

# “It Must be Odd to be a Minority”: Multiracial Japanese Americans, Racial Segregation, and the U.S. Empire

History 492

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## **Introduction:**

The December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was the catalyst for the United States entry in to World War II and the expulsion of Japanese Americans from the west coast. The mass incarceration of individuals of “Japanese citizenship and ancestry” began on March 24, 1942.<sup>1</sup> As members of the Japanese American Citizen League (JACL) scrambled to cooperate with the War Relocation Authority (WRA), they were immediately met with the confusion of community members. An open meeting of the Seattle JACL flooded the air with questions for WRA administrators. Multiple attendees asked “Eurasians – Will they have to go too?”<sup>2</sup> James Sakamoto, who took the minutes, softly scratched along the margins of the interracial child question “Can mothers enter with husbands - babies?” He was likely thinking of his white friend Ross Kusian. Kusian had recently disclosed with anxious excitement that his Japanese wife Fumie was pregnant with their first child.<sup>3</sup> Left in the dark by WRA administrators, Sakamoto would not have an answer for his friend before Ross and his wife were incarcerated in Camp Harmony.<sup>4</sup>

In the decades before World War II, the U.S. government had come to construe race in binary terms. Japanese migrants emigrated with the dual identity of Japanese and American subjects.<sup>5</sup> To uphold white supremacy, the U.S. government rejected dual identities by segregating “Japanese” and “American” into biologically incompatible categories. This

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<sup>1</sup> Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 169.

<sup>2</sup> Seattle Japanese American Citizen League (JACL) Meeting Minutes to War Relocation Authority, 7 April 1942, James K. Sakamoto Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle.

<sup>3</sup> Ross N. Kusian to James K. Sakamoto, 5 April 1942, James K. Sakamoto Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. McCloy to General DeWitt, Mr. and Mrs. Ross N. Kusian, August 3<sup>rd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>5</sup> Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35-60.

segregation ignored the reality of interracial unions and children. The Mixed Marriage policy was the initial attempt to reconcile these incongruences.<sup>6</sup> This memorandum allowed certain multiracial Japanese American families to apply for leave clearance from mass incarceration camps. The Mixed Marriage policy was a saving measure that attempted to answer two questions at the heart of the U.S. government's policy of segregation: Who was Japanese and who could be Japanese American?

The question of how to categorize multiracial Japanese Americans would persist into mass incarceration. Upon arriving in Tule Lake on July 15, 1942, Carlos Antonio Gomez immediately believed that the U.S. government had made a mistake. Dark skinned and Portuguese speaking Gomez felt out of place towering above a sea of shorter incarcerates. Aggravating the loneliness of social rejection, his ailing wife Mildred had no funds to join Gomez in camp. Despite his deceiving appearance, Gomez fell under the order of Executive Order 9066. As the son of a Portuguese father and a Japanese mother, Gomez met the blood quantum qualification of "one drop" for the mass incarceration.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after arrival in camp, Gomez made an application to leave camp through the Mixed Marriage policy. In his plea Gomez highlighted his cultural incompatibility with the Japanese identity: he had Portuguese citizenship, practiced Catholicism, and married a Caucasian wife. This racial logic assumes multiracial Japanese individuals could fully integrate into either the "American" or "Japanese" identity through cultural choices, but not both.<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the racial absolutism of the

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<sup>6</sup> Major German P. Goebel Jr. to Mr. W.H. Cheney, July 12, 1942, *Western Defense Command and Fourth Army Memorandum*, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

<sup>7</sup> The "one drop rule" standard meant that anyone with Japanese ancestry was considered Japanese. Whether one half, one quarter, or one sixteenth, the blood quantum obsession meant that no one of mixed Japanese heritage could escape U.S. racial logic.

<sup>8</sup> "Carlos Antonio Gomez," July 27, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

"The Gomez Family," July 22, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

first Mixed Marriage policy, WRA officials rejected Gomez's proposal and the logic it conveyed outright.<sup>9</sup>

The Mixed Marriage policy built upon prewar racial and sexual segregation that anticipated postwar integration. This marked a policy shift from explicit or “vulgar” to more “polite” racism.<sup>10</sup> The U.S. empire was acutely aware of its tenuous image as a new world power on the global stage. In a time where explicit settler colonialism was falling out of favor, the United States needed an international image that portrayed democratic acceptance rather than colonial violence. Increasing domestic disapproval over explicit racism threatened to undermine that image. Disavowal of the vulgar racism behind Japanese mass incarceration allowed the U.S. government to redeem itself with a projected image of liberalist humanism.<sup>11</sup> The integration of mixed race Japanese families became examples of the U.S. government's racial tolerance. In many ways, the “polite racism” of integration quietly strengthened the values behind prewar segregation that would have been challenging to defend through traditionally accepted policies that were explicitly racist.<sup>12</sup> Inherent to this system of integration was the goal of assimilation into the prewar hierarchy of patriarchy and white supremacy. These values would persist through the liberal guise of integration to define the racial hierarchy of the postwar United States empire. The U.S. government's treatment of multiracial Japanese Americans during World War II

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<sup>9</sup> Robert A. Petrie to E.L. Shirrell, August 8, 1942, Social Welfare File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>10</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 13.

<sup>11</sup> A note on terminology used in this paper. The terms “evacuation”, “relocation”, and “internment” are found in many of the primary sources cited in this work. These terms are harshly criticized as downplaying and obscuring the reality of trauma suffered by the Japanese American community during the war. While the term “concentration camp” is seeing increasing use by modern scholars, for the purposes of this study, “mass incarceration” and “mass incarceration camps” will be used.

<sup>12</sup> Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 17.

foreshadowed and facilitated postwar racial integration that became crucial to reproducing race and empire.

### **Section I: Prewar Segregation**

When they first emigrated to America, elite Issei (first generation Japanese migrants) carried with them a transpacific identity that allowed them to see themselves as both Japanese and American. These dual identities were promoted by the Japanese government. Migrants were ambassadors: both capable of projecting a respected international image that complimented Japan's emergence as a world imperial power. The assimilation of migrants as Americans translated to the acceptance of Japan's growing status as a world power. Unfortunately, Japanese hopes for assimilation failed to account for racial prejudice. The elite Issei and Japanese government determined that the rejection of Chinese migrants who came before them was caused by moral failures.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Japanese on both sides of the Pacific aspired to distance Japanese migrant communities from any comparisons to the Chinese through a policy of stringent moral policing. Despite these attempts by the Japanese government, the U.S. government resisted Japanese dual identity through racial segregation policies.

The Japanese government was quick to cooperate – and compromise - with the U.S. government to salvage this respectable international image of the Japanese people. As a result of anti-Japanese sentiment on October 11, 1906, the worst fears of the elite Issei and Japanese government came to fruition.<sup>14</sup> The San Francisco Board of Education attempted to force the ninety three Japanese American students attending public school in San Francisco to attend the

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<sup>13</sup> Azuma, *Between Two Empires*, 35-60.

<sup>14</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 40.

segregated Chinese school.<sup>15</sup> This segregation crisis was a double blow to the Japanese – not only were they being segregated as inferior to white, they understood that the U.S. still viewed the Japanese as comparably inferior with the Chinese. The solution to this crisis was the “Gentlemen’s Agreement”.<sup>16</sup> “A Mutually Unsatisfying Compromise” would have been a more accurate name. California officials agreed to reintegrate Japanese students on the condition that the Japanese government agreed to stop issuing passports to laborers bound for the continental U.S. This was a slow step in the erosion of the Japanese American presence in the U.S. under segregationist logic. Within a decade of the Gentleman’s Agreement, a series of land laws arose in opposition to Japanese permanent residency. The Californian Alien Land Law Act of 1913 forbade “aliens ineligible to citizenship” from purchasing, and eventually leasing property in the states where laws were passed.<sup>17</sup> Single generation families that wanted to make a living on American soil only had the hope of challenging the law by acquiring citizenship. The U.S. government’s segregationist policies not only prevented Japanese migrants from existing as equal citizens, but increased and racialized the divide between the “Japanese” and “American” identities.

Takao Ozawa’s story would be the Supreme Court test case to challenge the legal status of Japanese Issei. It became the nail in the coffin for the possibility of the Japanese migrant community recognizing themselves as American. Ozawa met all non-racial qualifications for naturalization. But could his cultural compatibility surpass the racial divide between “Japanese” and “American” identities to gain citizenship? After rejection by two lower courts, Ozawa’s

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<sup>15</sup> Yasuko I Takezawa and Gary Okihiro, *Trans-Pacific Japanese American Studies: Conversations on Race and Racializations* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 254.

<sup>16</sup> Takezawa and Okihiro, *Trans-Pacific Japanese American Studies*, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 115.

appeal passed to the United States Supreme Court as *Ozawa v. United States* on May 31, 1917.<sup>18</sup> Ozawa's own testimony was a paradox of sorts – while it asks for the liberal principle of equality in the eye of the law, it did so by upholding the racist logic that created his condition of inequality. He argued his skin was as white or whiter than the average Caucasian's. Only then did he respond with evidence of his impeccable cultural assimilation, concluding with “In name Benedict Arnold was an American, but at heart he was a traitor. In name I am not an American, but at heart I am a true American.”<sup>19</sup> Ozawa implied that while he was in a racially disparate category, the loyalty component of culture usurped existing biological inequities. His case for cultural citizenship asked the court to be color blind while simultaneously rewarding a personal rejection of race. However, the Supreme Court determined that the racial segregation was inherently incompatible with a cultural-only assimilation. The court declared that the word “white” was defined as synonymous with “what is popularly known as the Caucasian race.”<sup>20</sup> The court concluded that the Japanese could not be white, since they were “clearly of a race which is not Caucasian.”<sup>21</sup> This ruling legally cemented the divide between the identities of Japanese and American.

The Immigration Act of 1924 expanded upon the earlier legislation and court decisions to end all Japanese migration to the United States. Echoing the phrase, “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” from Alien Land Laws and *Ozawa v. United States*, a provision was inserted to exclude all Japanese from naturalization.<sup>22</sup> After the Gentleman's Agreement and Alien Land

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<sup>18</sup> Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History* 86:1 (June 1999): 81.

<sup>19</sup> *Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178 (1922).

<sup>20</sup> *Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178 (1922).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> “Immigration Act of 1924”, (United States of America 68th Congress, Session I, Chapter 190), 153-169.

Laws, the stream of Japanese migration to the U.S. had slowed to a trickle.<sup>23</sup> This act brought all migration to a screeching halt. The ultimate irony of these policies was they contributed to the concentration of Japanese migrants on the west coast. Exclusionists would subsequently point to population segregation as evidence of the Japanese inability to integrate. By the 1930s, Japanese Issei families that lacked overseas support from incoming migrants planted themselves amidst other migrant communities and camps. For laborers that left the countryside, families that could leave land titles to Nisei children established themselves in ethnic urban neighborhoods.

Between 1924 and 1933, Los Angeles's diverse Boyle Heights Neighborhood saw an increase in the Japanese by over 350%.<sup>24</sup> Japanese migrant laborers traveled in makeshift community camps with Chicano, Filipino, Chinese and many other first generation migrants who found themselves rejected by the politically dominant white society. Second generation Nisei citizens who acquired land before the passage of Alien Land Laws planted their feet and flourished on their parents' farmland, often hiring Japanese migrant laborers as seasonal farmhands. Exclusionists perceived these concentrations of Japanese populations as self-segregation rather than consequences of state policy, thus fueling anti-Japanese hysteria and attacks.<sup>25</sup> While the U.S.'s explicitly racist segregationist policies marked an end to the Japanese government's civilizing efforts of Japanese migration abroad, this racial logic laid the foundation for a different kind of Japanese American identity to emerge.

The shift in the Japanese American Citizen League's (JACL) identity politics exemplifies how the "Japanese" and "American" divide forced Japanese Americans to function within the

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<sup>23</sup> "Message from Japan to America," *The Japan Times and Mail*, October 1, 1924.

<sup>24</sup> *The Boyle Heights Oral History Project: a Multiethnic and Collaborative Exploration of a Los Angeles Neighborhood: Interview Summaries and Essays*, Los Angeles, CA: Japanese American National Museum, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> William Stephens to Bainbridge Colby, "Japanese Immigration," Hearings, House immigration committee, July 1920, 66th Congress, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1921).

segregationist logic of the United States. The JACL was founded in 1929.<sup>26</sup> Like the elite Issei leaders that came before them, the JACL initially began as an organization that took pride in the dual heritage of Japanese Americans. The U.S. government's rejection of Japanese as Americans by the mid-1930s left the assimilation of the Nisei as the last hope for salvaging the socioeconomic position of the Japanese American community. When "Japanese American" fell outside the U.S.'s racially segregated categories of "Japanese" and "American" the JACL attempted to fit into the more privileged of two categories – American, merely modified by the rejected identity of Japanese. By abiding by segregationist logic, the JACL became a self-fulfilling prophecy of an exclusive organization predicated on the denial of Japanese affiliation. By 1936, the JACL was only open to U.S. citizens to maintain a patriotic image.<sup>27</sup> Henceforth, Issei were automatically excluded from membership.<sup>28</sup> Any Nisei who rejected the JACL's hyper-patriotism as the ticket to acceptance into mainstream white society found themselves rejected. The JACL primarily represented descendants of elite Issei who found themselves economically benefitting above the lower class racial counterparts. Nonetheless the JACL did represent a strong current of Nisei assimilation politics in the prewar years. As the Nisei leadership within the JACL was the most organized by the early 1940s, they would be the faction that came to power on the eve of World War II.

By 1941, many Nisei were embracing an identity of cultural Americans that rejected the racial identity of Japanese. Later that year, JACL staff member Mike Masaoka was desperately trying to fill page space in a pamphlet the night before the JACL Salt Lake City Convention.

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<sup>26</sup> Jere Takashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1997), 54-55.

<sup>27</sup> Takashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 54-55.

<sup>28</sup> This is of course with the obvious exception of World War I veterans who had secured citizenship through the Nye-Lea Act of 1935. Ibid., 58.

Under the flickering gas light, he wrote what would (in)famously become known as the Japanese American Creed.<sup>29</sup> While it by no means portrays the opinion of all Japanese Americans, its last paragraph does offer an interesting insight into how many Japanese American Nisei leaders saw themselves on the eve of the World War II:

Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way--above board, in the open, through courts of law, by education, by proving myself to be worthy of equal treatment and consideration. I am firm in my belief that American sportsmanship and attitude of fair play will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.<sup>30</sup>

The Creed's language is overly humble at best and humiliatingly self-deprecating at worst. It suggests the possibility of the Japanese as Americans, but only in the context of existing below white Americans who on the racial hierarchy. While acknowledging the existence of the Japanese Americans as second class citizens, the price was unwavering loyalty to a society that discriminated based on physical characteristics. As Henry Miyatake bitterly paraphrased Masaoka's creed: "You can treat us like crap, but we're still going to be loyal."<sup>31</sup>

By the eve of World War II, the categories of Japanese and American had been seemingly severed beyond the possibility of reconciliation. Prewar identity formation could only occur within the parameters of a racial hierarchy that prioritized white supremacy above cultural assimilation. Japanese American measures at reforming migrant identity were performed to position their social status above other minority groups, albeit below white Americans.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Mike Masaoka and Bill Hosokawa, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), 16.

<sup>30</sup> Masaoka and Hosokawa, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Sadamu Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle: The Campaign for Japanese American Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 13.

<sup>32</sup> Azuma, *Between Two Empires*, 187-207.

Japanese Americans upheld this hierarchy with the interest of existing above other minority groups and elevating their status within the hierarchy through cultural assimilation. Expressing the categories of Japanese and American as mutually exclusive based off racial incompatibility ignored the small but glaring reality of what came naturally in many Japanese American communities –outmarriage. The transgression of these racial categories through miscegenation thus faced criticism from both the U.S. government and Japanese American communities. The state governments enforced strict sexual segregation of Japanese and American communities through miscegenation statutes dating back to the 1870s.<sup>33</sup> Many Japanese American leaders found themselves supporting the logic of miscegenation laws. In Seattle, the Japanese community made national headlines by attempting to bribe Gunjiro Aoki over \$1000 to call off his marriage to his white fiancée Helen.<sup>34</sup> He did not take it.

Support of miscegenation laws by Japanese leaders was usually justified as an action to maintain a law-abiding image. However, much of this justification can be contributed to the U.S. racial logic that controlled Japanese American identity building. The transgression of miscegenation threatened to undermine the Japanese superiority over other minorities by undermining the biological mutability of the U.S. racialized hierarchy. Especially amongst the elite Issei descendants which fostered close ties to Japan, Japanese Americans often held their own prejudiced perception of the Japanese as racially superior to other Asian races.<sup>35</sup> This was aggravated by the fact that most interracial unions occurred between lower class migrant

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<sup>33</sup> Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

<sup>34</sup> Adjusted for inflation, this bribe would have amounted to \$27,099.91 in 2016.

“Friend of Emery Family Seeks Medical Advice as to Whether Hypnotism can Explain Girl’s Wild Infatuation with Japanese,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), March 12, 1909.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Strong, *The Second Generation Japanese Problem* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1934), 99-124.

workers, exactly the kind of affiliation the first elite Issei migrants wanted to avoid.<sup>36</sup> One of the earliest Japanese terms for referring to half Japanese children was ainoko.<sup>37</sup> By the 1940s, it had evolved into umbrella pejorative that incorporated not only Eurasian, but Japanese children of any mixed heritage. Mexican-Japanese Americans like Mary Montoya experienced this prejudice long before the war. Montoya was born inside a multiracial work camp along the Santa Fe Railway.<sup>38</sup> Segregation began very young, as she recalled school officials arguing whether to place her in the Mexican or the Japanese classroom.<sup>39</sup> When it was decided that Montoya would be placed in a Japanese classroom, her eight year old classmates hollered “You don’t come near me. I’m full blooded Japanese. You’re just dirt, you know!”<sup>40</sup> Multiracial Japanese families had to function within prewar hierarchy that rejected their existence as shameful race traitors. As one biracial Japanese bluntly stated “In those days, the only Japanese that married Caucasians were prostitutes.”<sup>41</sup>

## **Section II: Multiracial Segregation Crisis**

Mass incarceration of the Japanese created a multiracial segregation crisis for the United States. The Japanese American community had a relatively low out marriage rate, but it was nonetheless present. While low end estimates are about 1,400 intermarried Japanese Americans and at least seven hundred multiracial, these numbers were likely significantly higher.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Helen Whitney, “Care of Homeless Children of Japanese Ancestry during Evacuation” (M.A. Thesis, University of California Berkley, 1948), 32.

<sup>37</sup> This literally means a child born of a relationship between two races, but is considered a derogatory slur today. Ibid, 32.

<sup>38</sup> Mary, interview by Andrew, August 14, 2012, New Mexico JACL Collection, Densho.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Mary, New Mexico JACL Collection, Densho.

<sup>41</sup> John Tateishi, *And Justice For All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), 220.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Spickard, "Injustice Compounded: Amerasians and Non-Japanese Americans in World War II Concentration Camps," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 5.2 (1986): 5-22.

Contesting definitions of who was considered “Japanese American” made the process of identifying mixed marriage families difficult. While military leaders like General John L. DeWitt abided by the “one drop rule”, Japanese American leaders who ostracized the multiracial community in the prewar years did not always consider multiracial families Japanese American. This can be observed in a JACL bulletin that chastised members for “falling down on the job” and embarrassing the organization by not properly disseminating information mixed marriage families in the earliest weeks of the evictions.<sup>43</sup> The first solution to the segregation problem was merely creating deferments for families in mixed marriages. This compromise between military leaders and the JACL highlighted but did not address contesting definitions of Japanese.

Military leadership grew increasingly frustrated with the two contesting definitions of what it meant to be Japanese American, and reinforced the one drop racial logic to rescind the policy of deferments. By May 15, 1942, all members of mixed families with up to 1/16<sup>th</sup> Japanese blood were required to register for camp.<sup>44</sup> This order also cited that non-Japanese spouses would be able to apply to enter camps. While applications for non-Japanese spouses were processed quickly, some faced resistance or were explicitly denied. Problems entering camp overwhelmingly involved the white wives of Japanese husbands. Laverne Matsuda was denied application to join her Japanese husband in Tule lake. She appealed on June 30, 1942.<sup>45</sup> Citing no reason for the denial, E.M. Rowalt had her last name removed from the mass incarceration camp census reports and stated that no further action would be taken on her case.<sup>46</sup> Elaine Black faced more explicit rejection. Soldiers pulled Elaine and her son Tommy out of a

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<sup>43</sup> JACL Bulletin No. 141, April 4, 1942, Box 10, James K. Sakamoto Collection, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle.

<sup>44</sup> W. K. Shaugnessy to WCCA, “Mixed Marriage exemptions to Evacuations,” May 12, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

<sup>45</sup> Matsuda to Bendetsen, June 30, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

<sup>46</sup> E.M. Rowalt to Matsuda, October 10, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

bus line where they were waiting to join her husband Karl in Manzanar. Despite already having her application approved, the guards continually insisted that she did not have to enter camp insisting “there were places where Tommy could go” and be treated decently.<sup>47</sup> Prewar miscegenation statues were overwhelmingly grounded in a fear of white women marrying men of color.<sup>48</sup> Attempts at excluding white spouses from internment was a continuation of this logic.

This crisis was partially prompted by physical factors that led to other camp exemptions. Overcrowding and a lack of resources prompted WRA interest in releases. The sixteen temporary detention facilities faced “severe overcrowding and ration shortages.”<sup>49</sup> Knowing only ten permanent facilities for holding Japanese incarcerates were being built, the WRA was planning on limiting the number of Japanese Americans returned to the west coast.<sup>50</sup> General DeWitt who headed the Western Defense Command (WDC) in contrast was interested all Japanese from the west coast, as it was the WRA which had to the work of building and operating mass incarceration camps. In addition, the mass exodus of Japanese Americans left a huge gap in agricultural industrial labor markets on the west coast. Young white men who previously could replace displaced minority communities were now joining the military. These labor opportunities led to an influx of other minority migrants, notably African Americans. California

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<sup>47</sup> The place guards hinted that Tommy could be taken was likely the Manzanar Children’s Village. While most children in the village had been orphaned before the war, the village grew by 40% its original capacity through the addition of mixed race children. Interracial would ultimately compose 19% of the population. Whether children had been abandoned like Dennis Tojo or abducted like Ronald Kawamoto, mixed children who could not follow parents outside camps under the mixed marriage policy were raised in what was dubbed a “Caucasian environment” within the Manzanar mass incarceration camp.

“Lillian Matsumoto ID Card”, California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, March 8, 2002.

Catherine Irwin, *Twice orphaned: voices from the Children's Village of Manzanar* (Fullerton, CA: Center for Oral and Public History, California State University, Fullerton, 2008), 253.

Vivian Raineri, *The Red Angel: the Life and Times of Elaine Black Yoneda* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1991), 208.

<sup>48</sup> Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, 10.

<sup>49</sup> *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1946), 15-24.

<sup>50</sup> Dillon S. Myer, *Uprooted Americans: the Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1971), 67.

neighborhoods like Little Tokyo experienced African American populations increases by 400% from 1941 to 1945.<sup>51</sup> White exclusionist communities sought to avoid permanent settlements of African Americans through the lesser but necessary alternative: Japanese American labor.

The symbolic value of integrating select Japanese as Americans offered a far larger incentive than the physical need for labor. U.S. military officials did not want biracial children who had grown up under Caucasian fathers to be tainted by “infectious Japanese thought” in camp.<sup>52</sup> The mass segregation order was designed under the premise of protecting white families from the Japanese. Race was the litmus test: if a white American was to be assumed loyal, a Japanese American was assumed to be disloyal. The presence of multiracial Japanese-White families in camp undermined this logic.<sup>53</sup> The U.S. military was keen on keeping the external world unaware of these apparent contradictions. The segregation crisis was an identity crisis that threatened to undermine the values of democratic racial tolerance espoused by the United States. These values were used as justification for the expansion of U.S. empire. Domestic racial turmoil contradicted and threatened to undermine the image of the U.S. as the morally superior policeman of the world. The United States needed to mobilize citizen-civilian armies and gain funding support for Congress to engage in overseas military conflicts and occupation. Domestic and international support was easier to garner when military action was justified on the defense of human rights rather than expanding military influence overseas. To continue building empire, the U.S. had to maintain an image of liberalism in concert with a reality of racial intolerance.

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<sup>51</sup> Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 158.

<sup>52</sup> Wilkie Courier to Ray Ashworth, "Emancipation of Japanese children, issue of mixed marriages," November 13, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

<sup>53</sup> Jennifer Ho, "Racial Ambiguity in Asian American Culture," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 19, no. 2 (2016): 263-265.

The U.S. government's need for Japanese American labor and public support existed in contest with its desires for racial segregation. This dilemma is best summarized by the scholar Takashi Fujitani: How does an empire render the once disposable colonized body of racial minorities into one that is newly indispensable in order to fuel and justify its expanded war-making?<sup>54</sup> The U.S. government's answer to this problem was allowing an identity reformation: determining who could be segregated as Japanese and who could be integrated as Japanese American. This disavowal of racism sustained the U.S. claim as a higher moral power, and therefore allowed it to continue existence as an imperial power. The politics of integration allowed white supremacy and patriarchy to withstand accusations of colonialism in ways no longer possible through explicit racism. If prewar segregation was exclusionary racism, the Mixed Marriage policy foreshadowed postwar integration and a new policy of polite racism.

Deferments and the initial separation of families had the effect of skewing data about the multiracial demographics of Japanese mass incarceration. Japanese spouses usually registered with multiracial children separate from their non-Japanese spouse. Absent non-Japanese spouses were overwhelmingly racially miscategorized. The IBM machines that created the WRA punch-card database of incarcerates lacked options for race ("Other") besides "Japanese" and "White" until October 1942.<sup>55</sup> To add to this confusion, mixed race Japanese individuals were usually just labeled "Japanese," regardless of ancestry. This was largely due to the military's assumptions that any amount of Japanese blood rendered one Japanese. These physical and technological separations had the effect of omitting or mislabeling most of multiracial Japanese American families - unions between Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, and Chinese migrant camp laborers - who

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<sup>54</sup> Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> "Instructions to Coders WRA Form No. 26", Item 17, Record Group 210, October 22, 1942, National Archives at College Park, MD.

initially entered camp.<sup>56</sup> Language barriers and the sheer number of people processed in mass incarceration camps meant these mistakes have long since been overlooked in the record. This miscalculation and confusion by the U.S. military laid the groundwork for the flawed logic that was manifested in the first Mixed Marriage policy.

The first Mixed Marriage memorandum was released to WCCA leadership on July 12, 1942. While the subject title was “Release of Mixed Marriage Families”, those who could apply was very narrow. The initial memorandum separates potential applicants for release into three groups: 1) Mixed race families with U.S. citizen Caucasian husbands and Japanese wives; 2) Mixed race families with U.S. citizen Caucasian wives and Japanese husbands; and 3) Mixed race Japanese American adults.<sup>57</sup> These initial three categories allowed mixed families to reintegrate into their previous lives based on a ladder of assimilability. White husbands serving in the military with Japanese wives were amongst the closest to assimilability, the only group in the initial memorandum given access to their abandoned communities without additional evaluation. White husbands that demonstrated less enthusiasm for military service could relocate to the Midwest with Japanese wives without additional evaluation. Mixed Japanese adult citizens and Japanese husbands with Caucasian U.S. citizen wives and mixed children could apply to leave, but only if their environment was evaluated as sufficiently non-Japanese or “Caucasian”.<sup>58</sup> Even then, this still prohibited many multiracial individuals and families from returning to their homes on the west coast.

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<sup>56</sup> These incongruences were found in the author of this paper’s comparisons of the Mixed Marriage File applications for leave clearance and the corresponding individual’s initial forms (notably WRA Form No. 26) filled out when families entered camps at the beginning of the war. This discovery is an important part of answering questions that have plagued scholars since 1986, “Where are the multiracial Japanese individuals and families in camp records and why are there discrepancies in registration?”

<sup>57</sup> Major German P. Goebel Jr. to Mr. W.H. Cheney, 12 July 1942, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army Memorandum, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>58</sup> Goebel to Cheney, 12 July 1942, National Archives at College Park, MD.

Emphasizing the presence of Caucasian husbands was based on the values of a white supremacist patriarchy. The overarching concern of WRA officials was that mixed children be “raised in a Caucasian environment” to retain a public image of benevolence.<sup>59</sup> Even though most childcare was performed by mothers, especially in cases of a father’s military deployment, the WRA assumed a Japanese mother would be subservient and therefore subject to the Westernizing-influence of her Caucasian husband. The problem was, most mixed race families and individuals did not fit into these three categories.

As the IBM registrations and spousal leave policy had already demonstrated, officials did not anticipate marriages between Japanese and non-Caucasian groups. As a dry afterthought, the initial 1942 memorandum notes that “A policy respecting families composed of Filipino and Chinese husbands, Japanese wives and mixed blood children, is now under consideration.”<sup>60</sup> This was a euphemism at best and a lie that failed to placate at worst. A policy proposed by distressed camp social scientists was not seriously considered in correspondences by WRA officials until February 1943.<sup>61</sup> This dismissal was allowed under the premise that the inclusion of mixed Japanese and non-white families in camp was not seen as a contradiction or reason for outcry by the American public. Ironically, allegiance to the United States – the U.S. government’s primary justification behind mass incarceration - was never addressed as a condition for release in the Mixed Marriage policy.

While the original policy was slightly amended on August 19, 1942, it was still narrowly defined. The amendment expanded among the groups eligible for residence in the evacuated

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<sup>59</sup> Goebel to Cheney, 12 July 1942, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> “Information Memorandum RE: Polices Effecting Japanese in the United States”, February 23, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

areas families where the head of the household – namely, a husband or eldest son - was a citizen of a friendly nation (English, Canadian, or other Anglo-countries).<sup>62</sup> This order still promoted race above nationality as a barrier against integration. Despite her husband’s British citizenship, Riyoko Patell and her children were still denied leave clearance. WRA official reasoned that her children were “clearly raised in an East-Indian rather than British environment,” citing Riyoko’s – not her children’s - weak English fluency.<sup>63</sup> In another instance, biracial Japanese-White son Stanley Yoeman’s was allowed to leave for “being raised 20 years in a Caucasian environment.”<sup>64</sup> His Japanese mother Alice, on the other hand, was denied. Alice’s twenty years of Caucasian influence was deemed insufficient. Her “possible continued source of education” - her husband, Alfred - had passed away months before she entered camp with Stanley.<sup>65</sup> This racialized paternalism maintained the idea that the “Americanization” of Japanese in camps was only allowed through white influence. The continued obsession with race revealed an overarching concern for individuals perceived as assimilable into an “American” culture that was racialized to omit all non-Anglo identities.

The results of this order after the initial leave clearances were highly contentious. While it attempted to broadcast an anti-racist by integrating select incarcerated families as Japanese and American, the reality was that it strengthened the racialized identity division. When Col. Karl Bendetsen gushed that the Mixed Marriage policy was “entirely successful and a valuable contribution to civilian morale,” the perception of the policy by Japanese Americans compared to

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<sup>62</sup> John Dewitt, *Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942: Final Report* (reprint by St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 2006),145-146.

<sup>63</sup> “Patell Family”, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>64</sup> “Yoeman Family”, September 17, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

white civilians was rather dismal.<sup>66</sup> On average, less than 30% of mixed marriage families could leave camp through the Mixed Marriage policy by the end of 1942.<sup>67</sup> The effects of prolonged separation in camp was extremely detrimental to the families. Camp and west coast newspapers reported a “sharp rise” in divorces amongst separated couples, particularly of Caucasian husbands and wives without children who did not want to join their spouse in camp.<sup>68</sup> While multiracial Japanese Americans largely shared the same experiences of their monoracial counterparts, they did differ in two major ways. The first of these, the separation of families, has already been noted. The one less often acknowledged was the discrimination and eventual forced disavowal of Japanese identity that many multiracial Japanese American families faced in camps.

The stress and humility of mass incarceration, in concert with the hyper-patriotism promoted by Nisei individuals escalated prewar prejudice against multiracial families within the Japanese American community. Different groups of scientists entering the camp were at the forefront of recording and reporting the ongoing of life within mass incarceration camps. Sometimes this information was leaked to the outside world, much to the anxiety of WRA officials. The appeal of four pregnant mothers to move in together at camp is evidence of prejudice against multiracial Japanese individuals within camp.<sup>69</sup> As justification for an appeal to change barrack assignment, the women cited concern for their existing Japanese-Chinese and Japanese-Korean children who were gawked and scorned at by monoracial Japanese women in

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<sup>66</sup> Col. Bendtsen to Col. Scobey, November 21, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>67</sup> “Exemptions Granted to Persons of Japanese Ancestry under the Mixed Marriage Policy,” August 1, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>68</sup> “Wives Divorce Japanese Husbands,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), May 12, 1943.

<sup>69</sup> Jean Lew and Marie Lee interview by Charles Kikuchi, August 14, 1942, University of California Berkeley Japanese Evacuation and Resettlement Study Archive.

their barracks for being mixed race. Another letter recalls John Young, a Chinese American who slept with “my newborn daughter in the crook of my right arm and a knife in my left hand.”<sup>70</sup>

Fears of prejudice escalating into hate crimes were not entirely unfounded. After the Santa Anita riot, a mixed-race Japanese-Korean man received the violent awakening of being yanked out of his bunk and beaten. The FBI file notes his attackers thought he was an informant to camp guards due to his Korean heritage.<sup>71</sup> The misfortunate reality of later released FBI files was this man was innocent.

### **Section III: Reformation**

Reports of the Mixed Marriage policy’s shortcomings were largely ignored until February 1943. This change occurred when the infamous “Loyalty Questionnaire’s” Question 27 brought the segregation of inmates to the debate again. Among other questions on the demographics of the survey-taker, Question 27 asked if Nisei men were willing to serve in combat duty.<sup>72</sup> While the survey was distributed by military officials under the premise of separating loyal from disloyal incarcerates, Japanese American incarcerates were left in the dark on the purpose of the questionnaire. The misleading title “Application for Leave Clearance” left many multiracial Japanese American families with the impression that this was another segregation order. Remembering the privileging of interracial military families from the initial mixed marriage policy led multiracial families to overwhelmingly answer Question 27 yes.<sup>73</sup> Adding to confusion was an October 7, 1942 order which specified the conditions allowing

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<sup>70</sup> John, interview by Rose, May 22, 2015, John Young Collection, Densho.

<sup>71</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, File No. 100-1477, by Edmund Mason, August 10, 1942.

<sup>72</sup> Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 182.

<sup>73</sup> Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied*, 182.

Japanese American servicemen to return to their homes in the exclusion zone but prohibited them from visiting their families in camp.<sup>74</sup> If enlisted Japanese American men left camp for service and their families were denied leave clearance, would they ever be able to see their families again? The presence of former “enemy aliens” in the U.S. military, albeit in segregated units, supposedly demonstrated success of “democratization” efforts within camps and a disavowal that segregation was racist.<sup>75</sup> Many Japanese Americans, as well as external politicians, accepted military service as proof of the cultural assimilability of the Japanese.

As WRA officials were hit with an onslaught of questions on leave clearance from military families in February, a six-month battle for amending the Mixed Marriage policy began. Shortly after the release of the Loyalty Questionnaire, Asst. Secretary John McCloy implored DeWitt to amend the policy to allow exemptions for the multiracial families with non-Caucasian husbands in the military, regardless of the presence of children.<sup>76</sup> McCloy noted that:

Instead of denying spouses of mixed marriages residence in the military area solely on the arbitrary establishment of racial background, would it not be better to establish the loyalty of disloyalty of the individual as a guide to granting clearance?

DeWitt dismissed the concerns of McCloy, arguing:

If the present mixed marriage policy is modified on the theory that loyalty can be determined and Japanese wives who are allegedly loyal be permitted to return to the evacuated area, there would be no real justification for not allowing any such Japanese to return...

Aside from ironically disregarding the McCloy’s concerns of loyalty in favor of conditions of racism above, DeWitt upheld the current policy as it had no relation to the supposed original objective of protecting mixed blood children and adults from a Japanese environment.

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<sup>74</sup> “Information Memorandum”, February 23, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>75</sup> Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 25.

<sup>76</sup> McCloy to Dewitt, February 11, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

As Nisei men who replied “yes” to question 27 were enlisted through the spring of 1943, the “civilian morale” which WRA officials claimed was invigorated by the first version of the Mixed Marriage policy began to crumble. Multiracial Japanese American military families who lost faith in their actions of loyalty usurping the racial prejudice that kept them in camp escalated their cases. When Mrs. Uchida’s biracial Japanese-Spanish son was not allowed to visit his parents in Poston when off duty, she reached out to the Spanish Ambassador.<sup>77</sup> In another case, Native American World War I veteran William Pape reached out to Secretary Henry L. Stimson in order for his Japanese wife Pearl to rejoin him in Seattle.<sup>78</sup> Following the unsuccessful example of the Filson family, half Japanese Theresa Takeyoshi tried to curry favor with the likes of Eleanor Roosevelt on her case to return.<sup>79</sup> While Mrs. Roosevelt did end up appealing Takeyoshi’s case, this was immediately ignored. Colonel Bendetsen argued that Theresa’s choice to marry a Japanese man like her mother demonstrated that she was raised in a non-Caucasian environment and therefore was “a Japanese, pure and Simple.”<sup>80</sup> This decision, especially with its disregard of her husband’s military service, managed to arise significant public discontent with the current mixed marriage policy and exemption order. Camp social scientists submitted these examples as evidence for the need of further amendments to the Mixed Marriage policy to quell public discontent that threatened to further soil the image of the U.S. military.

Despite hearing the pleas of camp officials and researchers, General DeWitt still attempted to hold his ground. On June 16, 1943, he reasoned that amending the mixed marriage policy would allow in “hundreds of Japanese to the west coast which would impair military

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<sup>77</sup> Information Memorandum,” February 23, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Theresa Takeyoshi to Eleanor Roosevelt, May 11, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>80</sup> Col. Bendetsen and Col. Hall, May 24, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

functionality.”<sup>81</sup> Pointedly ignoring questions for the justification of segregating multiracial Japanese military families, he restated that the policy was designed for children who should not be punished for the decision of their parents to intermarry.<sup>82</sup> McCloy’s reply pushed back against DeWitt continuing to emphasize the importance of justifying segregation on individual loyalty rather than DeWitt’s immutable interpretation of race. McCloy also made a veiled threat to DeWitt. He argued that west coast newspapers have already been given notice of modification to the mixed marriage exemptions and that “it may be best to carry out the change rather than to give appearance of receding.”<sup>83</sup> Not amenable to being called a coward or facing the consequences of further public scrutiny, DeWitt folded to approve an amendment that allowed the exemption of Japanese females to non-Japanese males where 1) the husband is a soldier or 2) there are children of the union raised in what was considered a non-Japanese environment.<sup>84</sup>

McCloy’s grateful reply to DeWitt’s concession highlighted that revision was necessary as part of maintaining a consistent and democratic image. He argued it was “getting harder to withhold wives against the ongoing legal challenges” due to the military’s reasoning for incarcerating Japanese Americans instead of Germans or Italians was becoming “dubious indeed” in public sentiment.<sup>85</sup> This is the context which allowed the final amendment of the mixed marriage policy. Rather than rejecting racial segregation, allowing cultural rather than solely “biological” factors sustained the segregation of the mass incarcerated Japanese American

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<sup>81</sup> Dewitt to McCloy, June 16, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> McCloy to DeWitt, July 14, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>84</sup> McCloy to DeWitt, August 3, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>85</sup> McCloy to DeWitt, August 3, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

community. In the words of McCloy, the “continued resistance to the mixed marriage policy without relaxation will result in a victory for those who want to undo evacuation” because the military’s perceived prioritization of race over loyalty made the Mixed Marriage policy “stick(s) out like a sore thumb.”<sup>86</sup>

The final wave of families to leave camp under the Mixed Marriage policy represented a shift in U.S. policy that fulfilled the hopes of Takao Ozawa – that with sufficient cultural integration, a Japanese could integrate as a citizen. The process of agreeing on these amendments, and the segregation they allowed, did not answer what was a sufficiently non-Japanese environment, nor what the process to determine such an environment would be. Rather than reject the biology that predicated their segregation, the multi-step test for assimilation was used to reinforce the racialization of the postwar American identity. This new identity opened the possibility for non-white citizens to be viewed as culturally assimilated American. However, non-white citizens were still not viewed or treated as equals in a society. Racial segregation policies from Jim Crow in the South to Sundown Laws in the West persisted well into the 1950s.<sup>87</sup> The segregation of the multiracial Japanese Americans anticipated this shift from biologically to culturally defined racial categories that maintained social inequities. The last families to apply under the Mixed Marriage policy were among the most diverse, often the products of second generation immigrant unions in work camps.

The process for leaving began with consulting paperwork from camp registration and the Loyalty Questionnaire. This usually required additional paperwork restating family

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<sup>86</sup> McCloy to DeWitt, August 3, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>87</sup> James Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How The Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 585-600.

demographics and the plans for relocation, as initial registrations oftentimes mislabeled the race of the non-Japanese spouse.<sup>88</sup> With this they had to provide at least two letters of reference to apply on leave. Documentation specifically maintained that these references were “preferably Caucasian.”<sup>89</sup> For some families this was an advantage, as previous employers were preferred to demonstrate that integrated couples would not rely on state aid.

The next step was an interview process for families, sometimes singling out individuals to be interrogated one on one. While these interviews began with a family’s financial status and the capacity to get work, the concern was overwhelmingly looking for evidence of a family’s “Caucasian” environment.<sup>90</sup> A policing of the new acceptable sexual morality was a key component, with WRA officials refusing to hear cases of non-married couples. Grace Umeko Record was not allowed to appeal her case because she obeyed California miscegenation laws by not marrying her partner.<sup>91</sup> Interviewees attempted to portray work, friend associations, religious activity, language, names, and even their physical descriptions with a hyper-anglo slant. The following excerpt is from the interview notes of Yoneko Charlene Kinoshita: “Interviewee demonstrates silence, kicked table and cried, possible lack of English?”<sup>92</sup> If this seems like odd or uncooperative interview behavior to the reader, they are right. But for the situation, it was appropriate. The interviewee, after all, was four years old.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> WRA Form 49, Record Group 210, Box, 28, National Archives at College Park, MD.

<sup>89</sup> Wade Head to E.R. Freyer, August 6, 1943, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>90</sup> “Survey of Mixed Marriage Cases of the Colorado River War Relocation Project,” Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>91</sup> “Grace Umeko Record”, October 10, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>92</sup> “Yoneko ‘Charlene’ Kinoshita Interview Notes,” registration file pulled from July 28, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>93</sup> Yoneko was the daughter of Japanese and Syrian immigrants Kai and Marian Haddad Kinoshita. For the purposes of sounding more anglicized in the appeal paperwork her parents applied to leave Colorado River Camp under the names Charles, Pauline and Charlene.

Caucasian references previously submitted in the first months of incarceration oftentimes aided in this erasure. Japanese-Hawaiian Lawrence Kalea had “difficulty with the authorities because no one knew whether or not he had Japanese blood” prior to the mass incarceration.<sup>94</sup> Advocating for his return, Kalea’s reference Aberdeen police Chief A.M Gallagher reassured WRA officials that upon investigation Kalea was “at least half loyal.”<sup>95</sup> In the aforementioned case of Carlos Gomez, his boss Mrs. Denivelle appealed for Gomez’s release arguing her employee never “had any friends amongst the Japanese.”<sup>96</sup> Implicit in Denivelle’s argument is the distancing of Gomez from his monoracial Japanese counterparts. In another instance, Japanese-Mexican Consuela Kagitani’s elementary school principle in camp wrote an appeal after her student’s family was denied leave under the Mixed Marriage policy.<sup>97</sup> She expressed concern that Consuela would develop Japanese rather than English language skills to replace her current fluency in Spanish.<sup>98</sup> Her family’s application was reviewed again and approved one week later.

If and only if multiracial Japanese Americans were assessed as sufficiently assimilated would they be allowed to leave. The integration process overwhelmingly maintained cultural segregation by favoring those who upheld the divide between Japanese and American. The policy still favored Japanese-White families, with those unions having the highest success rate in

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Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> “Lawrence Kalea,” September 3, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>95</sup> A.M Gallagher to Tule Lake Project Director, August 8, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>96</sup> Mrs. Hilda Denivelle to Tule Lake Project Director, July 11, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>97</sup> “Retha E. Breeze to Poston Lake Project Director,” July 27, 1942, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

appeals, despite not representing the majority of interracial families in camp.<sup>99</sup> This white washing of multiracial families would be continued after camp. The American Red Cross pioneered “American” schools to help multiracial mothers returning to their homes transition into white society easier. This education model would be replicated with Japanese women who married American servicemen and immigrated to the U.S. during the American occupation of Japan.<sup>100</sup> While this was a reintroduction of Japanese as Americans, it succeeded in its goal of reproducing the prewar segregation. Some may argue, not incorrectly, that multiracial appeals were a false-disavowal of multiracial identity because interviewees were acting under duress. However, the consequences of this perceived disavowal of multiracial identity through assimilation into a Caucasian environment still resulted in the very real of integration of multiracial Japanese families as Americans segregated from monoracial Japanese Americans and severed from their Japanese past.

#### **Section IV: The Resilience of Racial Segregation**

Racialized and gendered definitions of citizenship continued to affect multiracial Japanese families overseas. This discriminatory reality contrasted with the U.S. government’s projected image of racial inclusion. An estimated 5,000 to 10,000 offspring were born to Japanese women and American military servicemen from 1945 to 1955.<sup>101</sup> Whether the products of romantic trysts, prostitution, or rape, most of these “occupation babies” were abandoned in Japan. The U.S. military’s response to this moral crisis was rooted in the logic, and sometimes

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<sup>99</sup> “Survey of Mixed Marriage Cases of the Colorado River War Relocation Project,” Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>100</sup> These women were known as the Japanese War Brides.

Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945-1960* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 65-76.

<sup>101</sup> Everett to Grossman, War Relocation Authority Appeal Memos, 2 January 1955, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

borrowed procedures, of the Mixed Marriage Policy of 1942-1943. Similar to the prewar unions between Issei women and American men, the U.S. citizenship of multiracial Japanese children was not recognized as valid unless couples elected to marry.<sup>102</sup> The legal authority of military servicemen in interracial marriages mimicked that of the Mixed Marriage Policy. It neither assumed nor asked fathers to stay with the Japanese women that bore their children. The mass orphaning of occupation babies often involved the participation of both mothers and fathers. Like their transpacific counterparts, Japanese mothers often lacked the legal resources required for marriage. The pressure of crippling postwar poverty motivated Japanese mothers to abandon their children.<sup>103</sup> Combined with public ostracizing of multiracial families as shameful reminders of Japan's defeat, Japanese orphanages had overrepresented populations of biracial children amongst the usual war orphans.

Also like their white counterparts overseas, white servicemen who did apply for marriage with their "war brides" had a far easier time having appeals approved than their African American counterparts. Although the War Brides Act allowed servicemen who married women while stationed abroad to bring their wives to the United States on a non-quota basis and without regard to racial exclusion laws, the application often discriminated against African American fathers.<sup>104</sup> In short postwar policies of the U.S. military reproduced racial hierarchies and divides in Japan. The consequence was a disproportionate separation of mixed race families and the resulting occupation crisis that contradicted the image of racial tolerance. Mixed babies with servicemen of color had by far the worst outcomes of the occupation unions. Due to possessing

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<sup>102</sup> Everett to Grossman, January 2, 1955, Mixed Marriage File, National Archives Record Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>103</sup> John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York, NY, W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 235-236.

<sup>104</sup> Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 114.

darker skin and larger noses than their white and Japanese biracial counterparts, these children faced the reality of prejudice when unable to conceal their parentage.<sup>105</sup> Miki Sawada founded the Oiso orphanage specifically for the rejected mixed race occupation babies. Sawada writes “None of the fathers of more than 700 children who have stayed at our place took their responsibility, going back home, although I believe one or two of them must be suffering pangs of conscience.”<sup>106</sup> When the orphanages were not able to handle the volume of children, infanticide and neglect also became widespread. Social worker Ethel Payne begging for foreign aid to assist the occupation baby crisis testifies:

I was riding the train to a train passenger next to me when I spotted a cloth bundle on the luggage rack. When I unwrapped it, I discovered the bloated corpse of a newborn black Japanese baby.<sup>107</sup>

The subhuman classification of racially distinguishable occupation babies as they grew up. Rather than acting on the purported values of racial tolerance by intervention in the crisis, the U.S. military remained silent. If the authorities were to push soldiers, notably African American ones, to claim paternity or to marry a Japanese woman, it would challenge United States opposition to multiracial relationships and contradict existing prevailing state anti-miscegenation laws. The central message to the labels of mixed race children upheld the prewar experience of multiracial Japanese Americans in the middle of the war. The emphasis on "blood impurity" maintained the prewar conception of race as biologically rather than culturally defined. This allowed for the persistence of segregating Japanese and American identities.

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<sup>105</sup> Yuki and Toshiyuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II*, (New York, NY, Routledge Press, 2003), iii.

<sup>106</sup> Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence*, 65-76.

<sup>107</sup> Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride*, 128.

## **Conclusion:**

The Mixed Marriage policy of 1942-1943 provides an understanding of how the process of segregation enabled and enforced, not ended the construction of racial identity and empire during World War II. The U.S. government's policing of race and sexuality transgressed the upmost private boundaries of its citizens. Everywhere from the classroom to the bedroom fell under the surveillance of the state to control, reform, and advance the narrative of U.S. liberalism. The Mixed Marriage policy was among the many efforts of the U.S. government to project an external image of benevolent empire which contradicted domestic turmoil over the explicit racism of Japanese mass incarceration. The process of reforming Japanese identity to reintegrate the segregated Japanese as Japanese Americans celebrated cultural assimilation while ignoring multiracial identity in the postwar period. Multiracial Japanese families not only provided the redemption of the U.S. image, but were used to forget and forgive the U.S. government's and Japanese American community's racism against multiracial Japanese families.

To this day, the history of multiracial Japanese families is often overlooked within the Japanese American community. Nisei community leaders in the late 1970s and 1980s were on a mission to historicize the wartime struggles of the Japanese as loyal American citizens. Multiracial Japanese families were lumped in the same category as the Issei, No-no boys, and War Brides – ideological or racial minorities whose experiences did not fit into the narrative of the “full incarceration experience.”<sup>108</sup> While some courts did concede the injustices that multiracial Japanese couples experienced, many multiracial Japanese families were still denied

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<sup>108</sup> Takezawa and Okihiro, *Trans-Pacific Japanese American Studies*, 257-287.

both reparations and recognition.<sup>109</sup> The greater loss of the Mixed Marriage policy was not one of material wealth, but the loss of a potential multiracial Japanese American identity that rejected rather than conformed to white supremacy. In her poem “Looking Out,” Mitsuye Yamada plays on a misunderstanding that accurately portrays the loss of Japanese American multiracial identity during the postwar period.<sup>110</sup> There is a disjunction between the speaker’s internal perception of what it means to be a minority and her counterpart’s implied external assessment of the speaker. This attitude encapsulates how many multiracial Japanese Americans perceived themselves at the end of World War II – externally perceived to be Japanese American by the government, but internal to the Japanese American community often founded themselves rejected.

"Looking Out"

It must be odd  
to be a minority  
he was saying.

I looked around  
and didn't see any.

So I said  
Yeah  
it must be.

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<sup>109</sup> Catherine Irwin, *Twice orphaned*, 269-280.

“Claim of Julius Downs, Case No. 146-35-3593,” February 26, 1953, *Adjudication of the Attorney General, Volume 1, Precedent Decisions under the Japanese-American Evacuation Claims Act* (Government Publishing Office: Washington, D.C.) 308-319.

<sup>110</sup> Mitsuye Yamada, *Camp Notes and Other Writings* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 88.

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