

REMAKING
THE “HOME FRONT”
IN
WORLD WAR II
Japanese American
Women’s Work and the
Colorado River Relocation Center
By *Thomas Y. Fujita-Rony*

INTRODUCTION

With the onset of World War II, both public and private sectors strove to focus the national culture and economy of the United States on the war effort. An important aspect of this shift was on the “home front,” where, driven by the imperatives of war, large-scale social change took place. The economy as a whole was re-gearred to support the fight overseas. Citizens were told to gird themselves for the sacrifices the war would demand and to measure all actions against the yardstick of defeating the Axis powers. War production workers, such as those employed at Ryan Aeronautics, Douglas Aircraft, and Lockheed, all of which began widespread aircraft manufacturing in Southern California to meet wartime demands, were portrayed as the front-line soldiers of this struggle.¹

The Second World War was a traumatic time for the nation at large and brought great loss for many, particularly in the deaths of loved ones. Ironically, at the same time it also brought selected opportunity in terms of certain forms of work becoming possible for racial others and for women around the country. African Americans, for instance, were able as never before to secure employment in factories and other urban occupations, and moved in considerable numbers from their former homes in the South to the North and West to take advantage of new opportunities.² Women also found themselves able to take on new roles, symbolized by “Rosie the Riveter” or the entrance of women into military service with the WACS and the WAVES.³

For Japanese Americans on the West Coast during World War II, the “home front” had a harsh immediacy.⁴ At the orders of their own government, over 110,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of them citizens, were forced from their homes and places of employment and incarcerated, in the process destroying the communities and economic networks they had painstakingly built up over many years. One of the less-examined aspects of this catastrophic episode is the impact it had on Japanese American women, who had to negotiate fundamental shifts in family life, gender roles, and, intertwined with both, labor. Living in what were literally barracks, in many cases separated from husbands and fathers who were incarcerated in separate facilities by a mistrustful government, these women made choices and acted in ways that illuminate what one part of the “home front” in the Southwest meant in terms of the United States’ mobilization for war, particularly in terms of its complexities and contradictions. The largest of the ten “relocation centers” to which they were banished was the Colorado River facility, commonly known as “Poston.” The Colorado River Relocation Center was located close to the town of Parker, Arizona, and many of its residents came from Southern California, including Japanese Americans from Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties.⁵ Assessing the lives and strategies of these women gives us insight not only into the transformative impact of internment on their social identity but also the changes effected in the status of one group of Southern California women workers in the U.S. economy during World War II.

LIVES DISRUPTED

On December 7, 1941, 736 members of the Japanese American leadership in the continental U.S., a group that was overwhelmingly composed of

men of the *Issei*, or immigrant, generation were ripped from their homes by the FBI and imprisoned in Justice Department internment camps as “dangerous” enemy aliens; four days later, roughly double that number were in jail.⁶ By mid-February 1942, over two thousand Japanese Americans of the generation then deemed ineligible for citizenship under American law were held for the “crime” of being identified as potentially dangerous individuals on the mainland, and a roughly equal number were detained in Hawai’i.⁷ Involvement in Japanese cultural activities or the simple act of being a leader of some sort was enough for the authorities to define one as “dangerous” enough to merit imprisonment. As a result, many community leaders as well as other individuals, ranging from heads of poetry societies to priests, were taken into custody so that the West Coast Japanese American community suffered what was in effect a near annihilation of its ability to resist or even negotiate the terms under which the government would treat it in the following months. The magnitude of the dragnet, as Peter Irons points out, can be seen from the fact that nearly one in ten adult male *Issei* heads of household was taken away.⁸ The arrests drastically affected the community, especially as the imprisonment of much of the male leadership left many women without their accustomed support networks. Yukiko Furuta recalled through a translator, “The FBI came to the church to take Reverend Koda, but then the minister said that all the husbands had been taken and the wives were having trouble. If he would be taken, no one would take care of them. So the FBI agent called the office and talked to the people at the office. Then they decided not to take him. So he could stay in the Japanese community.”⁹ Unlike Reverend Koda, Furuta’s husband, Charles Mitsuji Furuta, was among those taken away, and she was not able to reunite with him until July 1943.¹⁰ Maki Kanno’s husband, Shuji, who had taught at a Japanese language school on Saturdays, spent a year in Lordsburg, New Mexico, before being able to join his spouse at Poston.¹¹

Furuta and Kanno’s husbands had immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1900s, considerably earlier than their wives, and in addition, the husbands were roughly a decade older, both common patterns in *Issei* marriages, which were shaped not only by economics, but by the highly restrictive immigration policies that the Japanese faced. From 1908 to 1920, much of the immigration stream was made up of women, many of whom were so-called “picture brides,” coming to join men they had never met to become their spouses in arranged marriages.¹² This practice was a logical extension

of the common practice in rural Japan of marriages being arranged by the two families involved; the picture-bride practice saved the groom's family the significant cost of transporting the husband-to-be from the U.S. to Japan and back.¹³

In the U.S., Issei women often found themselves not only working a "double shift" of domestic labor and unpaid participation in farms or urban small businesses; they also found themselves to be socially isolated by immigrant status, racial discrimination, and lack of English-language skills. Many of these women became mothers soon after their arrival, and in an era prior to labor-saving appliances, fulfilling childrearing responsibilities entailed much time and effort. Especially for the many women who were in rural areas, there was little opportunity to form supportive gender communities or to assume leadership roles. Thus, the simultaneous loss of their male partners, along with many of the community networks and organizations that those Issei men had run, abruptly placed them in new and highly demanding social and decision-making roles.

Faced with these new demands placed upon them by internment, many Japanese American women were focused first on their family responsibilities, especially as much of the adult male leadership in the community had already been incarcerated. Mine Yabuki Kaneko worried about the fate of her family and told an interviewer through a translator: "Since she was in the enemy's land, she thought that it might be possible that they would be killed. But the only thing she did not want them to do was to separate her from her children. She wanted to be with her children. But she really expected the worst might happen."¹⁴ Kaneko, an Issei and thus technically an "enemy alien" once war broke out, could have been imprisoned without charges on that basis just as her husband had been. Kaneko's seven children were all second-generation, or *Nisei*, and so U.S. citizens by birth, and were not subject to these strictures, but had she been imprisoned, the five of her children who had not yet reached legal adulthood would have been, in effect, orphaned. These Issei women, already facing many challenges, experienced severe financial turmoil when the government froze their families' accounts in the U.S. branches of Japanese banks and took over Issei-owned businesses and real estate holdings as "enemy alien" property.¹⁵ Some were also anxious about their responsibilities to parents. Issei Shizu Kamei, whose father was ill, was relieved that they would be able to be at Poston together.¹⁶

The first step of “evacuation” was that families and individuals were ordered to one of sixty-four army-run “civil control stations” close to their homes, such as the Santa Anita race track and the county fairgrounds in Pomona. Upon reporting, they were checked off of a list of area residents, a list based on the recent, and supposedly confidential, information provided to the government during the 1940 census.¹⁷ Masako Tashima recalled leaving her home: “Beginning of May 1942. Packing one bag to put in clothes, and one plate each to eat; cup, knife, spoon, fork, that’s all. Can carry just a few things.”¹⁸ After processing, most were organized into groups and then moved to a temporary regional “assembly center,” where they would be held under army supervision until the more permanent “relocation centers” were prepared. Some went to their designated assembly center by bus or train, while others were allowed to drive themselves. On arrival, they found themselves ringed by barbed wire and armed guards. By the end of October, the army had completed its mission of incarcerating every person of Japanese ancestry on the Pacific Coast as a security risk.¹⁹

In the absence of support and with the climate of fear and doubt, cooperation with the exclusion order probably seemed to most to be the only course open. Japanese Americans responded to the traumatic upheaval with a range of reactions. Tashima, a *kibei*, that is, a person born in the United States (and thus a natural-born citizen) but educated or raised in Japan, commented, “At first, I was very surprised, I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t understand, but gradually my feelings became that America was doing this in the best interest for everybody’s welfare. . . . I understood this and as I had to go, I was going to go and make the best of it.”²⁰ In the same interview, her daughter-in-law Mary Tashima commented, “She did feel bitter at the beginning when it first happened—being uprooted. But as the days went by, they reconciled themselves to the fact that they must obey the laws of the land, and while they’re living there, they’re going to have to do what they’re told.”²¹ Others were not so willing to trust the government that was breaking faith with them. They took stock of their situation and acted accordingly, moving to the centers under duress, hoping that soon their ordeal would end. At least a dozen and possibly over one hundred did not obey the exclusion orders, refusing to acknowledge their legitimacy by refusing to comply voluntarily.²²

Tashima’s spirit of resignation and others’ early hope that this was only a temporary interruption of their lives might have been less sanguine if

they had considered the pattern of discrimination Japanese immigrants and their children had long experienced in the U.S. Heirs to a virulent anti-Chinese movement, Japanese immigrants had quickly found themselves painted as a threat to the social order and inherently incapable of becoming naturalized citizens. These perceptions resulted in restrictive legislation at the federal, state, and local levels and in social, economic, and political isolation.

Japanese faced radical restrictions on immigration less than two decades after the 1890 census found a mere 2,039 immigrants living in the United States, for the 1908 Gentleman's Agreement virtually eliminated the entry of male laborers from Japan. Although children, wives, and parents of those residing in the United States could continue to enter, this inter-governmental agreement ensured that the growth of the community would be severely limited.²³ Efforts to secure the ability to become naturalized citizens and thus obtain greater rights were unavailing, ultimately reaching the Supreme Court, which upheld a number of previous lower-court decisions and sanctified the prevailing legislative and administrative practices when it declared Japanese immigrants categorically ineligible for naturalized citizenship in the 1922 *Ozawa* decision.²⁴ The 1924 National Origins Act definitively barred immigration from Japan by excluding those ineligible for naturalized citizenship—that is: Asians.²⁵

Once here, Japanese immigrants faced state and local statutes that were intended to deny them access to economic, and other, resources. In an effort to restrict the agricultural activities of the group, anti-alien land laws were enacted that prevented immigrant Japanese from buying or eventually even leasing agricultural land. These laws, specifically applying only to aliens ineligible for citizenship, had the two-fold aim of eliminating competition from the highly skilled immigrant farmers and restoring an efficient, cheap, and exploitable migrant labor pool by denying Japanese immigrants the ability to buy or lease land.²⁶ In California, the Webb-Heney Act of 1913 and the even more restrictive law of 1920 were formidable barriers to Japanese American community members and caused great hardship. Families sometimes purchased land in the name of their citizen children, or used a U.S. citizen's name to circumvent this restrictive legislation.²⁷

Residential, social, and employment discrimination also were facts of life for Japanese immigrants and their children, the color line offering

some permeability only in the sphere of education. In general, the social space that Japanese Americans moved in was highly constrained. Urban employment opportunities outside the ethnic enclaves were severely limited, with service occupations making up the overwhelming majority of such jobs. Domestic service, small retail shops, restaurants, laundries, and hotels were typical of these, many catering to a European American clientele. Within the community a vertical integration of Japanese American farmers with wholesalers and retailers provided all three groups with an economic niche; another niche was created in the fishing industry. Rural and urban dwellers alike came to do their shopping and gathered for events in the ethnic ghettos, forming linkages across space that tied together a dispersed community.²⁸ Maintained largely through the dint of enormous effort, the lives of the first generation, the non-citizen immigrant Issei, and their citizen children, the Nisei, were less than open, but a measure of security and even happiness had been achieved by the 1940s.

Now, with Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, these long-established Issei and their Nisei children were categorically rounded up, given little time to dispose of their possessions and allowed to pack only a suitcase or two, and incarcerated—first in holding facilities euphemistically called “Assembly Centers,” then transferred to more permanent prison camps known as “Relocation Centers.”

The Relocation Centers were run by the civilian War Relocation Authority.²⁹ There were ten of these camps scattered across the West and South in remote areas: Heart Mountain in Wyoming and Minidoka in Idaho; Tule Lake and Manzanar in California; Central Utah, or “Topaz”; Gila River and Colorado River, or “Poston,” in Arizona; Granada or “Amache” in Colorado; and the two Arkansas camps of Rohwer and Jerome. The camps ranged in climate from Heart Mountain's frozen desolation to the intense heat of the Arizona camps to the swampy humidity of Jerome and Rohwer.³⁰ The largest camp in both geographic size and population was Colorado River with a peak population of 17,814 residing in its three “units.”³¹

Those Japanese Americans who went to the Colorado River Relocation Center entered federal space, as the relocation center was built on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, which is why some of the activities of the relocation center were organized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Popularly known as “Poston,” the relocation center was situated outside the



Jim Morikawa sprinkling to settle the dust, Colorado River (Poston) Relocation Center, 1942. Fred Clark, photographer. *All photos courtesy National Archives. National Archives (210-g-a167).*

town of Parker, Arizona, and, as Margie Fujiyama remembered, was located at a three-mile walk to the Colorado River.³² Many new internees were struck by the heat and the dust, especially if they were from cooler coastal areas, as was Aiko Tanamachi Endo.³³ Poston itself had three “units,” and community residents soon identified with the location of their compartment, as Mine Yabuki Kaneko recalled, as reported by a translator: “She and her children went to Poston, Arizona. There were three camps in the Poston center—Camp I, Camp II, and Camp III. The Kaneko family lived in Poston, Camp I, Block 37, Barrack 11, Room D.”³⁴

The basic unit of the camp was the block, designed to house roughly 250 people. Every block had fourteen tarpaper military “theater of operations” temporary barracks, a recreation hall, a mess hall, latrines, and laundry facilities.³⁵ Each twenty-by-one-hundred-foot barrack was subdivided into four or five rooms by partitions that stopped short of the roof, with one family to a room; bachelors were given space in unpartitioned barracks. The WRA provided cots, mattresses, blankets, and, eventually, a stove for heating, but anything beyond these articles had to be provided by the residents themselves.³⁶ Separated from the barracks by a wide open space intended as a firebreak were a hospital and other support facilities for the incarcerated, the WRA administrative offices, and staff housing. Outside the fence were the offices and lodgings of the army guard force and additional housing for the WRA administrative staff.³⁷

Conditions were extremely difficult. The redwood used to build the barracks shrank in the intense heat; millions of feet of wooden strips had to be ordered to cover the openings, but even after these had been applied, dust and sand sifting into the units remained a ubiquitous problem.³⁸ Like other families, Mine Yabuki Kaneko’s family had one room without any furniture. She recalled, “This was during the summertime and it was very, very hot there. And they were given one big sack to make a mattress with hay. They had to go to the place where they put hay in the sack. It was such a torture for them to do this in the very hot sun, under the very hot sun. She really thought that hell would be something like this.”³⁹ Masako Tashima told her grand-daughter about her experience upon being interviewed: “Unhappy for awhile. [sic] It was so hot daytime; nighttime, very cold. In the morning, oh, so cold, we need one blanket. And sand—ground all sand. One step by step, sand all in shoes. Walk, walk, never have chance to ride. Everything by walk.”⁴⁰ Betty Oba Masukawa commented wryly, “If



Living quarters of the Japanese American evacuees at the Colorado River (Poston) Relocation Center, Arizona. Fred Clark, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a190).

it wasn't rattlesnakes, it was scorpions."⁴¹ Margie Fujiyama also remembered the regular surveillance of camp residents: "The camp was rather dreary. We knew there were guards. There were barbed wire fences, just as in the assembly center. The block where we were assigned had the GIs, the guards and the personnel on the other side."⁴²

Residents tried to adjust to their new lives despite the cramped quarters.⁴³ One major change was the lack of privacy—sound traveled easily over the partitions, and Yukiko Furuta remembered that neighbors could see each other in the adjoining apartments through the wall panels.⁴⁴ Japanese Americans soon transformed their own living spaces and assisted others in doing so as well. For example, Yukiko Furuta remarked that "Mr. Akiyama" built a table for her using wood that they found in camp.⁴⁵



Evacuees filling straw ticks for mattresses, Poston, 1942.
Fred Clark, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a147).

TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S "INSIDE" AND "OUTSIDE" SPACES

In addition to reshaping people's notion of place, ideas about "inside" and "outside" space also changed. Typically in Japanese American culture at that time, household domestic labor as well as labor that took place in a family business was defined as "inside" and was regarded as appropriate for women.⁴⁶ For many women, particularly those used to unrelenting work schedules caused from balancing family responsibilities and long work days in the fields or in small businesses, living in the relocation center transformed their family responsibilities. Labor that was formerly "private" entered the public realm.

For example, the labor of shopping and cooking became redefined as women no longer had to regularly make meals. Initially, camp residents

volunteered to make the food, although later cooks were paid. Aiko Tanamachi Endo recalled, "In the beginning, most of the men were the volunteer cooks, and later some of the women, also. The younger men were the most willing. What they did is they asked for volunteers, for all kinds of jobs. I started working in the kitchen, also, just to have something to do. Later on, for about sixteen dollars a month, you would actually be employed, either working in the kitchen or whatever."⁴⁷ Residents did not prepare food on an individual basis, in part because of the threat of fire and also to make the process more efficient on the part of the government.⁴⁸ Japanese American community members thus cooked and served the food in cafeteria-style meals for each 250-person block.⁴⁹ Margie Fujiyama recalled, "We were part of the earlier arrivals and the mess hall in our block

Serving pie and tea at New Year's Fair, Colorado River (Poston)
Relocation Center, 1943. Francis Stewart, photographer.
National Archives (210-g-a868).



was not yet staffed. I worked as a waitress. I helped by serving the food onto the plates and handing it to the internees. I made sure that salt, pepper and soy sauce were on the tables. It was not like a restaurant but like a cafeteria."⁵⁰ Elaborating on this, Fujiyama stated, "As for the food, you ate whatever you were served, just like in an Army camp. If you can visualize an Army camp, that's what it was like, except with your whole family."⁵¹

These new arrangements took a toll on parenting and being able to maintain the family. Aiko Tanamachi Endo explained: "My mother was still young and strong and very active, so she was still in charge. But I think that camp life was very hard on maintaining family life and unity." Endo remembered that, although families initially ate together, they were often unable to sit at the same tables, and the older children sometimes wanted to eat with their friends.⁵² Discussing Japanese American families in camp, sociologist Leonard Bloom noted in his 1943 article that "children detached themselves from parental supervision, returning to the home barracks perhaps only to sleep."⁵³ Fundamentally, "no longer were there any common purposes or activities to provide functional ties and group meanings. The father's authority as head of household lost much of its functional character, the age-hierarchy was all but destroyed, and group purposes disappeared. Nothing further from the Japanese plan of family organization could have been contrived."⁵⁴

In addition to cooking, washing for the family also became public work. Yukiko Furuta recounted that the essential labor women performed included washing every day, because the high temperatures meant that everyone perspired freely.⁵⁵ Washing was an extremely labor-intensive process as it was not done with mechanized equipment. Margie Fujiyama recalled, "Then there was a boiler room with washtubs and a boiler for hot water. We had to wash our clothes with a washboard-sheets and everything. We didn't have washers or anything like a wringer. You did all your personal things, like washing up for breakfast in the morning and showering, right along with everybody else."⁵⁶

Women also sewed clothing for themselves and other family members—another crucial part of household labor. Yukiko Furuta was eventually able to get her sewing machine in camp and would order material through the Sears catalog so she could make clothing.⁵⁷ In fact, sewing was such a vital part of the local economy that public space was allocated for this kind of labor. Margie Fujiyama's mother was a sewing-room monitor. Fujiyama remembered, "In every few blocks, a small room on the one end



Young people pursued their own activities, diminishing fathers' authority and the traditional age-hierarchy. Here, Yachiyo Honda and Sakae Nakasaki pin a favor on Jean Honda at a barn dance held in Block 12 at the Colorado River Relocation Center, 1942. Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-d614).

of an unused barrack was partitioned off for a sewing room. They used old sewing machines that were brought in, and women and young girls came in to sew and make their own dresses and things. Orders could be placed in the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalog, or the Speigel [sic] catalog from Chicago."⁵⁸

As Margie Fujiyama's memoirs indicate, women's expertise in purchasing was crucial for the family, even if the kind of outside "shopping" they could do was restricted to mail-order items. This skill was made even more important by the war rationing to which all Americans were subjected, intensified by the fact that, compared to most Americans, those incarcerated at camps such as Poston had an extremely narrow range of



Sewing school, Poston, 1943. Francis Stewart, photographer.
National Archives (210-g-a826).



Dry goods canteen, Colorado River Relocation Center, 1943.
Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a852).

options for obtaining the goods they desired. In February 1943, for example, Japanese American community members could buy only limited amounts of laundry bars and soap flakes, two commodities that were especially important to keeping clean in a perpetually dusty desert environment.⁵⁹ In addition, while many civilians were able to enjoy the incomes that full or even overtime employment and higher wages brought, the fact that the WRA's wages at Poston topped out at nineteen dollars per month for skilled professionals such as medical doctors meant that most families had, at best, a meager income.⁶⁰ Thus, not only was conservation a way to show patriotism to the U.S. cause, but on the most basic level it helped to stretch resources on a highly limited family budget.⁶¹

Women played an important role in performing the labor of consumption, especially as the internees could place orders with Sears and



Women at their sewing machines in the sewing school, Poston, 1943.
Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a842).

Montgomery Ward to transform their living spaces.⁶² Betty Oba Masukawa remembered the difficulty of caring for the household under such adverse circumstances, particularly with all the dust: “You can just have tears, you know. But, gradually, we were getting mail orders, like Sears [Roebuck and Company] or Montgomery Ward [and company], to make it look more like a home. . . . Of course, we had to buy all of our window shades and things like that. And dinner sets, also, because sometimes we’d go to the mess hall and bring the food home to eat.”⁶³

Aiko Tanamachi Endo’s memories concur with this observation concerning the importance of women’s roles as consumers and also as clothing producers. Endo recalled that the low camp salaries meant they often had to save funds for a few months to purchase something that they wanted through the Sears catalog. Endo continued, “Most of the women

would buy fabric. Later on, the canteen would get different types of fabric in, and, of course, they would go quickly. . . . As the camp became settled, they did get some machines and they offered different types of classes in sewing and tailoring.”⁶⁴ Hence, as Endo’s comments suggest, women were able to make and provide clothing for themselves and family members. In addition, given the lack of outlets for leisure-time activities, consumer shopping and sewing in the company of other women itself could be a form of entertainment.⁶⁵

Community residents worked hard to improve the interior space of compartments, a job that often fell to women and that likely became a source of pride. Margie Fujiyama commented, “Women started putting up curtains in the windows. The government eventually laid linoleum over

Mrs. Iwasaki making up the bed in the barracks quarter
she has made “homey” with curtains, dresser skirt, shelf border, and room divider.
1942. Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-d565).



the wood slats on the floor, because the wind kept coming in, bringing in sand. Eventually each compartment got its own coal or oil burning stoves, because in the wintertime it was cold. Conditions then became livable and by then, of course, we knew our neighbors. Things were beginning to settle down.”⁶⁶ The changes that Fujiyama and others note were typically performed by women, since it was usually considered “women’s work” to care for space inside the household. Curtains not only enabled people to feel “more at home,” but they also afforded a greater sense of privacy as well as a public display of people’s homemaking talents.

Such public displays were of course more likely to be noticed in camp than they would be in a farm setting, where the population densities could be quite low. The near-total lack of non-Japanese Americans, together with the extraordinarily cramped quarters, created a situation wherein even former rural dwellers and the less acculturated, who had been the most socially isolated before incarceration, could reasonably hope to forge friendships. Knowing one’s neighbors was a way to reshape an alien environment into one that was more familiar and to build a close-knit community. For many women, the drastically curtailed responsibilities for domestic labor and the nearly universal freedom from the demands of a farm or a family business meant that they could devote energies to such “non-productive” activities such as “visiting” in good conscience and with a greatly reduced chance of censure or punishment from husbands or other men.

RESHAPING “WOMEN’S WORK”

Denied their liberty and their prewar way of life, women were also, ironically, freed from some of the kinds of labor they might have faced prior to camp. As opposed to taking care of an entire house in, for example, an isolated and rural environment, they now were responsible for a tiny family compartment with public resources that were relatively available. While living conditions were highly constrained, this obviously also cut down on cleaning chores, for the lack of individual kitchens, washrooms, and bathrooms meant that cleaning those now-public areas was the responsibility of a designated staff and thus was removed from private household labor. Maki Kanno recalled through a translator, “A family of six or five could use two rooms, and there were a common bathroom and a shower room. They could use the bathroom anytime they wanted.”⁶⁷

The difference was especially pronounced for women from rural backgrounds. Margie Fujiyama commented about her mother, "Without having to work on the farm and with very little housework to do, because you were only allotted one compartment—which wasn't any bigger than this office—she didn't have much work to do. So, the older children were free to go around making friends."⁶⁸ Fujiyama's comments suggest that in addition to women having more flexible schedules because of their different work arrangements, older children benefited as well and were not needed to contribute to family labor requirements in the same way as before. Mine Yabuki Kaneko also remembered, "Finally, she could be thankful, because she didn't have to do much work there. She just could play around, and wait till the bell rang, and if the bell rang, they would go to the mess hall to eat. So she enjoyed her life, in a sense."⁶⁹

If women were relieved to be free of certain work, however, this might have been less an indication of the positive nature of the Poston environment than a testament to the difficult schedules and obligations they might have encountered in their lives before the war. Conditions in camp were austere with sometimes devastating results, particularly in regard to medical care. Women caring for the sick had very few options. When the camp opened, the lack of trained medical personnel was so acute that the staff anthropologist, Alexander Leighton, who also held a medical degree, jumped in, putting aside his notebook and picking up a prescription pad and stethoscope.⁷⁰ At one point in the early months of Poston's development, a mother whose child was sick in the hospital was forced to sleep outside the building for a night, because she was instructed to return home even though there was no available transportation. Tragically, the child died in the hospital.⁷¹

In general, mothering became more regulated as the government organized public health programs that were particularly targeted toward caregivers. For example, according to a September 1943 report of activities, services included a Friday morning "Well Baby Clinic" where "all mothers are invited to bring their babies in for weighing, cod liver oil prescriptions, S.M.A. milk, vegetable and fruit order." Also, there were prenatal and children's immunization clinics.⁷² Of particular concern, especially given the lack of medical personnel and supplies and the ease of spreading communicable diseases in such a constrained space, was preventive care. Numerous instructions were given to community members in a bilingual format regarding the care of children, such as the availability of vaccines for diseases like smallpox and typhoid.⁷³



Cheiko Neeno, nurse's aide student at the Poston Hospital, attending a baby patient, 1943. Francis Stewart, photographer.
National Archives (210-g-b495).



Crowd around Alice Maeda signing up for the WRA Work Corps at the Colorado River Relocation Center, 1942. Fred Clark, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-4421).

In addition to the new health care accessibility and the changes that went on inside the family household, Japanese Americans also began transforming their exterior environment into one that was more familiar. Farming was extremely important, especially for those from agricultural backgrounds. Margie Fujiyama remembered, “A lot of things were done. People started writing to their friends to send seeds for vegetables and men started working and bringing in irrigation water from the Colorado River. Soon we had fresh vegetables that Japanese particularly like.” Maki Kanno reported, “Some people built their own gardens, and they were very happy, you know. They could lease their land free of charge. Some wanted to live there forever.”⁷⁴ Because of the severity of camp life, Kanno’s comment underscores the impact of the alien land law and the preference of some to own their own land even under such difficult confinement. Mine Yabuki Kaneko also recalled through a translator, “Things became better

later on, because all Japanese families planted trees and then flowers. So, it became cooler, literally cooler."⁷⁵ Other improvements included the building of fish ponds and gardens and even a slaughterhouse so community residents could have access to fresh meat.⁷⁶

Organizational and religious life also flourished. For example, people held both Christian and Buddhist services.⁷⁷ Other social activities like clubs were important as well, especially in the absence of other outside activities to occupy people's time.⁷⁸ Organizational participation was high in camp, not surprisingly given the close proximity of community members and the many available activities that were considered "appropriate" for women.⁷⁹

In contrast to the prewar situation, many Japanese American women at Poston became wage earners, a contrast to their previous unpaid participation in family-run farms or small businesses. Although the top positions were often reserved for non-Japanese Americans, running the camp meant that a wide range of jobs needed to be filled, and unlike the prewar situation of racial and gender-based occupational segregation, Japanese American women were barred from comparatively few.⁸⁰ Beyond this, and contradicting the supposed impossibility of detecting subversives that was the justification for wholesale exclusion and incarceration, the government allowed some Japanese Americans to depart the camps for work or educational purposes. These policies were enacted early on, when the government acceded to a request from growers to allow Japanese Americans out on a short-term temporary basis to harvest crops. This was eventually expanded to include parole-like "indefinite leave clearance" wherein, after passing through a screening process that included taking a loyalty oath and promising to essentially attempt to de-racinate themselves, the incarcerated could depart for employment or educational opportunities outside the West Coast region.⁸¹ Thus, women who passed the screening procedures could work "outside" in an even wider range of occupations than their sisters and mothers in Poston.⁸² Wage-earning Japanese American women, whether in the camp or out in the larger civilian workforce, were thus part of a home front that had been radically transformed by the enormous need for war-production workers in the context of an economy that had, in addition, to deal with the fact that over ten million men and women were in the armed forces and were thus unavailable for civilian employment.⁸³

Within Poston, women's wages were low. Maki Kanno recalled that wages, such as those for cooks, could be sixteen dollars a month.⁸⁴ Profes-

sionals earned a slightly higher rate, as Aiko Tanamachi Endo recalled: "If you were a doctor, nurse, or teacher, you might get the top wages of nineteen dollars a month."⁸⁵ Others took the opportunity to take part in the multitude of jobs that were available in terms of readying the lands, constructing the camp, and running the camp.⁸⁶ Mine Yabuki Kaneko, an Issei, earned sixteen dollars a month by being a dishwasher.⁸⁷ Some women found jobs as secretaries in administrative offices, as librarians, or as teachers—in one announcement from the *Poston Chronicle*, the camp newspaper, assistant teachers were also sought for elementary school classrooms.⁸⁸ A variety of additional jobs opened up as well, especially as other community residents began to depart the Colorado River Relocation Center under the "indefinite leave" program for which those whom administrators had determined were not "dangerous" could apply.⁸⁹ Betty Oba Masukawa worked first as a police matron and then became a beautician, trained by two women who were licensed and who were going to Chicago. After they left, she became "head of the beauty shop in Poston I."⁹⁰

In order to instill the virtues of "perseverance, initiative, industry, public resourcefulness, and good citizenship," and to promote labor training and boost morale, WRA officials soon set up an Industry Section within the camp.⁹¹ Not only tofu, but also noodles, miso, and other foods familiar to Japanese Americans were produced at Poston.⁹² Other departments included Arts and Prints, Sewing, Flower-Making, and Woodcraft. The Sewing Department produced clothing and uniforms for community members, including tofu bags and aprons for mess halls. Artificial-flower making was also taught to groups, as flowers were needed not only for ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, but also to decorate homes and handicrafts in the absence of natural flowers. Some women were even employed to make these flowers to help meet the needs of community members.⁹³ In this way, typically practiced skills and spheres of work considered more private prior to the war entered the public realm as an "industry."

Although there was some crossing of gender lines in terms of employment, women were often found in jobs that were considered more "feminine" or "typical women's work," at least in the initial stages of camp life. Labor such as teaching or service usually benefited others or assisted those with more authority. Some who had professional experience in the outside world prior to the war, like Martha Horiuchi, who was already "a registered actress at Paramount," taught drama classes for high school students.⁹⁴

Other women, like Mrs. Ota, a graduate of UCLA, entered library work—Ota became head librarian at the Poston Public Library.⁹⁵ Nursing was another arena dominated by women. In September 1943, the staff of Public Health Nursing included “Miss Chizuko Yamada,” who was a secretary to the supervisor, and “Miss Satoko Suehiro,” who was a public health visitor. “Mrs. Tonai Matsuoka” was listed as “a former mid-wife,” and, according to a report, she was “given the responsibility of finding prenatals early and instructing them of the importance of periodic examinations by a physician.” She also ran the Well Baby Clinic. Another staff member, Asako Sato, assisted the “visiting doctor” each morning, ran the Saturday morning Immunization Clinic, and also oversaw clinic supplies.⁹⁶

Organizing the first office force of young women evacuees,
Colorado River Relocation Center, 1942. Fred Clark,
photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a416).





Beauty shop, Colorado River Relocation Center, 1943.
Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a844).

In the beginning stages of the relocation center, when women did take part in labor that was typically not considered “women’s work,” they often did so in a specific framework that was collective in nature and one that was often geared towards volunteering or “community service.” For example, women were involved in early construction, although within a limited community context, as indicated by one announcement calling for both women and men to become adobe workers to build schools in the community.⁹⁷ As it turned out, even young women decided to help in making adobe as “a community service to meet the community life program” of their Girl Scout troop.⁹⁸ In fact, at one point, when the War Relocation Administration was trying to persuade a reluctant company to provide lumber for the camp, the company agreed to do so after being shown a picture of women making bricks for their children’s school.⁹⁹ This incident underscores the expectations that people had about the kinds of labor performed by women.



Kiyoko Tasukawa, nurse's aide, Poston, 1943.
The nurse's aides students underwent a one-year training course.
Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-b491).

Even from the outset, however, there were exceptions to this rule. Some residents were able to use their abilities in ways that might have been considered less conventional a generation or two earlier. The community newspaper, the *Poston Chronicle*, became an avenue for many women to express their talents, whether through journalism or by writing features. Writer Hisaye Yamamoto was a regular contributor to the newspaper and later served as editor-in-chief from August 1944 to March 1945.¹⁰⁰

Labor options for women became even more wide ranging as the Colorado River Relocation Center began to face a chronic shortage of workers for staffing the center's many departments. In March 1943, the *Poston Chronicle* reported a mounting labor shortage that was either due to the fact that internees preferred jobs in the relatively better-paying camouflage-net factories run by an outside contractor as a private enterprise or because they left to join the armed forces or for other opportunities else-



Nurse's aides Yoshiko Konatsu and Tomiko Kitasaki assist registered nurse Mrs. Edythe Sasser in the treatment of a patient with infantile paralysis (polio) at the Colorado River Relocation Center, 1943. Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-b497).

where in the country.¹⁰¹ This resulted in women assuming new kinds of labor in order to ensure that the camp could be maintained. In one story, the *Poston Chronicle* reported that office workers from the camp's Agriculture Department helped to alleviate the labor shortage by performing manual labor needed for the building of fences and the care of plants.¹⁰² In another story, the camp newspaper noted the recruitment of women drivers to operate "light trucks" and also to staff the "inter-unit taxi system," jobs that were clearly less conventional than before.¹⁰³

THE IMPACT OF GENERATION

In addition to gender, generation had a tremendous impact on the internees' access to resources, especially because of the value placed on citizenship by the U.S. government and the fact that the American-born were generally considered less of a security risk. Because of the generational demographics in the Japanese American community caused by restrictive U.S. immigration policies, younger Japanese American women were usually American-born and thus had the advantage of being U.S. citizens. In contrast to this, as Yukiko Furuta reported, although labor opportunities were available, it was more difficult to find paying jobs if one were an immigrant, non-citizen Issei.¹⁰⁴ Gendered expectations still regulated the lives of many women, however, even if they were the relatively more-advantaged Nisei. As Margie Fujiyama explained, at that time, "girls weren't expected to have any schooling beyond high school. They were expected to become domestic servants until they got married. They could go to sewing school and learn how to sew and then get married."¹⁰⁵

Education was one sector in which the generational differences were especially pronounced. The Nisei tended to have easier access to public education at Poston, especially because of language issues. Classes in general tended to be more geared toward the American-born than to the Issei due to the WRA's emphasis on Americanization and the use of the English language. Not all camp residents participated in camp educational opportunities in the same way. Yukiko Furuta, an Issei, told an interviewer through a translator, "And later on in the camp they formed an English class, and they also went to church, but she herself didn't attend any of these because she felt it was too hot to get dressed up."¹⁰⁶

A high school was soon organized in Poston, necessitated by the large number of Japanese Americans of secondary-school age.¹⁰⁷ The director of the Poston schools was the much-beloved Miles E. Cary, who came to Pos-

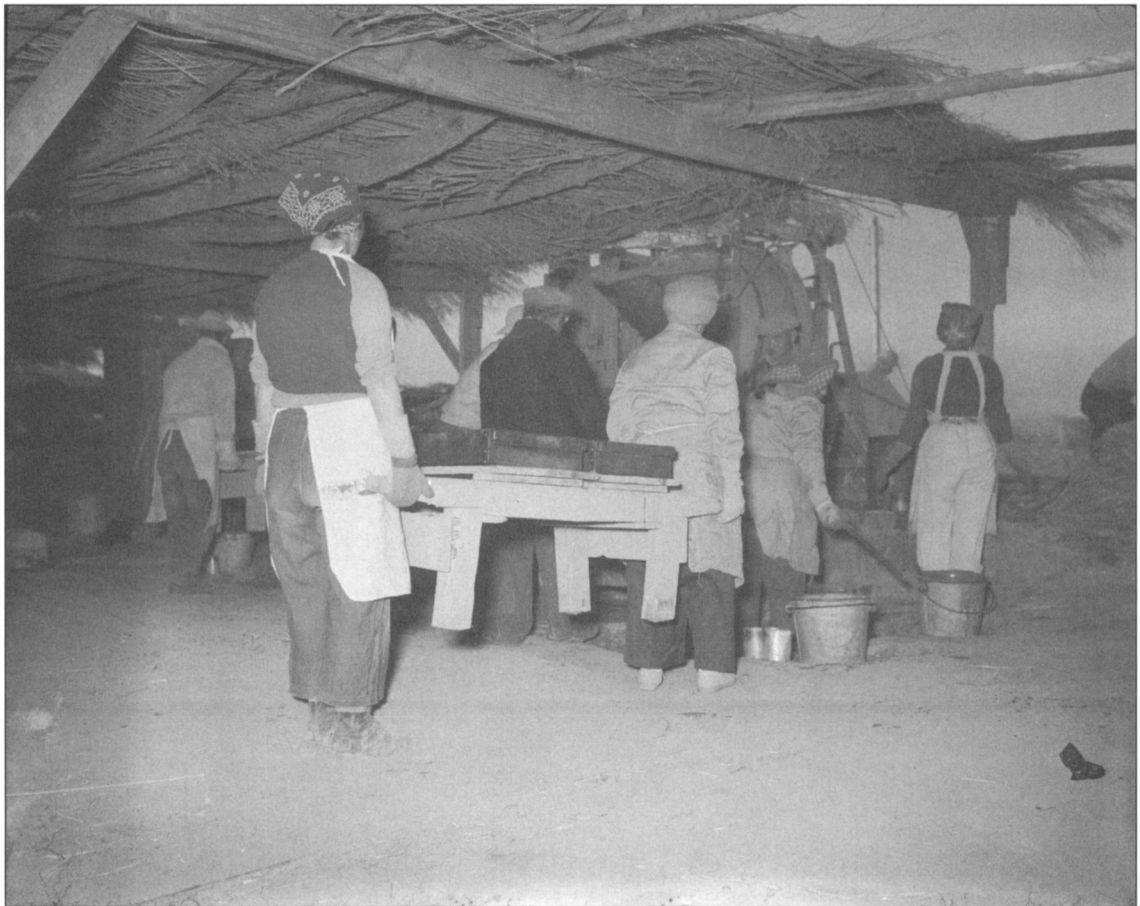
ton from McKinley High School in the Territory of Hawai'i.¹⁰⁸ Aiko Tanamachi Endo remembered how opening a high school for students who needed to finish their degree was a priority even though they had been exiled to the desert. Before buildings for the school were constructed, classes were held in recreation halls. There was none of the usual school equipment, not even furniture, and benches and tables had to be built out of scrap lumber.¹⁰⁹ Eventually this situation improved, and furniture and other supplies were obtained through mail order. Endo commented, "It was amazing, all the things people did order. I think Sears must have been doing a rip-roaring business (laughter) from all these relocation camps, because everyone ordered through the mail catalog."¹¹⁰ Margie Fujiyama also recalled the difficult beginnings and the lack of personnel to teach students: "We had nothing to start off with and there weren't enough teachers to begin with. . . . But the hardest part was for the students. They didn't have the books, the pencils, or the desks. They had no way of really getting on and yet they still held classes."¹¹¹

Many students had aspirations to build job-related educational skills that would help them in future employment. Margie Fujiyama explained, "It was my last two years and I was beginning to concentrate on what we used to call commercial subjects: shorthand, typing and bookkeeping."¹¹² Fujiyama also noted that other classes for adult education were available. Unlike many in her cohort, Fujiyama's mother was born in the United States and was a U.S. citizen with a high school education; thus, she was not part of the typical demographic profile for women her age. As a result, Fujiyama's mother did not study "academic subjects" but did take adult-education classes in "drafting for clothing and craft type of projects."¹¹³ The educational system benefited women in other ways as well. For those mothers with school-age children, the availability of school also alleviated child-care issues.¹¹⁴

Generational differences regarding women were particularly pronounced in the case of nursing. This aspect of the relocation center's activities was overseen by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as the public health program was put under that agency's auspices. Because of the shortage of medical personnel, Japanese American doctors and nurses were quickly recruited to meet the medical needs of camp residents.¹¹⁵ Maki Kanno explained how this enabled her to practice nursing for the first time since she had come to the United States, as her husband was a farmer. The U.S. government was also able to cut costs by hiring an internal candidate as opposed to bringing someone in to do the labor.¹¹⁶

As a rule though, nursing again tended to favor Nisei women, even though the labor shortage was so dire that volunteer nurses' aides were recruited as well. Helen P. Olmstead, field nurse supervisor, organized a "Public Health Visiting Program" in which women were trained to assist in public health care, thereby relieving an overburdened medical staff and enabling women to gain some experience.¹¹⁷ Aiko Tanamachi Endo's sister was one of the volunteers who helped as an aide. Endo recalled, regarding her sister's experience, "They gave you a three week crash course in

Women workers carrying adobe frames to the mixing tables in the adobe factory at the Colorado River Relocation Center, 1943. Francis Stewart, photographer. *National Archives* (210-g-a870).



which they taught how to give injections, how to give medication, how to make beds, et cetera. The girls were assigned to different floors, and to different specialties such as surgery and obstetrics. And there were only a few trained nurses, RNS [registered nurses], who did the supervising."¹¹⁸

LEAVING CAMP

For those women who did not want to stay in camp and who were able to seek outside work, leave clearances also became available. Two factors put labor at a premium: millions of servicemen and women were unavailable to employers, and war-production work required enormous staffs.¹¹⁹ Most who left were Nisei, both because they were more likely to be granted leave clearance and because of the conviction that even in a war economy, "enemy alien" Issei, who tended to possess limited English skills and were, of course, older, would be unable to find satisfactory employment. Once on the "outside," some Nisei even found employment in war-production jobs.¹²⁰

The WRA provided some assistance to those granted indefinite leave clearance in the form of information and contacts before leaving, transportation and a twenty-five-dollar cash grant on departure, and, in a handful of cities, field offices that had up-to-date information on housing and job prospects. Destinations had to be approved by the WRA and were required to be, if not welcoming, at least not actively hostile to the presence of Japanese Americans.¹²¹ As with many migrants, albeit with an additional level of anxiety due to their marked status, those on work leaves preferred destinations where other Japanese Americans had successfully settled and where they might be hired at the same places where other Japanese Americans were already working. In general, those who departed on indefinite leave found anti-Japanese prejudice to be present, but not universal, and exploitative landlords and employers to be motivated primarily by greed rather than racial animus, although quite willing to take advantage of their tenants' and employees' racial vulnerabilities.

Shizu Kamei told an interviewer that she went to Rifle, Colorado, for the sugar beet crop harvest. Sugar was regarded as a crucial commodity during the war and was strictly rationed, but the availability of better-paying factory jobs and the entry of many into the military meant that growers found themselves up against a wall at harvest, hard-pressed to find harvesting crews willing to do this back-breaking labor. The conditions Kamei faced were difficult—wages were low, and they had to make do

without electricity or heating. She ended up coming back to the relocation center.¹²² In June 1944, one group that left to labor at the Woods Cross Cannery in Clearfield, Utah, was comprised of fifty women and five men, a gender ratio that probably would have been unusual a year before, at the early stages of the leave program, when the reception that awaited those who left was more uncertain.¹²³ A front-page story in the *Poston Chronicle* reported on a company in Cleveland that specifically sought Nisei women workers from the Colorado River Relocation Center in August 1944 as laborers for its war plant, which made parts for aircraft and rockets. The importance of chain migration and employment is illustrated in the article, as it ends with a note that five Nisei were employed at the unnamed company and that they were “well satisfied with their jobs.”¹²⁴ As the war progressed and the labor shortage became even more acute, Nisei women were also recruited for positions in the armed services or for other government service. In September 1943, the U.S. Public Health Service allowed Nisei women to join the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. In addition, small numbers of Nisei women also joined the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) to aid directly in the U.S. war effort.¹²⁵ In fact, Frances Iritani, the first Japanese American WAC to be inducted, on November 10, 1943, had spent nine months in Poston before transferring with her family to the Amache camp.¹²⁶ Unlike their male counterparts, the roughly three hundred and fifty Nisei WACs who served during the war did not serve in segregated units.¹²⁷

Domestic work was a common job option, in all likelihood at least partially driven by notions of racially appropriate work for people of color.¹²⁸ Even employers from other states advertised for domestic workers in the *Poston Chronicle*, as shown in one announcement about the availability of two opportunities “for interested married couples in Omaha.”¹²⁹ In another article, a sorority house at the University of Colorado in Boulder sought “a first class cook, preferably a woman,” an indication that hiring was sometimes gender specific.¹³⁰

Personal and professional networks also made it possible for women to follow other labor opportunities. Yukiko Furuta’s daughter was able to go to Houston through the aid of Frank Findley, a previous employer. Furuta’s daughter became the first family member to leave the relocation center.¹³¹ Educational and professional training programs offered more choices, as shown by the example of Aiko Tanamachi Endo’s sister who left to attend the Episcopal Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia.¹³² Aiko Tana-

machi Endo went to the Lordsburg camp in New Mexico, where many of the Issei who had been defined as “dangerous” were held, to visit her father to help explain her sister’s opportunity in the government-sponsored program.¹³³ Because her sister had had a positive experience, Aiko Tanamachi Endo was able to go as well. In fact, Endo’s sister was able to pick her up at the train station, go with her to the hospital, and offer other support. Endo thus benefited from her sister’s experience.¹³⁴ As Endo’s comments suggest, because of the greater restrictions placed on young women, it was important for Endo to be able to hold up the example of her sister’s success and to demonstrate that it would be “safe” for a young woman to enter into such an educational opportunity. Margie Fujiyama recalled a similar situation in which her family needed to be reassured that she would have support networks in the new city when she left for business training. Luckily for her, a friend’s family had moved to St. Louis, and so Fujiyama gained permission from her father to leave.¹³⁵

AFTER THE WAR

Other women did not leave the Colorado Relocation Center until they were released from the relocation center at the end of the war. Many Japanese Americans, particularly if they had property, returned home to Orange County or other sites in Southern California.¹³⁶ As Shizu Kamei remembered, “And when they came out of the camp, they were told to leave all the things . . . blankets or things like that, and they were given only one mattress. And then they came back to Garden Grove and found all their mattresses had been bitten by the mice. She really can’t forget the first night they spent there.”¹³⁷ For many, it was difficult to begin again after the war and people faced great hardship in starting their lives anew.¹³⁸ As a community, the Poston internees’ World War II experiences would dramatically shape the ways they approached their lives in Southern California following the war.¹³⁹

In the postwar period, most Japanese Americans were more concerned with the daily business of earning a living, caring for loved ones, and rebuilding community institutions destroyed by exclusion and incarceration than with legal challenges and justice issues that their history suggested were not worth the effort.¹⁴⁰ However, in the tumultuous sixties, public discussion about the camp experience began to emerge. After much controversy, the community committed itself to obtaining monetary redress, a goal reached in 1988 with the passage of the Civil Liberties Act,

which provided each surviving person who had been excluded and incarcerated with twenty thousand dollars.¹⁴¹

Eleven years after the Civil Liberties Act was passed, Emiko and Chizu Omori, Nisei sisters who lived in Oceanside before the war, created a “documentary-memoir” film titled *Rabbit in the Moon*, named after the traditional Japanese interpretation of the moon’s appearance.¹⁴² As Emiko Omori, the younger sister, an award-winning filmmaker and the narrator of the work, recounts, during the war Japanese Americans were asked to forget and un-see the rabbit. Her older sister Chizu, a writer and a political activist who was twelve when the relatively prosperous Omori family was forced to leave their strawberry farm and enter Poston, is credited as Emiko’s “spiritual/historical guide.” As the film recounts, the war had a devastating impact on their family: their mother died at thirty-four of a bleeding ulcer a year after leaving Poston. Through the vehicle of their own family’s history, the Omori sisters traverse the major issues surrounding the camp experience through this cooperatively created capstone of both of their careers.

As Emiko, who was a toddler when she entered Poston, notes, the Japanese American community she knows differs greatly from the one her older sister recalls from the prewar era. She argues that the divided and reticent postwar community that chose to show a generally submissive and contented face to others is a product of the camp experience. The film is a labor of historical consciousness, an attempt to put the rabbit back in the moon—that is, to reconnect cultural continuity ruptured by the relocation experience; to reclaim and bring forth not only the now-known facts of deliberate governmental misconduct and abuse of power, but also to open up a dialog within the community regarding actions taken by various factions, while in the camps and afterward, that had been long kept from public view. With regard to the latter, it asks audiences to consider in a most serious manner the question of what defines correct action in our democracy and the role of dissent and difference in it.¹⁴³

THE HOME FRONT REDEFINED

Scholars of women’s labor in World War II have noted both the contributions women workers made to the war effort as well as the contradictions of their position due to gender, class, and racial hierarchies. Because of wartime mobilization and the transfer of male labor to military service or to other needed service, women had more opportunities to enter the

arena of paid labor, especially because their service was often considered “patriotic” and in the service of the nation. Ironically, however, with the conclusion of the war and the return of male labor to the regular economy, women typically were not able to hold on to most of the gains in labor that they made during the war, although some achievements were made.¹⁴⁴

Japanese American women from Southern California in World War II provide us with an important opportunity to consider these issues from the vantage point of a community that was considered “alien,” even though U.S. citizens constituted the majority of the community. For Japanese American women who were relocated to the Colorado River Relocation Center in Arizona, the “home front” was not the same as it was for other American women who were able to stay in their permanent residences for the duration of the war. Although they remained within the contiguous forty-eight states, Japanese American women had to make new lives in a detention compound that was both federal and military in nature, in an unfamiliar climate, and in a region that was being geared toward the war effort. Unlike other U.S. women who might have been in these spaces either as U.S. military personnel or defense industry employees or the dependents of such employees, Japanese American women were not sent to these sites primarily because of such connections to the military but because of their racial and ethnic status. As with other women in U.S. culture though, community demographics were reshaped in terms of gender and generation, as many young men left to fight on behalf of the U.S. in overseas arenas. In addition, Japanese American women started their lives in the camps without male support because a significant number of men in the Japanese American community were held elsewhere by the U.S. government at the onset of the war.

In the environment of a military compound surrounded by guard towers and barbed wire, not only did these women gain new exposure to professional and wage-labor opportunities, but the very nature of women’s labor was radically reshaped. Women’s activities that formerly took place primarily within the household arena, such as cooking, cleaning, and mothering, were transformed into public activities because of federal intervention in the relocation of community members. Generational identities emerged as particularly important because of the ways they coincided in large part with the resources and privileges that were allocated by the government to the second-generation, American-born, citizen daughters of immigrant mothers, notably in terms of employment within Poston

and the opportunity afforded them to depart under the indefinite leave process.

Therefore, examining the labor of Japanese American women at the Colorado River Relocation Center enables us to more fully appreciate the tremendous changes that women in the United States underwent during World War II, the range of experiences undergone by Southern Californians during this period, and the government-directed transformation of the U.S. Southwest region during this period. This history also enables us to examine the United States' national mobilization from a unique vantage point, and to assess the costs of this war on a greater basis, particularly in terms of its impact on the civil liberties and economic careers of Japanese Americans, many of whom were longtime residents or citizens of this country.

Their home front was one where many of the assumed securities of their lives had been stripped away. Under trying conditions, Issei and Nisei women rose to face challenges—creating new forms of community and family life, taking up leadership roles, and, as a group, taking up a far-wider realm of employment opportunities. In doing so, they had to learn new skills and new ways of thinking, often with little to sustain them besides the overriding needs of the moment. The cost for this was often high, as *Rabbit in the Moon* so eloquently illustrates. However, the resiliency and resourcefulness of these women in Poston who battled on their own “home front” enabled them to succeed, if not on their own terms, in ways that were highly significant, and that deserve our notice and admiration.

NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Research for this article was conducted at the Pollak Library, California State University, Fullerton, the National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Region branch in Laguna Niguel, California, and the National Archives, Washington, D.C. In addition, as background for this article, I also consulted sources at the Carl A. Kroch Library, Division of Rare & Manuscript Collections, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, California. I would like to thank the staffs of all of these collections for their help and guidance in my research.

¹ See Gerald D. Nash, *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 69–70, for a discussion of the aircraft industry and more generally for the changes reshaping the U.S. West at this time.

² See Charles D. Chamberlain, *Victory at Home: Manpower and Race in the American South during World War II* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2003), especially Chapter 3, “On the Train and Gone: Worker Mobility in the Cotton Belt, 1941–1945,” 69–96, and Chapter 4, “The Segregation Frontier: African American Migrant War Workers in the Pacific West, 1941–1945,” 97–128; Shirley Ann Moore, “Her Husband Didn’t Have a Word to Say: Black Women and Blues Clubs in Richmond, California during World War II,” *American Labor in the Era of World War II*, ed. Sally M. Miller and Daniel A. Cornford

- (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 147–164, and Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, “African-American Migrant Women in the San Francisco East Bay Area,” in Miller and Cornford, 165–185.
- ³ Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, The War, and Social Change* (New York: A Meridian Book, New American Library, A Division of Penguin Books USA, Inc., 1987); see also Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, *American Women in a World at War* (Wilmington: A Scholarly Resources, Inc. Imprint, 1997) for a range of narratives regarding women’s lives during this period. Two works by Moore deal specifically with military service carried out by women of color, Brenda L. Moore, *To Serve My Country, To Serve My Race: The Story of the Only African American WACS Stationed Overseas During World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), and *Serving Our Country: Japanese American Women in the Military During World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003).
- ⁴ Native Aleuts were also forced from their homes and suffered far worse treatment at the hands of the government. See *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 317–319, 323–359.
- ⁵ War Relocation Authority, *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946), Table 2, 198. “Relocation” and “relocation centers” are the euphemisms that were deployed by government officials to mask the harsh reality of race-based exclusion and incarceration in the absence of charges, trials, or convictions. “Internment,” while defensible as a legal description of what happened to the one-third of this population who were foreign-born (and who were at the time categorically denied the ability to even attempt to become naturalized citizens) is glaringly incorrect when applied to the two-thirds of the incarcerated who were U.S. citizens by birth, for the federal law under which internment takes place specifically excludes even naturalized citizens from its provisions. Those who raised the ire of the administrators at these ten “relocation centers” were sent to a “Citizen Isolation Camp” at Moab, Utah, later replaced by a facility at Leupp, Arizona. In addition to these twelve facilities that held the overwhelming majority of the incarcerated, there were four Justice Department Internment Camps of much smaller size to hold the supposedly more dangerous immigrant leadership, run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. *Personal Justice Denied*, 157, 179–180.
- ⁶ German and Italian aliens were also picked up by the FBI, but as noted above, only Japanese were ineligible for citizenship on racial grounds. Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 123; Dorothy Swaine Thomas and Richard Nishimoto with contributions by Rosalie A. Hankey, James M. Sakoda, Morton Grodzins, and Frank Miyamoto, *The Spoilage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), 5–6; Jacobus TenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart and Floyd W. Matson, *Prejudice, War and the Constitution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954), 101; and John Christgau, “Enemies”: *World War II Alien Internment* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985). For a discussion about the events leading to the government’s decision to incarcerate the Japanese Americans, see Gerald Stanley, “Justice Deferred: A Fifty-Year Perspective on Japanese-Internment Historiography,” *Southern California Quarterly* 74 (Summer 1992): 181–206. For a comparative discussion of the Italian American experience, see Gloria Ricci Lothrop, “Unwelcome in Freedom’s Land: The Impact of World War II on Italian Aliens in Southern California,” *Southern California Quarterly* 81 (Winter 1999): 507–544.
- ⁷ In 1882, Chinese immigrants were specifically barred by federal law from becoming naturalized citizens. Asserting that Japanese immigrants fell under the same strictures, in 1913, California passed a law barring “aliens ineligible to citizenship” from owning agricultural land. The Issei waged a long but ultimately futile battle in the courts against the assumption that they were barred from naturalized citizenship and against the land laws themselves. The Supreme Court’s *Ozawa* decision of 1922 upheld the racial barrier against Japanese immigrants acquiring naturalized citizenship, and it was followed in 1923 by four decisions by the Court upholding the anti-alien land laws. In 1924, the Congress banned immigration by those ineligible to become citizens, a group that in national origin was composed solely of Asians. Charles J. McClain, “Tortuous Path, Elusive Goal: The Asian Quest for American Citizenship,” *Asian Law Journal* 2:42–48. For the nature of leadership in these immigrant communities, see Miyamoto, viii–xx; Bob Kumamoto, “The Search for Spies: American Counterintelligence and the Japanese American Community, 1931–1942,” *Amerasia Journal* 6 (Fall 1979): 58–72, for the nature of the “A,” “B,” and “C” lists that the FBI drew up of those who were considered dangerous. Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865–1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 267, states that in Hawai’i, 1,875 went to either WRA or Department of Justice camps in the continental U.S., and 1,466 were held in

- camps located in the Territory of Hawai'i. For more comparison about the West Coast vs. Hawai'i experiences, see Ward M. McAfee, "America's Two Japanese-American Policies during World War II," *Southem California Quarterly* 69 (Summer 1987): 151–164.
- ⁸ Peter Irons, *Justice At War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases* with new epilogue (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 19.
- ⁹ Yukiko Furuta, interview by Arthur A. Hansen and Yasko Gamo, trans. Masako Hanada, O.H. 1752, Issei Experience in Orange County, Honorable Stephen K. Tamura Orange County Japanese American Oral History Project, California, Historical and Cultural Foundation of Orange County Japanese American Council; and California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, Japanese American Project, (Hereafter IEOC) June 17 and July 6, 1982, Pollak Library, California State University, Fullerton (Henceforth PL-CSUF), 108. Furuta had come to the United States in 1912 shortly after marrying her husband, who had lived in the U.S. for twelve years prior to their arranged marriage. The two youngest of the forty-seven-year-old Furuta's five surviving children were still in school when the FBI took her husband into custody. Yukiko Furuta interview, 2, 13. The "Reverend Koda" mentioned above is presumably Sohei Koda, who led the nearby Wintersburg Presbyterian Church. Henry Kiyomi Akiyama, interview by Arthur A. Hansen and Yasko Gamo, O.H. 1751, IEOC, June 10 and 29 and July 27, 1982, PL-CSUF, 135–140.
- ¹⁰ Yukiko Furuta interview, 118.
- ¹¹ Maki Kanno, interview by Toni Rimel and Masako Hanada, trans. Masako Hanada, O.H. 1761, IEOC, November 30, 1983, PL-CSUF, 58. Forty-four years old at the time, Kanno, who had been in the United States since 1924, was a farm wife and a mother of two teenage boys. Maki Kanno interview, 9, 15.
- ¹² The Japanese government unilaterally ceased issuing passports to picture brides in 1920, hoping this would placate the exclusionist lobby in the United States. Ichioka, *The Issei*, 173–175.
- ¹³ Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 126–132; Emma Gee, "Issei Women," *Counterpoint*, ed. Emma Gee (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 359–364. For the male immigrants, sending for a wife cost a considerable sum of money, and by the time most could amass the capital necessary, they were well into middle age. Picture brides, however, tended to be young women in their teens and twenties, as compared to their husbands' thirties and forties. See Daniels, *Asian America*, 152.
- ¹⁴ Mine Yabuki Kaneko, interview by Marsha Bode and Yukiko Sato, trans. Chiharu Yawata and Masako Hanada, O.H. 1760, IEOC, January 26, 1984, PL-CSUF, 34. Kaneko had come to the U.S. in 1922 when she was thirty-eight. Her husband, a farmer named Hyotaro, was taken by the FBI, leaving her alone with her seven children, the youngest a kindergartener. Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 3, 5, 12.
- ¹⁵ *Personal Justice Denied*, 61.
- ¹⁶ Shizu Kamei, interview by Toni Rimel and Masako Hanada, trans. Masako Hanada, O.H. 1755, IEOC, January 23, 1984, PL-CSUF, 74. Kamei came to the U.S. in 1916 at the urging of her father, who had immigrated previously. In 1942, she and her husband, Toranosuke Wada Kamei, lived on a farm with her seven children, ranging in age from eleven to twenty-one. Shizu Kamei interview, 2–3, 38, 48.
- ¹⁷ Raymond Y. Okamura, "The Myth of Census Confidentiality," *Amerasia Journal* 8 (Fall 1981): 111–120, and Roger Daniels, "The Bureau of the Census and the Relocation of the Japanese Americans: a Note and a Document," *Amerasia Journal* 9 (Spring 1982): 101–105.
- ¹⁸ Masako Tashima, interview by Pat Tashima, O.H. 1359, Japanese American Evacuation, Japanese American Project, California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, June 1, 1974, PL-CSUF, 5. Tashima was a Kibei, born in the United States but raised or educated to an extent in Japan before returning to the land of her birth. Her husband, an Issei, was among those taken by the FBI, leaving her and the five children still living at home to deal with closing down the general store that was their livelihood and preparing for internment. Masako Tashima interview, 1–7.
- ¹⁹ U.S. Department of War, *Final Report*, 357.
- ²⁰ Masako Tashima interview, 8–9.
- ²¹ Masako Tashima interview, 1, 9.
- ²² Irons gives the lower figure in *Justice at War*, 75, although the source of this is not clear. He names Yasui, Hirabayashi, and Korematsu in addition to Koji Kurokawa and John Ura in the San Francisco area, Toki and Ernest Wakayama from the Santa Anita assembly center, and Mary Asaba Ventura in Seattle, leaving some unnamed, 74–117. He also states that FBI records show ten arrests (including Fred Korematsu) in the San Francisco Bay area and an additional six in the Sacramento region by local police, on page 96.

- John Tateishi, *And Justice For All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984), xx, and The National Committee for Redress of the Japanese American Citizens League, *The Japanese American Incarceration: A Case For Redress* (San Francisco: The National Committee for Redress of the Japanese American Citizens League, June, 1978), 18–19, gives the higher figure although no source is given. Tateishi states that “those arrested were convicted by the courts, but with eviction near and without financial resources to appeal their cases, they were unable to continue their challenge in the courts.” Tateishi, xx. The National Committee on Redress holds that “over 100 Japanese Americans deliberately violated one or more of the orders and invited arrest. But the government was apprehensive about a judicial review and declined to prosecute most of these violators.” *The National Committee on Redress*, 18–19.
- ²³ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion*, 2 ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 41–44.
- ²⁴ *Takao Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178; see also Yuji Ichioka, “The Early Japanese Immigrant Quest for Citizenship: The Background of the 1922 Ozawa Case,” *Amerasia Journal* 4 (Fall 1977): 1–22.
- ²⁵ Swaine, et al., *The Salvage*, 3–15; United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Issues Facing Asian Americans in the 1990s* (Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1992), 3–4.
- ²⁶ TenBroek, et al., 50–62.
- ²⁷ Maki Kanno, interview by Toni Rimel and Masako Hanada, trans. Maskao Hanada, O.H. 1761, 1E0C, November 30, 1983, PL-CSUF, 57.
- ²⁸ CWRIC, 38–44; for rural dwellers, see also Valerie J. Matsumoto, *Farming the Home Place: A Japanese American Community in California, 1919–1982* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 56–86, and for those who lived in cities, Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, *Transforming the Past: Tradition and Kinship Among Japanese Americans* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985), 67–72, 134–153.
- ²⁹ Some went directly from their homes to Manzanar and Poston. Thomas and Nishimoto, *The Spoilage*, 30.
- ³⁰ Evaluations of climate from Thomas and Nishimoto, 28.
- ³¹ War Relocation Authority, *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation*, Table 1, 197. The Tule Lake camp had a higher peak population, at 18,789, but this occurred after it became a “segregation center” for those administratively determined to have questionable loyalties. Ironically, once the “segregates” had been moved from Poston by late 1943, all who remained had been determined to be loyal and yet still were denied their freedom despite this fact.
- ³² Margie Fujiyama, interview by Sue Fowler, O.H. 1383, Japanese American Evacuation, Japanese American Project, California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, January 11–12, 1973, PL-CSUF, 4. Margie Fujiyama, a Nisei, was fifteen when she was forced from her home in Sacramento, along with her parents and younger four siblings. Margie Fujiyama interview, 1–3.
- ³³ Aiko Tanamachi Endo, interview by Marsha Bode, O.H. 1750, Nisei Experience in Orange County, California, Honorable Stephen K. Tamura Orange County Japanese American Oral History Project, Historical and Cultural Foundation of Orange County Japanese American Council and California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, Japanese American Project, November 15, 1983, PL-CSUF, 28. Endo, a Nisei, was from Seal Beach in Orange County. The youngest of three children, she was seventeen when her father was taken away by the FBI, and the rest of the family was sent to Poston. Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 1–3.
- ³⁴ Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 35.
- ³⁵ Alexander H. Leighton, *The Governing of Men: General Principles and Recommendations Based on Experience at a Japanese Relocation Camp* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945), 55; Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 30.
- ³⁶ Thomas and Nishimoto, 29–30; War Relocation Authority, “Japanese-Americans in Relocation Centers,” page 2, in Folder, “Memorandum, Order, etc. Washington Office [1.1],” Records of J. W. Shepard, Fiscal Office of the Colorado River War Relocation Project, 1942–1948, From: Administrative Instructions To: Cost Accounting (file ind.), Box No. 63, A9598, RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Irrigation District Number Four, Colorado River Irrigation Project, NA-LN; Margie Fujiyama interview, 4.
- ³⁷ Jeffery F. Burton, Mary M. Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard B. Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Tucson, AZ: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Parks Service, Western Archeological and Conservation Center, 1999), 219–228.
- ³⁸ Burton, Farrell, Lord, and Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 216.

- ³⁹ Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 35.
- ⁴⁰ Masako Tashima interview, 6.
- ⁴¹ Betty Oba Masukawa, interview by Diane Tappey, O.H. 1756, Nisei Experience in Orange County, California, Honorable Stephen K. Tamura Orange County Japanese American Oral History Project, Historical and Cultural Foundation of Orange County Japanese American Council and California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, Japanese American Project, November 2, 1983, PL-CSUF, 11.
- ⁴² Margie Fujiyama interview, 5.
- ⁴³ Yukiko Furuta interview, 124.
- ⁴⁴ Yukiko Furuta interview, 124; see also Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 28, for her initial impressions of living quarters.
- ⁴⁵ This would presumably have been either her brother-in-law Henry Kiyomi Akiyama, or his son, Joe. Yukiko Furuta interview, 123–124.
- ⁴⁶ Yanagisako, 97–105, 115–118.
- ⁴⁷ Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 29.
- ⁴⁸ After a period of time, those who were in ill health could apply for permission to use a hot plate to cook in their barracks. See Yukiko Furuta interview, 135.
- ⁴⁹ Margie Fujiyama interview, 4.
- ⁵⁰ Margie Fujiyama interview, 7.
- ⁵¹ Margie Fujiyama interview, 7.
- ⁵² Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 29.
- ⁵³ Leonard Bloom, "Familial Adjustments of Japanese-Americans to Relocation: First Phase" *American Sociological Review* 6, no. 5 (October 1943), 559.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Yukiko Furuta interview, 135.
- ⁵⁶ Margie Fujiyama interview, 6–7.
- ⁵⁷ Yukiko Furuta interview, 135.
- ⁵⁸ Margie Fujiyama interview, 8.
- ⁵⁹ "Rationing to Be Applied," *Poston Chronicle*, February 4, 1943, 5.
- ⁶⁰ In 1942, the base pay of an army private was twenty-one dollars per month. War Relocation Authority, WRA, 77–81.
- ⁶¹ See "Unavailable at Stores," *Poston Chronicle*, February 3, 1943, 1.
- ⁶² See, for example, an advertisement by Sears in *Poston Chronicle*, June 6, 1943, 2.
- ⁶³ Betty Oba Masukawa interview, 11–12.
- ⁶⁴ Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 30.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Margie Fujiyama interview, 7.
- ⁶⁷ Maki Kanno interview, 61.
- ⁶⁸ Margie Fujiyama interview, 4.
- ⁶⁹ Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 36.
- ⁷⁰ See Leighton, 378–379.
- ⁷¹ See December 25, 1942, memorandum from Poston III Community Council to Dr. Ralph B. Snavely, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Folder "W.R.A.—Poston + Pima," Box 461, RG 75, NA-LN.
- ⁷² S.M.A. stands for "Synthetic Milk Adapted" and was an early variety of infant formula. Memorandum from R. N. Crawford, supervisor, Public Health Nursing, Camp II to Dr. Pressman, director of Health & Sanitation, regarding Monthly Report of Public Health Nursing Activities, Camp II, September 1–October 1, 1943, and October 11, 1943, included in correspondence from Elma Rood, supervisor, Public Health Nursing to Dr. Ralph B. Snavely, district medical director, October 12, 1943, Folder "War Relocation Authority, Poston, Ariz. Public Health Nursing Program," Box 461, RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Phoenix Area Office, Department of Health, Correspondence Related to Japanese Resettlement Camps From: 1942 To: 1944, NA-LN.
- ⁷³ See "Standard Method of Immunization," "A Guide to Baby's Feeding the First Year," as well as "Instructions for Parents of Children Who Have Had Tonsil Operations," and "Instructions for Parents of Children and Others Who Have Had Hernia Operations," Folder: "War Relocation Authority, Poston, Ariz. Public Health Nursing Program," Box 461, RG 75, NA-LN.

- ⁷⁴ Maki Kanno interview, 56. Note that even here Kanno speaks of a “lease” rather than ownership.
- ⁷⁵ Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 36.
- ⁷⁶ Margie Fujiyama interview, 7.
- ⁷⁷ See generally Lester E. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkeley: Yardbird Publishing, 1979), and specifically 243–263, for Poston.
- ⁷⁸ Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 33: “I think they used to have the Buddhist services fairly frequently in camp.”
- ⁷⁹ See, for example, “Miss Cheney Speaks to Quad 5 Women,” *Poston Chronicle*, February 13, 1943, 4.
- ⁸⁰ For examples of jobs that were available, see, for example, “New Jobs Available at Employment Office,” *Poston Chronicle*, December 30, 1942, 3.
- ⁸¹ WRA, WRA, 33–41.
- ⁸² Richard Drinnon, *Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 50–55.
- ⁸³ Sally M. Miller and Daniel A. Comford, “Introduction” in Sally M. Miller and Daniel A. Comford, eds., *American Labor in the Era of World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 2–3.
- ⁸⁴ Maki Kanno interview, 62.
- ⁸⁵ Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 29. The WRA set wages at twelve dollars for the lowest-level positions, but most were paid sixteen dollars a month, with a few “professional” workers making nineteen dollars. U.S. Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority, *Impounded People: Japanese Americans in the Relocation Centers* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946), 55–56.
- ⁸⁶ Shizu Kamei interview, 75.
- ⁸⁷ Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 36.
- ⁸⁸ Margie Fujiyama interview, 8; “Assistant Teachers to Aid in Grade Schools Urgently Needed by Education Department,” *Poston Chronicle*, January 22, 1943, 3.
- ⁸⁹ Obtaining “Indefinite Leave Clearance” was a generally lengthy process, and it required applicants to essentially agree to attempt to de-racinate themselves. After filling out a form, which was scrutinized for evidence of disqualifying Japanese cultural practices, an interview was required. Applicants were also checked against a “stop list” of those who had been deemed “suspicious.” Because the process basically utilized Japanese cultural practices or ethnicity as a means of determining whether or not a Japanese American could be paroled out of the camps, it favored the second-generation Nisei over their Issei parents and those who could show interactions with the mainstream over those who had lived within the ethnic community. The Supreme Court’s *Endo* decision in December of 1944 forced the WRA to greatly relax these policies. War Relocation Authority, WRA, 51–59. See also Drinnon, *Keeper of Concentration Camps*, 50–54.
- ⁹⁰ Betty Oba Masukawa interview, 12.
- ⁹¹ Quoted from a report by administrator R. H. Rupkey: R. H. Rupkey, chief, Operations Division & Agriculture, “Industry Activities,” Folder 4.5.2.11 “Colorado River Gravity Project—Japanese Internment—Gen.,” Box 10, RG75 U.S.B.I.A. Phoenix Area Office, Irrigation Projects, 1935–61, NA-LN, 1.
- ⁹² R. H. Rupkey, chief, Operations Division & Agriculture, “Industry Activities,” Folder 4.5.2.11, Box 10, RG75, NA-LN, 1; for a mention of work at the tofu factory, see Shizu Kamei interview, 75.
- ⁹³ R. H. Rupkey, chief, Operations Division & Agriculture, “Industry Activities,” Folder 4.5.2.11, Box 10, RG75, NA-LN, 1–4.
- ⁹⁴ “Classes in Drama Dept. Announced,” *Poston Chronicle*, December 24, 1942, 3.
- ⁹⁵ Toshiko Iwaki, “History of Our Library,” in Vincent Tajiri, edited with observations, *Through Innocent Eyes: Writings and Art from the Japanese American Internment by Poston I Schoolchildren* (“Originally compiled in 1943 as *Out of the Desert* by Ray Franchi and Paul Takeda with the assistance of teachers and students”), (Los Angeles: Keiro Services Press and the Generations Fund, 1990), 71.
- ⁹⁶ Memorandum from R. N. Crawford, Supervisor, Public Health Nursing, Camp II to Dr. Pressman, director of Health & Sanitation, regarding Monthly Report of Public Health Nursing Activities, Camp II, September 1–October 1, 1943 and October 11, 1943, page 2, included in correspondence from Elma Rood, supervisor, Public Health Nursing to Dr. Ralph B. Snively, district medical director, 12 October 1943, Folder “War Relocation Authority, Poston, Ariz. Public Health Nursing Program,” Box 461, RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Phoenix Area Office, Department of Health, Correspondence Related to Japanese Resettlement Camps From: 1942 To: 1944, NA-LN.

- ⁹⁷ "150 Adobe Workers Needed for New Project," *Poston Chronicle*, January 8, 1943, 6. See also, "Women Employed in Adobe Project," *Poston Chronicle*, February 5, 1943, 5.
- ⁹⁸ "Quad III Girl Scouts to Aid in Adobe Work," *Poston Chronicle*, February 4, 1943, 4. Women also recruited other women workers to join the project. See "Women Lauded for Adobe Effort," *Poston Chronicle*, February 9, 1943, 5.
- ⁹⁹ "Photos of Women At Work on Adobe Project Swing Big Lumber Deal for School," *Poston Chronicle*, April 18, 1943, 1.
- ¹⁰⁰ See, for example, the initial installment of Hisaye Yamamoto's short story, "Death Rides the Rails to Poston," *Poston Chronicle*, January 9, 1943, 7, and "Departing Chronicle Workers Given Party," *Poston Chronicle*, June 6, 1945, 3.
- ¹⁰¹ "Manpower Felt in Poston, Survey to Be Conducted," *Poston Chronicle*, March 6, 1943, 1.
- ¹⁰² "Ag' Girls Aid Manpower Shortage," *Poston Chronicle*, March 26, 1943, 3.
- ¹⁰³ "Girl Truck and Taxi Drivers Wanted," *Poston Chronicle*, March 7, 1943, 2.
- ¹⁰⁴ Yukiko Furuta interview, 135.
- ¹⁰⁵ Margie Fujiyama interview, 11.
- ¹⁰⁶ Yukiko Furuta interview, 135.
- ¹⁰⁷ For an overview of education see Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).
- ¹⁰⁸ McKinley was one of a handful of high schools in the territory, where access to education was generally segregated under the so-called English Standard system. McKinley was not an English Standard school and had one of the highest concentrations of Japanese American students in the prewar period. See Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 108-115, 172. See also Leighton, 101, and Okihiro, 156-157.
- ¹⁰⁹ Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 30.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ¹¹¹ Margie Fujiyama interview, 5-6.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ¹¹⁴ As Betty Oba Masukawa explained about her young daughter's education, "There was a class in front of our barracks so she went to school there." See Betty Oba Masukawa interview, 12.
- ¹¹⁵ In the initial stages of Poston's development, the administration tried to assess the availability of medical personnel. In September 1942, for instance, Sallie Jeffries, director of nursing, wrote to Mrs. Ella Lacy Blake, State House, Phoenix, Arizona, reporting that there were "several Japanese undergraduate nurses" at Poston who were from California nursing programs. Correspondence of Sallie Jeffries to Ella Lacy Blake, September 28, 1942, Folder "W.R.A.—Poston + Pima," Box 461, RG 75, NA-LN. For more on nursing and other women in medical care, see Susan L. Smith, "Women Health Workers and the Color Line in the Japanese American 'Relocation Centers' of World War II," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Winter 1999): 585-601.
- ¹¹⁶ Maki Kanno interview, 63.
- ¹¹⁷ Correspondence from Helen P. Olmstead, field nurse supervisor to Dr. A. Pressman, director of Health & Sanitation, W.R.A., Poston, Arizona, 20 February 1943, which includes "Report of Detail to Poston, Arizona, December 5, 1942, to February 7, 1943," Folder "War Relocation Authority, Poston, Ariz. Public Health Nursing Program," Box 461, RG 75, NA-LN.
- ¹¹⁸ Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 31. See also "Unit 2 Visiting Nurses Join Poston Hospital," *Poston Chronicle*, January 6, 1943, 4, and "Visiting Nurses Feted at 'Farewell Party,'" *Poston Chronicle*, January 7, 1943, 5.
- ¹¹⁹ War Relocation Authority, "Japanese-Americans in Relocation Centers," 3-4, in Folder "Memorandum, Order, etc. Washington Office [1.1]" Box No. 63, A9598, RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Irrigation District Number Four, Colorado River Irrigation Project, Records of J. W. Shepard, Fiscal Office of the Colorado River War Relocation Project, 1942-1948, From: Administrative Instructions To: Cost Accounting (file ind.), NA-LN. According to Margie Fujiyama, in the period before young Nisei men were conscripted, young men could get clearances to do agricultural labor because of the shortage of workers. The process was successful, leading others to gain clearances too. See Margie Fujiyama interview, 9. Pri-

- marily, young men left camp to find work outside, although some women also became employed in these jobs. See Masako Tashima interview, 7.
- ¹²⁰ Matsumoto, *Farming the Home Place*, 142–145.
- ¹²¹ Japanese Americans on indefinite leave were initially barred from the East Coast, but this restriction was eventually lifted. CWRIC, 202–204, and WRA, WRA, 135–142.
- ¹²² Shizu Kamei interview, 69.
- ¹²³ “55 Residents to Leave for Cannery,” *Poston Chronicle*, June 22, 1944, 1.
- ¹²⁴ “Girl War Plant Workers Wanted in Cleveland,” *Poston Chronicle*, August 22, 1944, 1.
- ¹²⁵ “Camp II Girl 1st Nisei WAC,” *Poston Chronicle* December 18, 1943, 1, and “Poston Girl Joins Air WAC,” *Poston Chronicle*, February 26, 1944, 1. The number of Japanese American WACs is unknown but is unlikely to have exceeded the target goal of five hundred recruits. Brenda L. Moore, *Serving Our Country: Japanese American Women in the Military During World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 29.
- ¹²⁶ All inductees had sworn loyalty to the U.S. and a willingness to serve overseas. Moore, 94–95.
- ¹²⁷ Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, “Securing the ‘Double V’: African-American and Japanese-American Women in the Military During World War II,” in Paula Nassen Poulos, ed., *A Woman’s War Too: U.S. Women in the Military During World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1996), 331.
- ¹²⁸ War Relocation Authority, “Japanese-Americans in Relocation Centers,” 4, in Folder, “Memorandum, Order, etc. Washington Office [1.1],” Box No. 63, A9598, RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Irrigation District Number Four, Colorado River Irrigation Project, Records of J. W. Shepard, Fiscal Office of the Colorado River War Relocation Project, 1942–1948, From: Administrative Instructions To: Cost Accounting (file ind.), NA-LN.
- ¹²⁹ “Domestic Work for Couples Open in Omaha,” *Poston Chronicle*, January 8, 1943, 5.
- ¹³⁰ “Chef Job Open in University of Colorado Sorority House,” *Poston Chronicle*, January 20, 1943, 2.
- ¹³¹ Yukiko Furuta interview, 129.
- ¹³² Aiko Tanamachi Endo interview, 31–32.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.
- ¹³⁵ Margie Fujiyama interview, 9.
- ¹³⁶ Maki Kanno interview, 68.
- ¹³⁷ Shizu Kamei interview, 75.
- ¹³⁸ Mine Yabuki Kaneko interview, 45; Shizu Kamei interview, 82.
- ¹³⁹ For more on the postwar experiences of Japanese American women and their relationship to Southern California, see, for example, Elizabeth A. Wheeler’s “A Concrete Island: Hisaye Yamamoto’s Postwar Los Angeles,” *Southern California Quarterly* 78 (Spring 1996): 19–50.
- ¹⁴⁰ See Tetsuden Kashima, “Japanese American Internees Return, 1945 to 1955: Readjustment and Social Amnesia,” *Phylon* 41, no. 2 (1980): 107–115.
- ¹⁴¹ See Mitchell T. Maki, Harry H.L. Kitano, and S. Megan Berthold, *Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Achieved Redress* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
- ¹⁴² Chizu Omori, “The Life and Times of *Rabbit in the Moon*” in Erica Hart, ed., *Last Witnesses: Reflections on the Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 216.
- ¹⁴³ *Rabbit in the Moon*, directed by Emiko Omori, (Hohokus, NJ: New Day Films, 2001).
- ¹⁴⁴ See Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited*, 16–17, 260–262; Amy Kesselman, *Fleeting Opportunities: Women Shipyard Workers in Portland and Vancouver During World War II and Reconversion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), especially Chapter 4, “What Will Happen When the Boys Come Home,” 91–103, and Chapter 5, “After the War,” 105–133. Gluck notes on page 17, for example, the continued presence of women in Los Angeles aircraft industries following the war. For more on women’s history in the post-World War II era, see Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).