

“SUPER SALESMEN” FOR THE TOUGHEST SALES JOB:
THE *UTAH NIPPO*, SALT LAKE CITY’S JAPANESE AMERICANS,
AND PROVING GROUP LOYALTY, 1941–1946

by

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ABSTRACT

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Utah State University, 2012

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This thesis examines the *Utah Nippo*, its messages to Salt Lake City’s Nikkei population, and draws out the paper’s editorial themes intended for resident Utah Nikkei. The *Utah Nippo* was one of three Japanese-language newspapers that published during World War II and it was a voice for community leaders and editors who urged Salt Lake Nikkei to behave in certain ways that (they believed) would prove a certain loyal American identity. Such an identity was comprised of prescribed behaviors: supporting the government and war effort, attending patriotic activities, keeping a low social profile, and quietly enduring the fear and discrimination directed at them as Nikkei in the midst of a national war against Japan. The *Utah Nippo* painted the model minority stereotype during World War II, although scholars view it as a postwar concept imposed on Asian Americans. Although not entirely dictated by the Japanese American Citizens League, the newspaper content was influenced by the League’s wartime campaigns for working with the U.S. government and behaving loyally. Nikkei in community leadership roles actively encouraged this image because it meant safety by assurance of Americanism. Individuals and editorials highlighted behaviors that helped or hurt the group image. The newspaper also focused

on ending racism in the U.S. within Nikkei communities and as they resettled throughout the nation. While the *Utah Nippo* printed such sentiments, not all residents necessarily agreed with or did as the newspaper suggested, yet the articles indicated the identity that editors and leaders hoped to create. In light of the tenuous situation that Salt Lake Nikkei felt they lived in, it made sense for individuals to outwardly conform and incorporate the paper's behavioral guidelines in order to deflect suspicions over loyalty away from the group.

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I examine the *Utah Nippo*, a newspaper that published in Salt Lake City, Utah, in Japanese and English during World War II. People of Japanese descent are called Nikkei. The immigrant parents are termed Issei and their U.S. citizen children are Nisei. I look specifically at the *Utah Nippo* English section editors’ messages to Salt Lake City’s Nikkei population and draw out the paper’s editorial themes intended for resident Utah Nikkei—and for the larger Euro-American population.

After the 7 December 1941 Japanese military attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government ordered that Nikkei on the West Coast be imprisoned during the war. This disrupted all Nikkei’s lives, including those in Utah who were not imprisoned. Newspapers on the West Coast could not publish, making the *Utah Nippo* one of three Japanese-language newspapers that published during World War II. It was a voice for community leaders and editors who urged Salt Lake Nikkei to behave in certain ways that (they believed) would prove a certain loyal American identity. Such an identity was comprised of prescribed behaviors: supporting the government and war effort, attending patriotic activities, keeping a low social profile, and quietly enduring the fear and discrimination directed at them as Nikkei in the midst of a national war against Japan.

The *Utah Nippo* painted the model minority stereotype during World War II, although scholars view as a postwar concept imposed on Asian Americans. The model minority stereotype

is that Asian Americans are the “best” immigrant group in the U.S. because they achieve in Euro-American institutions. This is not true and is a racist stereotype. However, in this thesis, I argue that the model minority image was one which Nikkei wanted to cultivate during World War II because it meant that they were truly and successfully American.

Another influence on the *Utah Nippo* that I discuss in this thesis is the Japanese American Citizens League, or JACL. Although not entirely dictated by the JACL, the newspaper content was influenced by the League’s wartime campaigns for working with the U.S. government and behaving loyally. The JACL planned meetings and conventions that had patriotic themes and messages in them. Nikkei who attended would, supposedly, learn about how to better their American image. The presence of the announcements showed Euro-American observers that the community and League were working together to be adequately American. Nikkei in community leadership roles actively encouraged this image because it meant safety by assurance of Americanism.

Other focuses in the *Utah Nippo* include specific examples of behaviors and demands that racism in the U.S. stop. Individuals and editorials highlighted behaviors that helped or hurt the group image. At the latter part of the war, the newspaper focused on ending racism in the U.S. within Nikkei communities and as they resettled throughout the nation after being released from camps. Although the *Utah Nippo* printed such sentiments, not all residents necessarily agreed with or did as the newspaper suggested, yet the articles indicated the identity that editors and leaders hoped to create. In light of the tenuous situation that Salt Lake Nikkei felt they lived in, it made sense for individuals to outwardly conform and incorporate the paper’s behavioral guidelines in order to deflect suspicions over loyalty away from the group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Three years ago, I drove down 300 West and 100 South in Salt Lake City with my husband. A street sign caught my eye—Japan Town Street. Little did I know that there were still a Japanese Church of Christ and a Buddhist Temple on that street, which had been a small Japanese community many years ago, but had been mostly demolished in the 1960s to make way for the Salt Palace Convention Center. “A Japan Town in Salt Lake? No way!” I said. At the time, I was searching for a research project for my history senior paper and decided to look into this topic more. The questions I asked early on slowly evolved into my master’s thesis. I am very thankful for all those who helped me on this journey.

I’d like to thank Dr. Victoria Grieve for her comments on my senior paper and encouragement to turn it into a thesis or dissertation at a later time. Dr. Mic Nicholls also deserves to be acknowledged for a highly entertaining methods course and the reassurance that it was all right if a research project died before it began.

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Sarah L. B. Fassmann

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WANTED: Any number of super salesmen for the toughest selling proposition in this whole country. The commodity to be sold is of excellent quality on the inside but its external appearance is something awful.

—S. U., “What Do YOU Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 18 September 1942

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the Wednesday, 3 December 1941 edition of the weekly newspaper, the *Utah Nippo*, English section editor Maurea Ushio observed that people were more picky about how their eggs were cooked than they were about their leaders. “Why can’t people be just as fussy in choosing men who are to lead them?” Explaining that soon “the intermountain niseis” would have a “great responsibility” in electing “new officers for the various nisei organizations,” Ushio chastised people of Japanese descent, or Nikkei, living in Salt Lake City, Utah, for showing little interest in this process.¹ One week later, on 10 December, she reflected on the events of the prior Sunday, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, saying, “the world in one sense seems suddenly to have stopped in its orbit, and on the other, it seems suddenly to have gone loco, rushing pell-mell to nowhere.”²

Ushio’s concerns had changed from elections to larger questions about life in the United States, the consequences of war with Japan for Nikkei, and what American citizenship and loyalty meant for herself and the Japanese American community. In the editorial published immediately after Pearl Harbor, she stated, “This is the time to prove to our fellow Americans that we are one of them ... for all Nisei to prove the fallacy of those ideas and suspicions cast on us Americans of Japanese descent that are existing in the minds of some of the other American citizens.”³ As a Nisei (second-generation Nikkei), Ushio held American citizenship, but she and other Nisei recognized that their place in the U.S. had changed—and their ethnicity not only led to job or recreational discrimination, but now labeled them the enemy.

¹ Maurea Ushio, “Editorial ... This is Election Time,” *Utah Nippo (Salt Lake City)*, 3 December 1941.

² Maurea Ushio, “Practice What You Preach,” *Utah Nippo*, 10 December 1941.

³ Ibid.

In histories of Japanese Americans in the twentieth century, Salt Lake City's Japanese American community often falls beneath the radar of western and Utah historians. While their numbers were relatively small, they formed a vibrant community, complete with a newspaper in both Japanese and English. The *Utah Nippo* recorded community activities as well as state, national, and international news, particularly during World War II, when it was one of only three Japanese-language newspapers the United States government permitted to print. It included extensive information about Japanese American evacuation, internment, and the subsequent resettlement of West Coast Nikkei across the nation.

This thesis, “‘Super Salesmen’ for the Toughest Sales Job: The *Utah Nippo*, Salt Lake City's Japanese Americans, and Proving Group Loyalty, 1941–1946,” examines the *Utah Nippo*, its messages about Salt Lake City, and draws out the paper's editorial themes intended for resident Utah Nisei.⁴ The *Utah Nippo* was a voice for community leaders and editors. I argue the newspaper urged Salt Lake Nikkei to behave in certain ways that (they believed) would prove a certain American, and loyal, identity. Such an identity was comprised of prescribed behaviors: supporting the government and war effort, attending patriotic activities, keeping a low social profile, and quietly enduring the fear and discrimination directed at them as Nikkei in the midst of a national war against Japan. The *Utah Nippo* painted the model minority stereotype, which scholars view as a postwar concept imposed on Asian Americans, during World War II. Nikkei in community leadership roles actively encouraged this image because it meant safety by assurance of Americanism. Although the *Utah Nippo* printed such sentiments, not all residents necessarily agreed with or did as the newspaper suggested, yet the articles indicate the identity that editors and leaders hoped to create. In light of the tenuous situation that Salt Lake Nikkei felt they lived

⁴ Title from S. U., “What Do YOU Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 18 September 1942.

in, it made sense for individuals to outwardly conform and incorporate the paper's behavioral guidelines in order to deflect suspicions over loyalty away from the group.

I argue these themes through this thesis. Beginning in Chapter 1, the introduction, I cover the historiography relating to Nikkei in the United States, Utah, and during World War II. I then consider the historiographies of race and assimilation, important concepts in my arguments. The introduction closes with a short overview of the *Utah Nippo's* wartime history to set the stage for more detailed analysis of the paper's editorial voice. In Chapter 2, "Salt Lake City's Japan Town and the *Utah Nippo's* Expectations for Community Members," I examine the responses to Nikkei population growth by white Utahns and the *Utah Nippo's* editorials and editorial requests of Japan Town residents, specifically that they rapidly Americanize and seek to blend in with mainstream culture, thereby avoiding negative notice and proving the group's loyalty, their "American-ness." The *Utah Nippo* emphasized the fact that Nikkei not evacuated, or living in the free-zone, represented the rest of the group, particularly those in the internment centers, and were responsible for group acceptance by the nation. In Chapter 3, "Bad Examples: The *Utah Nippo* and Negative Nikkei Behaviors," the newspaper editors' thoughts on behavior continue, but this time in defining behaviors that hurt the group. This chapter looks at the negative behaviors identified in the columns of the *Utah Nippo* and how individual Nikkei, whether acting as good or bad Americans, affected the way the rest of the nation viewed the entire Nikkei community. Chapter 4, "Behaving the Japanese American Citizens League Way," looks specifically at the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in Salt Lake City, which, during World War II, included both national and local chapters. It becomes an important part of the JACL's history and shows the validity of the Salt Lake City Nikkei community to the national story of internment. The League promoted a similar American identity and assimilationist strategy to the *Utah Nippo*, and held meetings and conventions that emphasized a patriotic identity. It was a message consistent with what the JACL attempted to present to the national government. Chapter 5, "The

Utah Nippo and the Elimination of Racism,” examines a major theme in the paper’s editorial direction, that of ending racism among Nikkei themselves and among white Americans. The chapter traces efforts to end racism in Utah, the West Coast, and the entire nation, placing the responsibility to do so with Nikkei. The thesis concludes by reflecting on my arguments, asking some unaddressed questions, and suggesting avenues for further research.

This thesis focuses on the *Utah Nippo* editors’ attempts to persuade Salt Lake City residents (and those who left the internment camps) to behave in certain ways. However, they continuously emphasize that things in Utah were not terrible—not as bad as on the West Coast—and that Nikkei had made progress. But was the racial situation in Salt Lake City really so great? Utahns at the time were subject to the same racisms as other Americans, yet there were no large non-white populations in the state. Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans *did* live in the city and surrounding areas, but there was never a large concentration that Euro-Americans directed their animosity towards. Utah was not racism-free, and Nikkei and the other ethnic minorities were restricted from businesses, residential areas, and limited in other rights. While the editors of the *Utah Nippo* painted a rosy view of race relations in Utah, their constant emphases on working to improve the situation by action point to the fact that they recognized the inherent ethnic and racial problems and believed specified actions by all parties was needed to make life better.

Historiography

Nikkei in the United States

Numerous books and articles focus on Japanese immigration to and settlement in the United States, and even more examine their evacuation from the West Coast during World War II. Paul Spickard’s *Japanese Americans* and Bill Hosokawa’s *Nisei* give an overview of the

history of Japanese and their descendents in the United States.⁵ While most scholarship about Nikkei focuses on internment, some scholars focus on communities before the war, usually on the West Coast of the U.S., but few address communities outside the Pacific area. Some scholarship addressing specific communities includes Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura's anthology of essays addressing the Pacific Northwest, Brian Masaru Hayashi's exploration the religious life of pre-war Los Angeles Nikkei, and Shiho Imai's research on the consumer culture of Nikkei in Honolulu.⁶ These studies of pre-war communities add understanding to the dynamics in Salt Lake City's small Japan Town.

Japanese immigrants, called Issei, first came to the United States in significant numbers beginning in 1884, most arriving in Hawai'i. After the territory's annexation in 1898, many Issei migrated to the West Coast of the United States. Like other immigrant groups, the Issei were heavily male and usually employed as agricultural workers. The Gentleman's Agreement (1907–1908) between Japan and the U.S. restricted immigration to the U.S. by refusing to issue passports to Japanese immigrants, excepting women who would join their husbands in the United States. Some of the women had been married before their husbands emigrated, while other were married by proxy and called “picture brides.” As the Japanese families grew with the addition of children (the Nisei), and rural Issei became farmers not just laborers, and urban Issei became shop

⁵ Paul Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformation of an Ethnic Group* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009) and Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002).

⁶ See Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura, eds., *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); Brian Masaru Hayashi, *For the Sake of Our Japanese Brethren: Assimilation, Nationalism, and Protestantism among the Japanese of Los Angeles, 1895–1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); and Shiho Imai, *Creating the Nisei Market: Race and Citizenship in Hawai'i's Japanese American Consumer Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010).

owners not simply clerks, they sparked animosity from their Anglo neighbors.⁷ Asian immigrants could not legally naturalize and become citizens, and ten western states (including Utah) created laws that forbade Issei from owning land; however, many purchased land in their citizen children's names.⁸

The West Coast continued as the most densely populated by Japanese in the U.S., although some small ethnic communities sprouted throughout the West. By 1930, there were 138,836 Nikkei in the United States, 68,357 of them American-born citizens. A decade later, there were 126,947 Nikkei and 79,642 Nisei.⁹ Urban Nikkei in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and other cities (such as Salt Lake City) created Japan Towns, Little Tokyos, or *Nihonmachi*, where they lived, owned stores, and worked in close proximity. Children attended Japanese language schools after American public school.¹⁰ Some children were sent to Japan to attend school and upon returning to the U.S. were labeled Kibei.

Despite their parents' attempts to internalize Japanese culture in their children, most Nisei were culturally American—they played baseball, wore American clothes, danced to popular music, and spoke and read English. The Nisei children and teenagers readily adopted white middle-class lifestyles, had American cultural skills, had more education than their Issei parents, and did not understand Japanese culture. But because of their race, Nisei were never fully

⁷ Roger Daniels, *Coming To America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Perrenial, 2002), 250, 253, 255 and Spickard, *Japanese Americans*, 46.

⁸ Dudley D. McGoveney, "The Anti-Japanese Land Laws of California and Ten Other States," *California Law Review* 35, no. 1 (March 1947): 7–8, 14, 17 and R. Todd Welker, "Sweet Dreams in Sugar Land: Japanese Farmers, Mexican Farm Workers, and Northern Utah Beet Production" (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2002), 14.

⁹ Hosokawa, *Nisei*, 151. The population drop is from the aging Issei population or those who returned to Japan during the Great Depression.

¹⁰ Noriko Asato, "Americanization vs. Japanese Cultural Maintenance: Analyzing Seattle's *Nihongo Tokkuhon*, 1920," in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest*, ed. Fiset and Nomura, 100.

accepted into an American society that demonstrated its deep distrust of Asian “others” through nineteenth-century exclusionary immigration laws.¹¹ Some Nisei attended universities, but were under-employed after their graduation because white employers refused to hire them. They were restricted from restaurants and theaters, and *de facto* segregation in the Japan Towns further isolated them from American society. Yoshiko Uchida remembered,

As I approached adolescence, I wanted more than anything to be accepted as any other white American. Imbued with the melting pot mentality, I saw integration into white American society as the only way to overcome the sense of rejection I had experienced in so many areas of my life.¹²

As Uchida related, the desire to assimilate but being repeatedly rejected was a source of deep frustration for many Nisei.

The JACL formed in 1929 to “foster good citizenship and civic participation.” The leaders were older, had more occupational mobility, and were more likely to be professionals than most other Nisei. The JACL has been controversial over its history. Bill Hosokawa’s entire book, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, is pro-JACL throughout, and the title reflects the JACL’s attitude toward World War II internment as quiet acceptance and loyalty. Paul Spickard describes the “clean-cut” JACL as “conservative, hardworking, devotedly pro-American, doggedly accepting of whatever crumbs White Americans offered, quietly persevering in the attempt to win a place for Nisei in the United States”—a description that begins as a compliment but ends as a criticism.¹³ No matter how it is viewed, the JACL was an important part of Nikkei life during World War II and represented all Nikkei to the U.S. government at that time.

¹¹ Spickard, *Japanese Americans*, 85–6.

¹² Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 40.

¹³ “History of the Japanese American Citizens League,” *JACL*, accessed 20 September 2011, <http://www.jacl.org/about/jacl-history.htm>; Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of*

Nikkei in Utah

Although Utah's historic Japanese American population was small, they had lived and worked in the state since the early years of Japanese immigration to the nation. R. Todd Welker's study of Utah's Japanese and Mexican American beet farmers and laborers describes the lives of most of the state's Japanese population before and during World War II. Sandra C. Taylor examined the West Coast Japanese Americans who voluntarily relocated to Utah and farmed, authored a book about the Central Utah Relocation Center (known as Topaz) and the people in the camp, and studied those who resettled in Utah and the surrounding areas after leaving camps. Welker and Taylor study non-urban Nikkei or those in the isolated internment camps. The historiography of urban populations in Utah is small, but informative. Arguing that Utahns reluctantly tolerated Japanese Americans in the state, historian Leonard Arrington labels wartime race relations as "ambiguous"—following negative national stereotypes yet recognizing that all Japanese Americans were not bad. A wartime University of Utah sociology professor, Elmer Smith, published articles about demographics, economics, and culture in Salt Lake City's Japan Town.¹⁴ This thesis observes Japanese Utahns in Salt Lake City during World War II, exploring

Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles, 1934–1990 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 30;

Hosokawa, *Nisei*; and Spickard, *Japanese Americans*, 98.

¹⁴ Welker, "Sweet Dreams"; Sandra C. Taylor, "Japanese Americans and Keetley Farms: Utah's Relocation Colony," in *Being Different: Stories of Utah's Minorities*, ed. Stanford J. Layton (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 120–36; Sandra C. Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert: Japanese American Internment at Topaz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Sandra C. Taylor, "Leaving the Concentration Camps: Japanese American Resettlement in Utah and the Intermountain West," *Pacific Historical Review* 60 (May 1991): 169–94; Leonard Arrington, "Utah's Ambiguous Reception: The Relocated Japanese Americans," in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, ed. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H. L. Kitano (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 92–7; Elmer R. Smith, "The 'Japanese' in Utah (Part I)," *Utah Humanities Review* 2, no. 2 (April 1948): 129–44; and Elmer R. Smith, "The 'Japanese' in Utah (Part II)," *Utah Humanities Review* 2, no. 3 (July 1948): 208–31.

the “ambiguous” race relations and asking if and how the *Utah Nippo* defined a group identity among urban Nikkei residents.

Japanese immigrants first settled in the state in the early 1880s. Many Issei went to Salt Lake City or Ogden in hopes of obtaining railroad work, but most worked as laborers in the sugar beet fields of northern Utah. As Nikkei gained capital, lawmakers restricted Issei from owning land in the state, so, like other Issei in the West, they purchased land in their Nisei children’s names. Becoming landowners tied them to the fabric of rural Utah society, even though its periphery. They proved excellent farmers, developing and producing nationally-acclaimed Sweetheart and Jumbo celery and the Twentieth Century strawberry. During the economic nightmare of the Great Depression, many of the Japanese farmers lost their land.¹⁵

Other Issei worked in mining communities around the state and were not met with the same antagonism as Greek, Italian, or Slavic miners because, in Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai’s words, they “did not attempt to enter into American social life; they endured slights without retaliation [due to cultural patience and were seen as temporary] ... of all people they were the most law abiding; and their children ... were well behaved.”¹⁶ These traits helped them maintain a low profile among employers and the Euro-American population of the state.

Five-sixths of the Japanese in Utah were rural or mine workers, but there were two ethnic urban communities in Ogden and Salt Lake. Salt Lake City held Utah’s densest Nikkei population. The Japan Town was about two blocks in size, at about South Temple and 200 West, and north of the Greek Town. Nikkei established the Buddhist Church in 1912 and the Japanese Church of Christ in 1918. There were several Japanese restaurants, a tofu factory, laundries, dry cleaners, and produce stands in the area. The E. D. Hashimoto store was at the heart of the

¹⁵ Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai, “Japanese Life in Utah,” *The Peoples of Utah*, ed. Helen Z. Papanikolas (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1976), 336, 339 and Welker, “Sweet Dreams,” 10, 14, 11, 18.

¹⁶ Papanikolas and Kasai, “Japanese Life in Utah,” 342–3.

community. Hashimoto was a labor agent and helped new immigrants find work and supplied them with clothes and dry goods. There were several hotels, boarding houses, and apartments, meaning Nikkei lived and worked in the same spaces.¹⁷ Experiencing significant population growth during WWII, especially as Nikkei left the internment camps, Salt Lake City's Nikkei population hit 878 in November 1944. The following November, the *Utah Nippo* reported that the state's Nikkei population had grown 297 percent over the course of the war. They estimated that 3,180 Nikkei settled in the state since 1943 and the state was currently home to 6,565 Nikkei and Salt Lake City to between 1,700 and 2,200.¹⁸ Even after the WWII population increase, Salt Lake's Japan Town was small but vibrant, a miniature version of counterparts on the West Coast.

Japanese met with racism in white establishments, such as theaters and restaurants. Ichiro Doi remembered being sent upstairs to “nigger heaven” at the theaters, but was not bothered by it until he was older and recognized it as discrimination. Yukiyo Inouye had a difficult time with dating in Salt Lake City, because “I was going to ask [white girls], but I chickened out and I didn't ask. Those days, the Japanese people wanted to marry Japanese. [Whites] didn't want to associate with ... especially get married [to us].” Recognizing the disapproval from white parents that would surely ensue by asking out their daughter, Inouye decided not to date the girls at his school. Sen Nishiyama recalled another social aspect of youth, saying “almost all of my friends were Caucasian Americans. And we kicked around together. I was just another guy, as far as they were concerned. And they were just another guy to me. So in terms of discrimination ... my

¹⁷ Papanikolas and Kasai, “Japanese Life in Utah,” 337, 340; Ichiro Doi, interview, 2 July 1984, s2:27, folder 2, box 1, Interviews with Japanese in Utah, 1980–1989, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter IJU); Chiyo Matsumiya, interview, 11 April 1984, p. 4, folder 6, box 2, IJU; and Grace Tasake, interview, s1:16–17, folder 10, box 3, IJU.

¹⁸ “Distribution of Japanese Evacuees Reported,” *Utah Nippo*, 27 November 1944 and “Utah Nisei Population Shows Gain Over 1940,” *Utah Nippo*, 21 November 1945.

friends didn't."¹⁹ Utah was not the most racist state in the western U.S., but discrimination existed and young people may not have recognized it. However, most Nikkei before the war did not experience the types of prejudice that Japanese on the West Coast did, and especially not the types of violence that contemporary African Americans experienced.

Not only were Nikkei different from white Utahns by race, but also differed from the largely LDS population by religion.²⁰ Doi did not "recall any ill feelings toward the Buddhist group," but believed that Buddhism was misunderstood in Utah and the U.S. He explained that "since everyone [was] Christian around me, to be a Buddhist seemed like you kind of stood out as being, you know, kind of funny or it's queer or something like that." Inouye's parents were "staunch Buddhists," but all of his friends were LDS. His parents advised, "'If [you're] going to live in America, you do what you need to do to become an American.' So I joined the [LDS] church when I was 12 years old."²¹ To these young men, being Buddhist was a point of difference from peers. Doi continued as a Buddhist, eventually serving as the president of the Buddhist youth group, while Inouye joined the LDS Church. There was a small Japanese LDS congregation at the time. Other Protestant Nikkei in Salt Lake City attended the Japanese Church of Christ. Religion was something that the Nisei in Salt Lake City had to deal with constantly because of their differences. The ethnic churches were the nucleus of youth organizations and social events for the community and were important for socializing with other Nisei.

In December 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States reeled from the shock. Nikkei feared (a fear soon confirmed) that because of their race they would be associated

¹⁹ Doi, 2 July 1984, s1:14-5; Yuki Yoshi Inouye, interview, 18 December 1987, folder 8, box 1, IJU; and Sen Nishiyama, interview, s1:13, folder 10, box 2, IJU.

²⁰ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is commonly known as the Mormon church. In this thesis, I will refer to the Church and its members as LDS instead of Mormon.

²¹ Doi, 6 July 1984, s1:9, s1:11 and Inouye, 18 December 1987.

with the nation's enemy. While government relocation directives forced West Coast Nikkei from their homes, Utah Japanese were not (excepting a few Issei community leaders).²² Because they were able to interact with whites outside of the detention centers and relocation camps, Utah Nikkei felt responsible to represent their entire race and to prove their loyalty and remain outside those camps. During World War II, Intermountain Nikkei developed a unique identity and a "discourse of survival," which established distance between themselves and coastal Nikkei.²³ Such distancing was intended to prove that Salt Lake Japanese Americans were *true* and loyal Americans—and only after that were they ethnically Nikkei. The community, dismissed in too simplistic terms by Sandra C. Taylor, spent the war "trying to be inconspicuous and avoid hostility from whites."²⁴ But it wasn't just about being inconspicuous; it was also about being appropriately American.

Joel Tadao Miyasaki, who studies Utah and Idaho's rural Japanese, explores the idea of Nikkei presenting a "local" identity in the Intermountain West. He explains that Japanese Americans created a "discourse of survival," which meant "embracing Americanization, becoming local Japanese." Chrissy Lau also focuses on American identity among Japanese Americans, describing the post-World War II focus on student academic, athletic, and leadership achievements in Japanese newspapers as an expression of all-American behavior that reflected

²² Papanikolas and Kasai, "Japanese Life in Utah," 355–6. Nikkei in the Intermountain West were not considered a military and security threat, most likely because it would be almost impossible for them to communicate quickly with Japanese enemies from their homes.

²³ Joel Tadao Miyasaki, "Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West: Japanese American Ethnic Identity in Utah and Idaho" (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2006), 4.

²⁴ Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert*, 60.

well on the larger group.²⁵ I, too, examine activities and commentary in the *Utah Nippo* that encouraged Americanization and staked Japanese American claims to being “local” and “Utahns” as well as “Americans.” The Nikkei community participated in many activities, among themselves and with the larger community, which the *Utah Nippo* used to argue for the group’s American loyalty and traits.

The Utah Nippo’s History and Historiography

With the urban communities in Utah came immigrant presses. In 1907, the *Rocky Mountain Times* began publishing from Ogden. The following year, it moved to Salt Lake City and was printed weekly. Uneo Terasawa founded *Utah Nippo* in 1914 as a Buddhist newspaper printed in Japanese. In 1927, the *Utah Nippo* bought the *Rocky Mountain Times*. A few years later, in September 1937, the *Utah Nippo* began its one-page English section, which made up the fourth (and final) page of the Japanese-language paper. It published weekly until January 1942 when the government halted all Japanese-language newspapers. However, publication resumed in March 1942, and the paper’s subscriptions grew so much that it began to publish three times a week by that summer. The *Utah Nippo* was one of only three Japanese language papers allowed to publish for the duration of the war (all were closed after Pearl Harbor and most not allowed to reopen),²⁶ and circulation grew because of “the increased ‘need for news’ by people of Japanese ancestry residing in the United States,” especially those in internment camps.²⁷

²⁵ Miyasaki, “Claiming a Place,” 82–3 and Chrissy Lau, “Award Winning Youth: Japanese Americans, Education, and Cold War Politics,” paper presented at the Western History Association conference, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, 2010.

²⁶ Haruo Higashimoto, “Assimilational Factors Related to the Functioning of the Immigrant Press in Selected Japanese Communities” (PhD Diss., Brigham Young University, 1984), 25–6 and *Utah Nippo*, December 1941–March 1942.

²⁷ Higashimoto, “Assimilational Factors,” 71. A sample of the subscription numbers followed by the month and year in parentheses are given here: 408 (Oct. 1939), 418 (April 1941), 901 (June 1942), 1,656 (Oct. 1942), 3,780 (April 1943), 4,604 (Oct. 1943), 6,558 (April 1944), 8,038 (Oct. 1944), 7,937 (April 1945), 5,075 (Oct. 1945), 2,863 (Oct. 1946),

Haruo Higashimoto studies immigrant presses and assimilation. He argues that an immigrant press is obsolete once the group assimilates, which questions the usefulness and impact of the *Utah Nippo*'s English section for Nisei readers. Believing assimilation to be a combination of lost cultural originality and rising cultural conformity, Higashimoto argues that newspaper subscriptions track the assimilation of ethnic Americans looking for news in other sources. In summarizing his study, he writes,

There were some Nisei and Sansei in this study who answered that they read the English section only, since most of them do not read Japanese. That section usually includes news and events happening in the Japanese community concerning such things as weddings, obituaries, softball tournaments, dance parties, etc. Since local 'American' newspapers do not usually cover such information, the English section of the Japanese newspaper plays an important role in providing such information for the Japanese community.²⁸

This accurately describes the *Utah Nippo*'s English section during World War II, including editorials of interest to the community.

Haruo Higashimoto outlines the *Utah Nippo*'s history and briefly examines the newspaper's role in the community and relationship with the national government. Explaining that, although Kuniko Terasawa and wartime authorities agreed that the *Utah Nippo* would only print translations of American newspapers in the Japanese language portion (which formed the bulk of the paper), "this was not followed very strictly and there was much original information in the content of the paper." The Japanese language staff, like the English staff, had the "freedom" to choose news items and headlines. Despite this editorial freedom, "their editorials were overwhelmingly precautionary throughout the war period." The Japanese editorials counseled Issei to work with Nisei to understand the situation and to be obedient to the

2,207 (Oct. 1947), 1,704 (Oct. 1948), 1,425 (Oct. 1949), 1,220 (Oct. 1950), 1,100 (Oct. 1951). Haruo Higashimoto, "The *Utah Nippo* and World War II: A Sociological Review" (revision of paper read at the 19th Annual Conference of the Association of Asian American Studies, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2002), 79–80.

²⁸ Higashimoto, "Assimilational Factors," 87.

government. Higashimoto finds that the *Utah Nippo*'s Japanese portions "play[ed] a good role" in giving messages to authorities about community and in counseling residents to avoid conflict with the government.²⁹ In this way, both the Japanese and English sections of the *Utah Nippo* reflected a similar editorial tone and strategy.

A study from December 1941 by the Office of Naval Intelligence offers a different perspective. In light of the growing tensions between the U.S. and Japan, this report assessed the level of Japanese propaganda in the United States. It examined several sources, looked at topics of current interest, such as the nation's relationship with Germans and "Negroes," labor unions, the U.S.-Mexican border, Hawai'i, and Alaska, ethnic newspapers, among other places of infiltration. The report concluded,

It should be mentioned that in several instances where there have been both English and Japanese sections within a paper, two diametrically opposed points of view are expressed, that **in English being either neutral or pro-American, whereas the Japanese language section is definitely pro-Japanese.** The UTAH NIPPON of Salt Lake City, Utah, and the ROCKY NIPPON of Denver, Colorado, are perhaps the best examples of this dual editorial policy.³⁰

This report was printed just days before the Pearl Harbor attack and, according to Higashimoto, was not the policy of the paper during the war. However, it is noteworthy that the *Utah Nippo* was, of all the Japanese newspapers in circulation before the war began, one with the most editorial inconsistency between sections. After the war began, the Japanese language section moved into line with the *Utah Nippo*'s English section, taking on its pro-American stance that predated the war. Higashimoto notes that the government sent a "watchman" to oversee the *Utah Nippo*'s publication and Takeyo Mizuno states that Nikkei newspapers at that time censored

²⁹ Higashimoto, "Utah *Nippo* and World War II," 89–90.

³⁰ Office of Naval Intelligence, "Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the United States during 1941," 4 December 1941, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., accessed 27 March 2012, <http://home.comcast.net/~eo9066/1941/41-12/IA021.html> (emphasis in original).

themselves according to both overt and more subtle government coercion.³¹ The JACL provided a vital news sources through announcements and other articles that promoted American loyalty.

The fact that the government watched the *Utah Nippo*, its editors censored their own content, and the JACL's influence explain why many articles were pro-American and ensured it remained a functioning newspaper.

David K. Yoo also studied the *Utah Nippo* briefly in *Growing Up Nisei*. He says that Japanese language papers often had English sections, and these sections focused on racial responsibility, racial solidarity, and racial victimization, which coincides with the *Utah Nippo*'s policy. Yoo reflects generally that subscription numbers for Japanese ethnic newspapers are not as helpful as they seem at first glance. While they do show how many papers were sold, those numbers do not show how many Issei and how many Nisei read the papers, nor how widely those papers were passed between friends. Both limit specific understandings of the *Utah Nippo*'s impact among those connected but different populations.³²

This thesis assumes that the English section had a wide influence among its readers, even while admitting that it is difficult to know exactly how many Nisei read the section. Some evidence from interviews with Japanese in Utah, available at the University of Utah, corroborates this assumption. Nisei interviewees mention a sense of behavioral caution among residents. They were afraid of the war and what might happen to them, their families, and their community if they misbehaved. Obviously, certain personality types are likely to participate in oral histories (high achievers and others who conformed), while those who did not conform are less likely to follow

³¹ See Higashimoto, "Assimilational Factors," 26–7 and Takeyo Mizuno, "Self-Censorship by Coercion: The Federal Government and the California Japanese-Language Newspapers from Pearl Harbor to Internment," *American Journalism* 17, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 31–57.

³² David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924–49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 68–9, 72.

through with study participation. So although the interviewees' experiences in Salt Lake City during World War II indicate familiarity with and a shared mood with *Utah Nippo* editorials, they may not be fully representative. And if that is the case, then the *Utah Nippo*'s editors were probably preaching to the choir—their readers were already in agreement with the paper's acculturationist and behavioral advice. Those who did not follow the guidelines the leadership established may not have read or even cared about the *Utah Nippo*. Another potential audience of the English section may be non-Nikkei Salt Lake residents. Because most of the newspaper was in Japanese, Euro-Americans and others may have been suspicious of a newspaper printed in the language of their enemy. The English section editors must have recognized this and published their editorials (in part) to secure the community against those in power. Printing blatantly pro-American sentiments, rabidly encouraging American acculturation, and reprimanding societal hooligans would work to convince the non-Nikkei readers that they were safe having a Nikkei community in their midst. While the *Utah Nippo* targeted all of these audiences, this thesis assumes the paper's editorial message primarily was aimed at and intended for Nikkei writ large.

Nikkei in World War II

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, racial hysteria against Japanese Americans reached a peak. On 19 February 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 as a “protection against espionage and against sabotage” in the war, giving military commanders authorization “to prescribe military areas ... from which any or all persons may be excluded” and to restrict specific people from entering, remaining in, or leaving the area.³³

Internment affected Nikkei living in California, the western parts of Oregon and Washington, and southern Arizona. Before the evacuation date, Nikkei could move anywhere outside of the

³³ “Transcript of Executive Order 9066: Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese,” *OurDocuments.Gov*, accessed 12 November 2011, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=74&page=transcript>.

exclusion zone; however, many states and their residents refused to accept the refugees, forcing Nikkei to return to their homes. However, before evacuation, 1,500 Nikkei moved to Utah. One agricultural community in Utah, Keetley, was settled by these quick-to-leave Nikkei. White residents were not hostile to, but not pleased with, their new Nikkei community members. The government quickly constructed ten internment camps and imprisoned 113,000 Issei and their Nisei children in the camps.³⁴

The War Relocation Authority (WRA), directed by Dillon S. Myer, managed the camps. The camps provided housing blocks, hospitals, schools, and other public systems for evacuees. Although created to give Nikkei evacuees a normal existence, the camps have been labeled relocation centers, internment camps, evacuation centers, and concentration camps. Those Nikkei forced into the camps lost their civil liberties. However, the leaders of the WRA insisted the camps were not concentration camps, even while recognizing that camp life was not a normal existence, and made it their goal to get loyal Japanese out of the camps.³⁵ In this thesis, I refer to the years of imprisonment as internment, incarceration, or imprisonment interchangeably.

One internment camp—the Central Utah Relocation Center, commonly known as Topaz—was located near Delta, Utah, about 150 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. From 1942 to 1945, Topaz was “home” to about 9,000 Nikkei from the West Coast. The camp was divided into thirty-six blocks. Each block had twelve barracks housing three families per building, a mess hall, and latrine. There were also administrative buildings, a hospital, police building, schools, and Buddhist church. The camp perimeter was fenced by wire, which still stands in many places.

³⁴ Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert*, 58 and Taylor, “Japanese Americans and Keetley Farms,” 124–5.

³⁵ Roger Daniels, “Words Do Matter: A Note on Inappropriate Terminology and the Incarceration of the Japanese Americans,” in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest*, ed. Fiset and Nomura, 190–214 and Dillon S. Myer, *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority During World War II* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971), 132, 158.

Attempting to physically change the landscape of the Great Basin and the psychological nature of their imprisonment, Nikkei planted trees, bushes, and gardens.³⁶

Beginning in 1942, the WRA permitted older students from all camps to attend universities outside of the evacuation zone to finish their education. The WRA allowed working Nikkei to leave the camps for short-term leave for medical purposes, to take care of property settlements, or to resettle temporarily as seasonal labor for agriculture. They also allowed certain Nikkei to leave indefinitely if they had a secure job, were not a security threat, had a place to live, and informed the WRA of address changes.³⁷ The Nisei usually left the centers before their Issei parents because they were more educated and Americanized, enabling them to find work in professional occupations and survive outside the ethnic community.

Internment has been written about from many angles. Roger Daniels writes extensively about internment, commenting often on how the language of internment has created false understandings of the event—he prefers terms like incarceration to describe it.³⁸ Scholars write on spaces, cultural life, resistance, the environment, and other subjects in the camps. By way of example, Connie Y. Chiang describes the unfamiliarity of the environment the internees

³⁶ Author's visit to Topaz site, Abraham, Utah, March 2011. For more information about gardens in internment camps, see Connie Y. Chiang, "Imprisoned Nature: Toward an Environmental History of the World War II Japanese American Incarceration," *Environmental History* 15, no. 2 (April 2010): 236–267 and Anna Hosticka Tamura, "Gardens Below the Watchtower: Gardens and Meaning in World War II Japanese American Incarceration Camps," *Landscape Journal* 23, no. 1 (2004): 1–21.

³⁷ Leslie A. Ito, "Japanese American Women and the Student Relocation Movement, 1942–1945," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 21, no. 3 (2000): 1–24; R. Todd Welker, "Utah Schools and the Japanese American Student Relocation Program," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 4–20; Department of the Interior, *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946), 39; and Myer, *Uprooted Americans*, 133.

³⁸ See Daniels, "Words Do Matter," 190–214 and Daniels, Taylor, and Kitano, eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*.

experienced, and their participation in the camps' environmental histories. Brian Masaru Hayashi describes the WRA's attempts to "dress" Nikkei up as American through their propaganda in the camps, but reflects that not everyone appreciated these efforts. Kristine C. Kuramitsu writes about Nikkei's use of agency through art during their imprisonment. Judith Fryer Davidov writes on Dorothea Lange's photographs of imprisoned Nikkei as filled with pathos, Ansel Adams's photographs of the same subject as subjects of heroism, and Toyo Miyatake's photos, as a prisoner, that told complicated stories of the humans imprisoned.³⁹ Former prisoners such as Miné Okubo, Toshiko Uchida, Toyo Suyemoto, and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, among others, have published memoirs about internment.⁴⁰ There is a wealth of scholarship about internment.

Although Utah Nikkei were not imprisoned for the course of the war, West Coast Nikkei's experiences in internment had repercussions for free-zone Nikkei. The *Utah Nippo* reported news from all internment camps and the Salt Lake community heavily felt the presence of Topaz camp in central Utah because it was so close to their city. Also, as people were allowed

³⁹ Chiang, "Imprisoned Nature," 236–67; Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Kristine C. Kuramitsu, "Internment and Identity in Japanese American Art," *American Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December 1995): 619–58; and Judith Fryer Davidov, "'The Color of My Skin, the Shape of My Eyes': Photographs of the Japanese American Internment by Dorothea Lange, Ansel Adams, and Toyo Miyatake," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9 (1996): 223–44.

⁴⁰ See Miné Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946); Uchida, *Desert Exile*; Toyo Suyemoto, *I Call To Remembrance: Toyo Suyemoto's Years of Internment*, ed. Susan B. Richardson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press); Estelle Ishigo, *Lone Heart Mountain* (Los Angeles: Anderson, Ritchie, & Simon, 1973); Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar: A True Story of Japanese American Experience during and after World War II Internment* (Carmel, CA: Hampton-Brown, 2002); and Louis Fiset, *Imprisoned Apart: The World War II Correspondence of an Issei Couple* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

to leave the camp, many settled in Salt Lake City until the West Coast was reopened to them.

These connected experiences made internment important for free-zone Nikkei.

Race

Race is an invented social category. Although Matthew Frye Jacobson studies whiteness, his analysis applies, in part, to Nikkei as they tried to conform to American culture, meaning to be identified with white culture. He states, “The contest over whiteness—its definition, its internal hierarchies, its proper boundaries, and its rightful claimants—has been critical to American culture throughout the nation’s history.” In this thesis, I describe the arguments of the Salt Lake City Nikkei editors and community leaders about their claims to American white culture.⁴¹

David K. Yoo claims that race, generation, and culture formed the Nisei experience, and argues throughout his book that race and racism were central to that experience. Because of their race, Yoo explains, Nikkei “were treated as a problem and/or a deviant people, their humanity and agency rarely emerged,” to early scholars. They “served as subjects for flawed social scientific research that was bent on proving the validity of some measure (e.g., intelligence tests) or that viewed their incarceration as an opportunity to experiment with social engineering.” To Yoo, Nikkei’s race defined the absence of their race in scholarship, even though it was central to their experiences.⁴²

Acculturation

In Eileen H. Tamura’s study about Hawai`ian Nisei, she suggests some vocabulary about this subject. She avoids using “assimilation,” and instead uses “acculturation” and “Americanization.” Tamura defines “Americanization” as Euro-Americans’ attempts to coerce Nikkei into adopting certain American traits while forfeiting Japanese ways, but also to keep non-

⁴¹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 5.

⁴² Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 5.

whites as lower class workers—effectively American but less than white Americans. In contrast, “acculturation” consisted of Nikkei efforts to adapt to middle class American life and usually incorporated elements of American and Japanese cultures.⁴³

Also addressing questions about cultural change among Nikkei, Lon Kurashige considers the Nisei Week festival in Los Angeles. He studies not what the identity was, but *how* it appeared, changed, and was accepted. Racism towards Japanese Americans stalled their entrance into U.S. culture, despite Americanization efforts by whites. Most Nisei, Kurashige explains, were bicultural, meaning their unique cultural hybridity made them more than one or the other. Nisei were not blind to the racism they encountered, but still hoped to succeed by American measures. Many of the rituals and institutions within Japanese America communities paralleled (but did not copy) white organizations, but they rarely intersected with the other.⁴⁴

David K. Yoo criticizes simplistic views of assimilation, arguing that scholars assume too often that Nikkei were assimilated. Such a viewpoint, to Yoo, suggests that scholars have failed to understand identity formation in the lives of Nisei. His study examines ethnic organizations and how they grew out of and influenced ethnic and racial identity among Nisei. Yoo proposes that Nisei established such a strong ethnic community because they were required to by the racism that limited them from white organizations and full participation in society.⁴⁵

Although the above scholars study assimilation among Nikkei communities, David R. Roediger, a scholar of whiteness, contributes to defining assimilation. He writes, “Assimilation involved not just an embrace of American identity but specifically of white American identity.” Groups and individuals desiring to assimilate adopted a certain identity. In most cases,

⁴³ Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), xiii–iv.

⁴⁴ Kurashige, *Celebration and Conflict*, xiii, 3, 5, 59.

⁴⁵ Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 5, 179.

immigrants wanted to identify themselves in contradistinction from oppressed minorities in the United States such as African Americans.⁴⁶ Nikkei rarely compared themselves to African Americans, except, as discussed in chapter four, when voicing the need to end racism against all minorities.

Mae M. Ngai criticizes the focus on assimilation in immigration studies, believing that originally “the assimilation paradigm marginalized the question of race in immigration studies,” but now race is central to ideas about assimilation. Her assessment would say that Roediger and Jacobson’s analyses cannot apply to immigrants of color, such as those from Asia. They are permanently left out of whiteness, no matter how much they culturally assimilate.⁴⁷

This thesis describes many of the statements in the *Utah Nippo* which supported acculturation. Not all people did so because the editors told them to. Some groups that may have been more reluctant to adopt American traits were Issei, Kibei, and Buddhists. They held onto Japanese religious traditions even while adopting other aspects of American culture. This would have been especially true of Nisei Buddhists. The editors and others may have been more gung-ho about assimilation and acculturation and may have been dismayed that community members did not fully abandon Japanese traditions.

Final Introductory Thoughts

Discussion of Sources

In this thesis, I rely extensively on the *Utah Nippo*’s English section. Perhaps I rely on it too much. Newspapers can be difficult sources to use because they can either reflect public opinion or attempt to influence it. In this thesis, I assume the editors tried to influence public opinion and were in turn influenced by the general population of their community and the

⁴⁶ David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 178.

⁴⁷ Mae M. Ngai, “Immigration and Ethnic History,” in *American History Now*, ed. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 366–7.

political realities of WWII America. Not all editorials were signed by their author, and not all reprinted articles were given a source. I try to complement the *Utah Nippo* with other sources, especially oral histories available in the Interviews with Japanese in Utah collection at the University of Utah, completed in the 1980s. Although these are helpful at times, they do not address the questions I had in completing this thesis. Had time and resources permitted, I would have liked to complete my own set of oral histories and tailor the questions and discussions to my thesis and individuals' experiences with Americanism and loyalty among free-zone Nikkei. Instead, I must make assumptions to connect ideas that are not always clear. Additionally, other records from the contemporary Buddhist Church and Church of Christ in Salt Lake City are not publicly available. With these limitations, I have tried my best to represent the words of the editors, draw out their intentions, and assess the response of the Salt Lake Nikkei community.

A Note On Terms

Finally, in this thesis, I may use the blanket term of "Nikkei" to mean Issei and Nisei, basically all those in the United States of Japanese ancestry. Other scholars use "Japanese Americans" instead of "Nikkei," but I have used the term because it reflects the terms Nikkei used to refer to themselves, in addition to "Issei" and "Nisei." And I often use the term "Euro-Americans" when I mean all non-Nikkei people. I recognize that other ethnic minorities lived in Salt Lake City, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans. However, the idea of a "mainstream" American is also problematic because it may vary from location to location, and a mainstream culture is also difficult to define. Instead, I use "Euro-American" to describe the broader ethnic group in a position of control in Utah and the United States, fully aware that it excludes other groups who may have considered Nikkei as suspect Americans.

As one editor of the *Utah Nippo*, Maurea Ushio, wrote to readers, “This is your paper. Its continuance will rest largely upon how much you readers realize the convenience and the necessity of even so small a publication in this intermountain district.”⁴⁸ To editors and other leaders, the messages printed in the *Utah Nippo* were vital in keeping the Nikkei community intact and functioning. They may have been about group acculturation, group behavior, group endurance of the ugly realities affecting their lives during World War II, but they were also about preserving the group and the identifiable community of Japanese Americans living and working in Salt Lake City’s Japan Town.

⁴⁸ Maurea Ushio, “The Editor Says,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 November 1941.

CHAPTER 2

SALT LAKE CITY'S JAPAN TOWN AND THE *UTAH NIPPO*'S EXPECTATIONS FOR
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

This chapter describes the efforts of the *Utah Nippo* editorial staff to influence the behavior of Salt Lake City's Nikkei community—how they emphasized the necessity to behave in certain, supposedly American, ways. The need for such an editorial and behavioral strategy responded to the white population's concerns about the growing number of Japanese relocating to Utah before and during the war and the forced relocation of others to internment centers like Topaz. Letters received by the state's governor, Herbert B. Maw, demonstrate this concern, especially given the silence of the LDS Church on evacuation and their non-committal stance either for or against internment. These reasons, along with Nikkei's status as an ethnic and religious minority, explain why Salt Lake's Japanese community needed to move forward cautiously. The *Utah Nippo* exhorted Nikkei to "fit in" by rapidly acculturating, and that those outside of the camps needed to serve as reputation-setters for all Nikkei. They were to become the model of loyalty, blending in, and assisting the nation's war effort.

White Utah's Response to Japanese Population Growth

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, most public mention of Japanese people focused on those in mining areas in Carbon County and the Bingham Canyon mine, where violence against Japanese was common. Newspapers printed articles about the dangers of miscegenation and economic competition.¹ However, after the United States declaration of war on Japan in 1941,

¹ See "Newspaper clippings on Japanese-Americans from Utah papers, 1906–1969," folder 2, box 25, Susan Sunada Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan and "Salt Lake Girl and A Jap," *The Evening Standard (Ogden, UT)*, 23 September 1910, p. 10.

newspaper editors filled their columns with imagined Japanese threats beyond interracial marriage and economic competition.

The day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, newspapers reported “Four [Salt Lake] Japanese were placed in jail” and “a good number of detention warrants were being served on others.” The next day, FBI agents and Salt Lake police and sheriffs “detained 14 Japanese nationals.” At the same time, “Federal, state and local law-enforcement agencies ordered the utmost vigilance to avert sabotage,” and “Nipponese workers remained away from their jobs at mining operations” while “Japanese school children in Salt Lake City also remained at home.” Tensions were high, especially for Nikkei who were fearful enough for their children’s safety to take them out of school. Local Euro-American leaders advised employers to give Nikkei workers identification papers, instructed banks to freeze Issei accounts, and enacted other limitations.² By the next week, Issei could withdraw \$100 per month from their bank accounts and restaurateurs could resume business. In January 1942, unknown terrorists shot at the rural Salt Lake City home of an imprisoned Issei, reflecting again the uneasy atmosphere in Utah and around the nation towards Nikkei neighbors.³

The obvious racial suspicion against Japanese prompted some to request calm and common sense instead of racial hysteria. On 8 December 1941, the *Ogden (UT) Standard Examiner* published Harvey F. Cahill’s plea that “everyone to be tolerant in their attitude to these people who for many years have proven themselves to be good farmers, law-abiding people and good neighbors.” Cahill was the secretary of the Utah Cannery Association and feared the local canning industry would suffer since many farmers who grew canning crops were of Japanese

² “Utah Arrests 4 Japanese,” *Pocatello (ID) Tribune*, 8 December 1941 and no title, *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 9 December 1941.

³ “Frozen Japanese Funds Released,” *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 14 December 1941 and “Gunshots Rain on Home of Interned Jap,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 January 1941.

descent. This plea for peace, although economically motivated, was appropriate. Another move for order came from Robert P. Patterson, the Undersecretary of War, who said, "The barring of loyal non-citizens from private employment because of their foreign birth is an un-American practice and is wasteful of labor severely needed for the war effort." By coupling patriotism with reducing hiring prejudice, Patterson encouraged tolerance towards Japanese in general and hinted that Nikkei labor could be used for war purposes after officials determined what to do about the nation's Nikkei population.⁴ Rumors and suspicions about internment flew, and one editorial succinctly described the feelings of the time: "It is really too bad if loyal Americans of Japanese descent are suspected or interned because of the attitude of their foreign-born parents, but tension has become so acute that one cannot count on anything else." The author reveals the community's general suspicion that Issei were saboteurs or potentially disloyal, but that American-born Nisei might be different. Nevertheless, the author indicates the sense that internment was inevitable at that point.⁵

Another editorial sheds light on the comparative state of racial affairs in and outside of Utah. Sarah M. Field (a recent Salt Lake arrival) wrote, "I have been delighted by the real brotherhood between races shown here in many ways." Field did not reveal where she moved from but indicated that Utah and Salt Lake City's racial atmosphere was mild compared to the rest of the nation. That sense of brotherhood was exemplified to her by Japanese Christians who (presumably) were more Americanized than their Buddhist counterparts. Historian David K. Yoo's research suggests that because Buddhism was seen as incompatible with American culture, Buddhists made changes to their practices and auxiliary clubs and that Buddhist youth organizations actively argued that one did not need to be Christian to be American. But Field

⁴ "Tolerance Asked In Case Of Japanese Farm People," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 8 December 1941 and "Utahn Lauds Fair Dealing With Aliens in U.S.," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 January 1942.

⁵ "Rounding Up Japanese After Startling Disclosures," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 February 1942.

continued, “[i]t is therefore a shock to find in this morning’s edition the phrase, ‘Scrap the Japs matinee.’ ... This is hardly considerate of the many kind patrons of the movie theater whose parentage is Japanese and whose American background is largely building through movie and newspaper.” Field’s observation that many Nisei had become culturally American through popular culture was apt, as most Nisei youth considered themselves American and enjoyed the same things as their Euro-American peers.⁶

Once the evacuation of West Coast Japanese Americans was officially announced in February 1942, Utahns grew more anxious, especially when Nikkei began to settle with friends and family in Utah to avoid evacuation, and particularly after the government decided to construct an internment camp near Delta, Utah. “[O]nce a Jap, always a Jap. I suppose if my cat had kittens in a fish hatchery they would be fish?” commented one citizen. He suspected Nikkei who left the evacuation zone were still disloyal when they arrived in Utah.⁷ Many white residents wrote to Governor Herbert B. Maw about their general disapproval of an internment camp in Utah and to using Nikkei as workers. They argued that an enlarged Nikkei presence would decrease property values, insult U.S. soldiers fighting Japanese overseas, and lead to an increase in overall racial turmoil. These letters came from individuals, citizens’ groups, and city councils.

Many complaints against Japanese resettlement in the state focused on their growing numbers and on the internment center. “I for one am protesting the Japanese exodus into Utah,” wrote Laura Chesterfield, “the American people are going into a state of insanity too [*sic*] allow such a move.” Kaysville City’s City Council, “unanimously resolved to go on record as opposing the immigration to, and housing within, Kaysville City of any Japanese evacuated from other

⁶ Sarah M. Field, “Dislikes Epithet,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 February 1942, p. 12. For more about Americanism and Buddhism, see David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924–49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 44–51.

⁷ B. C., “Likes Article,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 March 1942, p. 12.

areas.” A resolution signed by the United Veterans’ Council (UVC), the American Legion Salt Lake Post #2, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), stated that “the influx of said Japanese and enemy aliens would be harmful to the public interest of the people of the State of Utah and the United States.” They opposed Japanese settlement in the state and suggested to the U.S. War Department that “centers be established under proper supervision of constituted authorities” and that they “be moved out of the State of Utah at close of war and sent back to their native land.”⁸ Chesterfield and the veterans groups saw the presence of Japanese Americans in Utah as harmful to Utahns and wanted assurances that Japanese population growth in Utah would be temporary. But in asking that relocatees be returned to their native land, the groups meant Japan, although the Nisei were born in the U.S. in West Coast states.

Utah residents worried about the economic consequences for white laborers if more “cheap” ethnic labor entered the state. The UVC’s resolution demanded that “the local labor supply should be our first consideration and only when this supply is exhausted will these individuals [Nikkei] be used.” VFW Post #3476 (who also signed the UVC’s resolution) pointed out that “the influx of Japanese into our state and county, now taking place, will prove ... an economic problem for years to come.” Many Euro-American Utahns disapproved of hiring Japanese workers during the war because it took work opportunities away from whites. F. A. Henriod, a Salt Lake City resident, asked how Maw could allow Japanese people to “replace honest and trustworthy men ... who are willing to work,” heralding back to Depression-era fears that those who wanted work could not find it. He then asked, “Would you want honest American Citizens deprived of a chance to earn honest Bread and Butter and put it in the mouths of the so

⁸ Laura Chesterfield to Herbert B. Maw, 11 March 1942, item 66; Thornley K. Swan (Mayor of Kaysville City) to Herbert B. Maw, 2 April 1942, item 16; and H. O. Cowles to Herbert B. Maw, 21 March 1942, item 23, all folder 6, box 146, series XII, Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan (hereafter LJAHA).

called Loyal American Japs[?]" F. N. Myrick of the Salt Lake Federation of Labor would agree with Henriod, and said, "At the present time the Japanese is one of our vicious enemies and hence we strongly disapprove putting them into any position or jobs in preference to our allied friends the Mexicans, or any other peoples who are allies of the United States of America."⁹ Because Nikkei were considered the enemy, non-Nikkei opposed their being hired as it would promote supposed enemy aliens over loyal American workers.

Myrick voiced the kind of nationalistic racism that deracialized allies—Mexicans in this case—by racially targeting enemy Nikkei. In his 2002 master's thesis, R. Todd Welker describes the experience of Mexican laborers in Utah. During World War I, employers brought in temporary Mexican and Mexican American workers to harvest sugar beets while white Utah workers were away in the military. During the Depression of the 1930s, many Mexican laborers left or were deported from Utah and other western states. The Second World War attracted a new set of Mexican workers to the U.S. through the Bracero guest worker program. During the war the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company utilized about 1,700 braceros in addition to about 3,500 interned Japanese Americans.¹⁰ As U.S. allies, Myrick pointed out, Mexican workers were the preferred non-white laborers if white American workers were unavailable. Despite this nationalist preference for Mexicans, editorialist B. C. (the gentleman with the witty comment about kittens in fish hatcheries) proposed putting Japanese "out on big acreage farms, under proper guard, to produce food for America and the allies,"—his point: "[w]hy feed enemy aliens in camps or

⁹ Cowles to Maw, 21 March 1942; Karl G. Hin (adjutant, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3476) to Herbert B. Maw, 30 March 1942, item 20; F. A. Henriod to Herbert M. Maw, 10 March 1942, item 68; and F. N. Myrick to Herbert B. Maw, 28 April 1942, item 10, all folder 6, box 146, LJAHA.

¹⁰ R. Todd Welker, "Sweet Dreams in Sugar Land: Japanese Farmers, Mexican Farm Workers, and Northern Utah Beet Production" (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2002), 36, 38, 39–40.

mansions?” In B.C.’s plan, the Japanese American prisoners (who were decidedly guilty) would be put to work to provide for themselves and the nation as their punishment.¹¹

Alongside the opposition to hiring Japanese as workers, Utahns worried about the effects a Japanese presence would have on property values. Property owners in Granite, considering themselves “representatives of the white population,” protested Nikkei resettlement. They gave several reasons, including fears that Nikkei might compromise the water supply in the nearby canyon, sabotage war industries, and “decrease...property values on account of their presence.” Yet the UVC suggested to Governor Maw that “a control be established to prevent property purchase by, for or on behalf of such people from being leased, subleased or farmed out to any Japanese or enemy alien whatsoever.” The state legislature eventually took up this specific concern about property and property values. These early expressions of concern ultimately led to the contentious racialized atmosphere that seriously affected not only resettling Japanese Americans, but those already living in Salt Lake City.¹²

Some opposed Japanese settlement in Utah because they saw it as detrimental to the war effort and feared it would have a negative effect on U.S. soldiers. “Here we are enlisting our boys—good American boys that we have raised for purposes other than war—in the Army of the United States to fight Japanese aggression, and we are allowing these people [Nikkei] to roam at will within our country,” commented R. C. Wilson of Salt Lake City. Concern with the paradox of fighting Japan while living or working with Japanese Americans is evident in Wilson’s editorial. The Granite property owners did not think Nikkei “should be allowed settlement anywhere in this valley due to the enormous war industry being carried on here.” Joseph H. Sandall of Kaysville believed that if Nikkei settled in his area, the appropriate action would be to

¹¹ B. C., “Likes Article,” p. 12

¹² E. Wm. Grant et al. [15 signatures] to Herbert B. Maw, 6 April 1942, item 13, folder 6, box 146, LJAHA and Cowles to Maw, 21 March 1942.

“put up the white flag and say we are licked ... let['] s call the boys home and not send any more but let them take us over and be done with it[;] bow our heads in shame and prey to god [*sic*] for the best results.” For Nelson, Japanese resettlement in Utah was nothing less than a Japanese take-over.¹³ Utahns used jingoistic rhetoric and imagery to oppose Nikkei resettlement in Utah and support the war effort. The Japanese American community in Utah did the same thing, using the same phrases and ideas to prove their patriotism and loyalty.

Many of the comments in letters to the governor were blatantly racist. The letter to Maw from the Granite property owners stated that Japanese in the state would have an “unfair” advantage in agriculture “on account of [their] lower living standards,” reflecting the racial stereotype that non-whites lived in poorer conditions because they liked doing so, instead of being required by poverty and racial restrictions to do so. “Do you[,] I[,] or any other person actually know who if any of these are Loyal[?]” asked R. C. Wilson. Chesterfield wrote, “in these stratigic [*sic*] times why let these deceitful devils pull such a perfidious act in this peaceful little town [of Salt Lake City]. ... If the Japanese have no place to go[,] deport them[;] we Americans never did want them in the first place.”¹⁴ These letters evidence the racist rhetoric and hostility directed towards both resident Nikkei and those entering the state.

Governor Maw and the leaders of surrounding states felt concerned too. Governor Nels H. Smith of Wyoming wrote to Maw, “[S]ince many of the Western States are opposed to the moving of the West Coast Japanese into our respective states,” the federal government should develop “a plan or program which they intend to follow in making these arrangements.” In April 1942, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) held a conference in Salt Lake City to discuss resettlement options. The Colorado governor’s representative opposed resettlement, fearing their

¹³ R. C. Wilson to Herbert B. Maw, 7 March 1942, item 72; Grant et al to Maw, 6 April 1942; and Joseph H. Sandall to Herbert B. Maw, 2 April 1942, item 14, all folder 6, box 146, LJAHA.

¹⁴ Grant et al to Maw, 6 April 1942; Wilson to Maw, 7 March 1942; and Chesterfield to Maw, 11 March 1942.

state would become a “‘dumping ground’ ... for a west coast problem.” However, once resettlement got underway in Intermountain states, few government leaders fought the migrants. Employers pressured their state officials to make their states a positive place for resettlers to live and work. Maw explained to Harry Drew, of the Tremonton Lodge No. 45, that Nikkei laborers would be sent

where they will be in the best position to render service to the Nation in its all out war program. ... the federal government will provide sufficient guards ... for the protection of both the Japanese and the citizens. They will be required to use their abilities and their skills in the production of foods and in performing labor which will be beneficial to the Nation.¹⁵

Maw reassured his constituents that he would protect Utahns, but recognized the nation needed this special service from the Intermountain states and was willing to shoulder what the government required.

Although most of the letters Governor Maw received opposed the migration of Japanese Americans into the state, some of them—usually rural farmers—supported it. “I have heard several different rumors [*sic*] about the Japs,” wrote Jess R. Beal of Bridgeland, “and would like very much to get some good farmers on our place. ... This place could handle 3 or 4 families[.] [H]oping you can do us some good.” Beal wanted cheap workers and was willing to take in a significant number on his farm. A Salt Lake City farmer, J. M. Killpack wrote, “it occurred to me that my farm could be of service to some of these people, and in turn through their efforts, could be of more productive service to our country during this war.” Using the same rhetoric of the war effort as those who opposed settlement, both Beal and Killpack voiced the benefits of Nikkei

¹⁵ Nels H. Smith to Herbert B. Maw, 18 April 1942, item 41, folder 6, box 146, LJAHA; War Relocation Authority, *WRA: A Story of Conservation*, U.S. Department of the Interior (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 29; War Relocation Authority, *The Relocation Program*, U.S. Department of the Interior (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 92; and Herbert B. Maw to Harry Drew, 27 March 1942, item 21, folder 6, box 146, LJAHA.

workers. These farmers realized the Nikkei workers would cost less than white laborers and that there would be fewer young white men to hire because of military enlistment efforts.¹⁶

Lloyd O. Ivie wrote to Maw in hopes of working for the WRA camp in Utah (although Maw did not make assignments for camp leadership). He had lived in Japan for years as a missionary. Although claiming to be prejudice-free because of his knowledge about Japanese people, his knowledge only covered Issei from Japan. Of Nisei, Ivie said,

Many Japanese labor under the impression that they know everything about us while we know little or nothing about them. Hence they are ‘cocky.’ They must realize that they are mistaken in this before they are finally brought to a peace which will hold them in an American way.¹⁷

These comments reflect Ivie’s opinion that Nisei, although U.S.-born and holding citizenship, were not truly American, but that internment could change that. To many Americans Nisei were, in Mae M. Ngai’s words, “alien citizens”—always excluded.¹⁸

Some letters demonstrated concern for Nikkei safety and welcome as they settled in Utah. A Los Angeles attorney, Robert H. Wallis, wrote in behalf of his Japanese clients that “it would be a serious mistake for these people to migrate to Utah ... without first creating among the citizens there an attitude more friendly than now exists.” Wallis and his clients realized that resettling in a hostile environment could result in physical harm. An out-of-state letter from Dr. Joseph D. Sasaki of Fresno explained, “We [Nikkei] are an industrious group. I understand your state motto is ‘Industry.’” Sasaki brought up industry in hopes that Utahns would recognize parallel cultural traits between Utah Mormons and Nikkei. Sasaki poignantly pushed the governor

¹⁶ Jess R. Beal to Governor [sic] Maw, 10 March 1942, item 37 and J. M. Killpack to Herbert B. Maw, 7 March 1942, item 38, both in folder 6, box 146, LJAHA.

¹⁷ Lloyd O. Ivie to Herbert B. Maw, 3 August 1942, item 42, folder 6, box 146, LJAHA.

¹⁸ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 8.

to create an atmosphere of tolerance: “Remember that we are sacrificing for our nation, so your state must sacrifice for the nation.”¹⁹

While these letters do not address the existing Japanese population in Utah and Salt Lake City, they indicate some of the same attitudes that resident Nikkei had to navigate. They, too, were on the receiving end of Euro-American hostility towards incoming Nikkei. Although the resident Nikkei population was small and could easily slide under-the-radar, the entrance of unwanted relocatees increased the ethnic community’s visibility. The animosity towards newcomers simply spilled over onto existing Nikkei. Suddenly, Nikkei who had lived in Utah their entire lives became racialized as the enemy. They had an important stake in proving that they were *local* Japanese American Utahns who were patriotic and part of Utah’s existing socioeconomic order.

While many churches on the West Coast opposed Japanese American internment as unchristian behavior,²⁰ Utah’s dominant LDS Church had very little to say about the new Japanese Americans relocating as citizens or prisoners to the state. In a 1981 study based on interviews with church leaders, John R. Homer argues “that neutrality was the only viable stance the church could take” because the issue was so volatile and leaders had such varying opinions.²¹ George Albert Smith, a leading church apostle, was on a train bound for California in December 1941, when the military stopped the train and removed all those of Japanese descent. Smith

¹⁹ Robert H. Wallis to Herbert B. Maw, 27 March 1942, item 27, and Dr. Joseph D. Sasaki to The Governor of the State of Utah, 18 March 1942, item 68, both in folder 6, box 146, LJAHA.

²⁰ See Stephanie Bangarth, *Voices Raised in Protest: Defending North American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry, 1942–49* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 71–88.

²¹ John R. Homer, “No Comment,” unpublished paper, 20 August 1981, item 4, folder 4, box 147, LJAHA, p. 1.

Homer’s research was based on personal interviews with LDS Church leaders that were not archived at the time of his writing.

reflected in his personal journal, “I think of the situation at hand and wonder what will become of the Japanese Saints both on the West Coast and in Japan given the rash and impulsive reactions displayed by all thus far.”²² His, however, was not official church opinion.

The official stance of the LDS Church regarding the *declaration* of war was distributed in letters to local leaders on 15 December 1941. The church leadership fully supported the war declaration and the “First Presidency [the top church leadership] expected every young man to serve his country and fight for the protection of America.” Although many church leaders viewed Japan as the enemy and supported Nikkei incarceration, Homer states that their commitment to supporting the war (and the internment that followed as part of the war effort) “would soon haunt them.”²³

As internment became a wartime reality, Apostle George Albert Smith comprehended that opposing it was politically dangerous and potentially hypocritical given the church’s official statement. Francis M. Gibbons, a young man who would later become the secretary to the First Presidency, remembered that Smith personally opposed internment but “would not risk putting the Church against the Government in times of war. That risk was too great.” The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was equally divided on the issue—“six supporting the relocation and six against.”²⁴ Apostle LeGrand Richards saw the internment camps in a similar light to the situation for European Jews in German camps, while another, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson, believed Japanese people were “fanatics, war crazy, and no one knew what to expect from them” and that “relocating the Japanese was the least America could do with an enemy so bent on war.”²⁵ The

²² George Albert Smith quoted in Homer, “No Comment,” p. 2.

²³ Homer, “No Comment,” p. 3 (emphasis in original).

²⁴ Francis M. Gibbons quoted in Homer, “No Comment,” pp. 9, 5.

²⁵ LeGrand Richards in Homer, “No Comment,” p. 5 and Ezra Taft Benson quoted in Homer, “No Comment,” pp. 6, 7.

church did not make an official statement on internment, sidestepping the issue by calling it a political decision. Richards disagreed, arguing,

[R]elocation was not a political decision at all but ... a moral issue, one that the Church had an obligation to its members and to the Christian world to stand up and be counted. The decision to call the relocation issue political was convenient, this decision itself was politically motivated. ... [A] moral leader will choose what is morally right ... I must say in this instance the Church chose the contrary!²⁶

The disagreement among the highest ranking LDS leaders was hidden from members. Although mentioning the camps domestically and war atrocities abroad, the church avoided making an official statement on the justness or on the racist nature of internment.²⁷ This left church members to their own consciences in responding to the influx of Nikkei into the state. It also meant that resident Nikkei (some of whom were LDS) could not count on special protection by church counsel. Had the church spoken out against internment, resettling Nikkei would have gained refugee-like status in Utah, partially protecting them and the existing community from racism and harm. Since the church remained silent on the issue and steadfast in their generalized support for the war effort, many Utah Mormons must have wondered why the government would allow a community of suspicious aliens to remain outside of the camps and in the city housing church headquarters. The lack of comment from the LDS Church left resettling and resident Nikkei in an undefined position in the state.

The animosity demonstrated by many white Utahns in the newspapers and in private letters to Governor Herbert B. Maw, combined with the absence of a clear LDS stance on internment itself, led Salt Lake City Nikkei to realize that their status as free Japanese Americans was tenuous. Because of their ethnicity, they were the United States' enemy, but did not receive any special protection as the average Utah Nikkei was not imprisoned. It became apparent to Utah

²⁶ Richards quoted in Homer, "No Comment," p. 6.

²⁷ Homer, "No Comment," p. 4.

Nikkei leaders that they needed to prove both their loyalty to the country and their identity as native Utahns if they were to avoid the violence and conflict witnessed in West Coast states.

Expected Behavior in Salt Lake City's Nikkei Community

Even before Pearl Harbor and the subsequent population growth as people fled the evacuation, Salt Lake's Japan Town leadership was concerned about the behavior of Nikkei residents. Sunao Ishio, editor of the *Utah Nippo*, wrote in September 1941 that the U.S. was the "sole beacon of Liberty" in the "sea of Naziism and Fascism." Because Nikkei were both citizens and residents of a free country, they should "prove to the world that we are ready and willing, as part of a free and equal populace, to uphold those principles of Freedom that are our heritage."²⁸ Ishio's article contained significant optimism about the future of the nation and Nikkei's role in it. They could help eradicate European dictatorships by their dedication to American principles. Before the U.S. openly questioned Japanese American loyalty (even though they were never fully embraced in American society), Nikkei leaders worked to influence the behavior of *Utah Nippo* readers to be "American."

The following month, Ishio commented on Nisei holding dual citizenship, instructing them to give up their Japanese citizenship to be "recognized as Americans and Americans only." Doing so would presumably protect their rights as citizens. Dual citizenship, as historian Carey McWilliams noted, "tended to confuse public opinion on the West Coast about the Japanese problem" more than any other issue. Making it clear that they were *only* American citizens (not also Japanese citizens), Nisei would eliminate some of the national concerns over their loyalty. Once Nisei established themselves as Americans, according to Ishio, the "dawn of the second generation" would rise, where able leaders would "insure our future" and "attain the ultimate happiness in a secure and sound social and economic life." Ishio surely had no idea how true his

²⁸ Sunao Ishio, "The Time Has Come," *Utah Nippo*, 24 September 1941.

statements were. Within two months, the Issei generation's power within their communities faded while that of the Nisei rose. Behaving as loyal and "true" Americans become more important than ever.²⁹

After the events at Pearl Harbor, the new *Utah Nippo* English section editor, Maurea Ushio, wrote, "This is the time to prove to our fellow Americans that we are one of them" and to certify "the fallacy of those ideas and suspicions cast on us Americans of Japanese descent." Finally, "Greatness in character lies in being able to make the best of things."³⁰ Authenticating Nisei (and Issei) devotion to the United States was their own responsibility. Making the best of a bad situation by proving their loyalty would solidify their position in the nation. Additionally, this suggestion had roots in an idea in Japanese culture, *shikata ga nai*, meaning "it cannot be helped." Additionally, Ushio's wording "Americans of Japanese descent" became a standard way to name Nikkei. Doing so put the American part before the Japanese part, presumably influencing how people understood Nikkei. Even simple terminology can have a large impact on the ways people are perceived. Ushio's early statement became the central argument about Nikkei behavior in the *Utah Nippo*—that they were responsible for the way white Americans perceived them and therefore had some agency in shaping their own wartime situation.

When the *Utah Nippo* resumed publication in March 1942, Ushio reminded Nikkei that their individual demeanor had repercussions on others. Ushio exclaimed, "we are all in this together," and therefore everyone needed to make an individual choice to help the group by their behavior.³¹ Because most Utah Nikkei were not imprisoned during the war, they were examples

²⁹ Sunao Ishio, "Editorial Comments," *Utah Nippo*, 15 October 1941; Carey McWilliams, "Dual Citizenship," *Far Eastern Survey* 11, no. 23 (16 November 1942): 231; and Paul R. Spickard, "The Nisei Assume Power: The Japanese Citizens League, 1941–1942," *Pacific Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (May 1983): 147–74.

³⁰ Maurea Ushio, "Practice What You Preach," *Utah Nippo*, 10 December 1941.

³¹ Maurea Ushio, "The Man Worthwhile," *Utah Nippo*, 4 March 1942.

to Euro Americans of who Nikkei were—they were loyal to the United States and performed as such. Ushio again wrote in June 1942 that Nikkei were “in the position either to create better impressions among more people or to tear down the faith and understanding [and] good will with which many of the other Americans regard us.”³² The relationship Nikkei had with Euro-Americans could be ruined by un-American actions, just as their good choices improved relations with those racist against Nikkei. Behavior characteristic of model American citizens was the most appropriate way for Nikkei to conduct themselves.

The community leaders in Salt Lake City, like Nisei leadership in internment camps, “sought to counter outside hostility against Japanese Americans by demanding strict discipline and conformity of opinion within the ethnic group,” according to historian Lon Kurashige. Although many scholars have focused on the motivation to conform within the camps, few have looked at free-zone Nikkei and the pressure they received from community leaders to conform during wartime. Historian Eileen H. Tamura argues that ethnic communities pressed individuals to “behave in ways favorable to the community’s reputation.” Writing as a contemporary in Topaz camp’s literary magazine *Trek*, Lillian Ota instructed those who left the centers or were already outside: “It is scarcely necessary to point out that those who have probably never seen a nisei before will get their impression of the nisei as a whole from the relocated” people.³³ The *Utah Nippo* was not necessarily unique in pressuring local Nikkei to be on their best behavior, but as one of only three Japanese newspapers operating during the war, it compelled serious attention.

³² “An Editorial ... Lest We Hang Together,” *Utah Nippo*, 24 June 1942.

³³ Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles, 1934–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 77; Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 167; and Lillian Ota, “Campus Report,” *Trek* 1, no. 2 (February 1943): 34.

Not only was the reaction of white neighbors at stake, but the future of the ethnic group living outside the camps.

Maurea Ushio submitted a personal letter to the editor (herself) in April 1942, (I'm "Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter") about the current attitude of many Nisei. "Even for a small group of people like the American Nisei, the war has made a pretty sad state of things." The letter is somewhat humorous because Ushio criticizes her usually optimistic attitude: "you were going to stick your neck out again and start preaching about why this kind of attitude and feeling was undesirable and un-American at this time." She reminds herself of the personal and economic losses the imprisoned West Coast Nikkei experienced, asking, "Don't you think that such great personal losses would make anyone feel inclined to question justice—especially in a country where justice is supposed to be one of the basic building stones in the nation's make up?" Certainly, some Nikkei worried about current events and agreed with Ushio up to this point. Having sympathized with those who had left their West Coast homes, with imprisoned subscribers, and with her resident readers in Salt Lake City who worried over their future, Ushio then turned her message into one about hope and Americanism. She wrote, "Despite all the injustices and sufferings ... I am still idealistic enough to retain all my faith and belief in the democratic way of life—individual freedom to believe, work, create, express, love."³⁴ Even though Nikkei felt cautious about the future, doubted the justice of incarceration, and questioned their legal treatment in the U.S., they still needed to have hope in American principles. Supporting vague ideals like "liberty" and "democracy" would demonstrate Nikkei's commitment to the United States and help them in the short term if they remained optimistic.

A joint JACL meeting with the Ogden and Salt Lake City chapters in August 1942 featured speaker Mike M. Masaoka, the League's national secretary. Masaoka was "plenty riled

³⁴ M. U., "Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," *Utah Nippo*, 22 April 1942.

about the complacency and lackadaisical attitude of the Nisei hereabouts,” to which Ushio admitted the “truthfulness of his seering [*sic*] frankness.”³⁵ Utah’s Nikkei, and especially Nisei, were not pro-America enough. Though the community wanted to remain beneath the radar, leaders wanted them to be noticed for their positive support, demonstrating community loyalty, while complacency signaled a sloppy and careless one. At another activity in December 1942, Dr. Arthur L. Beeley, a University of Utah sociologist, “urged” Salt Lake Nikkei “to capitalize on their thoughtfulness for which they are known, and further good will and friendship among all Americans.”³⁶ While Masaoka focused on the community’s failings, Beeley focused on the community’s positive behaviors. Additionally, this early recognition of the “model minority” image by a Euro-American observer is significant.³⁷ Seeing Nikkei as thoughtful, friendly, and good, Beeley encouraged them to persist in this behavior, thus establishing the positive image that Masaoka seemed to think they lacked. That Beeley recognized the traits Nikkei leaders wanted to perpetuate perhaps indicates that their efforts to move the community in that direction were working.

Selling the image of loyalty even warranted a “want ad” in the *Utah Nippo*:

WANTED: Any number of super salesmen for the toughest selling proposition in the whole country. The commodity to be sold is of excellent quality on the inside but its external appearance is something awful.

³⁵ M. U., “Come to the Call of Your Party,” *Utah Nippo*, 31 August 1942.

³⁶ “Set A Long-Time Goal, Dr. Beeley Advises Japanese Americans,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 December 1942.

³⁷ Most scholars note World War II as a turning point in American perceptions of Asians. Since their arrival in the nation in the late 1800s, Euro-American considered Asians a “yellow peril,” but after World War II they were seen as the “model minority.” See Stanford M. Lyman, “The ‘Yellow Peril’ Mystique: Origins and Vicissitudes of a Racist Discourse,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 13, no. 4 (2000): 683–747; George T. Endo and Connie Kubo Della-Piana, “Japanese Americans, Pluralism, and the Model Minority Myth,” *Theory into Practice* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 45–51; and Kevin Allen Leonard, “‘Is That What We Fought for?’: Japanese Americans and Racism in California, The Impact of World War II,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (Nov. 1990): 463–82.

This ad was for “the job of selling Japanese Americans to the American public.” Most Nikkei were that “excellent” commodity, but suffered in the market of public opinion because of their “external” racial features. Nikkei who successfully sold the “commodity” would receive “future happiness and well-being;” failing would be “unthinkable.”³⁸ An immediate result, one with far-reaching consequences, was that more non-Nikkei would accept them as Americans, and not base their trust and friendship on race. Henry Kuwabara from the Gila Relocation Center, Arizona, wrote to say “bravo” to the article because the author (S. U.) was “thinking about the future,” something Kuwabara believed “most Nisei don’t stop to take time for.” According to Kuwabara, prisoners were “doing our best through correspondence” but could only reinforce the vital role free-zone Nikkei played because they had “the direct contact” with the rest of America.³⁹ Kuwabara’s letter reinforced the repeated sentiments of *Utah Nippo* editorials. Hearing support for model comportment, especially from an imprisoned source, made the newspaper’s case for the necessity of positive Nikkei behavior.

The following week an article entitled “It Can’t Be Over-Emphasized” appeared in the *Utah Nippo*, once again addressing free-zone Nikkei as emissaries of their race. While this theme may seem *overly* over-emphasized to contemporary readers scanning the paper, it was significantly less prominent in the newspaper’s three weekday editions. In this particular article, the author explained that individuals bore a responsibility to establish “a true and favorable ‘blanket impression’ ... in the minds of the rest of the Caucasian residents and citizens in the United States.” Although describing these efforts as individual ones, only through group conformity would they change public opinion. The argument went that it took many acting positively to build a reputation, but only one negative individual could ruin it for everyone else.

³⁸ S. U., “What Do YOU Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 18 September 1942.

³⁹ Henry Kuwabara, “A Letter...,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 September 1942.

Farm workers released from internment camps should do their best work, deal “squarely” with everyone, respect employers and coworkers; college students must avoid forming Nikkei clubs, associate with Caucasian peers, and study very hard; and those still in the centers “must and will retain faith,” follow the rules, and bear imprisonment with equanimity if not enthusiasm.⁴⁰

The 1943 New Year edition of the *Utah Nippo* was dominated by a bold-type, italicized headline reading: “Hereby Resolved: *To Make the Most and the Best of 1943—Come What May!*”⁴¹ This group resolution, if kept, would help the entire community. Even if the war turned sour or if Japan proved to be a harder enemy than expected, Nikkei in the U.S. needed to remember that they were residents and citizens of the United States. Free-zone Nikkei needed to continue to support the country and behave positively to justify the confidence Euro Americans held in them.

When the government created a Nisei combat unit in January 1943, it required all incarcerated adults, male or female, to answer a loyalty questionnaire. Two of the questions—numbers 27 and 28 about serving in combat and swearing allegiance to the U.S. while forswearing it to Japan—caused problems for some. The U.S. government considered those who answered “yes” to both to be loyal, while those who did not answer or answered “no” were suspect.⁴² Never staying quiet on a topic of loyalty, the *Utah Nippo* jumped into the conversation, asking, “Is Bitterness Disloyalty?” Referring to the 20 percent of interned adults who did not answer yes-yes, the author wondered if they were truly disloyal, pointing out that “even though the Japanese-Americans have undergone a bitter experience, a high total of 80 per cent are still

⁴⁰ “It Can’t Be Over-Emphasized,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 October 1942.

⁴¹ “Hereby Resolved,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 January 1943 (italics in original).

⁴² Most histories of internment include information about the loyalty questionnaire. See, for example, Kurashige, *Celebration and Conflict*, 102–3.

loyal to this country.”⁴³ While Salt Lake Nikkei were not required to complete the questionnaire, the unstated question in the article was whether the free-zone reader was going to be part of the 80 percent or part of the 20 percent.

An editorial advised those who were categorized as “loyal” and permitted to leave the camps of their “duty” to “demonstrate by personal contact with his fellow Americans” that Nikkei were quality Americans, to break barriers facing the group, and to “irrevocably and unflinchingly” counter criticisms and attacks against Nikkei.⁴⁴ Although the editorialist targeted internees, the message applied to those who had never been imprisoned and resettled in the free-zone. Being bolder in declaring Nikkei loyalty and being accepted as such grew in importance at this point. “Half the job in finding acceptance” and in showing one’s American qualities to the new acquaintances was to “[let] people know you speak English.”⁴⁵ That was impossible for many Issei, but not for most Nisei. The rest of the job was to continue to support the war effort and maintain a positive group image by being model citizens. “Many seem to think that they can drift their own way and avoid the problems affecting persons of Japanese ancestry,” reprimanded an editorial in November 1944. “Unless those on the home front make their contribution, it may be that only the soldiers may have a welcome” after the war—meaning that if free-zone Nikkei did not build the ethnic group’s image, only the soldiers would find a place in society after the war. If that happened, civilian Nikkei “may be relegated to a special class”—one that would be lower and less respected.⁴⁶

The *Utah Nippo* encouraged readers to register to vote in the 1944 presidential election—“a crucial year” because “Our democracy is under attack.” To protect democracy, people needed

⁴³ “Editorial ... Is Bitterness Disloyalty?,” *Utah Nippo*, 5 April 1943.

⁴⁴ Kt [*sic*], “We Have Many Friends: An Editorial,” *Utah Nippo*, 27 September 1943.

⁴⁵ “Speak English Urges Y[MCA] Worker,” *Utah Nippo*, 4 October 1943.

⁴⁶ “United We Stand,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 November 1944.

to “back the men who have consistently supported democratic issues and bills ... thereby insuring that democracy and democratic principles will remain supreme.” But if citizen Nisei hoped to exercise their privilege to vote, they needed to register so they could participate in the “the only way that we can express our desires as to what kind of policy the government will take toward us.”⁴⁷ Citizens would influence future government actions toward Nikkei, so it was their responsibility (and in their personal self-interest) to participate in the election.

The Salt Lake City municipal government advised all citizens on what would be considered proper behavior when victory in Europe was achieved. “Hilarity” was “[d]iscouraged,” and the city requested residents to observe the holiday through “thanksgiving, rejoicing, prayer and gratitude.” Later in August, Saburo Kido, the national JACL president and recognized Nikkei community leader, urged “[m]oderation” in celebration. Kido said,

We Japanese Americans are happy but we think our elation on VJ-Day should be tempered by the realization that over 1,000,000 casualties have been suffered by America. ... It is the responsibility of all free, victorious people to preserve and extend the ideals for which they fell. ... We have won the shooting war. The great job of winning the peace lies ahead.

Kido recognized that Nikkei had reason to celebrate—the U.S. had won and Nikkei had proved their loyalty throughout the war. However, Kido advised caution and quiet celebration out of respect for the American dead; and to repay the debt, Kido suggested that Nikkei be in the forefront promoting tolerance, peace, acceptance, and democracy. The peace would be won and their place in American society secured in expanding the reach of those virtues.⁴⁸

In the first “week of peace,” the U.S. government asked all citizens to see the “war jobs through to completion” and for students to return to school to gain the education needed for a postwar economy. However, by October, Utah found itself in a “paradoxical situation” where

⁴⁷ “Nisei...,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 October 1944.

⁴⁸ “V-E Day to Be Holiday: Salt Lake Lays Plans, Hilarity Discouraged,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 April 1945 and “Moderation Urged by Japanese American,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 August 1945.

much of the population received unemployment compensation while “thousands of jobs begg[ed] for workers.” A *Utah Nippo* editorial bluntly said, “We believe the Nisei should not take such an attitude towards the present situation” and they should “step in and get a position” if they need a job. The editorialist went on to say that any job a Nikkei got gave “him the opening to prove himself,” leading to future possibilities of career advancement.⁴⁹ Even though the country was at peace and their group loyalty had been confirmed, Nikkei needed to be conscious of the symbolic effects of their behavior and work ethic. Scholars often assume that this “model minority” stereotype was thrust onto Asian Americans, but this postwar example of Nikkei themselves promoting a continued model minority image complicates such simple unidirectional constructions. Nikkei internalized the political lessons learned from internment and resettlement, and recognized the benefits of fitting in, even as they maintained their identities as members of the Salt Lake Japanese community.

Throughout this thesis, I have used the term “Nikkei” to describe all members of Salt Lake City’s Japanese community—both Issei and Nisei. The *Utah Nippo*, on the other hand, generally used “Nisei” in describing proper behavior because these editorials were in the English section. Salt Lake’s Nisei spoke English and had more interactions with white Utahns, thus the push to speak English, and therefore had more opportunities for influencing and convincing others of their group loyalty. Usually, the newspaper did not give specific instructions to Issei, at least in its English language section. One editorialist recognized that the U.S. populace resented Japanese things and people because of their association with the enemy during war. The Issei, however, “contributed individually towards the war effort” and many Issei parents sacrificed their Nisei children to the military, and therefore “deserved citizenship” after the war.⁵⁰ Japanese and

⁴⁹ “Civilian Americans At Peace,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 September 1945 and “Get a Job Now,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 October 1945.

⁵⁰ “Citizenship For Issei,” *Utah Nippo*, 5 December 1945.

other Asian immigrants were ineligible for naturalization, citizenship, and landowning based on the Naturalization Act of 1870 which limited naturalizations to free white people and those of African descent.⁵¹ After the war, the *Utah Nippo* editors argued that Issei who had followed their counsel about loyalty and proper behavior deserved citizenship too.

Throughout World War II, the *Utah Nippo* advertised and counseled Nikkei to accept certain individual behavioral sets that proved the group's devotion to the United States. In general, the editorial staff and community leaders encouraged all Nikkei to promote the war effort, support democracy, work hard, and remain positive about the future. The *Utah Nippo* repeated these theories about behavior constantly. This strategy of consistent and vocal dedication to American principles, ideals, terminology, and government conveyed the message that Japanese Americans were not a threat to Salt Lake City, Utah, or the United States. Although these messages gave that impression, the *Utah Nippo* went further to prove that readers knew that Nikkei needed to act on these promptings.

Good Behavior in Practice

Highlighting Achievements

Although the bulk of articles in the *Utah Nippo* were about evacuation, resettlement, and appropriate behavior, the newspaper also highlighted individuals who exemplified the pro-American, acculturated behavior community leaders desired. Appropriate behavior, to the editors, was American and acculturated, and the terms are used interchangeably in this portion of the paper. Doing so gave real-life examples of people who lived the way the *Utah Nippo* editors and community leaders desired, given their assimilationist predilections—examples intended to inspire others in the community to follow. These articles also provided proof to white observers

⁵¹ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (Princeton: Perennial, 2002), 245.

that Nikkei were not enemy aliens, but were in fact citizens and lifelong residents committed to the United States and American institutions.

In September 1944, an article grouped Nisei youth with their Euro-American peers and counseled them to attend school and study hard. “Post-war America will need more and better trained men and women than it had before. School is where you get that training,” explained the article. Nisei helped the U.S. economically if they completed their studies. “Go back to school! Do not trade your [educational] birthright ... for a temporary job no matter how well it pays!”⁵² All Americans born in the U.S., according to this article, were privileged to receive an education. Attending school and achieving academically would demonstrate Nisei’s American qualities and affiliation. Many of the highlight articles in the *Utah Nippo* addressed individuals who excelled in their academic studies.

One highlighted individual, Harry Watanuki, graced a small space in the *Utah Nippo* in January 1943. He was an “outstanding Nisei student at the University of Utah” in Salt Lake City and a local resident in a position to influence local perceptions of the group. His grades qualified Watanuki to become a member of Phi Kappa Phi, a national scholastic fraternity for students in all disciplines, an important achievement for any student, especially for a Nikkei student who represented his ethnic group by his very presence. In addition to his election, he received a scholarship to George Washington University.⁵³ The *Utah Nippo* recognized Watanuki’s scholastic achievements and used the story for its positive public relations value in casting the local Nikkei community as excelling in American education.

The University of Utah had 121 Nisei enrolled in its 1943 Spring Quarter. Twenty-five were Utah residents while 96 were not. The majority of Nisei students enrolled in the Mines and

⁵² “Back to School,” *Utah Nippo*, 15 September 1944.

⁵³ “Harold Watanuki To Receive Scholarship,” *Utah Nippo*, 13 January 1943.

Engineering department.⁵⁴ Kiyotoshi Iwamoto, a prisoner at Manzanar for one year, decided to enroll in the University of Utah to finish his degree. While a Catholic priest arranged for him to come to the university and a friend found work for him in Salt Lake City, Iwamoto said the decision to come was “an own individual” one. The university’s president, Dr. LeRoy E. Cowles, told the Salt Lake Rotarians that Nisei students were “neither barred from the University of Utah nor are invited to attend.” Cowles explained that out-of-state students had to present letters from their former universities to confirm their character and abilities and had to pay out-of-state tuition. He noted, “The 125 Japanese-American students have a higher general intelligence than the average of all students at the University and a few of them are exceptionally bright.” In 1944, sociology graduate student Carma Hunsaker Croft compared Nisei students’ scholastic abilities with Euro-American University of Utah students as research for her master’s thesis. In comparing 26 Nikkei women and 26 Euro-American women, Croft found Japanese American women were more successful in school than their Euro-American counterparts 79 percent of the time. In the same comparison between 74 men of each racial group, Croft found that Japanese American men did better in their studies than their Euro-American colleagues 90 percent of the time. The *Utah Nippo* reported that of the 278 students on the university’s honor roll for 1944 Winter Quarter, 24 of them were Nisei students, once again explicitly noting their academic achievements.⁵⁵ Croft’s

⁵⁴ “Students from California Form Majority Nisei Enrollment At the University of Utah: Survey Shows Nisei Students Like Engineering,” *Utah Nippo*, 9 April 1943.

⁵⁵ Kiyotoshi Iwamoto, s2:10, 6/4/84, folder 9, box 1, Interviews with Japanese in Utah, 1980–1989, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter IJU); “President of U. of U. Explains Nisei Status to Questioning Public,” *Utah Nippo*, 28 May 1943; R. Todd Welker, “Utah Schools and the Japanese American Student Relocation Program,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 11; Carma Hunsaker Croft, “Comparative Scholastic Achievements of Japanese-American Students and Caucasian Students of the University of Utah for the Academic Year 1942–1943” (master’s thesis, University of Utah, 1944), 61–2; and “Twenty-Four Nisei Students Make U Honor Roll,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 April 1944.

findings and Cowles's statement encouraged the image that Nisei students held an academic edge and excelled in their fields.

Beyond their undergraduate education, some students pursued graduate or professional degrees at the University of Utah. Sigeru R. Hario, originally from San Francisco, was among the first 35 students to receive their MD degrees in Utah.⁵⁶ Although she was not a University of Utah student, the *Utah Nippo* recounted Margaret C. Echigoshima's graduate accomplishments. Formerly of Seattle, she relocated to St. Louis to attend Washington University Law School and held "the distinction of being the first Northwest Nisei girl known to have passed the bar examination."⁵⁷ The *Utah Nippo* used such examples of higher education achievement to improve the Salt Lake Japan Town's image, demonstrating Nikkei accomplishments and educational acculturation, locally and nationwide.

In 1944, West High School students Lindy Kumagai, Ernest Seko, and Masuki Imai received special honors at their graduation ceremony, being named "outstanding" graduates from the school alongside 21 other peers.⁵⁸ The *Utah Nippo* editor chose to include this information in the paper because it solidified the idea that even in high school, Nisei students competed academically with the best white students.

A group of newspaper "Briefs" spotlighted other young men who exemplified the American traits that Salt Lake community leaders hoped to encourage in Nikkei. In this case, the young men were athletes, something that American culture highly valued. Harry Osaki of Salt Lake City was one of the "highest ranking scout[s] [Boy Scouts of America] in the world" and had 103 out of a possible 106 merit badges. To add to his scouting prestige, Osaki placed "among the first ten" in the National Archery Championship the previous week. Two other community

⁵⁶ "Nisei Gets M. D. Degree at U of U," *Utah Nippo*, 11 September 1944.

⁵⁷ "Nisei Girl Passes Bar Examination," *Utah Nippo*, 21 May 1943.

⁵⁸ "Nisei Chosen For School Honors," *Utah Nippo*, 19 June 1944.

members, Seiko Kasai and Toshi Miyazaki, were equally successful in American pursuits. They were both wrestlers at the University of Utah and were undefeated through much of their season. At the high school athletic level, the Noda brothers were successful track runners at West High School. The *Salt Lake Tribune* mentioned them as likely competitors in the dashes in coming meets.⁵⁹ Tellingly, many Nisei students recognized for their achievements were athletes. Historian Mark Dyreson marks the relationship between sports and nationalism, arguing that “sport was made, or invented, to serve a purpose. That purpose had an intimate connection to the construction of an American team—a national identity for the United States.”⁶⁰ Sports have historically been a way for different racial and ethnic groups to gain access into a white-dominated American culture. The *Utah Nippo* recognized this and highlighted Nikkei athletes.

These featured highlight articles in the *Utah Nippo* offered examples and encouragement that Nikkei could become culturally American, demonstrating such traits through their success in academic institutions. Scholars, athletes, and others were public examples who inspired others in their group to excel in similar ways. These stories assured non-Nikkei Americans that Nikkei were or could be loyal, productive, and acculturated citizens.

Loyally Working

Nikkei who followed community leaders’ instructions to do their best in their jobs demonstrated community allegiance to the United States. The *Utah Nippo* illustrated the positive results of Nikkei loyalty in reporting that 200 Japanese Americans “worked in the [nation’s] capital, a large percentage in Government jobs.” Although “many of whom spent months behind barbed wire at relocation centers,” the federal government trusted and employed them. Some even did “highly confidential work for the War Department and the Federal Bureau of

⁵⁹ “Briefs,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 April 1943.

⁶⁰ Mark Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 2.

Investigation.” Others doing important, but lower security jobs, included “translators and researchers ... stenographers and clerks” for various departments. According to the *Utah Nippo*, 20 of those 200 who settled in Washington, D.C., worked in domestic services and lived above suspicion. All the workers served as excellent examples that strengthened the group’s image to the rest of the nation.⁶¹

Many resettled Nisei obtained work in the defense industries. As the war drew to a close, people of color—especially women of color—who got jobs in defense industries were always the first to be let go. Lyn Childs, a black women working in a shipyard in San Francisco, remembered the order of layoffs as, “the women were laid off first, and then the less senior black men were laid off next, and then ... finally many of the white workers were laid off, but originally the first ones laid off was women.” Historian Megan Taylor Shockley describes the conditions that black women met in World War II defense industries, and the racisms they faced.⁶² Nisei working in munitions plants and other factories found themselves in similar situations. The *Utah Nippo* counseled workers that by “gradually branching out as independent owners of small business,” they might avoid losing their jobs. A “successful Nisei business man” encouraged his cohorts to begin their own personal service businesses, such as “suit cleaning and dyeing plant, small auto repair shop, hand laundry, and numerous others which do not require much capital. ... [or] running of restaurants.” Smart Nikkei would move around the country and establish such businesses where there was a need for them, in the process promoting themselves as hardworking and industrious people.⁶³

⁶¹ “200 Niseis Holding Federal Jobs,” *Utah Nippo*, 5 March 1945.

⁶² Lyn Childs quoted in Connie Field, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Los Angeles: Direct Cinema Ltd., 1987), VHS and Megan Taylor Shockley, *We, Too, Are Americans: African American Women in Detroit and Richmond, 1940–54* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

⁶³ “Reconversion And The Nisei,” *Utah Nippo*, 23 May 1945.

Nikkei women participated in trainings to gain the skills to move beyond domestic work and find pink collar jobs. At Salt Lake's Henagers Business College, eight "American Japanese girls" won typing honors. Ayako Tanabe had 73 words per minute (wpm) with only 2 errors, Teresa Honnami had 75 wpm with 4 errors, Ayako Inabu had 75 wpm with 4 errors, Nobuko Miura typed 76 wpm and only made 4 errors, Nami Honda typed 80 wpm with 5 errors, Claire Taketoshi had 80 wpm with 5 errors, Amy Iwaki made 91 wpm with 4 errors, and Miyoko Shinoda achieved 104 wpm and only made 3 errors. These young Nikkei women, highlighted in the *Utah Nippo*, displayed "their true American spirit" in their impressive achievement, demonstrating their value as secretaries wherever they chose to work.⁶⁴

In Salt Lake City, Nikkei usually found jobs either in the Japan Town or in larger businesses. Kiyotoshi Iwamoto, a University of Utah student, remembered his first impressions of the economic opportunities in the city. He believed all the "Japanese businesses were prospering. When I came here, gosh, there were so many soldiers here going into Japanese restaurants. ... [Soldiers] just took their girlfriends to Japanese restaurants. ... As a consequence, local Japanese businessmen made money. A tremendous amount of money." And beyond Japan Town, Iwamoto noted, "There was absolutely no discrimination against Japanese. Because Utah, all of a sudden, particularly, Salt Lake City felt the labor shortage. They needed the labor in retail shops, you see. Needed the labor for thinning of beets. So, they welcomed Japanese. You know, they are hard working, punctual." Iwamoto witnessed less discrimination in Utah than he had in California, though his remarks from the 1980s may have been rose-colored as he remembered moving to the state. He also described stereotypical qualities of the model minority, qualities that the *Utah Nippo* and other Nikkei wanted to develop because they demonstrated the groups' non-threat to the nation. Iwamoto said, "those who came to Utah, they enjoyed it very much, their stay here." He

⁶⁴ "Eight Nisei Girls Win Awards," *Utah Nippo*, 1 January 1945.

enjoyed Salt Lake City so much that he permanently settled in the city.⁶⁵ In Iwamoto's eyes, business in the state capital prospered and Nikkei store owners and Nikkei laborers benefitted economically.

Masao Tsujimoto provided a California Nisei's impressions of Salt Lake City's job market in the "dirty and dingy" Japan Town in his "A Letter to Ophelia from Keetley, Utah." "The Japanese population was increased four or five fold, due to the influx of evacuees both voluntary and on furlough from relocation centers. Many of them are employed in restaurants, hotels, cleaning establishments, laundries, and garages. Many nisei [*sic*] girls are also working as domestics."⁶⁶ Though Tsujimoto's perspective of Salt Lake City was more critical than Iwamoto's, he saw the economic opportunities available to workers. Even as the population multiplied, people did not go without jobs if they simply looked for them.

Dillon S. Myer, director of the WRA, suggested that Nikkei seek employment as live-in domestics because of the housing shortage on the West Coast. There they would find both a home and wages. The *Utah Nippo* editor found this statement to be problematic. Issei or Nisei who were untrained could take such jobs, but since there were so many jobs available for those with training, it seemed to the editor "as if the WRA chief has fallen to the same level as those who have been agitating against persons of Japanese ancestry on the Coast." However,

We hope for a better lot than a domestic for the Nisei who have a long future ahead of them. This is especially true for those who have not been able to display their true talents because of the prejudice and discrimination. We would much rather see the WRA take an uncompromising position, demanding that the power and influence of the Federal Government be brought to win fair play for the Nisei.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Iwamoto, interview, 6-4-84, s2:21-s3:23-24, IJU.

⁶⁶ Masao Tsujimoto, "A Letter to Ophelia from Keetley, Utah," p. 8, 31 March 1943, folder 1, box 104, Alice Kasai Papers, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

⁶⁷ "Nisei As Domestics," *Utah Nippo*, 29 June 1945.

Domestic work was fine for those untrained for business or other services, including those who were generally less culturally American. For acculturated, educated Nikkei, domestic work was an inappropriate option that would actually move them backwards in the eyes of other Americans and in their own aspirations for a better socioeconomic status. Overall, this editorial statement was bold and assertive, even demanding. It was safe to make in June 1945 when Nikkei were practically assured of the status in the United States.

Artist Miné Okubo, who was interned in Topaz and then resettled in New York City, found her fame as an artist growing after internment. The *Utah Nippo* spotlighted her as a woman who successfully maneuvered American culture and the arts world. In March 1945, “More than 100 persons attended a tea” in her honor and to celebrate a new exhibit of her “documentary paintings and drawings of relocation center life.” While documentary in appearance, Okubo’s drawings conveyed her critical assessment of the circumstances of internment as well as her creative abilities.⁶⁸ In June of the same year, Okubo received the Arthur and Anne Baillhace Purchase Award in San Francisco for her painting “Checkers.” She continued to add prizes to “her list of art honors” over her career, informing Americans through her art about internment and about the cultural place of Nikkei in American society.⁶⁹

Working steadfastly in one’s occupation—whatever it was—was one way Nikkei demonstrated their American cultural traits. It was quite American to try to improve oneself through training and smart business ventures. The *Utah Nippo* editors believed working Nikkei

⁶⁸ “New Yorkers Honor Mine Okubo,” *Utah Nippo*, 28 March 1945. For Okubo’s drawings of her experiences with internment, see Miné Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983). One of my current projects, which is on hold while I work on this thesis, is an article about Okubo and her drawings in *Citizen 13660*. In it, I argue that she figures herself as both the observer and the observed, while she critiques internment and Nikkei women’s experiences in it.

⁶⁹ “Nisei Artist Wins Prize In San Francisco,” *Utah Nippo*, 13 June 1945.

helped the group and they published descriptions of work available if community members simply looked around.

Creating a Local Identity

As Joel Tadao Miyasaki has argued, Nikkei in the free-zone tried to create a local identity in their communities. In his thesis, “Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West,” Miyasaki argues that rural Nikkei sought to “claim a place,” or make themselves a part of the population landscape.⁷⁰ This was also true for urban Nikkei in Salt Lake City.

Utah’s history offered many insights to Nikkei in the city and those moving to other states, according to an editorial that encouraged evacuees to learn from Mormon pioneer history. Both had been driven from their homes, faced hostile public sentiment, and went to “a strange, undeveloped land to seek freedom.” Their history set “an example of what courage and faith can accomplish,” providing evacuees the courage to leave the centers, resettlers the support to continue their lives where they were, and the free-zoners the encouragement to remain steady in their pro-American actions.⁷¹ The Mormon pioneers also “converted the desolate, desert country into this productive, civilized state. . . . The State of Utah is the testimonial of their empire building contribution.” Utah was successful because hardworking people created it. To those rebuilding their lives after the war or those who were just trying to continue on, Mormon history could be “consoling as well as educational.” Utah residents who understood their state’s past would grow the state and exemplify the dedication of its Nikkei population. Although most Nikkei in Utah were not LDS, the editors insisted they could co-exist peacefully with the group.⁷² Those who did not understand Mormons and Utah caused problems for the Nikkei community

⁷⁰ Joel Tadao Miyasaki, “Claiming a Place in the Intermountain West: Japanese Americans Ethnic Identity in Utah and Idaho” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 2006).

⁷¹ “This Is The Place!,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 March 1945.

⁷² “Utah Pioneers,” *Utah Nippo*, 6 August 1945.

because they did not know how to blend in. Newcomers to Salt Lake City had a lot to learn. “Those of us who are new in Utah find it difficult to understand the beliefs of Mormonism because we came from a part of the country where Mormons are not well known ... and whenever any mention was made of them it was mostly in ridicule.” However, it was important for West Coast Nikkei to understand the culture they now lived with. The *Utah Nippo* counseled readers to be fair by “hear[ing] their side of the story before making up one’s opinion.”⁷³ The new residents would be better respected and would give the Nikkei community a better name by understanding Mormons and therefore Utah.

On the flip side, Utah resident Nikkei could also learn from newcomers. An evacuee who wrote to the *Utah Nippo*, stated that locals complained about the Californians in their town. “I’ve heard it said,” wrote An Evacuee, “that a frog in a well knows no other world: this seems to apply to a couple of your devout Salt Lakers.” The main problem with Salt Lake Nikkei was that they “cannot widen their scope and get away from provincialism.” There was too much gossip and too much being in others’ business. They were close-minded about the wider world. “Salt Lake is a nice place but there are other nice places too.”⁷⁴ In response, “A Salt Laker” agreed with that editorial and wrote to praise “local Salt Lake niseis” for taking “the initiative and conduct[ing] a [pleasant] program.” Incoming Californian enriched and revitalized local organizations:

Gosh sake, I’ve been watching the local niseis, particularly the Salt Lake JACL dozing dormant along as the more spirited and aggressive West Coast niseis come in and with amazing vitality initiate the Service and Friendship Club for girls, Music Appreciation Club, War Relocation Aid, and even take over dances, etc., etc.⁷⁵

A vibrant community holding productive, American-style programs supporting the war effort created a beneficial image for non-Nikkei as well as strengthened its own group identity.

⁷³ “Club Reporter Tells About Forum on Mormonism,” *Utah Nippo*, 14 April 1943.

⁷⁴ An Evacuee, “Hits Provincialism,” *Utah Nippo*, 14 April 1943.

⁷⁵ A Salt Laker, “Letters To The Editor,” *Utah Nippo*, 24 March 1943.

A *Utah Nippo* article in June 1945 explained how several myths associated with Nikkei and internment could be debunked. One of the first myths—that the evacuation was brought about by massive disloyalty among Nikkei—was disproved by “the rescinding of the exclusion orders,” which the editor took as “indisputable evidence ... that only a small number of evacuees were questionable from the standpoint of national security.” The next myth was that Nikkei were dishonest in their business dealings, in speaking with others, and in all facets of life. However, there was “no warrant for claiming that the Japanese as a class are more dishonest than Americans. There are undoubtedly rascals in both groups.” Their honesty, another reason they were no longer suspected, was similar to any group, and gave no valid excuse for discrimination. The third myth addressed was that Nikkei had a higher birthrate than Euro-Americans, a common rumor about all people of color at the time. The author reported that the 1940 U.S. Census “shows that the birth rate among Japanese Americans in every state on the West Coast was lower than the birth rate of the general population, including people of all ancestries.” If Nikkei had a lower birth rate than any other group, they certainly could not take over the nation through reproduction. In disproving these three myths, the *Utah Nippo* offered Nikkei factual arguments to counter discrimination and showed that Nikkei behavior, even before the war, was not a threat to the U.S.⁷⁶

By encouraging newcomers to the city to learn about Mormonism and Utah culture, and by encouraging long-term residents to take lessons from West Coast Nikkei, the *Utah Nippo* believed the population would reinforce their place in the Salt Lake community. Dispelling myths and rumors transformed Nikkei into “normal” people and contributed to the establishment of their local identity within the larger Utah and Salt Lake community.

⁷⁶ “Myths and Facts: Evacuation Not Due To Mass Disloyalty; Honesty of the Japanese as a Race; Birth Rate Among Japanese Americans,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 June 1945.

Chapter Conclusions

This chapter reviewed contributing elements to appropriate Nikkei behavior espoused by the editors of the English edition of the *Utah Nippo* during the 1940s. First, many white Utahns were uncomfortable with the idea of more Japanese Americans entering their state. Their distrust of these newcomers contributed to their concern about the existing resident Nikkei community. Second, the *Utah Nippo* meticulously described and encouraged acceptable behavior for the Nikkei community—that individuals should be pro-American, support the war, work hard, and try to blend in. Many people followed this behavioral advice, achieved honors in sports or academics, and obtained jobs where they were successful and helped the nation. These actions reflected what the leaders of the Nikkei community in Utah desired and what many community members themselves aspired to, but also created that reality in the minds of *Utah Nippo* readers and in the eyes of many in the larger Utah community. By emulating good examples, Nikkei worked to establish their image and place in American society as loyal and valuable American citizens.

CHAPTER 3

BAD EXAMPLES: THE *UTAH NIPPO* AND NEGATIVE NIKKEI BEHAVIORS

The previous chapter explained why and what the *Utah Nippo* editors wanted Salt Lake City Nikkei to do—to become the model of loyalty, blend in, and assist the nation’s war effort. Of course, some Nikkei did not conform to the good citizenship described in the *Utah Nippo*, and the newspaper reported on these people too, both to distance the community from the “unpatriotic” actions of a few as well as to warn others about the dangers of non-conformity. This is the focus of Chapter Two. In addition to these vague descriptions of bad behaviors, the editors gave examples of those people who did not behave and did not contribute to the ethnic community’s positive reputation. These were done to both inform and warn, and also to show that the main part of the community did not support such un-American and wild behaviors. It should be noted that this chapter is much shorter than the previous one, reflecting the editorial bent of the *Utah Nippo* in giving less attention to negative behavior in favor of highlighting positive behavior.

Negative Behavior Described

Some Salt Lake Nikkei did not behave the way they were supposed to, according to Salt Lake Japan Town leaders, and the *Utah Nippo* used these “bad examples,” or generalizations of bad examples, to illustrate how such actions hurt the city and nation’s idea of Nikkei. A *Utah Nippo* editorialist took a firm stance against those “who are most vitally concerned,” meaning Nikkei who did not conform. The editor believed,

...if there is anyone who is violating any regulation whatsoever, and if, after ample warning he will not abide by the regulation, then his name should be turned into the authorities, and he should be made to feel the full consequence of his offence. And I believe that everyone of Japanese descent has a responsibility in warning and in apprehending any offending member of his own group.¹

¹ “What do YOU Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 August 1942.

This editorial statement became the base for future reports in the newspaper. The *Utah Nippo* highlighted, reprimanded, and shamed those who were caught doing something wrong or something that hurt the public image of the Utah Nikkei community. Shame is a Japanese cultural trait that resonated with the way Nisei were raised. The editor publicly called out Nikkei who did not honor the law of the land, and called on the rest of the community to help stop them.

In March 1942, early in their efforts to define appropriate American Nikkei behavior, the editors of the *Utah Nippo* made use of negative examples to warn readers of the consequences. In one story, some local “fun-crazy young Nisei” went out “‘horsing around’ five or six or seven nights in the week,” frequenting movie theaters, bowling alleys, dances, and simply driving around “indulging in other sundry recreational activities.” Their behavior, according to the papers, was definitely out of line. The paper relayed community leaders’ instructions that Nikkei limit their recreational activities and to not be wild and stand out at such public events because “we can’t really afford it; I don’t mean financially, so much, but otherwise.” Salt Lake Nikkei could not afford the negative perceptions incurred by social excesses, especially when there were Euro-Americans involved. “Let us preserve our rights by giving a little consideration for what’s going on in the rest of the world,” said the author of the article, referring to the war and West Coast evacuation, “using sensible forethought and discretion” to show sensitivity as an ethnic community to the situation of the rest of the nation.² A concerned Salt Lake Nisei wrote to the *Utah Nippo* in response to the article, commenting that the main perpetrators of “disorderly manner[s]” were usually “the younger, high-school set.” Their “innocent ballyhoo are beginning to put the Nisei in a very precarious position” where Nisei and Issei could be “more and more discriminated against.”³ Even youthful misbehaving could turn compromising as it reinforced

² “Quo Vadis, Nisei?,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 March 1942.

³ “Editorial,” dated 12 March 1942, *Utah Nippo*, 18 March 1942.

local concerns about Japanese American loyalty. Editors suggested that refraining from such behavior showed that there was no danger from a quiet and peaceful Nikkei community.

These behavioral non-conformists constantly bothered Salt Lake Nikkei leaders. One article blasted such individuals: “[A]nyone with the brain of a microscopic amoeba should know that this is not time for the Nisei to be disunited in spirit.”⁴ It was obvious to the author, who hoped to make it obvious to readers, that unity in behavior was essential—that individuals represented the group, and one person behaving badly or appearing disloyal could ruin the image of the entire population.

One reader, signing himself “R. M.,” disagreed with the editorials dictating that Nisei live quiet, under-the-radar lives (which he labeled as “nutty”), explaining that if Nisei wanted to be taken seriously as Americans, they should be free to act like Americans—including all the social activities enjoyed by American youth. Historian Heather Fryer observes that youthful Nisei in the camps participated in sports and dancing and fashion because they *were* American, not because they were performing some image. R. M. would agree that the same was true of free-zoners:

Don’t we like good American dancing? Oh man! that jive music, our zoot-suits, our haircuts, bow ties, and those colorful, two-inch wide suspenders? Sure there’s a war going on, but that’s no sign that we have to be so timid about everything. We gotta keep up our morale on the home front, don’t we?

Although sometimes, “We get drunk and sometimes become very ridiculous looking, but we’re Americans and other Americans do it, so why can’t we?” R. M.’s argument that Nisei were Americans and therefore should be permitted to do what other American youth could do, was in opposition to what community leaders and the *Utah Nippo* preached over the course of the war. Nonetheless, R. M. supported the activities sponsored by the JACL and other organizations, because “we need socials so we won’t always have to hang around pool halls, cafes, and walk around Main Street in bunches looking for something to do.” In other words, although Nisei

⁴ “Editorial ... Apathy of Nisei,” *Utah Nippo*, 12 May 1943.

youth should have fun, participation in sponsored community events would limit their participation in more destructive behavior.⁵ R. M. at once disapproved of tight-laced wartime behavior in favor of fun yet encouraged actions and attitudes that developed the image leaders hoped for by participating in community and JACL activities of a patriotic nature.

After defending the entertainment and activities enjoyed by youth, R. M. also critiqued the older generation, particularly the Issei. He said that race riots such as those in Los Angeles, Texas, and Detroit could happen anywhere, including Salt Lake City. If the city's ire were raised against the residents of Japan Town, it would be because of "the Isseis walk[ing] around with no socks on, with the Japanese sandals on, ... talk[ing] in loud boisterous Nihongo [Japanese language]," and refusing to become cultural Americans. The younger Nisei, argued R. M., "are sometimes noisy when they talk, but they are talking the American language—everyone can tell what they are talking about."⁶ According to R. M., the Issei who did not speak English and had not adopted American behaviors posed more threat to the Japanese community than the rambunctious, youthful, and culturally American Nisei.

Another editorial, by S. U., encouraged Salt Lake Nikkei to think about their actions. He relayed a story about a Nisei soldier on leave who visited to Salt Lake City. After his ten-day furlough, "he left somewhat disillusioned and bewildered—definitely disappointed [in] what he saw back at home." S. U. relayed that the soldier said,

⁵ R. M., "We Are Americans—Be Like Americans, Says Young Nisei," *Utah Nippo*, 12 July 1943. See Heather Fryer, *Perimeters of Democracy: Inverse Utopias and the Wartime Social Landscape in the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 21.

⁶ R. M., "We Are Americans." R. M referred to the Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles, Beaumont Riot in Texas, and the Detroit Race Riot, all in the summer of 1943. For more on interracial violence during World War II, see Harvard Sitkoff, *Toward Freedom Land: The Long Struggle for Racial Equality in America* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 43–64, 65–92.

[E]verywhere I go these silly kids are planning parties and socials—not only kids, but older ones who out [*sic*] to know better, and as if that wasn't enough, they're running hog-wild every night in the week, and all they talk about is those swell California dames that has come to town. The only thing that concerns them is the eight o'clock curfew...Don't they know that there's a war on? Don't they realize that they and we are on the toughest spot in the world?

This unnamed (and potentially fictitious) soldier saw too many parties and young Nisei who did not worry about the war or their appearance in the eyes of the white Salt Lake community. S. U. did not blame the soldier or Euro-Americans who saw “these thoughtless Niseis” at bowling alleys, pool halls, “strutting unconcernedly” down the streets, and “overpatronizing already overcrowded” recreational centers. These youthful offenders hurt the entire community—including the patriotic soldiers who were willing to give their lives—with their careless frivolity. “It’s not just the habitual every-night-in-the-week offender that has got to wake up,” continued S. U. “Even the occasional once a week seeker of recreation must realize that if everyone went out only once a week or once every two weeks that still would make a conspicuous total.” S. U. did not define how much was too much, but he said he tried to curtail his own activities, and that everyone must do so to protect the community.⁷ Masao Tsujimoto testified to Ophelia that the “many nisei, mostly from camps, who are just loafing and bumming around on the streets of Salt Lake City, and they do make a bad impression of the Japanese populace, as a whole, in the eyes of the American residents here.”⁸ In this time of wartime restrictions and curfews, caution should be common sense, but apparently it was not. Ironically, while the *Utah Nippo* editorial staff consistently advised readers to be “American,” the activities described as “bad” were unquestionably American.

⁷ S. U., “What Do YOU Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 2 September 1942.

⁸ Masao Tsujimoto, “A Letter to Ophelia from Keetley, Utah,” pp. 8–9, 31 March 1943, folder 1, box 104, Alice Kasai Papers, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

The parties and social events advertised in the *Utah Nippo* newspaper often had patriotic purposes, like raising money for war bonds or giving gifts to Nisei soldiers overseas. Even so, in January 1945, the editor decided there were too many parties advertised in the English section, “a complete change” from the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor “when every person of Japanese parentage tried to avoid becoming conspicuous” by limiting social events. Although recognizing the “everyone is under a tension” and needed “some outlet for recreation and amusement,” the editor contested that “it [was] not a wise policy to be parading around in evening gowns and making a show”—especially when Salt Lake City families, both Euro- and Japanese American, “receiv[ed] war department telegrams almost every day with news of casualties.” Celebrating the war was problematic, but supporting war efforts was not. The editor believed Nikkei needed to exercise caution because merriment was “not fair to the soldiers overseas.” Those on the home front should “build up” soldier morale, putting their “amusement and desire for frivolity” second. The editorialist then suggested that the English section refuse to print announcements for parties and dances that made “no contribution” to the war effort or community welfare.⁹ This policy was enacted to a small extent. There was a lull in non-war effort announcements for a few months, but such community announcements picked up again as the war came to an end.

Current scholars have addressed this paradox between the expectations and behavior for Nikkei. Elena Tajima Creff notes that Japanese Americans in concentration camps “had little choice but to participate in their own racial and cultural erasure in order to prove their loyalty and lay claim to an American identity.” Or, as applicable to this thesis, some Nikkei in Salt Lake City—and particularly the *Utah Nippo* editorial staff—made a conscious effort to remove their association with Japanese culture and emphasize their Americanness. However, their version of American culture was one where Nikkei went unnoticed and lived quiet, unassuming lives, not

⁹ “Notices About Parties,” *Utah Nippo*, 29 January 1945.

something everyone would see as typical of Americans. In contrast, Heather Fryer observes that Nikkei prisoners in the detention camps did American things “not because they were trying to ‘look American,’ but because they *were* Americans.” Nisei youth did American things because they were culturally American, not because they wanted to prove something. They had American friends and enjoyed American social activities. Yet this same American youth culture was a source of frustration to Nikkei community leaders in Salt Lake because it did not prompt individuals to blend in and watch quietly. The cultural changes during WWII were probably the result of both tactics.¹⁰

This paradox continued to haunt community leaders given their ongoing concerns about the behavior and actions of Japan Town residents. Editor Toshi Miyazaki thought it would be bad enough to have to hunt for news in a “dead town, dead Nisei society.” Unfortunately, that was not the case. It was a “mental strain” for him “to see so many Nisei[—]from those in college studying, those working in shops, to those in pool halls and bowling alleys[—]completely nonchalant about the social and political forces which are threatening to do them great harm.”¹¹ Some Salt Lake Nikkei behaved as they should by studying or working hard, while others messed around. Even a member of the community like Miyazaki, let alone an outside observer, had trouble knowing which image represented the group and its true Americanness.

In February, a kabuki (traditional Japanese theater form) troupe from Topaz wanted to perform some of their classical drama in Salt Lake City for a Red Cross drive. Two opposing views emerged in the press—that this event could be seen as helping the war effort, *or* that it could be seen as pro-Japan and those involved “accused as spreading pro-Japan propaganda.” Carefully, the article’s writer stated that the “feeling of Salt Lake City and Utah in general does

¹⁰ Elena Tajima Creef, *Imaging Japanese America: The Visual Construction of Citizenship, Nation, and the Body* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 26 and Fryer, *Perimeters of Democracy*, 21 (italics in original).

¹¹ Toshi Miyazaki, “Gripes: Sad Bunch Nisei,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 April 1943.

not warrant over-confidence” among Nikkei, and requested actors and other interned Nikkei to be careful in their Japanese cultural demonstrations. Utah, although comparatively mild in its response to Nikkei relocatees, still needed to be treated with caution. After all, noted the writer, “we are sitting on a keg of dynamite. Anything may blow the lid off and start an hysterical anti-Japanese movement.” And because Utah was “quiet,” Nikkei still needed to be vigilant to avoid being “lull[ed] ... into over-confidence.” To conclude the article, the writer said, “those who have made this state their permanent home have an important stake and temporary residents should not carelessly jeopardize the future welfare of these people.”¹² Simply put, newcomers to Utah should not rock the boat. Standing out as un-aculturated and un-American Japanese got West Coast Nikkei forced from their homes and into concentration camps. In Utah, Nikkei benefitted from blending in. Ultimately, the kabuki performance, deemed “unwise” by this author, was not held.

Most of the behavior within Japan Town deemed counterproductive by *Utah Nippo* editorialists was associated with youthful exuberance, with kids wanting to have fun without realizing the potential impact of their individual actions on the community. The *Utah Nippo*'s articles painted those who went to too many parties, drove too fast, or drank too much beer as hurting the efforts of well-behaved residents. In morally conservative Utah, such actions were especially worrisome to LDS Euro-Americans. The editors reminded readers that being inconspicuous was ideal during wartime (unless one stood out for outstanding civic duty) because rowdy behavior was easily connected (negatively and wrongly) to the larger group.

The Curfew

A major source of stories in the *Utah Nippo* revolved around the curfew imposed on all Nikkei by Lieutenant General J. L. DeWitt. Although the curfew is usually identified with the West Coast and remembered as a precursor to the evacuation and incarceration, it also applied in

¹² “What Do You Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 9 February 1945.

Utah. According to the curfew law, Utah was classified as an “‘island’ zone,” and Nikkei were not permitted to leave their homes between 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., or venture more than five miles from their homes unless they had special permission.¹³ Utah’s District Attorney Dan B. Shields further clarified the curfew law, explaining that if people did not live in a highly concentrated area, they did not need to worry about the new law. But Nikkei living in Ogden and Salt Lake City should obey as best they could. “I want to emphasize the advisability of all Japanese adhering as much as possible to the curfew and the five-mile limit law whether they are legally forced to it or not,” Shields said. So even though rural Nikkei were exempt, they were advised that following the law would lessen suspicion.¹⁴

In its crusade to promote law-abiding citizenship and residency among Nikkei, the *Utah Nippo* chimed in immediately. The editor suggested that time spent indoors during the curfew was “as good an opportunity as you will ever get” to “devot[e] more time to those hobbies or tak[e] up new ones that you have always wanted to but haven’t had the time.”¹⁵ Instead of resisting it, Nikkei should embrace the curfew and see it as a positive opportunity. At this time, when thousands of Nikkei were forced from their West Coast homes, it was prudent for Utah Nikkei to quietly follow the curfew order and improve themselves and benefit their image as law-abiding Americans.

Surprisingly, considering its support for the curfew, the *Utah Nippo* published some criticisms of the curfew in its pages. One such criticism, a poem by Harry Mitani, eloquently described life before and during the Salt Lake City curfew. He wrote, “The day of impending disaster / Commenced with the arrival of the word, / That the man in command of the army / Had

¹³ “‘Army Proclaim a Curfew for Enemy Aliens in Western States’: Decree Takes Effect Friday. Area Listed Includes Utah,” *Utah Nippo*, 25 March 1942.

¹⁴ “Attorney Shields Explains Curfew and 5-Mile Zone Laws,” *Utah Nippo*, 15 April 1942.

¹⁵ “Means of Combating Curfew-Itis or Why Don’t We Practice It Anyway?,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 April 1942.

slowly killed our freedom's bird." After Pearl Harbor, the "[g]ay, young hearts enraptured with song" were interrupted by "clouds on the distant horizon." The youth then had to live "Through years of grief and worry, / Through years of toil and strife," and "We did all we could to be happy." And then, addressing the specific cause for that glumness, "The curfew's from eight 'til six / Other boundaries are limited, too. / Outside these hours of gaiety / We cannot enjoy golden hue." Mitani's biting criticism came through clearly at the end of the poem, noting that freedom was "just a mirage. / Who said all men are equal?" Although Mitani was born and raised in Salt Lake City and did not face internment, he endured a racially-based curfew that limited the freedoms he claimed as an American citizen. Even after voicing that most damning of critiques, and probably in a nod to the community's insistence on quietly enduring to prove one's loyalty, Mitani ended his poem on a hopeful note: "Perhaps when all is said and done / Tomorrow molds a shining sequel." This positive attitude was what the *Utah Nippo* wanted to portray through all the struggles the community faced during war. If people could endure the curfew and be optimistic about the future, they would have demonstrated their loyal support to the U.S.¹⁶

By the time January 1943 rolled around, rumors about the curfew being lifted circulated in Japan Town. In the 1 January issue, the *Utah Nippo* editor reminded readers that until they received official word, everyone should comply with the curfew requirements.

The curfew and travel restrictions as proclaimed by Lieut. Gen. DeWitt in March, 1942, are still effective for all Japanese aliens and Japanese Americans living in prohibited areas, according to Attorney General Dan B. Shields of Salt Lake City. All persons of Japanese ancestry are asked to comply by former orders regardless of contrary information.¹⁷

This announcement and reminder, given at the first of the New Year, countered rumors circulating in the Nikkei community questioning the necessity of following the guidelines of the

¹⁶ Harry Mitani, "Ringin' Curfew Bells," *Utah Nippo*, 18 September 1942.

¹⁷ "NOTICE!," *Utah Nippo*, 1 January 1943.

declaration. Although the restrictions stifled people's individual freedoms, it was seen as important they do so in order to better relations between their group and the non-Nikkei majority.

In addition to the curfew imposed on all Nikkei residents in Salt Lake City, the Alcohol-Tobacco Law Enforcement Committee of the LDS Stakes of Salt Lake City (ATLEC) submitted a proposal to the City Commission's legal department that would "bar unchaperoned single girls under 18 years from Salt Lake City streets and public places" between midnight and 5 a.m. The ATLEC believed that teenage girls were "confront[ed]" by many dangers between those hours, because of the "great influx of unattached young men into the community, both soldiers and civilians."¹⁸ This proposal covered all young women, whether they were Euro- or Japanese American. While the time restraints of this curfew would have no effect on Nisei girls who were already living under the wartime curfew, the *Utah Nippo* still reported it to their community of readers. In some cases, the government required publication of such general war announcements. In this case it is likely that the *Utah Nippo* printed the story to inform their community about the activities of the Mormon-led ATLEC who opposed alcohol and tobacco use and targeted recent immigrant groups in Salt Lake City who were rarely LDS. It reinforced the general message about proper behavior Nikkei community leaders actively espoused, and served as a reminder of the expectations their LDS Euro-American neighbors held for them.

When the city passed an ordinance implementing the teenage girl curfew in October 1942, the *Utah Nippo* published more information about it. Unless single girls under eighteen years were chaperoned by a parent, guardian, or other adult who had "the care and custody of the girl," young women could not be on the streets or in public places between the aforementioned times. Later clarification revealed it applied to boys and girls under eighteen, and that violation—by minors or their parents—would be a misdemeanor with a maximum sentence of six months in

¹⁸ "Curfew Law for 'Teen Age Girls Urged Upon City," *Utah Nippo*, 21 September 1942.

jail, a \$300 fine, or both.¹⁹ Once again, the newspaper did not provide editorial commentary on the new curfew but wanted the Nikkei community (and especially Nisei teenagers) to understand these larger legal behavioral expectations.

Some Nikkei chose to disobey the curfew orders, and the *Utah Nippo* used them as examples of how misbehavior hurt the entire group. In July 1942, “Many Salt Lake Nisei spent their first night in a jail house.” A state highway patrolman arrested forty-nine Nisei at the Sunset Beach at the Great Salt Lake. They were having a beach party, but were caught at 10:30 p.m., far after curfew permitted. To return home, the partying Nisei would have had to pass the Magna-Garfield zone and the Salt Lake airport, both of which were restricted zones. The Young Peoples’ Christian Association of Salt Lake organized the party and received permission from U.S. Attorney Dan B. Shields to meet at the beach. Shields admitted to have given his permission, but did not take responsibility for the lateness of the hour. The “25 girls were released early Saturday morning while the fellows were detained until the afternoon of the Fourth of July.” Despite having the approval of the US attorney and being organized by a Christian group, the actions of these curfew-breaking, partying Nisei “jailbirds” did not improve the group image.²⁰

Hindering the Group Identity

Nikkei community leaders in Salt Lake City firmly believed appearance would make or break Nikkei futures among Euro-Americans. When several incidents, described in the *Utah Nippo*, undercut Japan Town’s American identity, community members and their leaders insisted that more must be done to be careful in action, demonstrate loyalty, and prepare for a post-war future.

¹⁹ “Salt Lake City Adops [*sic*] Single Girl Curfew Law,” *Utah Nippo*, 9 October 1942 and “Minors of Salt Lake Get Curfew Clamp on Activities: New Law Applies to Both Boys and Girls,” *Utah Nippo*, 14 October 1942.

²⁰ “49 Nisei on Beach Party Arrested for Curfew Violation,” *Utah Nippo*, 8 July 1942.

One observant Nisei soldier wrote to criticize the *Utah Nippo* as not being American-enough because of the many ads in Japanese it printed in the English section. He asked, “Why don’t you get those dog-gone Jap ads out? ... It’s high time we became thoroughly American, and the least you could do is to make at least one page of your paper all-American.” The soldier realized that appearance was everything, and the *Utah Nippo* had not matched its appearance to an American paper. But advertisements in Japanese did not obviate loyalty. The editor replied, “By gosh, this is going to be an all-American paper alright. Better get me more than twenty Nisei customers, though.”²¹ Although some Nisei subscribed to or read other copies of the *Utah Nippo*, most subscriptions were probably in Issei names. Additionally, since the English section only took up the fourth page, that means there were at least three pages of news and advertisements in Japanese. Issei subscribers and consumers kept the paper afloat. Until more Nisei became interested in the *Utah Nippo*, it logistically could not publish only in English. However, it is impossible to know how many Nisei may have read the newspapers belonging to other Issei and Nisei subscribers.

The local JACL sponsored a young men’s basketball league in the Salt Lake area, with teams from Salt Lake, Ogden, Orem, and everywhere in between playing weekly. In January 1944, the league played at Granite High, where “it was discovered that some indiscreet players had smoked and generally messed up the premises with cigarette butts and orange peelings.” Such behavior was completely unacceptable because “the gym does not permit smoking and the privilege of using the gym rests on strict observation of this regulation.” The *Utah Nippo* and the JACL asked fans and players to obey the established rules. Not only would failing to follow the

²¹ A Soldier, “For All-Americanism,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 May 1943.

gym's rules result in loss of its use, but it also gave the league (and, by extension, the residents of Japan Town) a bad name.²²

In December 1944, the *Utah Nippo* sadly reported that “four Nisei gave up their American citizenship the other day in Salt Lake City.” The author did not mention if they were former internees or had spent the war in the free-zone, but they had violated their draft orders and had been arrested. The four explained that they “desire[d] to expatriate and go to Japan.” The author wrote, “It is most unfortunate to read about these young Nisei who may not have seen Japan” before in their lives. If they had been interned, the Nisei were now free, but had nevertheless chosen to forfeit their U.S. citizenship and cast negative light on the larger Nikkei community. But their actions also make clear the frustration and resentment some free-zone or resettled Nikkei felt toward their treatment during the war.²³ The *Utah Nippo* also reported that several Issei also planned to repatriate to their homeland after the war ended, but warned that “they will most likely be disillusioned” by what they find in Japan after being gone for so many years. Although the situation of Issei repatriates was sad, the “greatest tragedy” was exemplified by the four young men who were the visible representation of a larger problem—“the large number of Nisei who are desiring to expatriate” at war’s end.²⁴

In March 1945, the *Utah Nippo* editor wrote two articles describing Nikkei who were not planning well for their future—actions which hurt group image by extension. First, “We have heard young men complain that their pay of \$35 to \$40 a week is not sufficient.” These young men who, despite high wages, could not make ends meet were the ones who took girlfriends “to night clubs to show off and has to pay high cover charges.” These young men could act more responsibly, and learn from those young men who were “living together and cooking their

²² “Please!,” *Utah Nippo*, 10 January 1944.

²³ “An American Tragedy,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 December 1944.

²⁴ “Repatriates and Expatriates,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 March 1945.

meals,” which proved “to be the economical way of living, saving about 25 to 50 per cent in food bills.” Coinciding with this, another article stated that many Nikkei were “too busy with their own problems of making a living. Consequently they are prone to become too self-centered in self-pity as well as in their outlook regarding their fellow mankind.” Self-centered Nikkei complained about their budgets, and their behavior did not help anyone. In December 1945, the editor pitied the young Nisei who began working during wartime, because “they will not ... have a true sense of money values. The dollars came so easily and went away so fast that they will not appreciate nor realize the fact that money is difficult to save.” The people who patriotically invested in war bonds did not need to worry about the future and the state of their savings accounts, but the young Nisei men discussed above were unfortunate because they had nothing saved.²⁵ Clearly, the *Utah Nippo* wanted people to be fiscally responsible, so they could focus on larger issues plaguing the community and the rest of humankind.

Appearance was everything in the Nikkei community during the war. Too many Japanese-language advertisements, disobeying rules, giving up citizenship, and carefree spending were all highlighted as negative appearances and behaviors by the *Utah Nippo*, and all had negative consequences for the community.

Chapter Conclusions

The *Utah Nippo* editors firmly believed that rowdy and noticeable behavior was detrimental to the group because of the negative attention it attracted from Euro-American observers. Because Nikkei leaders and *Utah Nippo* editors viewed Utah’s racial temperature as moderate but delicate, it was necessary that newcomers as well as old Nikkei residents think about the affect of their individual choices on the entire community, demonstrate their loyalty,

²⁵ “Is Living Cost Prohibitive?,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 March 1945; “Peace Plans,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 March 1945; and “Saving for the Future,” *Utah Nippo*, 10 December 1945.

and behave in the pro-American ways the paper endorsed in order to preserve their place in Utah. However, not everyone did this. Some stayed out past curfew, spent too much money, enjoyed themselves too much, or made a spectacle of themselves instead of soberly sacrificing for the war. Others actively opposed the war and even renounced their citizenship—all actions that potentially hurt the image of Nikkei in the eyes of other Americans. The *Utah Nippo* included such reports to demonstrate disapproval of wild behavior and to draw a line between those who lived quiet, and supposedly more American, lives and those who did not, who were presumably less American.

CHAPTER 4

BEHAVING THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE WAY

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and its efforts to prove the loyalty of the entire racial group in the United States heavily influenced the *Utah Nippo*'s editorial messages about wartime behavior. Issei community leaders on the West Coast (and some in Salt Lake City) found themselves imprisoned after Pearl Harbor—leaving Nikkei communities without leadership. The JACL eagerly stepped into that position. Paul R. Spickard argues that young Nisei leaders became community leaders because of this need, their own middle-class aspirations, an honest desire to protect Nikkei from Euro-American racism, and generational conflict with Issei leadership.¹

Following the West Coast evacuation in 1942, the JACL relocated its headquarters from San Francisco to Salt Lake City, where it stayed until 1953, and where the League hoped to influence the city's population and grow its membership. Leaders believed Salt Lake City to “be the most advantageous and appropriate place from which the JACL work [could] be carried on.”² Although the *Pacific Citizen* (the JACL's national newsletter) also relocated to Salt Lake City,

¹ Paul R. Spickard, “The Nisei Assume Power: The Japanese Citizens League, 1941–1942,” *Pacific Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (May 1983): 148. For more about Utah's Issei leadership being imprisoned after Pearl Harbor, see Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai, “Japanese Life in Utah,” in *The Peoples of Utah*, ed. Helen Z. Papanikolas (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1976), 355; “Utah Arrests 4 Japanese,” *Pocatello (ID) Tribune*, 8 December 1941; and Alice Kasai, “Years of Infamy – As Experienced by Alice Kasai from the day of Pearl Harbor in Salt Lake City, Utah,” no date, p. 1, folder 5, box 106, Alice Kasai Papers, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter AKP).

² “Tentative Plans Made for Nat'l JACL Headquarters in Salt Lake: Assessment to Be Made of All I.D.C. Chapters,” *Utah Nippo*, 25 March 1945. See also David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924–49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 129.

the *Utah Nippo* remained the medium for the Salt Lake chapter to make announcements and for the national organization to reach a more diverse audience beyond *Pacific Citizen* subscribers.

During the war, National and Salt Lake JACL chapters informed Nikkei about problems they faced and highlighted participant loyalty. Regional and national conventions regularly addressed these problems and what Nikkei could do to resolve them. The local chapter provided services such as employment relief and improving their neighbors' perceptions of Nikkei. Although it freely gave services, the JACL asked for monetary contributions and annual membership dues to underwrite the costs of its work. In its activities, conventions, services, and membership drives, the JACL claimed that it served the local community and Nikkei at large, and that its patriotic work ensured Japanese American loyalty. As with any organization, criticisms leveled against the JACL were concerning, and the *Utah Nippo* gave space and consideration to these critiques. However, the League's response was that such criticism hindered the effort to prove Nikkei as loyal Americans. All in all, the JACL was an important presence (although debatably helpful or detrimental) in Japan Town, Salt Lake City, during the war. Its story in Salt Lake City is the story of the organization at that time.

The Japanese American Citizens League in Salt Lake City

Young adult Nisei founded the Japanese American Citizens League in California in 1930 to help Japanese Americans move into American society and improve themselves. The early leaders were older Nisei who worked as educated professionals and were therefore more in tune with and accepted by whites.³ The first Utah chapter was founded in Salt Lake City in 1935. Saige Aramaki joined the chapter in 1938 or 1939, paying dues of 50 cents per year. Aramaki

³ Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles, 1934–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 29–33.

believed the JACL did little and had “no known purpose” at that time, because they “were just starting out.” Aramaki never was deeply involved with the chapter; like many at that time he “just paid the dues and that was it.” Both National and local JACL at that time were “just a fledging young organization,” remembered Shake Ushio, that “tried to negotiate with the government to make it [internment and wartime] as easy as possible ... they reassured the people that if they cooperate, why, we could probably come out better.”⁴ Membership grew in Salt Lake City throughout the war until April 1944 when the Salt Lake chapter split into the Salt Lake City and Murray chapters.⁵

Before the war began, the League focused on integrating Nikkei into American society. The JACL’s National Board clarified their policy and mailed it to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, including a definition of “JACL” which the *Utah Nippo* published in October 1941. “‘J’ stands for Justice ... ‘A’ stands for Americanism ... ‘C’ stands for Citizenship ... ‘L’ stands for Leadership.” The newspaper published this alongside the “Japanese American Creed,” written by Mike Masaoka:

I am proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritages; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. ... Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not the representative of the majority of the American people. ... I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places; to support her constitution; to obey her laws; to respect her flag; to defend her against all enemies foreign or domestic; to actively assume my duties and obligations as a

⁴ Saige Aramaki, interview, 6/28/84, s2:30, folder 1, box 1, Interviews with Japanese in Utah, 1980–1989, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter IJU) and Shake Ushio, interview, 3/14/1984, s1:4, folder 5, box 4, IJU.

⁵ See “Intermountain District JACL Council Confab Held on April 16th,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 April 1944.

citizen, cheerfully and without any reservations what-soever [*sic*] in the hope that I may become a better American in the great America.⁶

The goals given here were the policy of the National JACL in October, two months before the attack at Pearl Harbor. Nisei leaders desired acceptance as “Americans” even before the nation questioned their group loyalty. The article also showed Masaoka’s imagined achievement of the American dream, something most Nikkei did not live. Masaoka, the League’s National Secretary and Field Executive, worked closely with the JACL President, Saburo Kido. Together, they implemented an “aggressive program” to improve mainstream perception of Nikkei, according to historian Paul R. Spickard.⁷ The “Japanese American Creed,” the League’s defined pro-American position, and the JACL messages published in the *Utah Nippo* reflected Kido and Masaoka’s leadership in advertising a specific brand of Nikkei.

Since the JACL billed itself as the spokesperson for all Nikkei, it made certain that Nikkei newspapers, like the *Utah Nippo*, reflected its ideas about wartime behavior. Dr. Joseph Sasaki wrote a letter reaffirming the above message, the JACL’s mantra for the duration:

We are fully determined to face this crisis as any other loyal Americans. We are also determined to firmly keep our courage and faith in our government. We are willing to sacrifice our homes, our lives if we must, to defend our democratic principles, our flag, our nation—our home sweet home; in order that in the end there will be a new birth of freedom for all people in our nation regardless of race, creed, or color.⁸

⁶ “A Declaration of Policy by the Japanese American Citizens League,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 October 1941. Creed also in Mike M. Masaoka, “The Japanese American Creed,” scrapbook (1940s), folder 4, box 114, AKP.

⁷ T. Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 189 and Spickard, “Nisei Assume Power,” 154.

⁸ Dr. Joseph D. Sasaki to The Governor of the State of Utah, 18 March 1942, item 68, folder 6, box 146, series XII, Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

Most articles in the *Utah Nippo* reaffirmed the JACL was a loyal organization and its members as committed Americans and good Utah residents. The newspaper covered local JACL meetings and speakers, regional and national conventions, JACL responsibilities and services to the Japanese American community, and what the community in turn needed to do for the JACL.

Meetings and Speakers

The Salt Lake City JACL chapter held meetings at the Japanese Church of Christ, the Buddhist Temple, or at the *Salt Lake Tribune/Telegram* auditorium. Shake Ushio remembered that the two churches were the most convenient for the Japanese community because of their central location in Japan Town. An editorial in the *Utah Nippo* in July 1945 noted “a definite need for some community center which may be used by the various groups” as the other places had become spatially inadequate. The editor suggested the chapter purchase a building and patriotically stated, “A building of this nature can be converted into a Nisei USO” and become “the center for gathering information on all Nisei soldiers, the GI Bill of Rights and other helpful matters for the returning servicemen.”⁹ The necessity of a Japanese American community center reveals that the both the JACL and the city’s Nikkei population had grown and the idea of employing such a facility as an information center for servicemen gave it a patriotic purpose and showed community fealty. However during this period, such a community center was never built.

The League advertised meetings and the speakers in the *Utah Nippo* to attract young Nisei concerned about the future and their place in it. David K. Yoo observes that the existence of ethnic activities, even if the topic was not about racism, signaled racism’s existence.¹⁰ JACL meetings were commonly about patriotism overcoming racism and the League’s work to end

⁹ Ushio, s2: 28, 6/21/84 and “A Community Center,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 July 1945.

¹⁰ Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 74.

racism. Although not all Nikkei attended meetings or were interested in these topics, the repeated themes of local community identity and American patriotism reinforced a specific characterization of the Salt Lake Japanese group—one which the JACL wanted to cultivate.

Despite the fear and chaos following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Salt Lake JACL chapter held its Sunday, 7 December 1941 meeting. Many Nikkei, reporters, and other worried Salt Lake residents were in attendance. At that meeting, the chapter leaders issued a formal statement:

At this time the American citizens of Japanese ancestry in Utah wish to reaffirm our loyalty to the United States of America. We condemn wholeheartedly Japan's unprovoked attack on the United States and place ourselves, without any reservation whatsoever, to the defense of America. We make this plea to our fellow American: Understand our position with the typical American sense of fair play. America's fight is our fight. Give us a chance to take our place with you in defending America against Japanese aggression.¹¹

This statement dedicated the community to the United States immediately after the event that racially implicated so many. They appealed to nonspecific phrases like “fair play” and would later do so with “democracy” to inspire readers. Pledging the support of all local Nikkei would, hopefully, eliminate suspicion. Like the National JACL and the national government, Utah's government saw the Salt Lake League as the representative organization for all Japanese in Utah. Although there was no way the organization could truly represent the varied opinions in Japan Town, they tried to present a united front in proclaiming group loyalty to the United States, to Utahns, and to the war effort.

The announcement of Topaz internment camp in Utah in 1942 had an immediate effect on the Salt Lake Nikkei community. Free-zone Nikkei feared the detrimental repercussions internment might have on their community. An October 1942 JACL meeting featured Dr. Carl T. Hirota (a Berkeley dentist who was imprisoned at Topaz, but quickly resettled in Salt Lake City),

¹¹ “Salt Lake CL Renews Pledge to U.S.,” *Utah Nippo*, 10 December 1941.

who offered “an enlightening report” about Topaz and “stressed the importance of maintaining good public relations by the Japanese ‘freezoners.’”¹² Hirota’s description of Nikkei living outside the camps as public relations specialists by necessity, reminded them (and their white Utah neighbors) that Nikkei words and actions rippled across the nation. Hirota called on a shared sense of ethnicity to encourage Salt Lake Nikkei to conduct themselves positively.

In November 1942, Dillon S. Myer came to Salt Lake City to speak at a JACL convention. Although the public was not invited to most convention meetings, JACL leaders “especially urged” local Nisei to attend Myer’s speech.¹³ They wanted to show skeptical white observers that they understood internment as protecting the nation from potentially dangerous foreign nationals, not as an attack of racial animosity against loyal Japanese Americans. Loyal local Nisei would learn more about internment from the head of the WRA himself and represent their ethnic group in a positive light.

At the December 1942 JACL meeting, Dr. Arthur L. Beeley, dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Utah, “likened the Japanese American minority problem in this country to any other minority group problem found in the various walks of life.” While that “minority problem” was never clearly defined in the *Utah Nippo*, Beeley and others believed that one existed, and that if the Nikkei recognized the problem they would be able to solve it themselves. Beeley also encouraged Nisei to “set a long-time goal and to constantly strive for its fulfillment.” These vague objectives revolved around improving oneself and thereby demonstrating ever greater conformity to white America. In closing, Beeley recommended that

¹² “Hirota Talks on Relocation,” *Utah Nippo*, 28 October 1942. Information about Carl T. Hirota from his wife’s obituary. See “Hirota, Uta,” Obituary, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 January 2010, *SF Gate*, accessed 20 January 2012, http://articles.sfgate.com/2010-01-10/news/17823397_1_uta-van-ness-avenue-2nd-landscapes.

¹³ “Public Invited To Hear Dillon Myers,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 November 1942.

Nisei “capitalize on their thoughtfulness for which they are known, and further good will and friendship among all good Americans.” Beeley’s comments are an early characterization of Nikkei as the “model minority” in the United States—they were kind and maybe even passive, and encouraged the best in everyone. At this time in Japanese American history, such an image was precisely what JACL, community leaders and many others desired.¹⁴

An “entertaining as well as informative and educational” evening in March 1943 featured Dr. Elmer Smith, from the University of Utah’s Anthropology Department.¹⁵ Smith, a common speaker at JACL meetings, was very involved in the Japanese community (both free and interned), and (according to Alice Kasai) was “endeared to us [Salt Lake JACL] as ‘Elmermoto.’”¹⁶ Smith’s speech offered “a few pointers” about eradicating prejudice through Nisei example, by “prov[ing] through your daily conduct in daily dealings with others that you are very unlike the cartoonist’s conception of all orientals” and “not conspicuously crowd[ing] into any one given area in the public eye.”¹⁷ This specific instruction would combat contemporary popular imagery of Japanese as menacing, swarming “Japs”—if they counteracted those images by blending in, they would reassure nervous whites and prove Nikkei devotion to the U.S.

¹⁴ “Set A Long-Time Goal, Dr. Beeley Advises Japanese Americans,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 December 1942. The stereotype of the model minority is complicated. There are many contemporary criticisms of it, such as that it ignores racism and contributes to prejudice against high-achieving Asian Americans. See George T. Endo and Connie Kubo Della-Piana, “Japanese Americans, Pluralism, and the Model Minority Myth,” *Theory into Practice* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 45–51; Nazli Kibria, *Becoming Asian American: Second Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Ellen Dionne Wu, “Race and Asian American Citizenship from World War II to the Movement” (PhD Diss., The University of Chicago, 2006).

¹⁵ “Program Lined Up For S. L. JACL February Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 15 February 1943.

¹⁶ Kasai, “Years of Infamy,” p. 4, AKP.

¹⁷ “Prof. Smith: ‘We Hope And Believe For A Future,’” *Utah Nippo*, 24 February 1943.

In April 1944, Dr. J. R. Cope, a public speaker focusing on minorities, spoke on “Some of the Deeper Implications of Racial Conflicts” at the monthly meeting.¹⁸ Although the *Utah Nippo* did not provide a report on the details of his lecture, Cope’s title infers his message, one with deeper implications for people experiencing limited opportunities in a racially divided nation. Nisei could challenge racism, improve their situation, and generate national unity by learning about these problems for both discriminated and discriminator.

Dan B. Shields, U.S. District Attorney for Utah from 1933 to 1948, spoke in February 1945 about “Citizenship,” in a meeting that also featured a variety show.¹⁹ The inclusion of the variety show may have been a strategy to attract a Nisei audience less concerned with how to proceed as citizens. Advertisements for JACL meetings regularly announced the speaker and the topic, as well as the entertainment for the evening, whether it was music, a film, or refreshments. The League also sponsored dances to attract high school-aged members. The *Utah Nippo* did not explain whether Shields’s speech was about how to become a citizen (for Issei who had not been permitted to naturalize) or about the civic duties of citizens (for citizen Nisei), but because of language limitations it was most likely Nisei. Shield’s talk regarding citizenship corresponded with the end of the evacuation order in 1945 and the movement of many Nikkei back to their homes on the West Coast. A talk about citizenship reminded those returning, as well as those staying in the interior, to continue demonstrating their loyalty and fulfilling their civic duties as American citizens.

¹⁸ “JACL Meeting: April 22, 7:45 P.M.,” *Utah Nippo*, 17 April 1944.

¹⁹ “S. L. JACL Features Variety Show At Next Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 14 February 1945. For more information about Shields, see “Dan B. Shields (1933–1948),” *U.S. Attorney’s for the District of Utah*, The United States Attorney’s Office: District of Utah, accessed 11 February 2012, <http://www.justice.gov/usao/ut/history.html>.

Nisei who attended the March 1945 meeting heard from Staff Sergeant Hiroshi Tanabe, who had recently returned from action in the Pacific Theater and “one of the first enlisted Nisei in Salt Lake City.”²⁰ His presence at the JACL meeting was meant to inspire members of the Japanese community to donate to war bond drives and to support American troops, but also highlighted a patriotic Nisei hero that the larger Salt Lake City community could recognize and appreciate. Nisei soldiers were big news in the *Utah Nippo*, and battalions composed of Nisei soldiers received substantial publicity throughout the war.²¹

Later that year in October, the League invited “Caucasian and Nisei friends” to hear Lieutenant Roger W. Smith speak. He was “closely connected with the Nisei soldiers in Europe and Pacific,” serving with them in the 442nd Battalion.²² The war in Europe and Japan was over by the time Smith spoke and, like Tanabe, Smith focused on the Nisei soldiers and their martial contributions. His speech reinforced the appreciation that white soldiers and officers had for their Nisei counterparts and, by extension, for the homefront Nisei communities.

1945’s April JACL meeting featured the newly-elected Mayor of Salt Lake City, Earl J. Glade, speaking on “Builders of Utah,” followed by a discussion period.²³ Just over one hundred people attended as Glade declared “that the way we learn to make, care, and appreciate things; the

²⁰ “Attend the Salt Lake JACL Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 March 1945.

²¹ Many histories of the 442nd Battalion are quite celebratory, but still give valuable information on the 442nd Battalion. See, for example, Lyn Crost, *Honor by Fire: Japanese Americans at War in Europe and the Pacific* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1997); C. Douglas Sterner, *Go For Broke: The Nisei Warriors of World War II Who Conquered Germany, Japan, and American Bigotry* (Clearfield, UT: American Legacy Historical Press, 2008); and Masayo Duus, *Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and 442nd* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

²² “Meeting: Salt Lake JACL,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 October 1945.

²³ “J.A.C.L. Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 April 1945 and “J.A.C.L. Meeting—Public Invited,” *Utah Nippo*, 23 April 1945.

way we grasp and evaluate ideas; and the way we deal with persons and with one's self spirituality, mentally, and physically, indicate the QUALITY OF THE AMERICANISM of every citizen." Glade encouraged his constituents to be industrious and to "utilize more fully" the potential of the resources, labor, and "ingenuity" in the state. Nikkei had economically contributed to Utah throughout the war, and should continue doing so.²⁴ Encouraging Salt Lake residents, especially Nikkei, to be industrious reflected Glade's LDS upbringing and the church's emphasis on work; it mirrored the state slogan ("Industry"), the state symbol (the Beehive), and the national wartime industrial imperative; but it also articulated national attitudes about Nikkei contributing to the war effort as one way of proving their patriotism. Mayor Glade honed in on contemporary concerns of Japanese American residents, particularly on their American-ness. His statements that American loyalty could be measured by Nikkei's thoughts and actions were extremely vague, but certainly reassured those in the JACL who had encouraged the Salt Lake Nikkei community along those lines throughout the war.

In May 1945, the *Utah Nippo* reported "a revival of interest in the JACL activities" nationwide, supposedly indicating a "return" to "normal thinking" among Nikkei. This revival was indicated by successful financial drives, a doubling of membership, high attendance at meetings, and less criticism of the JACL from within the Nikkei community (at least as reported in the *Utah Nippo*).²⁵ The Allied victory in Europe early in May, the confidence that the U.S. would be victorious over Japan shortly, the closing of camps, and the widespread resettlement of interred Nikkei inspired internees. All of this signaled to acculturated Nikkei that they were no longer suspect. JACL activities became more practical, with a less ardent and obviously patriotic bent. A meeting in May 1945 featured Dr. Lynn M. Bennion, the LDS director of education,

²⁴ "Mayor Glade Speaks to the JACL," *Utah Nippo*, 2 May 1945 (capitalization in original).

²⁵ "Revival of Interest," *Utah Nippo*, 4 May 1945.

giving a talk “Social Ideals and Postwar Democracy,” about creating a positive U.S. democracy as civilians and military personnel returned to peacetime life. Ending racism and promoting Americanism were not the major focus of his talk, but he spoke of both as qualities that built strong democracies. A JACL activity later in the month featured comic Will D. Rogers performing a comedy show, Dr. Walter Cottam presenting “color slides” of Utah wild flowers, and Mrs. Florence Lillian Dahl speaking on “There is no superior or inferior race.”²⁶ The speech about race relations reassured Nisei that the racism witnessed during the war was not to be the postwar social norm, but the real point of the meeting was, of course, Will Rogers’s comedy. From here on, JACL meetings reflected the normalization of ethnic community life (if not race relations) as the war and fear of Japanese infiltrators dissipated.

In early 1946, Judge Herbert Schiller (Utah War Fund chairman, law professor at the University of Utah, and chairman of the Council for Civic Unity) spoke at the JACL meeting. He “challenge[d] every thinking nisei to attend” the meeting where he and the audience would discuss the “JACL’s place in [the] community.”²⁷ Schiller’s challenge to “thinking” Nisei to come to discuss how the organization worked with the city and not just Japan Town was attractive for those already involved. It also signaled that Salt Lake Nikkei had proved themselves to white Salt Lakers—that they were recognized as contributing members of society, “thinking” and civically involved, and acculturated ethnic Americans.

These examples of local chapter activities during World War II indicate some strategies pursued by the Salt Lake JACL. The speakers they selected and the topics presented contributed to informing Nikkei and Euro-Americans about positive behaviors and the patriotic bent of the Nikkei community. The American interests and cultural developments they demonstrated had

²⁶ “J.A.C.L. Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 21 May 1945.

²⁷ “Salt Lake JACL February Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 13 February 1946.

been painstakingly calculated to demonstrate that these were good and patriotic citizens who happened to be ethnically Japanese. Each meeting and speaker reflected the League's larger loyalty campaign.

Regional and National Conventions

Like many contemporary organizations, the JACL held national and regional conventions. The themes and topics of wartime conventions were similar to those of monthly meetings in Salt Lake and other cities, but more publicized and with larger, more concentrated series of talks on topics of interest to the JACL. Since the League sought to involve Nikkei in alleviating issues that plagued the ethnic group (specifically internment and racism), the conventions focused on those and related topics, helping create a group identity of ethnic American loyalty.

The JACL Intermountain District convened in Pocatello, Idaho, November 1941—right before the outbreak of war with Japan. Two of the discussions were titled “What We Americans Can Do In This Crisis” and “Discussion on Nisei Problems in the Present Crisis.”²⁸ The crisis was increased Japanese aggression in the Pacific and its consequences for U.S. Nikkei. JACL members' current problems “[were] two-fold under the circumstance” and attending the convention was “an ideal occasion to prove to the other American[s] that the Nisei [are] one of them and holds the same regards toward the same American principles.”²⁹ No need to read between the lines here. By attending the 1941 convention, Nisei evidenced their American identification. Proving their American-ness—beyond simply listening to pro-U.S. talks and participating in discussions about improving the racial situation—was another matter.

²⁸ “Pocatello Stages Second Intermountain District Council Convention: Confab Scheduled for Nov. 21, 22,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 November 1941.

²⁹ “Going to the Convention?,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 November 1941.

After the Pocatello convention, the *Utah Nippo* summarized some of the speeches. Richard H. Wells explained that Euro-Americans could come to the “truth” about Nikkei only by “searching for and facing the real facts of where American citizens of Japanese [origin] stand.” Wells put the responsibility for learning about Nisei on Euro-Americans, but also assumed that anyone who got to know them would see that Nisei were sufficiently Americanized and not “foreigners.” Another speaker, Fred Tayama, “acquainted the intermountain people with the various problems which are peculiar only to Southern California Niseis and what is being done to solve them.” The racism California Nikkei faced was different from that in Utah, Idaho, or Colorado; part of the challenge was the population density and resulting lack of intercultural interaction between Euro- and Japanese Americans. Almost foreshadowing the coming months’ events, Tayama’s speech unknowingly described the future challenges Intermountain Nikkei would experience when West Coasters were removed and incarcerated in Intermountain states. Finally, the keynote speaker, Mike Masaoka, “tried to make the Niseis realize the vital necessity for cooperation and unity among all members.” To Masaoka, it was essential that Nisei throughout the United States work together to prove their American traits were stronger than their Japanese traits.³⁰ In printing the summaries of the main speeches, the *Utah Nippo* extended the calls to action from the convention to the Utah Nisei not in attendance. The existence of these concerns before Pearl Harbor shows the JACL’s wartime policies were a continuation of those in the preceding years.

After December 1941, plans for large assemblies of Nikkei had to be re-evaluated. In March 1942, the JACL announced its National convention, tentatively scheduled for April 3–5 in Oakland, California. The announcement clearly explained that there would be no entertainment in the program, only speeches and business, and that each of the sixty chapters should send only two

³⁰ “Convention Highlights,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 November 1941.

delegates.³¹ The *Utah Nippo* carried no further information about the Oakland meeting where discussions were largely about evacuation and JACL leaders held private meetings with government officials.

Although silent on the national meeting, the paper reported on an emergency meeting of the Intermountain District in March 1942 to discuss the “ever-increasing filtration [*sic*] of Japanese from the coast to the intermountain region.” With the evacuation order’s approaching deadline, many Utah Nikkei (and white Utahns) felt uneasy about the ramifications of a wholesale influx of coastal Nikkei. Utah Nikkei worried about the consequences for their small communities. Would they, too, be forced to leave their homes and live in prison camps? The Intermountain JACL decided that West Coast Nikkei “should be strongly advised not to come” unless they contacted a current resident and were “assured of a place to stay.”³²

Another national meeting—considered a Special Emergency Conference—met in Salt Lake City in November. Delegates from JACL chapters “discuss[ed] the various phases of the resettlement problem” facing evacuated Nikkei.³³ At the conference, Dillon S. Myer, whom Maurea Ushio regarded as “one of the most prominent national leaders of our time” because of his position of control over the “future welfare” of all U.S. Nikkei, would speak. Ushio stated, “The very fact that Mr. Myer, busy though he is, has decided to meet with the JACL leaders ... verifies the stand of this national nisei organization.”³⁴ Her statement reveals League leaders’ preoccupation with validating their standing among Nikkei and white citizens of the country. Having someone with such influence on Nikkei meet with representative leaders showed that

³¹ “National Convention Scheduled for April,” *Utah Nippo*, 4 March 1942.

³² “Urgent Problems Prompt IDC Meeting,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 March 1942.

³³ “Special Meeting of JACL Leaders To Be Held In Salt Lake City,” *Utah Nippo*, 4 November 1942.

³⁴ Maurea Ushio, “Dillon S. Myer Scheduled To Speak at S. L. JACL Meet,” *Utah Nippo*, 10 November 1942.

Myer planned to work with Nikkei in the resettlement process. Less nobly, it was an opportunity to brownnose an important leader.

Over forty JACL “bigwigs” arrived in Salt Lake City for the November convention from camps and free-zone communities.³⁵ JACL leaders in the internment centers were “officially on furlough” so they could attend; the others attending included three delegates from active chapters outside the evacuation zones, national officers, and invited guests. At the meeting, most of the business conducted was private, except for Myer’s public speech on Sunday. The main business was relocation, resettlement, and “to study all problems of U.S. Japanese.”³⁶ Myer’s address was to be “an enlightening speech on the variously phases of the relocation problem.” Though local Nikkei were not directly touched by resettlement, Marea Ushio “especially urged” residents to attend Myer’s speech because of their role as ethnic representatives.³⁷

Shake Ushio, a JACL leader in Salt Lake City, remembered the discussions at the November 1942 conference. “We talked about all kinds of things. Conditions in the camp and what needs to be done. And what can we do as JACL to alleviate some of the suffering and some of the uncertainties. And just generally to help the people.” Because the JACL was unpopular among many Nikkei at the time, as a result of their acquiescence and failure to speak out against internment, the leaders focused on rebuilding the JACL’s image as a positive and proactive organization dedicated to representing the Nikkei community within the broader American society.³⁸ Delegates passed a resolution to reinstate the selective service for Nisei and sent it to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and U.S. military leaders. WRA and JACL leaders explained the

³⁵ “Over 40 Delegates To Convene In Salt Lake For JACL Conference Tuesday,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 November 1942.

³⁶ “JACL Officials in Conference With WRA Leaders To Formulate National Policy on Relocation,” *Utah Nippo*, 18 November 1942.

³⁷ “Public Invited To Hear Dillon Myers,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 November 1942.

³⁸ Ushio, 3/14/1984, s1:9, IJU.

resettlement policy to free-zone Nikkei: Evacuees would permanently resettle in “small, inconspicuous groups” all over the U.S., a “great step towards the integrating American Japanese in the American way of life.”³⁹ Additionally, Myer “laud[ed]” a “spirit of cooperation” between Nikkei and government in the resettlement process, saying that in not exceeding the “saturation point” of a given area, Euro-Americans and Japanese Americans would exist peacefully together.⁴⁰ The conference, decisions, and announcements made regarding Nikkei resettlement demonstrated the JACL goal to appear appropriately American. Resettling as per the WRA plan allowed Nikkei to integrate and maintain racial peace. Reinstating the draft signaled they were a safe ethnic group from which to draw soldiers and reinforced the entire group’s American-ness.

In 1943, during the depths of the war, the JACL held no national conference, but did schedule one for December 1944.⁴¹ The December 1944 conference’s sessions covered “problems affecting Americans of Japanese ancestry” in the United States. The *Utah Nippo* reported that the “main attraction” of the conference were the representatives of the civil rights groups that “have been active in fighting for the restoration of the rights to the Nisei, particularly in connection with the right to return to the Pacific Coast.” The meeting also addressed the League’s budget and fundraising for several projects including public relations, speakers, pamphlets, publicity, campaigns to end discrimination, encouraging education, and working for democratic treatment of all loyal people of Japanese descent.⁴² A major topic at the convention, prominent in the pages

³⁹ “JACL Delegates Pass Vote on Return of Nisei Draft Status,” *Utah Nippo*, 23 November 1942.

⁴⁰ “U.S. Japanese At Crossroads—For Better Or For Worse,” *Utah Nippo*, 25 November 1942.

⁴¹ See “JACL Convention Set For S. L.,” *Utah Nippo*, 22 September 1944.

⁴² “Featured Speakers Of JACL Conference,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 December 1944 and “JACL Conference To Discuss Japanese American Problems,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 December 1944. For more information on Euro-American groups that supported Nikkei during internment, see Stephanie Bangarth, *Voices Raised in Protest: Defending North American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry, 1942–1949* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

of the *Utah Nippo* in its 1944 and 1945 issues, was promoting tolerance. Ruth Kingman, of the Committee for American Principles of Fair Play, said the intolerant were “only a small minority attempting to corrupt a vast body of good will.” Adding to the speeches, the League passed a resolution supporting the national government and war effort, and demanding equal rights for Nisei in the armed forces and in employment. They “saluted” Nikkei who supported the war effort and the Nisei soldiers in Europe. At the final dinner of the conference, those in attendance pledged to “dedicate ourselves and our communities to building up democratic good government of a kind which our returning soldiers will be proud to have fought for.”⁴³ It is clear from the conference’s tone that the League wanted to be an organization of civil equality—not just a mouthpiece for the Japanese community. They were interested in working with other civil rights groups to end racism.

Held in Denver, the National JACL Convention of 1946 was a crossroads event. Although the *Utah Nippo* English section editors expected attendance to be lower than pre-war because of population dispersal, they considered the consequences to be far-reaching. “The delegates will be making important decisions which will affect every Japanese home in America,” claimed the *Utah Nippo*’s opinion column. The JACL, having passed through the war with “flying colors,” would now develop postwar goals. Asserting that its “leadership has saved the position of all persons of Japanese ancestry in this country,” the editorial countered criticisms against the JACL and argued that in order to move forward minority groups needed a representative organization that could speak to Congress and other government agencies. And since that was necessary, argued the editorial, “The JACL is the only organization which can work on a national basis.” This was true—not because the League was capable while other organizations were not—but because it had gained tremendous power during the war, whereas

⁴³ “Leaders Condemn Promoters Of Racial Intolerance,” *Utah Nippo*, 6 December 1944.

Issei groups had lost influence. Finally, the editorial stated, “the role the JACL will have to play in behalf of the Japanese people in America becomes of the greatest importance,” indicating that *Utah Nippo* editors foresaw greater JACL influence going forward.⁴⁴

Following the convention, the *Utah Nippo* published “highlights.” The conference theme, “That They Shall Not Have Sacrificed in Vain,” referenced servicemen in the war, but also alluded to the patriotism of Nikkei relocates who had suffered without protest. The General Public Meeting was dedicated to Nisei servicemen and featured Al Wirin (of the American Civil Liberties Union, a wartime ally to Nikkei civil rights) and Sergeants Ben Kuroki and George Inagaki, “newly returned overseas veterans with long combat service in the European and Pacific theaters” as the speakers. The *Utah Nippo* listed the Farewell Ball, the convention’s “grand finale” with “an overflow crowd,” creating a “truly gala evening,” as a highlight, one made possible by the end of the war.⁴⁵

President Harry S Truman “sent special greetings to the delegates” at the meeting. The JACL convention, wrote Truman, gave him “a welcome opportunity to pay tribute to American citizens of Japanese extraction who served the United States so valiantly in World War II and whose high patriotism this event is commemorating.”⁴⁶ Truman’s message smoothly reinforced the JACL’s theme and recognized its efforts to prove group loyalty to the United States during the war. Being recognized by the nation’s president signaled JACL success in its goal of gaining the trust of the nation by orchestrating Nikkei Americanism. The convention’s theme communicated Nisei leaders’ postwar concerns—that the entire ethnic group would continue to prove its worthiness for American citizenship. They had survived the war and, although some Nikkei

⁴⁴ “All Eyes On JACL Convention,” *Utah Nippo*, 25 January 1946. See also Spickard, “Nisei Assume Power.”

⁴⁵ “Highlights of the National JACL Convention,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 March 1946.

⁴⁶ “Pres. Truman Sends Special Greetings to Nisei Convention,” *Utah Nippo*, 18 February 1946.

denounced their citizenship or protested their internment in other ways, the high publicity of the 442nd combat battalion, the willingness of interned Nikkei to resettle throughout the United States, and the overall proven loyalty of Nikkei had demonstrated their commitment to be Americans. Social acculturation was their next goal.⁴⁷

These national and regional JACL conventions held over the course of the war focused on a variety of topics, each of which was pertinent at the time. The 1941 Intermountain District meeting centered around avoiding the “problems” that Nikkei faced by acting like mainstream Americans to prove their dedication to the country. The 1942 Intermountain District met to discuss the evacuation and to discourage West Coasters from saturating the Intermountain states’ Japanese communities, thereby avoiding problems “by association” for those interior groups. During the 1942 National Convention, the main subjects included topics of internment camps, the WRA’s resettlement policies, dispersing Nikkei throughout the country, and loyalty. In 1944, the convention focused less on evacuation and more on eradicating racism in the U.S. The national 1946 convention emphasized the importance of the JACL during the war and into the postwar years, highlighting Nikkei as acceptable and loyal Americans. In observing the themes of the conventions, we see the larger issues for and strategies of the JACL leadership. The combined conference subjects centered around “problems” that the entire group faced, such as suspected disloyalty, the threat and reality of imprisonment, and racism of varying degrees. In discussing these problems and encouraging members and other Nikkei to conform to a certain image, a

⁴⁷ See Chrissy Lau, “Award Winning Youth: Japanese Americans, Education, and Cold War Politics,” paper presented at the Western History Association conference, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, 2010 for information about postwar acculturation as seen in newspaper articles. For more about those who did *not* prove their American-ness, see Lon Kurashige, “Resistance, Collaboration, and Manzanar Protest,” *Pacific Historical Review* 70, no. 3 (August 2001): 387–417.

conception of loyalty and Americanism emerged and grew through the efforts of JACL leadership.

Criticisms and Critics

No matter how much the Japanese American Citizens League believed it represented all Nikkei in the United States, there were always critics who disagreed with its strategies and made their voices known. Many people complained about the League, but Spickard explains that most of the League's serious opponents were liberal intellectuals who supported the United States but were concerned about their lost civil liberties, most of whom were in the camps.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, free-zone Nikkei still criticized the League and believed it could have handled their wartime situation in a better way.

The *Utah Nippo* and its English section editors in particular were caught in a difficult position. On the one hand, the *Utah Nippo* usually supported the JACL, partially because filling columns depended on League news. Since the government *only* permitted the paper to print pro-American messages (such as voiced by the JACL), the paper relied on JACL news stories and financial support. And, as one of the few Japanese newspapers during WWII, the *Utah Nippo* needed a strong news source to continue report on.

Despite that, the *Utah Nippo* did print some editorials critical of the League and its strategy of working with the government. One reader even wrote to the paper to say, "I am very much griped with you[r] English Section because you seem to use your paper as the voice of the JACL."⁴⁹ Were the editors truly JACL supporters or were they only printing what would keep them in a job and out of political trouble? Most of the editors did not sign their articles in the

⁴⁸ Spickard, "Nisei Assume Power," 160.

⁴⁹ A Critical Reader, "Letter to the Editor: He's Griped," *Utah Nippo*, 19 May 1943.

Utah Nippo, so names cannot be compared with JACL membership lists. Those who did sign their names on articles, like Maurea Ushio and Tosh Miyazaki, were League members. Given JACL informational and financial support, as well as its social and political power locally, it is understandable that the *Utah Nippo* had a pro-JACL editorial bias. Yet within those editorials and stories are instances of disagreement with, even rebuke of, the JACL. The answer is complicated. At times individuals agree with an organization, and at times they do not; sometimes they write what they believe and other times they write for self preservation. Speculating about the affiliation of specific *Utah Nippo* editors is not the scope of this chapter, but it is clear that editors were careful in their criticisms of the League.

Critics of the JACL often stated that the League had not dealt well with the evacuation, that new members could not express ideas or move into leadership positions, and that the League did not solve pressing problems like housing, instead focusing on more abstract notions like eliminating racism. The *Utah Nippo* published many of these criticisms, creating series of columns, editorials, and letters in the spring of 1943. Some community members saw the League as a “financially anemic organization, set up to accomplish very little[,] Too late.”⁵⁰ The JACL responded to criticism by portraying faultfinders as not-American-enough. The main counterargument to criticisms given in the newspaper was the insistence on the good the JACL did for Nikkei. And at war’s end, leaders used the fact that Euro-Americans around the nation accepted Nikkei in their communities to show that the League’s efforts were successful.

One of the earliest reports about critics of the JACL came in an April 1942 issue, wherein English section editor Maurea Ushio wrote that the leaders “Have A Headache” because of the “discontented murmurings” against them, such as that it was “week-boned [*sic*]” and had a “namby-pamby stand” on evacuation. However, she then *almost* agreed with detractors, saying

⁵⁰ “Editorial ... Apathy of Nisei,” *Utah Nippo*, 12 May 1943.

“this time is another story of too little and too late” with the evacuation, even while admitting that JACL was the “only organization that was in the logical position to put up any sort of united, representative stand for the Nisei cause in the United States.” Ushio then reprimanded readers, saying that they should support the League if they expected it to help them.⁵¹ In early 1942, critics were frustrated with the JACL’s acquiescence to the incarceration of thousands of Nikkei. Jun Kuramada, the Salt Lake chapter president during the war, remembered the critics who opposed the League’s response to internment, calling them an “anti-evacuation faction” that was also anti-JACL. One “staunch JACLeR” who left the camp and came to Salt Lake described an experience to Kuramada, when angry people came after him in camp, the member hid under the mattress of his bed to escape detection.⁵²

Maurea Ushio chronicled the criticisms against the JACL in another article, but this time she clearly sided with the League. “So much of their [National leaders’] efforts for our welfare goes without due credit and often with too much unfounded criticism,” she wrote, adding that anti-JACL critics were on the side of those “insidious forces” (meaning racists) who “time and time again boil up to threaten the balance in our favor maintained by the sane temperance and the God-given ideals of democracy.” According to Ushio, Nikkei bellyachers and white racists worked together to hinder progress. Although critics certainly did not believe they were in tandem with bigoted whites, this idea was extreme by design to discourage criticism of the League and to keep such public disapproval quiet. Instead, Ushio encouraged people to work together despite their different opinions:

This is no time to sit back and sulk or indulge in petty bickering over ... personal prejudices or adopt a defeatist’s attitude. The fight is barely begun. Let’s have faith in our

⁵¹ Maurea Ushio, “The Leaders Have A Headache,” *Utah Nippo*, 8 April 1942.

⁵² Jun Kuramada, interview, 10/24/1984, s1:5, folder 5, box 2, IJU.

cause. Let's with faith get behind our [JACL] leaders in spirit and endeavor and see this thing through to a worthwhile end.⁵³

Another English section editor Tosh Miyazaki admitted, "there is no organization as important today as the JACL," while simultaneously giving voice to Nisei critics about how to improve the League. The editorial series began with his summarizing five of the major complaints against the JACL. First, some did not feel like they were participating members because the leaders did not divide responsibilities to give more people an active role in the League. Second, many found both local and national branches "too bureaucratic and [did] not provide means for new and more capable leaders to step into responsible positions," while those with "initiative, ideas, and capability" could not move into positions to implement their talents. Third, some believed the JACL did "nothing worthwhile," the meetings were simply social events, and the League "always demand[ed] to be the one to sponsor everything and never [went] into action." Fourth, people wondered why the JACL had not "conduct[ed] a program of research in Japanese American housing problem, in market or other employment condition, or legislative lobbying," which people saw as greater, more pressing problems than the amorphous goal of eliminating racism. And fifth, Nikkei did not appreciate that the League always asked for donations, believing it should raise League funds in other ways.⁵⁴ These criticisms were not that the JACL had mishandled the evacuation, but were about improving the JACL and making it a more open organization designed for individuals. Ironically, these criticisms were precisely what the League continuously asked of the community—that they get involved and help the JACL help Nikkei.

⁵³ M. U., "Come to the Call of Your Party," *Utah Nippo*, 31 August 1942.

⁵⁴ T. M. [Tosh Miyazaki], "Editorial ... Nisei and the JACL," *Utah Nippo*, 29 March 1943.

Miyazaki's summary led to community discussion. A responding critic believed, "It is fallacious to assume that a membership will entitle one a greater opportunity to have his voice heard, he will be reproached and silenced with, 'if you don't like it, get out!'"⁵⁵ The writer argued that the JACL, like many organizations, was not interested in encouraging differing opinions within its ranks, but instead insisted on solidarity among members and non-members alike. Such objections were critical of attempts by JACL members to get others to join and the unceasing reminders that JACL services to the community merited community repayment. Two other responses to the five critiques showed the interest Salt Lake Nikkei had in the topic. "A Reader" claimed that the criticisms "appl[y] in general to any organization," but also appreciated the opinion article. "Raspberry" stated that the editorial "stunk" because Miyazaki was "too partial to the JACL." That writer said, "I haven't any use for that organization and anyone that believes that JACL can do any good is just plain loco."⁵⁶ While "A Reader" agreed that the five suggestions were problems facing all organizations especially the JACL, "Raspberry" aggressively expressed his disapproval of the League and his distrust that its actions benefitted Nikkei. Miyazaki's editorial spurred discussion in Salt Lake's Japan Town about the utility of the League and its willingness to tolerate dissent.

In light of these criticisms, a discussion group convened to "air" out the criticisms. Nearly fifty people met and learned "what some of the criticisms of the JACL are and also as to what policies, stand[s], and work this organization is carrying on." The people at the discussion group meeting addressed the criticisms, but did not argue or engage with new ideas or discuss changing the organization or looking into the problems the community felt were important (like housing or unemployment). Instead, participants focused on what the JACL *did* do for the

⁵⁵ "Nisei Safety Valve: Objections to JACL Raised," *Utah Nippo*, 2 April 1943.

⁵⁶ A Reader and Raspberry, "Letter to the Editor," *Utah Nippo*, 9 April 1943.

community. The article's author reported that attendants "were more interested in listening and be[ing] informed rather than in taking a stand on either side of the issue raised."⁵⁷ Because the results focused on what the JACL actually did, there were surely some JACL members in attendance. However, that people there were more interested in understanding the issues than in arguing says something for the community: they wanted open and rational discussion.

This moment of major criticism of the JACL, stemming in part from Miyazaki's editorial, also allowed him to chime in for the JACL, saying, "Gripes, gripes, gripes. There's plenty of people saying more than sweet nothing about the Salt Lake JACL in an uncomplimentary sort of way." All the complaints about the JACL were just that, complaints and little action. "People are beginning to wonder if there's anything to their gripes."⁵⁸ Miyazaki's final editorial comment on the critics and complainers ended the argument about the JACL, its usefulness, and how to improve it, at least in the public pages of the *Utah Nippo*.

Criticisms of the League as published in the *Utah Nippo* quieted in 1944 and 1945. In 1946, the *Utah Nippo* published an article in its editorial column, the "Observation Post," that disparaged former JACL critics. "More and more Issei and Nisei are coming to realize that despite the criticisms which were leveled at this organization during the war time period, its leadership has saved the position of all persons of Japanese ancestry in this country."⁵⁹ This statement followed the December 1944 announcement that internment centers would be closed, that Nikkei could return to the West Coast, and that government resettlement was at an end. The end of the war and renewed emphasis on future opportunities for Nikkei sealed the critics'

⁵⁷ "Discussion Group Meeting Airs Criticisms Against JACL: Opposition to JACL Week [sic]," *Utah Nippo*, 21 April 1943.

⁵⁸ Toshi Miyazaki, "Gripes: Salt Lake JACL," *Utah Nippo*, 26 April 1943.

⁵⁹ "All Eyes On JACL Convention," *Utah Nippo*, 25 January 1946.

complaints. The JACL had not damaged Nikkei but had affirmed Japanese American loyalty and citizenship, and they could return and live wherever they wanted. While JACL leaders did not save all Nikkei from the horrors of relocation and internment, they felt they had protected everyone from an even worse racial backlash outside the camps. Criticisms leveled against the League did not change it substantially, but demonstrated that not all Japanese Americans believed in the JACL or conformed to the stereotypical model minority they espoused.

JACL Community Services

Few of the League's critics came from outside the Japanese community, largely because the general population saw the organization as the community's official representative whose leaders cooperated with the government. Most criticisms, and especially the ones published in the *Utah Nippo*, came from within Japan Town. When Nikkei criticized the JACL, leaders and members defended the organization by focusing on the services it offered to the community. They insisted they had stepped up, secured spots as leaders when Nikkei had none, improved public images, worked with the government to hold off and improve evacuation, and helped their communities. The Salt Lake chapter described and advertized its services in the *Utah Nippo*, suggesting that the JACL played "a vital role in the [lives of] Japanese and the Japanese-Americans."⁶⁰ Beyond socials and speakers, the JACL offered to help people operate properly in the United States—they assisted with employment, taxes, and other bureaucratic tasks that some Nikkei may have struggled with. The League sponsored war bond and scrap metal drives for the war effort. In these ways, the Salt Lake JACL reminded the Japanese community that their services benefited both individuals and the group.

⁶⁰ T. M., "Salt Lake JACL and Its Need," *Utah Nippo*, 12 May 1943. See also Spickard, "Nisei Assume Power," 158.

The local JACL helped Nikkei find jobs. Jerry Katayama, who in 1942 was the Salt Lake chapter secretary, regularly announced job openings for “gardeners or house girls” in the city and surrounding area. Later in April 1942, an advertisement asked, “Want a job? Inquire at the Salt Lake JACL office” where Katayama “will show you a list of openings.” And in July 1942, the JACL advertised its employment file by saying, “There is no apparent reason why any healthy, ambitious person should be out of a job now.”⁶¹ Because of JACL efforts, Nikkei in the community could get work.

The JACL *did* do much for Salt Lake City Nikkei, and they further advertised that by implementing “‘At Your Service’ Evenings,” where the office would stay open late on weeknights from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. and Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in addition to regular hours. These later evenings made JACL services available to those who could not reach the office during normal business hours because of work, travel, school, or other responsibilities. Jerry Katayama expected the later hours to demonstrate the JACL “continue[d] to be of public service” in “assist[ing] the local and outside Japanese” in more ways.⁶² In addition to helping people find jobs, Katayama also helped non-English speakers and reviewed Red Cross donations. His sacrifices to the community were large while his pay for his job “waver[ed] a bit above and under the zero mark.”⁶³ This recognition of Katayama’s volunteer work encouraged people to donate to the JACL, but it was also a way to advertise all the chapter’s services.

⁶¹ “Notice: Employment for Nisei,” *Utah Nippo*, 8 April 1942; “Notice! Employment for Japanese,” *Utah Nippo*, 29 April 1942; and “Employment Opportunities for Intermountain Niseis,” *Utah Nippo*, 15 July 1942.

⁶² “S. L. JACL Office ‘At Your Service’ Evenings,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 November 1942. The weeknight hours were outside the curfew hours. It is unclear in the *Utah Nippo*, but may exist in other sources, how the office expected to work around the curfew restrictions.

⁶³ T. M., “Salt Lake JACL and Its Need,” *Utah Nippo*, 12 May, 1943.

The JACL helped implement a Salt Lake County-wide registration of all people of Japanese ancestry in June 1942. According to the county's statement, all Nikkei 14 years and older needed to register with the Sheriff. Two JACL members, Frank Tashima and Shigeki Ushio, volunteered to help Nikkei register and to serve as witnesses in the process. They tried to calm fears about what the registration meant for free-zone Nikkei by explaining that it was principally to record the growth of the Nikkei population. The questionnaire asked about "residential status, activities both business and social, auto ownership, physical characteristics and employment prior to and after the war."⁶⁴ However, any survey or census, the JACL and Sheriff's office struggled to collect information from everyone. The following week, the *Utah Nippo* announced that people living in Salt Lake County who had not completed the registration needed to report as soon as possible to the Salt Lake JACL office. Even a month later, "The Salt Lake County Japanese registration is still incomplete due to the lack of prompt consideration by a few slackers."⁶⁵ The cooperation between the city League and local government was comparable to the relationship between the national JACL and the federal government; and as they encouraged Nikkei to register they demonstrated that the JACL and Nikkei were a group that did its civic duty. The newspaper depicted the inconsiderate, slow-acting "slackers" as un-cooperative and out of step with the larger Nikkei community. The implication was that they were less-patriotic and American than those who had cooperated—that they threatened the community's position.

Because "so many forces working against the welfare of the Japanese and Japanese-Americans," the local JACL called a special meeting in May 1943. Nikkei needed "a well-knit organization" like the JACL to combat the opposition. The first step was to have all Nisei attend

⁶⁴ "Salt Lake JACL to Assist County Japanese Registration," *Utah Nippo*, 17 June 1942.

⁶⁵ "Registration of Salt Lake County Japanese Going On," *Utah Nippo*, 24 June 1942 and "Survey Still Incomplete," *Utah Nippo*, 22 July 1942.

the meeting and bring their parents, whether or not they were League members. According to the *Utah Nippo*, the Salt Lake chapter had “dilly dallied long enough” and needed to act in unity and quiet discontent against the organization.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the *Utah Nippo* did not include the meeting’s results, but the urgency of the announcement indicates the JACL’s interest in community cohesion. A united community was easier to influence internally and to represent externally to the non-Japanese community as a whole.

League members could participate in the organization’s credit union, first established in Utah in October 1943. After “six months of preparatory work,” Utah’s commissioner of banking accepted the charter and by-laws, and the League opened participation in the credit union to JACL members.⁶⁷ However, many people complained about membership requirements, while several members eligible to join were “still skeptical” about the advantages of banking there. The JACL reminded Nikkei, especially Nisei, that it was *their* bank, to help them establish good credit to pay for houses, automobiles, hospital bills, and smaller purchases in the coming postwar economy. If members banked with the JACL Credit Union, “their organization will be in a position to help them” make payments and save “a lot of money” with lower interest rates for loans.⁶⁸ The JACL, once again, advertised itself as an organization active in encouraging community growth.

Each persecuted minority, explained a *Utah Nippo* article in 1945, needed an organization to fight for its rights. African Americans had the NAACP; Nikkei had the JACL. The “value of a minority group organization” came when it could “solicit the aid of interested groups in bringing about improvement.” The JACL argued that its wartime work showed its value

⁶⁶ “Special JACL Meeting Slated On Saturday,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 April 1943.

⁶⁷ “National JACL Credit Union Is Instuted [*sic*],” *Utah Nippo*, 20 October 1943.

⁶⁸ “The People’s Bank,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 February 1946.

to Nikkei. It opened up the armed forces for Nisei and (arguably) protected their civil liberties. The JACL planned to fight for Issei's naturalization rights.⁶⁹ Even after the war, the League determinedly reminded Nikkei of all they had done and all they would do for the ethnic group. In comparing itself to the NAACP, the JACL illustrated the influence a minority organization could have and argued that it needed more support to make significant change.

Tangible benefits the JACL brought to the community included employment or banking, but many of the League's contributions were difficult to trace. Shake Ushio remembered that the JACL was not perfect, but it "at least tried to represent" Nikkei.⁷⁰ To Ushio, one of the most important things the Salt Lake JACL did for its community was to create a "climate...of acceptance" towards people of Japanese descent. Members of the JACL who were also LDS Church members spoke to congregations throughout the state twice a month over the course of the war and evacuation. Their main message to white LDS members was that Nikkei "were being unjustly dealt with. We are also god's children." The congregations, Ushio believed, were receptive to this message and the JACL's agenda of assimilation and integration. These efforts illuminated the situation facing Japanese Americans in Utah, encouraging greater tolerance.⁷¹

Although the JACL emphasized their services for Nikkei and their role as representatives to the U.S. government, the organization successfully provided valuable services to the people it aimed to represent. The assistance offered to Salt Lake City by the local chapter and national JACL brought some on-the-ground benefits to the community, such as helping people find employment, registering with the government, and a credit union, all accomplished within the extended hours at the JACL office. However, the League often referred to its less tangible

⁶⁹ "NAACP," *Utah Nippo*, 18 January 1946.

⁷⁰ Ushio, 3/14/84, s1:19, IJU.

⁷¹ Ushio, 6/7/84, s2:18-9, IJU.

benefits to the community, such as creating a more racially tolerant atmosphere and in its general concern with improving the welfare of the community. Despite its efforts, Paul R. Spickard notes that the JACL often failed at what it tried to do and never fully eliminated racial discrimination, a somewhat unfair critique because members and leaders did try.⁷² Yet, by advertising its services and describing the advantages it brought to Salt Lake City's Japanese community, the JACL solidified its place as the Nikkei's organization.

Community Participation

The JACL served the community without demanding payment, though it strongly encouraged Nikkei community members to voluntarily support the organization with their dollars, participation, ideas, and positive feelings. The train of logic went like this: The JACL represented Nikkei, therefore Nikkei should support the JACL and behave as the JACL encouraged members to behave, showing that the JACL was truly representative of the community as a whole, that its members were good Americans, and therefore that it was the appropriate organization to represent Nikkei to the government. The *Utah Nippo* printed this argument repeatedly throughout the war.

As people began complaining that the JACL was a tool of the federal government, simply going along with the evacuation rather than fighting more directly for Japanese American civil rights, Maurea Ushio asked readers, "If you now expect the JACL to do so much for you, have you always given the League your sincere support to enable its development so that it could function effectively for the Niseis at all times?"⁷³ This simple question criticized Nisei who had done little to support the JACL or the larger community and reminded them that complaining did

⁷² Spickard, "Nisei Assume Power," 168.

⁷³ Maurea Ushio, "The Leaders Have A Headache," *Utah Nippo*, 8 April 1942.

not resolve problems, but action did. At the same time, Ushio's question contained a gentle critique of the JACL—that it had been unable to function “effectively” in the face of evacuation because it lacked full Nikkei support.

The Salt Lake chapter served the community and depended on funds from community members. The *Utah Nippo* recognized that symbiotic relationship. “It is up to the Japanese people of this community to keep this office going, because it is for the community[’s] Japanese welfare that it function[s] ... [T]he chapter must depend on voluntary donations and contributions.”⁷⁴

Later in 1942, S. U. (perhaps Shake Ushio) asked Salt Lake Nikkei, “How many of us are willing to offer ourselves to render the service and to sacrifice the time and opportunities” the JACL leaders did? “How many of us are even supporting [the League] financially to maintain the office?” Salt Lake’s Issei had “responded nobly” to its needs, but the Nisei needed to pull their weight as part of their civic responsibility. “The sad part of it all is that you’ll all [meaning *Utah Nippo* readers] probably agree with me, but few will act upon it and march up to the office and say, ‘Thanks for the good work Jerry [Katayama], and here’s my small share.’”⁷⁵ If the city’s Nikkei wanted the chapter to keep offering services, the League needed money, and even began an “office maintenance drive” to raise it.⁷⁶ The JACL reminded Salt Lakers that they were “essential to the welfare of the Japanese” and needed to continue their support.⁷⁷

The National JACL also needed money. Free-zone Nikkei were especially important for fundraising, as they had the ability to earn much more money than imprisoned Nikkei who were limited to making about \$20 per month. At the JACL National Convention in November 1942,

⁷⁴ “An Appeal From Salt Lake JACL,” *Utah Nippo*, 15 July 1942.

⁷⁵ S. U., “What Do YOU Think?,” *Utah Nippo*, 9 September 1942.

⁷⁶ “Salt Lake JACL Lists Activities At Meeting: Announcement,” *Utah Nippo*, 28 October 1942.

⁷⁷ “Salt Lake JACL Seeks Means to Increase Finances,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 September 1942.

Nisei district leaders “pledged ten thousand dollars to help the National body to carry on its work,” which meant each free-zone family needed donate “an average of perhaps \$35 to \$50.” While this seemed like a significant amount for families, the JACL reminded them, “whatever you are asked to contribute is small indeed” when considering that “we Japanese Americans, a persecuted minority in America are being represented in the country ONLY because a handful of conscientious leaders are sacrificing all personal advantages for the sake of all of us.”⁷⁸

According to Alice Kasai, a devoted member, Intermountain Nikkei gave “most generous financial assistance” to the both local and national League.⁷⁹ Although some residents did not appreciate that the JACL asked for funds, other people donated handsomely. Once again, the JACL heralded its activities to convince Nikkei to contribute additional funds.

In an editorial summarizing various criticisms of the League, Tosh Miyazaki gave due consideration to the critics, also recognizing that the JACL worked towards Nikkei being “treated and ... recognized” as citizens and longtime residents of the nation. The critics’ complaints against the League included leadership opportunities, bureaucracy, actual results, solving problems such as housing or employment, and the unpopularity of fundraising. After considering these issues, the editorialist reprimanded Salt Lake Nikkei, saying that if they wanted to complain, they should “at least join the organization and campaign for such improvements as have been suggested.”⁸⁰ In recognizing some of the JACL’s weakness, but still promoting it by encouraging membership, the *Utah Nippo* persisted in its role as a pro-JACL newspaper. At one point in November 1944, the English section editor recognized the role of the League in the section’s continued existence—it needed to print something, and the JACL gave it something to

⁷⁸ “Free Zone Nisei, Please Hearken!,” *Utah Nippo*, 8 February 1943.

⁷⁹ Alice Kasai, “To JACL members at 25th anniversary of SLC JACL,” draft, no date (1950?), folder 2, box 104, AKP.

⁸⁰ T. M., “Editorial ... Nisei and the J.A.C.L.,” *Utah Nippo*, 29 March 1943.

print. The article stated that “it is not difficult to see the day return when the League will once again receive the wholehearted support of matured Nisei.”⁸¹ Clearly, the editors believed the League did not get the support it deserved, and if it lost more support the *Utah Nippo* would suffer. If Salt Lake Nikkei wanted to make changes in the League and to continue reading the English section, they needed to join and support it, change it from within instead of simply criticizing it from without.

For much of 1943 and 1944, most of the League requests for Salt Lake City’s Nikkei to participate in the organization came in the form of JACL war bond and Red Cross drives. Euro-American organizations recognized the League almost monthly for activating the Japanese community to participate in the drives. In 1944, the local chapter “cooperate[d] actively with Salt Lake authorities in putting it [the Fourth War Loan Drive] over the top.” That same year, the JACL and other Japanese clubs (Boy Scout Troop 84, Girl Reserves, Friendship & Service, Bussei, and Music Appreciation) made significant donations in an April 1944 Red Cross Drive, and the American Red Cross expressed heartfelt appreciation.⁸²

In 1945, the JACL refocused from wartime service to increasing its membership, at least as advertised in the pages of the *Utah Nippo*. Alice Kasai, chairman of the Membership Committee of the Salt Lake chapter, reaffirmed her goal to “double the membership of the club” through “interesting and worthwhile” meetings and programs that were generally about the “welfare of the Niseis.” Kasai’s membership drive focused on the idea that joining the JACL would benefit all Nisei in the nation, state, and city.⁸³

⁸¹ “The Center of Interest,” *Utah Nippo*, 27 November 1944.

⁸² “Fourth War Loan Drive Starts January 18,” *Utah Nippo*, 12 January 1944 and “Salt Lake Japanese Red Cross Drive,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 April 1944.

⁸³ “Join the Salt Lake JACL,” *Utah Nippo*, 2 February 1945.

The February 1946 JACL activity's advertisement enthusiastically declared, "J.A.C.L. is your organization! Bring your ideas to the next meeting in regards to what you want to do, who you would like to have for speakers, talents, etc."⁸⁴ This announcement claimed that the JACL would be put into the hands of members and not necessarily leaders. This was a turn from wartime when JACL leaders tightly controlled the organization's activities and messages. After the war, new leaders found it prudent to attract people by appearing more open and democratic. It was less urgent to strictly monitor group and member appearance. And since the JACL was created for Nisei as "their organization," they needed to keep it afloat and participate in it. Later in the month, the Salt Lake JACL appealed to "those who feel Niseis should have a representing organization" and wanted to be more involved in their public relations campaign, asking them to contribute to the fund and join the club.⁸⁵

With the new year at war's end, the national JACL in Salt Lake City felt a "subdued optimism" about its future, because it was "obvious that a stronger support [was] gradually accumulating in California" about the JACL. Soon, leaders believed, the "outstanding" younger Nisei would be closely involved with the organization, as they had been before evacuation. Oddly, observed the *Utah Nippo*, while Nisei "wail[ed] and moan[ed]" about evacuation and did little to increase the welfare of themselves and all Nikkei, two Euro-Americans expressed interest in "the Japanese American problem" and in "strengthening the JACL". This optimistic article reprimanded those Nisei not involved in the JACL who insisted on criticizing it, even after the war, by closing with a call to action:

If the Nisei desire to improve their future, they must show their desire to create a better condition for themselves. They cannot expect the friends [of Nikkei] to carry the entire

⁸⁴ "Fellow Niseis!," *Utah Nippo*, 15 February 1946.

⁸⁵ "Salt Lake J.A.C.L. Financial Drive Appeal," *Utah Nippo*, 25 February 1946.

load. It is time that they get down to earth and really work hard through an organization, such as the JACL.⁸⁶

This optimistic article again reminded Nisei that they needed to do something for other Nikkei (as the JACL had tried to do throughout the war) as well as for the organization.

Although the organization did not require payment for their services, the JACL expected Nikkei to do something in return. Whether through donations, support, or membership, the JACL requested that Salt Lake residents be supportive and uncritical. Messages printed regularly in the *Utah Nippo* about membership, donations, and one's duty to the leaders who had done much for Nikkei offered ways for the community to give back to the League. The JACL was controversial then and now. In many ways, these statements encouraging support pushed the boundaries of polite requests and became manipulative. The intentions and results, however, contributed to that image which its leaders sought.

Chapter Conclusions

The Japanese American Citizens League was an important, although sometimes unpopular, representative organization for Nikkei in the United States, and Salt Lake City was key in its wartime history as it was the League's hub for the duration of the war. The local Salt Lake chapter tried to focus more on problems such as employment and racism, although critics wanted them to address other problems like the housing difficulties facing residents. The JACL hosted meetings and conventions that repeated messages about loyalty and behavior, encouraging members and non-members to act and think in certain ways that cultivated American attitudes and loyalties. Because of the themes of the meetings and the services provided to Salt Lake City's Nikkei, the JACL insisted throughout the duration of the war that it represented Nikkei to the

⁸⁶ "Civic Mindedness," *Utah Nippo*, 18 February 1946.

state and the nation, that it was the only voice of the nation's Japanese American community.

Alice Kasai, in her typical pro-JACL fashion, believed,

Our entire constituency was well received by understanding and sympathetic pioneers of Utah, and welcomed on all levels of employment, public schools and universities. Under this favorable climate of acceptance, the National JACL thrived here in Salt Lake City from 1942 to 1953. ... Here in Salt Lake City, the JACL reached manhood and maturity for which we the JACLers of Salt Lake City are very proud.⁸⁷

Of course, Kasai's statement is highly biased. The JACL wanted to show that it had been accepted in Utah and chose to ignore the fear expressed in letters to Governor Maw. The League manifested that it could represent a highly-discriminated-against minority group, that it was a capable organization, and (with the help of articles in the *Utah Nippo*) it could influence the behavior and image of that group.

⁸⁷ Kasai, "To JACL members at 25th anniversary of SLC JACL," AKP.

CHAPTER 5

THE *UTAH NIPPO* ON ELIMINATING RACISM

This chapter turns to a different focus which appeared during the latter part of the war, when the *Utah Nippo* ran articles focused on eradicating racism in the nation in general, but in Utah specifically. Although the JACL may have been an influence, the editors did not necessarily state these opinions on ending racism as the League's. The *Utah Nippo* editors explained and reported on several cases throughout the war, realizing the importance that contemporary Supreme Court cases held for all Nikkei, even those not interned. The editors ran articles that addressed racism Nikkei experienced at that moment: housing discrimination in residential neighborhoods, and racism in schools and the community in general. According to the editors, because Nikkei had been victims of racism, they should be in the forefront fighting to end it. Nikkei should also overcome prejudices within themselves toward African and Jewish Americans. In 1945 in particular, the *Utah Nippo* ran many articles about Nikkei returning to the West Coast. Early in the year, they encouraged it, believing it would help to end racism in those areas; but in the later part of 1945, editors hoped Nikkei would reflect on the economic opportunities they had outside the western states and their influence for good in the rest of the nation. Racism, seen by the editors as incredibly un-American, was something Nikkei could work against to promote American principles of liberty, freedom, and democracy that would show their ability to overcome social obstacles and contribute to the nation.

Eliminating Racism

In covering news for the Nikkei community in Utah and the West, the *Utah Nippo*'s editors zeroed-in on incidences of racism in the state and around the country. These were accompanied by an editorial call to action, that Nikkei resist racist sentiments (either accepting

them or expressing them) and work to oppose racist actions. The paper was careful to frame such actions in the name of democracy and American values of equality before the law.

At the beginning of the war, the *Utah Nippo* joined Dillon S. Myer and WRA officials in advising Nikkei not to recreate dense ethnic settlements like the ones they had left on the West Coast. In Chicago, New York City, Nebraska towns, and “not excluding Salt Lake City,” new “regular Little Tokyo[s]” sprang up as resettlers entered the cities. *Utah Nippo* editors argued that purposefully gathering together was unwise, because it was “more or less a natural sociological phenomenon which will result in natural racial persecution.” If Nikkei dreamed of a life without discrimination, wrote editors, they should not invite it so readily by their own actions and instead listen to the logic of resettlement rules and guidelines.¹

Like law-abiding citizens, the English section editors awaited the decision of the Supreme Court in resolving cases of racial discrimination involving Nikkei, putting their “trust in the fair judgment of the court.” This April 1943 sentiment was expressed relative to the pending cases of Gordon K. Hirabayashi and Minoru Yasui. These two men, “for the sake of the rights of the Nisei, sacrificed themselves purposely” in test cases over Nikkei civil rights intended to reach the U.S. Supreme Court.² Hirabayashi’s case challenged the constitutionality of the curfew and most especially the evacuation. He “failed to report to the Civil Control Station on May 11 or May 12, 1942, as directed, to register for evacuation from the military area. He admitted failure to do so, and stated it had at all times been his belief that he would be waiving his rights as an American citizen by so doing.” Hirabayashi knowingly defied military order, and the court concluded that both the curfew and the evacuation based on racial heritage were constitutional during times of war, particularly when that nationality was at war with the United States. Yasui’s

¹ “P.M.: More Little Tokyos,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 April 1943.

² “P.M.: U.S. Supreme Court,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 April 1943.

case, decided the same day as Hirabayashi's, affirmed the decision that a curfew targeting certain races at war with the U.S. was constitutional.³ Although the outcome of the cases was not what the Nikkei population hoped for, the *Utah Nippo* editor's confidence and trust in the Supreme Court's decision, no matter how it decided, reflected the strategy of patience in obedience, even while acting within the system for a legal remedy to race-based legal restrictions and prejudice.

A year and a half later, in September 1944, the *Utah Nippo* provided information to readers about two other important cases, those of Fred Korematsu and Mitsuye Endo. The Korematsu case again tested evacuation's constitutionality and the Endo case decided the authority of the WRA over Nikkei prisoners. The Court upheld its earlier decisions, that the evacuation was constitutional in light of the uncertainty following Pearl Harbor. Justices also ruled that it was *not* racially motivated. However, the case did not address internment, saving that for Endo's case, wherein the Court determined that although the government could exclude a person from an area of the United States, they could not continue to detain them if they were loyal to the country—thus the WRA could not continue to imprison people who had demonstrated their loyalty.⁴

These concerns over racism in the entire nation were important, and the consequences of these cases had real impacts, even on free-zone Nikkei in Salt Lake City. But the local population was much more concerned about the racism they faced first-hand in their city and state.

Legal Discrimination in Salt Lake City

In February 1943, the state legislature passed a bill that reinforced existing property laws prohibiting alien nationals from owning property, and further limiting their abilities to lease or

³ Hirabayashi v. United States, 320 U.S. 81, 63 S. Ct. 1375, 87 L. Ed. 1774 (1943) and Minoru Yasui v. United States, 320 U.S. 115, 63 S. Ct. 1392, 87 L. Ed. 1793 (1943).

⁴ "Supreme Court To Hear Test Cases on October 10th," *Utah Nippo*, 18 September 1944; Korematsu v. United States, 323 U.S. 214 (1944); and Ex Parte Mitsuye Endo, 323 U.S. 283 (1944).

contract land.⁵ However, Governor Herbert B. Maw vetoed the bill. He argued that because the law covered Chinese and Filipinos in addition to Japanese farm laborers, it was unwise to pass a law against the nation's allies. He believed "the bill went considerably beyond its intent" and could restrict Japanese aliens (already settled and those from camps) from working on Utah land.⁶ Later, the *Utah Nippo* reprinted an editorial from Salt Lake City's *Deseret News*, saying "it took courage to undo a piece of legislative work that was so well sponsored and so little opposed as was this bill. But the governor clearly saw the bill's serious ramifications and killed it with his veto."⁷ This early incident of land restriction carried into an issue later in 1943, one that touched urban Nikkei lives.

Beginning in November 1943, Salt Lake citizens called attention to Nikkei moving into their neighborhoods. The Postwar Planning Committee of the Salt Lake Real Estate Board began considering changes to housing covenants. Richard F. Harding, the board's executive, said, "If the board adopts a recommendation that no realtor sell a home in the better residential areas to anyone of Japanese ancestry, such action would be binding."⁸ Residents of Salt Lake City, like Granite City homeowners, probably worried about "the decrease in property values on account of [Nikkei] presence" in their neighborhoods.⁹ The *Utah Nippo* editors did not editorialize on this motion, printing it to inform readers, but its presence identified a serious injustice that hurt urban

⁵ "Utah Passes Alien Bill," *Utah Nippo*, 22 February 1943.

⁶ "Governor Maw Vetoes Utah's SB 5—Alien Property Bill Two-Fold Reason Set Forth to Uphold Veto Argument," *Utah Nippo*, 8 March 1943. See also S. George Ellsworth, *Utah's Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Book, 1981), 458.

⁷ "On the SB 5 ... The Governor Was Right The Governor Was Right," *Utah Nippo*, 12 March 1943.

⁸ "Salt Lake Realtors May Close Residential Sections To Japanese," *Utah Nippo*, 5 November 1943.

⁹ E. Wm. Grant et al. [15 signatures] to Herbert B. Maw, 6 April 1942, item 13, folder 6, box 146, series XII, Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan.

Nikkei. If they could not live in middle- or upper class neighborhoods but were legally relegated to poor ethnic neighborhoods, they would forever be less equal and their image one of a segregated and unassimilated (even un-American) minority.

The Salt Lake Real Estate Board met in a “two-hour long heated discussion” the following week. The Board “reaffirm[ed] their acceptance of article 34 of a 1911 code of ethics,” the item that sparked the debate. The article “in effect, bar[red] realtors from sale of homes in better districts to persons of Japanese ancestry.” Some members “approved any action which would safeguard property values,” thereby opposing the “infiltration” of any Nikkei into their neighborhoods; while some members believed that at the current historical moment, it was “unconstitutional and contrary to the spirit of Christianity.”¹⁰ Despite the arguments, real estate agents no longer sold houses in well-off areas to the Nikkei who could afford it. Even after the war ended, such housing covenants continued (formally and informally) for years.

The use of the term “infiltration” is semantically interesting. Nikkei infiltrators, whether into white neighborhoods, behind the lines of U.S. soldiers, or into areas of national security, were dangerous. Despite all their efforts to change the image Americans had of them and their communities, Nikkei must have been disappointed by the persistence of such negative images and the ongoing attack to their civil rights.

The following week, printed perhaps to inspire discouraged Nikkei, the *Utah Nippo* reported how a Nisei couple in Kansas City was almost evicted because of a petition aiming to “prohibit the housing and remove at once Japanese who were quietly slipped into our neighborhood by certain groups, bureaus and individuals without consulting local homeowners.” Once again, racist discourse employed imagery of subtle infiltration into American homes.

¹⁰ “Salt Lake Real Estate Board Bans Home Sales to Japanese at Meet, Action Termed Un-Christian Like,” *Utah Nippo*, 17 November 1943.

However, “thirty-four letters and scores of telephone calls” poured into the local newspaper in support of the couple. And because of the public outcry, “Neighborhood Prejudice Loses Battle As Public Opinion Comes To [sic] Aid Of Nisei Couple.”¹¹

Ichiro Doi, a Nisei, remembered the housing discrimination in Utah. “The people wouldn’t sell you a home to a Japanese at that time. It was real difficult to buy a home. I believe we tried and a lot of people I know tried to buy homes but they couldn’t purchase any home. In fact, I think Henry [Kasai] was the first Japanese to be able to purchase a home. In Salt Lake.”¹² The Kasais purchased their home before the war began and Alice Kasai lived on her own with their children after Henry was imprisoned. Their home was across the street from J. Reuben Clark of the LDS Church’s First Presidency. Clark’s son-in-law, Captain Bennion, “was killed on Battleship Utah at Pearl Harbor.” The Clarks were devastated, and when they realized “that a Japanese family had moved so near by,” they “circulate[d] a petition to oust my family.” Alice Kasai reported that another neighbor told her the petition failed, so the Clarks “did not pursue it further.”¹³ Even after buying a home, Nikkei faced persecution and distrust from their neighbors.

When George Albert Smith became president of the LDS Church, the *Utah Nippo* editor reflected on his potential to do good and to eliminate racism in the state. The editor mentioned specifically the “discriminations by the Salt Lake City Real Estate Board and by some hotels and restaurants.” Believing the city’s discrimination against Nikkei to be “the stepping stone to

¹¹ “Neighborhood Prejudice Loses Battle As Public Opinion Comes To Aid Of Nisei Couple Facing Eviction,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 November 1943.

¹² Ichiro Doi, interview, 2 July 1984, s2:31, 7/2/84, folder 2, box 1, Interviews with Japanese in Utah, 1980–1989, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter IJU)

¹³ Alice Kasai, “Years of Infamy—As Experienced by Alice Kasai from the day of Pearl Harbor in Salt Lake City, Utah,” no date, p. 2, folder 5, box 106, Alice Kasai Papers, Special Collections and Archives, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter AKP).

something more serious,” the editor hoped that Smith’s spiritual leadership would eradicate segregation and discrimination, making the state more accepting of Nikkei.¹⁴

Alice Kasai wrote to the *Salt Lake Tribune* about an instance of discrimination and a Euro-American leader who opposed it. The Salt Lake Commissioners were “alarmed” by the “influx” of Nikkei into the city and felt “forced to take a vote on refusing to issue any further business license to these refugees.” This was done in hopes of “discourag[ing] any further influx and applicants as they felt the public opinion were aroused to the point of destructive action and violence.” Such an action threatened business opportunities for Nikkei entrepreneurs and made Salt Lake a difficult place to live. Kasai recounted that Mrs. Burton W. Musser (who advised the JACL at the time) contacted the League after attending the City Commission meeting. Musser reported that L. C. Romney, a commissioner at the time, “cast the one dissenting vote, saying that the Japanese were notably [*sic*] proud that their people never applied for welfare. But if they took away their means of livelihood [*sic*], it would force their need for assistance.” Despite Romney’s dissent and arguments for the economic sustainability of Nikkei businessmen, in a sad moment of injustice, “the vote carried.”¹⁵

Jun Kuramada, a practicing dentist and local chapter JACL president during the war, remembered being barred from leasing office space for his practice. He felt there was a “time period of discrimination” as he submitted applications to

several of the larger buildings in town for office space. ... When I was told that they were all filled up. ... Now the reason I say that there was an area of discrimination is because there were several dentists who were granted room and office space in the Medical Arts Building. And there were several vacancies there—even after I had applied.

¹⁴ “New Mormon Leader,” *Utah Nippo*, 25 May 1945.

¹⁵ Alice Kasai to *Salt Lake Tribune*—The Public Forum, no date, folder 2, box104, AKP.

Although Kuramada eventually leased office space in the MacIntyre Building on Main Street, the memory of that incident stayed with him for years.¹⁶

In June 1944, a new organization, the Citizens Committee for Interracial Action, formed to “combat the growing racial tension in the state of Utah and Salt Lake City and its neighborhood in particular.” The members elected R. D. Oliver, an attorney, as president, and JACL national president Saburo Kido as vice-president. The organization planned to work toward and propose to legislators a “Civil Rights Bill which would assure equality and fair treatment of all minority groups in public places, conveniences and so forth.”¹⁷ Organizers hoped that the JACL president’s involvement would help to solve some of the complaints made against it that the League did nothing meaningful for Nikkei. Teaming up with others combating segregation gave strength to Nikkei fighting all forms of discrimination in Salt Lake City.

It took two years of biting their editorial tongue before the *Utah Nippo* finally wrote bluntly about the reality of “Jim Crowism in Salt Lake City.” Since the United States was a “progressive and liberal” nation, it had slowly worked to “eliminate race prejudice and discrimination, segregation being one of the worst manifestations.” Of course, other types of violent prejudice were extremely detrimental to communities of color, but segregation was one which directly touched the lives of Nikkei in Salt Lake City. In their city,

the vicious symptoms of racism is coming to the surface. The realtors have been having their field day as far as housing was concerned. And restaurant owners have been refusing services to the Negroes who would not be able to eat in the [city’s] business section if the Japanese eating houses were not tolerant and willing to cater to their trade. And the Mexican-Americans are not permitted to some of the movie houses, excepting in the balcony.¹⁸

¹⁶ Jun Kuramada, interview, 24 October 1984, s1:1, folder 5, box 2, IJU.

¹⁷ “New Interracial Organization Launched,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 June 1944.

¹⁸ “Jim Crowism in Salt Lake City,” *Utah Nippo*, 17 September 1945.

It was safe for editors to critique U.S. racial policies at this time because WWII was over. Allying itself with other persecuted minorities, the Nikkei community finally felt it could finally write openly about the troubles it had endured, even in a “moderately” racist state like Utah.

Accounts in the *Utah Nippo* describing legal discrimination reveal that prejudice and racial animosity were more prevalent than appears at first glance. Many Nikkei relocatees did not see the same kind of racism in Salt Lake that they experienced on the West Coast, but it was there, just under the surface. While the *Utah Nippo* and Nikkei residents of Salt Lake found it troubling, they did not feel they could directly combat new racist ordinances until near the end of the war.

West High School Racism

An important incident of racism in Salt Lake City, one which frustrated *Utah Nippo* editors and the Japan Town community, was a 1943 incident at West High School where most Nisei students attended school. A “Student” wrote to describe the “Injustice” which occurred when classmates (including non-Nikkei peers) nominated two Nisei for the ballot for school elections. Their names, however, were removed from the list before the primary election even occurred.

When the two Nisei went to ask, why this was done, the answer given by the assistant principal was that the soldiers who were graduated from West high and who came back on furlough would not like to see the school being run by the Japanese.

The incident discouraged the students because recently Arthur Gaeth had spoken to the youth at a Young Buddhist Association (YBA) meeting and “encouraged us to participate in school activities. Here, we tried and got pushed in the face.” The editor commented that the Salt Lake JACL planned to investigate the issue and that Elmer R. Smith and Arthur Gaeth had both begun to act, “so you are sure of getting help. These are tough days for the Nisei, but let us not be

discouraged and keep on trying.”¹⁹ This issue of racism in the name of patriotism (like the evacuation) upset many Salt Lake Nikkei. That qualified, high-achieving Nisei students who were well-liked by their peers could not run for student office because of their race was inappropriate and un-American.

At the national meeting of the YBA, participants discussed five problems facing Nikkei in Salt Lake. The first was “Whether or not to make a protest to the West High school principal who scratched the names of the Nisei candidates off the school election ballot because of current trend of events.” The other four dealt with the JACL.²⁰ However, beyond these mentions in the *Utah Nippo*, the editor either did not report on the West High issues or nothing became of it.

Another student at West High School, Frank Nishiguchi, remembered his experiences as a freshman. The bus dropped him off five to fifteen minutes before school started, and

I’d throw the excess books in the locker and run down to the Algebra room. And I’d hide and stay out of sight so I’d be out of trouble. And then from there, why, I’d go as quickly from class to class and get on the school bus and go home. . . . [I hid because] I knew that if I were in the main stream of the class, of the hall, there would be an opportunity for pushing and shoving. And I didn’t like the snide remarks.²¹

Perhaps Nishiguchi’s freshman mind imagined more danger than there was, but he certainly would have been pushed or shoved, and there were surely plenty of mean comments and racial slurs thrown at him and the other Nikkei students.

Even young Nisei who were very Americanized experienced racism at their school. The students the principal removed from the ballot experienced discrimination at the hands of an adult. But the more common cases of racism, like Nishiguchi’s experience, came from peers.

¹⁹ A Student, “Injustice in High School,” *Utah Nippo*, 19 May 1943.

²⁰ Untitled, *Utah Nippo*, 19 May 1943. The four other issues were first, whether the JACL should publish its expense reports; second, if the League needed to address the housing problems facing Nikkei in Salt Lake City; third, why Nikkei Christians seemed uninterested in the League; and fourth, how to get Nisei more interested in politics.

²¹ Frank Nishiguchi, interview, 13 September 1984, s3:28, folder 9, box 2, IJU.

Nisei students, like adults in business and housing, felt the effects of their race during wartime, even in a racially “mild” place like Salt Lake City.

Becoming Free of Nikkei Racism

In the editorial column called the “Observation Post,” the *Utah Nippo* editor wrote about building tolerance toward other people of color. “Unless we are tolerant ourselves,” the editor said, “we do not deserve tolerance.” Some Nikkei joined with white bigots and persecuted other minority groups, perhaps to improve their standing when compared with the “Mexican, Filipino, Negro or Jew” they came in contact with daily. Because some Nikkei “had an unfortunate experience with some members of these groups,” they fell “into the common error” of racism against them to somehow repair the wrong. But if Nikkei acted that way toward other groups, they deserved the same treatment, “for a mistake which a person of Japanese ancestry may make, we may be damned.” Racism was wholly unacceptable among Nikkei, who “should be the champions for tolerance.” Part of promoting tolerance was not expressing frustration with wartime racism vocally or physically, especially not taking it out on Euro-Americans or other people of color.²²

The editor retold a story of a Nisei who planned to move out of his apartment because an African American tenant was moving in. Because of a negative experience in the past, the Nisei “had become rabidly anti-Negro.” However, commented the editor, the Nisei’s unfair generalization reflected badly on all Nikkei. “If the same line of reasoning should be followed,” the editor wrote, “then all persons of Japanese ancestry are treacherous because of the attack on Pearl Harbor.” And because so many people were adamant that they were always loyal even while suffering through the war, it was hypocritical to “condemn the Negroes or the Jews because [Nikkei] had some unfortunate experience in the past or read about some such incidents, then they

²² “Tolerance,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 January 1945.

have no defense to raise themselves.” Minority groups should stick together, concluded the editor, because even though Nikkei should acculturate, they did not help themselves by joining the majority in its racist attitudes toward other minorities; in fact, they hurt their well-being.²³

Well-known writer and lecturer Carey McWilliams visited Salt Lake City in December 1945, where he spoke on race relations, “one of the most acute problems in this country today.” Because it was a problem throughout the U.S., Nikkei “should be keenly interested in the developments which are taking place throughout the country on this question.” Utah Nikkei needed to recognize that racism existed in Utah, as the *Utah Nippo*’s editorial selections suggested, especially towards African Americans, but that it affected the experiences of all non-white groups in the state. McWilliams declared, “Until a Civil Rights law is enacted by the State of Utah, the Nisei cannot feel secure even in public places.” To make these changes come about, Nikkei needed to “arouse themselves to the problems confronting them” and “solidify their position as members of this community.” Whereas the *Utah Nippo* usually described a model behavior as one which was culturally American, submissive to government, and contributory to the war effort, McWilliams pushed it further: Part of Nikkei’s civic responsibility was to establish racial equality in Utah, not just wait for it to happen.²⁴

Nikkei could only expect unfair treatment if they themselves treated other excluded American minorities with disdain. If Nikkei did not encourage racism, and even actively opposed it, they would help themselves. Because racism was not a “true” American behavior (although deeply established in its culture), it was one that Nikkei should fight, among themselves and in others.

²³ “Race Prejudice,” *Utah Nippo*, 23 July 1945.

²⁴ “Carey McWilliams’ Lecture,” *Utah Nippo*, 17 December 1945.

Supporting Racism's Demise

A discussion club in Salt Lake City focused on a topic many Nisei pondered: “Should we Nisei demand our rights as citizens of this country first, or should we primarily direct our attention to the war effort[?]” Receiving the rights of citizenship meant that Nisei were accepted as Americans, but at the same time helping the war effort demonstrated their loyalty and submission. If they demanded their rights, Nisei may be seen by Euro-American observers as unpatriotic rabble-rousers. As those who supported the war effort argued, “[if] we are exerting our total energy in demanding our rights[,] ... we are doing nothing to help this country win this war.” And if the war was lost, a Fascist victory “will mean our doom, worse than any minority discrimination we Nisei have ever faced.” On the other hand, those pushing for civil rights believed that “unless our position in America is first made secure we have no basis on which to exert our energy to the war effort” because the law restricted them from working in war plants, being drafted, joining other branches of the military, or enjoying their other rights and duties as American citizens. These questions over balancing behavior and loyalty with American democracy and civil rights were problematic to Salt Lake Nikkei.²⁵

In June 1945, the JACL published a booklet called “They Work For Victory,” also described as the “Story of the Japanese Americans and the War Effort.” This booklet would be used on the West Coast “to acquaint the people as to what the Nisei have been doing while being excluded from the West Coast.” This booklet highlighted the positive actions and achievements of Nikkei during the war years. Although they were excluded and the victims of extreme discrimination, Nikkei had made the best of their situation and were model citizens, an argument carefully reinforced throughout the new booklet.²⁶ The editors encouraged Nisei to “distribute it

²⁵ “Editorial ... Which First? War Effort or Our Rights?,” *Utah Nippo*, 26 May 1943.

²⁶ “JACK [*sic*—JACL] Publishes Booklet,” *Utah Nippo*, 11 June 1945.

widely amongst their Caucasian friends” because the booklet gave “a clear over-all picture.” Their support in dispersing the pamphlet would (it was hoped) help end discrimination against Nikkei on the West Coast and in the U.S.²⁷

The *Utah Nippo* reported on some positive consequences of Nikkei resettlement in the Midwest, particularly “the fact that churches exclusively for persons of Japanese ancestry have not developed to any extent.” The editor strongly believed “the same policy should be adopted on the Pacific Coast as well as in the Intermountain area.” Nikkei needed to be the instigators of integration and join churches attended by Euro-Americans. Doing so was “the only way in which true integration into the community can be achieved.” Beyond simply believing that all Christians, white or non-white, were spiritual brothers, worshipping together reinforced the notion that they were also physical brothers. Even if some Euro-Americans were unhappy with Nikkei attending their churches, the editor saw them as the exception, especially since many West Coast churches had “espous[ed] fair play and justice for the evacuees.” Utah seemed the unwritten non-example, as most Nikkei attended the Japanese Church of Christ or the Buddhist Church, both in Japan Town and not with Euro-American members. Those who were Mormon worshipped separately in a Japanese-language congregation. In Salt Lake City, Nikkei had not yet religiously integrated. In the cause of becoming fully Americanized, Nikkei should worship as integrated people with other Americans, transcending their own ethnic community.²⁸

After President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s death and Harry S Truman’s ascension to the presidency in April 1945, the *Utah Nippo* editor expressed hope in the future. Because of the racism against Nikkei on the West Coast, racism against African Americans, and “anti-Semitism ... raising its ugly head in many sections of the country,” the editor hoped “President Truman will

²⁷ “Observation Post,” *Utah Nippo*, 15 June 1945.

²⁸ “Segregated Churches,” *Utah Nippo*, 9 April 1945.

indicate a strong stand at the earliest possible date against discrimination.” A strong presidential voice against racism would derail the “mischievous campaign of fomenting disunity within the country” by racists on the West Coast.²⁹

A month later in May 1945, LDS Church President Heber J. Grant died and George Albert Smith became the new president. Smith had “shown a great interest in human problems and [had] indicated a fair-minded attitude towards minority groups.” Additionally, he hired several evacuees to work for him, traveled in the Pacific states, seemed well-acquainted with the problems of evacuation, and did not appear overtly racist. The *Utah Nippo* editor wrote, “We are looking forward to a more aggressive leadership by the head of the Mormon Church so that race relations in Utah will be stabilized on all fronts.” The editor specifically mentioned the discrimination by realtors, hotels, and restaurants, hoping that Smith’s “powerful spiritual leadership of the Mormon Church” would “make this intermountain area the haven of human understanding.”³⁰ New leadership, both in the federal government and in Mormon Utah, offered hope to Nikkei community leaders that serious efforts to eliminate racism were possible.

At the beginning of 1946, the *Utah Nippo* editor wrote,

From this point on, the future is in our hands. ... We have repeatedly stated that too many Nisei cry about this and that without doing anything. They expect their Caucasian friends and [a] handful of those who desire to work for the welfare of the group to carry the responsibility. ... Every Nisei has his job to do. ... As the New Year opens we hope every Nisei will resolve to do his utmost to improve the position of all persons of Japanese ancestry in his community and thereby contribute to the advancement of the welfare of the whole.³¹

Eliminating racism, earning and receiving the respect of the nation was in their own hands. As had been the *Utah Nippo*’s message from the beginning, Nikkei needed to follow certain behavioral guidelines, do their civic duty, and uphold democratic ideals. They had that agency

²⁹ “A NW [sic] Administration,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 April 1945.

³⁰ “New Mormon Leaders,” *Utah Nippo*, 25 May 1945.

³¹ “New Year Greetings!,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 January 1946.

now that the war was over and their group loyalty to the United States was secured, the editor believed Nikkei needed to continue working to help themselves and others eliminate racial prejudice against the group.

Resettlement

Since 1943 when the WRA permitted loyal Nikkei to leave internment camps, the *Utah Nippo* had dedicated a significant amount of space to discussing resettlement and its consequences. In 1945, that dedication continued, but with a new bent—resettling on the West Coast as the U.S. Army lifted restrictions and opened the area to resettlers. Through the early months of 1945, the *Utah Nippo* encouraged Nikkei to return to the West Coast despite violent threats and uncertainty about jobs, housing, and social acceptance. However, in September, an article explained (and reprimanded those who had done so) that many Nikkei gave up “promising positions in order to breathe the Pacific Ocean breeze.”³² Articles printed in the *Utah Nippo* began encouraging caution among resettlers to not return to California too rapidly, especially if they could provide for themselves elsewhere in the nation.

In early January, the newspaper reported “there will be no stampede” to return to the West Coast and that “already threats of prosecution have been released in the press.” The story concluded that “the life of the returning evacuee is not going to be pleasant in the beginning.”³³ Such stories served notice to the Nikkei community that return would be difficult and stressful, setting the editorial tone of the paper for the next half-year that returning to California would require caution and heroic effort.

Threats and intimidation by racist white Californians (called “antis” in the paper) were mentioned often in newspaper reports. Historian Kevin Allen Leonard notes that by June of 1945,

³² “Shifting Population,” *Utah Nippo*, 12 September 1945.

³³ “Return Will Be Slow Process,” *Utah Nippo*, 5 January 1945.

there had been over forty acts of violence along the West Coast.³⁴ According to the *Utah Nippo*, Japanese Americans who returned found their property broken into, a move by the antis to “purposely paint a gloomy picture to discourage returning.”³⁵ Vandalism and physical threats stirred “hesitancy to go back” to homes, which arose “natural[ly]” among evacuees considering such a West Coast return. These actions “create[d] fear and thereby discourage[d] the return.”³⁶ Nikkei editors and authors reported the violence on the West Coast throughout the year, both to warn Nikkei that return would be difficult, but also to encourage those who were determined to return that they would be in the forefront of stopping violence and discrimination.

In May, the report came that “the courageous ones are pioneering the way back,” and, as time went on it became “apparent to one and all that the persons of Japanese ancestry must go back [to the West Coast] to help in the fight.”³⁷ The terminology of “fight” and later uses of “Nazi persecution,” “titanic struggle,” and “venomous race hatred” made the actions of anti-Nikkei persecutors evil and the enemies of *all* Americans, while transforming Nikkei who returned, despite the threats, into heroes.³⁸ The motives of the anti-Japanese movement were both racism and “economic greed”—which the *Utah Nippo* claimed was an investment racists made because they had made money from the Japanese removal and absence.³⁹ In describing the “antis” as undemocratic villains, the Nikkei who had proved their loyalty to the United States were heroic

Kevin Allen Leonard, “‘Is That What We Fought for?’: Japanese Americans and Racism in California, The Impact of World War II,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (November 1990): 468.

³⁵ “Go Home To See For Yourself,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 February 1945.

³⁶ “Intimidation Through Violence,” *Utah Nippo*, 28 February 1945.

³⁷ “The Race War of the West Coast,” *Utah Nippo*, 7 May 1945.

³⁸ “West Coast Terror,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 May 1945 and “Battle of the Century,” *Utah Nippo*, 18 May 1945.

³⁹ “Nation Becoming Aroused,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 June 1945.

and, by returning, upheld American values of liberty and democracy, such as those individuals the *Utah Nippo* highlighted for their American successes.

A *Utah Nippo* column called “Resettlement News” appeared at mid-1945, featuring short success stories of Nikkei who left the internment camps and settled in Midwest or West Coast states. James Miyano in Santa Rosa encouraged his friends in Granada camp to return in time for planting. Two brothers in San Jose, Katsuzo and Isamu Sam Uchiyama, “[found] it easier to get vegetable seeds to come out of the ground in California than to get many of their Poston friends to come out of camp and relocate.” This column was a generic one, published in many papers—the Nikkei in Topaz Camp were not urban nor at Granada or Poston so the column was not specifically targeted at them. Rather, “Resettlement News” was of broad scope and geared towards evacuees all over the U.S. In the same issue of the *Utah Nippo*, another segment reported that some San Francisco families “expressed the utmost delight in being back in California again; reported no unpleasant incidents en route; and look forward with pleasurable anticipation to their successful relocation.”⁴⁰ Though this ignored or overlooked the actual events of returning, the author focused on supporting resettlement and only addressed positive experiences. While earlier editorial choices focused on the threatening situation between aggressive whites and returning Nikkei, after mid-year, the heroism required to return disappeared from the columns and was replaced with reports that the situation wasn’t so bad and Nikkei of normal courage could also return.

Later in 1945, the tone of articles in the *Utah Nippo* changed again and significantly. Articles began to caution Nikkei about returning to the West Coast, not because of threats and violence, but because of the success and acceptance Nikkei were finding in Midwest and Eastern states. As early as May, editors noticed that “from the Middle West and the East ... the Nisei of

⁴⁰ “Northern California Resettlement News: San Jose and San Francisco” *Utah Nippo*, 2 July 1945.

the white collar class are enjoying greater freedom in the selection of jobs than they ever had in the past.”⁴¹ Nisei professionals met the most success in the Midwest. Many had college degrees and had been underemployed in West Coast states because of their race. For a pleasant change, “there seem[ed] to be no discrimination” in the workplace. “Doctors and dentists in Chicago [were] kept very busy” and had “more and more Caucasian patients.”⁴² These statements urged evacuees to consider unfamiliar locations, where they could be ensured of acceptance.

Those who were not professional workers but had entrepreneurial skills could also resettle in the Midwest, where every

city can support one or more restaurants specializing in Oriental foods, and openings exist in a wide variety of other businesses—laundries, hotels, rooming houses, produce markets, grocery stores, toy factories, handicrafts, dry cleaning and dress making establishments, and specialty repair stores.⁴³

The businesses many Issei on the West Coast had owned and operated could be transplanted to the Midwest, where they would find a ready non-Japanese clientele. Resettlement outside of the West was usually considered something for the more Americanized Nisei. Carolyn Chung Simpson suggests these “younger Nisei men and women from middle-class backgrounds, with some degree of college training...were willing to go to great lengths to prove their ‘loyalty’ and their willingness to be reformed and relocated,” which often meant that they “were prepared to dissociate themselves from their poorer ethnic communities and to adopt new patterns and social contracts.”⁴⁴ The *Utah Nippo* argued that even Issei could find a business niche throughout the United States. Skilled labor and university-educated professionals were also in demand in Eastern

⁴¹ “Eastward Trend,” *Utah Nippo*, 23 May 1945.

⁴² “Where To Resettle?,” *Utah Nippo*, 30 July 1945.

⁴³ “New Booklet on Midwest Now Available,” *Utah Nippo*, 20 April 1945.

⁴⁴ Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1943–1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 155, 161.

cities, where, in October, New York City reported “47,973 unfilled jobs” especially for “shoeworkers, auto mechanics, sheet metal workers, machinists, paint sprayers, tool and die makers, nurses, beauticians, cooks, domestics, commercial nurses, research engineers, medical technicians, pharmacists, and accountants.”⁴⁵ This sentiment grew more pronounced in editorial comments on the existing opportunities east of the Rocky Mountains. For the most part, the *Utah Nippo* did not publish articles describing the white collar prospects within Utah or in Salt Lake City (where most jobs would have existed), perhaps to avoid an even larger population growth in their city.

The longer peopled stayed in the concentration camps, the harder it would be for them to leave, argued the *Utah Nippo* editor. If evacuees put off leaving they would become “dependent upon others. Initiative is undermined. And the will to fight against odds is weakened.” The people (more specifically Nisei with the cultural skills to survive outside a Japan Town) who were hardworking had already left the centers and found new places to live. The Nisei who had “too long a vacation in the relocation centers” were “tragic” and pathetic to the editor.⁴⁶

In October 1945, the *Utah Nippo* blatantly spoke about the housing problems in Los Angeles County, where there were “inadequate facilities to house” those returning. Government housing authorities asked that Nikkei taper off their return to not overwhelm all facilities at once. An unnamed WRA spokesperson worried, “If we are forced, through lack of funds, to plummet the Japanese Americans back [to the West Coast] suddenly and without aid, I forsee [*sic*] chaotic conditions on the coast.” The same article provided statistics that “early this year [1945], two out of every three Japanese Americans elected to relocate in the East. Within the last few months ... the ratio has virtually been reversed.” The article tried to make it clear to Nikkei that their

⁴⁵ “USES Reports Numerous Unfilled Jobs,” *Utah Nippo*, 31 October 1945.

⁴⁶ “Self-Reliance,” *Utah Nippo*, 2 July 1945.

resettlement choices determined the future employment, sanitation, and housing for them, their families, and thousands of other Nikkei moving around the country.⁴⁷

According to a few *Utah Nippo* articles, many Nikkei simply returned to western states because they “[h]ave or know of no other place to go” and figured that they might as well struggle in “the milder winters” of these areas.⁴⁸ Not knowing where to go and attraction to the climate were paltry reasons to move to such an insecure home, according to the editors. “Those who have been engaged in white collar jobs or skilled work” would have a poor experience on returning to California, and, although the climate was nice, “this cannot be exchanged for economic security,” chided an October editorial. And, in December, an editorialist warned that “for those who have children, the future must not be overlooked.” “It is a mistake to dash back to the West Coast simply because the climate may be mild. After all, we can not [*sic*] live on the sunshine alone.” Even for farmers, the East Coast offered, “larger marketing opportunities,” truck crops didn’t need refrigeration, and farmers could grow a “wide diversity of crops.” The various opportunities in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and everywhere in between needed to be taken seriously in individual resettlement decisions. The economic opportunities outside the West Coast were much greater than those in it. Editorially, the *Utah Nippo* reported that it was acceptable for Nikkei to stay away from the West Coast, become model citizens wherever they lived, and prove that they could live in peaceful proximity to white Americans.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Raising Rents,” *Utah Nippo*, 1 October 1945 and “More Nisei Leave East To Return To West Coast,” *Utah Nippo*, 5 October 1945.

⁴⁸ “Have We Learned?,” *Utah Nippo*, 24 October 1945.

⁴⁹ “Reconstruction Period,” *Utah Nippo*, 22 October 1945; “We Should Be Thankful,” *Utah Nippo*, 21 December 1945; and “Farm Opportunities Offer Income On Level With City Jobs,” *Utah Nippo*, 16 November 1945. For more on resettlement, see Stephen S. Fugita and Marilyn Fernandez, *Altered Lives, Enduring Community: Japanese Americans Remember Their World War II Incarceration* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).

Chapter Conclusions

The *Utah Nippo* was concerned with ending racial injustice. Although they reported on racist legislation that impacted the community, it was only when the war wound down that the *Utah Nippo* strongly pressed for the end to racism. They noted the injustice of racist laws and practices in Utah, criticized hypocritical Nikkei who were themselves bigoted towards other people of color, and pushed for Nikkei to take the lead in ending of racism. And as people began to return to the West Coast, the *Utah Nippo* believed Nikkei could be instruments of ending racism in their new locales.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis, “‘Super Salesmen’ for the Toughest Sales Job: The *Utah Nippo*, Salt Lake City’s Japanese Americans, and Proving Group Loyalty, 1941–1946,” has examined Salt Lake City’s Japan Town during World War II and attempted to understand some of the forces at play inside that community through the lens of the *Utah Nippo*. Since there is a dearth of scholarship about the small community, which has often been dismissed simplistically by scholars, my thesis adds to our understandings of Nikkei in the Intermountain West, as well as to studies of Salt Lake City, ethnic, and Utah history. By focusing on the editorial content of the *Utah Nippo*’s English section, I explore Nikkei messages about wartime behavior and the construction of a group identity revolving around unity, national loyalty, and American culture. Nikkei in the state and throughout the nation found it prudent to pursue such a cultural strategy because of the questions raised about their citizenship and residency in the country. Behaving in certain ways, as recommended by community leaders in the pages of the *Utah Nippo*, would presumably ensure that Nikkei could continue to live, work, and participate in the United States.

Just because *Utah Nippo* editors and community leaders said something or recommended a specific course of action did not mean that community residents always followed suit. Indeed, the newspaper reported on their idea of bad wartime behavior and on the Nikkei in Salt Lake City who chose not to conform to the recommended behavioral norms. The editors used these reports as object lessons, but preferred to print articles about positive behavior in hopes that these would encourage more people to follow step. They emphasized actions that helped to “sell” the image of Nikkei as loyal Americans to the rest of the country focused on war with Japan.

I also argue that Nisei created and encouraged the model minority image themselves. Although many scholars see that image as a product of World War II, this thesis shows that

editors and JACL leaders actively promoted that image which is considered to be the model minority. Nikkei were to be loyal to the United States, well-behaved, not draw attention to themselves, excel in academics, athletics, and employment, and to contribute to the group's benefit. These actions, as described in this thesis, were the *Utah Nippo's* major focus during the war, even in its earliest years.

Utah's Nikkei population was small and, in the story of World War II and the Japanese American experience with relocation and internment, seemingly unimportant. But Utah's Nikkei experience is representative of the majority of Japanese Americans living away from the West Coast who were not imprisoned, who remained in their homes and communities, who fought for their rights, and who attempted to convey Nikkei loyalty to the rest of the nation. As one of only three Japanese language papers allowed to publish in the U.S. during WWII and a voice for the national JACL organization, the *Utah Nippo* was a major force in disseminating that message. Although it is difficult to qualify the actual impact the *Utah Nippo* had on people's behavior or whether it led or reflected group sentiment, we do know that *Utah Nippo* editors tried to influence their neighbor's individual actions for what they saw as the social and political benefit of the larger group. And, as a printed source in the English language, the *Utah Nippo* may have influenced nervous Euro-Americans, reassuring them that Nikkei were loyal Americans and local Utahns.

There are, of course, many avenues for future research which could expand and contribute to our understanding of the *Utah Nippo's* wartime message. Because the newspaper was a local news source, it printed many advertisements for activities from groups beyond the JACL. The influences that youth clubs associated with religion, specific activities or interests, or with other ethnic identities may have had on Nikkei actions during the war is an area that could be explored further. Because of time constraints, I neglected *Utah Nippo* coverage of the 442nd Combat Battalion, made up of Nisei soldiers from the internment camps and some men from Salt

Lake City. The impact of their demonstration of loyalty through blood sacrifice could be explored more specifically in the larger Salt Lake community. Additionally, access to the records of the Japanese Church of Christ and the Buddhist Church might provide a larger window into the Utah Nikkei community. A careful comparison of public opinion about the local Nikkei in Salt Lake City (long time residents as well as recent relocatees) through newspapers like the *Deseret News* or the *Salt Lake Tribune* could more fully gauge the effectiveness of the *Utah Nippo*'s attempts to reassure Utahns of the community's loyalty. Finally, future research will reveal more of the contours of the Salt Lake Nikkei community itself and the way the *Utah Nippo*'s editorial policy moved that community; and access to classified government documents may show how effective that strategy was in creating a specific identity and proving group loyalty in the midst of the fear and hysteria that swept the nation after Pearl Harbor.

The *Utah Nippo*, one of the few Nikkei newspapers published during World War II, was an important source of news and information for the United States' Nikkei population. For those in Salt Lake City, the state of Utah, and internment centers around the country, the *Utah Nippo* was a major news source. Beyond simply reporting, the *Utah Nippo* made an editorial priority to influence the current and future actions of American Nikkei. The actions the editors encouraged would, they believed, help the ethnic group to become accepted in American society. Nikkei who were well-behaved, patriotic, not racist, and hard-working were those who proved their American culture through their actions. This was the *Utah Nippo*'s editorial message during World War II.

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