

Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century. Louis Fiset and Gail Nomura, eds. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005

Four Hirabayashi Cousins: A Question of Identity

James Hirabayashi

The sudden onset of World War II on December 7th 1941 thrust the issue of identity to the forefront for all Japanese Americans. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the War Department to prescribe military areas from which any or all persons may be excluded. This order served as the basis for Lt. General John L. DeWitt to issue the curfew and exclusion orders. Public Proclamation No. 3 established a curfew from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. for Japanese Americans in Military Area No. 1 and requiring them to stay within a five-mile radius of their homes. The implementation of the exclusion order began on March 24, 1942, and by October, 1942, all Japanese Americans were removed from the West Coast incarcerated in hastily constructed concentration camps, also known as relocations centers. [1]

Early in 1943, the War Department and the War Relocation Authority devised a questionnaire to test the loyalty of persons 17 years and older in all camps. The purpose was to sort out the “loyals” from the “disloyals.” The questionnaire included two critical questions 27 and 28 which asked: “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?” and “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and . . . forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor. . . ?” [2] Answering “yes” to these questions was mandatory for those applying for resettlement out of camp to areas of the United States outside of the West Coast exclusion zones. It also made male Nisei of draft age eligible for conscription into the armed services. Beginning in February, 1943, the Army scheduled visits to the camps to register all male Nisei of draft age. [3].

The exclusion of all Japanese Americans from the West Coast and the conscription of Japanese Americans into the United States Army led to diverse reactions on the part of four Nisei cousins who were raised in Japanese American communities in and around Seattle, Washington. [4] The cousins are Grant Jiro Hirabayashi, Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabayashi, Robert Taro Mizukami, and Henry Nobuo Hirabayashi. They are the sons of Issei immigrants from an extended family neighborhood of eleven Hirabayashi households in the township of Hotaka, Nagano prefecture, Japan. Toshiharu Hirabayashi, father of Grant; Shungo Hirabayashi, father of Gordon; Isami (nee Hirabayashi) Mizukami, mother of Robert; and Hamao Hirabayashi, father of Henry, were the relatives who who emigrated to America.

The primary theme of this essay is Japanese American identity formation. It examines the nature of Nisei identities as Japanese Americans and Americans and how these issues impacted the decisions they made as Americans. It concludes with a discussion of ethnic identity formation in America and implications for America as a democratic and multicultural society. This essay considers the Hirabayashi cousins' family and community backgrounds, presents vignettes of their lives prior to the war, and describes their reactions and decision during the critical wartime period. With a common background, the four Nisei cousins identified as Japanese Americans, Each cousin operating in terms of his own understanding of American citizenship, made independent decisions in response to challenges to his citizenship rights.

Immigrant families seeking security in an often hostile land formed ethnic communities. In his classic study on the Japanese in the Seattle, Frank Miyamoto points to a tightly knit social organization as being the key feature of the community: “almost every Japanese minority member seemed in some way linked to an elaborate social network in the Japanese community.” [5]

Collective responsibility led to social solidarity. Miyamoto refers to the initial years of Issei immigration as the "frontier period": "the population was composed largely of laboring-class males, almost all of whom were 'birds of passage' eager to make quick money and return to Japan. Families were few, and only the bare framework of the institutional organization necessary for the wants of a normal community was existent." After the signing of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1907, the community entered what Miyamoto termed the "settling period": "Families were emphasized . . . New institutions were necessitated to bridge the gap for the settling Japanese immigrants between their native heritage and the American environment." It was a setting, however, characterized by racism: "prejudice and discrimination were much more manifest than they are today. . . it was caste like." [6]

Nestled in the foothills of the Japan Alps in Nagano prefecture is the township of Hotaka. In a semi-rural setting at the edge of town was a cluster of eleven Hirabayashi households. In 1907, several young Issei from this extended kin group emigrated to the Seattle area, where they maintained close relationships with each other. "There had been an adventurous man in Azumi who had come to America, made a fortune in five years, and returned home . . . advertised America's wealth and opportunities, and under his influence, these four young men made their decision to cross the ocean." [7]

In preparation for their overseas sojourn, several Issei cousins attended a private academy, *Kensei Gijuku*, to learn English. While there they converted to Christianity. The founder and principal of the school, Iguchi Kigenji, was a disciple of Uchimura Kanzo, the founder of *Mukyokai* (non-Church Christian Movement) in Japan. [8] The *Mukyokai* movement, repudiated institutionalized church structures and sectarian animosities. Instead advocated the equality of believers and established fellowships (*Kyoyu Kai*) devoted to living a Christian life, nurturing faith and morals, engaging in the study of the scriptures, and looking after the welfare of fellow members. [9]

Upon arrival in America the Issei cousins worked on railroad crews and subsequently moved to Seattle and found work in hotels, restaurants and stores. Some became small entrepreneurs and others turned to farming. Several cousins along with friends from Nagano prefecture began a vegetable garden which later became the site of the Sand Point Naval Air Station, just the few miles east of the University of Washington campus in Seattle. They peddled their vegetables at the Pike Place Market above the Seattle waterfront hauling their produce by horse and wagon. After a few years, the Issei cousins sent for their Japanese brides, and began families. They formed an extended family group and saw to each other's social and economic needs.

Together with fellow immigrants from Hotaka township in Nagano, the Issei cousins established a Hotaka Club in Seattle. They kept in close contact with each other and met regularly throughout the year on holidays and other special occasions. They even invited Caucasian acquaintances from the neighborhood to picnic gatherings. In addition to the Hotaka club, the Issei cousins belonged to the Nagano Prefectural Association, a social and mutual aid association. They also belonged to the Japanese Association, a social and political organization established to look out for the interests of all immigrant Japanese in the Seattle area.

In 1919, four Issei from Nagano prefecture, including two of the Hirabayashi cousins, moved their families to Thomas, Washington, a rural community twenty miles south of Seattle. They purchased forty acres of land in the name of the eldest Nisei child in the group and began to develop their property. In the early 1920s, John Isao Nishinoiri, a graduate student from Japan, was engaged in field research on Japanese farms for his M.A. degree in sociology at the University of Washington. He wrote:

“About five miles south of Kent on the west road leading to Auburn stand four neatly painted houses . . . this is the White River Garden . . . [they] came from the same district in Japan, Azumi in Nagano prefecture . . . Although four different families live there, they plant, crop, buy and sell together. Machinery, tools, barns, horses and all equipment are owned and used in common. Cooperation is not a theory with them; it is a daily practice . . . this occupational cooperation finds its source in their spiritual cooperation . . . acquired in Japan under the influence of a non-denominational evangelist binds them together closely . . . they maintain their simple Christian faith in its puritanic form. . . They do not work on Sunday even in the busiest seasons, and never fail to meet for the purpose of worshipping God. They have no minister, so each of them speaks in turn of his thoughts and experiences. Their simple service is opened and closed with hymns and prayer, and when I attended I felt as if I were sitting with the Puritans of the colonial period.” [10]

The *Mukyokai* Issei established relationships with the the local Christians. They joined with their Christian neighbors, both Japanese and Caucasian, to start the Union Sunday School in Thomas. The grade school annex was rented and over 50 people attended each week: “Occasional pastor was Rev. Ulysses Grant Murphy from Seattle, a former missionary to Japan. [He] came up from Seattle once a month to preach to the group; in the evening he spoke in Japanese . . . [to] the Thomas *Kyoyukai* - Friends of Jesus Society.” [13]

The White River Garden families cleared their land, began raising crops and in successive years, built houses for each of the families. In 1922, Malcolm Douglas, Prosecuting Attorney for King County claiming the land was in control of alien Japanese in violation of the Alien Land Act of 1921 which prevented noncitizens from owning land, He filed suit claiming: “Wherefore, the plaintiff prays that this court enter a decree herein declaring that said land is forfeited and escheated to the State of Washington, and that the defendants have no right, title or interest therein.” [12] Although they had purchased the land in the name of the eldest Nisei child in the group, an American citizen, the government charged that the Issei were really in charge. The Washington Supreme Court ruled against the families, who were then forced to lease the houses and land they had built and improved from the State of Washington. “They continue their humble life and hard work and quiet prayer in spite of the uncertainty of their position.” [13]

In spite of these hardships, they settled down, raised their children, and joined with others in community affairs primarily through the local Japanese Association. They wrote essays about their American lives in a journal titled *Shin Kokyo* (New Homeland), reflecting their attitudes towards their new homes and the transformation of their collective identities from being Japanese to American. [14]

From these intimate contacts, the Nisei learned about Issei conceptions of social relationships. The Nisei were in direct contact with the mainstream society in their daily

activities, but particularly with educational institutions. The aim of the public schools was to socialize all students into becoming good citizens of the Republic.

The social context of the 1920s and 1930s was a complex setting for the Issei. The period included racism, economic hardships of the Depression era, and mounting political tensions resulting Japan's move to increase its hegemony in Asia. As the Nisei matured, they established Nisei communities, building on the influences of both the Issei and the mainstream society. A distinctive Nisei lifestyle appeared during this period that was characterized by: “the Nisei’s assimilation of the Japanese interpersonal style, modified to fit the American scene, and the resulting emergence of a Nisei culture and associative patterns with which the Nisei felt themselves especially comfortable.” [15]

The education of the Nisei cousins included not only their Issei parents’ *Mukyokai* teachings but also exposure to mainstream Christianity through the Union Sunday School and the summer Vacation Bible School, which was located in Auburn, a town to the south of White River Gardens. As they grew older, the cousins also attended periodic meetings of the regional Japanese American Christian Association. This was a general pattern for the Christians in the Japanese American community, The church “established interpersonal ties of unusually enduring quality and also laid relational networks which spanned regional communities.” [16]

There was a strong advocacy of education within the Issei community: “Every Japanese community feels a strong duty about educating its young, and this projects itself down into a deep concern on the part of the parents over the training of their children.” [18] It was primarily through the formal educational system that the Nisei were exposed to and learned about American life. Here they had daily social interaction with their Caucasian peers. Their teachers introduced them to the basic precepts of the American society: “Some general characteristics of Americanization included a staunch support for democracy, representative government, law and order, capitalism, general health (diet, hygiene, and sanitation), and command of the English language.” [18]

A tightly knit ethnic community based within the general context of the American society provided the setting within which the Nisei were approaching adulthood just before the onset of World War II. It was within this societal milieu that the four Nisei cousins negotiated issues of identity and nationality. Out of the family came training in ethics and morals and in the public schools they were drilled on the democratic principles and ideals of American life. With this nurturing in the family and community and exposure to American cultural norms in the school system, identity as Japanese American and American merged into an integrated whole.

Over the centuries, ten Hirabayashi branch (*bunke*) households segmented from a single main (*honke*) household. These households operated as a kind of a corporate entity (*dozoku*). [19] It was out of some of these related Hirabayashi households that these Issei “cousins” originated. When Issei immigrants arrived in the States, those who had any kind of kin relationship often formed “new” kin groups. There is a redefinition and a reformulation, a transformation of selected relatives into new closely knit kin groups. A redefinition and a reformulation would occur, resulting in a transformation of selected relatives into new, closely knit kin groups. [20] The Hirabayashi Issei “cousins” formed a new kin group, while the Nisei “cousins” extended this relationship into their generation even though the only first cousins in the genealogical sense are Gordon Hirabayashi and Bob Mizukami as Gordon’s father and Bob’s mother were siblings. The new kinship formation was yet another example of Miyamoto’s social solidarity among this evolving immigrant community.

Grant Jiro Hirabayashi

Grant Jiro Hirabayashi was born in November, 1919. He was named after Rev, Ulysses Grant Murphy, a Methodist minister and former missionary to Japan who befriended the *Mukyokai* group. Grant's father, Toshiharu, was considered the most knowledgeable of the *Mukyokai* fellowship since he had attended academy in Hotaka longer than any of the others. Grant's early religious exposure came from his family setting: "My parents made sure we went to church. I had at least three Bibles for perfect attendance. . .so there was something passed on, the twelve years I spend here left a strong impression." [21]

Grant's desire to visit Japan was sparked by two of his boyhood friends. They had gone to Japan during summer vacation, making Grant envious of their experience and knowledge: "I heard Kenji and Tom talking about their visit to Japan. My gosh, I'd better learn more about Japan, in order to stay with the crowd." Grant's father told him that since he was one of eight children, he couldn't afford to send him just for a vacation. But if he would stay and study for two years, he would send him: "I had to make that commitment which I readily accepted." In 1932, at the age of thirteen, Grant was sent to live with his father's eldest brother.

In school, the teachers were very sympathetic allowing him to wear western clothing and keep his hair long. After a year, however, in order to conform, he switched to wearing zori (sandals) and had his hair styled in a crew cut. His peers generally accepted him, Being fast on his feet, he made the track team, and with his ability to help fellow students with their English, he was able to gain some popularity among his peers. His teachers appointed him "moral officer" of the class. [22].

During these school years he took the mandatory military training classes: "for some reason the officer favored me, so I was one of the commanders of the school" After three years, Grant was ready to return home, but was told by his father to finish high school. He remained in Japan for eight years, not returning home until 1940.

Although Grant tried to conform to the ways of his peers, he realized that he was somewhat different and never thought of himself as a Japanese: "Noooo, I considered myself an American." This distinction was reinforced at times, such as when all of the moral officers were sent to Tokyo to represent the school and he was not selected to accompany them. "And then I said to myself, oh I'm not a citizen. I knew I was different and, of course, I always felt like an American for some reason." They wanted to recommend him for Officer's Training School but he declined: "I said thank you but no thank you because I am an American."

In spite of the eight years of Japanese education, Grant's self identity did not change:

"I'm sure I was influenced and brainwashed to some extent but still I identified myself as American, I know what my friends in Japan are being exposed to and I know how they think, I have strong feelings for them, but as far as my experiences, at no time did I hesitate as far as my loyalties were concerned. I think, 12 years, however short, for some reason - my parents and Christianity, the upbringing was such that I always associated myself here."

Although he was exposed to various religious beliefs in Japan, Grant had no conflicts. "To me, I didn't see anything wrong with Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism - I like Confucianism - and Christianity and the 10 commandments. I think they all share - have things in common." And while he was in Japan "there was no one telling me that you can't

believe in Christianity.” He still considers himself a practicing Christian.

After Grant was in Japan for 8 years, his brother Martin, who was assisting Professor Abe at Kyoto University after graduating from the University of Washington, “told me to go home because the political situation - the international relations between the two countries was deteriorating.” Returning home in 1940, “I was told at Kent High School, you can get credit for work done in Japan, so I finished high school in one year.” He found work in a local garage operated by an Issei but in a few months “I enlisted in the Army Air Corps after being inducted into the Army. My thinking then was that war was inevitable and that if I am going to serve in the army, I wanted to pick up a trade and what I had in mind was to become an airplane mechanic.” He was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington.

Within a few days, the war began and Grant was immediately sent to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri, “All of the Nisei were placed into ‘protected custody’ and confined to barracks for forty days. During that period we were marched to the mess hall, marched to the PX, no recreation. There were about 30 of us Nisei.” After basic training in June, 1942, all assignments for Japanese Americans serving the the Army Air Corps stationed at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri were terminated, and they were reassigned. Grant was sent to Fort Leavenworth to work in a hospital during the summer of 1942.

Soon, Grant received a letter from Col. Kai Rasmussen “asking me for my history and experience and before I knew it, I received orders to report to the Military Intelligence Language School, Camp Savage, Minnesota. He trained to become a translator and interrogator. [23]

While at Camp Savage, Grant obtained leave and traveled by train to the Tule Lake camp to visit his parents, he had been incarcerated there since late summer 1942. He was surprised and shocked by the conditions he saw:

When I got to the desert, and finally arrived at Tule Lake, a desolated area with barbed wire, watch dogs, and guards that were facing not out, facing inside, I’m sure that they [parents] were quite depressed, yeah, but they were happy to see me, After a brief visit I left, and that was quite depressing. I got on the train and was totally devastated.”

The army relocated the Military Intelligence Service Language School to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, in 1944. While awaiting assignment, there was a call for volunteers on a “dangerous” mission. Two hundred volunteers stepped forward, and Grant was among the fourteen selected. They were sent to India, where his unit received jungle training. Subsequently the unit was designated as 5307 Provisional Unit, with Brig. Gen. Frank D. Merrill as commander. The unit later became well known as “Merrill's Marauders.”

During their first encounter in Burma with soldiers of the Japanese Army in early September 1944, they came upon scattered food supplies. Among them was a torn miso bag labeled “Shinshu Miso,” produced in the region where Grant had lived. “I didn’t want to meet any of my classmates, but fortunately the unit we fought was from Kyushu in southern Japan.”

Among his duties was interrogating POWs. He developed a standard procedure for interrogating them:

“I asked him if he was wounded, sick or if he needed medical attention. And then I said, where you from? Your parents, have you heard from them lately?”

And while conversing with him, I smoked a cigarette with him and of course, his attitude changed and actually a tear came down and taken by surprise, he said: 'you aren't going to shoot me?' Ah no, I won't shoot. And so he became very cooperative."

Once, however, an officer challenged him: "you're a traitor. I said I'm an American. He called me a traitor and refused to answer my questions. I was quite disappointed when he called me a traitor." Subsequently, however, after further exchanges, he became cooperative.

After the war Grant served with the occupying forces in Japan from 1947 to 1951. He worked there for the supreme commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). After the war, from 1947 to 1951, Grant returned to Japan during the occupation, working for the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) as an interpreter, translator and interrogator during the war crimes trials. Whether he was serving the prosecution or the defense, he wanted to be truthful and fair: "I always wanted to help as much as possible. As a matter of fact, I had many lawyers from the defense coming to me because they felt I was more understanding." And, after all his years in Japan, he did strongly empathize with the Japanese: "Well, I just go by the facts, whether one is on the defense or prosecution. I could feel for the Japanese. I know how they felt." In his mind, however, his loyalties were never in question:

"... although there were many things which I didn't like about America because of discrimination. . . at no time did I hesitate as far as my loyalties were concerned. . . I knew I was an American and couldn't be anything else."

After his work with the war crimes trials, Grant returned to the United States and went to college on the G.I. bill. He attended the University of southern California, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees in International Relations. He subsequently worked for the Department of State, the Library of congress, and the Department of Defense. He is now retired and as of 2002 lives in Silver spring, Maryland.

Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabayashi

Gordon Hirabayashi's father, Shungo, together with Grant's father, Toshiharu, formed the core of the Thomas *Mukyokai* fellowship. Gordon was born in 1918 in Seattle but his earliest memories are of living on the farm in Thomas, Washington next door to his cousin Grant. The family moved to Seattle one winter to escape from the hard farm life but returned to try farming again at the urging of the Mukyokai group, Gordon's mother, Mitsu, was concerned over disciplinary problems as young Gordon was picking up bad habits on the streets of Seattle near Skid Road area. Because she also attended the Kensei Gijuku academy in Hotaka before emigrating, she was a strong promoter of Mukyokai practices. Training in ethics came through example: Gordon's mother also attended the academy in Hotaka before emigrating and was a strong promoter of *Mukyokai* practices. Training in ethics came through example:

"A good portion of the influence of the parents didn't come from their lecturing to me and disciplining me. It was the way they lived. People in the community trusted Dad; their teaching came by their actions, so I got that training one way

or another.”

Gordon and Grant grew up on neighboring farms. On Sundays, Gordon and his cousins attended the local Sunday School.

It was four-square type fundamentalist, Pentecostal. They ran the Bible stuff, contest for kids. I got a new testament for memorizing all the books of the Bible. . .it took me until high school to kick them out of my life, the fundamentalists. . .I threw out all the literal things of the fundamentalists. but I didn't throw religion out.”

Gordon did well in public school. He took a state exam while in 7th grade and: “I skipped a grade and went on to junior high school by the age of 13. His mother had high aspirations for him: “Ahh, these guys going to University of Washington - a farm school. You're going to a school like Yale or Harvard.” He also attended the Japanese language school sponsored by the local Japanese Association.

In his youth, Gordon belonged to a mixture of Japanese American and mainstream groups which included the local Boy Scout troop 53, the Hi-Y (High School YMCA), and the Auburn Christian Fellowship (a Japanese American interdenominational group). He participated in sports at the public schools. He also organized a Nisei basketball team and played in the regional Nikkei league. Later, while at the University of Washington, he had a room at the University YMCA near campus. He received a scholarship to attend the YMCA President's School, a leadership training program, at Columbia University. He also joined the American Society of Friends (Quakers) while attending the University of Washington.

When Gordon saw the first exclusion orders posted on telephone poles in the early spring of 1942, during his senior year, he was confronted with a dilemma:

Do I stay out of trouble and succumb to the status of a second class citizen, or do I continue to live like other Americans, and thus disobey the order? I was not accustomed to disobeying the government. At the same time I was not sure I could abandon my values, goals and self respect, and still be useful to my family, community and country.” [24]

At the University YMCA, Gordon had numerous discussions with Bill Makino, a Nisei honor student, several years his junior. Recalling these discussions, Gordon commented: “At one point I said, this is all wrong. If I go I am giving tacit approval of what's going on, so I can't go.” Bill agreed, “I can't go either.” When Bill informed his parents, however, they were shocked: “They gave me the works.” Since he was the only child of an elderly Issei couple, his duty and obligations to his parents weighed heavily upon him. Gordon was pressured by his mother as well: “We don't know where we are going and what the government is doing but one thing we could do is to try to keep together.” Gordon, was pressured by his mother, as well: “We don't know where we are going and what the government is doing, but one thing we could do is try to keep together.” Gordon, comparing his situation with Bill's, felt that in his case the family was in good hands, since his brother Ed, who was just graduating from high school, and his next brother, Jim, who was just finishing his sophomore year, would both be with the family. My parents found it difficult to cope with me and my decisions, but

came around and supported me. with his brother Ed just graduating from high school and his next brother Jim just finishing his sophomore year: “My parents found it difficult to cope with me and my decisions but they came around and supported me.”

Gordon dropped out of the university in March, 1942, after completing the winter term. He then volunteered for the American Friends Service Committee to help the Seattle Nikkei community prepare for evacuation. Then on May 16, 1942, Gordon walked into the Seattle FBI office and challenged the “exclusion order” with a four page typewritten statement: Why I Refused to Register For Evacuation.

“Even though the exclusionary orders bore the imprimatur of the Western Defense Command on behalf of the United States government, I knew I must refuse what I considered to be a gross violation of the Constitution. . .I must maintain my Christian principles [and] the democratic standards for which this nation lives.” [25]

Gordon was arrested. The army, however, hoping to avoid such confrontations, was willing to drop all charges provided he leave for the temporary detention center at Puyallup, Washington. He refused and thus remained in jail.

Subsequently, the charge was amended to include violation of the curfew orders. At his trial on October 28, 1942, with Judge Lloyd D. Black presiding, Gordon's attorney, Frank Walters argued that his client's Fifth amendment right of due process was violated by the exclusion order. The judge dismissed the argument: “We have been engaged in a total war with enemies unbelievably teacheerous and wholly ruthless [The due process argument] should not be permitted to endanger all of the constitutional rights of the whole citizenry.” [26] Judge Black instructed the jury to find Hirabayashi guilty on both counts, which it did. He was sentenced to a year in prison.

On appeal, the United States Supreme Court considered only the curfew verdict and, on June 21, 1943, Chief Justice Stone, upholding the conviction wrote: “The danger of espionage and sabotage to our military resources was imminent, and the curfew order was an appropriate measure to meet it” [27] Throughout, Gordon remained convinced that he had taken the correct stand: “I fully expected that as a citizen the constitution would protect me. Surprisingly, even though I lost, I did not abandon my beliefs and values.”

After serving his initial sentence in a federal prison for violation of the curfew and exclusion orders, Gordon went to work for the American Friends Service Committee in Spokane Washington. There he was required to respond to the same special “loyalty questionnaire” administered to all Japanese Americans in camp. On February 22, 1944, he sent it back to the draft board:

This questionnaire, which I am returning to you unfilled, is an outright violation of both the Christian and American principles of justice and democracy. The form, entitled, ‘The Statement of United States Citizen of Japanese ancestry,’ is a form based purely on the grounds of ancestry. . .if I were to fill in this form I would be cooperating with a policy of race discrimination. I cannot conscientiously do so.” [28]

Moreover, as a Quaker and a pacifist, he declined to further participate with the selective service process. The FBI thereby arrested him for draft evasion and in the subsequent court

trial he was sentenced to a prison term at McNeil Island federal Penitentiary. Ironically, he was there at the same time as his cousin Hank. After a court trial, he was sentenced to a term in McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary, ironically, at the same time as his Cousin Hank.

After the war, Gordon complete his graduate studies at University of Washington. He conducted field research among the Doukabors of British Columbia and received his Ph.D. degree in Sociology. He taught for three years at American University in Beirut, Lebanon, three years at American University in Cairo, Egypt. In 1959, and he joined the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta. at Edmonton, where she stayed for the remainder of his academic career.

Gordon is retired and living in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada with his wife Susan. He is a member of the National Board of the Religious Society of Friends.

Robert Taro Mizukami (BOB)

Bob was born in 1922 in Star Lake in the hills above Kent, Washington. His mother, Isami, was the younger sister of Gordon's father, Shungo, and attended the academy, Kensei Gijuku, before emigrating. Gordon's mother, Mitsu, served as an informal "go-between" in his parent's betrothal. Raised during the depression, it seemed to Bob that the family was moving almost once a year. The Mizukamis lived and farmed in Thomas right next to cousin Gordon's farm before moving back to Renton. He and Gordon's younger brother, Ed, were best friends and together they attended the Union Sunday School, festivals in the nearby urban centers of Kent and Auburn as well as family picnics at Redondo Beach, Washington.

After returning to Renton, Bob attended a church where a Baptist preacher came from Seattle to give sermons. Even though his father was Buddhist, "he believed that all of his kids should have some kind of religious training so we went to Sunday School and daily Vacation Bible School during the summer ." Bob was baptised in a Baptist Church in Seattle. Today, he attends the Methodist Church, just a block down the street from the Buddhist Church, in his home town of Fife, Washington.

The Mizukami family moved from Renton to Fife in 1937. Bob was a sophomore in high school and soon became a part of the high school crowd, attending classes and participating in the extra curricular activities. He was interested in sports but was, "too small for football, too short for basketball, and even too light to make the 90 pound weight class in wrestling." So he got involved in athletics by assisting the coaches as a student manager and earned his varsity letter three years running. He graduated from high school in 1940.

After graduation Bob worked in he family greenhouse business: "Didn't have much choice in those days." When the army issued its exclusion orders in the Spring of 1942, being the eldest son, he suddenly incurred the responsibility of registration the family and preparation the household for the move to camp. May was the height of the bedding season, one of the biggest months in the greenhouse business. "We left everything intact when we left. The War Relocation Authority eventually sold the property [so] we didn't have any place to come back to after the war."

On May 15, 1942, the Mizukami family moved to the nearby temporary detention center in Puyallup on army orders. "We had our truck and put all our stuff on it drove down to Puyallup and unloaded." In September, they were were transferred to the Minidoka camp in southern Idaho. Soon after arriving, Bob signed up for a work furlough and went to harvest potatoes and sugar beets in Aberdeen, Idaho. [29] He returned to camp in time for Christmas,

1942 and found a job working in internal security .

Bob answered “yes, yes” to the critical questions numbers twenty seven and twenty eight, on the so-called loyalty questionnaire.” “I don’t recall when we filled out the questionnaire, during the time of recruitment or when but we all had to fill it out . It was an individual thing. It seemed only natural that I answer ‘yes - yes.’ There were ‘no - no’ people but I was not aware of them at that time.” During early Spring, 1943, an army team arrived at Minidoka camp recruiting for the segregated all-Nisei unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. [30] “Some of us might have talked about signing up, one way of getting out of camp and getting something done. So I went down and signed up. There wasn’t a big debate, should I or shouldn’t I, it just seemed like a natural thing to do when your country is at war.” He didn’t ask his parents for advice: “One thing about my dad, he was a pretty learned person. And so when I told him what I was going to do, he didn’t argue.” Regarding his induction into the army, Bob reiterated his views: “When you take oath to swear into the service and things like that - those things come home to roost, you know, from the upbringing that you had in the past - like I say, it seems like the natural thing to do.”

Before leaving Minidoka, Bob had told his younger brother Bill, “you stay and take care of the family, I’m going into the service.” Much to his surprise, while training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, a couple of months later, "Here comes Bill. I said, I thought I told you to stay home!" There were about 200 men in a company which was divided into 4 platoons. Bill was in the Third Platoon while Bob was in the Headquarters Platoon. They didn’t see much of each other during the day but did see each other during off hours, “He always seemed to have money and I didn’t, so I used to borrow money from him all of the time.”

After training in a heavy weapons company, “I ended up in the kitchen. I don’t know what decided me, but they were looking for volunteers to go into the kitchen.” Bob became a mess sergeant. The brothers shipped out together and were involved in the Rome-Arno Campaign in 1944. In early July, they crossed Cecina river and were a little south of arno river, advancing to a place called Hill 140 ("Little Casino):

The Germans were using the Leaning Tower of Pisa as a field artillery observation post and they had us pinned down for awhile. . . I saw Bill one night, we were hauling hot meals up to the line . . . I was talking to him and he was telling me some of those shells are getting awfully close. So I was kidding him, what do you want me to tell them when I get home, man - I can still remember saying that, what a smart ass thing to say. I keep thinking about that all of the time, He was caught in a mortar barrage, killed in his own fox hole.”

Bob stayed with the 442nd RCT throughout the European campaign. Some of the more memorable campaigns were the liberation of Bruyeres, the Lost Battalion battle where the 442nd Regiment lost more men than the Texans they saved, and critical breaking of the Gothic Line. [31] It was during at Bruyeres that Bob was to earn a purple heart: “a couple of mortar shells came over . . . hit about 10 feet away. . . got shell fragments and drew blood.”

After eighteen months in Europe, Bob returned to the United States and was discharged at Ft. Lewis, Washington, in December, 1945. Meanwhile, his family had left Minidoka camp on a work furlough program and were then working in a nursery in Spokane, Washington.

During the summer of 1946, the family went back to Fife on a vacation and visited the old homestead. “We made a deal to buy the place back; paid twice as much as when we bought it before the war.” Together with his parents and younger siblings, they resumed the family business. Bob got married, raised a family and ran a successful greenhouse business.

In 1956, a rumor floated around that the city of Tacoma wanted to annex Fife. Some of the locals wished to maintain their autonomy and Bob became a member of the original incorporating committee. After incorporation he was elected to the original city council. In 1980, the incumbent mayor was elected the county commissioner. The City Council elected Bob as the Mayor pro tem. Subsequently, he was elected to serve an additional four-year term. “I had a total of 7 years. At the end of 1987, I was 65 at that time, I decided that’s enough. During that period, there was no other Nisei elected to a political office in the State of Washington.”

Bob served thirty years in local politics. He is retired and lives in Fife with his wife Lily. His son Greg now runs the family business.

Henry Nobuo Hirabayashi (Hank)

Hank Nobuo Hirabayashi was born in Seattle on April 29, 1923. His father, Hamao, appears in many early photographs taken during the first decade of the 1900s with his bachelor cousins and friends. He was one of the earliest to emigrate and urged his cousins to join him. The families were to maintain close relationships throughout the pre-war years. Beginning in a day job in a hotel in Tacoma, Hamao saved his money and eventually opened the Bell Town Grocery:

We were about a half mile directly north of the Pike Place Market on First Avenue
We lived in the back of the store and had a nice view of Elliot Bay and West Seattle.
At that time, Belltown was known as part of skid row so it was a was not the best
place to grow up. In our block alone there were three taverns and three houses of
ill repute and on week-ends there were many fist fights in the street.

Hank’s mother, Sanae, arrived in America from Okayama prefecture with her parents when she was fourteen. In Seattle she attended a local grade school: “She spoke English fairly well for an Issei.” Her parents, the Numotos, also ran a grocery store nearby. “I had grandparents, one of the few Nisei to have grandparents in this country.”

Contact with his cousins in Thomas came through informal family gatherings particularly on holidays. His mother had converted to Christianity and encouraged Hank to go to church. Before elementary school, he was sent by bus to the Japanese Baptist Church pre-school. During his high schools days, he went to Blaine Methodist Church in Seattle, a Japanese American congregation, currently known as Blaine Memorial Methodist Church.

Few Japanese families resided in Hank’s neighborhood, and only 3 or 4 Nisei attended his grade school. At Queen Anne High School, most of his schoolmates were white. Aside from attending regular classes, his extra curricular activities were concentrated in sports. Prior to the war, an important activity among his classmates was the National Guard. Twice a week they went to train at the armory, located not far from his family’s grocery store: “I tried to get in and they rejected me because I’m Japanese. That left quite an impression on me.”

Hank graduated from Queen Anne High in 1941. That summer, he visited a friend on the

Olympic Peninsula: “it was an isolated place where you could fish and hunt and I wanted to buy some land and settle out there. There was logging, fishing, oysters, a lot of things to do to get by on.” But he returned to Seattle, and just before December 7, he was hired on at a fish processing plant on the waterfront through an Issei contact in the neighborhood. The next day, Hank’s father, the president of the Japanese Grocer’s Association and a prominent member of the community, was arrested by the FBI and detained at the Federal Immigration station on Airport Way. Hank tried to visit him:

There was somebody waving through the bars so I was waving and right away the guards came . . . took me into the building and threatened to put me behind bars. Finally they let me go, but they wouldn’t let me see him. it was a traumatic experience.”

Being the eldest, Hank had to shoulder all of the family responsibilities: closing the store, selling the inventory and equipment, arranging for the family possessions and preparing for their impending incarceration. In May 1942 they boarded a bus that took them to the temporary detention center in Puyallup. Later that summer they were sent by train to the Minidoka camp in Idaho.

Initially, Hank worked at the canteen. During the fall of 1942 he left on a temporary work furlough to harvest sugar beets and potatoes. When harvest ended he returned to camp. Soon the Army came to camp looking for volunteers for the 442nd RCT: “Mike Masaoka came to recruit and for some reason I missed him. But I heard that a lot of people were impressed with his presentation because he was a dynamic speaker.” Referring to the loyalty questionnaire, Hank said: “I was willing to serve, so I signed ‘yes, yes’.”

During the Fall of 1943, he signed on with the National Youth Administration (NYA) to attend a vocational school program in Weiser, Idaho. He acquired skills in auto mechanics. He then moved to Salt Lake City, where he served tables at a University of Utah sorority house. He then tried to enlist in the United States Air Force but was rejected: “I had an enemy alien status.” He wanted to be a mechanic and subsequently attempted to enter the aeronautical mechanics program at Weber State College: “I couldn’t get into that either.” He returned to camp.

On February 6, 1944, the army scheduled visits to the ten camps administered by the War Relocation Authority to register all male Nisei of draft age. Recalling events surrounding his refusal to comply with the draft, Hank said: “I guess it was when the draft actually came. Up until then, I guess it was a slow process of starting to think about what was happening.” He thought about his rejection by the National Guard, his father’s sudden disappearance and detention, the Army Air Force rejection and his inability to enter the aeronautical mechanics program at Weber State College.

I was always told by my parents that if anything ever happened between Japan and the United States, it was my duty to go to the army. As a citizen, that’s my obligation. I started to reflect on it, it just didn’t make sense to me - to be in camp and have to be drafted without having a choice. It just wasn’t right.”

Hank decided to refuse induction. He learned that there were other dissidents in camp who decided to resist the draft because of the loss of civil rights. [32] The day they were to be

inducted, U.S. marshalls arrested several of them, including Hank, and they spent the first night in the Twin Falls jail. They were then taken to the Emmet County jail where they sat for two months. Hank's trial was subsequently held in Boise, Idaho.

When my draft call came, I sent an appeal by a registered letter. The plea was not guilty on the basis that my citizenship rights were denied. My court appointed lawyer told me there is no way out of this, you violated the draft order. Your only out is the registered letter. I had the receipt but the head of the selective service from Seattle swore he never got it.”

Some of the dissidents changed their plea to guilty, and the judge gave them lighter sentences of two years. Hank did not change his stand: "I remained with the non-guilty plea and got three years and three months.

Hank was sent directly to McNeil Federal Penitentiary. Initially, he and the other Minidoka resisters were confined in the main prison. Later they were transferred to the penitentiary farm. They were assigned various jobs: “I happened to work on the newspaper.” There were classes: “I caught up on my education with math, calculus, and vocational training.” With time off for good behavior Hank was incarcerated for less than three years.

On Christmas Eve 1947, Hank and the draft resisters received a pardon from President Harry Truman. [33]

After his release from prison Hank returned to Seattle and stayed with his parents. For a year he worked as a gardner. But then decided to tour the country. “Went by bus, no idea where to go.” Did odd jobs along the way, got married in Los Angeles. After a brief venture in Los Angeles grocery business, he returned to Seattle and established himself as a successful grocer in the University District. A health problem forced him into retirement. As of 2002 he lives with his wife across Lake Washington in a community east of Seattle.

A Question of Identity

As the four Nisei cousins negotiated issues of race, identity, and nationality in the context of life in the Pacific Northwest, their life histories represent individual trajectories. They should not be viewed mere casualties of the times but as proactive participants in decision making concerning their lives during a critical period. They were socialized in a nurturing Issei community and they and their Nisei cohorts created their own communities. The Nikkei community evolved within the context of American society, harmonized with the fundamental precepts of American life, the basic tenets being embedded in the Constitution of the United States.

Religious training played a significant role in the socialization of the Nisei cousins. Sunday mornings, the cousins and their siblings jumped onto the back of a flatbed truck for a three mile drive to the Union Sunday School. They looked forward to Sundays evenings when the *Mukyokai* fellowship met in each other's houses and the potluck dinners meant there would be lots of “goodies” to eat, important particularly during the Depression years. Learning proper behavior was a daily affair and, as Gordon said, it came mainly through examples:

What's good, truth - it's not unique to Japanese or English teaching. . . a good portion of the influence of the parents didn't come from their lecturing to me and

disciplining me; their teaching came by their doing it. The one basic principle of truth - if it's valid on Sunday its valid on Monday too; one principle for all people.

Grant was exposed to alternative religious thought due to his school years in Japan. He observed the religious philosophies of Buddhism, Shintoism and Confucianism and saw them as congruent with his Christian beliefs. Christianity was linked to his identity as an American albeit in a Japanese environment: "I think I kept it separate as long as it didn't invade my privacy because there was no one telling me that I can't believe in Christianity."

Of the cousins, Henry's relationship to Mukyokai influences was the most peripheral of the Nisei cousins. He lived in Seattle, some 25 miles from his Nisei cousins and saw them on special occasions. At home, religious influences came from his mother, his Baptist pre-school, and at the Blaine Methodist Church with its Japanese American congregation.

The cousins were socially entrenched in the local Nikkei communities. Their families belonged to various Issei regional associations as well as the local Japanese Association. Henry's father, additionally, was the president of the Seattle Japanese Grocer's Association. The cousin's exposure to mainstream American life was largely through the educational system. They were not taught by the Issei to become nationals of Japan. They grew up within the Japanese American and American communities and never questioned their identities as Japanese American and American. Henry's exposure to mainstream society was the strongest among the cousins. Most of his high school friends were Caucasians. Grant was extensively exposed to Japanese life with his eight years of education in Japan. His early years in the United States, however, set the foundations of his identity as an American. Additionally, due to the ethnocentrism of the Japanese, regardless of Grant's attempts to conform with the behavior of his Japanese peers, "I knew I was different." [36]

The actions of the United States Government forced each cousin to re-examine the basic principles underlying his citizenship and make commitments in terms of his understandings of the meaning of citizenship. Grant, although educated in Japan for eight years, never doubted his self identification as an American "I knew I was different and, of course, I always felt like an American for some reason." In spite of the impending hostilities between the United States and Japan, he joined the U.S. Army prior to the onset of the war. He served in the Military Intelligence Service Language School with distinction, using the advantage of the education he had acquired in Japan to fulfill his military duties. Gordon, the idealist, adhering to Christian and Constitutional ideals, rejected any action on the part of the government making him less than any other citizen in the nation. He refused to respond to the loyalty questionnaire: "I must refuse what I considered to be a gross violation of the Constitution. I must maintain my Christian principles [and] the democratic standards for which this nation lives."

Bob, in spite of the exclusion orders and his incarceration in Minidoka Camp, never wavered from his interpretation of what he needed to do as an American. He responded positively to the loyalty questionnaire and subsequently joined the army: "Like I say, it seems like the natural thing to do." Henry also responded positively to the loyalty questionnaire but when the army came to recruit him out of Minidoka camp, he considered his rejections by the National Guard and the Air Force and challenged the government's abridgement of his citizenship rights: "It just wasn't right."

The totality of the socialization experience, both in the Nikkei community and the mainstream American society resulted in the cousins identifying as Japanese Americans and Americans. They internalized the basic American principles and as they understood these

principles, they acted accordingly. They did not consult with each other nor were they aware of each other's decisions. Loyalty for them was not defined as a simple, dichotomous wartime issues. For them, the real question was: What does being Japanese American, qua American mean under these historical, political and situational circumstances? [35] They negotiated the complexities of identity formation moving between spheres of influence, assessing their own situations, and acted out their own histories. How does a Japanese American qua American identity become significant and operational in the context of this critical setting? [36] In their responses, each cousin was asserting his rights and duties as he individually interpreted the meaning of being an American citizen.

With their diverse actions the cousins exemplified yet another basic American value: the long-cherished value of individualism. Adherence to the basic American principles need not result in behavioral conformism. Diversity exists within the Japanese American community, belying the oft-repeated stereotypic assessments of homogeneity that "they are all alike." Pluralism and diversity are found throughout America within each of the ethnic groups. Indeed, the various ways of implementing our democratic principles attest to the expression: "In America, there is strength in diversity." America must redefine itself so that ethnic communities ultimately achieve acceptance as legitimate and integral parts of American society.

ENDNOTES

I would like to thank Ako Wooley for her translations of Issei writings; Louis Fiset, Gail Nomura and Lane Hirabayashi for insightful feedback and the four cousins, Grant, Gordon, Bob and Hank for sharing their lives with the community. The author is a member of the Hirabayashi kin group and the younger brother of Gordon Hirabayashi.

1. For a discussion on the extensive literature on concentration camp experience, see Brian Niiya, *Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present* (New York: Facts on Files, 1993), 56.
2. U.S. Government Printing Office. DDS Form 804A, January 23, 1943.
3. Brian Niiya *Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present*, 260-1.
4. Issei, the first generation, are the immigrants from Japan. Nisei, the second generation, are the children of the Issei.
5. S. Frank Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity Among the Japanese in Seattle*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), vi.
6. *ibid.*, 11, ix.
7. Azumi is the traditional name of this district in Nagano Ken. John Isao Nishinoiri *Japanese Farms in Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Masters Thesis in Sociology, 1926), 47.

8. Hiroshi Miura, *The Life and Thought of Kanzo Uchimura: 1861-1930* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996)
9. William H.H. Norman, "Kanzo Uchimura: Founder of the Non-church Movement" *Contemporary Religions in Japan*, V:1, March 1963, 37.
10. John Isao Nishinoiri, *Japanese Farms in Washington*, 50.
11. Stan Flewelling, *Farmlands: The Story of Thomas, A Small Agricultural Community in King County, Washington*, (Auburn: Erick Sanders Historical Society), 95.
12. State of Washington Superior Court of the State of Washington. Film File C751 June 14, 1922 . All Asians were prevented from becoming naturalized citizens. The U.S. Congress in 1790 limited the rights to naturalization to the free and white. Congress amended this law after the Civil War to include the Africans among those eligible.
13. John Isao Nishinoiri, *Japanese Farms in Washington*, 51.
14. *Shin Kokyo* (New Homeland). Issues of this journal are in the collection of the Kensei Gijuku Museum in Hotaka, Nagano Prefecture.
15. S. Frank Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity Among the Japanese in Seattle*,xx
16. *ibid.*, xvii.
17. *ibid.*, 51.
18. David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 22.
19. For a detailed discussion of the dozoku structure in rural Japan, see: Chie Nakane, *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).
20. Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, *Transforming the Past: Tradition and Kinship among Japanese Americans*, (Stanford University Press, 1985).
21. The following vignettes on the cousins are based on interviews conducted by the author in 1996. When quoting from these interviews, the interviewee's name will always precede the quotes and citations will not be made after the quotes.
22. *kofukai yakunin*, a person in charge of upholding the school traditions or morals, the *esprit de corps* of the class.
23. Joseph D. Harrington, *Yankee Samurai: the Secret Role of Nisei in America's Pacific*

- Victory,_(Detroit: Pettigrew Enterprises, 1979). Tad Ichinokuchi, ed._John Aiso and the M.I.S.: Japanese American Soldiers in the Military Intelligence Service, World War II_, (Los Angeles: Military Intelligence Service Club of Southern California, 1988).
24. Gordon Hirabayashi, _Good Time, Bad Times: Idealism is Realism,_ (Argenta, B.C. Canada: Canadian Quaker pamphlet, no. 22, 1985), 3
 25. personal collection, Gordon Hirabayashi.
 26. Peter Irons,_The Courage of Their Convictions_ (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 42.
 27. *ibid.*, 43-45
 28. A letter sent to the Local Board 4, Seattle Washington, February 22, 1944. War Department files, ASW 014.311 WDC Exclusion Orders 9 March 44.
 29. Louis Fiset, “Thinning, Topping, and Loading: Japanese Americans and Beet Sugar in World War II,”_Pacific Northwest Quarterly_ 90:3, Summer 1999,123-139.
 30. Thelma Chang. *I Can Never Forget.: Men of the 100th/442nd,*_(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992). Masayo Duus, _Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and the 442nd,_Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).
 31. Chester Tanaka, _Go for Broke: A Pictorial History of the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team_ (Richmond, CA: Go For Broke, Inc., 1982).
 32. Brian Niiya,_ Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present,_152-154. For an account of draft resistance in Heart Mountain camp, see: Frank Emi, “Draft Resistance at the Heart Mountain Concentration Camp and the Fair Play Committee,”_Frontiers of Asian American Studies: Writing, Research, Commentary,_ Gail M. Nomura, Russell Endo, Stephen H. Sumida, and Russell Leong, Eds., (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1989, 41-69).
 33. Brian Niiya,_Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present,_153.

Gary Okihiro, “The Japanese in America,” in Brian Niiya,_ Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present, _18
 34. Regarding ethnocentrism in Japan, historians Reischauer and Jansen say: “their perception of themselves as being so distinct from the rest of humanity as to be unique.” Edwin O. Reischauer and Marius B. Jansen, _The Japanese Today: Change and Continuity_ (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 395ff.

35. For a discussion on the meaning of loyalty during wartime, see Yuji Ichioka, "The Meaning of Loyalty: The Case of Kazumaro Buddy Uno," *Amerasia Journal*, 23: (Winter 1977-1998), 45ff.
36. For a discussion on issues of perspective and meaning for Ethnic Americans, see Dorrine Kondo, Book Review of *Turning Leaves* *Visual Anthropology Review* 8:2 (Fall, 1992), 101.