

The Myth of “*Shikata Ga Nai*.”

The Japanese-American Community of Bainbridge Island, 1941-42

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Abstract

From the 1920s onward, the U.S. government planned to incarcerate Japanese-Americans in the event of a war with Japan. Once hostilities between the two countries broke out, federal authorities imprisoned Japanese immigrants in order to destabilize the Japanese-American community. Then the U.S. government removed all people of Japanese descent from the West Coast. Most of whom were confined in remote concentration camps, while others fled their homes. In the time since, people of Japanese descent have often described their attitude towards incarceration with the Japanese term “*shikata ga nai*,” which translates to “it cannot be helped.” However, historians have misinterpreted “*shikata ga nai*” to portray the incarcerated as passive subjects of state violence. This project centers on the Japanese-Americans of Bainbridge Island, who were the first community the government imprisoned during the war. It focuses on how they exercised their agency through various methods in an effort to avoid being incarcerated. Between the outbreak of war and the day the U.S. Army removed the Bainbridge Islanders from their homes, they affirmed their loyalty to America, joined the army, cooperated with the authorities, and tried to negotiate with the government. Through these actions, the Islanders attempted to achieve inclusion by proving that they deserved to live in America.

Exclusion Area No. 1

December 7th, 1941 was a Sunday, and it started out as just another day at work for Ichiro Nagatani.¹ His family were farmers, as were most of the 277 Japanese-Americans who lived on Bainbridge Island.² When he returned home that afternoon, his sister shared the startling news that the Japanese Empire attacked the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor without a declaration of war.³ Ichiro later said that “you can say that you’ve been sick and you know what it’s to be sick. You don’t know what kind of a sick feeling that I had when I heard [that] news. That was one of the worst feelings I’ve ever had... I don't think I'll ever forget that experience.”⁴

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Proclamation 2525 on the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, whereby “all natives, citizens, denizens or subjects of the Empire of Japan...are termed enemy aliens.”⁵ That designation applied to virtually all Japanese immigrants, or Issei,⁶ because they were prohibited from becoming naturalized citizens.⁷ The government froze their bank

¹ Paul Joseph Travers, *Eyewitness to Infamy: An Oral History of Pearl Harbor*, 1st ed., (Blue Ridge Summit: The Globe Pequot Press, 1991), 3-4; “Interviews with Ichiro Nagatani and Carl Pratt (Outdoor Footage of Locations in Winslow in Between Interviews),” interview by John de Graaf, *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) Collection, Bainbridge Island Historical Museum*, 1984, <https://archive.org/details/BIHM20177315DeGraaf>.

² “Pre WWII – Lives of Bainbridge Island Nikkei Before the War,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, <https://bijac.org/history/bainbridge-island-before-wwii/pre-wwii-lives-of-bainbridge-island-nikkei-before-the-war/>; United States Congress, House Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, *Report Submitted to Tolan Congressional Committee on National Defense Migration*, Seattle, Wash: Emergency Defense Council, Seattle Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, 1942, 13, <https://downloads.densho.org/ddr-densho-156/ddr-densho-156-184-mezzanine-a679819966.pdf>; “Bainbridge Island Residents of Japanese Descent in 1942,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, (last updated May 7, 2011), https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Residentsin1942_update.pdf.

³ “Interviews with Nagatani and Pratt,” interview by de Graaf.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Proclamation 2525, ‘Enemy Aliens, Japanese,’” *The American Presidency Project*, December 7, 1941, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-2525-alien-enemies-japanese>.

⁶ Issei are Japanese immigrants. *Power of Words Handbook: A Guide to Language about Japanese Americans in World War II*, National JACL II Power of Words Committee, PDF File, April 27, 2013, 3, <https://thentheycame.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Power-of-Words-Handbook-JACL.pdf>.

⁷ In 1941, there were 47,300 Issei who resided in the continental U.S. and another 40,000 in Hawaii. The government prohibited them from becoming citizens on the basis of their ethnicity. However, a thousand or so Issei were granted citizenship on account of their service in the U.S. military during World War One. Leonard Broom and Ruth Riemer, *Removal and Return, the Socio-Economic Effects of the War on Japanese Americans*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 32; Robert L. Shivers, *Cooperation of the Various Racial Groups with Each Other and the Constituted Authorities before and after December 7, 1941*, (Hawaii: Territorial Emergency Service

accounts and prohibited them from leaving Bainbridge.⁸ Furthermore, all the Issei's radios, guns, explosives, and cameras became contraband.⁹ Nagatani made a living selling dynamite, and the government even encouraged Bainbridge Islanders to use it for clearing tree stumps on their farms in the prewar era.¹⁰ However, after Roosevelt's proclamation, the state prohibited the Issei from owning dynamite and invaded their homes in search of contraband.¹¹ State agents arrested 42 of the 83 Issei Islanders, including Nagatani's father Otokichi.¹²

The authorities released most of the Islanders after a few days, while Otokichi Nagatani and a dozen other Issei men were sent to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention facility in Seattle.¹³ Otokichi's arrest was preceded by decades of government surveillance. According to Ichiro, his father "was being interrogated by the FBI in Seattle, [and] was stunned to learn that the FBI knew on what day, from which ship, and in what port he had 'jumped ship,' and the name of the person who befriended him."¹⁴ The day after Otokichi's arrest, Ichiro visited the INS facility in Seattle and advocated for his father's release. The agents

Committees, 1946), 3; Hiroko Takamura, "World War I and Japanese Immigrants' Fight for Citizenship in US and Canada," *National Institute of Informatics*, 2002: 1-12.

⁸ "Japanese Bans May Be Eased Soon," *Bainbridge Review*, December 12, 1941, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/3184/rec/42>.

⁹ Roosevelt, "Proclamation 2525, 'Enemy Aliens, Japanese.'"

¹⁰ "Interview with Ichiro Nagatani," interview by John de Graaf, *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) Collection, Bainbridge Island Historical Museum*, 1984, <https://archive.org/details/BIHM20177314DeGraaf>; Mary Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors: The Walt and Milly Woodward Story*, 1st ed., (Bainbridge Island, Wash: Fenwick, 2008), 49.

¹¹ "Truckload of Japanese Radios Seized Here," *Bainbridge Review*, December 31, 1941, 6, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/2173/rec/45>; "Seizure of Guns Made by F.B.I.," *Bainbridge Review*, February 5, 1942, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/2185/rec/50>; "Six Japanese Freed After Questioning," *Bainbridge Review*, February 12, 1942, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/973/rec/51>.

¹² *Report Submitted to Tolan Congressional Committee*, Japanese American Citizens League, 13; Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 88-9; "Bainbridge Island Residents of Japanese Descent in 1942," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; "Interview with Nagatani," interview by de Graaf.

¹³ "Seizure of Guns Made by F.B.I.," *Bainbridge Review*, 1; Katie Pratt and Spencer Howard, "U.S. Immigrant Station and Assay Office," *Northwest Veracular*, November 2023, 1, 23, https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/HistoricPreservation/Landmarks/CurrentNominations/2024/LPBCurrentNom_INS_Text.pdf; Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 88-9; "Bainbridge Islanders Interned on 3/30/42," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, (last updated May 7, 2011), https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Interned_3.30.42_02.pdf.

¹⁴ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 89.

told him that Otokichi was in custody because he had dynamite, to which Ichiro replied and said “that I was the licensed dynamite dealer for Bainbridge Island, and I could buy all the dynamite I wanted.”¹⁵ He secured his father’s release, but the other Islanders remained behind bars. The separation of these men from their families was a precursor to the wholesale incarceration of all Bainbridge residents of Japanese descent, who are otherwise known as Nikkei.¹⁶ In the words of the sociologist Tetsuden Kashima, “[t]he removal of the Issei supplied a blueprint, and the later mass exclusion was undertaken without fear of public condemnation or political consequences.”¹⁷

Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt orchestrated the incarceration of Japanese-Americans shortly after the raid on Bainbridge. He was in charge of the Western Defense Command, which controlled the western third of the U.S.¹⁸ In a memorandum to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson on February 14th, DeWitt claimed that all American Nikkei were a threat to national security because there was:

“No ground for assuming that any Japanese, barred from assimilation by convention as he is, though born and raised in the United States, will not turn against this nation when the final test of loyalty comes. It, therefore, follows that along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction, are at large today...The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.”¹⁹

¹⁵ “Interview with Nagatani,” interview by de Graaf.

¹⁶ Nikkei refers to all people of Japanese descent that live outside of Japan. However, I use this term to specifically refer to only Japanese-Americans. *Power of Words Handbook*, National JACL II Power of Words Committee, 1.

¹⁷ Tetsuden Kashima, *Judgement without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II*, 1st ed., (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 130.

¹⁸ *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 6, doi:10.1515/9780295802343; John L. DeWitt, United States, War Department and United States Army Western Defense Command. *Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942: Final Report*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 16, 83, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/6302>.

¹⁹ DeWitt, *Final Report*, 34.

DeWitt was particularly concerned about the Bainbridge Nikkei because of their proximity to the Bremerton Navy Yard. On March 24th, DeWitt issued Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1, which designated the Islanders as the first Japanese-American community the government incarcerated. In his own words, Bainbridge “was selected for first evacuation because of its importance to the security of the Pacific Coast... This was in accordance with the approved policy that the areas most vital to security would be the first to be evacuated.”²⁰ DeWitt’s order applied to the Issei as well as native-born Japanese-Americans, or Nisei.²¹ It stated that “it is hereby ordered that all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens, be excluded from... Bainbridge Island.”²² Non-aliens referred to the Nisei, and it was a euphemistic term the government used to disguise the fact that they were sending American citizens to concentration camps in violation of their constitutional rights.²³

After only six days’ notice, the U.S. Army forced the Islanders out of their homes and sent them over a thousand miles away to a concentration camp near Death Valley, California.²⁴ By August that year, the state removed the rest of the West Coast Nikkei from their homes and imprisoned them without due process.²⁵ All the while, the “government had in its possession proof that not one Japanese American, citizen or not, had engaged in espionage, not one had committed any act of sabotage.”²⁶ Nonetheless, the authorities prohibited the incarcerated from returning home until January 1945, although some were still behind bars as late as September

²⁰ DeWitt, *Final Report*, 114.

²¹ A Nisei is a native-born Japanese-American citizen born to Issei parents. Power of Words Handbook, 3.

²² J.L. DeWitt, U.S. Army, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, *Civilian Exclusion Orders, nos. 1-108*, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, UC Berkeley: Bancroft Library, 1942, 1, <https://digioll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/172814>.

²³ A concentration camp is a prison facility where people are incarcerated because of their minority status. Power of Words Handbook, 7, 8, 13.

²⁴ Frank “Kazu” Kitamoto, “Leaving Our Island: Chapter One,” *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community*, *BIJAC News*, Winter 2005-6, 4, <https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIJACNews05.pdf>; <https://www.calculator.net/mileage-calculator.html>.

²⁵ DeWitt, *Final Report*, 114; *Personal Justice Denied*, 2, 49, 75, 185.

²⁶ Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America’s Concentration Camps*, (William Morrow and Company, Inc.: New York, 1976), 29.

1947.²⁷ Moreover, the U.S. was at war with Germany and Italy as well as Japan, but the government didn't inflict collective punishment against German- and Italian-Americans.²⁸

My research examines the Bainbridge Nikkei and the various ways they navigated state violence. It focuses on the period between the outbreak of war with Japan and the day the U.S. Army uprooted the Islanders on March 30th, 1942.²⁹ To begin, a pernicious myth persists to this day that Japanese-Americans didn't speak out against incarceration, so it's important to recognize how they advocated for themselves in the face of state violence.³⁰ Furthermore, the Islanders were the first Japanese-American community whom the government imprisoned, so their experiences set a crucial precedent for the removal of the rest of the West Coast Nikkei.

Japanese-Americans have often described their attitude towards their wartime incarceration with the phrase “*shikata ga nai*,” which translates to “it cannot be helped.”³¹ One Islander elaborated on the essence of the term saying “[y]ou do the best with what you have and make it turn around.”³² Nonetheless, various media and academics alike have misinterpreted the meaning of “*shikata ga nai*” and portray the incarcerated as passive victims of state violence.³³ According to one recent account, “*shikata ga nai* expressed a collective resignation to these [exclusion] policies, which produced incalculable suffering. It also signaled an acceptance by the

²⁷ Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America*, 1st ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 252, doi:10.7312/robi12922; *Personal Justice Denied*, xv.

²⁸ *Personal Justice Denied*, 47; Kashima, *Judgement Without Trial*, 124, 137.

²⁹ Kitamoto, “Leaving Our Island: Chapter One,” 4.

³⁰ Brent Ryan Bellamy and Sheena Wilson, “Shikata Ga Nai,” in *An Ecotopian Lexicon*, ed. Matthew Schneider-Mayerson and Brent Ryan Bellamy, (United States: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 245, doi:10.5749/j.ctvthhdbm.30; Robert Coleman, “‘Public Enemy Number One’: The Resistance of Japanese Americans in Concentration Camps, 1942-1946,” *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History* 13, no. 2 (2023): 85. doi:10.20429/aujh.2023.130207.

³¹ Bellamy and Wilson, “Shikata Ga Nai,” 245.

³² “Hisa Matsudaira Interview,” interview by Debra Grindlelandi *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, April 14, 2007i <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-27-transcript-8c01d92e38.htm>.

³³ Bellamy and Wilson, “Shikata Ga Nai,” 245; Coleman, “Public Enemy Number One,” 85.

speakers that these policies were an unfortunate but perhaps inevitable outcome of World War II.”³⁴ However, that assertion simply isn’t true.

The fact of the matter is that the Japanese-American community of Bainbridge Island tried to achieve inclusion in order to circumvent incarceration. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, they cooperated with the authorities in order to deflect the scrutiny against their community. For instance, the Islanders affirmed their loyalty to America and joined the U.S. Army.³⁵ Some even destroyed their Japanese cultural paraphernalia.³⁶ A few, however, resisted the authorities when they invaded their homes.³⁷ Furthermore, the Bainbridge Nikkei attempted to negotiate with the authorities to avoid being sent to concentration camps.³⁸ Failing that, they left their property in their neighbors’ care and some even fled their homes in order to preserve their freedom.³⁹ All of these methods demonstrate the various ways in which the Japanese-Americans on Bainbridge Island exercised their agency when they were confronted with state violence at the outset of the war. Despite their limited options, the Islanders tried to avoid being imprisoned by proving to the U.S. government that they deserved to be treated like equal members of American society.

Views on Japanese-Americans Agency During World War Two

Olivia G. Wing captures the essence of how the Nikkei navigated state violence throughout the war. On the one hand, she argues that the Japanese American Citizens League

³⁴ Bellamy and Wilson, “Shikata Ga Nai,” 245.

³⁵ “Old Country Ties Torn Up As Nagatani Goes to War,” *Bainbridge Review*, January 8, 1942, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/2194/rec/46>.

³⁶ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 89.

³⁷ “Frank Kitamoto Interview,” interview by John DeChadenedes, *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, April 14, 2007, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-25-transcript-7ff2694cbc.htm>

³⁸ Ichiro Nagatani, “Testimony of Ichiro Nagatani,” *Densho Digital Repository, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Collection*, September 11, 1981, 1, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-67-260/>

³⁹ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 57, 62; “Junkoh Harui Interview,” interview by John DeChadenedes, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, February 3, 2007, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-20-transcript-f4c04d5a40.htm>.

(JACL) accommodated the U.S. government in order to leverage public sentiment and achieve equal rights. As Wing points out however, some Nikkei disagreed with the JACL's stance and directly challenged the authorities instead.⁴⁰ Morgan Galloway analyzes how the Islanders memorialized being forced out of their homes and argues that the Bainbridge Nikkei tried to avert scrutiny by cooperating with authorities prior to and during their incarceration. However, Galloway only discusses one instance where an Islander criticized the incarceration of their community,⁴¹ so she doesn't explore the full scope of how Japanese-Americans exercised their agency during the war.

Madeline Y. Hsu and Ellen D. Wu traced the myth of the Nikkei as a model minority back to World War Two. They claim that the JACL promoted an ideal image of Japanese-American soldiers as assimilated, patriotic citizens in order to improve their public image on behalf of their entire community.⁴² Bill Hosokawa, Frank Chuman and William Petersen support the JACL's stance and defend the organization against dissent that came from within the Nikkei community.⁴³ However, these three authors don't explain why some Japanese-Americans accommodated the government while others resisted incarceration. Hsu and Wu point to Petersen in particular as playing a major role in propagating the myth that Japanese-Americans were a model minority, whereby the American public in the postwar era held the Nikkei to unrealistic expectations of success.⁴⁴ Hosokawa even built off Petersen's

⁴⁰ Olivia G. Wing, "A Precarious Home: Japanese American Incarceration, Citizenship, and Strategies for Belonging, 1940s-1960s," 32-3, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2019.

⁴¹ Morgan Galloway, "'Topographies of Memory': Understanding State Violence Through Memorialization Practices," 138-156, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2023.

⁴² Madeline Y. Hsu and Ellen D. Wu, "'Smoke and Mirrors': Conditional Inclusion, Model Minorities, and the Pre-1965 Dismantling of Asian Exclusion," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 4 (2015): 43-65. doi:10.5406/jamerethnhist.34.4.0043.

⁴³ Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, (New York: William Morrow, 1969), 390; Frank F. Chuman, *The Bamboo People: The Law and Japanese-Americans*, (Del Mar, Calif: Publisher's Inc., 1976), 176; William Petersen, *Japanese Americans: Oppression and Success*, (Random House, 1971), 86.

⁴⁴ Hsu and Wu, "Smoke and Mirrors," 46-7.

argument that Japanese-Americans were inherently resilient because of their cultural background.⁴⁵ Hsu and Wu counter this narrative and posit that the Nikkei embodied the model minority myth as a necessary prerequisite for inclusion into American society. They described this phenomenon as conditional inclusion, but they only apply this term to the postwar era.⁴⁶

Kenzo E. Okazaki analyzes the factors that led the Nikkei to serve in the U.S. military during the war. He argues that since there was no legal basis for the incarceration of the Japanese-American community, they couldn't challenge it through the courts. Okazaki points out however that the Nikkei were very indignant over being incarcerated, but they joined the U.S. military nonetheless as a pragmatic way to earn equal rights on behalf of their entire community.⁴⁷ Okazaki's claim is at odds with Hosokawa, Chuman, and Petersen, who assert that Japanese-Americans volunteered for the U.S. military because they were loyal to America.⁴⁸ According to Okazaki however, the Nikkei actually challenged incarceration by joining the U.S. military. However, Okazaki limits his analysis to only the Nikkei who volunteered while they were imprisoned,⁴⁹ and therefore excludes narratives by those who were drafted or were already in service prior to the incarceration of their broader community.

Kristen Tomiko Hayashi explored how Japanese-Americans transitioned to life after incarceration in Los Angeles. She explains that imprisonment had a much more detrimental impact on the Issei than the Nisei. Whereas the Nisei were younger and had citizenship rights, the Issei were at an advanced age and weren't citizens. Therefore, Hayashi argues that the model

⁴⁵ Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, 495.

⁴⁶ Hsu and Wu, "Smoke and Mirrors," 47.

⁴⁷ Kenzo E. Okazaki, "Shikata Ga Nai: Statelessness and Sacrifice for Japanese-American Volunteers During the Second World War," *Swarthmore Undergraduate History Journal* 2, no. 2 (2021): 28–45. doi:10.24968/2693-244X.2.1.3.

⁴⁸ Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 393-422; Chuman, *The Bamboo People*, 174-81; Petersen, *Japanese Americans*, 84-7.

⁴⁹ Okazaki, "Shikata Ga Nai," 42.

minority myth excludes narratives by the Issei and focuses on stories of successful Nisei.⁵⁰ As Lisa M. Hoffman and Mary L. Hanneman pointed out, only the Nisei could serve in the U.S. armed forces.⁵¹ Okazaki fails to mention this point, and thus excludes narratives of the Issei, as did Hosokawa, Chuman, and Petersen.⁵²

The Nisei are the focus of most narratives on how Japanese-Americans navigated incarceration. For instance, Eric Muller described how some Nisei men refused to serve in the same army that kept their families behind barbed wire. As with Okazaki, Muller doesn't mention that the Issei couldn't join the military, and therefore fails to take into consideration their thoughts on whether the Nisei should join the U.S. military or not.⁵³ In another instance, Lane Ryo Hirabayashi and Kenichiro Shimada illustrate how a third of all incarcerated moved outside of concentration camps during the war.⁵⁴ However, most people who did so were Nisei because they had significantly more social mobility than the Issei.

My research is a response to the various myths surrounding how Japanese-Americans exercised their agency during the war. It explores how the Bainbridge Islanders dealt with the authorities through a multifaceted approach in an effort to achieve inclusion and therefore avert incarceration. I look at how they tried to cooperate and negotiate with the authorities, as well as some instances where they offered them resistance. Furthermore, this project examines how

⁵⁰ Kristen Tamiko Hayashi, "Making Home Again: Japanese American Resettlement in Post-World War II Los Angeles, 1945-1955," eScholarship, University of California, 2019, 283.

⁵¹ Lisa M. (Lisa Mae) Hoffman and Mary L. (Mary Louise) Hanneman, *Becoming Nisei: Japanese American Urban Lives in Prewar Tacoma*, 1st ed., (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 218, doi:10.2307/j.ctv1d1qmp0.

⁵² Okazaki, "Shikata Ga Nai," 28-45; Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 393-422; Chuman, *The Bamboo People*, 174-81; Petersen, *Japanese Americans*, 84-7.

⁵³ Eric L. Muller, *Free to Die for Their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Okazaki, "Shikata Ga Nai," 28-45.

⁵⁴ Lane Ryo Hirabayashi and Kenichiro Shimada, *Japanese American Resettlement through the Lens: Hikaru Iwasaki and the WRA's Photographic Section, 1943-1945*, 1st ed., (Chicago: University Press of Colorado, 2009).

oppression impacted both the Issei and Nisei and how their different circumstances shaped their responses to state violence.

A Bainbridge Story

I conducted my research through a small-scale, humanistic framework, which is an analytical lens that interprets historical events at the individual level. My approach stands in contrast to those who analyze the past through a large-scale and social-scientific framework. Whereas these historians focus on the processes that shape society on a grand scale, I focused on telling individual stories about the Islanders so that my readers can sympathize with them.⁵⁵

This project relies heavily on interviews with Bainbridge Islanders, and most of the oral histories I used were conducted by the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC). Between 2006 and 2008, BIJAC conducted 38 interviews with people from their community, and 31 of whom were Japanese-American.⁵⁶ Most of which were facilitated by BIJAC's founder, Frank Kitamoto Jr., his cousin Hisa Matsudaira, or his niece Debra Grindeland.⁵⁷ These resources are available through the Densho Digital Archive and I incorporated ten of them into this paper. The interviews centered around the Islanders' lived experiences during the war, although they also discussed the prewar and postwar period as well. For the purpose of my research, the interviewers posed similar questions about the Islander's

⁵⁵ Charles Tilly, "How (and What) Are Historians Doing?," *The American Behavioral Scientist (Beverly Hills)* 33, no. 6 (1990): 695-700, doi:10.1177/0002764290033006005.

⁵⁶ Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection, *Densho Digital Repository*, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-1001/>.

⁵⁷ Hisa Matsudaira's mother was Nobuko Hayashida, who was sisters with Shigeko Kitamoto. Shigeko's son was Frank Kitamoto, Jr., and his sister, Jane Chiseko Kitamoto, was Debra Grindeland's mother. Lilly (Kitamoto) Kodama, "A Strong, Quiet Woman," *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, BIJAC News*, Spring 2009, 3, https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIJACNews05_09.pdf; "Matsudaira Interview," interview by Grindeland; Colleen Pohlig, "Nurse Jane Akita jumped at the chance to help young people." *The Seattle Times*, February 23, 2003, <https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/20020223/obit23m/nurse-jane-akita-jumped-at-the-chance-to-help-young-people>; "Kitamoto Interview," interview by DeChadenedes; "BIJAC Officers and Trustees," *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community*, <https://bijac.org/about-us/bijac-officers-and-trustees/>.

reactions to Pearl Harbor, the FBI raids, and their removal from the Island.⁵⁸ I used their responses to explore the methods with which the Bainbridge Nikkei navigated state violence.

The *Bainbridge Review* is another major source of information that I incorporated into this paper. It was the Island's local newspaper, and it was owned, edited, and published by Walter and Mildred Woodward, who were a Bainbridge couple. They used their platform to advocate on behalf of the Nikkei Islanders from the very day war broke out with Japan.⁵⁹ The Kitsap Regional Library maintains a digital collection of *Review* publications that were published between 1941 and 1946.⁶⁰ There are seventeen editions available from the period between December 8, 1941, and April 2, 1942, most of which are included in this paper. These publications provided me with details on the events germane to this project, which I synthesized with the information provided by the BIJAC interviews in order to structure this paper around a clear timeline.

A Hundred Roads, One Destination

In 1940, federal agencies drew up a list of Issei to arrest in the case of a war with Japan. The government considered these people suspicious simply because they were prominent members of the Nikkei community. They labelled them either "A for 'immediately dangerous,' B for 'potentially dangerous,' or C for 'possible Japan sympathizer.'"⁶¹ On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, FBI director John Edgar Hoover ordered his agents to "[i]mmediately take into custody all Japanese who have been classified in the A, B, and C categories."⁶² Accordingly, the FBI

⁵⁸ Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection, *Densho Digital Repository*.

⁵⁹ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 26, 44.

⁶⁰ Bainbridge Review 1941-1946, *Kitsap Regional Library*, <https://www.krl.org/bainbridge-review-1941-1946/>.

⁶¹ Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 47.

⁶² Quoted in Kashima, *Judgement without Trial*, 47.

invaded Japanese-American households across the U.S. On December 7th, 1941, they arrested 736 Issei without a warrant, including “[a]t least one” Bainbridge resident.⁶³

Kanekuma Yamashita was one of the first Issei Islanders who the authorities took into custody. On December 8th, his son Isao returned from school and discovered that his father was absent. Then his mother Tsuya informed him that their local sheriff James Johnson took Kanekuma from the Island and sent him to Seattle, where he was incarcerated at the INS facility.⁶⁴ Upon visiting his father, Isao asked why he was behind bars. According to Isao, Kanekuma was once “the president of the Farmers Association here on the island. That’s the only reason he knew or thought the reason that they took him, because of the position he was.”⁶⁵ Evidently, the authorities targeted Kanekuma according to their plan to incarcerate prominent Japanese-Americans in the event of war with Japan. Once these leaders were separated from their communities, the U.S. government could imprison the rest of the West Coast Nikkei with considerably less resistance than they would’ve otherwise.⁶⁶

In reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Islanders affirmed their loyalty to the U.S. in order to avoid discrimination. On December 7th, 1941, Otohiko Koura pointed out to the *Review* that “[s]ome Japanese families already [sic] have sent their young men into active United States military service...I am positive every Japanese family on the Island has an intense loyalty for the

⁶³ Kashima, *Judgement without Trial*, 47-8; “Leaders Prepare for Blackout!,” *Bainbridge Review*, December 8, 1941, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/3199/rec/41>.

⁶⁴ James Johnson was the local sheriff on Bainbridge. “Japanese Should Report Dynamite,” *Bainbridge Review*, December 19, 1941, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/1342/rec/43>; “Isao Yamashita Interview,” interview by Frank Kitamoto, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, April 14, 2007, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-26-transcript-c49d4ec18a.htm>; “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community. Isao Yamashita said that his father “was in immigration here in Seattle.” The location he was referring to is the detention facility that the Immigration and Naturalization Service operated in Seattle, where Kanekuma Yamashita was incarcerated along with 150 other Japanese-Americans from the area. Pratt and Howard, “U.S. Immigrant Station and Assay Office,” 1, 23.

⁶⁵ “Yamashita Interview,” interview by Kitamoto.

⁶⁶ Kashima, *Judgement Without Trial*, 130; Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 61.

United States of America and stands ready to defend it.”⁶⁷ Koura was an Issei and the president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, which played a critical role in the lives of the Bainbridge Nikkei. The group was founded by Issei Islanders, and they built the Japanese Hall where they taught Japanese language classes, played sports, and held public events such as weddings and funerals.⁶⁸

Otohiko’s son, Art Koura,⁶⁹ shared his sentiments with the *Review* as well. He said that “our league will do everything it can to help the defense of this nation. Every Japanese person, first or second generation, will do everything he can to protect this nation’s flag. If there is any sign of sabotage or spies, we will be the first ones to report it to the authorities.”⁷⁰ Art Koura’s aforementioned “league” was the JACL, and he was the chairman of their Bainbridge chapter. The JACL limited their membership to the Nisei and tried to leverage their citizenship status in order to achieve equal rights on behalf of the Nikkei community. Throughout the war, the JACL sought to win the sympathy of the state and public alike by declaring their loyalty to the U.S.⁷¹ For instance, their Bainbridge chapter supported purchasing war bonds and celebrated Islanders who joined the army.⁷²

The *Review* advocated on behalf of their Nikkei neighbors from the outset of the war. On December 8, 1941, they declared that “[t]hese Japanese-Americans of ours haven’t bombed anybody. In the past, they have given every indication of loyalty to this nation. They have sent,

⁶⁷ “Japanese Leaders Here Pledge Loyalty to America,” *Bainbridge Review*, December 8, 1941, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/3199/rec/41>.

⁶⁸ “Japanese Leaders Here Pledge Loyalty to America,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1; Stefan Tanaka, “Audio recording of interview with Art Koura - abridged,” *Olympic College Libraries Digital Archives*, May 27, 1976, <https://ocdigitalarchives.omeka.net/items/show/1001>; “Nakao Interview,” interview by Grindeland.

⁶⁹ “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

⁷⁰ “Japanese Leaders Here Pledge Loyalty to America,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

⁷¹ Wing, “A Precarious Home,” 32-3, 46.

⁷² “Ichiro Nagatani Elected Head of J.A.C.L.,” *Bainbridge Review*, December 31, 1941, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/2168/rec/45>.

along with our boys, their own sons-six of them-into the United States Army.”⁷³ The *Review* was owned, edited, and published by Walter and Mildred Woodward, and they sympathized with their Nikkei neighbors because they demonstrated their loyalty to the U.S.⁷⁴ For that reason, the Woodwards used their platform to warn against “the danger of a blind, wild hysterical hatred of all persons who can trace ancestry back to Japan.”⁷⁵

A few Bainbridge residents took drastic measures to avert scrutiny once the war broke out. The Woodwards’ daughter, Mary Woodward, pointed out that “[i]n order to demonstrate their dissociation with Japan,” many Japanese-American Islanders “burned, buried, or otherwise destroyed many precious family keepsakes.”⁷⁶ For instance, Henry Takayoshi was an Issei Islander who was a prolific photographer.⁷⁷ Shortly after Pearl Harbor was attacked, he set fire to his photography equipment, and “the FBI hauled off” the rest.⁷⁸ Sonoji Sakai’s family discarded all their Japanese cultural paraphernalia in their commode. His daughter, Kay Nakao, lamented that “[e]verything that we would treasure now...the nice things Grandmother sent us when we were children, they were all just destroyed.”⁷⁹ The only Japanese cultural items Nakao was left with was a kimono and a doll that her family hid away in a chest.⁸⁰

In one instance, Yoshiaki Amatatsu cooperated with the authorities in order to navigate state violence. His granddaughter Wendy Noritake said that “just a couple of days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, [Yoshiaki] was taken away by the FBI for having dynamite in his

⁷³ “Plain Talk,” *Bainbridge Review*, December 8, 1941, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/3199/rec/41>.

⁷⁴ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 26, 44.

⁷⁵ “Plain Talk,” *Bainbridge Review*, December 8, 1941, 1.

⁷⁶ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 48.

⁷⁷ “Henry Sukezo Takayoshi photographs, circa 1943-circa 1982,” *Archives West*, <https://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:80444/xv36233>.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 48.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 48, “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

⁸⁰ “Kay Sakai Nakao Interview,” interview by Debra Grindeland, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, February 25, 2006, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-3-transcript-a79a633314.htm>.

storage shed. He used it for blowing up stumps to clear his fields.”⁸¹ Despite how innocuous that was, federal authorities took Amatatsu into custody and sent him to the INS facility in Seattle. His daughter Michiko visited him while he was in custody, and he told her to “[b]e brave and...obey. Whatever they say, obey. Don’t fight back.”⁸² Amatatsu wasn’t simply acquiescing in the face of state violence, however. Instead, he was trying to deflect scrutiny in order to prove that he deserved to live in America.

Amatatsu was arrested despite the fact that Issei couldn’t be prosecuted for dynamite possession in early December. Proclamation 2525 may have prohibited the Issei from owning “bombs” and “explosives,” but it didn’t specifically designate dynamite as contraband.⁸³ In spite of that, the *Review* encouraged the Issei Islanders to notify Deputy Sheriff James Johnson if they had dynamite in their possession. On December 19th, the *Review* cited an FBI spokesman saying that “[t]his, then, will establish their good faith and will be a matter of record that they were cooperative in telling proper officials about their supplies. This might stand them in good stead if the federal government later should embrace more stringent regulations.”⁸⁴ Subsequently, Islanders such as Tats Kojima surrendered their dynamite, while others like Sam Nakao reported theirs to Johnson.⁸⁵ It was one of many ways in which the Bainbridge Nikkei cooperated with the authorities in order to try and avert scrutiny.

⁸¹ Wendy Noritake, “It’s Seaweed Weather!,” *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, BIJAC News*, Winter 2009, 4, https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIJACNews11_09.pdf.

⁸² “Michiko Amatatsu Noritake Interview,” interview by Joyce Nishimura, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, February 26, 2006, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-4-transcript-b46a9d9dd9.htm>.

⁸³ Roosevelt, “Proclamation 2525, ‘Enemy Aliens, Japanese.’”

⁸⁴ “Japanese Should Report Dynamite,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

⁸⁵ “Isami Nakao - Kazuko Nakao Interview,” interview by Donna Harui, *Densho Visual History Collection*, June 18, 1998, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-68-transcript-c4139763a8.htm>; “Tats Kojima Interview,” interview by Debra Grindeland, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, October 22, 2006, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-10-transcript-20c01dbc76.htm>.

The Bainbridge JACL played a critical role in the Islanders' response to the state's transgressions. Their chapter supported the effort to surrender their contraband, which became a punishable offense on December 29th. By which point the Islanders surrendered an entire "truckload of radio sets, cameras and binoculars" to Johnson.⁸⁶ He even told the *Review* that "[t]he Japanese people cooperated well with this order."⁸⁷ Later that night, the Island's JACL chapter met at the Japanese Hall and redoubled their support for the war effort. For instance, their chapter set up a campaign under Sam Nakao "to educate the Japanese community for a wider sale of United States Savings Stamps and Bonds."⁸⁸ Furthermore, their chapter organized a ceremony for Kiyō Nagatani, who was joining the army soon. His brother Ichiro Nagatani was even elected to serve as their group's new president.⁸⁹

The Bainbridge JACL held Kiyō Nagatani's induction ceremony at the Japanese Hall on January 3rd. At first, they played a round of games and sang songs before Otohiko Koura addressed the gathering.⁹⁰ He took the opportunity to say that "I have received America's privileges. All the first generation owes [alot] to America."⁹¹ Then he turned to Nagatani and addressed him directly. "Your responsibility will be greatly increased because our reputation will be judged by you," Koura said.⁹² His words captured the gravity of the Islanders' situation. Pearl Harbor was attacked less than a month ago, and the authorities were already incarcerating Issei Islanders. In 1907, Koura arrived in the U.S., and within thirty years he owned an 80 acre strawberry farm.⁹³ Considering how prominent he was in the community, he could be arrested

⁸⁶ "Truckload of Japanese Radios Seized Here," *Bainbridge Review*, 6.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ "Ichiro Nagatani Elected Head of J.A.C.L.," *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

⁸⁹ "Ichiro Nagatani Elected Head of J.A.C.L.," *Bainbridge Review*, 1; "Bainbridge Island Residents;" Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

⁹⁰ "Ichiro Nagatani Elected Head of J.A.C.L.," *Bainbridge Review*, 1; "Old Country Ties Torn Up As Nagatani Goes to War," *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

⁹¹ "Old Country Ties Torn Up As Nagatani Goes to War," *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Koura, "The Koura Family," 7.

any day and potentially lose everything he'd worked for. Therefore, Koura put his faith in Nagatani to prove his loyalty to the U.S. in order to deflect the scrutiny against their community.

Ichiro Nagatani spoke after Otohiko Koura and shared his sentiments. "This induction gives us an opportunity to really prove we are American citizens and not just talk about it," he declared.⁹⁴ His brother's induction ceremony encapsulated how the JACL sought to achieve inclusion through Nikkei military service. Throughout the war, "the group strategized military service as a site on which Japanese Americans could stake their loyalty and demand the rights of citizenship by demonstrating their willingness to fulfill the obligations of citizenship."⁹⁵ They believed it was their best method to navigate state violence.

At some point in January, the authorities arrested Koura despite his efforts to prove his loyalty to the U.S.⁹⁶ His son Art Koura claimed that Otohiko was targeted because "anybody who was at one time an officer of this Nihonjinkai were suspected as being spies because they were called Japanese Chamber of Commerce."⁹⁷ In truth, federal authorities drew up plans to incarcerate prominent Japanese-Americans from the 1920s onward and actualized them on the day Pearl Harbor was attacked.⁹⁸ Otohiko's son-in-law, Momoichi Nakata, said that Otohiko "was even interned up in North Dakota and the only reason is that he was one of the leaders of the community, you know, they held a position in the Japanese Association and I think they confined basically the more the leaders of the communities."⁹⁹

⁹⁴ "Old Country Ties Torn Up As Nagatani Goes to War," *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

⁹⁵ Wing, "A Precarious Home," 54.

⁹⁶ Tony Koura, "The Koura Family," *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, BIJAC News*, Winter 2007-8, 7, <https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIJACNews07.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Nihonjinkai was the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. Tanaka, "Audio recording of interview with Art Koura - abridged."

⁹⁸ Kashima, *Judgement Without Trial*, 16, 47; Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 60-1.

⁹⁹ "Interview with Momoichi "Mo" Nakata," interview by John de Graaf, *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) Collection, Bainbridge Island Historical Museum*, 1984, <https://archive.org/details/BIHM20177328DeGraaf>.

The Bainbridge JACL held another induction ceremony for Nakata at the Japanese Hall on January 24th. Over a hundred people attended the festivities, and Nakata took the occasion to declare that “I’ll give Uncle Sam all I’ve got.”¹⁰⁰ In response to the accusations of disloyalty against Japanese-Americans, he said that:

“There was no question as far as my parents went, you know, being born here and raised and, and planning to always live here, that there was no question that it was my duty to help where I could and if I had to go in service, well, there was absolutely no question about that...I think most of the Isseis, parents, felt that it was our duty to go. And of course I was drafted, but nevertheless...there was no question that it was my duty as a citizen.”¹⁰¹

Nakata’s parents were Issei, so they couldn’t serve in the U.S. military because they weren’t citizens.¹⁰² Therefore, they supported Nakata joining the military because they recognized that it was a unique way that only the Nisei could fight for inclusion on behalf of their community.

In a memorandum to Attorney General Francis Biddle on February 3rd, FBI director John Edgar Hoover declared that “[a]rrangements are being perfected for the search of all Japanese dwellings or premises on Bainbridge Island near the Naval establishment. It is contemplated that this search will be completed on February 4, 1942.”¹⁰³ According to plan, the FBI invaded every Nikkei household on the Island that very day with the assistance of the Washington State Patrol and the Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office. Their force numbered thirty in all, and they apprehended at least a dozen Issei Islanders.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ “Nakata, Army-bound, Honored At Party,” *Bainbridge Review*, January 29, 1942, 5, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/960/rec/49>.

¹⁰¹ “Interview with Nakata,” interview by de Graaf.

¹⁰² Hoffman and Hanneman, *Becoming Nisei*, 218.

¹⁰³ Hoover’s memorandum doesn’t specify Francis Biddle’s name, but he was the Attorney General at the time. *Personal Justice Denied*, 9, 78-9; John Edgar Hoover to Francis Biddle, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, File no. 100-2-60, Section 2 (Washington, D.C: Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1942), 62, <https://www.foitimes.com/internment/Arrest02.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ It’s unclear how many Islanders were arrested on February 4th. The February 5th edition of the *Review* reported that twelve Islanders were incarcerated that day, and their February 12th edition claimed it was fifteen. “Seizure of Guns Made by F.B.I.,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1; “Six Japanese Freed After Questioning,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1.

Kaichi Kojima and his brother-in-law Ichiro Hayashida were both arrested during the incursion. When the authorities raided their homes, they found guns, radios, and dynamite in their possession.¹⁰⁵ As Hayashida's daughter Hisa Matsudaira pointed out however, "other families that lived on the island had the same things but it was not contraband for them. It was just normal everyday stuff that they had to make a living or to survive."¹⁰⁶ Matsudaira's uncle, Frank Kitamoto, Sr., had a gun and dynamite too, but he was a Nisei so it wasn't contraband. However, he couldn't provide officers with any proof of citizenship because it was destroyed decades earlier, so state agents took him into custody too.¹⁰⁷

Some Islanders cooperated with the authorities in order to navigate the incursions into their lives. Officers found dynamite on Sonoji Sakai's property, and they even accused him of storing a radio in his Buddhist shrine.¹⁰⁸ Sakai tried to reason with them and said that "[a]s long as I'm in America, I'm loyal to America."¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, the officers removed Sakai from his home and took him into custody.¹¹⁰ They released Sakai later that day, and he returned home determined "to prove his loyalty" to the U.S.¹¹¹ His daughter Yaeko Yoshihara¹¹² said "[a]t that

¹⁰⁵ Kaichi Kojima was married to Ichiro Hayashida's sister, Matsuno Hisa (Hayashida) Matsudaira, "Hayashida Family," *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, BIJAC News*, Fall 2009, 5, <https://bijac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIJACNews10.pdf>; "Matsudaira Interview," interview by Grindleland; "Kojima Interview," interview by Grindleland; Edward J. Ennis to John Edgar Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 98.

¹⁰⁶ "Matsudaira Interview," interview by Grindleland

¹⁰⁷ Frank Kitamoto, Sr., was married to Shigeko Kitamoto, whose sister, Nobuko Hayashida, was Hisa Matsudaira's mother. "Frank Kitamoto Interview," interview by Lori Hoshino, *Densho Visual History Collection*, April 13, 1998, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-35-transcript-cfabe77792.htm>; "Matsudaira Interview," interview by Grindleland; Kodama, "A Strong, Quiet Woman," 3; "Kitamoto Interview," interview by DeChadenes; Ennis to Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ "Nakao Interview," interview by Grindleland; "Bainbridge Island Residents," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹⁰⁹ "Yaeko Yoshihara Interview," interview by Joyce Nishimura, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, December 3, 2006, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-17-transcript-39033ef71c.htm>; "Bainbridge Island Residents," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹¹⁰ "Nakao Interview," interview by Grindleland.

¹¹¹ "Yoshihara Interview," interview by Nishimura.

¹¹² "Bainbridge Island Residents," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

time, we had dual citizenship, but he took care of that. He cancelled the Japanese citizenship and also he bought war bonds for each child. In other ways he wanted us to cooperate with whatever that was asked of us to do.”¹¹³ Sakai’s actions exemplify how state violence compelled some Nikkei to embrace their American nationality and abandon their Japanese citizenship in an effort to demonstrate their loyalty to the U.S.

Though accommodation in dealing with state violence was common, some Islanders also navigated this phenomenon with resistance. For instance, Henry Terashita tried to thwart the authorities from searching his home.¹¹⁴ According to Kitamoto, Terashita “said when the FBI came he stalled them around and, and told 'em they had no business being there and refused to cooperate with them and stalled as long as he could so his brothers can [sic] start hiding things and putting things away.”¹¹⁵ Despite his efforts, the officers took Terashita’s father Motokichi into custody.¹¹⁶

Tyke Nishimori was another Islander who challenged the authorities during the February 4th raid.¹¹⁷ He “had only one stick” of dynamite in his home, but when the officers asked him if he had any contraband, he said “[n]o, we didn’t.”¹¹⁸ His father Kirohachi, however, tried to cooperate and admitted that “[w]ell, I do have some dynamite, but... that was to be used for the farming.”¹¹⁹ The authorities thoroughly searched Nishimori’s home, farm, and sheds for

¹¹³ “Yoshihara Interview,” interview by Nishimura.

¹¹⁴ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes; Edward J. Ennis to John Edgar Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 117.

¹¹⁵ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

¹¹⁶ “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Ennis to Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 117.

¹¹⁷ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes; Ennis to Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 117.

¹¹⁸ “Shimako ‘Sally’ Kitano Interview,” interview by Alisa Lynch, *Densho Digital Archive, Manzanar National Historic Site Collection*, October 15, 2008, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-54-transcript-7c89a8f9bc.htm>.

¹¹⁹ “Sally Shimako Nishimori Kitano Interview,” interview by Frank Kitamoto, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, February 26, 2006, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-5-transcript-0efde3c3ed.htm>; “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

contraband, but came up empty handed. Nonetheless, they put Kirohachi under arrest.¹²⁰ Tyke objected to the officers and told them to “[I]eave my father alone, he's just an old man. And if you're gonna take anybody, take me instead.”¹²¹ As was the case with Motokichi Terashita however, the authorities separated Kirohachi from his family despite his son’s protestations.¹²²

Tyke Nishimori and Henry Terashita exemplified the generational divide in the Japanese-American community. Kitamoto mentioned that “it was very hard for Isseis to protest, and I think most of the people that did protest were probably second-generation Nisei.”¹²³ For instance, Tyke Nishimori and Henry Terashita were 25 and 18, respectively, single, and Nisei.¹²⁴ Hence, they were in a relatively advantageous position to resist state violence. On the other hand, Amatatsu and Sakai affirmed their loyalty to the U.S. when the authorities raided their homes. They were both Issei, 58 years old, and married with children.¹²⁵ Consequently, they had more to lose if they overtly resisted state violence. Whereas Nishimori and Terashita felt justified to challenge the intrusions into their homes, Amatatsu and Sakai saw an opportunity to negotiate with the authorities. Either through resistance or accommodation, they all exercised their agency one way or the other.

The government separated nearly a third of the 45 Nikkei households on Bainbridge.¹²⁶ 13 Islanders were in federal custody, and they were first sent to the INS facility in Seattle, then to

¹²⁰ “Kitano Interview,” interview by Kitamoto.

¹²¹ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

¹²² “Kitano Interview,” interview by Kitamoto; “Bainbridge Islanders Interned on 3/30/42,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Ennis to Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 117.

¹²³ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

¹²⁴ It can be reasonably assumed that Henry Terashita was Nisei since he served in the U.S. military during World War Two. “Bainbridge Island Nikkei WWII Veterans,” *Bainbridge Island American American Community*, <https://bijac.org/history/lists/bainbridge-island-nikkei-wwii-veterans/>; Hoffman and Hanneman, *Becoming Nisei*, 218. On the other hand, Kirohachi Nishimori was Issei, so therefore his son Tyke Nishimori was Nisei. “Kitano Interview,” interview by Kitamoto; “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹²⁵ “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; “Noritake Interview,” interview by Nishimura; “Nakao - Nakao Interview,” interview by Harui.

¹²⁶ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

remote concentration camps throughout the country. Most of them were confined in Missoula, Montana, including Frank Kitamoto, Sr., whose wife, Shigeko Kitamoto, had to care for their four young children all by herself.¹²⁷ According to her son Frank Kitamoto, Jr., “[m]y mom thought it was really scary... She said someone yelled at her through the bedroom window and said, ‘Pull the blinds. This is a blackout.’... she said it really scared her, ‘cause, since Dad had already been taken away.”¹²⁸ The authorities’ incursions on Bainbridge left 11 women without their husbands, and 52 children and young adults without their fathers. The youngest of whom was Shigeko Kitamoto’s daughter, Chiseko Kitamoto, who was only 9 months old.¹²⁹

Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt authored a proposal to incarcerate the Nikkei only ten days after the government separated Chiseko and Frank Kitamoto, Jr., from their father.¹³⁰ President Franklin D. Roosevelt condoned DeWitt’s scheme and promptly enabled him to carry it out. On February 19th, he issued Executive Order 9066, whereby the armed forces could “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.”¹³¹ By which point 2,311 Nikkei were already in federal custody.¹³² The selective removal of these people from their families was a preliminary step towards the incarceration of the West Coast Nikkei. Evidently, the government didn’t spontaneously imprison Japanese-Americans after the attack on Pearl

¹²⁷ The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community website includes Otohichi Nagatani on their list of 14 Islanders who were separated from their families and imprisoned out of state, but his son, Ichiro Nagatani, secured his release the day after he was arrested. “Interview with Nagatani,” interview by de Graaf; “Bainbridge Islanders Interned on 3/30/42,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 88; “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes. “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹²⁸ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

¹²⁹ “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; “Bainbridge Islanders Interned on 3/30/42,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹³⁰ DeWitt, *Final Report*, 33.

¹³¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order 9066, “Authorizing the Secretary of War to Prescribe Military Areas,” *National Archives*, (February 19, 1942): 1, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5730250>.

¹³² Kashima, *Judgement Without Trial*, 235.

Harbor. Rather, they used it as a pretense to implement their predetermined action to inflict collective punishment against an oppressed minority group.¹³³

The Bainbridge JACL took action and tried to avert the removal of their community. Within a week that Executive Order 9066 was issued, their chapter sent an appeal to the government, military, and media alike. Although they declared that they were “completely willing to comply with government orders regarding proposed evacuation,”¹³⁴ they offered generous concessions if the Islanders could remain home:

- “1. Continued planting and harvesting of crops as usual under protective custody.
2. The Japanese-American [C]itizens' League will be responsible for all Japan aliens living on this Island, and will cooperate fully with the authorities who are appointed to execute this plan.
3. Due to the fact the country is short of agricultural workers and products we are willing to raise any crop that the government can recommend to us.
4. We will comply with any other restrictions the government may wish to impose.
5. We will cooperate with all government travel regulations.
6. This being an Island the above plan would be easy to carry out.”¹³⁵

The Islanders' JACL chapter directly responded to the government's transgressions and tried to compromise with them. Their petition even pointed out the fact that some Bainbridge Nikkei were currently in the U.S. military.¹³⁶ Therefore, the Bainbridge JACL made the best effort they could to achieve inclusion and avert the incarceration of their community.

The government refused to consider the Islanders' petition. On March 2nd, DeWitt issued Public Proclamation No. 1, which turned the entire West Coast into an exclusion zone called Military Area No. 1 and 2. His order declared that “[s]uch persons or classes of persons as the situation may require will by subsequent proclamation be excluded from all of Military Area No.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 130.

¹³⁴ “J.A.C.L. Petitions For Aliens Here,” *Bainbridge Review*, February 26, 1942, 8, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/990/rec/52>.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.

1.”¹³⁷ Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Army invaded Bainbridge and prepared to remove its Nikkei residents. Their unit was under the command of Major C.F. Bisenius, and Ichiro Nagatani served as the Islanders’ mediator.¹³⁸

Nagatani offered the government an alternative to the wholesale incarceration of the Bainbridge Nikkei. He proposed “to set up a cooperative colony of evacuated Japanese in Eastern Washington and Idaho. They planned to take over abandoned farms in these areas and would even pay most of the costs in their moving.”¹³⁹ Bisenius supported Nagatani’s proposal, and he told him about some farmers from Moses Lake who wanted the Islanders to move there and farm with them. Nagatani visited the area and “found the farmers and landowners very cooperative and with consultation between our group and theirs, we were able to get a commitment from them for a farm for every family from Bainbridge Island.”¹⁴⁰

Nagatani returned home on March 21st, which was the day before DeWitt “unofficially” ordered the U.S. Army to remove the Islanders. The next morning, each of their families sent a representative to meet with Nagatani to discuss their plans to move to Moses Lake.¹⁴¹ He recalled that, “[j]ust as the meeting was called to order, Major Besinius interupted to inform us that the Western Defense Command had denied us permission to move to Moses Lake as a group, but

¹³⁷ J.L. DeWitt, U.S. Army, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, *Public Proclamation No. 1*, University of Washington Libraries: Special Collections, PNW01980, March 2, 1942, 2, <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/15297>.

¹³⁸ Nagatani, “Testimony of Ichiro Nagatani,” 1; “Japanese Internment Issue Revives,” *Bremerton Sun*, April 8, 1980, 15, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/kitsap-sun-japanese-evacuation-from-bain/184157083/>.

¹³⁹ Charles A. Ptolemy, “The Evacuation of Japanese-Americans from Washington State during World War II : A Study in Race Discrimination,” (Central Washington State College, 1965), 23.

¹⁴⁰ Nagatani, “Testimony of Ichiro Nagatani,” 2.

¹⁴¹ On March 23rd, Ichiro Nagatani told the *Seattle Times* that the Islanders couldn’t move. The *Times* was a daily newspaper, and they published his statement the day he made it. Assuming that Bisenius told Nagatani the news the day prior, then this meeting occurred on March 22nd. “Japanese-Americans in the Seattle Times, December 1, 1941 to October 31, 1945,” University of Washington Libraries, https://lib.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/gmm_collections_mcnews_guides_japanese-americans-in-the-seattle-times.pdf; “Island Japanese Accept Army Mandate For Move To Owen Valley, California,” *Bainbridge Review*, March 26, 1942, 1, <https://cdm16169.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16169coll1/id/2375/rec/56>.

that a few approved families would be permitted to relocate there.”¹⁴² After the meeting, Bisenius told Nagatani that his family could move to Moses Lake and encouraged him to leave. Given his leadership role in the community, Nagatani refused to even consider the idea because he “would betraying a trust to the other families on the Island.”¹⁴³

Six Days’ Notice

On March 24th, DeWitt promulgated Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1, which was right when the strawberries on Tats Kojima’s farm were starting to bloom.¹⁴⁴ It had been over a month since the authorities incarcerated his father Kaichi Kojima at the INS facility in Seattle, and now he was confined at the Missoula concentration camp.¹⁴⁵ In his absence, Tats and his three brothers, who were between 13 and 20 years old, had to care for their farm all by themselves.¹⁴⁶ They heard the news about DeWitt’s order when Art Koura and Sam Nakao stopped by and told them that “you can take one suitcase full of whatever you're gonna take to camp. And that's all you can take, whatever you can carry.”¹⁴⁷ DeWitt only gave Kojima and his brother six days to find a caretaker for their home before the U.S. Army forced them out of it.¹⁴⁸

The Bainbridge Nikkei leveraged their community ties to help prepare for their removal. Kojima left his farm in the care of Tony Bucsit, who was a Filipino man whose family farmed on the Island.¹⁴⁹ He told Bucsit to “harvest it and give us what you can for harvesting it, and then

¹⁴² Nagatani, “Testimony of Ichiro Nagatani,” 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ DeWitt, *Final Report*, 114; “Kojima interview,” interview by Grindeland.

¹⁴⁵ “Bainbridge Islanders Interned on 3/30/42,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Pratt and Howard, “U.S. Immigrant Station and Assay Office,” 23-4; Edward J. Ennis to John Edgar Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 98; “Seizure of Guns Made by F.B.I.,” Bainbridge Review, 1.

¹⁴⁶ “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; “Kojima interview,” interview by Grindeland.

¹⁴⁷ “Kojima interview,” interview by Grindeland.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ “Kojima interview,” interview by Grindeland; Brian Roberts, ed., *They Cast a Long Shadow: A History of the Nonwhite Races on Bainbridge Island*, (Minority History Committee of Bainbridge Island School District No.

send us the money.”¹⁵⁰ Kojima’s cousin, Hisa Matsudaira, was also separated from her father, Ichiro Hayashida.¹⁵¹ Her family stored some property with their neighbors, the Flodins, and stowed their firearms with another family, the Schmidts. They left their farm with a few Filipino men who worked for them and let them move into their home. Matsudaira lived with her uncle, Saburo Hayashida, who helped take care of her family while Ichiro was in Missoula.¹⁵² He even found the time to go over to his nephews, the Kojimas, and help them pack their things too.¹⁵³

DeWitt’s order gave the Islanders until March 29th to either leave the exclusion zone or be removed by the U.S. Army the next day.¹⁵⁴ Saburo Hayashida decided against moving his household and told his wife, Fumiko Hayashida, to “trust the government, children are too small, no use if we do move.”¹⁵⁵ Fumiko was pregnant at the time and had two girls, Natalie and Neal, who were 1 and 2, respectively. Saburo also cared for his sister-in-law, Nobuko Hayashida, and her five children, who were between the ages of 1 and 7.¹⁵⁶ The prospect of moving so many vulnerable women and children in six days’ notice was untenable to Saburo, so he did what he could to comfort them instead.

When Kamekichi Shibayama heard the news about DeWitt’s order, he told his family to “act quickly, and let’s move to Moses Lake.”¹⁵⁷ Shibayama was a hotel owner, and he bought a

303, Bainbridge Island School District 303, Wash., 1975), 62, 91, 93, 96, 111, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED133388.pdf>.

¹⁵⁰ “Kojima interview,” interview by Grindleland.

¹⁵¹ Tats Kojima’s mother, Matsuno, was Ichiro Hayashida’s sister. “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Matsudaira, “Hayashida Family,” 5;

¹⁵² “Matsudaira Interview,” interview by Grindleland.

¹⁵³ “Kojima interview,” interview by Grindleland.

¹⁵⁴ DeWitt, U.S. Army, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, *Civilian Exclusion Orders, nos. 1-108*, 1.

¹⁵⁵ “Fumiko Hayashida Interview,” interview by Lori Hoshino and Alice Ito, *Densho Digital Archive, Densho Visual History Collection*, March 16, 1998, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-15-transcript-acf80ec99b.htm>.

¹⁵⁶ “Bainbridge Island Residents,” Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Hayashida Interview,” interview by Hoshino and Ito; “Matsudaira Interview,” interview by Grindleland.

¹⁵⁷ “Junkoh Harui Interview,” interview by Donna Harui, *Densho Digital Archive, Densho Visual History Collection*, July 31, 1998, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-11-transcript-3c2260e004.htm>.

farm so he could move there with his family.¹⁵⁸ His uncles, Zenmatsu Seko and Zenhichi Harui, also owned a major business on the Island called Bainbridge Gardens. In addition to a nursery, it had a gas station, post office, and grocery store.¹⁵⁹ Their extended family numbered 14 people in all, but only 13 of them left Bainbridge together because Seko was arrested during the February 4th raid and sent to Missoula.¹⁶⁰

Shibayama's extended family were the only Islanders who fled the exclusion zone, which is surprising considering that their group was almost twice the size of the Hayashida household. However, Shibayama's family possessed the capital necessary to uproot their entire family and move with only six days' notice. Additionally, their group was evenly divided between six adults, ages 19 to 65, and seven children who were between 2 and 7.¹⁶¹ Their class and age demographics helped enable them to flee their homes, whereas that prospect confronted Saburo Hayashida with considerably more challenges because of his circumstances. As his wife Fumiko Hayashida said, "[m]y children were young, and I'd just found out I was pregnant again, and I was afraid for myself. I had my husband, he's a citizen, but my brother-in-law, they were all... taken to Missoula."¹⁶²

Shigeko Kitamoto managed the removal process while caring for her four children by herself, and they were between 9 months and 7 years old.¹⁶³ She said that, "I try to pack... after they went to sleep. And even the booking, you know, and you have to give to the government

¹⁵⁸ "Harui Interview," interview by DeChadenedes; "Harui Interview," interview by Harui.

¹⁵⁹ "Harui Interview," interview by Harui.

¹⁶⁰ "BI Residents of Japanese Descent sorted by Circumstance," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, (last updated May 7, 2011), <https://bijac.org/history/lists/bi-residents-of-japanese-descent-sorted-by-circumstance/>; Ennis to Hoover, in United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Custodial Detention (Arrest Warrants) Japanese 1941*, 98; "Bainbridge Islanders Interned on 3/30/42," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹⁶¹ "BI Residents of Japanese Descent sorted by Circumstance," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

¹⁶² Hayashida Interview," interview by Hoshino and Ito.

¹⁶³ "Bainbridge Island Residents," Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community

how much I have...I have to do every night after children went to sleep and I've been crying."¹⁶⁴ All the while Shigeko tried to make her children's lives as comfortable as possible. Her oldest daughter, Lilly Kodama, recalled that "[t]he night before we're going to leave the island, I remember Mama saying, '[t]omorrow we're going to go to Seattle. We're gonna take a ferry, and it will be like a vacation.'... I still just marvel that she was able to make it okay for us children somehow."¹⁶⁵

The Kitamoto's friends and family were by their side throughout the day they were removed from the Island. Felix Narte and Elaulio Aquino were cousins who worked on their farm, and they stopped by in the morning to bid them farewell. Frank Kitamoto, Jr., said that prior to his father's arrest, he "actually had a contract written out with Felix and... Elaulio Aquino, to look after our farm and he would share profits with them."¹⁶⁶ Afterwards, the Kitamotos proceeded to the Hayashidas' home to see Shigeko's sisters Nobuko and Fumiko. The U.S. Army arrived at their doorstep in a convoy, forced them out of their home, and took their family to the Eagledale ferry dock along with the rest of the Bainbridge Nikkei.¹⁶⁷

At 11 o' clock, the soldiers started to march the Islanders onto a ferry bound for Seattle.¹⁶⁸ Fumiko Hayashida recalled that "[w]e were really careful, we were prisoners and they had guns with spears."¹⁶⁹ She left the Island holding a suitcase with one hand and her daughter Natalie's hand with the other.¹⁷⁰ Hayashida felt "worried about everything, what they were going

¹⁶⁴ "Interview with Shigeko Nishinaka Kitamoto," interview by John de Graaf, *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) Collection, Bainbridge Island Historical Museum*, 1984, <https://archive.org/details/BIHM2017737DeGraaf>.

¹⁶⁵ Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, "Bearing the Unbearable," YouTube video, 28:36, National Park Service, February 6, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHzZUXfuzkI>.

¹⁶⁶ "Kitamoto Interview," interview by DeChadenedes.

¹⁶⁷ Kodama, "A Strong, Quiet Woman," 3; "Matsudaira Interview," interview by Grindleland.

¹⁶⁸ "Kitamoto Interview," interview by Hoshino.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in Chuck Tasaka, "Canadian Nikkei's Pilgrimage to J.A. Internment Camps – Part 1," *The North American Post*, August 2, 2018, <https://napost.com/2018/canadian-nikkeis-pilgrimage-to-j-a-internment-camps-part-1-by-chuck-tasaka/>.

¹⁷⁰ "Fumiko Hayashida Interview," interview by Debra Grindleland, *Densho Digital Archive, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection*, February 25, 2006,

to have and drink. I was more concerned about children than myself. We could only carry what we could carry, and my suitcase was full of diapers and children's clothes.”¹⁷¹ At 11:20, the ferry departed from Eagledale bound for Seattle.¹⁷² It would be over three years before any of the Islanders moved back home.¹⁷³

The Myth of “*Shikata Ga Nai*”

The Bainbridge Nikkei exercised their agency through various methods in an effort to avoid being incarcerated. From the very day war broke out with Japan, the Islanders repeatedly affirmed their loyalty to the U.S. For example, the Bainbridge JACL shared pro-American sentiments with the *Review*, held two induction ceremonies, and helped turn in the Islanders’ contraband.¹⁷⁴ A few of the Bainbridge Nikkei even destroyed their Japanese cultural paraphernalia to try and avert the government’s scrutiny.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the authorities invaded the Islander’s homes and separated a third of their families.¹⁷⁶ While some Issei tried to cooperate with the government, there were a few Nisei who resisted the incursions into their lives.¹⁷⁷

In the aftermath of the raids, the Bainbridge JACL sought to compromise with the government in order to avert the incarceration of their community. At first, they tried to avoid being removed from their homes, then they attempted to move outside the exclusion zone to

<https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1001/ddr-densho-1001-1-transcript-da408b94a8.htm>; Hayashida Interview,” interview by Hoshino and Ito.

¹⁷¹ “Hayashida Interview,” interview by Grindeland.

¹⁷² “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by Hoshino.

¹⁷³ “Hayashida Interview,” interview by Grindeland.

¹⁷⁴ “Japanese Leaders Here Pledge Loyalty to America,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1; “Old Country Ties Torn Up As Nagatani Goes to War,” *Bainbridge Review*, 1; “Nakata, Army-bound, Honored At Party,” *Bainbridge Review*, 5; “Truckload of Japanese Radios Seized Here,” *Bainbridge Review*, 6.

¹⁷⁵ Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors*, 89.

¹⁷⁶ “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

¹⁷⁷ “Yoshihara Interview,” interview by Nishimura; “Noritake Interview,” interview by Nishimura; “Kitamoto Interview,” interview by DeChadenedes.

Moses Lake.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, the U.S. government refused to compromise with the Islanders and sent them to concentration camps after only six days' notice.¹⁷⁹ Within that short window of time, the Bainbridge Nikkei entrusted their property with their neighbors, and a few Islanders even fled their homes and moved to Moses Lake.¹⁸⁰

Japanese-Americans started to return to the West Coast in 1945, but it wasn't until 1947 that they were all free from concentration camps.¹⁸¹ In the years since then, Nikkei incarceration has become "the single most-documented subject in Asian American studies and a vital theme of popular debate."¹⁸² A major point of contention within this field is how Japanese-Americans exercised their agency after war broke out with Japan. While some historians recognized how the Nikkei navigated state violence both through resistance and accommodation,¹⁸³ others failed to appreciate how they challenged incarceration through a multifaceted approach.¹⁸⁴

According to some accounts, Japanese-Americans didn't even advocate for themselves when they were faced with state violence. One in particular claimed that they used the Japanese phrase "*shikata ga nai*" to express resignation towards incarceration because it translates to "it cannot be helped."¹⁸⁵ Such narratives ignore how the Nikkei exercised their agency in an effort to achieve inclusion. Moreover, academics should dismantle the myth of "*shikata ga nai*" because it flies in the face of evidence that the Bainbridge Islanders tried to avoid being sent to concentration camps.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ "J.A.C.L. Petitions For Aliens Here," *Bainbridge Review*, 8; Nagatani, "Testimony of Ichiro Nagatani," 2.

¹⁷⁹ Kitamoto, "Leaving Our Island: Chapter One," 4.

¹⁸⁰ "Kojima interview," interview by Grindeland; "Matsudaira Interview," interview by Grindeland; "Kitamoto Interview," interview by DeChadenes; "Harui Interview," interview by Harui.

¹⁸¹ Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 252; *Personal Justice Denied*, xv.

¹⁸² Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1.

¹⁸³ Wing, "A Precarious Home," 32-3; Okazaki, "Shikata Ga Nai," 29; Muller, *Free to Die for Their Country*; Hsu and Wu, "Smoke and Mirrors," 43-65; Galloway, "Topographies of Memory," 138-156.

¹⁸⁴ Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 393-422; Chuman, *The Bamboo People*, 174-81; Petersen, *Japanese Americans*, 84-7.

¹⁸⁵ Bellamy and Wilson, "Shikata Ga Nai," 245.

¹⁸⁶ Okazaki, "Shikata Ga Nai," 42; Galloway, "Topographies of Memory," 138-156.

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