Graaf Center for Oral History at California State University, Fullerton

Sue Kunitomi Embrey
Margie Fujiyama
Ishida Seiko
George and Miki Kaihara
Mine Kaneko
Kanno Mako Maki
Katsumi Kunitsugu
Misako Miheki
Mary Nitta
Yoshi Mary Tashima
Aiko Taniamchi Endo
Hannah Holmes
Amy Uno Ishi
Shiza Kamei
J. & K. Kishiyama
Irene Kobayashi
Betty Oba Masukawa
Men Hanako Nakashima
Elaine Okimoto
Emi Yamaki

Transcribed Interviews From *Re-Gen-Er-a-Tions Oral History Project: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era* (listed in published order)

Los Angeles
Rose Honda
Huruko (Sugi) Hurt
Mary (Nishi) Ishizuka
Katsumi (Hirooka) Kunitsugu
Marion (Funakoshi) Manaka
Esther (Takei) Nishio
Sakaye Shigekawa

San Diego
Kay (Torio) Fuamizu
Umeko (Mamiya) Kawamoto
Hisako (Inamura) Koike
Ruth Takahashi Voorhies
Dorothy (Okura) Yonemitsu

San Francisco
Masayo (Yusui) Arii
Katie T. (Koga) Hironaka
Hatsu (Matsumoto) Kanemoto
Tetsuko (Okida) Zaima

Memoirs from *Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota* (listed in published order)

Ruth Nomura Tanbara
Esther Torii Suzuki
Kimi Yamada Yanari
Toshiko Baba Yoneji
Martha Inouye Oye
Maye Mitsuye Oye Uemura
Chisako Joyce Hirabayashi
Mary Mariko Ogura
Yoshi Uchiyami Tani
Haruko Kuramoto Hashimto
Tai Shigaki
Gladys Ishida Stone
Alice Abe Matsumoto
Mary Takao Yoshia

Interviews Consulted From *Too Long Been Silent* & *Justice for All*

Amy Okagaki and Esther Stone Mabel Ota—Poston Mary Tsukamoto—Jerome

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