2004

Japanese Americans in Redwood City : a local history

Jagruti Patel
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Patel, Jagruti, "Japanese Americans in Redwood City : a local history" (2004). *Master's Theses*. 2625.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.fj9z-d6rj>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/2625

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

JAPANESE AMERICANS IN REDWOOD CITY: A LOCAL HISTORY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Jagruti Patel

June 2004

UMI Number: 1424496

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 1424496

Copyright 2005 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2004

Jagruti Patel

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dr. Wendy Ng

Dr. Bruce Reynolds

Dr. Stanley Underdal

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

JAPANESE AMERICANS IN REDWOOD CITY: A LOCAL HISTORY

By Jagruti Patel

This is a thesis about the lives of several Japanese Americans who immigrated to Redwood City before and after World War II. In Redwood City, the Japanese American community found themselves living in an area where they were tolerated when most other areas in California were hostile towards them. This thesis will present a social history of the Japanese American community and their interaction and accommodation with the majority white population.

Following the lives of Japanese American chrysanthemum business owners in Redwood City reveals the impact of their community on this town before and a little after World War II. Today, Redwood City is predominantly populated by Latinos and the history of the Japanese Americans in Redwood City has not been researched. A topic of this type will help us not to forget an important part of Redwood City's history.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

	1
Sources of Information	7

Chapter 2: Prewar

	9
Asian Exclusion	9
Anti-Japanese Sentiments in California	11
Anti-Japanese Laws and how Redwood City Japanese Coped	15
Life in Redwood City	17
The Chrysanthemum Industry in Redwood City	20

Chapter 3: Incarceration

	25
Redwood City Japanese and non-Japanese Reactions about Internment	25
Joseph Elmer Morrish and his Relationship with the Japanese Americans	34

Chapter 4: Post War

	41
Reactions towards the End of Internment	41

Chapter 5: Final Ties

48

Redwood City Today

48

Conclusion

53

Chapter 6: Bibliography

55

Chapter 7: Appendix

60

I, Too, Am an American

60

Chapter 1: Introduction

Migrations to the western part of America came from various areas, both from the Eastern part of the United States and from foreign countries. The West experienced a diversification that no other area in America had during the latter part of the 1800s.

In 1849 the California Gold Rush attracted immigrants from across the world to the Sierra Mountains in California. The first group of Asian settlers that came to California was the Chinese. Competition ran high because gold was scarce and many people from different ethnic groups were searching for it. After the Gold Rush ended, many Chinese moved to different parts of California and worked as farmers and factory workers. Seeing the Chinese hired before themselves, many whites formed discriminatory attitudes against this group and pushed Congress to create acts to hinder it from prospering. When the Chinese Exclusion Act banned China from sending laborers to the United States, a shortage of farm labor developed throughout California and Japan was encouraged to send laborers to America. Before this, however, many Japanese moved to Hawaii for the same reason. Sugar plantation owners needed labor and called upon the Japanese to fill this position. The Japanese began migrating to Hawaii after 1884 when the Japanese

government signed a contract with Hawaiian sugar plantation owners.¹ Once the Japanese were encouraged to come to California in the 1890s to fill in labor shortages, many came from Hawaii. By 1908 Americans saw the Japanese immigration as competition in the labor sector. They believed the Japanese were taking away jobs and influenced President Roosevelt to create The Gentlemen's Agreement in order to halt Japanese labor immigrants from entering America.

The influx of Japanese into America cannot solely be based on encouragement by America; many Japanese who were dissatisfied with their lives in their native land immigrated to the western parts of the United States. Some fled Japan in order to improve their economic condition while others came as birds of passage; they came temporarily to America, made some money, and returned to Japan to share their earnings with their families. A majority of the Japanese who emigrated to America resided in California. By 1930, 138,834 Japanese were living in the United States, 87,456 of them in California.² The Japanese use distinct words in order to distinguish between first-generation immigrants and second-generation Japanese. Those living in America, but were born in Japan were called, "Issei," their children born in the United States, and hence United States citizens, were called "Nisei." This

¹ The Library of Congress, 2000, <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/japanese2.html>, accessed 6 August 2004.

² Yamato Ichihashi, *Japanese in the United States* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 94-96.

social history will focus on the Japanese Americans living in Redwood City, in Northern California.

A small town, Redwood City in San Mateo County, is located twenty miles south of San Francisco and five miles southeast of the town of San Mateo. Redwood City developed from shipping activity along the San Francisco Bay wharf involving lumber, shingles, hay, and wheat. By 1856, other wharf side industries included shipbuilding, blacksmithing, and, later, several tanneries.³

Because Redwood City residents focused on port business, they gave less attention to the area's agricultural potential. Redwood City's climate would prove to be the most important asset of the area; however, as according to a recent study on California's climates, Redwood City's weather is great for sustaining plants.⁴ With its flat land, fertile soil, and temperate climate Redwood City appealed to many migrants during the 1880s, particularly for the Japanese.

Before World War II, the Japanese established themselves as pioneers in several different business sectors within California; one was working in agriculture. Many Japanese immigrants in the San Francisco

³ Russel Dotsen, *Redwood City Historic Tours* (Redwood City: Historic Resources Advisory Committee, 1995), 7.

⁴ Paul Tritenbach, *"California's Climates" Your Friendly Guide to California's Cornucopia of Climates* (Bishop: Excellence Press, 1999), 75. Tritenbach explains that weather is "recorded hourly, or twice daily and averaged by months and then over many years. These long-term calculations and compilations inform us about the Climate of where we live." Page 12.

Bay Area established themselves in the floral industry. The Japanese American Citizens League found:

Flower growers began arriving on the Peninsula after the 1906 earthquake...in Redwood City, land was subdivided into approximately five-acre parcels, this being the primary reason for bringing growers to the Peninsula.⁵

The large, open area of land was not the only reason Redwood City attracted the Japanese; the climate was conducive for flower growing. A “Welcome to Redwood City” banner to this day hangs above Jefferson Avenue, and underneath the greeting is a famous quote created in the 1930s to lure people to the city that says, “Voted Best by Government Test.”⁶ The attractive climate, coupled with the availability of fertile land drew the Japanese to the area.

⁵ San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, *1872-1942: A Community Story* (The San Mateo: JACL, 1981), 19.

⁶ Redwood City Chamber of Commerce, newsletter, 24 April 1942, folder I-2 844 oversize, San Mateo County Museum Archives. Redwood City takes pride in its great temperate Mediterranean climate. To this day a big sign with the catchy slogan, “Climate Best By Government Test,” is mounted above Broadway as one enters the heart of Redwood City. In my research I came across newsletters written by the Redwood City Chamber of Commerce. In these letters, they update board members on political, California and RWC population stats, community, and economic happenings in Redwood City. They occasionally include poems, famous quotes, and quirky notes. A poem was written about Redwood City’s climate on April 24, 1942. Titled “Redwood City’s Climate,” the author wrote: “Her winters are mild, no ice in the pool; fine place to live, summers are cool. Never too hot, never too cold; rains just right, sunshine of gold. No adverse winds, warm summer sun, never have snow, of sleet there is none. No winter coats, fuel costs low, no rubber boots needed for old slushy snow. Freedom from fogs, but breeze from the sea, air almost perfect if you’re asking me. Cyclones unknown, tornados are too, horrid old hurricanes are also taboo. “Climate Best By Government Test” suits me fine after seeing the rest. If you would like the most perfect clim(ate), won’t you come up and see me some time?”

The Enmoto family came to Redwood City in 1901, during a time when anti-Japanese sentiment was forming throughout California. They found the area suitable for chrysanthemum growing. Tolerance of the Japanese by Redwood City residents allowed Eikichi and Sadakusi Enmoto to introduce chrysanthemums, the main type of flower grown in the area.⁷ The Enmotos created a market by shipping their flowers across the United States. While establishing their business, they helped other Japanese establish their own flower productions. Sadakusi's grandson proudly states:

I think my grandfather was a real pioneer, he came over here in 1898 when he was 18 yr old (and) didn't speak a word of English. He was a houseboy for quite a while in San Francisco and on the Peninsula he eventually settled in Redwood City and with his brother started a nursery in Redwood City.⁸

In 1926, the Chamber of Commerce declared Redwood City the chrysanthemum center of the world as local yearly income from the crop was more than seven million dollars.⁹ Because Redwood City residents were tolerant of Japanese settlement in the area, Japanese immigrants were able to build thriving chrysanthemum-growing businesses. These Japanese found themselves living in an area where they were tolerated when people in most other areas in California were hostile towards their

⁷ Alan Hynding, *From Frontier to Suburb: The Story of The San Mateo Peninsula* (Belmont: Star Publishing Company, 1982), 191.

⁸ Hiyedoshi Kashima, *Chrysanthemums and Salt*, prod. Dianne Fukami, 26 min., PBS video, 1994, videocassette.

⁹ Hynding, 191.

group. Books written on San Mateo County's history include the history of cities in its vicinity. The Japanese held as much a stake in the history of San Mateo County as they did in Redwood City during 1890-1945. Many books about San Mateo County's history (written before 1980) failed to include the Japanese influence.¹⁰ This thesis presents a social history of the Japanese American community and their interaction and accommodation with the majority white population. Following the lives of a specific group of Japanese who found success in Redwood City by owning chrysanthemum hot houses and observing their experiences before, during, and after World War II has been the base of this study. This thesis examines the role of early Japanese settlers in Redwood City who started as migrant laborers and then participated in the boom of the city's chrysanthemum growing business. These members played a big role in building Redwood City's economy and befriended many non-Japanese, who in turn assisted them while they were incarcerated. This work explores the lives of many Redwood City Japanese Americans and discusses their experiences after their migration to Redwood City through the end of World War II.

¹⁰ Here is a list of some of the books I looked through: Mitchell Postel, *Peninsula portrait: an illustrated history of San Mateo County* (Northridge: Windsor Publications, 1988); Frank Marriam Stranger, *South from San Francisco; San Mateo County, California, its History and Heritage* (San Mateo: San Mateo County Historical Association, 1963); Roy W. Cloud, *History of San Mateo County, California* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1928).

Sources of Information

This monograph includes the use of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, including public documents, newspapers, private letters, and oral histories. The primary sources are located at the Redwood City Public Library. On October 23, 2002, the local history room has embarked on a project titled "Surviving the Internment: Redwood City Remembers." The project is based on the letters of correspondence between a local Redwood City banker, Joseph Elmer Morrish, and the Redwood City Japanese internees during World War II. Oral histories and transcriptions of the taped interviews located at the Redwood City library serve as the foundation of this thesis.

This thesis is organized in chronological order. The first chapter discusses the prewar history of the Chinese and Japanese in California and focuses on the history of Redwood City and the Japanese experience in the town. Chapter 2 explores the incarceration of the Japanese and the lives of the Japanese who were sent to concentration camps and those who decided to evacuate voluntarily. During their evacuation many Japanese chrysanthemum growers of Redwood City received assistance from their white friend, Joseph Elmer Morrish. Chapter 3 focuses on post-World War II resettlement and how some of the Redwood City Japanese were able to return to their chrysanthemum businesses after the war with the assistance of Morrish. The final chapter discusses

Redwood City today. High land prices have driven chrysanthemum landowners to sell their property to homebuilders. However, this is not the only reason for the decline of chrysanthemum hot houses. Many of the Sansei, the third generation Japanese Americans, decided to break away from the flower business and have gone into different fields. As a result, all of the areas that once grew chrysanthemums are filled with condominiums and single family houses.

Chapter 2: Prewar

Asian Exclusion

Before the Japanese came to America, the United States experienced an influx of immigration from Europe and China. Most of these immigrants came to America because industry and commercial businesses needed labor. Eager to offer their services, many Europeans and Chinese flocked to America. Americans were xenophobic toward the Europeans and Chinese because their culture and lifestyles differed from “Anglo-American traditions.”¹¹ This xenophobia led to racist discrimination, especially against the Chinese Americans. Nativist articles of faith included:

(1) Orientals shall not become citizens of the United States, (2) Orientals possess unwelcome, pagan religions, (3) Orientals possess inconceivably low standards of living and easily drive out “good labor,” (4) Orientals have so high a birth-rate that natives will be quickly out-populated.¹²

When the Chinese immigrated to California after the gold rush, they mostly worked on railroads, as miners, and in agriculture. Seeing the Chinese work in these fields enraged the white men who felt that the Chinese were taking away their jobs during a time when any form of

¹¹ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Ethnic Americans* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 210.

¹² Emory S. Bogardus. “Public Opinion as a Social Force: Race Reactions.” *Race, Cultural Groups, Social Differentiation* 8 (September, 1929): 102.

employment was already scarce. White workers encouraged Congress to create a law to deter employment of the Chinese.

Article 19 of the California State Constitution authorized cities to totally expel or restrict Chinese persons to segregated areas and prohibited the employment of Chinese persons by public agencies and corporations. Other federal, state, local laws or court decisions at various times prohibited the Chinese from: becoming citizens or voting, testifying in court against a white person, engaging in licensed businesses and professions, attending schools with whites, and marrying whites.¹³

Consequently, “The Chinese experience in the West created too much interracial friction to encourage further immigration.”¹⁴ This anti-Oriental sentiment influenced Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, which halted Chinese immigration for ten years.¹⁵ The loss of Chinese immigrants created a shortage of labor that led to the influx of Japanese immigrants. In the 1860s the Japanese were welcomed because they were seen as different than the Chinese, but this soon changed and like the Chinese, the Japanese endured resistance, racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia from white Americans.

¹³ Japanese American Citizens League National Educational Committee, *A Lesson in American History: The Japanese American Experience* (San Francisco: Japanese American Citizens League, 1994) 13.

¹⁴ Dinnerstein, 232.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

Anti-Japanese Sentiments in California

Job competition, cultural differences, and anti-Oriental “yellow peril” fear led to the anti-Japanese fervor in California. When the Japanese immigrated to California, white Americans believed that they took their jobs because the Japanese were willing to work for low wages. Driving down wages added to the anti-Japanese sentiments. As soon as the Japanese settled, they began to buy land and small businesses. Most Japanese settled, worked land and contributed their goods into the agricultural industry. Some Japanese entrepreneurs owned businesses such as restaurants, laundry cleaners, and flower shops. Americans and the Japanese vied for jobs and competed in the business sector.

The consequences Japanese Americans faced from their monetary success were mistreatment and discrimination. During Japanese immigration and settlement in California, historian Dr. Thomas A. Bailey (quoted by Carrey McWilliams) found “the general controversy lay not between the United States and Japan but between Japan and California, with the federal government seeking to secure justice for the aggrieved foreign power and at the same time endeavoring to convince the state of its obligation to the rest of the union.”¹⁶

Non-Japanese involved in the laundry business feared competition from Japanese dry cleaners. The “Anti-Japanese Laundry League”

¹⁶ McWilliams, 15.

establishment in 1908 was created to keep the Japanese out. Several Japanese who owned laundry businesses within California faced posters that read:

Foolish woman!
Spending your man's
Earning on Japs.
Be fair, patronize
Your Own.
We support You.¹⁷

These posters attempted to deter people from patronizing Japanese-owned laundries.

Competition with small businesses was not the only threat white Americans believed the Japanese posed for Californians. The Japanese brought an entirely different culture and seemed strange to Californians. On May 7, 1900 at a meeting sponsored by the San Francisco Labor Union, Dr. Ross, a Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University, stated that the Japanese posed a threat to American society because:

1. They were unassimilable.
2. They worked for low wages and thereby undermined the existing labor standards of American workmen.
3. Their standards of living were much lower than those of American workmen.
4. They lacked a proper political feeling for American democratic institutions.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., 59.

¹⁸ McWilliams, 17.

Such beliefs that paralleled anti-Chinese sentiments.

Generally, white Californians were ethnocentric towards the Japanese and did not bother to understand their culture. Jean Cloud, a white San Jose resident, recalls her feelings toward the Japanese and expresses xenophobia towards Japanese culture.

They didn't mix...they had another religion, they didn't go to Sunday school and church and everything with other people, they had their own religion and there was not mixing like there is nowadays. We hadn't learned that the world was one world. We were all scared of them because we knew...they didn't mind dying...we didn't understand their Shinto, and we didn't know them really. When I grew up in San Jose I saw that in the strawberry fields the Japanese women worked right along with their man, and they would be down on their knees picking strawberries, and a baby's head would be sticking out of a manure pile...we didn't trust them, they were a different culture and they had different values.¹⁹

Believing that she was speaking on behalf of all Americans, she declared that the Japanese could not assimilate in America because they did not believe in Christianity and their work style was abnormal because Japanese women would work with their husbands, an idea that was foreign to most Anglo Americans during that time. Jean Cloud essentially held an ethnocentric view toward the Japanese and believed that many other Americans felt the same way.

¹⁹Jean Cloud, interview by author, tape recording, Redwood City, California, 19 April 2003. Jean Cloud first lived in San Jose and moved to Redwood City before World War II.

Not all Americans shared the same anti-Japanese feelings; however John P. Irish, who served as a Naval Officer of Customs for the Port of San Francisco in 1894, openly stated his stance on Japanese Immigration. He wrote an article during a time when Japanese exclusion hysteria hit San Francisco. In his article, "Reasons For Encouraging Japanese Immigration," he finds that the views of many anti-Japanese aggressors who said the Japanese were unassimilable used that reason as an excuse because they could not find a better reason to oppose the Japanese. Irish writes,

The Japanese are, like us, a temperate zone race, with a form of civilization high in its essentials and much older than our own. It is doubtful whether the term "coolie" in its usual sense applies to them. They are very industrious, frugal, temperate and orderly, with quick wit and intellectual alertness...Japanese farm laborers have notable characteristics, of which their personal cleanliness is especially to be noted. They require facilities for a hot bath, and at the close of a day's labor they bathe and change to dry clothing before eating dinner...A considerable percentage of Japanese laborers are students, eager to learn. When they acquire English and read it, their leisure is employed in reading our works on history, biography and science...To include Japanese in the Chinese exclusion laws will raise grave international issues. Japan has adopted western civilization and her civil institutions are tempered by the parliamentary system.²⁰

²⁰ "Chinese and Japanese in America," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. XXXIV (No. 2. 1909) 74-79.

The Japanese immigrants offered a lot to America. Unfortunately, not many people felt the way Irish did towards the Japanese. However, in Redwood City there was tolerance towards the Japanese.

The Japanese moved rapidly into small businesses and farming, adopting Western way and dress far more quickly than other Asian immigrants...While San Mateo tolerated Japanese newcomers as long as they stayed outside white residential business districts. Elsewhere on the Peninsula (in Redwood City), more tolerant conditions enabled Japanese growers to pioneer in the new industry of floriculture. At Redwood City, Sanakusu Enmoto opened the first of several Japanese nursery businesses there.²¹

Many Japanese succeeded in Redwood City because they found ways to work around the laws that made it difficult for the Japanese in other parts of California.

Anti-Japanese Laws and how Redwood City Japanese Coped

The Gentlemen's Agreement was a product of prejudice against Japanese emigrants during 1907-1908. President Theodore Roosevelt created an agreement between Japan and America in order to halt the immigrants coming to the United States and relieve tensions between the two countries over the immigration of Japanese laborers. From this understanding, passports would be issued to non-laborers or laborers who were coming back to their home in America or coming to join their

²¹ Hynding, 191.

family residing in America. This agreement caused an influx of Japanese women into the United States because of an interesting type of marriage system that the Japanese adopted. American government officials termed these women “picture brides” or “photograph brides.”

Laboring men were among the first Japanese immigrants to the United States. When the Gentlemen’s Agreement ensued, many men went back to Japan, got married, and came back to their homes in America with their brides. For those not so fortunate as to be able to afford a ticket to Japan and then another two tickets back, there had to be another way to get married. These men resorted to finding their wives via pictures that would be sent to them by their family members. This institution was something Americans could not understand and this helped fuel the fire of anti-Japanese sentiments.

Politicians, citizens, labor unions, and local organizations in California voiced their opinions about the Japanese owning land pushed the state legislature to pass alien land laws geared toward Japanese Americans. These measures stimulated that: (1) an alien might acquire real property and hold it only for one year, (2) he might lease land only for five years, (3) corporations, of the stock of which is owned by aliens ineligible to become citizens, were declared to be citizens.²² This bill was

²² Raymond Leslie Buell, “The Development of Anti-Japanese Agitation in the United States,” *Political Science Quarterly* 38 (March, 1923): 61.

passed on April 2, 1913 in its regular form and hindered Japanese Americans from owning land. The Japanese in Redwood City found different ways to work around the Alien Land Laws in order to become independent farmers. Hiyedoshi Kashima remembers how his grandfather found a way to own land in Redwood City.

My father started in a different part of Redwood City...probably that was the early twenties and then moved to Horgan ranch in 1927 and then before mid 30's all were leasing from Horgan so there was an opportunity to buy it, so they bought it, but at that time the alien land law was in effect, so we had to trustee my cousin he got the title, most of them worked that way.²³

Because Kashima's cousin was an American citizen, his father was allowed to put the land under his cousin's name.

Life in Redwood City

While Japanese adults succeeded with their flower growing techniques and businesses, their children excelled in school. Most Japanese American students did well in their studies, many made the honor roll, and actively participated in school activities and clubs. Charles Inouye of Redwood City was recognized for his outstanding performance at Sequoia High School and received a \$100 scholarship on June 3, 1932. Before he attended Stanford University, he was chosen to

²³ Hiyedoshi Kashima, *Chrysanthemums and Salt*, prod. Dianne Fukami, 26 min., PBS video, 1994, videocassette.

speak on graduation day about the “Adjustment of Modern Life Problems.” He said:

It may not seem an easy task to become adjusted to this new group of people. Indeed it is not easy. However, there is a way in which we can more easily become assimilated, and that is by participation.

The effect of participation in securing assimilation can clearly be illustrated by my own personal experience. When I came to Sequoia, being ignorant of many of the American customs and not being able to speak as fluently as others, I felt somewhat out of place, and I felt that I was out of place until I became adjusted by participating in some of the many school activities of Sequoia. In my case I hope that it can easily be seen that participation led to assimilation.

When we have become socially adjusted to our environment, we the students who have been educated through the aid of the inhabitants of the world must know it to be our duty to increase the efficiency of our present deficient government, for our benefit and for the benefit of our posterity. I believe that with this political adjustment, life will become more easy and happy.²⁴

His speech shows how he had a tough time trying to fit in at Sequoia High School, but in the end he shows how the Japanese Americans students tried to assimilate as Americans.

Students at Sequoia High School created their own organization called the Japanese Student Club. The club conducted various activities including plays, parties with other Japanese Student Clubs from different high schools, and donations of toys to charities in Japan.

²⁴ Hirohata, 139.

Through this club the students learned how to balance their culture with the American way of life.

Another way the Japanese tried to assimilate into the American way of life was by forming a community organization of their own: the Japanese American Citizens League. The JACL was founded in 1929 and served as an Asian American civil rights organization. The organization was created in response to the growing anti-Japanese organizations such as Grange Association, Sons of the Golden West and the Japanese Exclusion League which tried to hinder Japanese participation and rights within America's economic and political system. The JACL tried to show America that, contrary to most American beliefs, the Japanese were an assimilable group of people who were willing to work with the government. According to the JACL website, "The JACL has 112 chapters and eight regional districts with 24,000 members worldwide."²⁵ One of the chapters is located in San Mateo. The San Mateo County JACL was created in 1935 and it consisted of the Nisei who lived around the Peninsula. Back then, meetings were held monthly at the Sturge Presbyterian Church in San Mateo (located north of Redwood City) to discuss and review matters concerning general welfare of the whole group. The JACL tried to participate in all civic events as much as

²⁵ K. Asai, "History of Japanese Pioneers in San Mateo, unpublished manuscript, folder 330SM, San Mateo County History Museum Archives, Redwood City, California, 1927.

possible. In 1941, a historical monograph about the local JACL stated that, "The J.A.C.L. forever striving to make better Americans of all its members and encourage its members to do everything the American way."²⁶

The Chrysanthemum Industry in Redwood City

Redwood City citizens saw how much the Japanese contributed to their city with their flower growing techniques, and businesses. First introduced in China, chrysanthemum growing dates back to the 15th century in Japan. Soon after, the flower became so popular in Japan that it was adopted as the crest and official seal of the Emperor and it became Japan's national flower.

Of the many Japanese-owned nurseries in Redwood City, two were proclaimed as newly established businesses in the Redwood City Democrat newspaper in 1913. Sandwiched between articles of incorporation of newly white owned shared stock businesses, the article boasts the shares of new Japanese-owned nursery companies.

The following articles of incorporation were filled in the county clerk's office during the week:
Enmoto Land Company incorporates with a capital stock of \$10,000 divided into 100 shares at a par value of \$100 each. The purpose of the company is to engage in the nursery business at Redwood City. The actual amount of stock subscribed is \$3000 by the

²⁶ Japanese American Citizens League, 2004, <http://www.jacl.org>, accessed 10 March 2004.

following stockholders who subscribe one share each:
S. Enmoto, K. Enmoto and T. Honda.

The Western Nursery Company has incorporated with a capital stock of \$10,000 divided into 200 shares at par value of \$50 each. The purpose of the company is to engage in the nursery business at Redwood City. The actual amount of stock subscribed is \$300, subscribed by the following stockholders: S. Kashima, 29 shares, \$1450; A. Mashihara, 24 shares, \$1200; and C. Hattori, 7 shares, \$350.²⁷

A technique developed by nurseryman and retail florist Henry L. Goertzhain of Redwood City helped speed the process of chrysanthemum growing. He invented the idea of using protective cheesecloth shading, a method that prevented flower buds from being harmed by harsh winds or by the scorching heat of the sun. The Japanese adopted this protective flower growing technique and started planting in Redwood City. The process of cheeseclothing the entire field of flowers was a long and tiring one that would take days if a family did it on its own, but there was a sense of community among the Japanese in Redwood City and families would help each other with this process. Kashima remembers:

You know if you had to do it by yourself it would take maybe two or three days but with the help of the neighbors within four hours it went along fine and the next day we would go to another family and do it. It was a community affair in that way everybody helped each other out even when my father got ill the neighbors came and helped so it was tough but when you have people helping it was pretty nice.²⁸

²⁷ "Articles of Incorporation," *Redwood City Democrat*, 7 August 1913, p.1.

²⁸ Hiyedoshi Kashima, *Chrysanthemums and Salt*, prod. Dianne Fukami, 26 min., PBS video, 1994, videocassette.

The flourishing chrysanthemum business created markets across the United States. According to the Redwood City Tribune, the popularity of chrysanthemums influenced the city Chamber of Commerce to pump money into the flower growing businesses primarily owned by the Japanese. The chrysanthemum's popularity spread across the United States as these flowers were shipped to the East Coast.

San Mateo county's famous floral industry, in which Redwood City has an important part, will receive a big boost from the local chamber of commerce this weekend, it was announced at headquarters today. Three refrigerator express carts filled with the finest chrysanthemums grown will be sent from Redwood City on the 23, 24, and 25 of October to Chicago and New York markets. The flowers are valued at thousands of dollars. They are being grown in and near Redwood City by the Japanese Floral Association. Efforts will be made to have a Pathe cameraman take motion pictures of the hothouses, nurseries and express cars. The chamber of commerce expects to have several attractive Redwood City girls in movies.²⁹

The flower business provided the county of San Mateo with money and the diversification of the product to different parts of the country caused the popularity of the flower among people from different areas. In addition, motion pictures wanted to show the flowers' beauty to the public. The demand for the chrysanthemum flower was so high that Redwood City became the largest chrysanthemum growing area in

²⁹ "Japanese Florists," *Redwood City Tribune*, 22 October 1926, p. 4.

California. The monetary rewards of chrysanthemum growing for the county of San Mateo made it a leading agricultural product in California.

According to County Horticulture Commissioner A.W. Tate JR, San Mateo county reaps an annual return of \$7,000,000 from the growing of flowers. That equals in financial returns the asparagus crop of the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta. It is almost as much as the value of wheat crop for all California and half as much as that of the potato crop for the entire state.³⁰

Chrysanthemum growing provided profit to San Mateo County, and Redwood City particularly benefited from the flower business as well. According to the Redwood City Standard the output of chrysanthemums in 1927, “promises to eclipse by far the shipments made last year, which was a record one and which put Redwood City in the lead as the Chrysanthemum growing center of the world.”³¹ In 1931, Chrysanthemum growers in Redwood City began holding Kiku Matsuri (Chrysanthemum Festival) during the early fall months of September and October. This festival was a part of the “Fiesta Year,” an annual event celebrated throughout California. It was events like these that helped non-Japanese residents of Redwood City identify with and appreciate the Japanese community.

One Redwood City resident, Jean Cloud, recognized how important the Japanese were to the flower growing industry in the area. She

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Films to Depict Flower Industry,” *Redwood City Standard*, 27 October 1927, p. 2.

commented on the popularity of the flowers that came from the local Japanese growers. According to her, women would buy flowers especially before they went on an excursion to the City.

I remember how they just used to wear a little flower on their clothes to San Francisco, and that was quite a thing when you would go to the city you would always buy a little (flower). The flowers came from this area (Redwood City) all out on Valota road there were Japanese hot houses and fields where they grew flowers...after the war everything had changed and nobody wore (flowers) on them anymore.³²

Unfortunately, after Pearl Harbor, the flower growing business in all of its glory came to an end in Redwood City when Japanese, both citizens and non-citizens, were forced to evacuate the area and were sent far away to internment camps.

³² Jean Cloud, interview by author, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, California, 19 April 2003.

Chapter 3: Incarceration

Redwood City Japanese and non-Japanese Reactions about Internment

On December 7, 1941 Japan attacked America at Pearl Harbor and anti-Japanese fervor felt before the attack worsened afterwards. Soon after the attack, local newspapers reported on the Redwood City Japanese American community's shock. In fear of Japanese American participation in espionage, FBI agents started to arrest Issei leaders.³³ The Redwood City Times reported on December 8th that Kotoharu Inouye was the first Japanese national to be rounded up and "lodged" to jail. Though Inouye was assumed to be a criminal, his son was the outstanding figure at Sequoia High School who wrote about assimilating into Redwood City.³⁴ The Redwood City Times described the elder Inouye's imprisonment in the following manner,

He is Kotoharu Inouye, 57, of 1401 Valota Rd., prominent chrysanthemum grower. He was booked by Federal Bureau of Investigation Agent J.A. Cost at 6 p.m. yesterday at the county jail and held "en route to the U.S. marshal."

Inouye, widely-known here where he has lived for 35 years, is the father of two American born children, one of them a graduate of Stanford University. He was taken into custody at his home by the FBI agent, who seized some of his personal papers but made no

³³ Gayle K. Yamada, *Building a Community: The Story of Japanese Americans in San Mateo County* (San Mateo: AACCP, Inc., 2003) 54.

³⁴ Joyce Hirohata and Paul Hirohata. *Nisei Voices: Japanese American Students of the 1930's-Then & Now*. (Oakland: Hirohata Design, 2003). Charles Inouye's speech on assimilation titled "Adjustment of Modern Life Problems" is on page 19.

attempt to take over his business, as was done in some cases in Sacramento...No bail was set and his family was not allowed to see him.³⁵

Soon after the Inouye's confinement, the FBI began conducting thorough searches in homes of Japanese Americans. One Redwood City resident recalls when his father was interrogated. Minoru Okamura remembers vividly when the FBI came to his house in search for his father. Okamura recalls,

We were all sleeping and then all of a sudden we heard cars. It was about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. Then my mother told us the FBI was out there. My mother told them he's not back from the farmers market, so they left. Then they knew exactly where my father was and at twelve o'clock when my father came home, the FBI people came into the nursery and they started searching inside the house-checking all of it. In my bedroom we had a picture that someone ripped up and left on the bed, and an FBI guy came over and told me to put a puzzle together so that he could see what kind of picture it was.³⁶

In response to the wartime hysteria, Japanese Americans tried to show that they were not involved in espionage as many Americans suspected. A student who belonged to the Japanese American Club in Sequoia High School wrote an essay about her loyalty to America called, "I too, Am an American."³⁷ In Redwood City Japanese Americans hoped to gain credence by contributing to the American Red Cross. By December 16th,

³⁵ "Inouye Held Here; Many Seized," *Redwood City Tribune*, 8 December 1941, p. 1.

³⁶ Minouru Okamura, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, 14 May 2003.

³⁷ This essay is located in the Appendix section on page 61.

16 members of the Japanese Association of Redwood City had donated \$1,650 to the fund. They went out of their way to show they were faithful Americans.³⁸ The Japanese American students of Sequoia High School made a second donation to the American Red Cross and voted on a \$10 contribution to the Red Cross drive. An article written about Japanese American loyalty professed to America was written on December 19 about a resolution that was passed by the club read as follows:

We the American-Japanese students of Sequoia High School, pledge complete loyalty and cooperation to our school, community and country.

As Americans, we give our full support to defend our freedom and democracy. We believe unity is all-important and all of us will do our share to preserve that unity.³⁹

The San Mateo JACL also paid for a column in newspapers stating their loyalty to America and gratitude towards people in San Mateo County.⁴⁰ In the text, the JACL expressed their willingness cooperate with the evacuation plans set by the government. They also desired to

³⁸ "Japanese Take Lead Here, Contribute Total of \$1650," *Redwood City Tribune*, 16 December 1941, p. 4. Among those who contributed to the fund, the chairman of the American Red Cross, James D. Hedge, reported that members of the Japanese association who contributed \$100 each were K. Honda, K. Okamura, I. Kitayama, T. Honda, N. Higaki, K. Inouye, T. Kashima, Tsukushi Brothers, M. Yamada, Nakana Brothers, T. Mori, T. Yamane, R.S. Yamane, A. Kitagawa, S. Tamura. A \$50 contribution was given by S. Inouye.

³⁹ "Sequoia Students Affirm Loyalty," *Redwood City Tribune*, 8 December 1941, p. 3.

⁴⁰ The advertisement is an undated clipping, Folder 73-364, San Mateo County Archives.

help the United States by participating in the Food for Victory program and by sending their sons into the armed forces.⁴¹

Although the Japanese in Redwood City and surrounding areas continually tried to show their patriotism, anti-Japanese sentiments and hatred soon turned into fear. Many white Americans were afraid that the Japanese living in America would be involved in sabotage, espionage, and fifth column activity. These public attitudes forced President Franklin D. Roosevelt to create an incarceration plan for the Japanese in order to secure America. Roosevelt devised his plan for the Japanese by consulting his advisors who suggested the evacuation and internment of Japanese living near coastal areas of the United States. Some Japanese were given the choice to either go to the relocation camps or to move out of the Western Defense Zone (Oregon, Washington, and California). Bay Area Japanese who were not able to relocate away from their homes were sent to an assembly center called Tanforan located in San Bruno, an area located north of Redwood City and south of San Francisco.⁴²

⁴¹ A description of The Food for Victory program is located in the *San Francisco Times*: "Sixty-nine per cent of the California lands formerly operated by alien and citizen Japanese farmers has been transferred to others for continuous production of food for victory, the Army's Wartime Civilian Control Administration announced today." The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, *Internment of San Francisco Japanese*, 1995, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/land1.html>, accessed 10 March 2004

⁴² It is important to note that most Japanese in the Bay Area were ordered to evacuate and were sent to Tanforan. For further information about Tanforan Assembly Center see Dianne Fukami, *Tanforan: Race Track to Assembly Center*, prod. Dianne Fukami, 57 min., KCSM TV, 1995, videocassette. See also, Charles Kikuchi, *The Kikuchi Diary: Chronicle from an American Concentration Camp: The Tanforan Journals of Charles*

Although Tanforan was a horse race-track, it served as temporary living quarters while an internment camp was being built in Topaz, Utah.⁴³

There were, however, others who left the area completely. The Enmoto family moved to Colorado. William Enmoto recalls his decision to move his family,

Personally the government decreed, I think sometime in February, that we had to leave the state. We went to the San Joaquin Valley, then to the Nevada State line, but progressively then around the middle of March they said you have two weeks to leave or you have to go to one of these camps. We left on the next to the last day, on the 28th or 29th of March, and went to Denver-the whole family. First we rented a house, then my father bought a bigger house, and everybody else bought a house so as far as the family goes, through the duration of the war they were all there, including my wife's side. They also went to Denver See, the governor of Colorado, I think his name was Love-no Governor Carr, he and the governor of Utah, said, "These are American citizens," and they welcomed them (the Japanese) to Colorado during the time of these troubles. People in Colorado and Utah, they treated us just like normal.⁴⁴

Kikuchi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Mine Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 27-116.

⁴³ For more information on Topaz, Utah Internment Camp, see Sandra C. Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert: Japanese American Internment at Topaz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Yoshido Uchida, *Journey to Topaz* (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company, 1985); Mine Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 117-209.

⁴⁴ William H. Enmoto, interview by Phil Demma and Barbara Morris, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, 29 March 1979.

Like the Enmotos, the Higaki family also voluntarily evacuated by leaving Redwood City before they could be incarcerated. Harry Higaki recalls how his family went to Idaho.

Then came the Executive Order to either voluntarily evacuate to the western defense zone or to be put into camp. We chose to voluntarily evacuate. We had friends in Twin Falls, Idaho so we were invited to voluntarily evacuate there...We were sharecroppers and the community there was very helpful. I thought the people were very kind to us under the circumstances.⁴⁵

Those who went to the camps recalled their time spent in Tanforan and Topaz quite differently. Because Tanforan was once a horse racetrack the stables were turned into living quarters for the Japanese. Each stall that once belonged to a horse was turned into living quarters for an entire family. Teru Tama Mitsuyoshi recalls her family's decision to go to camp:

Well we went to Tanforan-that was an experience! The first day we were there, we had to make a line to go into the main area-they called it the grandstand. There was this long line to get your food, and another thing I'll never forget, we didn't have mattresses. They gave us this big canvass bag and you filled it up with straw. The only people who got mattresses were people who had a medical reason for not being able to sleep on top of hay. But you just did what they told you...⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Harry Higaki, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, 3 April 2003.

⁴⁶ Teru Tamura Mitsuyoshi, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, 16 July 2003.

The inhumanity the Japanese suffered while being sent to an assembly center is clearly shown here. There were, however, those who felt sympathetic towards the Japanese.

Jean Cloud spoke about her reactions to the internment. She recalls,

It was really a sad thing, but all the Japanese in this area were put on trains and taken to camps...I always felt sorry for the poor Japanese that were not shooting at people and doing things at all...they were just victims (who had people telling them) "pack up your stuff you can take one suitcase! You can go! Leave your house!"⁴⁷

She furthermore commented on the impact their leaving had on Redwood City. "It affected Redwood City a lot because we had so many Japanese that were in the flower business. (Their evacuation shocked the flower business) right away!"⁴⁸

One Japanese American involved in the flower growing business, Higaki, spoke about his experiences in leasing his land to non-Japanese residents in Redwood City.

I think we were fortunate in the fact that we had a lessee that was interested in taking over our operation. His name was William Zappettini from the Zappettini Company, and they decided to take over our nursery among others. He was taking a chance because he didn't know what the future was going to be but he must have saw that there was an opportunity there, I

⁴⁷ Jean Cloud, interview, 19 April 2003.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

think that was his motive, I am not sure, maybe his motive was to help us out.⁴⁹

Kazuye Mori had several non-Japanese friends before she and her family were interned. Before their actual internment, some of her friends tried to protect her family by telling them to move to a different state “either Texas or Colorado” instead of going to internment camps, but they feared that Japanese Americans lives would not be any easier there because they believed they would meet resistance from the non-Japanese citizens living in those states. Many of her friends helped by handling her finances while she was away. Some even brought her family food while they were at the Assembly Center in Tanforan.

We had so many friends because of flowers, everyone tried to help...we were lucky to have good people all around us because my husband was good to them. While we were in Tanforan Edwin would come every weekend with a pot of rice. . .cooked rice, and he would come visit us. . .and at that time it was hard for him to do that you know going into Japanese internment camps, but he came every Saturday.⁵⁰

Even after the camps when the Japanese returned to their homes, Mrs. Mori had a great experience coming back home to Redwood City.

(In) Redwood City. . .everybody was so good, when I went to Woolworth’s the first day I came back this young girl says welcome home, oh that made me feel so good! Redwood City was the best place!⁵¹

⁴⁹ Harry Higaki, interview, 3 April 2003.

⁵⁰ Kazuye Mori, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, California, 3 March, 2003.

⁵¹ Ibid.

When she came home, two of her non-Japanese friends gave back everything she had left with them. She had left \$2,000 with her personal doctor, Doctor Klatenburg, and she left her banking with Mr. J. Elmer Morrish. Both individuals returned everything to Mrs. Mori.

Jim Mori, another Redwood City resident, discussed his experiences as a child in the camps. He recalls that while his parents were incarcerated he had suffered a reaction to the typhoid vaccine which was severe enough to require medical attention. Mori was sent to the San Mateo County hospital for thirty days. Not only was he not allowed to have Japanese visitors, but they isolated him from all of the other patients at the hospital. One of his fondest memories while being locked up in a hospital room was when his non-Japanese family friends from Redwood City visited him.

As high school students, the Nisei had been regarded as the citizens of the United States they were in Redwood City. Principal A.C. Argo of Sequoia High School in Redwood City wrote a message in a pamphlet dedicated to the members of the Japanese students' club before their internment:

The students at Sequoia of Japanese descent have made a distinct contribution to the accomplishments of the school and many are numbered among its best citizens. We are sorry to lose them. Their loyalty to the United States is being displayed by the way in which they are making the sacrifice of moving from

their present homes. We wish them well and sincerely hope that in the not too distant future they can be with us again.⁵²

Whether students or business owners, Redwood City Japanese were respected by their white friends. Before their forced internment, chrysanthemum owners, who already had a thirty-five year history of acting cooperatively, entrusted their friends to supervise their property during the years of internment. This hopefully would give evacuees something to come back to after the war.

Joseph Elmer Morrish and his Relationship with the Japanese Americans

Although there were many who helped the Japanese Americans while they were interned, one man in particular stood out for the Japanese flower growers in Redwood City. Joseph Elmer Morrish was born December 7, 1886 in Sierra City, California. His family later moved to Grass Valley where his father worked in the mining industry. By 1900, his family moved to Berkeley, where Morrish first worked in the banking business. There he worked as a teller at the First National Bank. In 1919, the Morrish family moved to San Jose where Morrish worked at the Bank of San Jose as a manager. He was active in many

⁵² A quote from Principal A.C. Argo, in "Dedication to the Japanese Students' Club," Sequoia High School, 1942, Folder M-420 Sequoia High school 1x, Student Body Files, Japanese Students Club, Local History Room, Redwood City Library.

organizations and served as the president of the Chamber of Commerce, The Kiwanis Club, and the Peninsula Clearing House.⁵³

In 1932, Morrish accepted a job as head manager of the Broadway office of Bank of America in Redwood City. After four years at this position, Morrish was subsequently appointed Vice President and one of the members of the board of directors of the Redwood City First National Bank of San Mateo County in 1937.⁵⁴ After working in the banking business for 27 years, Morrish had gained clout and become a powerful figure in Redwood City.⁵⁵

In Redwood City, Morrish was active in professional as well as community organizations, including the California Bankers Association, the Independent Banker's Association, and the Redwood City Chamber of Commerce.⁵⁶ He was the director of the San Mateo County Fair, treasurer of the Salvation Army, and the director of the Children's Health Home. His involvement in many social organizations made him a well-respected man in Redwood City. He was especially admired by the Japanese because he handled their business and personal banking before, during, and after the war.

⁵³ "First National Bank Post Goes to J.E. Morrish," *Redwood City Tribune*, 12 March 1937, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Saddened by the fate innocent Redwood City Japanese Americans were facing during World War II, Morrish took it upon himself to step in and help them out. He felt compelled to assist the Japanese who had once been his clients. In 2000, the local history room of the Redwood City library received a box of letters from an anonymous source. In the box were more than 2,000 letters of correspondence between Morrish and Redwood City Japanese Americans that were written during their internment. As the Vice President of the First National Bank, Morrish wrote business-like letters to the Japanese. He could not write to the extent of the letters that evacuees wrote. A busy man, he received many requests to act upon, so he could not respond at length. He corresponded with, handled their banking and taxes, and oversaw the land of more than twenty Japanese families. For example, in a letter to Sigeo Kashima who was a local chrysanthemum grower. In the letter, Morrish discusses how he handled Mr. Kashima's taxes and chrysanthemum business. He wrote,

Today I received your San Mateo County Tax bill for 1942-1943 and I am sending the Tax Collector a check for \$96.73 to cover payment in full of 1st and 2nd installments. This amount is being charged to your commercial account.

I talked to Harry Lee this week about the rent and he told me he will be in within the next few days and take care of this. He is just about finished with the Chrysanthemums and I believe he has had a very good

season. The place looks very well and he seems to be taking very good care of everything.⁵⁷

The internees on the other hand, had time to write, allowing them to describe their new life behind barbed wire. They wrote of their thoughts, frustrations, and hopes. In one letter, Tetsuo Kitayama discussed how dull camp life was in Topaz. He wrote:

It looks as though we are going to spend another Christmas and many more in the camp. It sure is a dull life but I guess it's only those things that couldn't be helped.

How are you and Mrs. Morrish? I suppose the town looks as same as ever. We certainly like to take a look at the old town at this time.

I've been to Chicago for about a month looking for a prospect for a relocation but didn't have much luck. There's no use in getting job because my earnings can't support my family. Yet I can't invest in any business as I'm uncertain of everything. Therefore, I think it's best that we stay in the camp until the war is over.

There is barely a thing to write about in here except about Adachi's mother's death which happened a few days ago.

I have enclosed a tax bill. Will you please pay it for me?⁵⁸

This downbeat account is not as explicit as one that was written by Fukima Takagi. While many other internees kept their "real" feelings

⁵⁷ Joseph Elmer Morrish to Sigeo Kashima, Redwood City 18 November 1942, Personal Letters of Joseph Elmer Morrish, M-31, Box 1, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, Redwood City, California.

⁵⁸ Tetsuo Kitayama to Joseph Elmer Morrish, Topaz, 12 November 1942, Personal Letters of Joseph Elmer Morrish, M-31, Box 1, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, Redwood City, California.

about what the government was doing to themselves, Takagi broke out of his shell and deeply professed his feelings about the situation:

We, here at Tule Lake, are as you can well imagine, taking life quite easy and making the most of our time just loafing around. Frankly speaking, Morrish, this life in a concentration camp is really "hell." The children just don't give a darn about anything anymore. They play all day without going to school in the mornings and just spend all their time playing around and getting dumber and dumber by the minute. I certainly do hate to see the Government interning American citizens because I know the schooling is going to be none too good. Well, I suppose time will tell whether the facilities here will excel those on the outside as officials claim.

Not only did the Japanese write letters to Morrish about their lives in the camps, they also graciously thanked him for his help and services.

Toru Yamane wrote,

Thanking you for your most wonderful services rendered to me and to my folks here in the Relocation Center when we were unable to carry on our personal businesses for ourselves. My gratitude to you is more than what I can express and I'm thanking you from the bottom of my heart.⁵⁹

Morrish's selfless act of humanity helped him create a strong, close relationship with many Redwood City Japanese Americans.

Teru Tamura Mitsuyoshi recalls how his father felt towards Morrish's helpfulness while his family was incarcerated.

⁵⁹ Toru Yamane to Joseph Elmer Morrish, Topaz, 20 November 1942, Personal Letters of Joseph Elmer Morrish, M-31, Box 1, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, Redwood City, California.

My dad knew Morrish and he had nothing but good things to say about him and how helpful he was. He helped a lot of businesses here with a lot of complicated things that happened. He helped the Issei's, and I think that's why they trusted him because he was always so good to them. I know my dad, when he talked about Morrish, he was way up there! I remember the incident that really impressed me was that my dad had bought a car in early 1941-a Chevrolet, four-door and he was very proud of it because he had upgraded from a Ford. When the war came, he asked Morrish to store it and take care of it. As the war progressed, there were a lot of people interested in buying the car and dad didn't know when he was going to come back, so he asked Morrish to go ahead and sell it for him. I'll never forget him because my dad was so grateful that he was able to sell the car and not worry about it. Morrish was someone you trusted.⁶⁰

While some recalled Morrish's protection of their personal goods, others remember him even more for watching over their land. Harry Higaki was amazed by the kindness of Morrish and by how well he had handled the Higaki family's land. In an interview about the Japanese internment experience, Hagaki said:

He was our local banker at First National Bank, and he was a prince of a gentleman. He personifies the meaning and word of gentleman because he offered (assistance) to us during the times of tension and I guess you would say discrimination. But yet he rose above that and he treated us the same before and after. As a matter of fact, I just couldn't believe how he was so kind and generous in helping our family. He collected monthly rent for us, he paid our taxes for us and did everything for us. Periodically he would

⁶⁰ Teru Tamura Mitsuyoshi, interview 16 July 2003.

take pictures of the tenants renting the property. That's what I mean by a gentleman. I'll never forget him. I'm eternally grateful to him...the lessee Mr. Zappettini his decision or vision turned out quite rewarding for him and so when we got back, he returned the property in better shape than we left it, so we're thankful for him too. It was very positive experience.⁶¹

To this day Elmer Morrish is highly respected in the Japanese community. He was a man who, contrary to wartime hysteria, provided aid and comfort to Japanese Americans. Morrish's deeds were appreciated by Japanese Americans.

Of the many evacuees from California, thanks to Morrish, the economic experience of the Japanese flower growers in Redwood City was not bad compared to the Japanese living in other areas because of Morrish. His assistance helped them resume their lives and their business after the war without the difficulty commonly experienced by other returnees.

⁶¹ Harry Hagaki, interview, 3 April 2003.

CHAPTER 4: Post War

Reactions towards the End of Internment

On January 2, 1945, Public Proclamation No. 21, which allowed evacuees to return home, went into effect. The War Relocation Authority informed the evacuees they were allowed to leave the camps. Some of the reactions of the Japanese were fearful because they had nowhere to go, they did not know how non-Japanese would react to them, and they were forced to fit back into American society after years of anti-Japanese sentiments. One internee recalls,

Many of them were afraid to leave the camp once the WRA or the War Relocation Authority was told to empty the camps. Many of them were penniless they lost everything they had while in camp spent what they had, so they were really penniless and to say all of a sudden, go back to a hostile environment, it scared many people.⁶²

In hopes of trying to make things easier for the evacuees, the WRA tried several techniques to entice the Japanese to leave the camps to create a life for themselves. The WRA created a booklet for Japanese Americans called the "Issuance of Leave for Departure from a Relocation Area." The WRA encouraged internees to leave the camp and settle in areas away from the West Coast. In conjunction with the booklet, the

⁶² Starting *Over: Japanese Americans After the War*, produced by David Hosley, directed by Dianne Fukami, 60 min., San Mateo County Community College District, 1996, videocassette. Interviews with several Japanese Internees were conducted throughout this video. This quote is from Steven Doi.

WRA created a propaganda film called “The Way Ahead” to persuade the Japanese Americans to leave camp for a better life.

The film shows Japanese American actors happily packing their bags and leaving the camp, while in the background an old man with a cheerful voice narrates:

If you don't have money enough to get to your new location, the government will make a grant of enough money to get you there and a little extra until the paychecks start coming in. This money does not have to be repaid, it's a helping hand from Uncle Sam...It's a big moment when you start to pack for your trip outside, there are so many things to take and you'll need most all of them...yes, including Jimmy's roller skates. It's an even bigger moment when you walk through the gates for the last time, and present your passports to the guards for the last time, and take a last look at the barbed fence for the last time. Your friends aboard the bus are going to new experiences and a better way of living...”⁶³

The actors in the film look contented with their lifestyle in the camps. They look healthy, happy and excited as though being sent to camp was a gift from the government. They looked as though they were as happy to live in the camp as they were in leaving the camp. The film made job hunting, and house searching look promising. While highlighting the help wanted ads in newspapers and showing how many jobs were available outside of camp, the film ignores the fact that the Japanese Americans would face discrimination.

⁶³ Ibid.

The narrator continues:

It's probably the children who are influenced the most by the way they live. They're going to grow up in the United States; it's their country! They may object to the dust and the winds in the Relocation Center, but there are places that are more pleasant outside and the adjustments to outside living are easy for them.⁶⁴

Although the narrator makes moving back and conducting a normal life sound easy, this part of the film was as far away from the truth as imaginable. The majority of the Japanese Americans were to continue to experience racism regardless of gender or age.

One evacuee recalls how afraid she was to go back to her home in Los Angeles.

But it took an awful long time to not be afraid, when we first came out of camp, we relocated to Los Angeles and I stayed inside of that hostel for two solid weeks without leaving, I was so afraid, I was so afraid of meeting a Caucasian and if he called me a "Jap" I don't know what I would have done. I would have just stayed indoors for the rest of my life.⁶⁵

The Japanese faced a harsh reality that was not shown by the WRA in their video when they left camp. Not only did they face discrimination with racial slurs yelled out at them on the streets, but upon their return to their West Coast homes, many of them found their properties were vandalized. One internee remembers when he came home,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Maya Aikawa.

The house had been raided many times over. Our personal belongings and wedding gifts were scattered all over among the neighbors and so on. Our silk kimonos the doll collection, the ceremonial dolls for the doll festival everything else was raided, trunks stripped open, the locks just hanging, doors of storage rooms just split and broken into, the under wood typewriter gone, the Hoover vacuum cleaner being used next door and gone.⁶⁶

Although many returning Japanese received an unpleasant reception, for the Japanese residing in Redwood City it was different. After returning to Redwood City, Jim Mori recalls the welcoming feeling he received at school. "The teachers at the schools did a very good job telling the students that we were coming back and they accepted us back into class."⁶⁷ This is not to say that every single non-Japanese person living in Redwood City was nice towards the Japanese. Mori recalls how he met resistance when he went to Safeway and tried to buy something.

The lady at the checkout counter looked at me and said "I'm not serving Japs" and she walked away. To make up for that; however, another clerk came to him and immediately apologized and assisted me.⁶⁸

This was one of the cases where a Redwood City Japanese spoke of his experience with discrimination.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Tomoye Takahashi.

⁶⁷ Jim Mori, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Local History Room, Redwood City Library, 13 May 2003.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

When the Japanese received freedom from internment, many came back to their hometowns to find that their land, businesses and belongings that they had loaned to their acquaintances would not be given back to them. This was not the case for many of the Japanese residents from Redwood City upon their return from exile.

Kazuye Mori discussed her family's devastation during their internment. She luckily had several friends in Redwood City who cared for her businesses while she was away. She and her family grew chrysanthemums and owned ten acres of property. When they evacuated Redwood City, their workers took over their ranch.

When we came back they gave us everything back...right away...other people, some people had problems you know getting back their old house, but you know when we came back our boys had everything all ready for us. . .others had to wait and wait.⁶⁹

Several internees came home to find everything was in the same condition as when they left to camp. With Morrish's help and help from their friends, many Redwood City internees found their businesses intact and ready for them to take over again.

Minoru Okamura remembers how his family received assistance from Morrish and compares the treatment of the Redwood City Japanese to the Fresno area Japanese:

⁶⁹ Kazuye Mori, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Redwood City Library, 13 March 2003.

My mother got somebody to take care of our property and our business while we were gone. That person watched over our business while we were in camp, and Morrish also watched over the property and helped with the lease. I don't know how much he charged, but it wasn't that much. So that's why we were able to keep the property. He was able to keep the property while we were in camp. All these people in Fresno when they left for camp, they lost their property. When they came back, a lot of them, they didn't have anything to come back to, and there were a lot of those big properties that were all leased.⁷⁰

He furthermore explains why their people in Fresno were not willing to help the evacuees. He remembers:

The people around that area where the Japanese lived, they wanted them out of there so they could take over the properties. And there was nothing they could do about it when they got back - by law.⁷¹

Coming back to Redwood City was good for the Okamura family, as everything they left behind was well taken care of.

In the Redwood City Times, newspaper columnists were also compassionate towards the Japanese. When the government created a proposal to release the Japanese from camp, the State Grange attacked their suggestion. One unnamed writer for the Redwood City Times who felt sympathetic towards the Japanese internees wrote an article about the attitudes of the State Grange. According to the Redwood City Times:

⁷⁰ Kazuye Okamura, interview by Jeanne Thivierge, tape recording, Redwood City Library, 14 May 2003.

⁷¹ Ibid.

In Sacramento- deputies of the CA State Grange representing various areas in CA issued a statement today opposing the return of Japanese of CA as “extremely dangerous and ill advised.”

Selfishly thinking about themselves and the anti-sentimentalists and not about the Japanese who deserve to have their property back, the State Grange asserted that the Japanese return would destroy the lives of settled farmers because they would have to move out of their homes.⁷²

The author of this article disagreed with the State Grange and desired to have the Japanese back into their community. The State Grange felt that the Japanese would pose a threat to farmers living in the valley with their presence; however, the author of this article did not believe this would happen. The sympathetic feelings of non-Japanese Redwood City residents towards the Japanese were noticeable to the extent that some people coming back from their internment decided to move to Redwood City.

One of the first families to come back to California from the Topaz, Utah internment camp was the Arimotos. Sumiye Sugimoto and Keiko Adachi joined with Marianne Arimoto, formerly of Salinas, and her family. According to Arimoto, “We want to get out of camp. We have no place to go back to in Salinas, and we hear that the people there are not as friendly as those in Redwood City.”⁷³

⁷² “State Grange Hits Jap Return,” *Redwood City Tribune*, 20 December 1944, p. 8. The author of this article is unknown, as the newspaper did not disclose the names of their journalists.

⁷³ “First Japanese Return to Redwood City,” *Redwood City Tribune*, 8 January 1945, p.2

Chapter 5: Final Ties

Redwood City Today

The Japanese American Citizens League is still a strong national organization and the San Mateo County chapter is still alive. When the Japanese experienced discrimination from white Americans, they formed the JACL in order to fight for Japanese American civil rights.⁷⁴ Today the organization is “committed to protecting the civil rights of all segments of the Asian Pacific American community.”⁷⁵ Jim Mori, a Redwood City resident today, is still involved with the JACL and contributes to Japanese American history for the group. He proudly states his ultimate aspiration for the JACL,

That we assimilate into the American culture. I think that probably is a goal. I think in the old days it was by choice that you had to be with your own people and I think the Japanese Americans have assimilated into the mainstream America to a large degree. Of course we look different, that’s something we can’t do anything about, but generally I think it’s my goal to be like any other citizen to contribute to the culture and to the country in that manner.⁷⁶

The JACL made it easier for the Japanese to integrate back into the social fabric of America and helps others of Asian descent to assimilate comfortably in America by ensuring their civil rights.

⁷⁴ The JACL also fought for the rights of the Chinese and other ethnic groups as well. For more information on the JACL go to <http://www.jacl.org/about.html>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Jim Mori, interview, 13 May 2003.

The Japanese community that received assistance from Joseph Elmer Morrish during their incarceration continues to honor him. On September 27, 2003, at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, the Japanese community of Redwood City, with help from the Redwood City Library and Bancroft Library held a luncheon with special guest speakers and presentations. Pictures, letters and documents of the Japanese community during World War II decked the hall. The luncheon served many purposes: to acknowledge Morrish for his good deeds, to educate those who were not a part of the internment about the ill fate of the Japanese Americans during World War II, and to reunite long-lost friends. According to Sachi Elmer Adachi,

Thanks to Morrish, our family was able to return to Redwood City to our home and nursery after being released from the WWII Internment camp at Topaz, Utah in 1945. Soon after, I was able to purchase some land in Los Altos to start a chrysanthemum nursery. A couple of years later, I was able to buy more acreage in Mountain View to expand our nursery. This was all possible because of the encouragement and trust that Morrish had in my wife, Tatsuko and myself. The flower business was a good business and most of us succeeded in creating a better life for ourselves with a lot of hard work. We owe our success to people like Morrish who had faith and trust in us. It may be a little late to honor and thank him, but I will not forget what he has done for us.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Located under Ethnic Groups and Japanese Americans, Folder M-830, Local History Room, Redwood City Library.

Generally the cut flower industry of California began to fade during the 1970s. As importation of flowers became efficient and cheaper, prices became so competitive that it drove many flower growers in California out of business. Another reason for the decline of Japanese flower growers can be blamed on internal reasons. As the new generation of Japanese Americans have moved into different fields of work, the desire to work in agriculture has dwindled. Typically, Japanese parents encourage their children to become educated and their children tend to come out of college with a desire to work in non-agriculture sectors.

Yesterday there were hothouses while driving along Valota Road and the Horgan Ranch area.⁷⁸ Today these areas have become real estate havens. Condos, townhouses and homes fill these areas. The transition from chrysanthemum growing to residential and commercial use also has to do with the rising costs of production. By the 1960s, the Nakanos who owned three acres of land on Horgan Ranch informed the Redwood City Tribune that “the cost structure of the nursery business has gone down, but the cost of production has gone up...Utility bills have increased tremendously. Taxes also have been raised quite a bit. Labor

⁷⁸ Hothouse is another term for greenhouse.

is the biggest bill.”⁷⁹ The Japanese held onto their flower growing businesses up to the point when residential housing needs, inflation, and competition from South American imports of cut flowers destroyed Redwood City’s hold on the floral industry.⁸⁰ Sadly, by the late 1970s, all of the greenhouses once filled with beautiful chrysanthemums were torn down. As the old saying goes, “what goes up must come down.” The Japanese in Redwood City experienced their highpoint in the cut flower industry for almost a century and had to let it go due to external economic and global forces. According to one Japanese American grower, James Knetch, “I thought someday this would happen, but I never thought it would during my lifetime. I’m going to have to tear down greenhouses I built with my own hands. I don’t see how I’m going to do it. But I know I am going to have to.”⁸¹

As you walk through Redwood City, you notice one ethnic group that has grown considerably. The Latinos have created a community in the Bay Area with its highest concentration in Redwood City. Mexican restaurants and shops that sell goods from South America and Mexico, and farmers markets fill the area with an air of ethnicity. Like the Kiku Matsuri that was celebrated by the Japanese in Redwood City, the Hispanics celebrate a day that is close to their hearts, Cinco De Mayo.

⁷⁹ “Chrysanthemum Growing is Big Business Here,” *Redwood City Tribune*, 3 August 1961, p. 18C.

⁸⁰ “RC’s Famed Floral Industry Fading,” *Redwood City Tribune*, 18 August 1977, p. 3.

⁸¹ Ibid.

While the Japanese had their hold in the community with chrysanthemum growing, many Latinos in the area have dispersed into diverse businesses including auto shops, restaurants (including, but not limited to, taco stands and burrito shops), markets, and specialty shops. The Japanese helped one another during their chrysanthemum growing days; similarly, the Hispanics share the same sense of community. Jose Luis Torrens, the owner of Williams Market, states, "We are very tight-knit, we all want all of the businesses in the area to survive," while discussing the closeness of the Latino group in the area.⁸² The Redwood City Weekly sums up the feelings of ethnic groups moving into the area. A Latino business owner responded to the rise in Latino-owned establishments in Redwood City by saying, "Commerce is a way to move up the social ladder. It's good for others to see that it is possible to succeed in Redwood City."⁸³ In the future, it will be interesting to see which group will dominate the area after the Latinos.

⁸² The *Redwood City Tribune* newspaper clipping can be found in box M-810, Local History Room, Redwood City Library.

⁸³ Ibid.

Conclusion

Today, only a handful of nurseries are located in Redwood City. The city has lost much of its Japanese population leaving the cultural traditions once celebrated by the Japanese lost in history. Kiku Matsuri which was once an annual festival has become replaced with the annual fiesta of Cinco de Mayo.

This thesis has been a social history of the Japanese American community that inhabited Redwood City, California. In historical approach this thesis emphasizes the “history from below” as I have focused on the views of a minority group within Redwood City who were not included in historical studies of that area.⁸⁴ The absence of a study of ethnic minority groups in Redwood City demands further research. Histories of Redwood City are limited because authors have fail to mention Japanese contributions between the years of 1890-1945, a gap which this study seeks to fill. Hopefully, I will inspire those reading this

⁸⁴ Peter Burke, “Overtures: The New History, Its Past Present and Future,” *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992) 1. The “New History” was a historiographical movement that emerged in the 1960s. Peter Burke (who defined this type of history) argues “traditional history offers a view from above, in the sense that it has always concentrated on the great deeds of great men, statesmen, generals, or occasionally churchmen. The rest of humanity was allocated a minor role in the drama of history. The existence of this rule is revealed by reactions to its transgression.” However new historians, “are concerned with ‘history from below’, in other words with the views of ordinary people and with their experience of social change. The history of popular culture has received a great deal of attention. Historians of the Church are beginning to examine its history from below as well as from above.”

work to investigate their own local history and write on people who have been or may be forgotten.

Chapter 7: BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Academy of Political and Social Science. *Chinese and Japanese in America: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Issued Bi-Monthly*. Philadelphia: R and E Research Associates, 1909. Vol. XXXIV, No. 2.
- "Articles of Incorporation," *Redwood City Democrat*, 7 August 1913, p.1.
- Asai, K. "History of Japanese Pioneers in San Mateo." Unpublished manuscript. San Mateo County History Museum Archives, Redwood City, California, 1927.
- Benedict, Ruth. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*. Boston: Mariner Books, 1989.
- Bogardus, Emory S. "Public Opinion as a Social Force: Race Reactions." *Race, Cultural Groups, Social Differentiation* 8. (September, 1929): 102-105.
- Buell, Raymond Leslie. "The Development of Anti-Japanese Agitation in the United States." *Political Science Quarterly* 38 (March, 1923): 59-66.
- Burke, Peter. "Overtures: The New History, Its Past Present and Future," *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992.
- Chen, Young. *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- "Chinese and Japanese in America." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. XXXIV, No. 2. (1909) 74-79.
- Chrysanthemums and Salt*. Produced and directed by Dianne Fukami. 26 min, PBS video, 1994. videocassette.
- "Chrysanthemum Growing is Big Business Here," *Redwood City Tribune*, 3 August 1961, 18C.

Cloud, Jean. Interview by author. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City. 19 April 2003.

Daniels, Roger. *Not Like Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America 1890-1924*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997.

"Dedication to the Japanese Students' Club," Sequoia High school, 1942, Folder M-420 Sequoia High school 1x, Student Body Files, Japanese Students Club, Local History Room, Redwood City Library.

Dinnerstein, Leonard. *Ethnic Americans*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Dotsen, Russel. *Redwood City Historic Tours*. Redwood City: Historic Resources Advisory Committee, 1995.

Enmoto, William H. Interview by Phil Demma and Barbara Morris. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 29 March 1979.

"Films to Depict Flower Industry." *Redwood City Standard*, 27 October 1927, 2.

"First Japanese Return to Redwood City," *Redwood City Tribune*, 8 January 1945, 2.

"First National Bank Post Goes to J.E. Morrish," *Redwood City Tribune*, 12 March 1937, 1.

Hagaki, Harry. Interview by Jeanne Thivierge. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 3 April 2003.

Hirohata, Joyce and Paul. *Nisei Voices: Japanese American Students of the 1930's-Then & Now*. Oakland: Hirohata Design, 2003.

Hynding, Alan. *From Frontier to Suburb, The Story of The San Mateo Peninsula*. Belmont: Star Publishing Company, 1982.

Ichihashi, Yamato. *Japanese in the United States*. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969.

"Inouye Held Here; Many Seized." *Redwood City Tribune*, 8 December 1941, 1.

Japanese American Citizens League. 2004. <http://www.jacl.org>. accessed 10 March 2004.

Japanese American Citizens League National Educational Committee. *A Lesson in American History: The Japanese American Experience*. San Francisco: Japanese American Citizens League, 1994.

"Japanese Florists." *Redwood City Tribune*, 22 October 1926, 4.

"Japanese Take Lead Here, Contribute Total of \$1650," *Redwood City Tribune*, 16 December 1941, 4.

Kikuchi, Charles. *The Kikuchi Diary: Chronicle from an American Concentration Camp: The Tanforan Journals of Charles Kikuchi*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

Kraut, Alan M. *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921*. Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1982.

Kurashige, Lon. *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival, 1934-1990*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2002.

McWilliams, Carrey. *Prejudice, Japanese-Americans: Symbol of Racial Intolerance*. Hamden: Archon Books, 1944.

Minouru Okamura. Interview by Jeanne Thivierge. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 14 May 2003.

Mitsuyoshi, Teru Tamura. Interview by Jeanne Thivierge. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 16 July 2003.

Modell, John. *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900-1942*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977.

Mori, Jim. Interview by Jeanne Thivierge. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 13 May 2003.

- Mori, Kazuye. Interview by Jeanne Thivierge. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 13 March 2003.
- The Library of Congress. Hawaii: Life in a Plantation Society. <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/japanese2.html>. Accessed August 6, 2004.
- Okamura, Minoru. Interview by Jeanne Thivierge. Tape recording. Local History Room. Redwood City Library. 14 May 2003.
- Okubo, Mine. *Citizen 13660*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Personal Letters of Joseph Elmer Morrish. M-31, Box 1. Local History Room, Redwood City Library, Redwood City, California.
- Redwood City Chamber of Commerce. Newsletter. folder I-2 844 oversize. San Mateo County Museum Archives. 24 April 1942.
- "RC's Famed Floral Industry Fading," *Redwood City Tribune*, 18 August 1977, p. 3.
- San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League. *1872-1942: A Community Story*. The San Mateo Chapter JACL, 1981.
- "Sequoia Students Affirm Loyalty." *Redwood City Tribune*, 8 December 1941, p. 3.
- Starting Over: Japanese Americans After the War*. Produced by David Hosley, directed by Dianne Fukami. 60 min. San Mateo County Community College District, 1996. videocassette.
- "State Grange Hits Jap Return." *Redwood City Tribune*, 20 December 1944, 8.
- Tanforan: Race Track to Assembly Center*. Produced and directed by Dianne Fukami. 57 min. KCSM TV, 1995. videocassette.
- Taylor, Sandra C. *Jewel of the Desert: Japanese American Internment at Topaz*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco.

Internment of San Francisco Japanese. 1995.
<http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/land1.html>. accessed March 10, 2004.

Tritenbach, Paul. *'California's Climates' Your Friendly Guide to California's Cornucopia of Climates.* Bishop: Excellence Press, 1999.

Uchida, Yoshido. *Journey to Topaz.* Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company, 1985.

Yamada, Gayle. *Building a Community: The Story of Japanese Americans in San Mateo County.* San Mateo: AACCP, Inc, 2003.

CHAPTER 6: APPENDIX

“I, Too, Am an American” by Kiyoko Kasai

I, too, can say, “But I live here; here are my beginnings and my endings. I know only this, and I love only what I know—“ I and the host of thousands who are Japanese Americans.

Questions! Questions! Questions! When did you come? Why did you come? How old are you? Where’s your passport? Questions! Questions! Questions!

I can’t give you the exact time of year not even the exact year in which the hosts of Japanese laborers began to enter the western coast of America. I know only that amid the thousands who came to this nation there was a young woman who was destined to become my maternal grandmother. Like many other immigrants she lived among her own people. And she clung to the old ways in the new land. One would see her bow and hear her say, “Kon nich wa? (How are you?) and “Sayonara” (Goodbye). America could not change her physical features, but America did change her philosophy and spiritual outlook on life. You may ask, “How could she expect me to understand the democratic principles of living without being able to understand the English language?” There are many ways in which she has come to learn and appreciate the American love of liberty, justice, and freedom. She saw her children come here from school literally bursting with news of what they had done and especially of what their teachers had taught them. She saw that they had equal rights with those whose forefathers were Americans; they had the opportunity to become doctors, lawyers, farmers, or businessmen; and that they had the right to build homes for their children. She learned that she could walk down Market Street without being made to feel inferior to those of greater wealth or higher social position. She could voice her own opinion without fear. The little things that she encountered every day made her believe in and love the democratic way of life. Her Christian faith also helped her to stand upon a common footing with others in America.

Grandma was of an older generation—one with memories and roots in Japan. What of my generation—the generation of American born Japanese, who have become an integral part of the American schools, churches, and communities? Where would our loyalty naturally stand? There really was never any question in our minds. We deferred to our

elders and learned the language and some of the customs of Japan. But America—land of the kindness and of promise—was our country. We were the garb of the young American, spoke his language, had his aspirations, and assured his loyalties. We intended to live and die here—Americans.

We who are Japanese Americans realized as did other Americans that the situation between America and Japan was very tense, but before December 7 we did not think that war was imminent.

For me the morning of Sunday, December 7, was like any other Sunday morning. In fact, it was not until I got here from church that I heard the news—America had been attacked! Pearl Harbor was bombed. There never had been news more stunning. I felt the same emotions well up in me as those I had felt when my grandmother had died. I didn't wish to meet nor talk to anyone because a huge lump would come into my throat; but still I had to attend Guild Vesper Day, a day set aside for girls of all races all over America to come together for prayer. News reports were coming in spasmodically as the girls from our church and I drove down to San Jose. How could I face all of them and lead in this prayer?

The Japanese Aliens were stunned as greatly as the Japanese Americans by the dastardly incident which took place in Hawaii. The position of the alien Japanese is now an especially difficult one. Although their hearts may be loyal to what America stands for, they are still classified as alien nationals because they are not eligible to apply for American citizenship. However, I—and they—can see the importance of preventing any possibility of fifth column activities which would endanger the Pacific Coast and America.

I was not prepared, however, for the fact that I and other Japanese Americans must be classes as possible enemies. I could understand the desire to prevent another Pearl Harbor here in the western states by restricting alien actions; but why should we, Japanese Americans, be evacuated with the aliens? We are American citizens. Why must we be compelled to undergo curfew regulations? Why must this happen to those who know nothing but America, and who have no loyalty but for America? These were the thoughts that entered my mind as I resign myself to leave school just on the eve of graduation, when I had to give up my hope of college. I was bewildered and hurt. When, however, I think of things beyond myself I can understand that removal of Japanese from military zones may be for our own protection as well as for others. I

can realize that these necessary hardships which I must experience are insignificant when compared to those made by our American soldiers and sailors in the Philippines, in Burma, and in other parts of the world. I know, also, that we Japanese Americans will be able to begin anew wherever we are. America is humane, and I cannot help believing that somehow all things will work together for good. A wiser and less selfish self says to me, "Yes, here are your beginnings and endings. You know only the American way of life enriched by the very fact that it offered opportunities to your parents and your parents' parents. You say that you love only what you know. Then you can face sacrifice; you can bear to see your home dismantled; you can bear to leave your friends, your school, everything that you know; you can bear to sacrifice your plans for the nation, America. If the concentration and government supervision of the Japanese can contribute to the ultimate victory of America and the safety of your friends, you can go willingly, gladly.

I am a Japanese by ancestry and by physical features; but my heart, mind, and spirit are with America because this is my home. There is no love of Japan in me, no spiritual, no mental tie. I can feel a oneness with other Americans of foreign ancestry—German, Irish, Swedish, Italian, Chinese, or Greek Americans—in saying that my blood will never flow for the land of my ancestors.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ "Dedication to the Japanese Students' Club," Sequoia High school, 1942, Folder M-420 Sequoia High school 1x. Student Body Files, Japanese Students Club, Local History Room, Redwood City Library.