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“Wherever I go I will be a loyal American:”  
Democracy and Dissonance in the Lives of Seattle’s Nisei

Yoon K. Pak

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1999

Program Authorized to Offer Degree: College of Education

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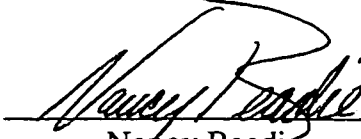
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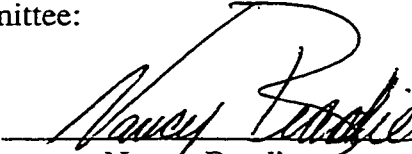
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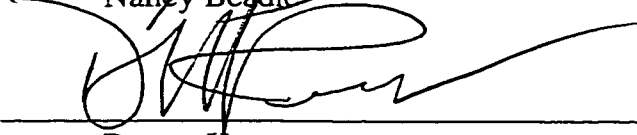
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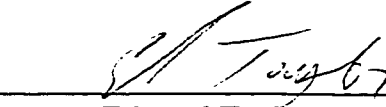
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Abstract

“Wherever I go I will be a loyal American:”  
Democracy and Dissonance in the Lives of Seattle’s Nisei

Yoon K. Pak

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This dissertation examines how Washington School in Seattle, Washington, the site of a Deweyan experiment in intercultural democracy, dealt with the challenge to its experiment by the news of the incarceration of its Japanese American, Nisei, students. The following questions, based on a historical investigation of primary evidence, frame my research study: What ideas of democracy, Americanization, and citizenship were expressed in the writings by Japanese American and non-Japanese American students from 1941-1942? How and in what ways did students and school officials cope with a federal policy calling for the imprisonment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast in light of citizenship education based on toleration? How did Japanese American and non-Japanese American students make sense of the contradictions between the citizenship education they received in school, on the one hand, and the prospect of the incarceration on the other? These questions serve as the basis for conducting a historical analysis of primary evidence based on students’ writings, archival documents, and oral history interviews of Nisei who attended Washington School.

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Matthew Walch (husband)

Frances Pak (sister)

Jacob, Rachel, Justine and Kristyan (brother's family)

George and Kwang Soon Guy (uncle and aunt)

# DEDICATION

To

Ella Evanson

Arthur Sears

Hisa Kato

Mitsie Fuji

Kaz Ishimitsu

and the Students of Washington School

## INTRODUCTION

### Making the Case: Washington School as a Historical Site of Democracy and Dissonance

*March 24, [19]42*

*Dear Miss Evanson,*

*Because of this situation, we are asked to leave this dear city of Seattle and its surroundings. I am sure I will miss my teachers and Mr. Sears. There was never a school like Washington School and I sure will miss it. As for me, the one I will miss the most will be you. You have been very patient and kind throughout my work. If the school I will attend next would have a teacher like you I will be only too glad. When I am on my way my memories will flow back to the time I was attending this school and the assemblies that were held in the hall.*

*Wherever I go I will be a loyal American.*

*Love,*

*Emiko (7B1)*

Democracy, loyalty, citizenship. Although these words may sound perfunctory today, for the Japanese American, or Nisei, students of Seattle Public Schools, such words were weighted with meaning, especially after their lessons in citizenship and loyalty in English and Japanese Language Schools. As offspring of immigrants who had been denied citizenship and who had experienced a range of racial discrimination, many Nisei were cognizant of their parents' struggle for dignity. But the one thing Nisei children possessed that their parents did not was citizenship in the United States.

The meaning of citizenship for Nisei was called into question by the forced imprisonment<sup>1</sup> of Japanese American and permanent residents on the West Coast United States with the signing of the Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. Despite the lessons of citizenship the Seattle schools were trying to teach their students, the reality of Nisei as citizens turned out to be far different from the principle. As expressed in the letter by Emiko, a seventh-grade student in Ella Evanson's homeroom class at Washington School, she would remain loyal to a government that questioned her very loyalty. Writing to her teacher in response to the Executive Order 9066, the student was attempting to make sense of the dissonance between the idea of citizenship on the one hand, and the experience of being treated as an "enemy alien," on the other. I wish to explore the contradiction between the schools' mission to educate for democracy and the news of the forced incarceration.

This introduction section lays out the significance and purpose of the study in relation to educational historiography. In doing so, I make the case for the ways in which Washington School became the historical site of democracy and dissonance in the lives of Nisei and non-Nisei youth. I offer historical questions as a springboard to examine where my study fits in the tradition of the history of education and how schools in

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<sup>1</sup> As a point of clarification and accuracy, I shall be using the terms "incarceration" and "imprisonment" over "evacuation" and "internment." According to David Takami, in *Divided Destiny: A History of Japanese Americans in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press & Wing Luke Museum, 1998), "Evacuation" was a government euphemism for the forced removal of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. It conveyed the idea that the removal of citizens was for their own safety. "Internment" is a technical term applied to prison camps run by the United States Justice Department for suspect Issei, immigrant Japanese, just after Pearl Harbor and to more permanent army-run camps for some of these detainees. The internment of enemy aliens during a war has a basis in law – specifically the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798 – and it is governed by international accord in the form of the Geneva Conventions. The roundup and incarceration of American citizens had no legal precedent and singled out a race of people (7).

Seattle, and Washington School in particular, were attempting to model a Deweyan form of intercultural education.

### **The Historical Questions**

This study examines how Washington School, the site of a Deweyan experiment in intercultural democracy, dealt with the challenge to its experiment by the news of the incarceration. The following questions, based on a historical investigation of primary evidence, frame my study: What ideas of democracy, Americanization, and citizenship were expressed in the writings by Japanese American and non-Japanese American students from 1941-1942? How and in what ways did students and school officials cope with a federal policy calling for the imprisonment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast in light of citizenship education based on toleration? How did Japanese American and non-Japanese American students make sense of the contradictions between the citizenship education they received in school, on the one hand, and the prospect of the incarceration on the other? These research questions serve as the basis for conducting a historical analysis of primary evidence based on students' writings, archival documents, and oral history interviews of Nisei who attended Washington School.

### **Review of Relevant Research**

While the study of ethnic minorities and immigrant groups and their relation to public school education during the Progressive Era and the Great Depression are

plentiful<sup>2</sup> there are still relatively few accounts of the West Coast experience. As a result, relatively few sources provide accounts of the schooling experience of Asian immigrants who figured prominently in West Coast cities. Also some studies look at the history of schooling on the West Coast, but focus primarily on school organizational policy, paying little attention to student populations. The existing studies of Seattle schools fit this latter category.<sup>3</sup>

The two major exceptions to this general description are Judith Raftery's study of reforms in Los Angeles schools<sup>4</sup> and Eileen Tamura's work on Americanization and acculturation of the Nisei generation in Hawaii.<sup>5</sup> Both these studies give considerable attention to issues of Americanization and discuss the relationships between ethnic communities and schools, with Tamura focusing specifically on Nisei. However both end their accounts before World War II and neither take on the question of how the meaning of Americanization changed or was challenged by the West Coast's peculiar experiences during the war. Seattle provides a rich context for taking on this topic,

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<sup>2</sup> See for example: James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Ronald D. Cohen, *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). William J. Reese, *Power and Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements during the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988). David Tyack, Robert Lowe, and Elizabeth Hansot, eds., *Public Schools in Hard Times: The Great Depression and Recent Years* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984). Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). David Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995). George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Dominic W. Moreo, *Schools in the Great Depression* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1996). Bryce Nelson, *Good Schools: The Seattle Public School System, 1901-1930* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Judith Rosenberg Raftery, *Land of Fair Promise: Politics and Reform in Los Angeles Schools, 1885-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

especially as it held one of the highest percentages of Japanese Americans in the U.S. at the time. Other than the landmark study by the sociologist, S. Frank Miyamoto, on the Japanese community of Seattle,<sup>6</sup> there is yet to be a published study on the schooling of Japanese Americans in Seattle. My study thus addresses research on schooling in Seattle from the perspectives of students and school officials on the eve of the Japanese American incarceration. This scenario presents a ripe case to study Americanization and citizenship education in the context of a governmental policy of exclusion.

Another body of relevant historical literature is on the incarceration -- especially that which explores the responses of Issei and Nisei to the fact of being interned. The body of literature stretches across disciplinary fields and literary genres. In terms of major historical works, there is *Japanese Americans from Relocation to Redress*<sup>7</sup> which includes autobiographical accounts of Issei and Nisei during the incarceration. Roger Daniels, who has written extensively on the history of Asian Americans, has written specifically on the incarceration experience in *Prisoners Without Trial*<sup>8</sup> and on the history of Japanese Americans. Gary Okihiro's *Whispered Silences*<sup>9</sup> tells the story of the camps from reminiscences of former internees. *Personal Justice Denied*,<sup>10</sup> the report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, with a forward by Tetsuden Kashima, is based on the Congressional hearings which includes the evacuees'

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<sup>6</sup> S. Frank Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939).

<sup>7</sup> Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H.L. Kitano, eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress, Revised Edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Gary Okihiro, *Whispered Silences: Japanese Americans and World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

account of their lives behind barbed wire. Exemplary works focussing on Nisei are Robert O'Brien's *College Nisei*<sup>11</sup> and Bill Hosokawa's *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*.<sup>12</sup> Yuji Ichioka's study<sup>13</sup> of the Issei is arguably the definitive historical work on the immigrant Japanese. Local histories of Japanese Americans include Kazuo Ito's *Issei*,<sup>14</sup> James Watanabe's *History of the Japanese in Tacoma*,<sup>15</sup> Linda Tamura's *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley*,<sup>16</sup> and Thomas Heuterman's *The Burning Horse: The Japanese-American Experience in the Yakima Valley 1920-1942*.<sup>17</sup> A more general history of Asian Americans can be found in the numerous publications by historians Ronald Takaki and Sucheng Chan.

My study is different, however, in placing the events prior to the incarceration in the context of school lessons on Americanization. I trace the development of the Seattle Public Schools' official declaration of citizenship education from 1916, to the changes of attitude and approaches through the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s. The study explores the schools' and students' reactions to the impending incarceration within the backdrop of the tradition of Americanization and citizenship education training. While previous

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<sup>10</sup> The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Robert O'Brien, *College Nisei* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1949).

<sup>12</sup> Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans: The Story of a People* (Niwot, CO.: University Press of Colorado, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Kazuo Ito, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*, Translated by Shinichiro Nakamura and Jean S. Gerard (Seattle: Japanese Community Service, 1973).

<sup>15</sup> James Watanabe, *History of the Japanese of Tacoma*, Translated from the Japanese by James Watanabe (Seattle: Pacific Northwest District Council, Japanese American Citizen League, 1988).

<sup>16</sup> Linda Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Heuterman, *The Burning Horse: The Japanese-American Experience in the Yakima Valley, 1920-1942* (Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University Press, 1995).

studies focus on the incarceration experience itself, I concentrate on the schools' and students' response prior to the event.

There are two major aspects of the history of education to which this dissertation project will contribute: 1) the social history of education as reflected in the experience of the participants themselves -- the students; and 2) the history of Americanization and citizenship education in the West Coast context of Seattle Public Schools.

A project centering on what students felt and expressed during a time of war addresses a major gap in historical research. Too often, the voices of students are rendered silent and not given due recognition. How and what the role of schooling might have played with respect to one's identity are major concerns for Japanese American students, whose loyalty and citizenship status were held suspect. The question of what it means to be an American loomed heavily for those whose identities were at stake. Focusing the study on what students wrote places them at the center, and not the margins, in the social history of education.

Secondly, the issue of how schools reacted to wartime events, based on a tradition of teaching tolerance, puts to the test the idea of democracy and citizenship education. The theory and practice of democratic life had been an explicit subject of discussion in the schools, and thus the challenges the U.S. war policy made to those ideas may have been particularly salient in the school context. Not only did the students have to make sense of the dissonance, but school officials and teachers did as well.

## Dewey and Interculturalism in the Seattle Schools

Washington School in the late 1930s and early 1940s was the site of a Deweyan experiment in intercultural democracy. In this study I look at what happened to this experiment when its ideals were tested by the news of the incarceration of its' Japanese-American students. Three ideas that help frame this claim are: public schools as laboratories of democracy; democracy as a mode of associated living; and public culture as a product of historical negotiation.

As Parker<sup>18</sup> asserts, public schools can be sites of experimentation in democracy. When coupled with Dewey's definition of democracy as a mode of associated living, which includes intercultural recognition, the experiment becomes that much more complex:

A democracy is more than a form of government: it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer to his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity.<sup>19</sup>

This idea provides a framework for understanding how Seattle Public Schools, in general, and Washington School, in particular, became a site for the negotiation of public culture across social differences of race and culture. According to Dewey's philosophy,

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<sup>18</sup> Walter Parker, *Educating the Democratic Mind* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

schools needed to reflect and model a laboratory of democracy, working to guard against students leading miseducative experiences. An educative experience included a mode of communicated existence based on an understanding of difference.

The Seattle Public Schools in the 1930s looked to Dewey's philosophy to guide their school life. The district-wide resource guide for character education and democratic schooling, *Successful Living*, included the following excerpt under the "School and Democratic Living" section:

Any program designed to attack the real problems of living must help to prepare the individual for successful living in a democracy such as ours. He must learn how to work with others for the common good. The school, serving all the children of all the people, has a unique opportunity for overcoming snobbery, reducing racial and class prejudices, and teaching the brotherhood of man. The individual must gain a consciousness of his civic responsibilities. Dewey reminds us of the fact that school is not only a preparation for life; it is life itself. It may be so organized as to afford opportunity for the exercise of all the duties and obligations of citizenship.<sup>20</sup>

As this statement indicates, school officials saw schooling as an opportunity to put democratic principles into practice. An important element in the school's concept of democracy was reducing various forms of prejudices. The authors of the guide -- a group of social studies and history teachers, as well of administrators -- were clear to point out that school is more than mere preparation for life. Schools needed to model a democratic

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<sup>19</sup> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1944), 87.

<sup>20</sup> *Successful Living* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1935), 4.

life in a way that Dewey envisioned. While the Seattle Public Schools attempted to outline a democratic way of life, Washington School was recognized for its reputation for modeling democracy:

Washington School, as a separate unit, in and of itself, presents a close approximation to the great American ideal which the fathers of the American Constitution hoped to achieve. A visitor to Washington School would find around one thousand children between the ages of 12 to 15, of every race, every religion, and every economic status, working together and playing together, with no tensions between them due to their differences of race, religion, or economic background. Democracy, in the true sense of the word, is practiced from the principal right down through the office staff and faculty, the custodians, and cafeteria workers, and then is reflected back again through the students themselves. The school is truly a small United Nations, actually accomplishing democratic objectives in an extremely significant way. Teachers and students are fortunate and privileged to be able to participate in the democratic situation as it exists at Washington at the present time.<sup>21</sup>

Although the publication on the history of Washington School was published in 1961, this excerpt highlights the longtime reputation of the school's experiment in intercultural democracy. Other primary source evidence in the 1940s point to Washington School and its principal, Arthur Sears, as trying to model a Deweyan idea of democracy based on an appreciation of difference. The students represented varied ethnic and religious backgrounds, ranging from Japanese and Chinese American, to

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<sup>21</sup> *Histories of the Seattle Public Schools* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1961).

African American, Jewish, and members of other immigrant groups. Sears specifically addressed these differences and how students should regard each other as equal citizens in a democracy. The claim that the school actually achieved a condition in which “no tensions” existed between students due to differences of “race, religion, or economic background” is questionable, to be sure. But it is clear that this vision of intercultural democracy was the ideal or model WS set for itself. Washington School, in this regard, strove to model a laboratory of democracy.

Expounding on the idea of public schools as “laboratories of democracy,” it can be argued that opening up opportunities to deliberate on issues of social and political import are paramount. Public schools offer a public forum for deliberation of public issues. On the most positive end of the spectrum, public schools can be models for effective democratic citizenship education through recognition and appreciation of individual and group differences. In the most negative view, public schools can perpetuate and recreate racial, gender, and class stratification.

Seattle Public Schools’ administrators and teachers were aware of approaching democratic school life as a form of laboratory. In a 1940 *Seattle Principal’s Exchange* issue, attention was paid to newer instructional practices devised by the Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction. In it, the idea of schools as laboratories of democracy was pronounced:

If we do not believe thoroughly in democracy we should not talk it so much or lead parents and others to expect a degree of democracy in education which we have no intention of delivering.

The school is thus a laboratory in which one lives, studies, discovers, tests, and enjoys the democratic way of life. It is a laboratory in which the pupil, through living, broadens his sympathies for all human beings, enlarges his faith in humanity, and increases his capacity to see merit in the uniqueness of other personalities. It should be a laboratory which serves as a home base for the exploration of all phases of society outside the school. It is a laboratory for living and testing the method of science, of intelligence in the solution of problems. It is a testing ground for criteria of truth and value. It is a creative environment in which unique personalities can flower.<sup>22</sup>

That the schools were to educate for a democracy through the laboratory method was clear. It was meant to test and broaden one's skills and perspectives while helping to develop the unique character of each individual in a democracy. It was, above all, a means to explore one's humanity.

In light of the laboratory view of education, it is also fair to equate that perspective with an experiment; and in a laboratory experiments may succeed or fail. The results are not entirely predictable. This is where the notion of public culture comes into play. If one thinks of schools as laboratories of democracy, then they represent a kind of public culture where national and local events are brought to the fore for possible public deliberation. In that context, the deliberative process accounts for varying perspectives that are predictable as well as unexpected, peaceful and violent, tolerant and intolerant. As careful as one may be in conducting an experiment in a socially controlled environment, clearly the possibilities for human "error" are vast.

Public culture, then, provides another lens for understanding how Washington School represented a mini-democracy for negotiating issues of moral and social import. Thomas Bender's idea of public culture helps to frame the case of Washington School as a historical event:

Very recent historical scholarship however, is beginning to reveal a public realm that is not a given but is, rather, a product of historical processes, one made and remade in time. The process of making and remaking supplies a focus for a new historical synthesis. How do different groups contribute to that making? How are groups defined in their relation to that culture? How do groups gain (or not gain) legitimacy? How do they participate (or not participate) in the creation and distribution of public meaning and institutional power? The key to such synthesis is an understanding of difference in America that is relational, that does not assume discontinuity in social and individual experience.<sup>23</sup>

Bender's critique of the failure of recent historical scholarship to address the interrelatedness of historical participants to larger political and social forces, becomes useful in the analysis of Washington School. The question of what happened in this particular experiment with democracy is a historical question. It requires that the concept of public culture be historicized, that it be treated not as a static event, but as a historically contingent encounter negotiated and renegotiated in different ways in different times by different people. This historical study examines the process of

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<sup>22</sup> "New Instructional Practices," *Seattle Principal's Exchange*, v15 n2 (November 1940), 2. Seattle Public Schools' Manuscripts and Archives Division.

negotiation and renegotiation of public culture in Washington School at a time where the very ideas of democracy and citizenship were being tested. If Washington School was a laboratory of democracy, the democratic experiment underwent a severe test in the winter of 1941-1942. The news of the forced imprisonment weighed heavily on the Japanese and Japanese American, Nikkei, community all along the West Coast. The subsequent fears of another attack by Japan and growing rumors of Nikkei espionage by the government and the media were overwhelming realities. In spite of what seemed to be a hopeless situation, the teachers and principal of Washington School used their spheres of influence to remind students of the importance of democracy and equality. This study examines the historical forces that influenced the process by which Washington School and its students, administrators and teachers coped with the news of the incarceration.

### **Chapter Outlines**

In laying out my argument that Washington School was a historical site of democracy and dissonance, several features require investigation. One of those features is a look into the tradition of American and citizenship education in the Seattle Public Schools. Chapter one investigates the tradition of Americanization and citizenship in the Seattle Schools dating from 1916 up to the 1930s. Loyalty and patriotism were the overarching ideals that the Seattle Schools sought to inculcate the young.

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," in *Journal of American History* 73 (1986), 130-131.

Chapter two is an extension of the schools' lessons on citizenship in the 1930s.

I pay particular attention to the ideals of tolerance and interculturalism as influenced by national educational organizations such as the Progressive Education Association and the National Education Association. Locally, two curriculum guides, *Successful Living* and *Living Today Learning for Tomorrow*, are the primary sources Seattle school teachers and administrators used in implementing character and moral education – a natural extension of American and citizenship education.

Chapter three is a historical overview of the Nikkei community in Seattle from the 1900s up to May of 1942.<sup>24</sup> The primary business and residence locales, various cultural values shared by Issei as they passed them down to their offspring, and educational influences on Nisei are addressed in this section. In addition, I provide a chronology of events affecting Seattle's Nikkei from the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor up through the final evacuation orders. Newspaper articles and editorials from the *Seattle Times* comprise the chronological analysis of the events leading up to the imprisonment of innocent residents and citizens. Schools oftentimes act as a mirror to the events that unfold in the local communities. Tensions and conflicts that plague communities also work its way into schools. Likewise, the growing prejudice that evolved in Seattle against Nikkei, and was further exacerbated in the media, seeped into the minds of Seattle's schoolchildren. The letters of Washington's students make reference to conflicts and tensions developing in their communities.

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<sup>24</sup> According to governmental orders, Seattle's Nikkei were to be evacuated from the area by May 1, 1942.

Chapter four focuses on three Nisei who attended Washington School on the eve of their incarceration. Their oral histories touch on their lives and identities in schools and outside the schools, and how that was jarred by the news of being forced to leave their homes. Their individual stories shed light on how contingent their identities as Nisei were (and still are). Whereas chapter three concentrates on the shared histories of Nikkei in Seattle and along the West Coast, the oral histories provide a more complex and rich narrative that sometimes works against the grain of popular knowledge on Nisei identity development.

Chapter five, the final chapter, is the focal piece of this research and centers on the writings of Nisei and non-Nisei students of Washington School. Ella Evanson, the students' homeroom teacher – as well as a social studies and English teacher, and later the school's librarian – collected the students' compositions and kept them until the 1980s, when she handed them over to the University of Washington's Archives and Manuscripts Division. The students wrote personal farewell expressions to Evanson, and also wrote essays for their English composition class. The students' responses provide historical insights into their lives as they expressed their thoughts on the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and on the news that the school's Nisei students were to be taken away. Chapters one through four provide the historical background and context in which to read the students' responses with deeper understanding, and how the lives of young people were changed by the signing of Executive Order 9066.

## EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9066

Whereas, the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U.S.C., Title 50, Sec. 104):

Now therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restriction the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Proclamation of December 7 and 8, 1941, and shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclamations in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area herein above authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services.

This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8972, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigations of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas hereunder.

The White House, February 19, 1942

Franklin D. Roosevelt.

## CHAPTER I

Seattle Public Schools' Approach to Democratic Citizenship Education,  
1916 -- 1930: Americanization for Loyalty and Patriotism

Pupil Leader: *Salute the flag! [A salute is given followed by the Pledge of Allegiance]*

*Leader: Why do we salute the flag?*

*Assembly: Because we desire to honor it.*

*Leader: Why should we honor it?*

*Assembly: Because it stands for liberty, justice and equal opportunities in life for all those who live under its folds.*

*Leader: How can we best show our devotion to the flag?*

*Assembly: By obeying the laws of our country.*

*Leader: Who are the enemies of the flag?*

*Assembly: All persons who strike at our flag by war or who break the laws that have been made to keep our liberties.*

*Leader: What are our duties as citizens?*

*Assembly: First, always to defend the honor of our country; second, to obey the laws and see that others obey them; and third, always to remember that first of all we are American citizens, whose duty it is to stand by our country and keep its flag free from dishonor.<sup>25</sup>*

Seattle school students often greeted their day with a flag salute much like the one above. A pupil leader, most often a boy, held the American flag in stalwart fashion while the rest of the student body, with their right arms extended outward, recited the assembly

portion of the salute. Such flag rituals and various flag assemblies aimed to instill loyalty, citizenship, and respect for American ideals. They were critical components in the Americanization efforts for children of immigrant parents, ethnic minorities, and White, native students. This tradition in the Seattle Public Schools became a permanent fixture in the school day after the passage of a flag law in the fall of 1915.<sup>25</sup> In today's classrooms the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, albeit performed cursorily, is a vestige of the old flag rituals.

In this chapter I argue that Seattle had a tradition of steering a moderate course in response to Americanization pressures while stressing loyalty and Americanism. I examine curricular reforms, which placed heavy emphasis on the teaching of Western history, specialized programs for immigrant populations, and ongoing extracurricular activities to provide evidence for how the Seattle schools directed a moderate and progressive approach to Americanization and citizenship. Before those issues are examined in greater detail, an explanation of why Seattle was chosen for this study as well as an overview of national Americanization efforts are provided.

From 1916-1930 Seattle Schools had at its core a philosophy of loyalty and patriotism in their approach to democratic citizenship education, with particular emphasis on the teaching of history. The thrust of Americanization nationwide contained seven different strands at the time: flag rituals; segregation in English language education; social welfare; thrift; citizenship curriculum; extra-curricular activities; and grades for citizenship. Seattle used all these approaches.

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<sup>25</sup> *Triennial Report of the Seattle Public Schools, 1924 – 1927* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1927), 39.

<sup>26</sup> Roger Sale, *Seattle, Past to Present* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976).

Urban schools across the United States represented a range of the type of Americanization programs offered. While others took the extreme in implementing English-only practices and denigrating their immigrant students to conform to Anglo standards, others offered a more social welfare approach to the acculturation process. In Seattle, Superintendent Frank B. Cooper (1901-1922) early on resisted the efforts by Daughters of the American Revolution and the Minute Men to control school curricula and activities devoted to patriotism and loyalty. Cooper also warned the Board of Directors against developing a permanent, segregated school for students with limited English proficiency. In his efforts to Americanize, Cooper stressed the importance of providing a relevant curriculum in the lives of students rather than an emphasis on rote learning. Serving the needs of the community, the schools also offered night classes to adults, especially immigrant mothers, to learn the English language. All of these curricular and extra-curricular components embodied the teaching of Americanization and citizenship in the Seattle Schools from 1916 up to 1930.

From the time of World War I up to the Great Depression, the Seattle schools' program on citizenship training comprised of flag rituals with obeisance and reverence for laws. Patriotic ideals were a major focus in curricular and extracurricular activities. Nationwide, Americanization programs reached their zenith during the mass influx of immigration from southern and eastern Europe to urban areas in the United States. In a broad sense "Americanization," or the instilling of a "common culture," had always been a function of public schools.<sup>27</sup> During World War I, however, explicit Americanization

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<sup>27</sup> A thorough account of the history of the common school movement, including a discussion of the ideological drive for many schools, can be found in Carl Kaestle's *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools*

programs, with an emphasis on loyalty and patriotism, as well as acculturation, became prevalent in U.S. schools. Partly as means for social control *and* as a genuine way to respond to growing social crises, educators sought out policies and programs for acculturation and assimilation.

### **Why Seattle? A Demographic Look**

Much literature on the history of racial minorities tends to focus on matters of “Black and White,” with regions specific to the south, Midwest and East Coast United States. The western coast of the US has always been multicultural, including Anglo, Mexican, American Indian, Asian, and African American populations.<sup>28</sup> Other regions in the United States also existed in complex multiracial relationships, but they did not have as many Asian residents as did the West Coast. The fact that Seattle, and much of the West Coast, had a very different immigrant and ethnic minority population than did cities on the East Coast and the Midwest, and that Seattle had a distinct population mix than either Los Angeles or San Francisco, warrants a more critical look into how schools reacted to a growing national challenge from a demographic perspective: i.e., in educating its youth in the ideals of Americanism.

During the Progressive Era, Seattle and Los Angeles had the highest numbers of Japanese American residents in the United States.<sup>29</sup> The dominant non-White group (but not the dominant immigrant population) in Seattle between the turn of the century and

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*and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> An example of this can be found in Quintard Taylor’s *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Hawaii’s Japanese American residents comprised an overwhelming 43% of the total population during

World War II was Japanese Americans.<sup>30</sup> By 1940 Los Angeles County was comprised of more than 36, 866 Japanese Americans; of these, almost two-thirds or 23,321 lived in the city of Los Angeles.<sup>31</sup> Seattle came next, which had almost 7,000 with another 2,700 in surrounding King County and 2,000 more in adjacent Pierce County.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, compared with the total population, the proportion of Japanese residents and Americans was higher in Seattle than in Los Angeles. The following table gives a population breakdown among the major minority and immigrant groups in 1920 in Los Angeles and Seattle:

Table 1:  
Population of Los Angeles and Seattle's Minority and Immigrant Population in 1920<sup>33</sup>

1920 Los Angeles			1920 Seattle		
Group	#	%	Group	#	%
Japanese	8,536	1.5%	Japanese	7,874	2.5%
Chinese	2,062	0.4%	Chinese	1,351	0.4%
African Am.	15, 579	2.7%	African Am.	2,894	0.9%
Mexicans	21,598	3.8%	Filipino	458	0.1%
LA Total	576,673	100%	Seattle Total	315,312	100%

Figures worth noting in Table 1 are the similar numbers of Japanese and Chinese Americans in both cities. Whereas Los Angeles had much higher numbers of African

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1920 but it was a territory and did not receive statehood until 1959 (Tamura, 1993, 38).

<sup>30</sup> Calvin Schmid and Wayne McVey, Jr., *Growth and Distribution of Minority Races in Seattle, Washington* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1964), 14.

<sup>31</sup> Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 156.

<sup>32</sup> Daniels, 157.

<sup>33</sup> Raftery, 1992, 12, 70, & 102; and Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 108.

and Mexican Americans, Seattle contained substantially fewer African Americans and no record of Mexican Americans, but the beginnings of a Filipino population. By 1910, Seattle's 6,127 Japanese was the fifth largest ethnic group after the Canadians, Swedes, Norwegians, and Germans.<sup>34</sup> By 1916, ten churches, a variety of civic and social clubs, and five Japanese-language newspapers served Seattle's Japanese American community and areas beyond.<sup>35</sup>

In other urban areas across the nation, there were higher numbers and greater percentages of immigrants from northern and southern Europe. At the turn of the century, cities in New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Missouri had most immigration from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>36</sup> The number of Asian immigrants was nowhere near the figures of Los Angeles and Seattle. By 1940 in the East, the only sizable Japanese American community was in New York, where some 2,500 lived.<sup>37</sup>

### **Methodology and Evidence**

The evidence for investigating the Seattle Public Schools' policy on Americanization, chapters one and two, comes from archival data which includes superintendents' memoranda, district newsletters, annual reports, and curriculum guides. The documents span nearly two-and-a-half decades from 1916 through 1942; with materials focusing largely in the 1920s and 1940s. The year 1916 begins this historical

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<sup>34</sup> Taylor, *Forging of a Black Community*, 118.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor, *Forging of a Black Community*, 118.

<sup>36</sup> Reese, *Power and Promise of School Reform*, 24-25.

<sup>37</sup> Daniels, *Asian America*, 156.

analysis as specific Americanization and citizenship training policies and curricula are discussed and given primary import in the Seattle Public Schools' *Annual Reports*. Other cities and states also began Americanization programs at this time. The year 1942 concludes this analysis as the United States' entrance into the Second World War disrupted many school activities on the West Coast, especially with the forced removal of Japanese Americans. Also, within this twenty-six year time span, the greatest influx of immigration, subsequent anti-immigration policies, and increase in birth rates, especially among Japanese residents and Japanese Americans, occur in Seattle and throughout the West Coast.

Examining the scope of Americanization policies in the Seattle Public Schools lays the historical context for what the schools were teaching up until the time of the incarceration. The students' response to wartime events and the reaction to Executive Order 9066 contain elements of what the schools were teaching all along. The school district's emphasis on American civic ideals provides a perspective for beginning the examination process. The school district's *Annual Reports*, the *Principals' Exchange*, and the Superintendent's memoranda all speak to promoting an effective citizenship education based upon civic values and responsibility for democratic living.

Secondary case studies of Americanization programs nation-wide complement the historical focus on the Seattle program. The general scope of Americanization ideology and citizenship education played out in various ways across various regions over time. While specific actions and policy measures ran the gamut, the overarching theme -- that of instilling in students the "American" way of life -- contained an Anglo-Saxon

standard. From Honolulu, Hawaii to Gary, Indiana, efforts to assimilate and acculturate were steadfast.

### **Americanization and Citizenship in the Seattle Public Schools: 1916-1930**

In the Seattle Schools, loyalty and Americanism were the overarching themes that framed the curricular and extracurricular instruction in citizenship. Curriculum-wise, an emphasis on the teaching of ancient Western civilization and training in thrift predominated for decades. English Language instruction for adults, in night schools, and schoolchildren, through the Pacific School, were programmatic additions which aimed to serve the immigrant populations in various communities of Seattle. School assemblies, flag rituals, and citizenship clubs for boys and girls were also ongoing in-school and extra-curricular activities for character building.

Flag rituals were to be held in all public gatherings in Washington State, including schools, starting in the fall of 1916. This state-wide flag law of 1915 brought about its' own set of tensions and conflicts between Superintendent Cooper and some of the community members in Seattle. The following memorandum by Frank Cooper to Josephine Preston, the State Superintendent for Public Instruction, illustrates the conflict and Cooper's response to nativist pressures:

February 18, 1916

Mrs. Josephine C. Preston

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Olympia

My dear Mrs. Preston:

Yours, enclosing a letter from Mrs. Edmund Bur of this city addressed to you relative to the operation of the law regarding flag exercises and flag salutes in the public schools of this city, received. My response has been delayed by reason of the fact that I am just recovering from a long illness. We would gladly have answered Mrs. Burt's question from this office if she had seen fit to call us by telephone or had communicated with us by letter.

Last fall, soon after the opening of school, the attention of the principals was called to this newly enacted law regarding flag exercises and they were instructed to carry into effect the letter and spirit of the law as nearly as practicable. The particular method of doing this was left to them.

I believe that principals and teachers generally are in sympathy with the intention of this law. The fact that there has been used in this city for six or eight years past a flag ritual, a copy of which I am sending you, is evidence that we have not been unmindful of the desirability of improving citizenship through respect for the flag and what it stands for. I mention this as proof that I and those associated with me are not open to the charge of lightly regarding the inculcation of patriotic principles and sentiments, since we attended to such instruction before it became a matter of law.

I very much fear that a strict observance of this law, to hold flag exercises in every school every week, will defeat the purpose of the law and its authors. I think the attention of the Daughters of the American Revolution should be called to the fact that there are certain psychological effects unfavorable to accomplishment of the desired end which may have been overlooked in enthusiasm for the end to be achieved. I wonder as to the effect upon high school boys and girls of having them participate every week in flag exercises and a flag salute according to the prescribed legal formula laid down. I think that it would be easy for those who are conversant with the reactions of boys and girls in the adolescent period to conceive how a distaste for flag exercises and for the flag itself might result in the minds of many from the weekly repetition of this formal

exercise. With the smaller children this would not be true, but I think it would be much better even there to leave to the patriotic initiative of the teacher the selection of time and occasion. In his way what would be a stimulating and inspiring exercise would not become perfunctory and tasteless. If this law is strictly observed, a pupil in his course through the grades and high school will have participated in this formal exercise every week of every year through his entire course. Is it not possible that we may do more harm to the patriotic impulse and to the inspired feeling which should accompany the sight of "Old Glory" by a strict observance of this law than if its purpose were carried out with less attention to regularity and to formality?

I wish you might suggest to the ladies of the D.A.R. the advisability of securing the opinions of high school principals and grade principals, also, regarding the possible effects as to the literal carrying out of this law. I may be wrong. If I am, I am willing to be put right.

Yours truly,

Frank B. Cooper.<sup>38</sup>

Cooper's expression of his professional and personal distaste for a structured and formalized flag ritual was representative of his administrative style as superintendent. He argued for symbolic flag rituals emphasizing lessons on the meaning behind the flag over rote exercises. Cooper saw teachers and principals as competent professionals in developing and implementing specific loyalty and patriotic programs for their students.

Frank Cooper, known for his progressive education measures, found himself entangled in ideological battles with staunch traditionalists throughout his tenure. His response to the members of the Daughters of the American Revolution set the stage for

how the Seattle Public Schools would approach citizenship education and Americanization beyond his tenure as Superintendent. While understanding the need to appease, to a degree, the demands of patriotic organizations, Cooper, nevertheless, voiced his opinions where he felt it mattered.

Under Cooper's leadership flag exercises and district-wide curricular attention to civic ideals, primarily through the teaching of history, remained. Even after Cooper's resignation in 1922, the Seattle Schools steered a moderate course of Americanization. Curricular content as well as extra-curricular activities, in-school exercises, and night classes comprised the major efforts by the Seattle Schools to Americanize its' students and immigrant communities. The rest of the chapter describes how the Seattle Schools in framing citizenship education, based on the themes of loyalty and Americanism, did so through various curricular reforms, programmatic additions, and extracurricular activities from 1916-1930.

### **Loyalty and Americanism: The Overarching Themes**

*Loyalty.* Loyalty framed one purpose of curricular and extra-curricular activities of the Seattle Public Schools' teachings on citizenship and Americanization from 1915 to 1942. The thrust of this effort came from nationalistic sentiments during World War I and a state legislation making flag ceremonies mandatory at all public gatherings in Seattle and other cities after its'

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<sup>38</sup> Frank B. Cooper to Mrs. Josephine Preston, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 18 February 1916 (Seattle Public Schools' Manuscripts and Archives Division, Superintendent's Files, Box 1, E4-27).

passage in 1915.<sup>39</sup> As discussed in the previous section, in schools the issue over how the flag exercises should be implemented was a point of contention between the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools at the time, Frank B. Cooper. In a memorandum to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Josephine C. Preston, Cooper defended his position to allow for a loose interpretation of the flag law.<sup>40</sup> The intent of the law was to heighten loyalty and improve "citizenship through respect for the flag and what it stands for."<sup>41</sup>

Cooper's desire was to uphold the spirit of the law and have individual school principals and teachers implement the program as they saw fit. He pointed out that a literal translation of the flag law would essentially be "perfunctory and tasteless."<sup>42</sup> As in the case of other urban areas across the U.S., the Daughters of the American Revolution, and other civic organizations, sought influence in matters of patriotism in the schools. The era of "political fundamentalism" in schools was evident throughout the nation.

Compulsory Americanization did not reach its peak until the decade after World War I. David Tyack and James Thomas refers to this period as "political fundamentalism in education" for many patriotic, civic, and legal organizations such as the American Legion, the Grand Army of the Republic, American Bar Association, Daughters of the American Revolution, the National Security League, and Constitution Anniversary Association, and the Better America Federation worked to secure orthodox political

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<sup>39</sup> Sale, *Seattle, Past to Present*, 118.

<sup>40</sup> The Daughters of the American Revolution seemed to play a central role in promoting a strict and literal observance of the flag exercises.

<sup>41</sup> F.B. Cooper to J.C. Preston, 18 February 1916.

instruction.<sup>43</sup> By 1923 an overwhelming percentage of states prescribed to patriotic instruction or rituals in the following areas: History of U.S. (90%); Citizenship (81%); Flag Displays (81%); and All Instruction in English (73%), among others.<sup>44</sup> Within this structure of mandated public programs, a range of policies and attitudes toward immigrants and Americanization existed within and among different districts.

Superintendent Cooper's and the DAR's dispute over the flag law was indicative of various civic and community groups trying to assert its influence over school policies. In the spring of 1916, there was much pressure on the schools to allow for military training as a program in war preparation.<sup>45</sup> Despite opposition and resistance to military training by the Seattle schools, the state legislature placed compulsory military training in high schools in 1917.<sup>46</sup> War preparedness also centered on flag saluting as one its activities.

Further, volunteer nativist groups, such as the Minute Men, saw as their patriotic duty to influence the ways in which schools were operating. Historian Bryce Nelson highlights four ways in which the Minute Men sought to change school activities:

First, they were often involved in successful attempts to fire teachers who were unsupportive of the war. Second, they were prominent in the recall of board member Anna Louise Strong [a pacifist labor leader]. Third, they led the drive to drop German as

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<sup>42</sup> F.B. Cooper to J.C. Preston, 18 February 1916.

<sup>43</sup> David Tyack and James Thomas, "Moral Majorities and the School Curriculum: Making Virtue Mandatory, 1880-1930," in Tyack and Thomas, *Law and Shaping of Public Education* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1987), 170-171.

<sup>44</sup> Tyack and Thomas, 171.

<sup>45</sup> Nelson, *Good Schools*, 109.

<sup>46</sup> Nelson, *Good Schools*, 111.

an elective foreign language. And fourth, they led the drive to drop certain textbooks thought to be pro-German.<sup>47</sup>

In all matters having to do with the character of classroom instruction (as opposed to the character of school board politics), Superintendent Cooper resisted the efforts of nativist groups. However, his judgments were eventually overruled by a more conservative board, and he himself was forced to resign in 1922 over some of these issues. Outside group influences, especially during 1916-1921, were one of many tensions the Seattle Public Schools faced with respect to the implementation of various Americanization programs.

### **Curricular Reforms for Citizenship and Americanization**

*Americanism through History and Civics.* The Seattle Public Schools articulated a philosophy of Americanism which served as the foundation for the principles and ideals of a civic life: "Americanism is more than a system of government; it is the spirit of a national life. The American people believe in self-government tempered with wisdom. They believe also that a nation has a right to live its own life without interference by other nations."<sup>48</sup> This definition given by the Seattle Schools in 1916 was one of the guiding principles upon which to enact school curricula towards the goal of living in a democracy. Such a concept underlay how students in the first grade through high school

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<sup>47</sup> Nelson, *Good Schools*, 117.

<sup>48</sup> *Quinquennial Report of the Board of Directors of Seattle School District No. 1* (Seattle: City of Seattle, 1921), 86.

would be taught patriotism and ideals of American citizenship. The schools were to emphasize this as practice and theory in all their grades.

Nationally, concepts of Americanism contained different definitions and different purposes. The following excerpt from a national 1920 *Handbook Series on Americanization*, provides another perspective in understanding how Americanism was viewed by educators all across the United States at the time. In this particular view, Americanism was seen as:

a matter of spirit, to be regarded and approached in a spirit of truth. It breaks down race and class prejudice . . . Americanism makes democracy possible . . . As Americans if we could but grasp the elementary fact that Americanism is always partial and incomplete, an ideal to be sought but never fully to be attained because always in its perfection just beyond our reach, how much better Americans might we ourselves become, and how far more potent missionaries of the gospel of Americanism would be.<sup>49</sup>

This view of Americanism contained both a humanistic principle, of breaking down the barriers of race and class differences, and a means for proselytizing foreigners toward the common good of American ideals. In the Gary Schools of Indiana, Superintendent William Wirt incorporated religious study into the school curriculum. Part of the Americanization process, in Wirt's conception, necessarily included instruction, and

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<sup>49</sup> Winthrop Talbot, "Americanism," In *Americanization: Principles of Americanism, Essentials of Americanization, Technic of Race Assimilation, Annotated Bibliography*, edited by W. Talbot and J. A. Johnsen (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1920).

conversion, to (Protestant) religious ideals.<sup>50</sup> Although Seattle Schools did not go to such measures in enforcing Protestant ideals, the Jewish community leaders of Seattle, and in other urban areas, saw public schools as a negative influence in this regard. The Seattle chapter of the Council of Jewish Women contains documents that speak to the fact of schools acting as Christianizing agents to newly arrived Jewish immigrants and how the Jewish settlement work needed to counteract such measures through their own Americanization programs.<sup>51</sup> Thus the idea of Americanization was approached differently in different spheres, even in the same city.

In the Seattle Public Schools, the Americanization curriculum, with a concentration on loyalty and Americanism, followed a general, three-part outline published in the *Quinquennial Report* of 1921. The report emphasized lessons in civics and history for the high school level. Part One emphasized an understanding of “The Great War” and all the various motives and decisions respective countries underwent to achieve peace. This format was to help students comprehend why wars developed and to show the “real” motives of each country in their involvement during World War I. What the “real” motives were, were to be left open for discussion in classrooms.

Part Two examined the progress of democracy through a strong emphasis on ancient Greek history. The connection to democratic civilizations of the past and the lessons to be learned from that knowledge was the intent of the lessons drawn from Greek history. According to the Seattle Public Schools’ report:

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<sup>50</sup> David Cohen, *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 61.

<sup>51</sup> Council of Jewish Women, University of Washington Manuscripts and Archives Division, Accession No. 2089-29, Box 4 Folder 16.

American history and civics, building on the foundation thus laid, teach the duties and responsibilities of every intelligent patriotic citizen. 'To be honest and upright; to obey the law; to assist in law enforcement; to seek no special privilege; to vote for upright and competent citizens; to insist on protection and justice for all; to respect the flag as the symbol of his country; to recognize that national need comes before private case and comfort, and the salvation of his country before his own life.'<sup>52</sup>

An intelligent citizen was one who embodied loyalty and patriotism with a concern for communitarian goals. An understanding of the importance of the collective need over one's individual needs was a focus of history and civics. This explanation, of a civics curriculum moving away from individualism and independence, was part of a dramatic and radical move away from the "old" civics to the "new." The National Education Association endorsed a new civics curriculum in 1915 which ignored formal politics and government in favor of cooperation and community.<sup>53</sup> Citizenship moved away from political rights and voting towards a cultural ideal and identity. An examination of *The Seattle Educational Bulletin* from 1920-1942, a monthly district newsletter for administrators, teachers, and community members, revealed significant number of reports on the current trends within the National Education Association. It is not surprising, then, that the Seattle Schools were influenced by national curricular reforms.

Part Three examined various social and economic problems such as the "agrarian question, the colonial policy, the alien problems, the organization of industry, and the

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<sup>52</sup> *Quinquennial Report*, 87.

development of social life.”<sup>54</sup> This was designed to address the political issues and challenges to the development of a democracy. Again, the specific details of these issues were to be discussed in individual classrooms.

In the Seattle Public Schools from 1921-1924, history and civics lessons were central and ongoing components for citizenship education. In the *Triennial Report of 1924*, curricular attention to American civic ideals and patriotism was emphasized for the first eight grades. High school students could not graduate without passing requisite courses in history and civics. Thus for all grades, a heavy stress on lessons in American history dominated. The typical history lesson would focus on the “heroes” of American society and, how through their stories one would learn about “the struggles of the early patriots against a despotic king, the winning of the West, the liberation of the slaves, and other high lights of American history. . . .”<sup>55</sup> The focus of such curriculum reform was meant to perpetuate the European-American norm of western civilization and democracy. Such inculcation of patriotic sentiments, continuing its way through high schools, was to contribute “directly to citizenship training by education for thoughtful participation in government based upon true American ideals.”<sup>56</sup>

The Department of Research was established in October of 1922 with Dr. Fred C. Ayer as the Director. Ayers was responsible for studying the educational problems connected with the administration of the curriculum, instruction, supervision, and the

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<sup>53</sup> Julie A. Reuben, “Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era,” in *History of Education Quarterly*, 37 (Winter 1997) pp. 399-420.

<sup>54</sup> *Quinquennial Report*, 87.

<sup>55</sup> *Triennial Report of the Public Schools, 1921- 1924*, 16.

progress of the pupils.<sup>57</sup> Included in the *Triennial Report* of 1921-1924 was a detailed account of the number of minutes the Seattle schools expended on core subject areas (reading, arithmetic, history, science, civics, etc.) and other programs (drawing, supervised play, recess, arts, etc.) in comparison to the national average among the other 49 states. Seattle led the nation's average when it came to Reading (2567 minutes a week versus 2003), History (900 min./week vs. 616), and Supervised Play (650 min./week vs. 136).<sup>58</sup> This indicates the degree to which the Seattle Schools emphasized the importance of history instruction in teaching American civic ideals. It is also apparent how scientific management of schools in the Progressive era led to such detailed accounting of minutes spent on classroom instruction of all subject areas.

The teaching of history and civics was again stressed in the 1924-1927 *Triennial Report* for training in patriotism and service. A 1925 study revealed that Seattle Schools expended an average of 51% more time to American history and civics than the rest of the nation's schools.<sup>59</sup> The study of the Constitution and its' link to liberty and democracy in the development of the United States as a "great world power" provided training for the young citizen. The justification for such an emphasis was "primarily to utilize the impressionable years, which are those of the elementary school, for the inculcation of patriotic sentiments and ideals."<sup>60</sup>

An assessment of how students' learned and practiced "good citizenship" was done through the grading of qualities that supposedly facilitated proper behavior. A

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<sup>56</sup> *Triennial Report, 1921-1924*, 16.

<sup>57</sup> *Triennial Report, 1921-1924*, 49.

<sup>58</sup> *Triennial Report, 1921-1924*, 50.

<sup>59</sup> *Triennial Report of the Public Schools, 1924- 1927* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1927), 36.

students' citizenship was graded on the points of: Courtesy, Promptness, Dependability, Cheerful Cooperation, Self-reliance, Initiative, Thrift, Self-Control, Good Sportsmanship, School Service, and Good Workmanship.<sup>61</sup> A three-page, single-spaced descriptor details the points to which students were to adhere. Such itemization, of ideal modes of behavior for good citizenship, was meant to aid parents in teaching proper behavior at home. In this manner, a close coordination between school and home life would provide a consistent and continuous link in the Americanization effort.

*Training in Thrift.* The thrift component of the regular "Course of Study in Citizenship" grew from the schools' sale of Thrift Stamps and Liberty Bonds as a part of their service during World War I. Under Superintendent Thomas R. Cole, a school savings plan was adopted on March 13, 1923, and put into operation in all elementary and high schools.<sup>62</sup> The feature of the school savings plan called for weekly "bank days" for pupils to make deposits. The emphasis lay more on learning the habit of saving, rather than on the amount deposited, whereby the act of saving would build character, deemed an "American" virtue. The savings plan was a voluntary effort by the students, and by the district's account most schools were reporting anywhere from 70 to 100 percent of the student body making deposits.<sup>63</sup> Another lesson school personnel hoped students would learn from the savings plan was that upon leaving high school, graduates would know how to earn, save and invest money, thereby contributing to the economic

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<sup>60</sup> *Triennial Report of the Public Schools, 1921-1924*, 16.

<sup>61</sup> *Triennial Report, 1924-1927*, 43.

<sup>62</sup> *Triennial Report, 1921-1924*, 16.

<sup>63</sup> *Triennial Report, 1921-1924*, 17.

revitalization of their community. A Thrift Committee was developed by the Superintendent Cole to report on the school savings plan and it indicated that students were learning the value of money and were budgeting whatever small incomes they had.<sup>64</sup>

In Los Angeles, school savings banks were introduced as early as 1900 and by the time the Depression hit, many bankers felt that the savings concept needed reinforcing.<sup>65</sup> The Americanizers of Los Angeles felt that "given the opportunity and intelligent guidance," immigrants could "best Americanize themselves when left to their own devices and to the skills and ingenuity of the native leaders."<sup>66</sup> One such service offered by the schools was the opening and maintaining of savings accounts by children. A good citizen, developed through particular habits of character education, was essentially made and not born.

*Extensions of Citizenship Education.* An extension of citizenship was slowly broadened, curricular-wise, to the study of the natural environment and health and hygiene as highlighted in the 1927-1930 *Triennial Report*. Americanism ideals, such as loyalty and patriotism, served secondary purposes to an exploration of the environment and nature, increasing handwriting standards through penmanship tests, and basic application of health principles.

According to the *Report*, natural science education underwent reform, particularly for the elementary grades, from 1928-1930. The University of Washington and the Seattle's Audubon Society led the efforts to provide teacher training in plant sciences and

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<sup>64</sup> *Triennial Report, 1924 - 1927*, 36.

<sup>65</sup> Raftery, *Land of Fair Promise*, 240.

courses in bird study, respectively. In justifying the move towards a more experiential curriculum, the *Report* states, “[T]eachers recognized the value of a knowledge of the out-of-doors as a joy to be experienced by the children; as an aid in appreciation of our great wealth of natural and scenic beauties; as a basis for teaching some phases of the social subjects; and as a general aid to good citizenship through a knowledge of practical conservation.”<sup>67</sup>

The study of natural science in the Seattle schools was formalized in 1929 with 31 platoon schools offering such courses, either alone, or in combination with art, penmanship, or hygiene.<sup>68</sup> Adopting the innovative measure begun by William Wirt of the Gary Schools in Indiana, Seattle followed suit with their version of the platoon system. The marriage of science with art, penmanship, and hygiene instruction is an odd relationship, to be sure, but a connecting thread of orderliness, regimentation, and [bodily] control is evident throughout.

Penmanship tests became a regular feature for elementary school children at the time. They were judged by the standards deemed appropriate for their grade level, and efforts were underway to compare the test results of Seattle’s school children with others around the nation. Students were encouraged to develop the habit of self-criticism by frequent comparisons with the standard of his grade.<sup>69</sup> The students were forced, to a large degree, to mind their “p’s” and “q’s.”

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<sup>66</sup> Raftery, *Land of Fair Promise*, 163-164.

<sup>67</sup> *Triennial Report, 1927-1930*, 25.

<sup>68</sup> *Triennial Report, 1927-1930*, 26.

<sup>69</sup> *Triennial Report, 1927-1930*, 27.

With the appointment of a Seattle school teacher to a national committee on health education in Washington, D. C., physical education and health and hygiene matters received a greater degree of attention in the *Report*. The reform measure for physical education in elementary schools provided for the segregation of boys and girls with “appropriate” programs planned to fit their specific needs. A program for girls in platoon schools, “Natural Expression through Rhythm,” included exercises for body control, folk dancing, and the interpretation of nature, music, literature and art through rhythmic movements.<sup>70</sup> Again, intimated in the description of the course is the language of control, regimentation, and self regulation of one’s body.

Another aspect of such attention to bodily matters came in the form of hygiene, health and cleanliness inspection, and weighing and measuring. Such daily rituals also became normative practice of school life in Gary, Indiana. William Wirt felt that attention to cleanliness and hygiene was especially important for immigrant children, as he believed them to be the most lacking in such areas.<sup>71</sup> For Wirt, and for many progressive reformers, Americanization embodied an internalization of health and hygiene practices. Either for the same reason, and/or in response to growing cases of contagious diseases, Seattle school officials employed a limited number of nurses to treat children who teachers felt needed more careful screening.

Consequently, concern for underweight children in the Seattle Schools gave rise to the weighing and measuring of students twice a year, in October and March, beginning

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<sup>70</sup> *Triennial Report, 1927-1930*, 29.

<sup>71</sup> Cohen, *Children of the Mill*, 23.

from 1925.<sup>72</sup> According to the schools' figures, school life was favorable to weight gain; whereas summer vacations, with irregular sleeping and eating habits, tended to result in a loss of weight for many children. The report by health professionals indicated that such attention to hygienic habits of living helped children to put on weight. Certainly, with the Great Depression underway at this time, the stress on health habits, cleanliness, and weight gain are understandable. Curriculum reform was designed to meet the real-life needs of many students.

### **Specialized Services for Immigrant Populations**

*"English for Foreigners."* Seattle schools developed services specific to immigrant populations at the same time it reconfigured their approaches to history and civics lessons. Americanization classes for adults, aimed specifically at foreign mothers of immigrant school children, was one such addition. Superintendent Cooper proposed to establish English classes for foreign mothers so that the ideals of Americanism would flow down to subsequent generations. Cooper contended that:

As part of one general scheme for the promotion of good citizenship and sound Americanism we shall begin this year along with our regular program of instruction of children in the principles and practice of the civic virtues, with the awakening of a sense of obligation among the children of non-English speaking parents to encourage their parents to learn our national language and to become interested in and acquainted with American ideals and institutions. This, in order that a better and safer national heritage may be left to the children for whom our foreign born parents are making a home. Any

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<sup>72</sup> *Triennial Report, 1927-1930, 25.*

really effective scheme of Americanisation must include reaching the home of foreign people using a language other than the English, in our community, and one influential means of reaching such homes is by way of the mothers and through the cooperation of the children attending American schools from those homes.<sup>73</sup>

Reflecting much of the progressive era rhetoric on acculturation of immigrant children, Cooper saw mothers as central figures in the home for successful Americanization. Mothers, then, would take on the moral responsibility of raising civic-minded individuals at home; with teachers and administrators filling the gap at school. The schools' efforts to lessen the cognitive dissonance some students might feel between home and school would supposedly be addressed through contiguous means to promote the speaking of English. The revitalization of Republican motherhood was underway. In some ways Seattle's program for teaching English to immigrant mothers was similar to the work of progressive social reformers in Los Angeles through an Americanization program enacted in 1915.

The Home Teacher Act (HTA) of 1915 was a specific Americanization program in Los Angeles targeting immigrant women, mothers who normally did not seek English or naturalization classes elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> A notable aspect of this act was that certified teachers, trained in specific courses, were responsible for teaching immigrant women, in addition to being employed at a regular elementary school. The social welfare model as approached in the Home Teacher Act primarily serviced the needs of immigrant Mexican women. The reformers involved in the HTA were concerned with studying nutritional

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<sup>73</sup> F.B. Cooper to the BOD, 24 September 1919, Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

deficiencies, providing basic medical attention, and acting as liaisons between immigrant families and social service agencies.

A closer resemblance to the Home Teacher Act in Seattle came in the form of the settlement work provided by the Council of Jewish Women (CJW). The CJW was responsible for administering social service programs targeting Jewish immigrants in the Central area of Seattle. The first Settlement home, built on April 12, 1906 on Washington and 12<sup>th</sup> South, emphasized religious, philanthropic, and educational purposes. It was designed strictly to be a “Social Center” – a bureau of observation.<sup>75</sup> The first night school for foreigners was established on November 1909 for English Language and citizenship. It met two nights a week and the participants included Jewish women and men, among them Greeks, Italians, and other nationalities with a total number of attendees between 40-50.<sup>76</sup> According to a report in 1913 the principal departments were sewing and Sabbath school. The dedication of the permanent Settlement House at 304 18<sup>th</sup> South and Main took place on December 29, 1916. The CJW’s Settlement House remained a strong community feature well into the Second World War.

Although the Seattle schools did not offer an extensive social welfare model like the HTA of Los Angeles or the CJW’s Settlement House, it did provide Americanization classes as part of the Evening School curricula. The courses offered were: (1) English for Foreigners; (2) American history, civics, geography, and literature; and (3)

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<sup>74</sup> Raftery, *Land of Fair Promise*, 68.

<sup>75</sup> Council of Jewish Women. University of Washington Manuscripts and Archives Division, Accession No. 2089-29, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>76</sup> Council of Jewish Women, Box 1, Folder 1.

Naturalization classes for men and women who wished to get their final citizenship papers.<sup>77</sup> By 1921 the Seattle schools offered Americanization classes (twelve months in the year) for those wishing to attain citizenship and for foreign mothers who desired to learn English and to know American customs.<sup>78</sup> Most likely the American customs foreign mothers became acquainted with were those closely tied to domesticity. Many children of the mothers who attended Americanization classes most likely attended Pacific School, a transition school for students learning English as a second language, at some point in their schooling.

*The Pacific School.* The Pacific School, situated on 510 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, served as a transition school for students with limited English proficiency. It was a school of "distinct classes for newly arrived young foreigners who sought admission to the day classes."<sup>79</sup> Four classrooms were designated specifically for the teaching of English language to "foreigners." Students, above the primary grades and who were not fluent in English, attended Pacific until they were able to gain proficiency and comprehension in English. Once students reached a level of fluency, they were admitted into their "regular day schools."

A description of the Pacific School and the general structure of the school's curriculum and program are described below:

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<sup>77</sup> *Seattle School Bulletin*, v7, n1, (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, November 1919), 1.

<sup>78</sup> *Quinquennial Report*, 87.

<sup>79</sup> F.B. Cooper to BOD, 13 January 1922, Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

The Japanese form the largest group; the Chinese the second; the Russians the third in point of number; with individuals from many European countries. These pupils are not classified according to their knowledge of English for they have too little of that for examinations or tests of any kind. All these factors are considered briefly. An interpreter is called in and some idea is obtained of the applicant's education and intelligence and he is assigned to the group which promises to contribute most for his immediate inspiration to hear and to speak English.

Through these classes the foreign pupils are saved from embarrassment and discouragement and are helped by intensive training to overcome mannerisms and accents that otherwise persist through adult life. . . . Return to regular classes is conditioned upon their being able to use the English language reasonably well for the grade assigned.<sup>80</sup>

The school was in existence since 1909 but it was not until the *Triennial Report* of 1924 that attention was paid to the specialized service offered by Pacific School. Before 1924, particular interest in Asian students was expressed by the Board of Directors when it requested Cooper to submit the numbers of "Asiatic pupils" in the Seattle Schools. By 1920, there were a total of 930 Asian students reported, with 704 Japanese (76%), 166 Chinese (17%), 65 Filipinos, 3 Armenians, 1 Korean, and 1 Russian.<sup>81</sup> Pacific School may have been regarded as one of the schools being particularly oriented toward Asian youth as Seattle's largest non-White population at this

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<sup>80</sup> *Triennial Report of the Public Schools, 1921 - 1924* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1924), 74.

<sup>81</sup> F.E. Willard to BOD, 12 March 1920, Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

time was Japanese Americans. Pacific School also had an almost equal number of Jewish immigrant children.

Two years later, the Board of Directors requested Cooper to submit another report on the nationalities of students at Pacific School. It is important to clarify that not all students of Pacific School required training in English language. Students from the community, regardless of their fluency in English, attended Pacific, as did students in other areas and neighborhoods of Seattle. The following table reflects the total number of students attending Pacific School in 1922.

Table 2: Nationalities of Students at Pacific School, 1922<sup>\*2</sup>

Nationalities of Students at Pacific School	Number
Japanese	156
Chinese	35
Jewish [Polish (9), Russian (37), Spanish (38), Turkish (78), Austrian (2)]	164
Italians	18
Greeks	3
Finns	16
Danes	3
Norwegians	7
Swedish	11
French	2
South American	1
Belgian	3
Latvians	2
Germans	4
Austrians	1
English	16
Irish	3
Scotch	7
Welch	1
Canadians	10
Eskimos	1
Africans	17
U. S. Americans (ethnicity unknown)	153
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>636</b>

Of the twenty-six different nationalities represented at Pacific School, 269 students were born in the United States of immigrant parents; figures which would include the Nisei student population. 96 of the 636 students at Pacific School were enrolled in classes for "newly arrived foreign youth." The ethnic backgrounds of the 96 students were as follows: Japanese, 38; Chinese, 14; Russian Jews, 11; Turkish Jews, 22; Italian, 7; Swedish, 1; Latvians, 2; Greeks, 1.<sup>83</sup>

The representation of students at Pacific School was an amalgamation of cultures. The area in which the school was located contained a high number of immigrants, Jews, and longtime residents of Seattle from various European countries. It is highly unlikely that students from Canada, England, and other parts of the U.S. required instruction in English. It is more the case that their families settled in the area around Pacific School, as only twelve percent of the students lived outside of the school's district.<sup>84</sup>

The purpose of the specialized service at Pacific School gradually aimed to return all students into the "regular" day classes. There was a discussion, however, concerning the Pacific School and whether or not a permanent building be allocated for segregated instruction for foreign students. Cooper expressed his disagreement to the proposal by the Board of Directors to consider a permanent, segregated building. He felt that the idea, if implemented, would be disadvantageous, both from an educational and financial point of view and that an "arbitrary segregation would invite serious embarrassment and

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<sup>82</sup> Adapted from: F.B. Cooper to BOD, 13 January 1922, Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

<sup>83</sup> F.B. Cooper to BOD, 13 January 1922.

<sup>84</sup> F.B. Cooper to BOD, 13 January 1922.

complications."<sup>85</sup> He felt that an immersion into American culture and ideals would provide for faster acculturation rather than confining foreign students to one building. Cooper advocated, rather, a process of transitioning students into regular day schools as swiftly as the students' skills warranted.

This middle course pursued by Seattle contrasts with the most virulent English-only efforts in specific areas of the United States. Although not yet a state, the territory of Hawaii was also affected by efforts at Americanizing its youth. Eileen Tamura's study, "The English-Only Effort, the Anti-Japanese Campaign, and Language Acquisition in the Education of Japanese Americans in Hawaii, 1915-1940" examines the extent to which the English-only effort really dealt with language. Tamura's assertion is that it was really an anti-Japanese drive, targeting the Japanese language and the Nisei while disregarding other non-English languages and the children of other immigrants.<sup>86</sup>

In 1924 Hawaii began designating a set of schools as "English Standard."<sup>87</sup> A small group of Hawaiian residents sought to instill a WASP ideal of Americanism and Americanization. Marked by a tumultuous past of a series of conflicts between Japanese American and Caucasian community leaders over the schooling of its youth, the English Standard movement was no exception. For twenty-five years the English Standard schools, located mostly in Honolulu, were developed primarily for European American school children so that they would not be negatively influenced by Hawaiian Creole English and other forms of "non-Standard" English spoken by many non-Europeans.

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<sup>85</sup> F.B. Cooper to BOD, 20 January 1922 Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

<sup>86</sup> Eileen Tamura, "The English-Only Effort, the Anti-Japanese Campaign, and Language Acquisition in the Education of Japanese Americans in Hawaii, 1915-1940," in *History of Education Quarterly* 33 (Spring 1993), 38.

Supporters of the cause argued that the schools would promote "Americanism by protecting the English language and encouraging good speech habits."<sup>88</sup> Critics called the Standard schools un-American due to their discriminatory methods which encouraged race prejudice and marked a backwards turn in the process of acculturation.<sup>89</sup> The emphasis lay in keeping White students away from being "contaminated" by the "ways of the natives." Despite the generation of a fair amount of dispute, the Standard Schools were not phased out until 1949, when more Middle-class Asians were able to affect change at the legislative level.<sup>90</sup>

The push toward "English-Only" was not isolated only to Hawaii. The Hawaii development of English Standard schools is a variant of the mainland phenomenon of laws against schools that taught non-English languages.<sup>91</sup> This is further evidence that Seattle again directed a moderate approach in educating immigrant students in English language instruction. While the Board of Directors of the Seattle Schools considered the possibility of establishing a permanent building for its foreign students, Frank Cooper was adamant in maintaining the course of transitioning students into their regular neighborhood schools.

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<sup>87</sup> Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*, 111.

<sup>88</sup> Tamura, *Americanization*, 111.

<sup>89</sup> Tamura, *Americanization*, 111.

<sup>90</sup> Tamura, *Americanization*, 115.

<sup>91</sup> Personal correspondence with Eileen Tamura, 9 October 1997.

## Ongoing Extra-Curricular Activities and In-School Exercises for Character Building

*School / Flag Assemblies as a Means of Citizenship Training.* Weekly assemblies<sup>92</sup> in the schools were seen as a way to foster ideals of citizenship. It was another ongoing component of the Seattle Schools in education for loyalty and Americanism. Most Seattle schools held an assembly once a week by reciting a flag salute and giving the pledge of allegiance. Up through the 1940s, it was commonplace for schools to partake in a flag ritual. Often used as a symbol to promote the ideals of Americanism and the "American dream," the flag salute would begin most school mornings. A rare activity prior to World War I, the United States' involvement in the war changed all that. The Seattle School Board placed American flags in classrooms and flag-saluting exercises, much like the one at the beginning of this chapter, became common.<sup>93</sup>

The approach to this particular form of Americanization rested on having students understand the flag as a symbol of civic ideals and patriotic loyalty. The justifications for conducting flag ceremonies rested on instilling a sense of duty to country,<sup>94</sup> training for immediate and prospective citizenship as a member of a community, and increasing pride in the students' schools. School administrators believed that these participatory efforts would overcome narrowness in character by the development of intelligent citizens, through daily recitations.<sup>95</sup> Again, the stress on an intelligent citizenry consisting of

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<sup>92</sup> School assemblies are discussed in further detail in the last chapter.

<sup>93</sup> Nelson, *Good Schools*, 111.

<sup>94</sup> *Triennial Report, 1921 - 1924*, 15.

<sup>95</sup> *Triennial Report, 1924 - 1927*, 39-40.

loyalty, patriotism, and an unquestioning faith to Americanism was the benchmark for the teaching of democracy at this time.

The use of school assemblies also gained in popularity throughout the nation as growing interest in raising the civic consciousness of students became vogue. With citizenship in schools tied to student conduct and behavior, assemblies were seen as a way of promoting pride in schools, elevating citizenship, and in increasing adherence of school laws and regulations.<sup>96</sup>

*Pupil Participation in School Government and Habit Training through Citizenship Clubs.* Extracurricular activities through Good Citizenship Clubs, Boys' Clubs, and Girls' Clubs were additional means of promoting Americanization. The aim here concentrated on developing the democratic character. One of the foundational conditions of these clubs required that students abide by a code of conduct which would promote values of a "good citizen;" the emphasis, again, focused on one's behavior. School personnel often encouraged students to join in such civic clubs and its' activities. Certain schools had a "Standards Committee" that considered ways and means for establishing standards of conduct. An example is a code of conduct for girls in the Girls' Clubs:

#### **MY CREED**

I believe, as a High School girl of Seattle, I should be

Joyous, courageous and courteous.

Truthful, considerate and just.  
 Loyal and sincere in friendship.  
 Too noble to speak ill of others.  
 Willing to forgive and forget.  
 Prompt and gracious in obedience.  
 Ready to do all possible service.  
 Quick to appreciate what is done for me.  
 Respectful to my elders.  
 True to the best that is within me that  
 I may become a fine and worthy woman.<sup>97</sup>

The activities of the Boys' Club primarily concerned itself with athletic competition in various sports, whereas the Girls' Club members gathered over committee matters in the following areas of Vocational, Social Service, Standards, Extension, and Health. The Social Service component entered largely in the configuration of Citizenship Clubs where both girls and boys partook in community activities. The aims of the Social Service Activities in Seattle High Schools were broken down in the following manner:

1. To interest students in helping their community.
2. To teach cooperation with organized charity.
3. To discourage emotional and encourage scientific giving.
4. To render service to individuals not helped by organized[sic] charity.
5. To train a small group of students to be social workers.
6. To develop leadership dependability, civic responsibility, and unselfishness.

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<sup>96</sup> *Triennial Report, 1924 - 1927*, 40.

7. To teach students business methods in finance.<sup>98</sup>

The emphasis on community activities and work towards the common good is an extension of the idea emphasizing community civics in citizenship education from 1915. National educational leaders championed reforms in the civics curriculum that looked to how schools could best serve its communities. Arthur William Dunn, Henry Thurston, and John Dewey were national educational leaders who viewed the school itself as a community and education as a service to the larger community to which it belonged.<sup>99</sup> Seattle, in all its' functions, modeled its approach to citizenship education after the progressive thinkers of the time.

### **Conclusion**

The Seattle Public Schools adopted a moderate course in Americanizing its' student body to the ideals of democracy and citizenship. While the general theme of loyalty and patriotism marked the ways in which curricular and extracurricular activities guided the education of students, the tradition set by Superintendent Cooper contained a progressive approach. He worked early on to address the more conservative influences to institute a patriotic education and did so tirelessly until his resignation in 1922.

The curricular reforms for the Seattle Schools placed heavy emphasis on the teaching of history. It was meant to provide a foundation on which to understand the principles of democracy and the practice behind the students' daily flag rituals. Cooper

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<sup>97</sup> *Triennial Report, 1924 - 1927, 42.*

<sup>98</sup> *Triennial Report, 1924 - 1927, 42.*

desired to have the practice of flag exercises, instituted by a flag law, coupled with a critical understanding of the symbolism behind the flag. He resisted the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution to instill a literal interpretation of the flag law.

Specialized curricular programs for immigrants focused on Americanization classes for mothers and English language classes for students. Again, Cooper adopted a moderate program of implementing the goals of Americanization and citizenship. Specifically, his response to the Board of Directors, to establish a permanent building set aside for students with limited English proficiency, made it clear that the purposes and function of schooling in Seattle would be hampered by such an act. He called for maintaining what was already in place, a program of gradually transitioning students into regular classrooms.

Extracurricular activities were the focus of attention throughout the 1920s. Boys and Girls' Civic Clubs had the goal of connecting their aims to the larger needs of the community. This aspect continued under Superintendent Thomas Cole, who continued to implement a moderate emphasis toward Americanization. Influenced by the national reforms in progressive education, especially with the emphasis toward communitarianism, the aim of citizenship, especially with respect to major curricular and extra-curricular activities, looked to how schools could contribute to the good of society.

Curriculum in citizenship education was also reformed in the 1930s to reflect a more cosmopolitan concept. The Great Depression, political unrest in Europe, racism in the U.S., and increased anti-Semitic activities at home and abroad necessitated a response

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<sup>99</sup> Reuben, "Beyond Politics," 401.

by educators to provide relevant education for all students. The Progressive Education Association, the National Education Association, and key actors in the Intercultural Education movement all played a hand in the national reform efforts. Seattle also joined in the efforts to promote a more intercultural education through toleration and understanding in their schools. The next chapter continues to examine the Seattle Public Schools' approach to Americanization and Citizenship with a broader focus.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Americanization Broadened: Tolerance and Intercultural Education, 1930-1942

The 1930s and the Great Depression, just prior to the Second World War, carried its own set of challenges for schools. One cannot downplay the severity of economic losses of businesses and families. Massive unemployment and subsequent migrations of families in search of work all interrupted the basic functions of schools. During this time, the growing racial crises and the rise of anti-Semitism abroad, with events such as *Kristallnacht*, compelled leaders in national educational organizations to reconceptualize notions of tolerance, religious freedom, and a democratic way of life. Character education became the focus for successful citizenship. Seattle Schools, through curricular and extracurricular content, also used similar concepts to educate its' students on the values of civic ideals. With so many people out of work during this time, the argument of an education for jobs became weak. Schools refocused its efforts toward a greater understanding of the democratic process and redoubled its efforts toward tolerance and interculturalism.

Ideas of "tolerance" and "intercultural education" were introduced in the official curriculum guides of the Seattle Public Schools in the mid to late 1930s and early 1940s. Although the specific terminology of interculturalism was not used in official documents until 1941, the main ideas promoted by intercultural educationists and the Progressive Education Association influenced Seattle's curriculum reform measures as early as 1935.

Two main texts that served to promote progressive ideals and vision towards character education and the democratic way of life were *Successful Living*<sup>100</sup> and *Living Today -- Learning for Tomorrow*. *Successful Living*, published in 1935, was a handbook to be used by all teachers in promoting good character, eventually leading to good citizenship practices. *Living Today -- Learning for Tomorrow*, published in 1938, was a social studies curriculum guide for all grades. Subject areas in history, civics, geography, and the environment were outlined in a way to develop connections between the individual and society. During this time the language of citizenship gave way to character education and democracy. While one may argue that character and democracy are fundamental components of citizenship education, the schools' concentration and specific use of the words, character education and democracy, indicate a shift in the schools thinking that broadened and deepened the concept of citizenship.

One of the reasons for a more inclusive notion of citizenship derived from the economic unrest of the 1930s. Seattle schools at this time, like the rest of the nation, were experiencing the effects of the Great Depression. Teachers' salary cuts and deep budget woes drastically curtailed many school activities. For a time, *The Bulletin* was suspended from September 1932 to March 1934.<sup>101</sup> As in New York City, Seattle

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<sup>100</sup> I am deeply grateful to a former student of mine, Gary Davenport, for allowing me use of one of the original copies of *Successful Living* that had been kept in his family. His grandfather, Noah Davenport, was Head of the History and Social Studies Department at Franklin High School in Seattle and kept a copy of the text in his personal library. Noah Davenport is the co-author of books on life in Seattle including: *Government in Seattle: City, County, State, National*, with Samuel Fleming, Assistant Superintendent of Schools (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1935); and *Living in Seattle*, with Lorin Peterson, Division of Adult Education at the University of Washington and former Research Director of the Seattle Municipal League (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1950).

<sup>101</sup> Moreo, *Schools in the Great Depression*, 86.

teachers were asked to "'donate' a part of their pay, their time, and their good-will."<sup>102</sup>

Without a doubt, other district staff salaries and programs suffered from financial exigencies. It became more difficult to argue that a good education would lead to job security when even some school officials had difficulties earning a subsistence wage.

Curriculum-wise, Superintendent Worth McClure reportedly adapted a modified version of the "platoon system" in Seattle that had originated in Gary, Indiana under Superintendent William A. Wirt.<sup>103</sup> The result amounted to limited specialization in the lower grades whereby the teachers were relieved of certain duties by having others teach music, physical education and fine arts.<sup>104</sup> This may have been a way to offset teachers having to "volunteer" one's salary.

### **The Progressive Education Association and Intercultural Education**

The Progressive Education Association (PEA) was founded by Stanwood Cobb in 1919. It started out as an organization of parents and laypeople whose base was the elite private schools of the East, but the PEA reached mass appeal in the 1930s with a socially-concerned leadership interested in the reform of public education.<sup>105</sup> The PEA gained notoriety as *Time* magazine featured the basic functions of progressive education and the PEA in their October, 31, 1938 issue.

The Progressive Education Association's concern for race and ethnicity grew out of increasing social unrest in the 1930s. The organization and its leaders, such as

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<sup>102</sup> Moreo, *Schools in the Great Depression*, 87.

<sup>103</sup> Moreo, *Schools in the Great Depression*, 86.

<sup>104</sup> Moreo, *Schools in the Great Depression*, 87.

Executive Secretary Frederick Redefer, urged for a socially responsible agenda that looked at issues of race and ethnicity by scholars such as Charles Adamic.<sup>106</sup> The organization's journal, *Progressive Education*, beginning in 1935 published considerably on human relations, intercultural education and the uses of materials on ethnicity in the classroom.<sup>107</sup>

The push for interculturalism was the brainchild of Rachel Davis DuBois. She was the founder and first Executive of the Service Bureau for Intercultural Education.<sup>108</sup> Her pacifism, Quaker roots, and past experiences of feeling like an outsider forged a strong belief in developing empathic understanding with immigrants and racial minorities. DuBois's particular interest in the writings of W. E. B. Dubois,<sup>109</sup> especially his remarks that wars were a consequence of intergroup hatred, helped her to formulate classroom teaching methods, as a high school social studies teacher, in connecting the idea of international peace and intergroup understanding through assembly programs:

it brought together the entire student body; permitted actual demonstrations of the artistic achievements of ethnic groups; provided a forum for visiting ethnic group leaders, and permitted an appeal to the students' emotions as well as their intellects, a feature of the program that DuBois came to insist made it pedagogically superior to strictly intellectual approaches. With the assistance of a student-faculty committee, she planned a year-long

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<sup>105</sup> Nicholas V. Montalto, *A History of the Intercultural Educational Movement, 1924-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 126-127.

<sup>106</sup> Ronald K. Goodenow, "The Progressive Educator. Race and Ethnicity in the Depression Years: An Overview," in *History of Education Quarterly* 15 (Winter 1975), 374.

<sup>107</sup> Goodenow, 374.

<sup>108</sup> Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 77. Montalto provides a thoughtful and thorough account of Rachel DuBois professional career as the leader in intercultural education. as well as her rise and fall within the Progressive Education Association are also discussed.

series of assemblies, held at two to six week intervals, each devoted to history, achievements and contributions of a particular ethnic group.<sup>110</sup>

DuBois's approach to arouse the sympathies of the young through assemblies was refined as a doctoral student at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Her close proximity to immigrant groups and racial minorities in New York City, and her associations with progressive educators such as William Kilpatrick, George Counts, and Daniel Kulp II helped to lay out a systematic program of understanding attitude formation and prejudices. DuBois's work continued through the 1930s where her influence reached the leaders of the Progressive Education Association. Through PEA sponsorship, the Service Bureau for Intercultural Education reached the mainstream of America's schools. As DuBois's biographer asserts, from 1924 through the 1930s, she was probably the first American educator to develop ethnic studies curriculum materials for the public schools.<sup>111</sup>

DuBois published a number of articles in *Progressive Education*. In a March 1935 issue entitled, "Our Enemy -- The Stereotype," she writes about how the "pictures in our minds" operate to render one ethnic group as somehow inherently different, and thus inferior, from the dominant group. Stereotypes are the measures by which American society have kept racial minorities at a cultural and economic disadvantage. She continues:

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<sup>109</sup> There is no relation between the two.

<sup>110</sup> Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 85.

As long as we have economic competition, we of the dominant group are going to use stereotypes to justify our exploitation of another group which is 'different.' As long as we feel that we are 'different,' we cannot unite in one common effort to change the economic system. As long as the Jew is pictured as the crafty money-getter, anti-Semitism and pogroms remain possible even in the United States. As long as the Negro is considered to be 'different,' lynching will continue. As long a 'foreign' is thought of as being synonymous with 'inferior,' American will be culturally poor.<sup>112</sup>

The responsibility of the schools, DuBois asserted, lay in devising assembly programs offering opportunities for cultural exchange. An example of such a program would involve community leaders of different cultural groups coming to schools to give talks on how negative stereotypes affect their communities. In return, students would later engage in dramatic sketches illustrating how the "power of vicarious living through drama is used as a means of building further understanding."<sup>113</sup> She also urged teachers to move beyond parochialism by opening their social experiences to people outside their own race. Here DuBois emphasized how the role of teachers had a direct impact on the degree to which intercultural education succeeded or failed.

In terms of curricular reform, DuBois felt that effective change was only possible through the introduction of selective materials of ethnic minority and immigrant groups; including sections on racial histories and cultural achievements into the courses of

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<sup>111</sup> Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 92.

<sup>112</sup> Rachel Davis-DuBois, "Our Enemy -- The Stereotype," in *Progressive Education* XII (March 1935), 147.

<sup>113</sup> Davis-DuBois, "Our Enemy -- The Stereotype," 149.

study.<sup>114</sup> Her content analysis of texts at the time revealed an overwhelming number of misinformation and misleading facts about Jews and African Americans, in particular: “Nothing of importance was found which would develop sympathetic attitudes our various culture groups. It was easier to count lines developing antagonisms. The proportion ran five hundred lines against the Negro, to fifty against the Jew and ten against the Southern European immigrant. . . . But no text mentions the fact that the first man to lose his life in the American Revolution was Crispus Attacks, a Negro.<sup>115</sup> Certainly, such lack of information required that teachers and other educators develop a more systemic way of gathering information on racial minorities. DuBois was firm in her efforts, however, to preach the gospel of interculturalism.

The message of tolerance and interculturalism, however loosely interpreted by progressive educators, made its way to the administrators and school officials in Seattle. The *Bulletin* at the time contained numerous articles summarizing the various activities between Seattle, the National Education Association, and the Progressive Education Association. Seattle was host to the annual NEA conference in July of 1927<sup>116</sup> and also hosted the regional conference of the PEA in 1934.<sup>117</sup> A survey of *The Bulletin* between 1925 and 1940 indicated a high degree of involvement between Seattle educators and national leaders within the NEA and PEA. With close connections to the activities of the PEA, and subsequent reports of activities in the *Bulletin*, Seattle schools were influenced to varying degrees by the national movements in progressivism and intercultural

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<sup>114</sup> Davis-DuBois, "Our Enemy -- The Stereotype," 147.

<sup>115</sup> Davis-DuBois, "Our Enemy -- The Stereotype," 148.

<sup>116</sup> *The Seattle Educational Bulletin* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, October 1927), 1.

<sup>117</sup> *The Seattle Educational Bulletin*, March 1934, 1.

education. The publication of *Successful Living* and *Learning Today -- Living for Tomorrow* was a project by a committee of Seattle educators dedicated to progressivism and tolerance.

### **Successful Living**

*Successful Living*, published in 1935, was developed by a committee of teachers to pass down a cohesive set of ideals on citizenship, namely through character education. The curriculum aimed at progressive social goals in two main ways: 1) character education; and 2) school as society. It examined how schools, as laboratories of democracy, can serve to facilitate the process of living a democratic way of life. According to the authors, character education was to be thought of, "like health, as the productive way of living through which strength is acquired. Character education in America is the mastery of a truly democratic way of living . . . a way of living which conserves and produces as many values as possible for as many persons as possible over as long a time as possible. Character education is the facilitation of this way of life."<sup>118</sup> What the textbook authors hoped to accomplish was a more cohesive, coordinated approach emphasizing a progressive character education.

A progressive ideology is apparent in the textbook's approach to the democratic way of life. Such ideas are expressed in the committee's viewpoint which introduces the text. Eight major ideas which serve as the basis for learning are: Knowing and Doing, The "Either-Or" Fallacy, Opportunities in the Classroom, The Teacher as Counselor and

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<sup>118</sup> *Successful Living*, 1.

Friend, School Life and Democratic Living, Play and Democratic Living, Changing Time and Ethical Principles, and Coordinating the Out of School Life.

**1. Knowing and Doing** addressed the tensions inherent in education between vocational efficiency and education for life -- in the Deweyan sense of the word. As the Great Depression reconfigured many educators' thoughts on "why we educate," the appeal for a liberal arts education, with a concentration on the classics surfaced once more. Hence the idea of education as "making a life" played centrally to the task of the development of character; especially since vocational work, or any work for that matter, was in limited supply.

**2. The "Either-Or" Fallacy** sought to draw connections from two seemingly oppositional ways of thinking: of how the everyday world of the classroom contributed to society's broader objective. It states that, "No pupil can attain the highest mental development of which he is capable without establishing habits of accuracy, self-reliance, patience, and industry - essentials of good character."<sup>119</sup> It relied on efforts to not choose between a "classical" versus a "vocational" education, but rather, to interweave the two. The classroom would be the place where everyday habits of mind, character growth, would develop.

**3. Opportunities in the Classroom** were to be facilitated by the teacher in ensuring that all subject areas in the classroom connected, however obliquely, to the aims of character education. Mathematics, science, literature, history, and geography contained important markers for bridging the gap between subject area and citizenship.

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<sup>119</sup> *Successful Living*, 3.

**4. The Teacher as Counselor and Friend** expanded the role of teaching beyond pedagogical aims. The growth of specialized knowledge, administrative progressivism, and scientific management looked at particular ways of tending to the “problems of the child.” Thus in this manner, teachers were responsible for monitoring a child’s mental and physical deficiencies as it benefitted the work of the Child Study Department.

**5. School Life and Democratic Living** attributed some of its ideas to John Dewey in that the school offered a place to equalize opportunities for all children. The committee saw the school, “serving all the children of all people, has a unique opportunity for overcoming snobbery, reducing racial and class prejudices, and teaching the brotherhood of man.”<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, “The individual must gain a consciousness of his civic responsibilities. Dewey reminds us of the fact that school is not only a preparation for life; it is life itself. It may be so organized as to afford opportunity for the exercise of all the duties and obligations of citizenship.”<sup>121</sup> Linking tolerance to citizenship began to be pronounced more and more. While loyalty, patriotism, and emphasis on school clubs were expressed, the promise and possibilities of democratic schooling surfaced.

**6. Play and Democratic Living** grew as a means to respond to the shortened work hours, creating unstructured and potentially delinquent activities among young boys. One of the aims of citizenship education rested on productive play through an

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<sup>120</sup> *Successful Living*, 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Successful Living*, 4.

appreciation of the natural environment and development of hobbies. The point of play was that it be a structured means of affecting outcomes for growth.

**7. Changing Times and Ethical Principles** attempted to lay out universal morals on which to base character. The authors' saw the "homely values" of honesty, thrift, loyalty, and tolerance as beginning points for facilitating discussion. These principles were not to be understood in a fixed and narrow way. Rather, class discussion was to provide a basis for that which proved too ambiguous.

**8. Coordinating the Out-of-School Life** required a smooth transition between social service agencies which looked to meet the needs of "problem" youth. The authors made it clear that schools were not a panacea to the problems plaguing youth, and that a closer articulation between home and school was required for effective training in character. Outside organizations and community agencies, including churches, all needed to take part in raising the young. Thus character education required that all social forces, with schools as providing one link in the chain, be held accountable in the production of future citizens.

The overarching theme expressed in *Successful Living* examines how schools, as laboratories of democracy, can serve to facilitate the process of living a democratic way of life. To that end, the character education guide offered model programs in the classroom for emulation. Several examples of how model classrooms offered programs for character enrichment were highlighted in various chapters.

As far as classroom practices, of particular interest were those offering quiet meditation, or “moments of silence,” before the start of the school day.<sup>122</sup> This was meant to provide time for students to reflect on the day as well as to temper energetic bodies. Secondly, an emphasis on writing and composition was stressed as it was believed that “compositions created by pupils are the instruments through which we see their innermost souls.”<sup>123</sup> Not only were teachers to provide topics on which to write, but issues stemming from the lives of students were also encouraged. Above all, relevance between the subject matter of the composition and the experiences of students was needed. Lastly, the idea of homerooms generated much support in fostering citizenship and character. The bonds between teacher and students, and students to students, were believed to occur best in a homeroom environment where lasting relationships would occur.

The guide’s approach to tolerance was expressed through individual stories of students who came from various racial, ethnic, class, and religious backgrounds. The “success” stories focused on how important it was for students, especially immigrant and second generation, to: 1) recognize their cultural or religious background as one that has value and not as subordinate or inferior; 2) not denigrate their parents for speaking a different language and practicing foreign customs; 3) exhibit character at home by practicing the habits of citizenship, thereby serving as Americanizing agents to one’s parents; and 4) understand that there are two sides to every story. Tolerance, or human understanding, was one way of countering various forms of maladjustments. To a large

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<sup>122</sup> *Successful Living*, 11.

<sup>123</sup> *Successful Living*, 46.

degree, however, the onus was on the immigrant or minority child to develop such habits of mind. When such habits were not fully actualized by the student, the Child Study Department, through their scientific assessments, found ways to address such matters.

Progressive approaches to character education, represented by *Successful Living*, reiterated old themes and introduced new ones. Although specific activities such as flag salutes and participation in civic clubs were not highlighted as much as they were in previous decades, broad notions of character education reflected indirect sentiments of loyalty and patriotism. The 1930s approach to citizenship education was characterized by an emphasis on the democratic way of life. Schools served to meet such needs through toleration, open discussion, equalization of opportunities, and recognizing that students came to school with their own personal experiences. Whereas *Successful Living* served to foster character growth in and out of school, *Living Today -- Learning for Tomorrow* provided the subject matter content for character development in the social studies.

### **Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow**

*Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, published in 1938,<sup>124</sup> was the Seattle School's curriculum guide for a course in social studies from the kindergarten through the senior high school. It is broken down by semester-long increments which provides a general description of the subject to be taught, approximate time allotments for certain

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<sup>124</sup> The same year in which John Dewey's *Experience and Education* was published.

topical areas, materials of instruction - basic bibliographic listings, and desired outcomes for each grade and semester level.

There are three reasons given for using the guide across all grade levels: (1) The Student Learns About the World in Which He Lives; (2) The Student Experiences Civic Teamwork; (3) The Student Gains Perspective and Lasting Interest in the World and Its People.<sup>125</sup> The emphasis is on familiarizing students with their local geography and seeing how their place in the local community shapes things on a global level.

The understandings to be achieved by learning this particular brand of social studies are to be "arrived at naturally through the illustrative content activities of the social studies program."<sup>126</sup> The major concepts that frame this social studies guide include ideas of mutual dependence, control over the environment, open discussion, obligations of citizenship, and preparation for democracy. The following represent the major understandings to be achieved by the students through the study of various social issues.

**Interdependence** focuses on mutual dependency of individuals. The authors write that "Civilization is the product of the contribution of many races and peoples."<sup>127</sup> This begins to address intercultural approaches to education in that society is composed of various cultures and ethnic groups that have contributed to the progress of its nation.

**Changing Environment** discusses the role of human nature's slow accommodation to changes in the environment and that "resistance to change and

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<sup>125</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1938). 12-14.

<sup>126</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 15.

<sup>127</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 16.

unreceptivity to new ideas often result in revolution by violent measures."<sup>128</sup> Perhaps reflecting on the political uncertainties of the time, especially overseas, this served as a reminder for how humanity needed to broaden its' understanding in multiple contexts.

**Man's Power to Control Nature** is considered an outstanding aspect of modern history and that social control remains the "unsolved problem" of modern man.<sup>129</sup> The centrality of human nature to manipulate its' environment, particularly for "the betterment of society," is seen here as a commendable and worthwhile endeavor .

**Obligations of Democracy** considers the particular role of the individual to partake in the civic duties of democracy. Voting is seen as a privilege and that possessing rights and privileges as a citizen "imply obligations and sacrifices."<sup>130</sup> The message for democracy is that freedom comes at a cost.

**Free Discussion**, a variant on the freedom of speech, is emphasized as a critical component of democracy, especially as it applies to addressing the imperfect status of the government. Tolerance and striving for intelligent understanding through an exchange of diverse ideas mark the bedrock of free discussion.

**The Individual and Society** addresses "man's" need to harmonize two opposing forces, where one is motivated by competition and the need to maintain one's individuality, and by the obligation and responsibility toward society and recognizing the need for cooperation.<sup>131</sup> The challenge of democracy lies in integrating both successfully.

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<sup>128</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 16.

<sup>129</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 16.

<sup>130</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 17.

<sup>131</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 18.

The seventh and eighth grade history curriculum have similar desired outcomes and understandings to be achieved. The curriculum committee sought to have students comprehend and relate a connected historical narrative, recognize character traits of outstanding world characters (Moses, Socrates, Christ, Paul, Pericles), have knowledge of and respect for ancient texts, appreciate the long struggle for democracy, and have a sympathetic attitude to the long struggle of man to improve and overcome obstacles in order to benefit society.<sup>132</sup>

The geography curriculum for these grades concentrates on an introductory study of the state of Washington as well as a strong recommendation to the study of East Asia. The main outcomes for learning geography are to gain a sympathetic understanding of other people which comes from a study of their problems and an appreciation of how men, by working together, can, to a certain degree, control nature and improve conditions.<sup>133</sup> The idea that humans have the power to determine the fate of the natural and physical world is emphasized once again.

*Successful Living and Living Today -- Learning for Tomorrow* represent a moderate, citizenship-based approach to character education and Americanization. Their progressivist outlook and method for instruction was, to a large degree, influenced by the national movements within the National Education Association and the Progressive Education Association, especially in relation to character and social studies instruction.

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<sup>132</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 73.

<sup>133</sup> *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow*, 82.

Like many other curriculum guides, it is difficult to know or investigate the extent to which educators actually used them. At the very least, it may be safe to assume that teachers implemented a modified version of the ideas proposed, each teacher using what was most favorable to them. Further, knowing how much the students actually learned and understood aspects of character education from their teachers are problematic as well. However, the letters themselves provide some evidence of how the lessons in democratic citizenship education were received.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In summary, the case for Seattle embodies a progressively moderate approach to Americanization, citizenship, and character education. Also, the official policy was many things, even in one district - it represented a range as well as change over time. In reference to difference, the official attitude was more pluralistic than the programs in different urban areas at the time. There was the mention of having critical understanding of differences through discussion, and schools as places for opening up of opportunities of all races and economic classes. Seattle steered a moderate course in the face of political pressures.

Within the range of programs in Seattle, the assessment of the primary documents reveals a common strand throughout the decades. The Seattle Public Schools' devotion to Americanism, Americanization, and citizenship training retained a consistent core through curriculum revision, programmatic additions, and extra- and non-curricular activities. History and civics instruction were important components in how teachers taught for citizenship. Increased immigration, the role of various civic organizations, and

the social and political upheavals no doubt played centrally in the schools' desire to implement strategic plans for educating citizens for the school and community life.

The extent to which the programs were inculcating a narrow brand of citizenship, or even pernicious to certain immigrant groups remains an open question. The brief analysis of programs nationwide indicate that for some ethnic groups, Americanization was a euphemism for racial discrimination policies. The Seattle perspective comes solely from an administrative point of view and lacks views from students and non-English speaking parents. Superintendent Cooper's initial desire to celebrate a broad interpretation of the flag law perhaps set the tone for how Seattle would approach the national push for a limited view of Americanization and acculturation. Cooper, it seems, spent time addressing outside groups' interests on how the schools ought to operate in light of wartime events.

To be sure the nation, in general, and Seattle, in particular, did partake in patriotic instructions or the political fundamentalism as noted by historians Tyack and Thomas in chapter one. Popular programs consisted of studying a revised version of U.S. history, learning about citizenship, participating in flag exercises and displays, and classroom emphasis on learning Standard English. Seattle Public Schools enacted various forms of all these curricula.

The Seattle case is distinct, not only because of the makeup of its' non-white population, but because of the ways in which various Americanization programs were set in place. It did not express explicit policies of ethnic erasure as did the Gary Schools, a concerted English Standard movement of Hawaii's schools, and of the social welfare movement of Los Angeles. The Seattle schools embraced both traditional and

progressive approaches in the implementation of a moderate approach to Americanization.

Referring to the well-known labor radicalism that characterized Seattle during World War I, Roger Sale discusses Seattle as a city that somehow became a place of radical ideas at the same time as it experienced growing conservatism.<sup>134</sup> Undoubtedly, the Seattle Public Schools were also places where radical and bourgeois ideals clashed and merged. It was not outside the realm of local and national politics; in fact, the schools were very much a reflection of local politics. Also important at this time were the demographic and social changes that took place in Seattle. Although Japanese Americans formed a large group of immigrants in Seattle, the total immigrant population, and the total non-white population was not as big as in some other cities.

To be fair, the other urban cases were also reflective of their local demographic and political situations. Considering that Seattle was a much younger city,<sup>135</sup> in comparison to that of the eastern, Midwest, and other West Coast cities, it was still in the midst of developing a local politics of its own. Other urban areas across the United States already had strong, well-established political machines with control over public schools. Further, these areas had to contend with population influx long before the West Coast, and programs of Americanization, though not called specifically that, were implemented in those places. Also, the higher number of immigrant and minority groups in a concentrated, urban area may have contributed to some schools' more segregative approach to Americanization. Although Seattle's Japanese American population was the

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<sup>134</sup> Sale, *Seattle, Past to Present*, 117.

<sup>135</sup> Seattle was founded on either in November 1851 or February 1852, according to Roger Sale, 8.

highest nonwhite population, it did not reach beyond three percent of the total population. Seattle was still overwhelmingly a white population and minority groups did not comprise a numerically significant group prior to the Second World War.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Formation of a “Nisei” Identity in Prewar Seattle

This chapter investigates the history of Japanese and Japanese Americans, Nikkei, with particular focus on the second generation, Nisei, in Seattle on the eve of the incarceration. My aim is not to essentialize the experiences of individuals into a tightly-knit cultural framework but to emphasize a shared history marked by immigration and Anti-Asian policies. It is because of such factors that the distinctions in successive generations are termed Issei, Nisei, Sansei, Yonsei. Major historical developments marking Nisei identity and culture, the growth of the Nikkei community in Seattle, and the early schooling experiences of Nisei comprise this section.

With the general history of Nikkei in Seattle is a chronological look at the events from the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 up through May 1, 1942.<sup>136</sup> What the chronological events show are the growing fears and prejudices aimed against Nikkei. Popular media’s depiction of Seattle’s Nikkei started from a clear distinction between “American Japanese” and the Japanese of Japan, to a blurred and pejorative identity of “Jap.” The language used to convey growing prejudices also ranged from tolerance in the beginning, to an overwhelming attitude in favor of forced evacuation. The underlying assumption was that even the American Japanese were not to be trusted. Despite efforts by the local Japanese American Citizens’ League to promote loyalty toward their own U. S. government, the events of the war, the signing of Executive Order

9066, and the heightened fears of another bombing by Japan on the West Coast, increased public hatred towards Japanese in Japan and Nikkei in the United States. Reports of violence against Issei and Nisei men by Whites and non-Whites grew in the Seattle area and throughout the nation. The time period from December 1941 up through May 1942 was an extremely volatile and hostile environment for Americans of Japanese ancestry. The chronology of events provides evidence for what happened locally and nationally during that time. The historical overview also considers how acts of prejudice evolved over a period of time, and how those acts influenced the Nisei and non-Nisei students in the Seattle Public Schools.

**Historical Development of a “Nisei” Identity and Culture**

The Nisei generation predominated in the early 1930s, an overwhelming majority being children. By the decade’s end, the children outnumbered their Issei parents.<sup>137</sup> The “typical average” Nisei was born between 1918-1922 to a thirty-five-year-old father and a twenty-five-year-old mother, reaching legal age between 1939 and 1943.<sup>138</sup> Second to Los Angeles County, Seattle had the largest number of Japanese Americans on the west coast with almost 7,000 and with another 2,700 in surrounding King County and 2,000 more in Pierce County.<sup>139</sup> Japanese Americans formed the largest non-white group in Seattle. The following table shows the areas in which Japanese Americans predominated by the 1940s:

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<sup>136</sup> The date by which all Seattle Nikkei were to be evacuated to Camp Harmony Detention Center in Puyallup, Washington.

<sup>137</sup> Daniels, *Asian America*, 155.

<sup>138</sup> Daniels, *Asian America*, 155.

Table 3: Major Cities where Nikkei Predominated in 1940<sup>140</sup>

Cities	Population of Japanese Americans in 1940
Los Angeles	23, 321
Seattle	7,000
San Francisco	5,000
New York	2,500

A population study by Calvin Schmid and Wayne McVey in 1964,<sup>141</sup> published by the Seattle Public Schools, helps to gather information on Seattle's Nikkei community. The Japanese population in Seattle was first recorded in the 1890 census where 125 resided. By 1900 the figure jumped to 2,990 and continued to increase to a prewar high of 8,448 in 1930. The decrease in 1940 is attributed to the economic effects of the Great Depression and it is reported that a number of Japanese residents moved to California or returned to Japan. Not addressed in Schmid and McVey's report, but also a major factor in the decrease of population the Immigration Act of 1924, which called for the termination of Japanese immigration. The following table shows the population of Seattle's Japanese over a span of five decades:

Table 4: Population of Seattle's Japanese, 1890 -- 1940<sup>142</sup>

Year	Nikkei Population in Seattle
1890	125
1900	2,990
1910	6,127
1920	7,874
1930	8,448
1940	6,975

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<sup>139</sup> Daniels, *Asian America*, 156.

<sup>140</sup> Daniels, *Asian America*, 156.

<sup>141</sup> Schmid and McVey Jr., *Growth and Distribution of Minority Races in Seattle*, 14-18.

S. Frank Miyamoto's "An Immigrant Community in America"<sup>143</sup> describes Seattle's Japanese American history, pre-World War II era, in the following categories: The Frontier Period (1890-1907); The Settlement Period (1907-1924); and the Second Generation Period (1924-1941). The Frontier Period were the years in which many Japanese males, primarily laborers, came to earn enough money in the hopes of returning to Japan to be prosperous. However, many were disillusioned by the false promise of quick wealth accumulation and began adopting the idea of America as their new home. The Settlement Period spans the years between the Gentlemen's Agreement and the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act. Many Japanese women journeyed across the sea to join their husbands and for some others to find employment. It is a logical step, then, that the following Second Generation Period is the time where the majority of Nisei's were born. The following section covers the major immigration laws in greater detail, and how they worked to shape the historical realities and to a certain degree, the identities, of many Issei and Nisei.

### **Immigration Restrictions and Anti-Japanese Activities**

Discriminatory policies in immigration and citizenship can be traced back with the Naturalization Act of 1790, providing for naturalization of "any alien, being a free white person."<sup>144</sup> After a revision of the statute post-Civil War, it prohibited any Chinese

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<sup>142</sup> Sources: Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, 14; and Schmid and McVey, 14.

<sup>143</sup> S. Frank Miyamoto, "An Immigrant Community in America," In *East Across the Pacific: Historical and Sociology Studies of Japanese Immigration and Assimilation*, edited by H. Conroy and T. S. Miyakawa (Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1972).

<sup>144</sup> United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1997. *Personal Justice Denied* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 28-29.

immigrant from becoming an American citizen, and in 1922 the Supreme Court interpreted the statute to prohibit the naturalization of any “Oriental.”<sup>145</sup> A majority of the Japanese settlers landed in California and that was where the spectacle of anti-Japanese efforts took place.

In May 1905, delegates from 67 organizations met in San Francisco to form the Asiatic Exclusion League, later to become the Japanese Exclusion League.<sup>146</sup> Their racial and economic motivations to exclude Japanese came in the form of legislation, boycott, school segregation and propaganda. By 1908 the League had over 100,000 members and 238 affiliated groups, mostly labor unions. Clearly, the presence of Japanese immigrants posed an economic threat to the group members, comprised primarily of European immigrants. Even non-members expressed support for the League’s actions.

An important and pivotal move in the anti-Japanese campaign came in the proposal to segregate Japanese schoolchildren in the San Francisco’s schools. On December 11, 1906 the school board issued an order barring Asian children from white primary schools, even though they had been legally excluded since the 1850s. This move, backed by the coalition of labor unions and politicians affected only 93 Japanese students, 25 of them born in the United States, were then in the San Francisco Public Schools.

The news reached Japan of the San Francisco’s School Board decision, and President Theodore Roosevelt, in an attempt to avoid conflicts with Japan, struck a deal that if the Board rescinded its order he would negotiate with Japan to restrict

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<sup>145</sup> *Personal Justice Denied*, 28-29.

immigration. Thus was born the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 whereby Japan agreed to not issue more workers' passports valid for the continental United States, and to restrict issuance to "laborers who have already been in America and to the parents, wives and children of laborers already resident there."<sup>147</sup> This limited the entry of Japanese immigrants between 1908 and 1924. Between 1900 and 1920 many men summoned wives from Japan and entered immigrant society in one of three ways: 1) wives who were left behind in Japan by immigrant males; 2) women who married single men after they returned to Japan to seek brides; and 3) the "picture bride" practice.<sup>148</sup>

In conjunction with immigration restrictions came serious economic sanctions. The 1913 California Alien Land Law barred future land purchases by aliens ineligible for citizenship and forbade such aliens to acquire leases for periods longer than three years. As a response to the racist policy, some resident Japanese purchased land under their children's names, with the parents serving as guardians over the land. But that was soon overturned in a 1920 amendment prohibiting any further transfer of land to Japanese nationals, forbidding them to lease land, barring any corporation in which Japanese held a majority of stock from lease or purchase of land, and prohibiting immigrant parents from serving as guardians for their minor children. In Washington State, the Alien Land Law was enacted in March 1921 also aimed squarely at aliens who were ineligible to

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<sup>146</sup> This section is summarized from *Personal Justice Denied*, 32-36. What I cover are the most basic laws and policies aimed against the Japanese on the West Coast.

<sup>147</sup> *Personal Justice Denied*, 34.

<sup>148</sup> Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei*, 164-165. It is important to emphasize that the term, "Picture Brides," is embedded in specific cultural contexts and that it should not be confused with the more denigrating form of the "Mail Order Brides" that we have at the present time. For further details on this, please see for example, Ichioka's work cited in this footnote.

citizenship.<sup>149</sup> By 1924 the anti-Japanese attack, not only in California but in various west coast areas, saw the results in the complete exclusion of immigration from Japan.

It is through these various immigration restrictions that the distinctive generations in the Japanese American community developed. The limited influx of Japanese women's immigration, during the time of the Gentlemen's Agreement up to 1924, marked the period in which the Nisei generation burgeoned. To be sure, California's extreme nativist examples did have influencing factors in the politics and everyday lives of the Nikkei in Seattle. Amidst the racial hostility, however, the Issei were able to find ways to work within the racist system and transmit cultural values to the Nisei that syncretized the moral aspects of their ethnic and newly adopted "American culture."

### **Seattle's Nikkei Community**

The primary business and community locale of Seattle's *Nihon-machi*, "Japan town," was situated on Sixth Avenue and Main Street, at the southern edge of the central business district.<sup>150</sup> Just east of the *Nihon-machi* were housing developments along the area of First Hill, more like aging clapboard structures, located on Washington.<sup>151</sup> Thus Washington and Main were the principal areas in which the majority of Seattle's Nisei socialized and grew up together. By law, Japanese were not able to live in certain areas of Seattle. Racial covenants against renting or selling homes to Japanese were written into real estate contracts in West Seattle, Magnolia, and other Seattle neighborhoods.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ichioka, *The Issei*, 232.

<sup>150</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, xii.

<sup>151</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, xii.

<sup>152</sup> David Takami, *Divided Destiny*, 23.

Due to the racial covenants and de facto segregation in public schools, many Nikkei lived in close proximity to each other. Many Nisei students also attended neighborhood schools where they comprised the largest ethnic minority.

Bailey Gatzert Elementary, Washington School, and Pacific School were located east of *Nihon-machi*. Bailey Gatzert was near the heart of where Nikkei lived along First Hill and Yesler Way. Washington School was closer to the Central District of Seattle where many Southern European and Jewish immigrants presided. Pacific School was located furthest east of the Japanese American community in the Capital Hill area of Seattle.

Prior to the Second World War, Seattle's Japanese comprised the largest ethnic minority group in Seattle. The following table provides an overview for the years 1900-1940:

Table 5: Seattle's Ethnic Minority Population, 1900-1940<sup>153</sup>

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940
Black	406	2296	2894	3303	3789
Japanese	2900	6127	7874	8448	6975
Chinese	438	924	1351	1347	1781
Filipino	—	—	458	1614	1392
Native American	22	24	106	172	222
White	76,815	227,753	302,580	350,639	354,101
Other	—	70	49	60	42
<i>Total</i>	80,671	237,194	315,312	365,583	368,302

In characterizing the cultural traits of the Japanese minority, Miyamoto contends that two major values aided in the Issei's instillation of ethnic pride to their children:

First, the Japanese immigrants brought from Japan and transmitted to their children cultural values, consistent with and complementary to the middle-class values emphasized in American society, which emphasized status achievement.

Second, the Japanese minority maintained a high degree of family and community organization in America, and these organizations enforced value conformity and created conditions and means for status achievement.<sup>154</sup>

In addition, the cohesiveness of family, extended family groups, quasi-familial relations (between neighbors and prefectural organizations), various community organizations, and the disposition to work together as a group all played a part.<sup>155</sup> The Issei brought the values with which they were familiar when living in Japan during the Meiji Era; one of them calling for a universal education system. These all contributed to the high degree of the persistence of Japanese American community before and after World War II.

Despite the existence of the language barrier between the first and second generation the Issei were able to transmit cultural values and concepts through what Miyamoto calls the "Paratactic Mode,"<sup>156</sup> which stressed learning through observation and experience. The paratactic mode worked to transmit many parental attitudes, sentiments, and values. Among the major cultural values were respect for etiquette, regard for status and authority, and regard for principles of social obligations.

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<sup>153</sup> Source: Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, 108.

<sup>154</sup> Miyamoto, "An Immigrant Community in America," 218.

<sup>155</sup> Stephen S. Fugita and David J. O'Brien, *Japanese American Ethnicity: The Persistence of Community* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

Sociologists Harry Kitano and Miyamoto<sup>157</sup> also refer to the importance of the ethical system of norms known as: *On*, *Giri*, *Ninjo*, and *Enryo*. *On*, which is ascribed obligation, comes from Confucianism, and marks an individual's duties to parent, family, country, and teachers, for example. It is a value to which one is born and cannot ignore. *Giri*, contractual obligation, is one that is incurred and achieved and built into every form of relationship. *Ninjo*, humane sensibility, seeks to achieve sensitivity with others to a high degree. It is a form of extreme empathy. Lastly, *Enryo* refers to modesty and requires an exercise of excessive restraint. One must initially hold back and hesitate. *Enryo* is regarded to explain much of Japanese American behavior, particularly in reference to one's seeming indifferent and deferring of opinions; when in fact these are signs of respect. Generally, these norms hold the orientation of the group over the needs of the individual. One is always in relation to an other.<sup>158</sup> The most persistent efforts at training were devoted to teaching the Nisei the ancient principles of *ko* (duty to parent), *on* (filial obligation of reciprocity), and *giri* (duty and responsibility). The extent to which Nisei truly internalized these values are questionable. But clearly the emphasis on these traits and their daily lives in *Nihon-machi* where they were often practiced, left an indelible mark on the Nisei.

The influence of education and its' role in the formation of the Japanese American cultural values cannot be overlooked. Immigrant parents often chided their

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<sup>156</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*.

<sup>157</sup> Harry H. L. Kitano, *Generation and Identity: The Japanese Americans* (Needham Heights, MA: Ginn press, 1993). S. Frank Miyamoto, "Problems of Interpersonal Style among the Nisei," in *Amerasia* 13 (1986-87), 29-45.

<sup>158</sup> Undoubtedly, these cultural values and norms were misunderstood to a large degree and held as extreme forms of stereotypes that worked to label Japanese Americans as "unassimilable."

children for being disrespectful of authority figures, including teachers. The importance placed on education and social mobility, then, was a powerful influencing force for many Nisei in Seattle.

### **Early Community Schooling: Bailey Gatzert Elementary**

To this day, S. Frank Miyamoto's 1939 master's thesis, and the subsequent revised editions,<sup>159</sup> serves as the foundational basis for documenting the early educational history of Seattle's Nisei. Current historical research on Seattle's Japanese American community all cite Miyamoto when discussing schooling prior to the evacuation.<sup>160</sup> Due to the dearth of research in this area, I rely on Miyamoto's study to provide the early schooling experiences of Seattle's Nisei.

The Seattle Public Schools, through Americanization and citizenship education<sup>161</sup> was the primary force of acculturation for the Nisei. The Seattle school system was based on the idea of a neighborhood community school where emphasis was placed on transmitting academic content, and developing intellectual skills, character, morality, and good citizenship, than in job preparation.<sup>162</sup> Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, many ethnic minorities were not able to live beyond the bounds where they resided. Desegregation in the 1970s, with voluntary bussing programs, allowed for more movement of minorities and whites into certain schools. So for many Seattle school

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<sup>159</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*.

<sup>160</sup> See for example: Daniels, *Asian America*; and Yasuko Takezawa, *Breaking the Silence: Redress and Japanese American Ethnicity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

<sup>161</sup> See chapter one for details on the Seattle Public Schools' Americanization and Citizenship Education programs.

<sup>162</sup> Nelson, *Good Schools*, 3-4.

children prior to the 1960s, their lives existed within the boundaries of their neighborhoods and did not extend much further.

Prior to the 1920s, the Main Street School with Ada Mahon as the principal was the local community school for the Nisei. Bailey Gatzert, a new larger structure, was built in 1921 where Mahon continued to serve as the Principal. As described in the *Histories of Seattle Public Schools*: “So it was that on a rainy day in December, 1921, Ida [*sic*] Mahon led her students and teachers on a damp march up Jackson Street to a new building at Twelfth South and Weller Street.”<sup>163</sup> By 1929 the school required an expansion of a new gymnasium, teachers’ room, music room, science room, art room, library, and two new classrooms. The report indicated that most of the children attending were of Chinese and Japanese ancestry before the Second World War and that the development of a new housing project along Yesler Way resulted in the “world’s three major races” being “represented in nearly equal portions” by 1960.

In prior decades, Asian students configured the largest majority at Bailey Gatzert. A demographic breakdown of student population is provided for 1920. In that year, the makeup of the student body at Bailey Gatzert were mainly Japanese and Chinese students. The following table represents, in descending order, the number of Japanese and Nisei students in the Seattle Public Grade Schools for the 1920-1921 academic year, the only years between 1916 and 1941 in which full student data are available:

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<sup>163</sup> *Histories of the Seattle Public Schools*, 1961.

Table 6: Seattle Grade Schools with the Highest Numbers of Japanese, 1920-1921<sup>164</sup>

Schools	"Colored"	Chinese	Japanese
Main Street	1	111	334
Pacific	24	34	164
Central	2	30	82
Washington	3	3	36
Hawthorne	5	2	22
South Park	0	0	17
Beacon Hill	0	1	12
Seward	0	1	11
Lowell	4	0	10
Rainier	24	6	10
Concord	0	0	8
Stevens, I. I.	0	4	8
Denny	1	1	7
Minor, T. T.	5	1	6
Summit	9	3	6
Cascade	0	0	5
Ravenna	1	0	5
University Heights	0	1	5
Walla Walla	10	0	5
Columbia	4	0	4
Madrona	0	0	4
West Queen Anne	0	0	4
Fairview	0	0	3
Gatewood	0	0	3
Hay, John	0	0	3
Muir, John	1	0	3
<b>TOTAL FOR GRADES</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>803</b>

Main Street School clearly had the largest contingency of Japanese American students. The school was in the hub of Seattle's Japantown. Racial covenants and school segregation created the distinct ethnic neighborhoods in central and south Seattle. The student enrollment at Main Street School was 452 in 1921; 445 or 99 percent of those students being of Chinese and Japanese descent (25 and 74 percent, Chinese and Japanese, respectively).<sup>165</sup> For Washington School, the percentage of Nikkei students was far less at 5 percent. The highest attendance at Washington School for the 1920-1921

<sup>164</sup> Source: *Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1916-1921* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1921), 226-227.

academic year was at 756.<sup>166</sup> Many of the Nisei students whose writings are represented in this work went to Bailey Gatzert for elementary schooling, prior to being transferred to Washington School for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

As Bailey Gatzert's most memorable principal, Mahon is described as a "strict, no-nonsense kind of teacher who emphasized traditional values in school instruction, [and] was considered by the Japanese community a most admirable head."<sup>167</sup> The Issei certainly felt a great deal of obligation and appreciation toward Mahon in her attempts to instill ethics of hard work in schooling and for building moral character.<sup>168</sup> To show the deep gratitude for Mahon's leadership role in the Japanese community, a group of Issei raised funds to provide Mahon on a tour of Japan with a large reception in her honor prior to her departure.<sup>169</sup> Evidently, the community members did the same, in providing for a trip to Japan, to Principal William Sears of Washington Junior High School. Part of Mahon's success is attributed to the fact that her student body was overwhelmingly Japanese.<sup>170</sup> The homogenous population, in addition to the cultural values shared by the Japanese in Seattle, aided in Mahon's ability to be a stern and authoritative leader; a quality seemingly admired by the Issei parents.

Even for older Nisei today, Mahon's spirit resonates. A personal narrative on Mahon's influence comes from a 1998 *Seattle Times* article written by a Bailey Gatzert alumni, Atsushi Kiuchi:

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<sup>165</sup> *Quinquennial Report*, 270-271.

<sup>166</sup> *Quinquennial Report*, 270-271.

<sup>167</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, xv.

<sup>168</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, 53.

<sup>169</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, 53.

<sup>170</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, 53.

Each spring, Bailey Gatzert Elementary School's departing sixth-grade class was called to the auditorium stage for traditional "moving up" ceremonies. As the rest of the students loudly kept count, each class member stepped off the stage to receive a firm, farewell handshake from Principal Ada J. Mahon.

Although Miss Mahon never had children of her own, thousands of Seattle-area youngsters growing up in pre-World War II Chinatown and the "Nihon-machi" (Japan Town) areas were her legacy. She was "Irish tough" and proud, teaching her "children" to have the same tenacity and pride about being Asian, Native American or black.

Her influence extended well beyond her school property at 12th and Weller streets. Miss Mahon was social worker, counselor, cop, judge and jury - and was loved and respected.

The Asian parents held her in awe. With their strong cultural belief in education as the path to success, the parents entrusted Miss Mahon to build the bridge for their children. Among the Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrants) parents, who hold teachers in high esteem, she was "Mahon Sensei."

Miss Mahon served as the cultural and generational intermediary as we struggled with our "Americanization" process, which sometimes clashed with our parents' cultural traditions. She prepared us to succeed in an adult world where we would be considered minorities.

The world turned topsy-turvy on Dec. 7, 1941. The next morning, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, we were immediately directed to the school auditorium. Miss Mahon, looking out to her sea of colored faces, began the assembly, leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The usually composed Miss Mahon shook with emotion. "You are all my children. Although we come from different places and may look different, we are the

same," Miss Mahon said, her voice breaking at times. She warned that friendships would be tested and that difficult times loomed ahead.

In early spring, school enrollment began dropping as the students of Japanese ancestry left in compliance with the wartime evacuation orders. Miss Mahon held special assemblies, timed with their departures, calling them to the stage, so everyone could say goodbye. The ceremony, usually reserved for sixth- graders moving on to Washington junior high school, was modified to include all students who were leaving with their parents to the internment camps.

On a bright spring day in May, I passed through Bailey Gatzert's large double doors for the last time. My last glimpse of Miss Mahon was her standing ramrod straight and resolute on the front steps. One hand - always extended to help and sometimes holding a wooden ruler to discipline - was waving goodbye, and the other clutched a white tear-soaked handkerchief.<sup>171</sup>

This reflection by Kiuchi is indicative of how members of the Nikkei community felt about Mahon as a leader, in and out of school. Pride in one's ethnicity and heritage, while holding steadfast to the ideals of Americanism, seemed to permeate the minds of the young in prewar Seattle. She was also aware of the possible ramifications of war in her warning that friendships would be tested. This cautionary note of possible violence amongst friends was also reflected in the writings of Washington School students after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.<sup>172</sup> Indeed, Mahon's impact emanated beyond the students' time at Bailey Gatzert. The tradition set by Mahon was also passed on by William Sears

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<sup>171</sup> Atshushi Kiuchi. "Part of Miss Mahon's Class -- Until the Internment," *Seattle Times* (Sunday, 19 July 1998), Lifestyles section.

<sup>172</sup> Described in detail in the following chapter.

of Washington. He stressed the ideals of a national, “American” identity while recognizing the importance of one’s ethnic heritage.<sup>173</sup>

### **Pearl Harbor and the National Media Fervor**

Yet the schools’ emphasis on tolerance could not safeguard their students against the prejudicial attacks against Nikkei by the media and the government at the time. Pressure mounted after the bombing of Pearl Harbor to evacuate the Nikkei further inland in the West Coast areas. Stereotypes of the “Enemy Japanese” began to appear with regular frequency in *Time* and *Life* a few days after the bombing up through May of 1942.<sup>174</sup> Troubling images, pernicious caricatures, and stories of alleged fifth column activities served as horrific internalizing force for many Nisei.

To complicate matters, specific actions were being taken by the Chinese consul in Seattle and California to provide name badges for its Chinese American community members. An *Associated Press* report issued on December 8, 1941 reported: “Dr. Kiang Iaseng, Chinese Consul, today announced that he had ordered identification cards for all

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<sup>173</sup> The written accounts in Miyamoto as well as other oral histories of Japanese Americans in Seattle indicate varying degrees of the effect of schooling in terms of Americanization. For example, Takezawa’s *Breaking the Silence* offers accounts of Nisei who felt that their schooling was one of humiliation of one’s home culture.

<sup>174</sup> See for example: “How to Tell Your Friends from the Japs,” *Time* 33 (22 December 1941). “Men to Arms: Nation Begins to Change,” *Life* (22 December 1941), 16-17. “Desperate Dorothy,” *Life* (7 December 1942), 132-139. “Life’s Reports,” *Life* (30 March 1942), 20. “Pictures to the Editor,” *Life* (30 March 1942), 130-131. These images portray how the “infiltration of enemy Japanese” severs the foundation of democracy during wartime. Another troubling effect of racial stereotypes comes in the form of portraying Japanese men as sexual predators and Japanese women as sexually passive receptors to male aggression. The visual representations of stereotypes are clear indicators of the kind of manufactured hatred at play. Most disturbing of such portrayals were the *Time* and *Life* December 1941 pictorials entitled, “How to tell your friends from the Japs.” It juxtaposes a Chinese and a Japanese man’s face, deconstructing each facial feature to tell the difference between the two Asian groups; exemplifying the social construction of race to the extreme.

Seattle Chinese to distinguish them from Japanese, 'to avoid any unpleasantness.'"<sup>175</sup>

This event, as Kiuchi indicates and the narrators will reveal, was a petulant issue for Ada Mahon. She became extremely offended at the site of Bailey Gatzert's Chinese students wearing the badges and ordered them to remove them. A school assembly was also conducted for the specific purpose of addressing the badge issue. Similar actions were taken by Sears at Washington Junior High. An assembly was called on the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and Sears emphasized the need for brotherly love. For some students of Washington School, this event was the first time they became aware of differences within their Asian peers. A particular student wrote of not knowing that a female student was a Chinese American, when all along he assumed that she was Japanese.

Seattle and its schools soon fell prey to the ravaging effects of race prejudice. For example, as hostilities grew, there were mounting pressures by a select group of White mothers in the West Seattle area to terminate the employment of all Japanese American school clerks.<sup>176</sup> The "Gatewood Mothers," as they became to be known, influenced the Superintendent of Seattle Schools, Samuel Fleming, to form a directive for the termination of all Nisei clerks. After the "success" of the mothers, they exclaimed that it was very "white" of the [Nisei] girls to prove their loyalty by accepting the policy of the

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<sup>175</sup> Associated Press, "Chinese in Seattle Will Carry Cards," in *Los Angeles Times* (9 December 1941), 15. Similar actions were also being considered for Chinese Americans in the Southern California region as expressed in the article, "Chinese Want Identity Emblem: Designs Being Drawn for Southland Aliens," in *Los Angeles Times* (9 December 1941), 11.

<sup>176</sup> Louis Fiset, "Redress for Nisei Public Employees in Washington State after World War II," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 88 (Winter 1996/97), 21-32. Fiset provides a good chronological account of the events leading to the dismissal of Nisei clerks and the Superintendent's response (or lack thereof) of the Gatewood Mother's actions. The redress of the Nisei clerks paved the way for the national Japanese American redress movement to occur.

Seattle Schools.<sup>177</sup> Despite the many criticisms of the Gatewood Mothers' in published reports, the die was cast. The executive order to evacuate Japanese residents and Americans from the West Coast was ready to implement.

### **Chronology of Events in Seattle and Abroad on the Eve of the Incarceration**

A chronological look at local newspaper reports, from the bombing of Pearl Harbor up through May of 1942, shows the increased level of hatred and prejudice against Nikkei's in Seattle and throughout the country. However, for years before the war, government agents scrutinized activities of possible "suspect" Japanese, and in the months before Pearl Harbor, the War and Justice departments prepared for their apprehension.<sup>178</sup> The immediate arrest of Issei and a few Nisei, including Buddhist priests, Japanese-language teachers, and community leaders, by FBI agents on the evening of December 7, 1942, indicates the extent to which government officials were already prepared to take action. That evening, federal agents arrested 736 "Japanese aliens" during the night in the United States and Hawaii, as indicated by the United States' Attorney General, Francis Biddle.<sup>179</sup> Most of the individuals arrested were taken to the jail at the Immigration and Naturalization Service building just south of the Nihonmachi.<sup>180</sup>

Shortly thereafter, the lives of Seattle's Nikkei, as well as Nikkei across the United States, were severely restricted. Seattle Japanese were being barred from travel

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<sup>177</sup> Fiset, "Redress for Nisei Public Employees."

<sup>178</sup> Takami, *Divided Destiny: A History of Japanese Americans in Seattle*, 41.

<sup>179</sup> "736 Japanese Arrested in U.S. and Hawaii," in *The Seattle Times* (8 December 1941), 1.

<sup>180</sup> Takami, 42.

on airplanes, busses, and trains on orders of the War Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.<sup>181</sup> An official U. S. Treasury statement suspended all Japanese financial transactions prohibiting the transfer of money or other assets to all Japanese regardless of how long they may have lived in this country continuously prior to June 11, 1940.<sup>182</sup> These major prohibitions occurred in the last days of 1941.

The restrictions against Nikkei also affected the lives of Nisei schoolchildren. The main Japanese Language School in Nihonmachi was closed by government orders. A *Seattle Times* article indicated: "Tokugo-Gakko Japanese Language School at 1414 Weller St. was closed yesterday for the first time since it was founded nearly forty years ago when its principal, Yoriaka Nakagawa, was held for investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation."<sup>183</sup> Considered a possible threat as an ally to the Japanese government, Nakagawa and other Japanese Language School instructors were arrested and later interned in U. S. Justice Department Camps in Fort Missoula, Montana. However, in the same newspaper article, the aims of the Japanese Language School promoted more the ideals of Americanism than loyalty to the Japanese government. Among the stated goals of the Japanese Language School in Seattle were to: "Study Japanese culture and always be correct, respect the elders and develop the virtue of obedience. Act with absolute sincerity. Develop the spirit of independence and become a good American citizen."<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> "War Orders Stop Japanese Travel," in *The Seattle Times* (8 December 1941), 2.

<sup>182</sup> "Total Curb on Japanese Funds," in *The Seattle Times*, (8 December 1941), 22.

<sup>183</sup> "Nippon School Here is Closed," in *The Seattle Times* (9 December 1941), 2.

<sup>184</sup> "Nippon School Here is Closed," in *The Seattle Times* (9 December 1941), 2.

Many Nisei shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor promoted their spirit of citizenship by pledging loyalty to the United States. As a public act to reinforce their status as citizens and to reveal to the public that they were not the enemy Japanese, many Nisei stepped up their efforts to prove their loyalty to the U. S. government. James Sakamoto, the Nisei representative for the Seattle's Japanese American Citizens' League, publicly expressed the Nisei's "unswerving loyalty" to the U. S. immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.<sup>185</sup> In a public ceremony on December 23, 1941 a group of Nikkei, mainly Nisei, gathered to pledge their loyalty to the government. The *Seattle Times* showed a photograph of the ceremony and the caption read: "So massed that they overflowed into an adjoining gymnasium 1,300 Seattle Japanese are shown as they pledged allegiance to the American flag last night, and vowed to fight for American victory over their ancestral empire."<sup>186</sup> The local Methodist Preachers' Association Committee asked the public to regard the treatment of Seattle's Japanese by using "clear thinking and a Christian attitude."<sup>187</sup> Through late December of 1941 a tolerant attitude towards Seattle's Nikkei was expressed.

By February 1942, however, reports by the *Seattle Times* concentrated more on the increasing support to evacuate all Nikkei following the signing of the Executive Order 9066. The *Times* reported, almost on a daily basis, on arrests and raids of "suspect" Japanese,<sup>188</sup> the growing fear of another attack by Japan on the West Coast,<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> "American-Born Japanese Loyal, Editor Asserts," in *The Seattle Times* (8 December 1941), 2.

<sup>186</sup> "1,300 Seattle Japanese Pledge Loyalty," in *The Seattle Times*, (23 December 1941), 8.

<sup>187</sup> "Churchmen Ask Friendship for Japanese Here," in *The Seattle Times* (10 December 1941), 10.

<sup>188</sup> "200 More Japs Seized by F.B.I. In California," in *The Seattle Times* (19 February 1942), 8.

"23 Japanese Seized In Portland Raids," in *The Seattle Times* (19 February 1942), 8.

<sup>189</sup> "Danger of Jap Attack on Coast 'Heightened'," in *The Seattle Times* (1 February 1942), C1.

and various civic organizations and groups overwhelmingly in support of the forced removal of Nikkei.<sup>190</sup>

Once again, schoolchildren faced the brunt of many attacks against Nikkei. Towards the end of February and March of 1942, Seattle's Japanese had to prepare to leave their schools and communities. In preparation for their removal, the War Department required that all Nikkei be registered. At Bailey Gatzert Elementary, the Lady Stirling Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution eagerly joined in the war effort by fingerprinting all Nisei schoolchildren and issuing identification tags to children, many of whom were under six years old and attending kindergarten and pre-school. Ada Mahon, the principal of Bailey Gatzert, responded to the disruption of activities in her school by stating that:

[n]o racial prejudice exists among students.

We like to refer to our student body as 'little democracy'. . . . We attribute our success to the work of our Good American Citizens' Club,<sup>191</sup> which is made up of 'upperclassmen' of the fifth and sixth grades.

The students organize many committees, such as committee for clean grounds, good deeds, safety, clean shoes, turn-off-the faucets and activities like that. The children are so busy helping each other, they have no time for developing prejudices.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> "Korean Urges Interning of All Japanese," in *The Seattle Times* (19 February 1942, 8). "Move Japs. Say 4 More Posts," in *The Seattle Times* (19 February 1942), 11. "Portland Council Urges Moving All Japanese," in *The Seattle Times* (20 February 1942), 13.

<sup>191</sup> Hisa Kato, in her oral history in chapter 4, discusses the influence of the Good American Citizens' Club during her time as a student at Bailey Gatzert.

As much as Mahon attempted to show the public that the school reflected democratic ideals, one of them emphasizing tolerance, the young children “showed a strain of uneasiness over the uncertainty” of being forcefully removed.<sup>193</sup> Even for the young, the contradiction in the lessons of democratic citizenship with the news of having to be evacuated was a point of extreme dissonance. No longer were they looked upon as “American-born Japanese,” but as the pejorative “Jap.” As May 1, 1942 drew near, Nisei identities as Americans became conflated with the term relegated to the enemy Japanese. Despite Nisei efforts to prove their loyalty,<sup>194</sup> their imprisonment was imminent.

Newspaper reports in late March and April of 1942 concentrated almost exclusively on the evacuation efforts being taken throughout Washington, Oregon, and California. Seattle’s Nisei, now turned towards cooperation toward the evacuation effort as a sign of loyalty.<sup>195</sup> Resistance toward the evacuation always existed among Nisei and some questioned the democratic basis on which the evacuation orders took place. And although many felt an inner turmoil, a mingling of humiliation, anxiety, and resentment, the removal process proceeded almost without incident, a fact that may be attributed to the Japanese stoic attitude toward adversity, *shikata ga nai*, “it cannot be helped.”<sup>196</sup> By May 1, 1942 the

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<sup>192</sup> “320 Bailey Gatzert Jap Pupils Face Unfinished School Term.” in *The Seattle Times* (23 March 1942), 2.

<sup>193</sup> “320 Bailey Gatzert Jap Pupils Face Unfinished School Term.” in *The Seattle Times* (23 March 1942), 2.

<sup>194</sup> “Nisei Reaffirm Loyalty to U.S.,” in *The Seattle Times* (20 February 1942), 16.

<sup>195</sup> “Japanese Are Ready to Obey Moving Order,” in *The Seattle Times* (24 February 1942), 4.

<sup>196</sup> Takami, *Divided Destiny*, 48

majority of Seattle's Nikkei were bussed to Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington.

Among those taken were the students of Washington School who wrote on what the "evacuation" might mean for them. Clearly, their lives from the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and into their imprisonment were affected by the events going on nationally and locally. Their schools became sites where democracy and dissonance came into play. The lessons of democratic life eroded into a reality marked by racial prejudice.

In the following chapter I attempt to capture the interplay of school, community, and national events through the oral histories of three Nisei, all of whom attended Washington School on the eve of their incarceration. Their life histories reveal how their identities were molded by how they viewed themselves and how others perceived them once the bombing of Pearl Harbor took place.

The chronology of national events affecting all Japanese Americans, provided below, is a general summary that helps to contextualize the lives of Nikkei in Seattle and elsewhere. The following chapter, on the oral histories of three Nisei, as well as the letters by Washington School students cannot be understood without an overview of the national events which affected the lives of over 110,000 people.

**Chronology of Events Affecting Japanese Americans Nationally from December 7, 1941 to June 7, 1942<sup>197</sup>**

- 1941  
December 7      Japan attacks Pearl Harbor  
Authorized by a blanket presidential warrant, United States Attorney General Francis Biddle directs the Federal Bureau of Investigation to arrest a predetermined number of “enemy aliens” classified as “dangerous.” This list includes Japanese, German, and Italian nationals. By the end of the day 737 Japanese are in federal custody.
- December 8      The United States declares war on Japan.
- December 11     1,370 Japanese classified as “dangerous enemy aliens” are detained by the FBI.
- December 22     The Agriculture Committee of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce recommends that all Japanese nationals in the United States be placed “under absolute Federal control.”
- December 29     All enemy aliens in California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada are ordered to surrender all “contraband.” “Contraband” includes: radio with short wave bands, cameras, binoculars, and a variety of weapons.
- 1942  
January 5        All Japanese American selective service registrants placed in Class IV-C along with enemy aliens. Many Japanese Americans already in military service were discharged or put on “kitchen police” or other menial tasks.
- January 6        Los Angeles Congressman Leland Ford sends a telegram to Secretary of State Cordell Hull urging the removal of all Japanese from the West Coast. Ford wrote, “I do not believe that in the face of the treacherous way in which they do things.”

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<sup>197</sup> The source for the chronology is taken from the following: Daniels, et. al, eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*.

- January 28 California State Personnel Board votes to bar all “descendents of natives with whom the United States [is] at war” from all civil service positions. This rule is enforced only against persons of Japanese ancestry.
- January 29 Attorney General Biddle issues the first of a series of orders establishing prohibited zones which must be cleared of all enemy aliens. German, Japanese, and Italian aliens are instructed to evacuate areas on the San Francisco waterfront.
- January 30 California Attorney General Earl Warren calls the Japanese situation in California the “Achilles heel of the entire civilian defense effort.” He further states that “unless something is done it may bring about a repetition of Pearl Harbor.”
- February 4 The U.S. Army defines twelve “restricted areas.” Enemy aliens in these designed areas must observe a curfew (9 p.m. to 6 a.m.), and are allowed to travel only to and from their place of employment. In addition, they are forbidden to travel any further than five miles from their place of residence.
- February 6 A Portland post of the American Legion circulates a resolution urging the removal of all “enemy aliens, especially from critical Coast areas.” The cover letter attached to the resolution indicates that the post is urging the removal of all Japanese regardless of citizenship.
- February 13 In a letter to the President, the West Coast congressional delegation urges the removal of “all persons of Japanese lineage...aliens and citizens alike, from the strategic areas of California, Oregon and Washington.”
- February 14 Native Sons of the Golden West urges the evacuation of all Japanese, regardless of citizenship status.
- February 16 California Joint Immigration Committee urges that all Japanese

be removed from the Pacific Coast and any other areas designated vital by the U.S. government. FBI arrests and detention of Japanese aliens reported to be 2,192.

- February 19      President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066. This order gives the secretary of war the authorization to establish military areas “from which any or all persons may be excluded as deemed necessary or desirable.”
- February 20      Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson appoints Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt as the military commander responsible for executing Executive Order 9066.
- February 21      Hearings by the House Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration (Tolan Committee) begin on the West Coast to investigate problems of enemy aliens and others living along the Pacific shore.
- February 26      All Japanese on Terminal Island, San Pedro, California, are given forty-eight hours to evacuate homes and business by naval order. They are allowed to resettle where they can.
- February 28      House Committee on Un-American Activities makes public its Yellow Book. The 300-page document contains almost every possible charge against the Japanese in America.
- March 2            General DeWitt issues Public Proclamation No. 1 designating military areas in the states of Washington, Oregon, California, and portions of Arizona. It further states that certain persons or classes of persons might be excluded from these areas should the situation require it. The restrictions apply to Japanese, German, and Italian aliens, or any person of “Japanese Ancestry” living in Military Areas No. 1 and 2.
- March 16          General DeWitt issues Public Proclamation No. 2 making Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah Military areas No. 3 through 6 respectively.

- March 18 President Roosevelt issues Executive Order 9102 creating the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Milton S. Eisenhower is named the first director and charged with the task of implementing a program of orderly evacuation of designated persons from the restricted military areas.
- March 21 Congress enacts a law providing penalties for persons who violate orders to enter or leave the designated military areas.
- March 23 Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1 is issued by General DeWitt. It directs that all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien (American citizens) evacuate Bainbridge Island near Seattle, Washington, on or before March 30, 1942.
- March 24 Public Proclamation No. 3 extends travel restrictions, curfew, and contraband regulations to Japanese Americans, regardless of citizenship.
- March 27 Public Proclamation No. 4 issued by General DeWitt. It prohibits the voluntary evacuation from Military Area No. 1 by Japanese aliens.
- April 7 WRA director Eisenhower meets with the governors or representatives of ten states at Salt Lake City. States represented Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, Washington, and Arizona. The meeting is to ascertain the views of these states on accepting Japanese evacuees. Only Governor Ralph Carr of Colorado offers to cooperate.
- May 7 National Japanese American Student Relocation Council is organized through the efforts of the American Friends Service Committee. The council is designed to assist evacuee college students to continue their education outside the proscribed military areas.
- May 8 Evacuation of all Japanese living within the Arizona Military

Area is reported completed.

- May 16      The Atlantic Coast is declared a military area by the Eastern Defense Command.
- May 21      Initial group of incarcerated Japanese Americans leave the Portland Assembly Center to do agricultural work in Eastern Oregon.
- June 7      General DeWitt announces that the removal of 100,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from Military Area No. 1 is completed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## Identity Formation as Nisei:

## Personal Accounts on the Eve of the Incarceration

*“The prejudice was coming out a lot more, I think, as the days went along. There’s the propaganda on the radio and then even at school when your own friends are wearing these ‘I am Chinese’ buttons . . . A lot of the friends that you had were kinda ignoring you or keeping their distance.”*

*Hisa Kato, Narrator*

As the narrators of the oral histories will reveal, despite their schools’ attempts to quell prejudice and discrimination fomented against the Nikkei community, the calculated attempts by the government, and subsequently by popular media, to manufacture hate took its toll. The Nisei were Americans, yet their physical features precluded them from being regarded as “complete” Americans. Indeed, the image being mirrored to them was one of inferiority and incompleteness. Their political identities as “non-alien, aliens,” played a major role, to say the least, in the formation of their selfhood. Mitsie Fuji, one of the narrators, reflected that even after the war was over, “I remember going to the mirror and looking at myself, at my face and I think, ‘Wow, do I look different? Do I look mean? Do I look bad? Because right away you’re stigmatized you think, ‘Oh my God, you look just like the enemy,’ and you get scared. You don’t know, cuz you’re only what, eleven or twelve? You don’t know what’s gonna happen, you don’t know what the effect of all this is gonna be.”

While evidence of what appeared in popular media and governmental directives are copious, what the schools were doing to address wartime hysteria is not that easily found. To be clear, I make no attempt to fill the gap in research on schooling prior to the evacuation. I wish to add a drop to the understanding of such complex events. My objective is to provide a historical case study of how the Seattle Public Schools and the students responded to the needs of its school children, particularly the Nisei, at a definable moment in the history of Japanese Americans.

The narrators tell a story of their lives prior to World War II and beyond and how schooling, if at all, helped make sense of dissonance so evident in their lives. Their analysis and reflection of their own lives are common yet unique. Their shared history reveals how they came to problematize the idea of democracy; a concept that is very much taken for granted today.

### **Why Oral History?**

The oral history interviews gather the personal accounts of surviving Nisei who attended Washington Junior High School; two of whom were in Ella Evanson's classroom. I asked them to reflect on their schooling experiences on the eve of the incarceration.<sup>198</sup> While their memories of schooling were at times vague, at best, their accounts nevertheless provided important clues on the Seattle Public Schools' tradition of citizenship and Americanization. I conducted in-depth, biographical, semi-structured interviews guided by Valerie Yow's *Recording History*.

There are several advantages of conducting in-depth interviews. To begin, it is through oral history that the dimensions of life within a community are illuminated.<sup>199</sup> It makes other public documents understandable through the narrator's recollection of the past. While the analysis of primary sources make for a compelling study in and of itself, the incorporation of the participants' voices add a new dimension of understanding that cannot be achieved solely through document analysis. Furthermore, how surviving Nisei's saw themselves within the context of schools and community helps in understanding the negotiation process of public culture. The in-depth interview can reveal a psychological reality that is the basis for ideals the individual holds and for the things he or she does: "How the subject sees and interprets her experience, given her view of herself and of the world, can be gleaned in no better way than to ask in the context of life review."<sup>200</sup> The point is not to gather the "truth" but to gain an understanding of how the narrators viewed and constructed their realities in a time of grave uncertainty. Further, it also points to ways in which their identities were constructed by their material realities of the time.

### The Narrators

Hisa Kato, Mitsie Fuji, and Kaz Ishimitsu graciously gave of themselves to share an account of growing up in Seattle before the war. In 1942 they were thirteen and

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<sup>198</sup> I, however, did not limit their recollections to just that period in their lives. The sum of their life experiences necessarily include their evacuation to Puyallup and then to Hunt, Idaho (also referred to by the narrators and fellow Nisei as Minidoka Camp, Idaho).

<sup>199</sup> Valerie Yow, 1994. *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 14.

<sup>200</sup> Yow, 15.

fourteen years of age, on the threshold of young adulthood. Their daily thoughts were consumed with socializing with their friends and going to school. National events such as a possible threat of a world war did not even enter the reality of their existence. To a certain degree, words such as “racism” and “discrimination” were not a part of their vocabulary. As long as they could remember, their attendance at Bailey Gatzert, under the guidance of Ada Mahon, and Washington Junior High School, with William Sears as principal, were amongst neighborhood friends, mainly other Asians, who did not think twice about contemporary notions of “difference.”

However, the bombing of Pearl Harbor changed their realities drastically and in a most fundamental way. To this day, many historians of Japanese America divide a century of immigration and settlement into “before the war” and “after the war.” The narrators, and most Seattle Nisei, share a common history. They were all born in Seattle bordering the International District, attended Bailey Gatzert Elementary and Washington School, intermittently attended Japanese Language School, were taken to the Puyallup Detention Center, were then transported to Minidoka incarceration site in Hunt, Idaho, and were resettled after the war in Seattle. Their common histories were bound by a legacy of discriminatory immigration laws beginning in 1790. The wave of immigration restrictions are what gives the distinctive names of each respective generations in the Nikkei community, “Issei,” “Nisei,” “Sansei,” “Yonsei.”

Yet within the “common” stories lie individual voices of struggle, survival, and triumph. It becomes apparent that the age differences within the Nisei population had an affect on how schooling and the incarceration were experienced. Indeed, research studies on schooling in the camps were geared more toward the elementary and high school

level.<sup>201</sup> The lives of junior high school students are usually combined with the high school experience and thus are lumped into a general category of analysis. Assuming that the experiences of adolescents and teenagers are or should be similar misses the complexity in the developmental consciousness and identity that students in the junior high level undergo. This difference of experiences within the Nisei is also in the narrator's account of their schooling. The point of emphasis here is that not all Nisei were alike in their feelings and experiences of the past. This is an obvious but important reminder, particularly in studying the lives of ethnic minority youth.

In an effort to provide a more honest account of the narrators' life experiences, long excerpts of interviews are provided with contextual analysis, as necessary. The purpose of this method lies in placing primacy of voice to the narrator and not the author's interpretation of them. The "truth" of their experiences is not the aim, but rather how they construct the past through their perceptual lens. And how that construction of memory serves to formulate one's identity. Our memories, those events that reside in our consciousness, are constructed through the interplay of historical forces that shape our identities. The fact that some things are not remembered is just as telling as what is told in the story.

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<sup>201</sup> See for example: William Dean Zeller, *The Educational Program Provided the Japanese Americans during the Relocation Period 1942-1945* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1963). Zeller's dissertation provides an excellent overview of the types of democratic citizenship education provided in the camps by Stanford University's Graduate School of Education Summer Course headed by Professor Paul Hanna in 1942.

**Hisako “Hisa” Kato<sup>202</sup>**

*Dear Miss Evanson,*

*I have missed your smiling face and I will miss you more, after all of us are gone. I enjoyed being in your class a year ago.*

*With love,*

*Hisako Matsubara<sup>203</sup>*

There is certain level of calmness and balance in Hisa Kato’s narration. The perceptual landscape that encapsulates her memory bank is a complex web, yet she is able to provide a metacognitive view of things. She analyzes her memories by maintaining a level of “objectivity” and “distance.” Hisa regards the actions of the past in historical terms with phrases such as, “Well that was how things were in those days.” She realizes that the world is a completely different one from when she grew up. She gives credit to today’s youngsters in how they are “more sophisticated” and “worldly” compared to how she was in the 1930s and 1940s. To Hisa and her family’s credit, how they managed to live on a single-parent’s meager income is a wonder, especially since Issei’s were not allowed to own their own businesses nor land. It is a tribute to the community, as a whole, that there were extended family members to help out as needed.

Hisa’s recollection of the past, especially with regard to schooling, was certainly positive. Although her memories of Washington Junior High are “like a blank,” she does not think that her experiences were very different from Bailey Gatzert. Considering that

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<sup>202</sup>Hisako Kato, 18 May 1998, Interview by author: Seattle, WA.

Nisei students of Washington were evacuated in March, April, and May of 1942, they were not able to complete the school year. That was a big factor in the lack of specific memories of Washington, Ella Evanson, and William Sears. Hisa's story, then, is one of a "normal" childhood disrupted by war and how her family coped with the severe interruption in their everyday lives.

Hisako Kato, who goes by "Hisa," was born in 1928 in Seattle, Washington near the International District. She currently resides in a custom-made house built by her late husband in Seattle's Beacon Hill neighborhood. She retired from the Seattle Public Schools in 1990 and spends much of her days with her three adult children and friends, traveling, and doing volunteer community work. Hisa and her older sister were raised by her mother, who recently passed away at the age of ninety-four. Her mother earned a living managing a tiny candy store in Japan town. Because her father died when Hisa was only two years of age, her mother was the family's sole provider. Hisa's family lived in a hotel-like complex that served as an apartment, located approximately one block from the candy store.

In retrospect, Hisa wonders how her mother managed to take care of her and her sister throughout those years: "We had everything we needed. It's amazing how my mom, with just that little candy store raised us. We didn't feel as if we were neglected, or we went without, because we had everything we needed." Up until her schooling, Hisa spoke mainly Japanese at home: ". . . because at home, my mother didn't speak English that well and all the people who helped raise me spoke mostly Japanese. She [Hisa's

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<sup>203</sup> Matsubara is Hisa's maiden name.

mother] always marveled at how, especially the Nisei's, not just me, how we learned and got along in school." She adds, "Of course I had an older sister and I learned from her."

### Schooling Experiences

Hisa's formal schooling consisted of attending Bailey Gatzert and then Washington Junior High School prior to the evacuation. She went to Japanese Language School for two years and admits, "My Japanese is terrible, and I could just read the real simple, kinda like the alphabet type of thing. I can't read the fancy characters." She considers her comprehension of Japanese to be minimal. As was reflected by many other Nisei, attendance of Japanese Language School, in addition to regular public schooling, was looked upon with great disfavor. They wanted to play after school rather than go to Japanese Language School. The idea of going to school twice each day was unbearable. This popular sentiment was aptly portrayed in Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter*:

'So Papa and I have decided that you and Ka-chan will attend Japanese school after grammar school every day,' She beamed at us.

I choked on my rice.

Terrible, terrible, terrible! So that's what it meant to be a Japanese -- to lose my afternoon play hours! I fiercely resented this sudden intrusion of my blood into my affairs.

'But, Mama!' I shrieked. 'I go to Bailey Gatzert School already. I don't want to go to another!'

Henry kicked the table leg and grumbled, 'Aw gee, Mama, Dunks and Jiro don't have to -- why do I!'

'They'll be going, too. Their mothers told me so.'<sup>204</sup>

Sone's autobiography of life in Seattle's *Nihon-machi*, especially in reference to Japanese Language School, was a sentiment shared by many Nisei.<sup>205</sup> The description of her distaste for additional schooling was one that resonated with Hisa and the narrators. However, the Japanese Language School had a powerful residual affect of creating close social ties amongst fellow Nisei's.<sup>206</sup>

In terms of her public schooling, while Hisa's memories of Washington are limited, she does remember the positive influence of Bailey Gatzert's Principal, Ada Mahon. "I just loved her because she was very strict. But if you did what you were supposed to do, she was very nice. And I was quite studious so I got along quite well with her," Hisa reminisced. But it was a kind of "love" that spoke more of reverence, respect, and fear. Mahon was known as a strict disciplinarian. Students often marched down the hallways of the school, three abreast, synchronized to the chime of the triangle. Bringing "discipline" and "order to things," was how Hisa framed her memories of Ada Mahon and Bailey Gatzert.

As far as citizenship and Americanization activities, Bailey had the "Good American Citizens' Club" and Hisa remembers being president for one year. They had assemblies reflecting on modes of citizenship. Citizenship education came in the efforts

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<sup>204</sup> Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>205</sup> Tamura's, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity* also provides oral history accounts of the Nisei's experiences in Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii.

to imbibe a melting pot ideal. To that end, Mahon was central in promoting ways for her primarily Asian students to get along. Perhaps due to the relative homogeneity of the school, socialization with other schoolmates came easily. Bailey Gatzert, reflecting a neighborhood community school, contained an overwhelming majority of Asian students.

This was not so out of the ordinary as Seattle Schools operated as neighborhood schools. And due to the “racialized” zoning of neighborhoods most of the minority races in Seattle resided along, what is today commonly known as, the Central District:<sup>207</sup>

So we went to school with Chinese kids and Filipino kids. We never had many Blacks in those days. So there was, you know, we were all mixed. I don't know why but we stuck around mostly with Chinese and Filipino kids. And it was only when the war started that the kids were told to wear these ribbons, I mean these little buttons that said, 'I am Chinese.' And that's when we knew about discrimination. Up to that point we weren't, we didn't feel like [there was] discrimination at all, because we went to school with them. They were our friends, and all of a sudden, whether the kids wanted to or not, the parents made them wear this, 'I am Chinese' [button]. Other people, when they look at you, they can't tell whether you're Chinese or Japanese. I think we could but, as a whole you could kinda tell whether you were Chinese or Japanese.

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<sup>206</sup> Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, 53.

Hisa is referring to the *Associated Press* report on Seattle's Chinese consul ordering identification badges for all Chinese residents and citizens to wear, to avoid possible confusion and potential violence aimed against the Japanese. The first case of violence against a Japanese resident was reported in New York by Teddy Hara who was assailed by three unidentified men who was quoted as saying "Why don't you go where you belong?" before attacking Hara and leaving him with a skull fracture and lacerations and contusions of the left eye, face and head.<sup>208</sup>

After the war ensued, Hisa remarks that divisions and an underlying racial tension did occur amongst fellow Asian groups and with Caucasian school mates and community people: "[A]t that age, you really don't understand it [discrimination]. But in those days [prior to the evacuation], we just went to school with our friends and they were all our friends." As with Hisa and Monica Sone's account, a number of young Nisei did not think twice about "who" they were in terms of racial identity. They had always lived with, and were accustomed to, negotiating between their parents' Japanese culture with their adopted "American culture." Their lives between cultures was a matter of fact and not a matter of dissonance. This is not to say, however, that certain forms of "identity crises" did not occur.

At Washington Junior High Hisa does not remember her experiences being that different from her days at Bailey Gatzert. Her memories of Washington are "like a

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<sup>207</sup> The history of Seattle's Central District can be found in Taylor's, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*.

<sup>208</sup> Associated Press, "Japanese Attacked on New York Street: Beaten Nipponese Escapes in Hallway," in *Los Angeles Times* (9 December 1941), 16. Other news of violent outbreaks against Nikkei, in Seattle and elsewhere, are reported in the following: "Japanese Says He was Beaten," in *The Seattle Times* (11

blank.” A couple of reasons might account for this. One is that Hisa attended Washington for less than a year when Executive Order 9066 came out. The other is that her home life was fraught with worry about how her mother would be able to take care of her daughters with the news of the evacuation: “At that age, you don’t have a voice about anything. You do what you’re told to do. And if the government tells you you gotta leave, you leave.” The “voicelessness” of many Nikkei members was also brought on by a feeling that there really wasn’t anything that could be done. To show loyalty to the government by and large required doing what they were told to do.<sup>209</sup>

As far as affecting the lives of the people, I think, if you were around, say, in the early 20s or something, just getting started in your life and, or just married or something, THEN it would’ve really affected their feelings, their thoughts, and everything. But when you’re seventh-grade age, you know, you didn’t worry about that kind of stuff very much.

Here Hisa realizes the age differences within the Nisei generation and understands how her personal experiences would be much different from her older counterparts. Being of junior high school age, and heavily dependent on their parents, precluded this group of Nisei from really exerting and voicing the level of injustice aimed against them.

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December 1941), 20. “Stockton Japanese Killed by Filipino,” in *The Seattle Times* (26 December 1941), 26. “Man Admits He Shot Japanese,” in *The Seattle Times* (11 January 1942), 5.

<sup>209</sup> There are specific cases where Nisei did question the racial ground on which the curfew and evacuation orders were conceived. Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Koretmatsu, and Mitsuye Endo are landmark court cases. For more on this, please refer to Daniels, et al., eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to*

Feeling injustice yet needing to exhibit loyalty, Hisa and her family followed governmental orders.

### **Mitsie Fuji**<sup>210</sup>

Mitsie (pronounced “Mitzie”) Fuji’s recollection and representation of the past are explained with humorous anecdotes of how she and her family tolerated the bitter events of the war. She harbors no resentment for what happened. Rather, her buoyant personality underscores the strength she possessed to overcome that episode. What stands out in her narrative are the inhumane physical conditions while at the Puyallup Detention Center and in Hunt, Idaho. She explains in mild disgust at the dust that permeated the air everywhere. It was as if the pervasive dust clouds, hovering above, was a telling omen for how everyday life would be for the Fuji family in one of the darkest moments of the history of this country.

In story-like fashion, Mitsie’s memories weaves and shifts, back and forth, from camp life to life in prewar and postwar Seattle. Her overall recollection of Bailey Gatzert was favorable, as were her experiences with Ada Mahon. Mitsie attended Washington Junior High briefly before her family’s departure to Puyallup. She cannot remember much of what occurred in Washington but does not believe that the environment there was much different from Bailey Gatzert.

These days, with boundless energy, Mitsie’s time is spent coordinating community and social events for retired Nisei’s in Seattle and playing with her

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*Redress.* Playwright and author Frank Chin has also written on the subject of Japanese Americans voicing injustice of the evacuation at the time.

grandchildren. Her busy days are marked by quiet times of reflection of the past and the wonderment of how everyone was able to overcome such difficult times.

Mitsie was born in 1929 in Seattle. Her Father left Japan at the age of sixteen from Nagasaki to Seattle.<sup>210</sup> Her mother immigrated from Hiroshima when she was seventeen years of age. She believes that her parents were married through an arranged situation (her father was twenty years older than her mother). Mitsie has two sisters (one of whom has deceased) and two brothers (one of whom has deceased). Her father started out as a plumber, then a salesman in wholesale fishing tackle and then later into importing goods. Prior to the evacuation the Fuji's lived on Seattle's Beacon Hill neighborhood. The family lived in Des Moines, Iowa for a year and a half after a brief time in Hunt, Idaho's evacuation camp. Mitsie is unclear as to how the move to Iowa occurred but thinks that her father's persuasive selling skills and abilities in business enabled her family to leave the camps earlier than other families. He even saved enough money to send his two eldest daughters to college:

Because we were in camp, and he felt that we were wasting our time there he sent my two older sisters to school, college. And that took some bucks, I'm sure. I mean looking back now, at this age that I'm at, I wonder how they did it, you know, financially. But somehow he managed to send them to school. So, and actually as a matter of fact my

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<sup>210</sup> Mitsie Fuji, 19 May 1998, Interview by author: Seattle, WA.

<sup>211</sup> That is all the information Mitsie has on her father's arrival to the United States. She wishes that she took the time to document his life as she felt that he led a very interesting and unique existence, "atypical" of many Issei's at the time.

dad researched three places before we even left camp which was unusual. And he researched three cities and he decided on Des Moines, Iowa. I think the other two he looked at were Chicago and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. But he decided Des Moines was a good place and it was a good place. The people were very nice and they'd never seen Asians before. I think they felt my black hair was such a novelty, you know?

After the war, the Fuji's returned to Seattle where her father resumed his business.

As an eleven or twelve year old adolescent at the time of the evacuation, Mitsie felt that she was not keenly aware of the ramifications and the seriousness of the times but:

I knew it was something drastic because we had to sell all our things and I'll never forget my sisters, Younga she was eighteen at the time, and this one dealer I guess came to try to buy stuff cheap. Everybody was trying to benefit from the hardships of the Japanese, you know like buying property, cheap furniture, cheap anything cheap because we had no choice, we had to get rid of it. And so this one man came to our house and offered us, and I remember we had this huge console radio that was just beautiful, and he offered us just a ridiculous sum and my sister she got so angry she told him to leave the house, and I thought, 'Whoa.' And then we rode out to Puyallup the next morning and I remember sleeping out on the floor because we had sold off all the beds and things, there was

nothing left. And got up and got in the truck I guess and took our one suitcase that we were allowed each and then left. And went to Puyallup and I thought, 'Wow, what a horrible place!' They had straw mattresses and then we had these barracks and then the partitions only went up so high so you could hear everything that was happening throughout the whole barracks and all the different families.

Clearly, Mitsie's recollections during wartime were the stark contrasts between the everyday world she was used to and the dreary camp life that followed. She did not have a way of naming and articulating the situation into which she and her family were thrust, but she sensed the somber tenor of the times. Letters from the Puyallup Detention Center to Ella Evanson also remarked at how the mattresses were made of straw and many different families had to squeeze into tight and confined areas. A popular sentiment held by internees was how the food and the diet in the camps did not reflect their cultural norms:

One of my most vivid memories was when my mom was able to cook rice on that pot-bellied stove and one of the things we love to eat was raw egg and soy sauce on hot rice. I mean it's just a real simple dish, but we *loved* it. And the first time I remember eating that in our barrack, with rice cooked at home, I don't think I'll ever forget it, it tasted so good! And then I remember the laundry rooms we had to go and just hand scrub everything, the sheets and the towels – Oh God that was awful. I don't

know why my sisters weren't around it seemed like I was always the one that had to help her [mother]. . . . Yeah Puyallup was pretty bad and in the wintertime it got so muddy and terrible . . . and the food. Vienna sausages, I'd never eaten Vienna sausages, they gave it to us I swear morning, night, and noon. And to this day I can't stand looking at 'em [laughter]. It's the funny things you remember, you know?

Her humor about camp food highlights a simple but major cultural disjuncture between a typical Japanese meal she was used to at home versus the food at camp which were most often heavy in starch, dairy, and processed meats.

### **Schooling Experiences**

As far as schooling in Seattle prior to her family's departure, Mitsie attended Bailey Gatzert and then Washington Junior High. She recalls that because Washington had set up a new junior high school system, she attended Bailey Gatzert for one quarter and then was transferred to Washington in January of 1942. Her memories of schooling, particularly of Washington are not very vivid, but one instance at Bailey Gatzert stands out in her mind:

I remember Miss Mahon saying to the Chinese kids not to wear those buttons saying, 'I am Chinese.' She was really offended because she felt that, we were all, you know, American citizens and all that. And the Chinese put them on to escape the wrath, the discrimination, and the anger

from the White people towards the Japanese. But she, that assembly just really stood in my mind.

When asked to clarify on the nature of the assembly and her move to Washington Junior High School, she explained in further detail:

It was an assembly at Bailey Gatzert and she [Mahon] called the whole school together in the auditorium and, for the specific purpose of telling everybody not to wear those buttons. Yeah, so she was great. And then I remember going to Washington Junior High but really just for such a short time so it must've been for a month or so cuz we were evacuated in February in 1942. I remember the name of my teacher there [WJH] I don't know why I remembered her but I think it's because I showed up one day in class and she looked at my dress and said, 'What a pretty dress,' and I thought, you know, because parents sold everything . . . and my mom was always sewing dresses but I never thought anything of it. And I looked to see what I was wearing. It was so funny cuz I couldn't figure out why she was saying that.

Mitsie remembers her teacher's name at Washington as Miss Mortensen.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Martha C. Mortensen wrote about Washington School in an article entitled "War and the Children" which appeared in the *Seattle Principal's Exchange*, May 1942.

Mitsie's description of Ada Mahon was not very different from many Nisei's recollections. She described her to be stern but very fair. Her no-nonsense approach as an educator stands out in her mind:

She was quite a person. She was VERY rigid, very rigid. I mean for as fairminded as she might have been, she was also very rigid. But I think she was as fair as she could be in her position, I think she tried to be very fair. But she did run a very strict school. And I think the only reason it succeeded was because we were all children of immigrants, used to obeying, homogenous -- pretty much, because I think the school was ninety-percent Japanese to tell you the truth; or Chinese . . . -- but very few Blacks, very few Whites, so almost one-hundred percent Asian. Well, you know you get children at that age at that time, they're not boisterous and they're not, in fact I think I can remember out of that whole school, one or two or even three kids that were considered troublemakers. Also I think because of the Asian influence of real hard studying, hard working, smart kids, good students, and I think almost everyone did well in school. But she was strict, rigid, and that's why she was able to carry it off. I still remember everyday, dismissal time, we marched out of that school. And the song was playing on the speaker. I always, I liked her, but it wasn't a 'like' like you could just feel free to go up and hug her. Because she was like an officer in the Army, you just give them respect. I think the students were all in awe of her.

It appears that even at an early age, Mitsie was able to distinguish between an affectionate “like” with that of a respectful “like.” She mentions how the cultural influence of her family and community promoted academic success in school. She also provides additional insight into how Mahon’s role as a stern Principal worked insofar as the student body comprised mainly of Japanese, used to obeying authority figures.

Mitsie attended Japanese Language School, but for a brief time. Her experiences differ from the “typical” Nisei in this regard. She attributes that to her father’s unique ways. Mitsie describes her father as being rather “unorthodox” and not caring too much about what others felt about him. “I kinda respected him for that because it is not easy to be like that . . . considering you’re new to the country and you don’t speak the language.” And when it came to attending Japanese Language Schools, his attitude did not waver much:

Well you know, my dad really didn’t believe in them and so we started late. And I know all my friends went from the time they were kindergartners. And then he sent us to this one little school, rather than the one major school that everybody went to. So we went to this one small school and, it was really small, and I still remember the name of the teacher, his name was Ishi, and we called him Ishi-Sensei and we, I was just so old compared to the others in the class cuz you know we didn’t start until late -- I must’ve been in fifth or sixth grade and everybody else was in kindergarten. But you know, you at least learned the basics.

Mitsie reveals that the reason she and her sisters attended the small language school rather than the “major” one was that her father knew the instructor and wanted his children to go there. Aside from the embarrassment of a ten or eleven-year old sitting amongst five year-olds in the tiny classroom, she still was able to pick up the basics of the Japanese alphabet system.

The cultural encapsulation of living near the International District with fellow Asian youth did not allow for Mitsie to gain a sophisticated understanding of discrimination and racism. The homogenous environment to which she was familiar with did not involve the level of self-questioning that she remembers during and after the war:

Well you know when you grow up, without knowing, when you're always with people of your own kind you don't really know anything about discrimination because you don't experience it. And after the war I remember going to the mirror and looking at myself, at my face and I think, 'Wow, do I look different? Do I look mean? Do I look bad? Because right away you're kinda stigmatized you think, 'Oh my God, you look just like the enemy.' And you get scared. You don't know, cuz you're only what, eleven or twelve? You don't know what's gonna happen, you don't know what the effect of all this is gonna be.

Mitsie's realization that she was being looked upon as the “enemy” frightened her. She began to internalize part of the hatred and started to question who she was. The

ambiguity stemming from the unknown ramifications of being allied with the enemy was a point of alarm and shame. She concludes:

And I still remember after we came back, I think it was in '44, '45, after VE-Day, and we were just, two of my girlfriends, I still palled around with mostly Japanese because that's all I knew. And these were all friends before the war and they had all come back. You see everyone had started coming back one by one, and as each person came back we didn't know if they were friends so we looked them up, and my girlfriend that was two years older than me, a childhood friend, was just living almost next door so I knew right away when she came back. And so we just picked up our friendship and started doing everything together again, even though she was a couple of years older but we still went to the same schools. And I still remember, the three of us were walking down 4th Avenue going past the public library and all of a sudden this woman turned to us and said, 'Jap!' You know, just like that [emphasizing the offensiveness of the word] and we were just mortified. And I was just stunned but this other gal, she turned around and she said, 'Fascist!' Oh, I thought that was so funny! So that was good for a laugh, we laughed about it. I thought, 'Wow, fast thinking.'

The racial epithet hurled by the woman on the street was indicative of the residual and continuous effects of racism. But in a remarkable and resistant fashion, Mitsie's

friend responded with a stinging retort. This was, in effect, their own way of actively resisting and maintaining ethnic pride. Rather than internalize the pejorative nature of the word, “Jap,” the girls saw that the problem of racism resided in the woman and not themselves as inferior individuals.

### **Kazuo “Kaz” Ishimitsu<sup>213</sup>**

*April 3, 1942*

*Dear Miss Evanson,*

*I cannot express the way I enjoyed being one of your formal pupils. I am sorry because I have to leave Washington School and miss you and Mr. Sears and all the teachers. I like to write to my favorite teacher but the time is getting short and I must close this letter.*

*Respectfully yours,*

*Kazuo Ishimitsu*

Kazuo “Kaz” Ishimitsu is very introspective and forgiving in his reflection of the past. He possesses a very spiritual outlook of his experiences while providing historical, political, and social explanations for why things happened the ways in which they did. What stand out in his narration are the big questions of “why” and what possible reasons occurred in people’s behaviors to result in hate. He likens the diversity inherent in our society to the colorful flowers the “Creator” has bestowed in the floral beds of the earth. Kaz feels that it is the existence of all the beautiful colors that contributes to the well-

being of all of us. The perspective he has now began as an adolescent in Seattle trying to make sense of the prewar hysteria. The only thing that made sense for him was developing a strong Christian faith of forgiveness and love. He also realizes now that the actions of the past stemmed from a racialized tradition of the United States reaching back to the Gentlemen's Agreement.

Kaz Ishimitsu was born in Seattle in 1929. He is the only surviving member of his family out of two brothers and one sister. His father, Kichisaburo Ishimitsu died when he was one-hundred and five years of age. His mother, Yoshi Ashimahara, died when she was sixty-one; thereby leaving her husband without a life partner for many years. Kaz's parents immigrated from the Yamaguchi area in Japan prior to settling in Seattle's International District. Although his age would indicate that he should be in retirement, his inexhaustible energy rivals any person many years his junior. He works fulltime as a contractor, spends much time with his grandchild, and volunteers as a Chaplain in a Nisei Veteran's group. He currently resides with his wife in Bellevue, Washington.

One of his early memories of childhood comes from learning to sing Japanese songs his mother taught him. They had a gramophone on which to play the songs, but that was taken away by the FBI, as "evidence" of possible subversive, "fifth column" activities. "That was one of the first things the FBI took, this gramophone of all things, it's not a short-wave; it can't be used, in my opinion. No way could I imagine that could be used for sabotage, or you know, communication with the enemy. But that's the way it

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<sup>213</sup> Kaz Ishimitsu, 10 June 1998, Interview by author: Bellevue, WA.

was. Somebody gained a nice little gramophone I used to learn my Japanese songs on.” In one fell swoop a valued family treasure, which provided one of his earliest educative experiences, was stolen. To this day, he can remember some of the songs his mother taught him to sing.

### **Schooling Experiences**

Part of Kaz’s schooling experience included Japanese Language School. He remembers the burning of Japanese schoolbooks at the Japanese Language School he attended (Kokuko-Gako) prior to evacuation. He attended for two to three years until the war interrupted his daily life. In similar fashion to many other Nisei, however, he admits that he would have rather played baseball or football after school rather than attending Japanese Language School. He mainly learned the alphabet, the Kanji, and learned to read and write the rudimentary aspects of Japanese language. He, like Hisa and Mitsie, was taken to Minidoka, Idaho at the Hunt Schools after his family was bussed to Puyallup for detainment. While in Hunt, he learned to draw blood as a lab technician at around 15 years of age(!).

He attended Bailey Gatzert and Washington Junior High School before the war. He has a vivid recollection of Ada Mahon and appreciates her sternness and strength as a leader:

Oh, I liked her. She was a disciplinarian, absolutely. I know that she had probably a German background<sup>214</sup> I felt because . . . I’m very thankful to

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<sup>214</sup> According to Atshushi Kiuchi, in a 1998 article he wrote for *The Seattle Times*, Mahon was Irish.

her because she made us march. Would you believe it? And when I was drafted in the Army now, I was a good marcher. I could march, I didn't have any trouble at all. It was wonderful, I learned march songs, I enjoyed it.

This almost amusing but utilitarian way of appreciating the daily marches at Bailey Gatzert is characteristic of the narrator's way of finding the good in any event.

He remembers another daily aspect of school life consisting of "prayer:" "It was silent prayer, it wasn't perhaps strictly Christian or anything but we had a chance for silent prayer. The silence was there. The control was there."<sup>215</sup> We always gave the Pledge of Allegiance also. And we frequently sang the anthem, the Star Spangled Banner; which was a difficult song to sing." Although not expressively stated by Kaz, these daily school rituals most likely served as an Americanizing tool for Mahon's students.

Today, Kaz's own view of "Americanism" is not the inculcation of a westernized perspective, but rather, a conglomeration of all philosophies put together. "It's taking the good out of all the different cultures. . . . Biblically speaking I apply it by 'you gotta like yourself.' You gotta know yourself and like yourself . . . self esteem is very important."

Overall, Kaz's memories of schooling are positive. In describing Ada Mahon's attributes as a principal, "She was strict. I think she showed enough love and care but her goal was to discipline, 'You've got to study,' that was the essential part of it, 'We're

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<sup>215</sup> Kaz Ishimitsu is most likely referring to the quiet meditation offered in the homerooms as described in *Successful Living* (11).

here to study, period.”” She also pushed students to engage in extracurricular activities, such as being a patrol boy or girl, and Kaz remembers being one and reflecting on how that experience, among others, helped to build his self-esteem. He remembers that while his schooling helped to formulate a strong sense of self, his esteem “was tore down *tremendously* during that war, that incarceration experience. That’s the thing that really, I think it hurt many people. They became very ‘Quiet Americans’<sup>216</sup> without being there to, none of that great big expression, you know.”

In matters of self-esteem and how that was eroding away after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Kaz remarks, “Well, if you read the Hearst papers or any of those, or listen to the radio programs, you know that they created hate. . . . And because of that, they tell you you’re ‘slant-eyes’ and all that, it was so predominant, ‘yellow-belly,’ that kind, it does affect the young mind.” The way he analyzes those events with respect to discrimination and racism, when talking to younger people today, is how we are representative of the colorful flowers the “Creator” has bestowed on the world and how the inter-mixtures of those should create a system of love and care rather than hate. His view is that the more colorful the garden, the more opportunities exist for enjoyment.

The progression of the manufactured hate seeped into the community’s perception of Japanese Americans and it did not go away after the war:

You could feel that you’re the target of hate. They spearheaded that way and they, when President Roosevelt signed that 9066, I mean General

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<sup>216</sup> Also the title of Bill Hosokawa’s book on the incarceration experience of Nisei’s.

DeWitt in charge, you know, he had a tremendous amount of this hatred. How it developed I don't know. But I know that members of the 442, following the war, asked him, 'Well now what do you think of our achievements?' But he said that nobody didn't change his mind, 'A good Jap is a dead Jap.' He kept that attitude till the day he died. He had it embedded in him. It was an effort to make the United States ALL white."

His recollection of such military events are further informed by his experiences in the Army as a Nisei – although not in the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit,<sup>217</sup> and his subsequent involvement in the veterans group where he serves as a chaplain. He keeps referring to diversity in humankind as flowers needing to express their beauty through its' colors.

Kaz explains that fist-fights, especially among boys, broke out in schools, although only occasionally:

I had a friend, you know, he came along and says I'm a 'Jap,' you know.

But they take on that, if you're a good American, that's what you do is

hate the Japanese<sup>218</sup> it's the kind of philosophy that was built up. . . . You

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<sup>217</sup> The 442nd was widely known for the all-Nisei unit, which was one of the most decorated, that served during World War II. Their proof of loyalty and citizenship in this regard was still held suspect by the likes of General DeWitt. For an extensive look at this contribution by Nisei veterans, please refer to *Personal Justice Denied* and the feature movie *Go For Broke*, among others.

<sup>218</sup> This idea is very much reflected in a 1942 issue of *Time's* Letter to the Editor segment. A series of photographs depicts what the "average American boy," who happens to be blonde and Caucasian, does as part of his daily routines. The photos show the boy doing homework, practicing violin, receiving a toy rifle from his father, and lastly pointing his rifle to a caricature of the "Enemy Alien" Japanese as his sister

had a feeling of inadequacy. You're so much an outcast. That's the feeling . . .  
. As a citizen, what can we do to help? I don't like to kill. But yes, we  
had the occasional fist-fights from anger. And get into fights, you know  
how kids get angry.

He remembers that overall there was integration in schools. Moments of anger and violence were to be expected, especially as the Caucasian and Chinese American children were heavily influenced by their parents' perception of the war and who was considered the "enemy." Kaz explains that what would begin as name calling escalated into fights. And being a typical boy, he himself did not let up nor concede; although he did admit that he could run pretty fast. In general, however, he wanted to find ways to understand why the hatred was there.

One of the ways he came to "accept" the everyday hatred of the time was adopting the Christian philosophy of love. As a young adult, he remembers attending church regularly and using his growing faith as a vehicle for understanding and compassion. It was the only way to make sense of the incongruence of the times. The level of irrational hate that was being produced at the times was incomprehensible to a young mind, so a means of coping was to seek another level of understanding through the opposite emotion of love.

Additionally, as an adolescent, he was experiencing the typical process of identity development and group acceptance in and out of school, "You see as a young person, as

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points amusingly at the sketch. The message, that part of what every "American" child is supposed to do is hate the Japanese, was very clear.

you yourself could recall, you wanna be accepted. You wanna be liked. You want to get yourself up in the world and be something.” Kaz commented that one of the things that also helped him to get through the tough times in school was the smiles of the teachers, “They always had these nice smiles. Those I think took a lot of fear away.” The simple, non-verbal act of care, as Kaz describes, was etched in his mind as youngster caught in an ambiguous space.

When asked to reflect on the importance of what it is that we should remember in the Nisei’s experiences before and after the War, he explains, “The things that I’d like to have people know [is] that we did kinda feel badly as a whole because we were pledging allegiance, we used to, we thought we were Americans . . .” He goes back to how it is the Creator’s intent is for all of us to get along and learn from each other’s culture and extract the best from one another.

His vision of diversity and equality was learned by experiencing racism. “It was TOUGH at times.” Kaz illustrates this point by telling the story of how his father, a carpenter, would get picketed by the union members for not being a member. Yet during that time, the senior Ishimitsu was not able to join. Racist policies forbade Kaz’s father to gain employment security through a union. The sad irony in this situation erupted in violence sometime later when two union members were trying to convince the senior Ishimitsu to join and Kaz’s brother -- who, later as an adult, was able to change the union by-laws -- spoke out, “Who in the hell are you to tell us what to do?” Kaz goes on to say, “That night, they broke up the whole house. We couldn’t prove that they did it. You see that cost us a lot. They suffered through, those are the sufferings that you have to deal with hate.” So to speak up against injustice as an ethnic minority resulted in their

house being vandalized. The discrimination Kaz's family experienced was not totally demoralizing. Through it all, his family and fellow Nikkei's were able to weather the various storms.

He attributes the enduring Nikkei community in Seattle to the Issei's values of strong family and communal ties that they brought over from Japan as immigrants. The cultural milieu of valuing children, family, community, and education contributed to his social network of having other Nisei friends; although he does say that he had Jewish friends and others as well. Certainly, it is also the endurance and strength to overcome and live through the incarceration that helped the Nikkei to maintain strong ethnic roots.

## **Conclusion**

The narrators provide information that is not easily understood in isolation. Their lives are contextually bound by a shared history of discrimination beginning with immigration policies up to the incarceration experience and beyond. There are predictable as well as unpredictable responses in their construction of the past. One of the salient points came in their positive experiences of schooling in Seattle, especially that of Bailey Gatzert and Ada Mahon. They all describe her as tough, stern, caring, and likable. They respected and held her in awe. They did not question too much their status as Americans because of they grew up with fellow Asians and also with the schools' efforts to imbibe a thick, pluralistic description of democracy. While their memories of Washington School are not very vivid, they do sense that the attitude among the teachers and the principal did not differ from their elementary school. They remembered their teachers' ways of caring as exhibited through their smiles and moments of recognition.

While commonalities exist among the narrators, in terms of their shared past as defined by their ethnicity, their individual stories of their families were an unexpected surprise. I cannot imagine how Hisa's mother managed to care for her and her sister at a time when women's wages, especially for minority women, were barely sustainable. Yet, as Hisa remarks, her mother did what she had to do. As a child she did not feel deprived of the "normal" things children had while growing up. The strength of her mother and the social network of other Issei women in Japantown helped raise Hisa and her sister.

For Mitsie, she remembers her father not fitting the cultural norm. She tells a story of how as a girl her father, a salesman, took the whole family on a car trip around Washington State. One day for dinner, her father stopped in at what they considered a fancy steakhouse and ordered steak for everyone. What took Mitsie and her sibling by surprise was the moment when her father had the server take the steak back to cook as it was still mostly raw. As a child, she was flabbergasted by such a daring show of assertiveness. She was quite embarrassed and dumbfounded, at her father drawing attention to the family in such a way, but now she looks back on her father's act as a way of legitimating their presence in this state as viable citizens.

Kaz's way of looking back on his life and how past events came to be constructed in the way that they did provides deep insight into schooling and the incarceration experience. Despite the school's attempt to instill values of pluralism and democracy amongst the student body, racist acts emanating from the government and the media tremendously influenced the young mind, as he puts it. He feels that adolescents in their developmental growth need positive feedback in terms of who they are and how they fit

in society. Lacking that aspect at the time worked to diminish the self-esteem of many Nisei. The lessons from the past are the stories Kaz uses today in talking to the young about needing to appreciate who they are.

This chapter does not close the door on the narrators' experiences. The following chapter, which concentrates on the written responses by Nisei and non-Nisei students of Washington School, includes the narrators' response to the writings. Issues of identity, discrimination, loyalty, and citizenship education are revealed in the students' written response as they were in the oral history interviews. Finally, I turn to trying to provide a sense of how students and school officials coped with democracy and dissonance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

"I am and always will be an American":

Writings by Washington School Students on the Eve of the Incarceration

*December 7, 1941, has taken its place beside the dates in the life of America which will endure forever in the minds of the people. Never before in our history had there been so sudden and complete a transition from the ways of peace to the ways of war.*

*On the morning of the 8th of December Seattle teachers and principals began quietly and thoughtfully to meet the challenge. The need for calmness and orderliness was discussed with children who the day before had listened to the broadcasts from Honolulu and who had participated in the first hurried blackout precautions. Tolerance toward Japanese classmates was stressed. One principal reminded her cosmopolitan student body: "You were American citizens last Friday; you are American citizens today. You were friends last Friday; you are friends today."*

"Schools Prepare for War Emergencies" by E.W. Campbell, Assistant Superintendent and Member of the Seattle Municipal Defense Commission<sup>219</sup>

### Introduction

Sunday morning, December 7, 1941 was the day that would forever "live in infamy." Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii marked the entry of the United States into the Second World War. The "surprise attack" on U.S. soil by an Axis power heightened many Americans' fears of "Yellow Peril." The possibility of another

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<sup>219</sup>Seattle Schools, Vol. XVIII, No. 5 (January 1942), 1.

raid by the Japanese grew in intensity and such fears were exacerbated by the media.

From the day of the bombing and into the incarceration of Japanese Americans, national magazines such as *Time* and *Life* published pernicious caricatures of the enemy Japanese that seeped its way into the minds of Americans of Japanese ancestry. The “native white” population did not distinguish between the Japanese of Japan from Japanese Americans who had lived in the United States for more than a generation. The fallacious representation, that “all Orientals look the same,” was played out to a degree by the national media as reports and pictorials juxtaposed Chinese and Japanese faces with the title, “How to tell your friends from the Japs.” The friends, of course, were the Chinese who at the time were considered an ally to the United States.

The question for this chapter rests on how and in what ways schools and school officials contended with the news of the Pearl Harbor bombing and the subsequent incarceration order of its Nisei students. As sites of cultural and social reproduction, schools were not immune to wartime hysteria. Nisei students were subjected to increased racial prejudice after the bombing and beyond. But the response by the Seattle School District on Monday, December 8, the day after the bombing, focused on addressing the “Pacific Crisis” through individual school assemblies. As the excerpt from the school district publication at the beginning of this chapter indicates, the schools’ attempted to address and hopefully prevent possible hostilities against Nisei students. Seattle Public Schools prided itself on promoting a tolerant view of races. Beginning with its tradition of a progressive Americanization program in the 1910s, under Superintendent Frank Cooper, various district publications point to emulating a Deweyan, democratic approach

to education up through the late 1930s.<sup>220</sup> Research on the history of education is replete with evidence on official policies and directives for effective schooling. However, how students felt about schooling and schools, at the historical moment in which they were the direct beneficiaries of school policies, have yet to be explored in greater detail. This chapter, emphasizing the writings of Japanese American and non-Japanese American students, places students' reactions at the center of a definable and historical period in the United States. The writings by Washington School students also take into account the structure of character and citizenship education as reflected in the homeroom plan, school assemblies, and classroom composition in the Seattle Public Schools. This chapter also provides the official response of the Seattle School district in light of wartime events.

### **Homeroom Teacher, Ella Evanson, and Her Students**

The students' compositions were the personal collection of their homeroom teacher, Ella Evanson, of Washington School. Evanson taught seventh and eighth grade English, Social Studies, and was later the school's librarian. A *Seattle Times Magazine* article on Evanson provides a short biography of her teaching career.<sup>221</sup> Evanson was a native of North Dakota and taught there for a few years. After working for the government in Washington, D.C., during World War I, she came to Seattle and earned a Washington State teaching certificate at Bellingham. She taught for a year in Everett, commuting daily on the interurban. She then taught at B.F. Day Elementary School in

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<sup>220</sup> As expressed in Bryce Nelson's *Good Schools*.

Seattle before going to Washington School in 1928. She was there until her retirement in 1956. By then, Washington was a junior high school. She speaks fondly of the principal, Mr. Sears, and how he stressed the importance of America being a country of many different cultures and races. After her retirement in, Evanson went on a freighter trip across the Pacific and continued traveling around the world, being gone more than a year. She traveled extensively for several years and forgot about the collection of letters, until she happened upon them some time later. She died in January 1986 at the age of eighty-eight.<sup>222</sup>

At the time of the newspaper interview in 1974<sup>223</sup> Evanson, an octogenarian, was quoted as saying that the letters showed a general acceptance of the evacuation as justified, even though the Japanese American children regretted having to leave and their schoolmates were sorry to see them go. "I remember how difficult it was when the children had to say good-bye to their friends and board buses for the relocation center at Puyallup. . . . Many of the Japanese-American children took their pets and gave them to their friends because they weren't allowed to keep them. It was a very emotional experience. Many of the children were weeping."<sup>224</sup>

The students' writings might reveal such sentiments on the surface, but a critical examination into the nature of what students wrote, in the context of the political

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<sup>221</sup>The article was written by John Haigh and appeared in the October 6, 1974 issue (pg. 12). The rest of the description of Evanson, including her views on the incarceration, is adapted from Haigh's article.

<sup>222</sup> Personal Communication, Seattle Retired Teachers' Association, 22 October 1996.

<sup>223</sup> Around this time the national Redress Movement was underway and Japanese American activism was strong in Seattle and throughout the West Coast. This article might have been a response to the political situation surrounding the Redress Movement by portraying a group of Nisei who felt a sense of "acceptance" at the time of their incarceration, in contrast to the activist Nisei of the 1970s.

<sup>224</sup> John Haigh, "Children's View of the Japanese Evacuation," in *The Seattle Times Sunday Magazine* ( 6 October 1974), 12.

situation of the time, reveals another story that Evanson might have neglected to recall at the time of her interview. The popular presses in the 1940s did indicate a “general acceptance” of the incarceration orders by Nikkei. However, the public acts amidst private fears were hardly congruent. On the one hand, Nikkei’s public act of loyalty towards the United States stemmed in part from their efforts to “do what the government ordered.” On the other hand, the private reactions and fears to the Executive Order 9066 were always there.<sup>225</sup> This study problematizes the idea of “general acceptance” on the part of Japanese Americans by going beyond the surface of the students’ writings and the response by Evanson herself. Very few choices existed for Nikkei when the Executive Order 9066 was signed. Older Nisei who publicly resisted governmental orders were arrested and imprisoned. The “general acceptance” on the part of Japanese Americans was due to the fact that very little could be done about the impending imprisonment. The public, on the other hand, typically viewed “general acceptance,” as one in which the Nikkei voluntarily and eagerly accepted governmental orders to evacuate “for their own good.” The multiple layers of meaning embedded in the students’ simple phrases are beset with issues of identity and citizenship, and how that fit within the context of democracy.

Three sets of writings comprise this study in this chapter. The first set comes from an English class writing assignment where students reflected on their school’s assembly performed the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The message of tolerance by the Principal Arthur G. Sears is resoundingly clear as expressed by the

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<sup>225</sup> Many sources in Asian American studies, particularly historical and literary works address this very issue.

students. The second set contains farewell entries by Nisei in a journal made for Ella Evanson by one of her students. While a district-wide request went out to gather writings by Nisei on the eve of their incarceration, it is not possible to ascertain whether the farewell entries were a part of this project. It is more likely the case that the students were writing for Evanson only. The final collection is non-Nisei reflections on the “evacuation.” They write on how the evacuation of their Nisei classmates would affect their friendships and relationships.

As noted previously, this chapter focuses on the writings of Ella Evanson’s students, which in essence are extensions of their voices. Their perspectives on what Washington School was doing to address wartime events provides insight into how, if at all, the students internalized school policies of tolerance, given the national message of race hatred against the Japanese.<sup>226</sup>

Thirty-seven Japanese American students and eighteen non-Japanese American students expressed their thoughts through composition. There are close to eighty writing

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<sup>226</sup> Analyzing written work by students requires a healthy dose of skepticism. Many educators would agree that whenever classroom work is assigned, varying degrees of resistance and non-compliance exists. Whether in historical or present-day contexts, students’ active and passive resistances to requisite work is a matter of fact. The case for Ella Evanson’s students is no different. The collection of students’ writings indicates levels of depth and superficiality. Some are highly descriptive and emotional while others are not. A myriad of factors comes into play when relying on students’ writings.

Without a doubt, the students’ voices, especially those of Nisei students, need to be taken into account in this analysis. Possibly realizing that they were writing for an audience, the students might have felt reticent to disclose their true feelings. Much like the public acts of compliance and general acceptance as reported by the news media, the Nisei students might have kept their private feelings hidden. Cultural characteristics might also have played a factor. Emotional restraint, or *Enryo*, was a value passed down to Nisei by their Issei, or immigrant, parents. To disclose one’s feelings in public was seen as a sign of weakness and lacking respect. While not all Nisei adhered to this value, *Enryo* was a cultural trait largely understood by most Nikkei. The students’ writings are also bound by the local and national attention to the war and the media’s increasing efforts to project hate towards Italy, Germany, and especially Japan. The blurring of identities, between Japanese and Japanese Americans, became ever more apparent in the eyes of other mainstream Americans. This in turn had many Nisei play project hyper-loyalty to the United States.

samples<sup>227</sup> from students between December of 1941 and May of 1942 in Ella Evanson's collection. The topics range from the students' reflections of the school's Pearl Harbor Bombing assembly to the farewell journal entries written to the teacher.

The categorical groupings of the students' writings are partly that of the author and of Ella Evanson. The teacher, also the school's librarian, organized the students' reflections into three main sections. I have maintained the same groupings and have added appropriate titles as necessary. The letters signify and incorporate the totality of their lived realities in the short but expressive phrases. Ideas of loyalty, democracy, citizenship, the threat of possible violence, and how school officials were helping to cope are unveiled. The most expressive ideas disclose feelings of uncertainty at what the future will hold and of the sadness of having to leave their home. The uprooting of one's birthplace, as also expressed in the narrator's accounts, to a place unknown created extreme anxieties, to say the least. Proof of one's loyalty and American identity became a focal point for many Nisei as they were preparing to leave Seattle. Perhaps the opportunity to express the chaotic experiences of being uprooted provided a vehicle for students to attempt to make sense of dissonance.

### **The Character of Schooling in the 1930s: Homerooms, Assemblies, and Composition as Vehicles for Expressing Interculturalism**

In Seattle and in various locations across the United States, the concepts of homerooms and assemblies were adopted by schools in efforts to achieve a sense of

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<sup>227</sup> Not all of the writing samples are included in this chapter.

community and develop character education amongst the student body. The homeroom plan allowed teachers to monitor her students' academic and social growth throughout the school year. Homerooms also afforded opportunities for close relationships between teachers and students to develop. Naturally, close bonds between students also formed. The objectives of assembly programs meant to instill and promote character education for students. The method for such instruction varied from school to school, but the objectives typically remained the same. In particular situations, as in the case of Washington School, students wrote about the content of their schools' assembly in their homerooms. Seattle schools in the mid-1930s emphasized the use of composition to further develop moral character and training in the habits of mind.

### **The Homeroom Plan**

The 1935 character education guide for the Seattle Schools, *Successful Living*, describes how the organization of the homeroom was an advantageous situation for teachers and students. Teachers were able to monitor her students' academic and social development throughout the school year. The consistency of having a same group of students, over an extended length of time, allowed teachers to examine her students' progress wholistically. If a student's academic work slipped, the teacher was encouraged to look at environmental and familial situations for improving the child's school work. The building of close relationships, going beyond the students' life within the confines of the school, were means of fostering character growth:

Organization of the school into home rooms is often believed to be a decided advantage since it offers excellent opportunity for both direct and indirect methods of character instruction. Attention is centered upon the pupil, his activities, and his interests. . . . He contributes to the programs and the group discussions, which may be in the nature of direct character instruction but which are often closely connected with some school occurrence or project. . . . The child remains with the same home-room teacher during his enrollment in the school, and close pupil-teacher relationships are formed. The teacher learns the abilities, the interests, and the environment of each pupil and can give help in administering guidance to the members of his roll. . . . The members of the home room, working together for several semesters, create a group spirit. They develop a feeling of responsibility to their group and to the school rather than to anyone who may commit a misdemeanor.<sup>228</sup>

To some extent homerooms and teachers expected to serve as agents of social control. An underlying objective lay in diminishing acts of delinquency and heightening communitarianism. In the introduction to *Successful Living*, a discussion on the potential risks of delinquent behavior is outlined. While schools cannot monitor a child's activities twenty-fours a day, the argument went, "it can show him the rewards of evil doing, give him a sense of values, uphold high ideals, and teach him the scientific truths regarding the effects of such things as alcohol and narcotics."<sup>229</sup> The work of schools, within a homeroom atmosphere and beyond, would focus on education for character by providing the guiding principles for leading a moral and ethical life in and out of school.

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<sup>228</sup> *Successful Living*, 15-16.

<sup>229</sup> *Successful Living*, 6.

In describing a segregated school in the Caswell County of North Carolina, Vanessa Siddle Walker maintains that several features of the Caswell County Training School (CCTS) fostered an ethic of care and close relationships. Among those was the homeroom plan. “[It] was an important mechanism for facilitating relationships between teachers and students.”<sup>230</sup> The teachers of CCTS felt that the homeroom plan provided the sharing of lives, where in turn the teacher grew to accept and eventually have love for her students. Former students recalled their homeroom teachers having a great amount of concern and care, creating a family-like atmosphere.

Walker’s research provides a historical case study of how the concepts of homerooms and assemblies were implemented in classrooms and in the schools where a homogenous, ethnic minority, student body predominated. Former teachers, principal, and students provided oral histories of how they viewed and received lessons in their homerooms and in their school’s assemblies. Walker provides a historical glimpse into how the structure of schooling and school curriculum affected the lives of students. Similarly, my study incorporates evidence of students’ writings, written in their homerooms, of how school assemblies affected them.

To clarify, while homerooms by themselves did not create caring communities, the combination of the teacher, the student body, the character of the school, and the neighboring community provided opportunities for caring relationships to develop. Although the particular case of CCTS, from 1933 to 1969, cannot be generalized to all public schools in the United States at the time, it nevertheless provides an important and

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<sup>230</sup> Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential*, 125.

critical insight into how the concept of homerooms played out. From *Successful Living* in Seattle to a segregated school in the South, homerooms potentially offered the space, and were at times intended, for close relationships to foster.

### **School Assemblies**

Along with the homeroom plan came school assemblies to further augment character and citizenship education. The purpose of assemblies varied in different geographic locations and across various cultural groups. However, a major thrust of school assemblies was framed around the development of character and group cohesiveness amongst the student body.

School assemblies in the 1930s in the Seattle Public Schools were seen as a unifying aim for the student body. It also held educative value. Discussions on various aspects of school life, extracurricular activities, reports on citizenship clubs, and award ceremonies at the end of the school year were featured in the assemblies:

Assembly projects serve to unify our purpose and carry out our building plans. An assembly program at the beginning of the semester acquaints the pupils with building aims and rules. Talks given by pupils tell of the purposes of the Girls' Club and Boys' Club, and such topics as the lunchroom, etiquette, and building courtesy are discussed. A welcome is extended to new members, and one of them responds. Another program given by the 8A class at the end of each semester brings to a focus the opportunities for

character training offered by the school. One class used as its theme, 'The Character Side of the Report Card.'<sup>231</sup>

A focus on appropriate behavior for proper citizenship is clear. What is not included in this account of assembly projects is a message of understanding across cultures. Ideas of tolerance and the inclusion of ethnic groups' contributions to society were highlighted in detail in *Successful Living*. Whereas the assemblies were a unifying aim for the student body, the classroom was the site of exploring different cultures' contribution to society. Model classroom programs for overcoming prejudice on the part of students (and not necessarily the teachers) toward immigrant cultures and ethnic minority groups is discussed in a chapter of *Successful Living* on what the homerooms can contribute in the organization of the school life.<sup>232</sup>

In Siddle Walker's research, school assemblies were called "chapels," a weekly gathering of students offering further means for education.<sup>233</sup> The weekly chapels at CCTS served two functions. The first was an extension of the activity program providing a focal point for club planning and gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their interests and exercise their talents before other students. The second served an educative

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<sup>231</sup> *Successful Living*, 19.

<sup>232</sup> The chapter on "Individual Guideposts," in *Successful Living*, gives an example of a student overcoming his prejudice towards his own race. The section, entitled "I Belong to an Inferior Race," is as follows: "Dick was overheard to say, 'I have no chance. I belong to an inferior race.' A few days later, through pictures, poems, and stories, he was surprised to find that his race possessed outstanding qualities and characteristics. There was a marked change in his attitude which not only changed his type of school work, but also carried over into the home" (SL, 157). Such examples of highpoints in classroom activities concentrated on students' prejudiced beliefs and attitudes towards different (or of their own) races or cultures, and how subsequent teachings helped to overcome stereotypes.

<sup>233</sup> Walker, *Their Highest Potential*, 109.

function for discussing proper modes of behavior, as well as teaching about why particular historical events had direct relevance and significance in their education.<sup>234</sup>

Underlying these functions was the stress on character and moral principles. Principal Dillard of the Caswell County Training School often recited messages on the importance of character. The following excerpt is a yearbook address that best typified the content of the school's chapel:

I can only say to you and ask of you that you hold fast to those enduring qualities which have been tested by time and eternity. Character is one of them. Character means confidence in one's integrity by others. It means worthiness, it means loyalty to the highest ideals of morality in one's daily affairs, it means the application of the highest ethical standards to everything you do, say or even think. Character is one of those precious spiritual commodities that cannot be bought, sold or traded on the open or closed market. One who possesses it has one of earth's most precious and priceless possessions. Seek it, find it, protect it.<sup>235</sup>

This excerpt provides insight into what an emphasis on character education might have looked like in a school's assembly. Principal Dillard of the Caswell County Training School emphasized how character as a virtue was tied to students' behaviors and conduct, of which loyalty was one. Character had to be nurtured and cultivated through careful instruction in the schools. The value of character education could not be

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<sup>234</sup> Walker, *Their Highest Potential*, 109-110.

<sup>235</sup> Walker, *Their Highest Potential*, 111.

measured like a commodity, but rather, acted upon through appropriate ethical and moral principles.

For intercultural educators of the 1920s and 1930s, character education played secondary to the cause of increasing intergroup awareness. Rachel Davis Dubois, the pioneering intercultural educator, saw assembly programs as a way of promoting interracial harmony.<sup>236</sup> Assemblies were meant to appeal to emotions as well as intellects by enhancing classroom learning in a different way. As a doctoral student at Teacher's College, Davis DuBois conducted a systematic study on the effectiveness of assembly programs versus "incidental classroom teaching in developing tolerant attitudes."<sup>237</sup> From 1929 to 1930, she surveyed nine schools and 4,000 students in the Philadelphia area and found that the assembly program was a more effective method for changing attitudes than a strictly intellectual approach represented by written materials.<sup>238</sup> She concluded, however, that the best approach to changing attitudes combined both at the same time. Perhaps realizing that assembly programs, along with activities in the homerooms, contained critical educative value for instilling all forms of character, including that of tolerance, the Seattle Public Schools worked to incorporate emotional and intellectual appeals.

### **Composition in the Classroom**

The Seattle Public Schools, in *Successful Living*, articulated why a study of literature and composition was important for the development of character. The purpose

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<sup>236</sup> Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 85.

<sup>237</sup> Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 90.

of such a method served two purposes: 1) to increase students' understandings of others' experiences through literature; and 2) to use writing as a means to express complex world situations. These dual objectives were to further stimulate democratic character growth.

Literature opened up the world of others. It was through the vicarious experience of others that the students' imaginations would be stirred. One's provincial outlook on life was expanded to perceive different possibilities for existence. Moreover, the study of lives through the works of Louisa May Alcott, Maude Warren, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Abraham Lincoln were used as learning tools for the cultivation of human understanding.

Written assignments of students were to apply the lessons learned from literature to aspects of their own lives. An example of a topic for composition was, "Where Was Your Dad Born?"<sup>239</sup> The objective in this writing assignment was to have immigrant students appreciate the cultural background of their parents, or specifically in this situation – their fathers.<sup>240</sup> By investigating where one's father was from, a connection was then drawn to study different countries' contributions to the development of the United States. The aim was to make the strange familiar. "The whole unit was worked

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<sup>238</sup> Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 91.

<sup>239</sup> *Successful Living*, 46.

<sup>240</sup> Another example of best practices in the classroom in *Successful Living* is reported by a foreign language teacher entitled, "Tolerance for Foreigners." In it, she writes: "I am glad in my foreign language work to have an opportunity to develop in the children a spirit of tolerance. In foreign books, I emphasize the fact that people of another nationality, though apparently so different from us, are fundamentally made of the same human stuff as we. They have the same emotions and therefore are actuated in much the same way. If all our children cannot be broadened by travel and personal contact with foreigners – their customs, their matter of thinking, and their ideals – at least they can read books which express these ideals" (SL, 59). Although this section does not specifically call this method interculturalism, the same concepts, of human understanding across differences, are apparent.

out on the assumption that we seldom hate those we really know. Interest, understanding, and sympathy should first be developed, and from that, friendship will follow.”<sup>241</sup> Understanding, sympathy, and friendship are three distinct terms that are important to keep in mind in the context of the writings by Washington School students. These lessons for character education, however conceived and applied and in the classrooms and schools, influenced to varying degrees the students’ composition in their homerooms.

The emphasis on literature and humanistic understanding, a goal of interculturalism, extended its way to composition. According to the character education guide, writing was a gateway to one’s conscience, to see how students make sense of their world in relation to larger contexts as gleaned from literature. It was also an individual piece of creativity, generated from their unique understanding of their immediate experiences. The process of writing and composition was seen as an act of character building for it built the principles for ethical and moral understanding:

Someone has said that literature is the telescope through which we view human nature. We might add that compositions created by the pupils are the instruments through which we see their innermost souls. Their composition is a piece of creative work built by the student from his own thoughts. If we can help him to strengthen right ideals and can direct him to new avenues of high thinking, we create a condition that makes for fine character building.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> *Successful Living*, 59.

<sup>242</sup> *Successful Living*, 46.

If we take the schools approach to writing and composition seriously, then the writings by Evanson's students add a critical dimension to the study of character education. We are, in essence, peering through the gateway to their innermost souls. While what they write may not be articulate and detailed, their expressions carry heavy meaning. Especially for Nisei students, their sense of self, or lack thereof, becomes salient. The Nisei students' affirmation of their American identities in the writings indicates that their identities were held suspect by others around them. The need to accentuate their loyalty to the United States came at a time when the government questioned Nikkei's loyalty as viable citizens. Progressively over time, the prejudices against Japanese Americans and residents, in Seattle and nationwide, escalated. How students and schools reacted to outside pressures is revealed to varying degrees in the students' compositions and by the school district's response to wartime pressures.

### **World War II and the Americanization Policy Directive for the Seattle Public Schools: Official Response to Democracy and Dissonance**

In January 1941, nearly one year prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Superintendent Worth McClure distributed a special bulletin to the principals of Seattle Schools regarding the teaching of the social subjects. A policy measure was unanimously adopted by the School Board to use *Living Today - Learning for Tomorrow* in all schools.<sup>243</sup> The reason for its use is summarized in the introductory paragraph:

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<sup>243</sup> Worth McClure to Principals, 13 January 1941, Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

The teaching of history, geography, civics, and economics was probably never more vital to American democracy than at the present time. At the same time, it is also true that the impact of current world events upon the public emotions inevitably exposes the teaching of these subjects to a continuous hazard of misunderstanding. The present situation, therefore, lays certain responsibilities upon the School Board and the school corps.<sup>244</sup>

World War II and international political events increased fears at home. In an effort to respond to growing uncertainty the school district once again emphasized Americanization and citizenship education. This time around, an emphasis was placed on living for democracy and having tolerance and understanding of others. Official district documents at this time once again turn its attention to flag salutes and weekly assemblies as means for instilling such virtues. The flag ritual is another adaptation of the 1920s version:

Flag: I am your flag.

Children: We are your children.

Flag: I represent America.

Children: We are America.

Flag: I have given you a land that is great, beautiful, and rich. I have given you liberty, freedom, toleration and opportunity for all. These and more I have given you, but I require: Understanding. You must know your country and her history.

Children: We will find out what has made America great and what must be done to keep her great.

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<sup>244</sup> Worth McClure to Principals, 13 January 1941.

Flag: I require: Devotion. Every cause that would make a better country or a better people is your cause.

Children: We will be loyal to American ideals whether we stand with many or alone, etc.<sup>245</sup>

The themes of tolerance, understanding, and loyalty are evident in how schools looked to teaching democratic citizenship through this flag salute. The flag rituals and other Americanization and citizenship programs took on a more somber tone for the Second World War loomed on the horizon. Specifically, the future of Japanese American school children became tenuous, for in the next few months and years, the course of events changed their lives forever.

On January 16, 1942, Superintendent Samuel Fleming submitted to the Board of Directors a model citizenship training program devised by a school teacher from Broadway High School. Some points worth highlighting deal with many of the same principles of the 1920s such as: Endeavor to understand basic Christian principles (honesty, uprightness, courage, courtesy, etc.); make loafing a thing of the past by taking the initiative and applying themselves diligently to their studies; be alert to the dangers of engaging in idle gossip and in spreading rumors which are intended to confuse us; exercise self-control, dignity, and judgment in all crises; develop a toleration and a consideration for those with whom they have to work; be ready to sacrifice to personal comfort and pleasure for the good of their country; be loyal to their flag, their country, and their government.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> *Seattle Principal's Exchange*, v5, n3 (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, February 1941), 1.

<sup>246</sup> Samuel E. Fleming to Principals, 16 January 1942, Seattle Public Schools' Archives, Superintendent's Files.

Perhaps aspects of these outlying principles were repeated and brought out in the open as schools were preparing for wartime emergencies. The official newsletter of the district expressed concerns over the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and how that might affect the Japanese American school children. The article states, "Tolerance toward Japanese classmates was stressed. One principal reminded her cosmopolitan student body: 'You were American citizens last Friday; you are American citizens today. You were friends last Friday; you are friends today.'"<sup>247</sup> The school district's response to the crisis seems evenhanded and careful to assure all school children that one should not succumb to the ugliness of war hysteria.

An important piece of evidence comes from an article written in the spring of 1942 by a school teacher of Washington School on "War and the Children."<sup>248</sup> The teacher, Martha Mortensen, wrote about the Japanese American students and their peculiar place in school and community, considering they comprised 33 percent of the school's enrollment. She states that the war will have a definite impact on the enrollment for 223 students will have been evacuated by May 20, 1942.<sup>249</sup>

The teacher explains that a request went out by the district to over 300 students<sup>250</sup> to write on how they felt about the incarceration. The non-Japanese American students were sad to see their friends leave. The Japanese American students wrote of needing to comply with the government's wish but feeling strain over their uncertain future. One girl prayed that her family would stay together during the ordeal.

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<sup>247</sup> *Seattle Schools*, v18, n5 (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, January 1942), 1.

<sup>248</sup> *Seattle Principal's Exchange*, v6, n7 (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, May 1942), 7-8.

<sup>249</sup> The date by which all Japanese Americans were to report to the Puyallup Detention Center in Puyallup, Washington.

Despite the horrors of the real world, the principal of Washington School attempted to instill the ideals of democracy and citizenship. Describing this role, the teacher wrote, "The Principal, A.G. Sears, long ago laid the ground work for rooting out any existing prejudices. At all times he has tried to break down cultural barriers, establish mutual appreciation, and develop a program which would lead to a deep devotion to the American way of life. He has stressed a better understanding of all races and religions."<sup>251</sup>

Sears drew on the influence of the Progressive Education Association in laying this ground work prior to 1942. Sears' approach to the appreciation of ethnic traditions was highlighted in a *Seattle Educational Bulletin* article in November 1937. The story described how Washington School students wrote individual letters to their parents inviting them to the school's open house. Many students were encouraged to write in English and in the language of their immigrant parents – Spanish, Hebrew, Japanese, or Chinese. Principal Sears upheld this method by stating:

'I use this device not only to get the message over to the parents, but also to dignify the parental background. Too often I have seen tragedies among the second generations. They feel frequently that they have reason to be ashamed of their parents when they can neither read nor write the English language. I believe we produce better Americans from the foreign-born if we dignify their background, and while they should love America more, they should not lose their love of the land of their ancestry.'<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Who exactly the 300 students were is unknown.

<sup>251</sup> *Seattle Principal's Exchange*, May 1942, 7.

Principal Sears understood the need to preserve one's ethnic heritage. He revealed, through personal observations, that the pain of having to live with the erasure of one's home culture created a rift not only within the parents and their children, but also within the children themselves. His emphasis on living a dignified life was accomplished through an understanding and an appreciation of one's ethnic identity. Such was the tradition Principal Sears laid down in educating his students of Washington School for democratic citizenship.

### **Washington School, 1941-1942**

This historical case study of students' compositions on the eve of the Japanese American incarceration takes place in Washington School from December 8, 1941 to May 1942. It operated as a neighborhood school bordering the Central District serving students from different ethnic backgrounds. The student population contained Asian Americans and immigrants, European immigrants, African American, as well as a high number of Jewish students. Washington School, from 1920 until 1942, was among those in which the highest numbers of Japanese American students attended.<sup>253</sup>

Washington was originally a grade school from 1912 to 1938. In 1938 Washington became a seventh and eighth grade center and operated in that manner after World War II in 1945 when it became a junior high school. Washington had a reputation

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<sup>252</sup> *Seattle Educational Bulletin*, November, 1937, 1.

<sup>253</sup> The *Annual Reports* of the Seattle Public Schools are inconsistent in the compilation of demographic information of its' student body, especially in terms of racial/ethnic breakdown. The most complete record comes from 1920-1921.

for embodying cosmopolitanism. According to a 1961 Seattle School publication describing the history of Washington School:

Washington School, as a separate unit, in and of itself, presents a close approximation to the great American ideal which the fathers of the American Constitution hoped to achieve. A visitor to Washington School would find around one thousand children between the ages of 12 to 15, of every race, every religion, and every economic status, working together and playing together, with no tensions between them due to their differences of race, religion, or economic background. Democracy, in the true sense of the word, is practiced from the principal right down through the office staff and faculty, the custodians, and cafeteria workers, and then is reflected back again through the students themselves. The school is truly a small United Nations, actually accomplishing democratic objectives in an extremely significant way. Teachers and students are fortunate and privileged to be able to participate in the democratic situation as it exists at Washington at the present time.<sup>254</sup>

This history of Washington School is distinguishable for its' reliance on democratic ideals and practice from all the school staff and students. A survey of other schools' histories in the Seattle area revealed only Washington explicitly emphasizing the promise and possibilities of a democratic ideal.<sup>255</sup> Certainly, the character of the school, its' teachers and principal, and the student body contributed to its' unique perception and reputation of Washington School. The students' writings indicate a degree to which that was real.

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<sup>254</sup> *Histories of the Seattle Public Schools*, 1961.

<sup>255</sup> *Histories of the Seattle Public Schools*, 1961.

### **Students' Reflections on the School's Assembly after the Bombing of Pearl Harbor**

According to the writings by Washington School students, and various Seattle School district materials, Principal Sears emphasized and stressed a democratic school life emphasizing tolerance and respect for differences -- the dual appreciation of a unified political identity while recognizing individual and ethnic particularities as also expressed in the writings of John Dewey. The immigrant and ethnic group mix of Washington posed its own challenges, to be sure, and it appears that the principal did what he could to avert potential confrontations, especially in light of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Sears's message of tolerance and recognition of all who make up the American ethnic composition is evident in the students' reflections. The students' interpretation of the bombing and the school assembly are foregrounded by what they were taught in schools and most likely the values instilled in them by their family and community. All of the entries written by students are transcribed in the exact manner in which they were written.<sup>256</sup>

Keisoo -- English 7A1<sup>257</sup> -- Dec. 8, 1941

#### **Our Assembly**

Today Mr. Sears talked to us about tolerance. As we know tolerance means to be friendly to other in any way.

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<sup>256</sup> All the entries are typed in the exact manner in which they were written by the students -- including spelling and grammar inaccuracies. Only the students' first names are used. This approach was used to maintain anonymity while focusing on each individual student as real and historical participants.

When war broke out in the Far East situation yesterday some citizen of this country were intolerance. The people who are intolerant do not think before they speak.

Every person should be tolerant to different nationality if they have enemies.

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Fumiko -- English 7A1 -- December 8, 1941

Morning Assembly

The morning assembly was good for it tells to be good friends or neighbors wither our skin are different. That skin does not count by shelf but our spirit for helping people and cleaned heart count more for America and honesty too counts more for defending and best of all is love one another. We are all brothers and sisters even our parents and teachers but they are sent to take care of us and to give us more education and to become a better boy and girl.

The poem was good also and that all make to become American.

I wish sometimes if there were no war or evil thing, that do now happen were stop we could be friendly with country more and more until the end of the world than people would be like neighbor, no war, no unclean heart, but all clean and cheerful voice in this world.

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Katsu -- English 7A1 -- December 8, 1941

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<sup>257</sup> Many of the students' writings have designations such as "7A1" on their headers. The 7 refers to their grade, the A being the semester in which they were enrolled in Ella Evanson's class, and I being the first

### This Morning Assembly

In this morning assembly Mr. Sears experimented about having the morning assembly in the second period and next week it would be the third period because we always miss the first period class.

He spoke to us about not hating each other first because we have mixed nationalities in this school. But instead cooperate with each other and think of other people as our neighbors.

He also told us a story about a German boy and a Italian boy being a good American Citizens and even if their country is in war they are very good friends.

Mr. Sears read us a poem copied from a bulletin that a boy from Miss Fritgerald's<sup>258</sup> room. Then he mentioned about the paper drive. After he was through with his speech we sang America from the bottom of our hearts and we also saluted the flag.

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Betty-- English 7A1 -- Dec. 8, 1941

#### Assembly

This morning we had a assembly in the hall. Mr. Sears told us that if even we have a different color face, it's alright because we're American Citizen. We all should be American Citizen.

He read us a poem of prayer because in school or out side the school the people might not be friendly with the other people which as (Japanese

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period of their school day (and usually their homerooms).

people) cause the war is going to be. When I heard Mr. Sears read that poem I was proud to be a American Citizen. And I'll (I am) always be American Citizen.

This year is the second world war in many years if it goes on.

When we were saluting the flag I was proud to salute the flag. Some people were crying because they were proud of there country.

Nisei were Americans. Their emphatic tone and insistence to be recognized as viable citizens bespeaks, I argue, a cry for recognition. This theme plays out repeatedly. Within the context of their essays, Nisei students obviously picked up on the meaning of tolerance. The students used phrases such as “friendly to other in any way,” the importance of being “good friends or neighbors wither [*sic*] our skin are different, “not hating each other because we have mixed nationalities” at Washington, and that “if even we have a different color face, it’s alright because we’re American citizen.” The students’ interpretations of the meaning of tolerance, leaves open the question of how much an appreciation of difference was taught and understood .

Furthermore, some of the Nisei students seemed to personalize the content of the school’s assembly, especially in relation to a poem of prayer that was read in front of the student body. It further helped, perhaps, to legitimate their presence as loyal Americans. Betty’s statement, “When I heard Mr. Sears read that poem I was proud to be a American Citizen. And I’ll (I am ) always be American Citizen,” re-emphasizes the importance of what citizenship meant to her. At a tenuous moment in her life history, perhaps she needed to let her teacher, Ella Evanson, and the reader know that she was, and is, indeed

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<sup>258</sup> Petronilla Fitzgerald taught Art at Washington School as indicated in the *1941-1942 Seattle Public*

a viable and legitimate “American.” In some respects as well, perhaps Betty needed to re-emphasize that point to herself in writing. The tears that were shed at the assembly, while saluting the flag, perhaps intimate the level of seriousness and importance of appreciating one’s place in American society. It can be seen as conjoining the official and unofficial responses into a tearful moment of understanding the fragility of democracy.

The idea of difference and race, and how it fit within the concept of citizenship, was central in the minds of the Nisei. The students’ interpretations of race, either conceived by them or by Sears, were noted by their use of “different color face or skin” or “mixed nationalities” in their writings. In that regard, citizenship meant an acceptance of individuals from various ethnic backgrounds and racial characteristics, most notably differentiated by skin color. Race as a social and cultural construct was something that was used in the past to create an artificial hierarchy of social order. And for Sears to express the idea of equality of races, despite skin color, could have come as a surprise, as well as a welcome message, for some students.

The idea of race in the 1940s, especially in the Seattle area, can be understood in greater depth through the evidence provided by the minutes of a 1939 meeting of the Council of Jewish Women (CJW) and their work in the Settlement House near Washington School. One of the meetings of the CJW brought an anthropologist from the University of Washington speaking on Franz Boas’ concept of the word “race,” and why the term should no longer be used:

Dr. Rose Ostrow introduced the speaker of the evening, Dr. Melville Jacobs of the U of W who spoke on 'An Anthropologist's Point of View on Race.' He explained that Dr. Franz Boas, noted authority on anthropology, urges the elimination of the use of the word race from the english [*sic*] language. He argues that there is really only one race on the face of the earth, -- the human race, -- that the gradual shadings from region to region are scientifically unjustifiable as 'races,' -- he suggests the use of the term 'varieties' or 'regional types.'<sup>259</sup>

It is not known if Sears was directly influenced by the theoretical concepts of race at the time. However, Sears' approach was congruent to the ideas of leading anthropologists, such as Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict, who also influenced intercultural educators within the Progressive Education Association. Time and again, his principles of racial equality, of one race -- the human race, and the need for tolerance and brotherly love were reflected in the writings of Nisei and non-Nisei students. The students compositions address how the concept of race should be focused more on the commonalities in the human race rather than one's facial features.

The following set of writings reveal what non-Nisei students<sup>260</sup> felt about Sears's Pearl Harbor assembly presentation. They, too, expressed the idea that being an American encompassed an array of nationalities and skin colors, albeit slightly different.

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<sup>259</sup> "Minutes of The Business and Professional Women's Evening Committee of the Seattle Council of Jewish Women", 17 April 1939, Council of Jewish Women, University of Washington Manuscripts and Archives Division, Accession No. 2089-29, Box 6, Folder 25.

Edmond -- English 7A1 -- Dec. 8, 1941

Our Assembly

This morning Mr. Sears us a good talk. "When we were friend, we love each other, but suddenly we hates each other maybe we had a fight or something else. This is same to school or between two nations. In school we were playing together, but some thing is not good, or the thing they don't like. And started to hate. War were broke out in the same way."

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Maurice -- English 7A1 -- Dec. 8, 1941

American's

In our first assembly, Mr. Sears our principal spoke on the freindly attitude toward the pacific crisis. He said, "We are all American's and we here at Washington want no part of race hated. We are all under the same roof."

In the short time he spoke he accomplish very much.

He spoke of 23 years ago, of how he work in the naturalazion dept., and of two gents (men), one a Italian and a German who at the same time as Germans were fighting Italians were still good neighbors and good americans. We should now be that way here at Washington school.

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Shirley -- English 7A1 -- Dec. 8, 1941

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<sup>260</sup> Washington School had a mixture of students from all different backgrounds. Because I could not discern the ethnicities of students in this section, I refer to them as "non-Nisei," i.e., they were most likely

## Assembly

In assembly this morning Mr. Sears told us about being intolerant he said that now because of the war different races might fight with each other and say that they started the war. He said that no matter what race or color you are that you are all American citizens and that even if your parent came from country that are fighting aganest us that we had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Sears also read a peom that a boy in our school made up it was very patreotic and expressed the feeling that and imagrant might have coming to America.

Mr. Sears said that people said to him that they thought he would have trouble with the children of Washington School because of the many different races and Mr. Sears said that he trust us and knew that we would not be intolerant.

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Gerald -- English 7A1 -- Dece. 8, 1941

## Our Assembly

This morning Mr. Sears our principal of Washington School gave a talk about tolerancet. He said that we should not fight each other because their is nothing to fight about, ecsepth that the United States and Japan are at war but that should make little different because we are all citizens of American and citizen should not fight but be friend and help to make America a strong nation.

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European American, Jewish, and African American students.

A noticeable distinction between the writing samples are the non-Nisei's use of the word "race" and "hate" in their reflections. In paraphrasing Principal Sears's speech, some of the students reveal, "'We are all American's [*sic*] and we here at Washington want no part of race hated [*sic*]. We are all under the same roof,'" "He said that no matter what race or color you are that you are all American citizens." Although the underlying messages between Nisei and non-Nisei are similar, there are differences between the usage of language to convey certain ideas. The Nisei students' writings indicate a level of internalization of being a proud citizen, especially in light of Sears's message of tolerance. In contrast, the non-Nisei student's summary of the school's assembly concentrated on what Sears said and not necessarily on what the message meant to them. This might be an indication that the bombing of Pearl Harbor was one that was "foreign" and distant to their experiences. One might imagine that they did not have to consider nor question their status as citizens, for it was not a point of contention in their lives as it was for their Nisei peers.

In the non-Nisei's interpretation of Sears's assembly message, it appears as though the principal provided an analysis of the war by describing it in terms of friendships. As friends are prone to engage in disagreements and fights, he explained the war as once friendly countries embroiled in a violent disagreement. The point of emphasis seemed to rest on Sears's insistence of not conflating the violence between countries at war with the bonds of intercultural friendships that developed at Washington School. Much like the tone of the passage that introduced this chapter, Sears stressed the importance of maintaining friendships among schoolmates.

The assembly concentrated not only on the bombing, but on the importance of examining citizenship from an all-inclusive framework. Principal Sears reminded his students why differences in race or racial features should not be a means for discounting the rights of citizenship in the United States, even though the realities of war contradicted that idea. Sears, within his sphere of influence at Washington school, continued to emphasize the rights of all people who live in a democracy.

### **Nisei Reflections on the Eve of Their Incarceration**

While it might be said that history is made by the actions of political leaders, I argue that history is made by everyday people, living everyday lives, interrupted by moments of extreme circumstances. The accumulation of those individual experiences is what distinguishes a history that is lived and formed by all from a history of the few. An important reminder in this regard is that the students of Washington School, by providing their thoughts in writing, helps us to shape a deeper understanding and interpretation of the events on the eve of the incarceration. The actions of the government, albeit an important factor in deciding historical events, is better understood in the context of the participants for whom the exclusionary policies were affected.

The following farewell entries, then, are reflections by young Americans grappling with the conflicting message of citizenship and exclusion. As will be further highlighted by the narrators later in the chapter, the news of the incarceration cast the Japanese as inferior. While growing up not having to think explicitly about how race shaped their lives, Nisei were suddenly thrust into a situation where their racial identity

became a major determining factor for exclusion.<sup>261</sup> Within a few months time, their schools, homes and all their belongings had to be abandoned for a tenuous life behind barbed wire. The following entries are a lasting reminder of how everyday young people were attempting to reconcile and negotiate the ideal of democracy with racism; and how the teacher provided an opportunity for some to express their frustrations, confusions, and disappointments:

Mar. 25, 42

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am sorry we are leaving because I have first become acquainted with this school. I will always remember this school and teachers as one of the best.

Sincerely,

Mary

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March 29, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

We are leaving our city, to where I am going I am wholly ignorant. However I am not unhappy, nor do I have objections for as long as this evacuation is for the benefit of the United State. But I do am regreting about leaving this school and the thought that I shall not see for a long while pains me extremely. Your pleasant ways of teaching had made my heart yearn for the

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<sup>261</sup> The government's final report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded that the incarceration was a result of: 1) Race Prejudice, 2) Wartime Hysteria, and 3) Failure of

days when I was in your classroom. Your kind smile and your wonderful work you did for me shall be one of my pleasant memories.

Tooru (8B4)

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Mar. 25, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

Because of this war, we are asked to leave this city of Seattle. I am sure I will miss my teachers and Mr. Sears. There was never a school like Washington, and I will sure miss it. I will miss you very much. You have been very kind and patient throughout my years.

Sincerely Yours,

Masaharu (7A1)

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Mar. 20, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I well start out my letter by writing about the worst thing. I do not want to go away but the goverment says we all have to go so we have to mind him. It said in the Japanese paper that we have to go east of the cascade mt. but we were planning to go to Idaho or Montana.

Now that the war is going on many Japanese men, women, and girls are out of jobs. And a lot of my friends fater are in consentration camp. If I go there

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I hope I will have a teacher just like you. And rather more I hope the war will be  
straightened out very soon so that I would be able to attend Washington school.

Sincerely Yours

Sadako (7B1)

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March 31, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am sorry we have to leave. Just when I was going to graduate  
Washington School. I'm glad that I had you in the 7B & A & 8B. I hope we do  
not have to go. Where ever I am going I wish I have a teacher like you. I  
enjoyed being in your room very much. When I go away I will always think about  
the wonderful time I had in Washington School. In so many months I wish the war  
will be over. I will always remember you.

Your pupil,

Martha (8A1)

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4/2/41

Dear Miss Evanson,

I'm very sorry to leave Seattle. I shall miss all my friends. I enjoyed  
being in your room in the 7B4. I shall miss you and all the rest.

With Love,

Kazuko (8B5)

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Mar. 25, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I feel very sad because I have to leave such a nice school and all the helpful teachers especially you. I have been interested in history about Gods and Goddesses. When I first started to learn and read about them it seemed interesting and began to like it.

When I first started school I was about 5 (five) years of age. I haven't stayed once, took a double in fourth grade, and haven't took me since. I am eleven now and am going to be twelve this year on May ? (so and so). I hope to come back to Seattle after this awful war.

A pupil,

Reiko (7B3)

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4/3/42

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am very lonely without your face smiling before us. I miss you very much but I hope to come back soon.

Your former pupil,

Katsuko

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March 25, 194[2]

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am sorry that we will all be leaving the Washington School, but even though we are I will think about the ways we have been taught. I appreciated the way you and the teachers have been working with us.

Sincerely,

Yeoko (7B3)

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April 16, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson

Remember well and bear in mind

A faithful friend is hard to find

But if you find a friend so just always try before you trust

For if you trust before you try

You will repent before you die

Sincerely,

Teruyo (8A5)

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Mar. 25 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am very sorry I will have to leave Washington School so soon. As long as I am here I will try in some way to appreciate what you've taught me.

We all hope we will win this war (not the Japs) and come back to Seattle for more education.

Sincerely Yours,

James

7B3 Washington School

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Dear Miss Evanson

My heart is so sad to have to leave this school and all the helpful teachers I had, one of whom I liked the best, Miss Evanson. I hope I may come sometime soon to visit the "Dear Old Washington School."

Sincerely,

Aido

7B4-8A6

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Mar. 19, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am writing to you today because I am expecting to move away with in very short time. As you always know the japanese people has been asked by our goverment to evacuate. I do not know yet where we will go. I hope there will be some good school in which I can continual, my school work. I am very sorry

to leave Seattle and Washington School. And most especially to lose you for my teacher. I am hoping the war trouble will be soon over and I could come back to Seattle and be in your school and have you for my teacher again.

Sincerely yours,

Chiyoko (7B1)

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March 25, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am awfully sorry I am leaving, just when I was getting acquainted with the children and work. I would like all of you to write to me. This has been and will be always my favorite school.

For Get Me Not.

Sincerely,

Mary (7B1)

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Dear Miss Evanson,

Since we are leaving, I will always think of you for what you did when I was in your room. You taught me all kinds of things which I am always using.

Sincerely yours

Chizuko.

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March 20, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am very sorry that I will soon be leaving Washington School and the teachers I have. As you know we have been asked to evacuate. My parents still haven't decided where to go. Where I am going I hope there will be a school like Washington School. I also hope to have a good teacher like you. I don't want to leave Seattle because I have been in Seattle from the time I was a little baby. I hate to lose you for my teacher and Mr. Sears as my principal. I know I am going to miss everybody. I am hoping the trouble will be over soon so we will not have to evacuate.

Sincerely,

Yurido (7B1)

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Dear Miss Evanson:

Since we must leave Seattle and move to the east<sup>262</sup> I won't forget Washington School and its patient teachers and principal. I was born in Seattle and I wish it not to perish with bombs and bullets. And if Freedom and Liberty should fall it should grow again.

Don't forget, Buy United States Saving Stamps and bonds!

Sincerely Yours,

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<sup>262</sup> It was believed that some would be evacuated east of the Cascade Mountain range in Washington. This student is probably referring to what was being discussed in the newspapers, radios, and the community. This student, Tokunari, along with his classmates were all taken first to Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington.

Tokunari

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Dear Miss Evanson,

I have missed seeing your smiling face and I will miss you more, after all of us are gone. I enjoyed being in your class a year ago.

With love,

Hisako

---

April 3, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

Four little words, Then a dot, These are the words Forget-me-not.

Love,

Yoshiko

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April 3, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I cannot express the way I enjoyed being one of your formal pupils. I am sorry because I have to leave Washington School and miss you and Mr. Sears and all the teachers. I like to write to my favorite teacher but the time is getting short and I must close this letter.

Respectfully yours,

Kazuo

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March 24, 42

Dear Miss Evanson,

Because of this situation, we are asked to leave this dear city of Seattle and its surroundings. I am sure I will miss my teachers and Mr. Sears. There was never a school like Washington School and I sure will miss it. As for me, the one I will miss most will be you. You have been very patient and kind throughout my work. If the school I will attend next would have a teacher like you I will be only too glad. When I am on my way my memories will flow back to the time I was attending this school. and the assemblies which were held in the hall.

Wherever I go I will be a loyal American

Love,

Emiko (7B1)

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April 17, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

It makes me sad to write in this book for it will mean departure.

I hate to be leaving Seattle, for I'll not see my friends, nor my school but there is nothing I (we) or anyone can do about it.

I have enjoyed being a pupil of yours very much,

Sincerely,

Ai (8A5)

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Mar. 25, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

When the time come for the Japanses people to move out of Seattle it will be hard to go because I was born here. But I will not forget the teacher of my old school and Washington School because they are so kind and I learn many things from them. I wish I can find some teacher that was as nice as you teachers was.

I am a American.

Sincerely Yours,

Haruo (7B1)

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Mar. 24, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am very said we are leaving Washington School with all it's helpful teachers. I will always think of the happy times we had. I hope we have a good school and a teacher like you wherever we go. Whenever I think of Seattle I will think of you and all the teachers.

Sincerely yours,

Kazuko (7B3)

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Mar. 23, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson

I am sorry we have to evacuate because I will miss my studies, teacher's, friend's and our principal, Mr. Sears.

Maybe it is better for us to go and do what the government says. I hope there is a school where I can continue with my studies.

As you know Seattle is my home town so I am sorry to leave here. I hope this war will soon be over because then I could come back and to attend the Dear Old Washington School.

Yours truly,

Kazuko (7B1)

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April 3, 1941

Miss Evanson,

First I wish to thank you for your splendid teachings and second to wish you have success in everything.

Your former student.

Reo

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April 17, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

Flowers may wither, Flowers may die, Pupils may forget you, But never will I.

Yours truly,

Yoshiko (8A5)

7B4-8A5

While the depth and complexity of what is written in the Nisei students' farewell messages are not immediately apparent, I would contend that these passages provide interesting insights on what it means to be an American. At the same time, however, the students' American identity is overlapped and layered with their specific cultural experiences as Japanese Americans. The salient themes in these letters reflect the complex nature of their multiple and sedimented identities.

One of the themes that stands out in these letters is a collective sense of "we-ness" in the writings. The typical farewell begins with "I am sorry we are leaving." The "we" may be referring to the students' families, the Japanese American students, and/or the Japanese American community. "We" is not specified. An immediate analysis of the "we" issue might indicate some aspects of the cultural values of the Japanese American community of downplaying individual identity over a collective and cohesive group identity. Whereas the students are individually "sorry" for leaving, they realize that it is a particular "we" group who is leaving -- a group that has been the focus of governmental exclusionary policies.

Many students phrased their departure in terms of "we are asked to leave Seattle." The usage of the word "ask" connotes a feeling that the evacuation was performed on a

voluntary basis. Indeed, the government did “ask” for volunteer evacuation in the beginning but soon changed to a policy of forced removal. *Nikkei*, by and large, knew that they did not have a choice in the matter. Government newsreels of the time reflected the image of a “benevolent” bureaucracy helping to find a “safe” place for Japanese residents and citizens, and perhaps that ideal was accepted to varying degrees by Japanese and non-Japanese alike. That may explain some of the students’ writings in that particular tone.

Although loyalty is not often explicitly stated by the students, evidence of loyalty on the part of Japanese Americans is apparent. For example, a student wrote, “However I am not unhappy nor do I have objections for as long as this evacuation is for the benefit of the United State [*sic*].” Likewise, another expressed similar sentiments, “I do not want to go away but the goverment [*sic*] says we all have to go so we have to mind him.” Additional excerpts also contain important clues. A student wrote, “It makes me sad to write in this book for it will mean departure. I hate to be leaving Seattle, for I’ll not see my friends, nor my school but there is nothing I (we) or anyone can do about it.” Perhaps because of the hopelessness of the situation, the students felt they had no other choice but to do what the government said. Loyalty, in this manner, was more of obeisance. They were maintaining loyalty to a government that held them suspect. So in an effort to be loyal, they had to do what the government ordered. Another student remarked, “I am sorry we have to evacuate because I will miss my studies, teachers, friends, and our principal, Mr. Sears. Maybe it’s better for us to go and do what the government says. I hope there is a school where I can continuie [*sic*] my studies.” The appearance of a

“general acceptance” on the part of Seattle’s Nikkei may be a misunderstanding of the cultural sentiment of *shikata ga-nai*, “it cannot be helped.”

Loyalty had always been a component of Americanization and citizenship education in the Seattle schools since 1916. While the thrust of the 1930s and 1940s lay more with tolerance and interculturalism, loyalty and patriotism were an aspect of the students’ civic education. At the community level, older Nisei who were involved with the Japanese American Citizens’ League (JACL) stressed the importance of loyalty and patriotism to the US government, especially during this time of forced evacuation. While dissident voices in the Nikkei community questioned the extent to which their loyalty was taken seriously, the public image to portray was one of trust towards the government. After all, they were American citizens, or were they?

The “we-ness” and loyalty, alongside the evacuation’s throwing into question, created a dissonance. One student explained of instances where many Japanese men, women, and girls lost jobs. In the case of Seattle schools, Japanese American school clerks were terminated from employment as increasing prejudice against Nikkei’s grew. The “Westgate Incident,” as it was known, received public attention for a time being.<sup>263</sup> James is emphatic in distinguishing himself from the Japanese of Japan, “We all hope we will win this war (not the Japs) and come back to Seattle for more education.” The “we” is also in reference to “our” government. His assertion of his American identity is also poignantly expressed by other students’ phrases: “Wherever I go I will be a loyal American,” and “I am a[n] American.” For many generations, Japanese Americans

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<sup>263</sup> Fiset, “Redress for Nisei Public Employees in Washington State after World War II.”

fought for recognition and viable rights as American citizens. Their continuous efforts, despite racist governmental policies of the past, to prove loyalty to the United States were left unrewarded.

Moreover the students were making the point that they were all American citizens despite that fact that they had to leave. The Nisei's assertion of their American identities was made more explicit at a time when their status as American citizens was called into question. The students' need to reinforce their identities meant that it was held suspect. Several students remarked how they did not wish to leave because they had been born in Seattle and leaving their homes would sadden them deeply, "I don't want to leave Seattle because I have been in Seattle from the time I was a little baby." Another student wrote, "I was born in Seattle and I wish it not to perish with bombs and bullets." The beginning of one message, "When the time comes for the Japanses [*sic*] people to move out of Seattle, it will be hard to go because I was born here," typifies the general feeling of having to leave a place of one's birth. Reiterating the fact that people born in the United States has automatic citizenship was possibly one of the lessons learned in Ella Evanson's social studies class as well as the assemblies conducted by Principal Sears.

Also evident is the strong feeling of appreciation the students had towards schooling and their teachers, especially Ella Evanson. Despite the interruption of an extreme circumstance in their lives, schooling was a major part of their lives. To conceive of a future without schools was unimaginable. The message of wanting to be in

school and being with former classmates was told time and time again in the students' letters to Evanson from Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington.<sup>264</sup>

### **Non-Nisei Reflections on the Eve of their Classmates' Incarceration**

How much did the news of the incarceration affect the lives of non-Nisei students? Were they at all attempting to reconcile the conflicts between the ideals of democracy and the reality of racism? While these questions might tempt one to conduct a psycho-social analysis, they are nevertheless important to consider in grasping what the "Japanese Evacuation" meant for non-Nisei's.

At a glance, the writings by non-Nisei students on the impending incarceration show a range of emotions, from sadness to indifference and citizenship to racial identification. The wording used to describe the forced removal is phrased as "safety for their own good" and that the government would "take care of them." Perhaps through popular media -- such as the newspapers, radio, or newsreels -- and through national, local, and parental attitudes, one of the students rationalized the "evacuation" the way that she did. While it is impossible to gather the totality and depth of what the students felt, the following writings provide powerful clues. Again the question surfaces as to how well the concept of citizenship had been developed previously:

June -- English 7B3 -- April 24, 1942

The Japanese Evacuation

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<sup>264</sup> These sets of letters from students to Evanson from Camp Harmony are not included in my research.

We are all sorry to see the Japanese leave for we know if they do not have that the white people who don't like the behavior of Japan will start beating up on the American Japanese so that is why they are leaving.

I hope some day after the war is all over the Japanese that were evacuated can come back.

One of my best girl friends is leaving today to a more safer place.

At Washington the 8A girls and one class from the 7B-7A, 8B put on a dance this was a farewell party for the Japanese who were leaving.

I think that it is best for them to leave and go to a much safer place in land.

---

Lamar -- English 7B3 -- April 24, 1942

Japanese Evacuation

The japanese have to all be out of Seattle by May 1. I do not feel very said about it, although there are some good japanese in the city. The children in my room that are japanese are leaving. We have one Chinese girl called Helen<sup>265</sup> in our room. I just recently found out she was Chinese, I always thought she was Japanese.

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Jack

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<sup>265</sup> Last name omitted by author.

Today Washington school boys and girls gave a farwell to the Japanese boy and girl.  
We are very sory thay have to leave and we all are very sory and sad. Thay  
have shown the best of sitizzonship in every way and everything thay have done.

---

Louise -- English 7B3 -- April 24, 1942

The Japanese Evacuation

This week the Japanese are going and I will miss them very much. Mary  
and Dorothy were my best friends and they are going. It is very unhappy for they  
are going and we wish they could stay.

---

Mr. Don -- English 7B3 -- April 24, 1942

Japanese Evacuation

I dont think I like the Evacuation becaus the Japanese when they get where they  
are going they won't have no friends or anything to do. They won't get any  
privlages of the Americans. They won't be able to see a movie or nothing else  
like that. I think they should have the privileges of theAmericans because there  
just as good citizens as we are.

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Doris

The departure<sup>266</sup>

I am very sorry that the japanese children are leaving Washington school. They were really good friends to all of us American children even though there American citizens, too.

I am very sorry to see some of my best friends go which I have first got acquainted with this semester. It was really a pleasure.

I am going to try if I can to get their autographs or picture of them so I can remember them always.

Japanese Evacuation<sup>267</sup>

For some I am glad, some sorry. I know some J. boys that would punch holes in tires and break windows if you ask them to. Other are real nice people. They have manners and sometimes are considered better Am. cit. than most white people. Ernst

Marsha -- English 7B3 -- April 24, 1942

## Japanese Evacuation

The Japanese people are going to leave us soon. We are all wishing that they could stay. Some are going today and others after ward. In

<sup>266</sup> Doris crossed out her original title, "Japanese Evacuation," and replaced it with "The departure" written above it.

<sup>267</sup> Evanson's note in parentheses: "This is in Ella Evanson's handwriting -- for some reason copied from the original of 'Ernest,' which is not in hand." No date.

Washington School all the Japanese are very nice. The Chinese and Japanese never quarrel or fight and they are good sports. In our room all of us like all of the Japanese pupils. Some are going to Idaho Falls, Montana, and other places.

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Grace

Japanese Evacuation

After all we're all Americans but the children with Japanese ancestors will have to be evacuated.

Washington school will not be the same soon because it will be much smaller. Many faces will be missing, to our dispare.

We are sorry to see the Japanese go.

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Marjorie

Japanese Evacuation

I feel very sorry for the Japanese that have to go away. Some of my best friends are Japanese, but I'm sure that Our Government will take care of them, as they were here and we'll have a small school when the Japanese go away. We are sure that they're like it over there. It's very beautiful there. My brother has a farm over east of the mountain. And every summer I go there and maybe I may see a few of my friend.

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Lee Roy

The Japanese Evacuation

Some of the Japanese boys, and girls, of Washington, Jounior High School, are leaving us today. Some of them are leaving today, some monday, and the rest Tuesday. About 25 or 30 children are leaving today. They are going to go to a camp at Puyallup, which use to be a fair.

Today in our Assembly we had a fairwell party for the Japanese boy, and girls. The girls, and boys danced there. They danced to many songs.

I had a friend that is leaving today.

We were all very sad to see the Japanese children go today and the other days.

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210-28 So. -- Seattle, Wn. -- April 24, 1942

Dear Mary,

I am sorry you have to leave us soon. I wish when you get to your new home that you will send me your address and write to me. I posted your picture in my book. When you get there send me some more.

Will you say hello to Ryko, Kazodo and Mary H. Please. Well I'll close.  
Love Betty.

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Bob

### Farewell Party

Today we had a farewell party in honor of all the Japanese that will be leaving in the next few days. The different rooms did dances. The one I and almost everybody else though was best were the dances put on by the 8-A dancing club.

We are all sorry to see the Japanese go. I hope the war will soon end in our favor so that the Japanese will be able to come back to Seattle.

There is obvious sadness in the tone of many non-Nisei reflections, especially the female students concerned over losing friendships with other Nisei females. Relationships of all kinds were difficult to maintain and many budding friendships between students were ended by the forced evacuation. Some students indicated how much the student body would change once their Nisei peers were gone. More than one-third of Washington school's population would disappear after May of 1942. At Bailey Gatzert, where the Asian student population comprised an overwhelming majority, the sea of empty desks were constant reminders of missing classmates. Schooling was disrupted on all fronts.

One can only surmise how the boys and girls interacted at the farewell party.<sup>268</sup> It was there perhaps that Ella Evanson, with her farewell book made for her by a student, had the idea to have all the Japanese American students write their farewell reflections. The songs and dances that filled the classroom perhaps hid the feelings of sorrow and uncertainty soon to follow. For one last time, all the students of Washington were able to

experience time together. Many non-Nisei students might have felt a little more at ease in the thought that the government would “take care” of Japanese Americans in providing “saftey for their own good.” They believed in the benevolence of the government to act on behalf of all citizens. Regardless of their naïve understandings, the next day and subsequent ones to follow would affect everyone’s life.<sup>269</sup>

While many students were sad, not all students felt that way. As one student wrote, “For some I am glad, for some I am sorry...” The probity of their remarks reveal, at least, that some students did not hold strong feelings toward their Nisei classmates. On an essay written by Gerald, Ella Evanson’s handwritten note claimed that he had been in a “knife incident” with Hideo and friend. To be sure, conflicts between students and some occasional fights between boys, in particular, are to be expected and did in fact occur. However, even the ones not very sad to see their Japanese classmates leave did indicate how much their Nisei classmates were even “better citizens than the whites.”

The writing by Lamar raises an interesting point in regards to the acknowledgment of different ethnicities within the Asian culture. This student realized for the first time, in light of the national event, that there was a Chinese student in the class. Given the student's recent awareness, it raise an important question: what was the practice of Washington School in terms of recognizing differences? How students identified their Asian peers leaves open the issue of how Washington School’s citizenship education was practiced or, at least, of how effective it was.

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<sup>268</sup> *The Seattle Times* reported that many Nikkei were planning “farewell parties” prior to their departure to Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington. The specific article is entitled, “Japs, About To Go, Plan Farewells,” in *The Seattle Times* (26 April 1942), C1.

<sup>269</sup> Unfortunately, the oral history narrators have no recollection of this last day at Washington School.

Some students expressed the citizenship of their classmates with statements such as: "Thay [*sic*] have shown the best of sitizzonship [*sic*] in every way and everything thay [*sic*] have done," as well as: "They have manners and sometimes are considered better Am. cit. than most white people." Citizenship and citizenship education, as far as the tradition in the Seattle Public Schools' Americanization program, included an emphasis on loyalty<sup>270</sup>

Another student's concern rested with his Nisei classmates no longer being able to enjoy the everyday "rights" of "Americans" such as watching movies. Don's consideration for the daily activities his Nisei classmates would miss indicates that he was attempting to grasp what lay ahead for his school friends. He realizes that the "privileges" of the Americans should be open to all. He concludes his essay, however, with "because there [*sic*] just as good citizens as we are." Here an "us-them" distinction in citizenship indicates that an "American" is someone who is White. To be sure, the normative view of an America that is defined by Whites was not new. Neither the school nor the friendships between White and Nisei schoolmates structurally changed that perspective. Grace's sentiment captures the contradiction and dissonance felt by many Nisei: "After all we're all Americans but the children with Japanese ancestors will have to be evacuated." Being a Japanese American held provisional citizenship status.

Specifically, the tenuous citizenship status meant being a "non-alien." With such play on words, Nisei were categorized as such and deemed unequal to (white) citizens --

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<sup>270</sup> According to the Seattle Public Schools' 1927 *Triennial Report* (43), students were graded on citizenship based on the following points: Courtesy, Promptness, Dependability, Cheerful Cooperation, Self-reliance, Initiative, Thrift, Self-Control, Good Sportsmanship, School Service, and Good Workmanship.

even though "non-alien" really meant citizen. Yoshiko Uchida's autobiography, *The Invisible Thread*, explains the situation quite dramatically:

It was a sad day for all Americans of Japanese ancestry. Our government no longer considered us its citizens, simply referring to us as 'non-aliens.' It also chose to ignore the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution that guaranteed 'due process of law' and 'equal protection under the law for all citizens.' We were to be imprisoned in concentration camps without a trial or hearing of any kind.

'But we're at war with Germany and Italy, too,' I objected. 'Why are only the Japanese Americans being imprisoned?'

No one, including our government, had an answer for that.<sup>271</sup>

Indeed, language became a powerful tool for devising race-based policies of exclusion. To be an American for the Japanese required that they be incarcerated, behind barbed wire fences, and saluting the flag placing loyalty to a government that betrayed over 120,000 of its residents. The narrators' own analyses and responses to the students' writings indicate, too, that feelings of betrayal, confusion, and sorrow surrounded their everyday lives for the next three years.

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<sup>271</sup> Yoshiko Uchida, *The Invisible Thread* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: J. Messner, 1991), 69.

## Narrator's Response to the Letters

How the students possibly negotiated and reconciled feelings of the news of the evacuation are further gleaned from an analysis by the oral history narrators. They were asked to freely respond to a sample of the students' writings as well as Ella Evanson's collection the author shared with the narrators. Their reactions, then, are in response to the writings that resonated most to them.

### Hisa Kato

Hisa's first response was to Tooru's essay in that the evacuation would be for the "benefit of the United States." She agreed with what he had to say and added:

I think that's how a lot of us kind of felt because we were, we figure we're Americans and we're Japanese, but we're Americans too. And of course, like, all the while we were going to school we saluted the flag of the United States. So well, we figure if the government thinks this is the best thing to do, that's what we *had* to do whether we like it or not. This is expressed really well in the first letter.<sup>272</sup>

The idea of "safety for their own good" and the threat of potential violence against the Nikkei community were real concerns. Sadako wrote, "I well start out my letter by writing about the worst thing. I do not want to go away but the goverment [*sic*]

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<sup>272</sup> Sample letters were given to the narrators in which to respond. Hisa's reference to the first letter is in response to the first sample letter given to her.

says we all have to go so we have to mind him.” There were no real choices available for them. The idea, reflected in many essays, that “we have been asked to leave Seattle” is one rooted in the illusion of choice. They were forced to evacuate. Hisa understands that point made by Sadako:

I think that's how we felt. We didn't have any power to change it. How do you even go about making changes at that age? Students expressed themselves real well for the age group. They wonder why? And you never got the answers. You don't want to go but you go because the government tells you you have to go. I think too, that maybe it's safer for us to be away from, because the propaganda was there's ships, because we were so close to the Pacific Ocean and everything. That there's submarines coming in closer and the ships are bringing troops in closer. Because the location [of where] Seattle was, not like you were way out in the middle of the country. And they kept saying that it might be safer for you [Nikkei] when you're away from the coast. So in a way, we thought, well maybe it is safer for us to go. And there was violence toward the Japanese, so we kept thinking, well maybe before things get worse it might be better if we do go kind of away where there's very few Japanese.

There was growing concern of the increased violence towards Japanese in the United States after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Hisa noticed, too, that her schoolmates started to react differently towards her and her Nisei friends:

The prejudice was coming out a lot more, I think, as the days went along. There's the propaganda on the radio and then even at school when your own friends are wearing these 'I am Chinese' buttons. And I'm sure that the kids themselves didn't feel it that much but they were told by their parents not to associate with the Japanese students or something. A lot of the friends that you had were kinda ignoring you or keeping their distance. Then I think too, I don't really know, but like the Chinese people especially, I think, were worried that they might be mistaken for Japanese. Because most Caucasians would not be able to tell a Chinese or a Japanese apart. And so maybe the parents were kind of concerned they didn't want their kids to be associating with the Japanese because they might be mistaken for Japanese. Little by little you start feeling scared. It's what you hear, what you see that kind of adds up to it. . . . It all builds up to a point . . . where something would happen.

Confounded by all the messages bombarding Hisa, she and her family and Nisei friends were overcome with feelings of fear. It was not a type of fear that happened all at once. Rather, it was slowly built to a boiling point, as she aptly states, to "where something would happen." Her Chinese classmates and member of the Chinese American community in Seattle began distinguishing themselves from the Japanese by wearing badges that bore the phrase, "I am Chinese." That was meant to signify for non-

Asians that violence should not be aimed against a Chinese ally. A number of friendships were severed because of the message of hate aimed against the Japanese.

### **Mitsie Fuji**

Mitsie was at Bailey Gatzert on the eve of the incarceration. She feels that the messages as told by Sears in the school's assembly on December 8, 1941 was very much like the one Ada J. Mahon gave at Bailey Gatzert. She was caught by the phrase "not the Japs," in one of the farewell messages as one Nisei student was making a clear distinction between Seattle's Nikkei and the Japanese in Japan. She was taken by the students' ability to make that remark at that age.

Mitsie cannot recall any writing assignments on the incarceration and it never dawned on her to write to her teachers at that time. The way she sees it, the idea of the evacuation was one that was too difficult to place in coherent terms, especially as a young person, "If we didn't grasp it, I can't imagine that they [the students at Washington] would." When asked how she thinks non-Nisei students might have viewed things:

The way I look at it, the only impressions they would have I would think would be the ones that their parents gave them. They would, not follow the lead of their parents, but I'm sure take the direction from them as to how to react to it or what to think of it. Like we all do, you know? I must have been out of it. Obviously I don't remember that much. . . When you're younger too, we were all so naïve, I think compared to kids today that age. I mean such a world of difference. So if we were a little more

sophisticated maybe I'd remember more but a little more worldly, but we lived in such a narrow world, small world, so that's about it.

Mitsie's life in Seattle's Nihonmachi did not lend itself to a diverse, intercultural experience. The racialized zoning of neighborhoods confined Mitsie and her fellow Asian community members to a particular location in Seattle. Hence her interactions with other peers in school and in the community was with other Nisei's. The way that Mitsie frames her life experiences, ideas of race and difference was not a conscious reality. The war brought those issues to the surface. Mitsie's lack of specific memories of schooling prior to the incarceration is also a telling reminder of how, to a certain degree, her immediate reality was her small world of everyday life.

### **Kaz Ishimitisu**

At first glance, Kaz did not recognize his farewell note to Evanson. In fact, he glanced over his farewell message to Evanson without even blinking an eye. He says that he did not like to write and does not really remember his time in Evanson's class. His lack of memory for that time frame becomes readily understandable when he adds:

At that time, there was a tremendous amount of fear, as a child. When you're going to lose everything, and you're mom is hurt bad and she cried, 'What should we do about the children? What kind of clothes can we bring for them?' We could only bring what you could carry . . . the parents concern was the welfare of the children. And of course there was

anger, too. There was anger because we didn't do anything! What have we done?

To be sure, for some Nisei, schooling was perhaps the last thing on their minds. It also adds another complex component to the collection of writings. With all that the Nisei students were feeling at home, with regard to the evacuation, did schooling have relevance in their lives? That is certainly an open question. However, Kaz does provide another important insight to consider in how students viewed their teachers at the time:

Many of the teachers then really cared about teaching, really teaching. Miss Galen was my music teacher, I remember her at Bailey Gatzert day. But in Washington Junior High School I know that Miss [indecipherable] gave me a "D" when I didn't write a book report . . . I loved to play more than anything as a kid.

Kaz also remembers the bright smiles the teachers had and how that helped some students to cope. Many of the students' writings also include how the teachers' smiles would be missed and that they would fondly recall their time at Washington.

Tooru's essays were immediately recognized by Kaz:

This is my buddy, Tooru. I don't know what happened to this fellow. Oh yeah, he was a very, very smart man, Tooru was . . . he was a brilliant fellow. He passed away, he's gone. He wanted to be a like a teacher, a minister. He was too brilliant. He was a real thinker, a philosopher. I

think he suffered a lot . . . all the hate, trying to comprehend what causes all this hate. What can be done? With that type of thinking. It's hard.

Hisa and Mitsie also recall Tooru as being a genius. It seems as though because of his unusually high intellect, he was at times ostracized by his peers. At the same time, however, the narrators remember having respect for his intelligence and deep reflection. According to the narrators, Tooru recently passed away.

Kaz did not specifically remember Principal Sears but remarks that the teachers and principals were "kind people." Upon reading some of the farewell remarks, he added how deeply upsetting it was to have to go. It further upset him that there was the possibility of his being recruited into the Army to kill people, which ran in strong opposition to his Christian beliefs. So for him, there were multiple reasons for his distaste for the war. Not only was he angry that his civil rights had been denied, he was also struggling with the idea that he might have had to kill people for the war effort. The dissonance he felt at the time contained multiple layers.

## **Conclusion**

Seldom can schools change world events. At best, schools can offer opportunities for students to make sense of the dissonant world around them. Washington School, with teachers such as Ella Evanson and Principal Arthur Sears, provided a context in which to have students discuss, in composition form, how they were making sense of Pearl Harbor and the news of the incarceration. They instilled the lessons of democratic citizenship education that had been a tradition in the Seattle

Schools for many decades. While school officials themselves were powerless to overturn the Executive Order 9066, they reminded their students that everyone was an American. Homerooms, assembly programs, and composition opened up the space for students to learn about democracy and citizenship, and to express the lessons learned.

Through the students written expressions, many powerful ideas emerge. Nisei students emphasized their loyalty to the United States regardless of the outcome of their lives. As citizens, they trusted in the government. Schools continued to remind their students that everyone was an American, regardless of which countries were at war with the United States. However, many Nisei still faced chaotic home lives. Some of their fathers were arrested by the FBI and interned in Fort Missoula, Montana. Many of their mothers were left to resolve the final details of their removal from Seattle. Most of their belongings had to be sold. Family memorabilia were either burned – for it might have been deemed “suspect” by the FBI – or were sold to the lowest bidder.

For non-Nisei students, they themselves had to face the idea that their friends would soon be gone. They also trusted in the government to take care of their schoolmates. “After all,” as one student wrote, “we’re all American citizens but the children with Japanese ancestors will have to be evacuated.” The distinction between “American” and “American Japanese” became more apparent at this time. Despite the fact that Nisei were citizens, they were imprisoned for looking like the “enemy.” *Shikata ga nai*, it cannot (could not) be helped.

## CONCLUSION

The strength and persistence of Nikkei's to survive the years behind bars is also a testament to their faith in the power and promise afforded in a democracy. The Civil Liberties Act, signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 acknowledged the findings, of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, that the imprisonment of Japanese Americans was motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and failure of political leadership.<sup>273</sup> Nisei and Sansei, third generation Japanese Americans, spearheaded the Redress Movement to seek personal justice for every individual incarcerated during World War II. They reminded the general public that democracy was not in force. American citizens were denied due process and the forced imprisonment of innocent civilians was a serious breach of democratic principles -- rudimentary lessons all students learn in schools.

Democracy, loyalty, citizenship. These were the very lessons taught in the Seattle Schools from 1916 up until the time of the Japanese American incarceration. The first Superintendent, Frank Cooper, laid down a tradition of steering a moderate course in response to Americanization pressures. Cities across the United States represented a range in how Americanization programs were implemented. Some places fought hard to implement English-only practices and require their immigrant students to conform to Anglo standards, while others offered a more social welfare approach in the assimilation process. In Seattle, Superintendent Frank Cooper early on resisted the efforts by

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<sup>273</sup> *Personal Justice Denied*, 459.

Daughters of the American Revolution and the Minute Men to control school curricula and activities devoted to patriotism and loyalty. Cooper also stood firm in favor of not erecting a permanent school building for immigrant students with limited English proficiency. A relevant curriculum, and not rote learning, was his main pedagogical emphasis in schools. Seattle schools also served the needs of immigrant communities by offering Night Classes on Americanization and English Language instruction. All of these curricular and extra-curricular components laid the foundation for a progressive approach to Americanization and citizenship education through the 1930s.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the international political upheavals redirected ways in which schools should educate for democratic citizenship. Educational organizations and its' leaders in the National Educational Association and the Progressive Education Association emphasized the need for character education. Tolerance and a push towards intercultural understanding was a major thrust for character and citizenship. Seattle Schools, through curricular and extracurricular content, also employed similar concepts to educate their students on the values of civic ideals.

*Successful Living and Living Today -- Learning for Tomorrow* were the primary character and curriculum guides used in the Seattle Public Schools to promote ideas of tolerance and intercultural understanding in a democracy. Influenced by the PEA and the NEA and the intercultural education movement, the Seattle Schools, and Washington School in particular, drew on the progressive intercultural framework in responding to the events of Pearl Harbor and the incarceration. *Successful Living and Living Today -- Learning for Tomorrow* are evidence of an early form of multicultural education in the Seattle Schools.

With the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the signing of the Executive Order 9066, school teachers and administrators acted as moral agents by conceiving of their own agency in the context of injustice. They knew that the political forces of the Second World War and the incarceration could not be stopped. Many teachers and administrators privately dealt with the message of democracy and dissonance on their own. However, they knew that the principles of democracy, on which the United States stands, needed reinforcing, especially for their Nisei students. Ada Mahon, Principal of Bailey Gatzert Elementary, ordered her Chinese students to take off the “I am Chinese” badges distinguishing them from Japanese students at the assembly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. While Mahon could not affect change in the community’s actions toward wearing identification badges, she realized that in the context of her school, she had the power to control how democratic principles were to be understood.

Likewise, Principal Arthur Sears of Washington School in his school’s assembly made it known to his students that everyone was an American. The need for brotherly love rather than hate was required. He warned his students that there would be the possibility of violence against Nikkei outside of school, but that he trusted his students to reach for understanding and tolerance – the basic lessons of citizenship the students learned in school. Early on, Sears understood the need for immigrant school children to appreciate the cultures and values of their parents. The most healthy form of democratic citizenship education was one in which students learned to combine aspects of their cultural and “American” values.

The early forms of multicultural education, through an emphasis on interculturalism and tolerance, proved a lasting and important lesson for Nisei today. The oral history narrators recollected their time at Bailey Gatzert Elementary and how the simple lessons taught in schools, and with the extracurricular clubs such as the Good American Citizens' Club, helped to foster an identity where discrimination did not play a big role. While aspects of the "color-blind" philosophy was in force at the time in the 1930s and 1940s, especially with an emphasis that the only race that existed was the human race, many students did not think twice about notions of race and difference. As the oral history interviews indicate, it was not until the war and the news of the incarceration erupted that they were faced with feelings of inferiority.<sup>274</sup> Their early schooling played a big part in how they identified as Americans. Subsequently the war made them confront the lessons of democracy learned in school with the dissonance of being treated as an alien enemy.

How school teachers and administrators of Seattle Schools reacted to wartime events have direct implications for teaching in multicultural contexts today. How do we teach for democratic citizenship when forms of racism and discrimination still exist? What can schools do to foster ways for students to express their innermost souls? How do we teach for ambiguity? Seattle schools, and Washington School in particular, were faced with these very questions. School officials did not know what would happen with the war and with their students about to be imprisoned. They knew, however, that one of the ways for students to confront these uncertainties was by writing about that which

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<sup>274</sup> That does not mean, however, that racism and discrimination did not always exist at some level.

affected their lives. The curriculum of the school had to connect with the realities the students were facing. Homerooms and school assembly programs provided the opportunities for students to express the realities with which they were faced. However uneasy and tenuous that reality was, school personnel had to address how one was to live with such ambiguities.

I do not believe that schools can change the scope of international politics nor the structural inequalities of our society. That the aim of democracy exists alongside much that is undemocratic is an everyday reality that all students, at some point, must face. At best, schools can offer the space of hope, the promise of what democracy can offer in the face of injustice and ambiguity. Through such lessons can we envision the possibility of what could and should lie ahead, an increasingly democratic society with increasingly democratic relations.

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## APPENDIX A: ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE

### **I. Biographical Information**

1. Birth, birthplace
2. Father's names, mother's maiden name; siblings
3. Birthplace: father, mother
4. Father and mother's work
5. Narrator's education
6. Schools attended (including Japanese Language Schools, if applicable)
7. Age in 1942

### **II. Schooling Experiences**

1. What were some of the activities you remember participating in school?
2. What were your impressions of the teachers and principals?
3. What were your relationships with other students?
4. What was it like in school after you heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?
5. Do you recall any events or activities being organized in the school after the bombing?
6. What was it like in school after the "Evacuation Orders" were made public?
7. What events or activities were organized in the school in response to Executive Order 9066?

### **III. Reflections on the Writings of Students**

1. In reading some of these letters on the bombing of Pearl Harbor, what comes to mind?
2. In reading some of these letters on the school's principal, what comes to mind?
3. In reading some of these letters on the "Evacuation," what comes to mind?

### **Miscellaneous**

1. Do you have additional information you'd like to share with respect to your schooling and the events leading to the incarceration?

## APPENDIX B: ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Investigator: Yoon Pak, Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies  
6310 60<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE, #103  
Seattle, WA 98115  
(206) 517-4759, home; (206) 543-1836, work

Investigator's Statement

## PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

The purpose of the research is to gather oral history interviews of Seattle's Japanese Americans who were of middle school age on the eve of the internment. This will be an extension of my dissertation research which relies on existing archival data of Japanese American schoolchildren who wrote letters on their feelings of the forced evacuation in February 1942. The benefit of conducting oral history interviews is to gain a complex understanding of schooling from the participants themselves. I have chosen to conduct this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree in Education.

## PROCEDURES

I will conduct in-depth, informal interviews for approximately one-hour in duration. There may be one to two follow-up interviews within a one-month period to gather clarifying information. Questions asked are to gain an understanding of the schooling experiences in Seattle prior to February 1942. Narrators may refuse to answer any question or item in the interview. Unless otherwise stated, only the investigator will have access to the audio-taped interview. Narrators have the right to review and delete any portions of the audio tape as they choose.

## RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

There is minimal possibility that highly sensitive information may be revealed. In such cases, the investigator will work with the subject to alleviate any or all discomfort.

## OTHER INFORMATION

If the subject so chooses, the interview will be held in full confidentiality. Only I will have access to identifiable data. Narrators may refuse to participate or may withdraw from the study at any time as this is a voluntary effort. The written report of the results of the study will be placed in the thesis section of the University of Washington Library.

---

 Signature of Investigator

Date

Narrator's Statement

The study described above has been explained to me. I voluntarily consent to participate in this activity. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that future questions I may have about the research or about my rights as a subject will be answered by the investigator above.

---

 Signature of Narrator

Date

I wish for my identity to be held in confidence \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: Narrator  
Investigator's file

## APPENDIX C: ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM

**Release Form**

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give to the University of Washington this taped life history and grant the university the right to make it available to the public for such educational purposes as the researcher judges worthwhile.

NARRATOR \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER Yoon K. Pak

ADDRESS 6310 - 60th Ave. NE, #103

Seattle, WA 98115

DATE June 10, 1998

RESTRICTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## VITA

**YOON K. PAK****EDUCATION****Doctor of Philosophy (May 1999)**

University of Washington, Seattle

Major: Educational Leadership &amp; Policy Studies

Area of Concentration: Social Foundations – History &amp; Philosophy of Education

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Nancy Beadie

**Master of Education (August 1994)**

University of Washington, Seattle

Major: Educational Leadership &amp; Policy Studies

Area of Concentration: Higher Education Administration

**Bachelor of Arts (June 1992)**

University of Washington, Seattle

Major: History

**FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS****Dissertation Research Support (Spring 1999)**

Minority Education Division, University of Washington

**1998 Graduate Student Leadership Award**

College of Education, University of Washington

**Center for Educational Renewal Travel Award (Winter 1998)**

College of Education, University of Washington

**Minority Doctoral Research / Teaching Fellowship (Summer 1997)**

College of Education, Washington State University

**AERA Graduate Student Scholarship (Spring 1997)**

Division G – Social Context of Education, American Educational Research Association

**Dean's Special Travel Award (Autumn 1997, Spring 1997)**

College of Education, University of Washington

**W. W. Stout Fellowship (Winter 1997)**

Dean Graduate School, University of Washington

**Walker Ames Educational Enhancement Grant (Winter 1997)**

Office of the Vice Provost, University of Washington

**Dean's Travel Award (Autumn 1996)**

Minority Education Division, University of Washington

**Graduate Unrestricted Fellowship (Autumn 1994)**

Minority Education Division, University of Washington

**Nellie Martin Carman Scholarship (September 1987 to June 1992)**

Nellie Martin Carman Foundation for Academic Merit and Financial Need

**TEACHING AND RESEARCH POSITIONS****Assistant Professor, Educational Policy Studies (August 1999)**

*Educational Policy Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Tenure-track, Assistant Professor in Educational Policy Studies specializing in the History of Education and Asian American Education.

**Co-Instructor, Introduction to Women's Studies (Winter 1999)**

*Developmental Education Division, Edmonds Community College*

Co-instructor for "Introduction to Women's Studies" designed to familiarize students with issues, concepts, and methods in the field of women's studies, with a focus on U.S. society. An exploration of various topics which are of importance to women's lives, among them socialization, race, class, work and the economy, women's histories and identities, reproductive issues, the media, body image and eating disorders, violence against women, and sexual orientation.

**Instructor, Introduction to Multicultural Education (Fall 1998)**

*School of Teacher Education, San Diego State University*

Instructor for two sections of a requisite course, "Introduction to Multicultural Education," for pre-service teachers conditionally admitted to the School of Teacher Education at San Diego State University. A multicultural examination of schools and society as it intersects with race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Overview of culturally relevant pedagogy and its' relationship to democratic citizenship education.

**Co-Instructor, Diversity and Equity in Schooling (Spring 1998)**

*On-Site Master's of Education Program at Chief Leschi Schools, Puyallup Indian Reservation  
Antioch University, Seattle*

Co-instructor for a course, "Diversity and Equity," designed to explore the meaning and significance of diversity and equity in elementary and secondary schooling historically and in the present. Examination of the recurring public policy, ethical, and legal issues concerning access to schools, allocation of resources, social and cultural relationships, and educational outcomes as they affect all social groups in American society, especially those holding lesser power, privilege, status and wealth, giving particular attention to American Indian education.

**Instructor, Schools in American Society (Winter 1998)**

*Teacher Education Program, University of Washington -- Tacoma*

Instructor in two sections of a social foundations course, "Schools in American Society," to a cohort of elementary education students at the University of Washington's branch campus in Tacoma. Provided sustained inquiry into the social, political, and economic foundations of schools, with an emphasis on their historical development and mission, the major public policy issues currently facing schools, school law, and the relationship of forms of schooling and curriculum to democratic ideals.

**Instructor, Secondary Social Foundations (Autumn 1997)**

*Masters in Teacher Education Program, Antioch University, Seattle*

Instructor in a social foundations course to a cohort of secondary education students at Antioch University's graduate and certification program in teacher education. Implementation of historical and philosophical methods through the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation to the study of educational issues from the Progressive Era to the present.

**Predocctoral Research Associate (September 1997 to June 1998)**

*Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Higher Education Program  
College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle*

Collaborated and assisted in a national qualitative research project, *the African American College Choices and Educational Success Study (ACCESS)*, examining the socialization and acculturation of African American students' experience in higher education. Assist in research and service activities of the higher education faculty. Act as liaison between members of the University of Washington campus, academic and community personnel in the greater Seattle area, and the higher education faculty, in promoting and sustaining programmatic issues related to the Higher Education program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

**Research Assistant (January 1997 to December 1997)**

*Seattle Institute for Biomedical and Clinical Research  
Veterans Administration Puget Sound Health Care System*

Coding of audio tapes in a federally funded quantitative and qualitative research study noting frequency rates of shared, informed decision making opportunities in doctor-patient interactions.

**Visiting Summer Faculty (Summer 1997)**

*Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology  
College of Education, Washington State University, Pullman*

Selected as one of thirteen visiting minority faculty through a national competition funded by WSU's College of Education and the Office of the Provost. Six-week funding period provided to conduct independent research in the history of education. Development of mentoring relationships from prominent scholars of color in education.

**Predocctoral Research Assistant (March 1995 to October 1995)**

*Experimental Education Unit, College of Education  
University of Washington, Seattle*

Assisted in the developmental format of a federally funded grant project, *Transition and Vocational Education Guides*, for pre-service and in-service educators specializing in transition programs for students with special needs in secondary schools. Analyzed field-test data of participating colleges and universities interested in employing particular vocational transition modules.

## PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

**Predocctoral Staff Associate (September 1992 to June 1997)**

*Fellowship & Assistantship Division, Dean Graduate School  
University of Washington, Seattle*

Analyzed, monitored, and interpreted policies to administrative and academic departments on all areas governing Graduate Student Service Appointments. Counseled, administered, and assisted in the implementation of private, local and federally funded graduate fellowship programs.

**Project Specialist (September 1994 to June 1996)**

*Minority Education Division, Dean Graduate School  
University of Washington, Seattle*

Formatted, composed, and designed a quarterly newsletter for distribution to all graduate students of color at the University of Washington.

**Graduate Intern (Spring 1994)**

*Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs  
University of Washington, Seattle*

Attained knowledge of the organizational functions in the various offices within the VPASA's domain: Office of Admissions and Records, Office of Minority Affairs, Disabled Student Services, Student Activities and Union Facilities, Office of Student Financial Aid and Residential Life.

## SELECTED PAPER PRESENTATIONS

“Interpreting the Gendered Self: Girls in Schools” (October 1998)  
American Educational Studies Association; Philadelphia, PA

“Negotiating the Palouse: A Multidisciplinary and Intercultural Model for Stress Management and Career Development for Women of Color in Higher Education” (April 1998)  
Roundtable / Special Interest Group – Stress and Coping in Education  
American Educational Research Association; San Diego, CA

“Citizenship and Ethnic Identity in the Writings of Washington Middle School’s Japanese American Students, 1941-1942” (October 1997)  
History of Education Association; Philadelphia, PA

“Prejudices and the Self:” Thinking Historically on the ‘-isms’,” (October 1997)  
American Educational Studies Association; San Antonio, TX

“Japanese Americans and the Public School Americanization Program of the Progressive Era” (March 1997)  
Individual Paper Session / Division F – History and Historiography  
American Educational Research Association; Chicago, IL

“Can We Talk? Dialogue and Pedagogy Across Difference” (March 1997)  
Interactive Symposium Session Title / Division K – Teaching and Teacher Education  
American Educational Research Association; Chicago, IL

“Who Counts in a Democracy?” (November 1996)  
Association for Moral Education; Ottawa, Ontario

## INVITED PRESENTATIONS

“The Danger and Possibility in Merleau Ponty’s Phenomenological Ontology” (March 1998)  
Sixth Concurrent Session  
Philosophy of Education Society; Boston, MA

“Why Should We Care to Dialogue?” (November 1997)  
Roundtable Luncheon Discussion Facilitator  
Association for Moral Education; Atlanta, GA

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

**American Educational Research Association Annual Conference (April 1999)**  
Division K – Teacher Education Roundtable Discussant, “Confronting White Privilege and the Color Blind Paradigm in a Teacher Education Program,” Montreal, Quebec

**History of Education Society Annual Conference (October 1998)**  
Session Chair, “Exploring 20th Century Mexican American Education;” Chicago, IL

**Philosophy of Education Society Annual Conference (March 1998)**

First Concurrent Session Chair, "Charter School Reform: Potential Arenas for Participation and Deliberation in the Public Educational Sphere;" Boston, MA

**American Educational Research Association Proposal Reviewer (August 1998 & 1997)**

Division G -- Social Context of Education

Division K -- Teacher Education, Multicultural Education

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- American Educational Research Association
  - Division F -- History and Historiography
  - Division G -- Social Context of Education
  - Special Interest Group -- Research and Education on Asian and Pacific American Students
- American Educational Studies Association
- Association for Asian American Studies
- History of Education Society
- Philosophy of Education Society
- Social Science History Association

**VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE**

**"Skin Deep" Inter-group Discussion Facilitator Training (February 1997)**

*Curriculum Transformation Project*

Office of Undergraduate Education; University of Washington, Seattle

**Elementary Tutor (October 1995 to June 1996)**

*Bryant Elementary School*, Seattle Public School District

**Graduate Student Representative (September 1995 to June 1996)**

*Council on Graduate Studies and Research*, College of Education; University of Washington, Seattle

**Graduate Mentor (September 1994 to June 1996)**

*Early Identification Program*, Office of Minority Affairs; University of Washington, Seattle

**Steering Committee Officer (September 1993 to June 1995)**

*Students Promoting Diversity*, College of Education; University of Washington, Seattle

**Project Coordinator (June 1991 to October 1991)**

*"Mixed Blood" -- Ethnographic Videography by Dr. Valerie Soe*

A Washington State's *Art in Public Places* Grant; Seattle and Tacoma, WA

## RELEVANT GRADUATE COURSEWORK

### Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (EdLPS) – Social Foundations Core

#### History of Education

- Progressive Education in Comparative Historical Contexts
- Special Topics in the Historical Research in Education -- Multiple Seminar Courses
- Women Leaders in the Progressive Era
- Various Independent Coursework

#### Philosophy of Education

- Democracy and Education
- Pedagogies of Domination and Care
- Prejudice, Violence, and the Moral Imagination
- Rethinking Democracy and Education
- Survey in the Philosophy of Education
- Schooling, Character, and Democracy
- The Role of 'Us-Them' in Education

#### Research Preparation

- Educational Inquiry
- Research in the History of Education
- Qualitative Methods of Educational Research
- Understanding Understanding: Education and Hermeneutics

#### First Cognate: Democracy and Difference (Curriculum and Instruction)

- Classroom Discourse: Gender, Class, Culture
- Critical Perspectives in Democratic Citizenship Education and Multicultural Education
- Democratic Citizenship Education in a Diverse Society: "Progressive" vs. "Traditional" Approaches

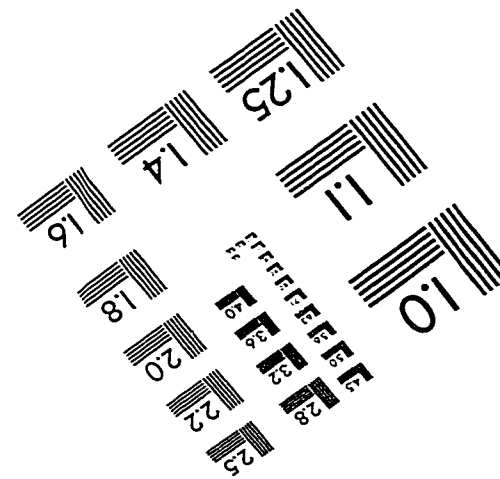
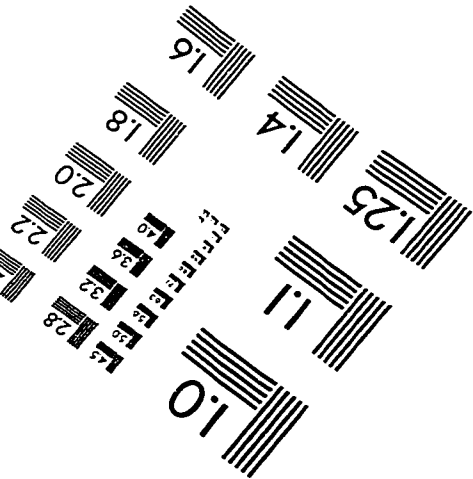
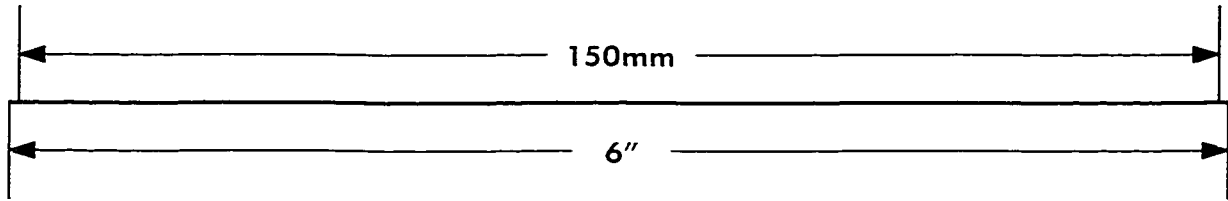
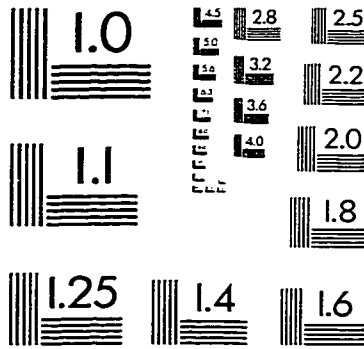
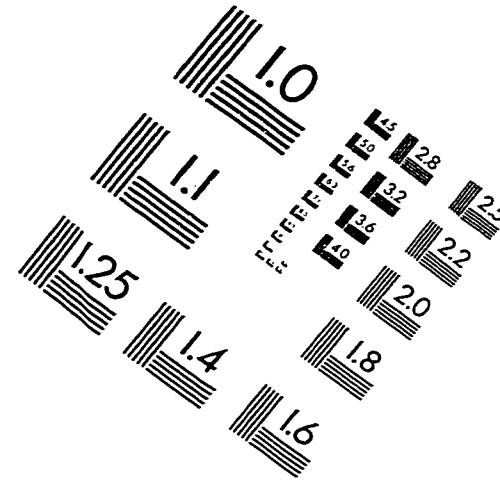
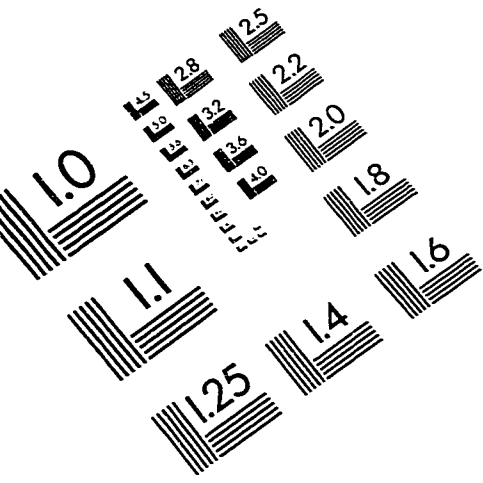
#### Second Cognate: Democracy and Community Policy Making (EdLPS)

- Educational Policies Serving the Disenfranchised
- Race, Ethnicity, and Educational Policy
- Research on Race and Ethnicity

#### Specialization Outside of Education: Issues in Japanese American History (American Ethnic Studies)

- Internment Camps in North America
- Japanese American History and Culture

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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