Reflections of Cultural Identities in Conflict
Japanese American Internment Camp Newspapers during World War II

On February 19, 1942, shortly after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the removal of all Japanese Americans living in the Pacific Coast region. As a result, about 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were forced to evacuate to hastily erected internment camps. Those who have discussed their internment experiences often mention the struggle in cultural identity that they had felt. This article explores how the newspapers that were established in each camp reflected this identity struggle. Although the Japanese Americans initially suppressed their Japanese cultural identity in favor of their American identity in the newspapers, their sense of identity evolved through the course of internment to where both cultures were proudly affirmed.

In this era of high technology and rapid communication processes, the socially constructed boundaries separating various cultures have become obscured. It is within this context that an interest in the concept of cultural identity has resurfaced. Many authors have approached this topic under the overarching framework of neo-colonialism, incorporating a center-periphery notion and conjuring up images of cultural identities being transformed by economically and politically defined dominant cultures. Although the works produced by these authors have been highly insightful, their underlying assumption appears to be that cultural identity can be changed in a linear fashion. In other words, if a dominant power is able to legitimate its position in relation to a subordinate, the cultural identity of that subordinate will be directly transformed in a manner that would accommodate the higher power. Lacking in the scholarship is consideration of the possibility that resistance may occur on the part of the subject of the transformation process.

In contrast to this widespread notion that cultural identity change is linear, the approach in this article conceptualizes such change as taking place in a dynamic process. The central assumption is that when two cultural identities come into conflict, a struggle occurs between them, regardless of whether an asymmetry of perceived strength exists in the conflict. The end result is a merging of identities or a triumph of one identity. It is also contended that communication plays a vital role in this struggle. According to sociologist George Herbert Mead, “communication in the sense of significant symbols, communication which is directed not only to others but also to the individual himself,” serves as a means of objectifying the individual. Forms of communication allow the individual to step outside of himself or herself in order to view how he/she is reacting to the outer world and to see how the outer world is responding. In tandem with this line of thought, media are envisioned in this article as providing an arena where viewpoints can be expressed and where clashes in cultural identities are reflected. Through such reflection, it is assumed that media also help to define and shape the final identity that emerges from identity conflicts. Thus, the analysis of media documents (i.e., books, newspapers, electronic media, etc.) should allow researchers to decipher and understand how identities are molded over the course of time.

This research explore these ideas through the examination of
newspapers written and edited by Japanese Americans while they were detained in American internment camps during World War II. Studies have shown that many of the Japanese Americans who were forced to relocate, a majority of whom were citizens of the United States, experienced an identity crisis. Suddenly denied their civil rights as U.S. citizens, they began to question the American side of their identity. An identity crisis touched even those Japanese Americans who were not U.S. citizens. As former internee and author James Okada wrote, “Alien resident Japanese felt that America was their adopted country, despite the fact that they were denied by law to become naturalized.”

Widespread bitterness and hatred in the United States toward the Japanese also made the Japanese Americans question the Japanese side of their identity. As Amy Iwaski Mass wrote about her experiences during this period, “Our parents had told many of us to take pride in the strength and beauty of our ethnic heritage. It was extremely difficult to maintain a positive identity during the racial hostility, propaganda, and hysteria of World War II.” This article was prompted by an expectation that the newspapers published in the internment camps reflected the conflict or crisis in identity and would provide a means by which to examine the type of struggle that took place between the two cultural identities (i.e., American identity vs. Japanese identity).

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, an already racist attitude toward Japanese Americans intensified in the United States. Unfounded accusations that Japanese Americans were running covert operations in support of the Japanese government prevailed, and rumors abounded that the Japanese would soon attack the Pacific Coast. As a result, calls for the removal and detention of all Japanese Americans living within the so-called “military zones” came from government officials and the public. Research has shown that the mainstream press advocated this view and fostered the anti-Japanese American hysteria. Even well known columnist Walter Lippmann, on February 12, 1942, argued for the forced evacuation of all Japanese Americans living in the West Coast, writing that “the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and without.”

In the week following Lippmann’s column and a week after a west coast congressional delegation formally recommended to President Franklin D. Roosevelt the “immediate evacuation of all persons of Japanese lineage” from California, Oregon, and Washington, Executive Order 9066 was issued on February 19. In line with the delegation’s recommendation, the executive order effectively authorized the removal of all individuals of Japanese lineage from the west coast of the United States. The stated justification was that the “successful prosecution of the war” required “every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national defense material, national defense premises, and national defense utilities.” Approximately 110,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry were theretofore forcefully uprooted from their homes, stripped of their rights, and transported to the hastily erected internment camps; about 70,000 of those sent to the camps were U.S. citizens. Not only did these Japanese Americans have to endure the humiliation of being required to wear identification tags before being sent to the camps, but they were forced to part with personal property, resulting in heavy financial losses for many of them.

Ten camps were erected in various parts of the United States, all of which were located in desolate areas with extreme weather conditions. Although the U.S. government called them “internment centers,” to many of the internees, the camps were, in essence, concentration camps. Surrounded by barbed wire and armed, often hostile, guards who were constantly monitoring their every move, the interned Japanese Americans were not allowed to freely exit the camps. They were, in fact, forced to build a community within their cramped confines.

The War Relocation Authority (WRA), which was charged with overseeing all internment camp operations, required that a newspaper be established in each camp as a means to disseminate information and to create a community atmosphere. Among the few studies of the internment camp papers, disagreement exists regarding the extent to which these papers were censored by the authorities. Such a disagreement may reflect variations in press and editorial freedom among the newspapers, and it also may reflect the researchers’ methods of analyses and assumptions. For example, historian Lauren Kessler, in an article on three camp newspapers, explicitly stated the assumption from the outset that the second-generation Japanese American (Nisei) writers of the newspapers were accommodationists, and the findings drawn from her analysis of the papers echoed that view.

Of the three newspapers examined, she wrote, “After necessary space to WRA announcements and official bulletins, editors tended to concentrate on innocuous aspects of camp life—notably sports and other leisure-time activities—rather than the important issues that affected the inmates.” While her study is interesting and informative, another approach to analyzing the newspapers might yield a different interpretation. Perhaps on the surface, the writings did convey an accommodationist nature, but if a “between-the-lines” analysis of the papers was conducted, subtle struggles to voice opposition might come to the fore.

In reviewing archival WRA documents, it is apparent that a degree of newspaper censorship did occur, despite the initial intention of the WRA to allow a free press to develop within the camps. In an internal memorandum on May 26, 1942, Colonel E.F. Cress of the War Relocation Authority wrote, “Either evacuees enjoy freedom of the press or they do not. If WRA intends them to have it (and we have said so), it should be made real. Project newspapers can have an ‘official notice’ section for anything the project director wants to say.” As the process of internment was well underway and camp newspapers became established, however, a shift took place among project directors and the WRA in terms of their views toward the papers. Official documents reflect a veiled attempt on the part of the authorities to exert some form of censorship over the camp newspapers. In a memorandum on February 18, 1943, from O.J. Buttedahl, officer...
at the Minidoka internment project, to John Baker, chief of WRA Office of Reports, a level of frustration was expressed at not being able to overtly censor material. Buttedahl wrote:

We need to revise our definition of censorship and freedom of the press, or admit that in reality there can be no such thing at relocation centers because of the very nature of the situation. It’s all a matter of degree anyway, I suppose, and there is a way to impose censorship (as demonstrated at Topaz and Minidoka) without making it seem like censorship and without stirring up too much resentment about it. It all depends on the way it’s handled.40

No evidence has been found, however, that U.S. authorities resorted to blatant and unrelenting censorship throughout the internment period. In fact, government documents show that a concern existed among the authorities to stress the notion, at least to the internees, that camp papers were free to publish material without censorship. In a memorandum on May 1, 1944, officer Angelo Girardo reported to Malcolm Pitts of the War Relocation Authority that a need existed to promote the idea that freedom of the press was being observed at the Heart Mountain internment camp. He wrote, “A number of people feel that the Sentinel is a project-controlled paper and that true facts and the evacuees’ side cannot be printed.”41 While emphasizing the necessity of presenting an image of upholding the concept of a free press in the camps, however, government officials also were cautious about allowing certain materials to be published in the papers. This viewpoint was expressed by WRA Director D. S. Myer in his memorandum to Tule Lake Director Ray Best on December 4, 1944. He wrote:

As you doubtless know, it has always been our position that center newspapers, and particularly those sponsored by an evacuee organization such as business enterprises, should be allowed as much freedom of expression as feasible. At the same time, however, we have always recognized that such newspapers can adversely affect the interests of the entire Japanese American population by ill-advised writings and that there are consequently definite limits beyond which they should not be permitted to go.42

Thus, the relocation authorities attempted to harness press freedom in the camps on a situational basis.

Judging from the writings of those who served as writers and editors of the various camp papers, the overall consensus is that overt censorship by the authorities rarely occurred on most of the camp papers.29 During research for this article, it was assumed that the papers selected for examination were under the threat of some form of censorship, but the Japanese American writers and editors tried to use the papers to convey critical expression in subtle ways that avoided censorship. Thus, by closely examining these newspapers, one should glimpse into the identity-related turmoil that the intern-
ees apparently experienced and attempted to resolve.

Scholars from diverse disciplines have long grappled with the concept of identity. For example, in his classic treatise on human nature, sociologist Charles Cooley explored the subject of identity, or "self," as it relates to society at large. He wrote:

"The self that is most impertinent a reflection, largely, from the minds of others... We live on, cheerful, self-confident, conscious of helping man the world go round, until in some rude hour we learn that we do not stand so well as we thought we did, that the image of us is tarnished... The private self and its social reflection... seem separate but are darkly united, and what is done to one is done to the other."24

In a similar vein, Mead wrote that "the individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members."25 For Cooley and Mead, then, the essence of self or identity is based on an individual's social milieu, and an individual's sense of identity is highly interwoven with others' perceptions of him or her. When reviewing the more recent research on cultural identity per se, the influences of these classical works seem to pervade many of these studies.

Cultural identity has generally been conceptualized in two diverging theoretical ways. One school of thought conceives of cultural identity as being static, enduring, and more sharply defined by one's cultural heritage and tradition. The other perceives cultural identity as being much more fluid, continually being shaped by various social and cultural factors. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall, describing the latter perspective, wrote: "Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power."27

This second way of conceptualizing cultural identity mirrors the classical studies on identity that portray individuals as actively assessing their identities based on societal and cultural cues. In a never-ending process, identities are constantly being modified by forces both external and internal to the individual. In his study of the cultural identity in Great Britain, Malcolm Young wrote: "Cultural identity or belonging can never thus be grounded in any essentialism. ... Rather it is a continuing 'processual' drama that moves on like any other social discourse, in that it is always changing and flowing, taking and weaving in narrative style; and always worrying over those pieces that seem not to fit."28

This article has adopted this second conceptualization of cultural identity as in a state of perpetual flux. This flux, however, is not viewed as erratic. Rather, identity is shaped in a gradual dialectical process composed of struggles and contradictions, a process largely determined not only by those in power but also by those considered to be subordinate. Also, a central argument here is that communication, embodied in the printed word and as a production of culture, plays a crucial role in this transformation process of cultural identity.

Cultural studies scholar Raymond Williams viewed any means of communication, more specifically language, as a "material practice and a process in which many complex activities, of a manifestly material kind—from information to interaction, from representation to imagination, and from abstract thought to immediate emotion—are specifically realized."29 For him, the process of communication produces a broad range of meanings and experiences. He envisioned forms of communication as having the potential of either supporting the hegemony of the dominant culture or assisting in the creation of a counter-hegemonic culture. Similarly, Antonio Gramsci, as a philosopher and political activist, viewed media as either reinforcing the relative power of those in the dominant positions or as serving to promulgate a new class consciousness and collective will amongst those in the subordinate positions; in his words, media had the capacity to create a new "proletarian cultural hegemony."30

What these social or cultural theorists have suggested is that a transformation, in self or identity, may occur among individuals as a result of a new form of consciousness that emerges from the communication process. One may thus extrapolate from this and further advance the notion that printed communication (i.e., newspapers) may empower the creation and evolution of cultural identity. Therefore, critically examining the meanings in printed texts should provide illumination on the identity or identities being promoted or reflected. For this article, newspapers published in the Japanese American internment camps during World War II were studied for any evidence of conflict in cultural identities by those interned.

The overarching question guiding research for this article was the following: During times of crises, when an individual's cultural identity is called into question by a force of power (i.e., an entity holding greater power than the individual), does the individual's loyalty toward that identity diminish or disappear entirely?

The specific research questions asked were:

What did the camp papers reflect with regard to how the Japanese Americans were reacting to their internment when first brought into the camps in 1942? Does evidence exist suggesting that internees were either quietly acquiescing to their predicament or were boldly opposing the authorities? The assumption behind these questions is that by putting them in the camps, the internees' American identity was being challenged by the United States government. Thus, any form of resistance against the government's decisions would indicate that the Japanese Americans were trying to reaffirm their American identity.

Was there evidence in the camp papers that the Japanese Americans attempted to accentuate their American identity, while suppressing the Japanese side of their cultural identity?
Did the newspaper content suggest a particular identity prevailing in the cultural identity conflict?

In the early stages of being established, all of the camp papers were mimeographed and were mainly sponsored by co-ops that were set up within the camps. As these publications became firmly established as a part of camp life, and as supervised group excursions by camp internees to nearby towns for shopping purposes commenced, many of the newspapers began procuring sponsorship from businesses in those towns, and thus they were financially able to be professionally printed. Each newspaper eventually also had a brief Japanese language section, but these sections were not examined for this article. Most of the newspapers were published biweekly, but a few of the irregularly published ones varied from daily to every other day to weekly.

For each of the camp newspapers, issues from the first four months, the mid-four months, and final four months of publication were examined to represent the beginning, the middle, and the end of the internment period (see table 1). Three camp newspapers, the Poston Chronicle, the Topaz Times, and the Heart Mountain Sentinel, were selected for a closer examination covering the entire internment period. The Poston Chronicle was published in the Poston, Arizona, internment camp, the Topaz Times was published in the Topaz, Utah, camp, and the Heart Mountain Sentinel was published in the Heart Mountain, Wyoming, camp. These three papers were selected based on the knowledge that although the camp where the Topaz Times was published was fairly passive, overt resistance toward authority figures took place in both of the internment camps where the Poston Chronicle and the Heart Mountain Sentinel were published. Therefore, it was believed that comparisons between these papers might shed light on the possibility that the degree of evidence revealing identity changes might be contingent upon the nature of the camps in which the newspapers were published.

Discourse analysis was the method used to study the newspapers. Two lines of approaches seem to exist in this form of analysis. Social scientists stress the autonomy of the textual language from the author while humanities scholars emphasize the relationship between the written words and the author. The definition of discourse used here follows the approach by humanities scholars. That is, discourse is the linguistic construction of the author’s beliefs or thoughts. Moreover, in accordance with Norman Fairclough’s assessment, discourse analysis is understood as seeing “language as multifunctional” and “texts as simultaneously representing reality, enacting social relations, and establishing identities.”

According to Teun van Dijk, a systematic discourse analysis should entail the following considerations: “syntactic structures (sequences of sentences, for example, word order);” “lexicalization (selection of words);” “semantic (macro) structures of sentence sequences and whole texts (topics or themes);” and “rhetorical operations (figures of speech, such as metaphors or hyperbole).” Analysis that takes into account these facets of the text should capture “an interdisciplinary description of the respective levels and dimensions of discourse and its social, cultural, and cognitive contexts,” said van Dijk. Following his guidelines, special attention was paid in studying the camp newspapers to the location of certain stories or information, the selection and placement of words, the topics or overarching themes, and the accompanying visuals (i.e., drawings or photographs) presented in each newspaper issue.

As a final stage of the research, an interview was carried out with a former journalist, Sue Kunimori Embrey, who was interned at the Manzanar, California, internment camp and who worked for the camp’s newspaper as a reporter and managing editor from June 1942 to October 1943. The author wondered whether insights provided by Embrey would support or call into question the findings drawn from the examination of the camp newspapers.

The newspaper issues during the beginning, the middle, and the end of the internment period revealed the three time frames reflected three distinct phases of the Japanese American experience in the internment camps. A certain degree of continuity appeared across all of the newspapers in terms of their depictions of identity changes among the internees. The findings for the three time periods are therefore presented separately below to signify three separate phases of changes in identity for the Japanese Americans.

**Phase 1 - Identity Dissonance**

Camp newspaper issues during the initial months of internment in 1942 depicted the internees as a group of individuals who had lost their sense of a true Japanese American identity and who
were striving to find something new which they could call their own. Writings in these newspapers suggest that the Japanese Americans were searching for a reaffirmation of their American cultural identity, even if that meant disassociating themselves from their Japanese cultural identity.

An effort on the part of the Japanese Americans to disassociate themselves from their Japanese identity was suggested by many of the newspapers. Although several writers used an identification label, "Japanese Americans," the American identity tended to be emphasized rather than the Japanese identity. In a number of the newspapers, such as the Heart Mountain Sentinel, the Minidoka Irrigator, and the Tulean Dispatch, it was much more extreme. Neither a Japanese nor an American identification was conferred upon the internees in these newspapers. Rarely did the term "Japanese Americans" appear; instead internees were referred to as "coloni-sts." All camp papers referred to U.S. governmental authorities, or non-internees, as the "Caucasians," thus avoiding the term "Americans" as a means of classifying this outside group. No evidence of overt opposition to the authorities was found in these early issues of the newspapers. In fact, some of the writings exhibited an effort to place a positive spin on the internment experience. For example, an editorial appearing in the Manzanar Free Press on June 16, 1942, began with the following: "Our changed little world has brought changed modes of thinking and living. We thought the days of initiative and enterprise were gone, but now we are being presented with a rare opportunity for self-improvement and community development."

Also attempting to provide an upbeat slant in the Rohrer Outpost's February 27, 1943, issue, the editor wrote of how a community of equality was being brought forth by internment:

"All men are created equal" are words which may not be wholly true, but it is possible through artificial man-made means to bring about a semblance of equality. Politically, it has manifested itself in these United States; socially, it exists in Sweden; and economically, the Soviet Union has been trying these past decades to carve a Utopia for her populace.

This equality for which many have fought (even as in this war), though few have succeeded in getting, is a thing that we in this Center possess.

Evacuation has brought that equality by tearing down the economic, social and political barriers. It has brought the farmer in contact with the businessman; it has brought the liberal minds together with the narrow-minded ones; and it has placed us all on the same economic level.

Such writings, however, cannot be taken as evidence that internees were quietly accepting their fates in the camps. Evidence suggests subtle expressions of opposition by the Japanese Americans toward the authorities and to the various hardships and injustices they were forced to face. Much of the oppositional expressions were such as to require one to "read between the lines." For example, in the January 19, 1943, issue of the Denson Communiqué, plans for welcoming Nisei soldiers who were to visit the Denson camp are discussed. Although much of the information was provided in a rather straightforward fashion, in discussing the need to boost the morale of the visiting soldiers, the following lines were included that alluded to the somber feelings of the camp internees: "No one realizes more the burden which the soldier carries for us than the Center resident. Perhaps we are adding another burden on these soldiers when we organize a group here 'to help maintain the morale' of these servicemen. Perhaps is our morale that will find a boost."

Another example of subtle opposition appeared in a June 6, 1942, article in the Manzanar Free Press when the reporter provided information concerning the creation of watchtowers around the camp. The article also was fairly straightforward, but a note of sarcasm regarding the towers could be detected in the writing. For instance, with the large headline, "Rising Watchtower to be Community's Guardsman," the reporter began the article by writing, "Have you noticed those towers going up around this center and wondered whether these incipient skyscrapers were the prelude to a carnival or a fair?" The reporter then explained that they were actually watch towers that would provide "improved visibility to the watchmen and... further security to the residents."

In some of the papers, drawings or cartoons appear to have represented oppositional feelings about a particular issue or decision. In a Topaz story on October 27, 1942, the writer reported that a "fence" had been completed around the northern portion of the internment camp. Despite the matter-of-fact, detached feeling conveyed in the article, the drawing accompanying the article told a different story. It depicted the Topaz camp surrounded by a menacing looking barbed wire fence, which was similar to the kind one would find around a prison yard. This drawing may have represented an expression of resentment for, and criticism of, the U.S. government's decision.

Cartoons that appeared in camp papers during the early period of internment often indirectly commented on the harsh or unjust living conditions of camp life. Several depicted, in a humorous fashion, such conditions as internees having to take cold showers or wear government-issued clothing. One cartoon also seemed to allude to the existence of a certain degree of censorship that the newspaper writers were coming under. Many of the cartoons also called attention to the unfair social stereotypes that existed toward the Japanese Americans. For example, when the cartoon character Lil Dan'l, as a Japanese American, was being gradually introduced in the Rohrer Outpost, the cartoonist wrote, "Following the adopted rule of American cartoonists that all Japanese wear horn-rimmed glasses, Lil Dan'l will henceforth sport a pair of nifty specs." Humor also was used in the editorial section to indirectly criticize camp conditions. The Rohrer Outpost published the following joke in
its editorial section: "A man dropped a toothpick the other day and five people were injured scrambling for it." This joke appears to have been an indirect criticism of the lack of adequate provisions for the camp internees.

Another technique that appears to have been used to express opposition was quoting criticisms stated by others—either people living outside the camps or those who were considered outsiders. For example, in a Topaz Times' story welcoming the non-internee teachers who had arrived to instruct the camp children, the writer quoted a teacher as saying, "I think the residents here aren't given much credit for their loyalty." Another issue of the Topaz Times featured letters from those who had recently received permission to leave the camp for outside work. In the letters, the freedom denied to the camp internees came across clearly. A young girl working at a farm, where she plucked turkey feathers, wrote: "I can tell you now that this is about the hardest work that many of us have done—but without a murmur of complaint, we worked 8 hours through the first day without a pause. . . . But even if the work's hard, it is worth the freedom that we are allowed." A man working on a beet field wrote similarly, "It certainly feels grand to be in the wide open spaces again. And to see nice green trees about us! I don't miss the Topaz dust a bit."

Camp newspaper writers tended to characterize the internees as similar to nomads, yet unable to settle upon a home of their own. In the Poston Chronicle's January 1, 1943, issue, one writer stated, "[We are] unlike the 'okies' and the Jews in being banished from our homes facing an uncertain future." Connoting the same sentiment, the September 17, 1942, issue of the Topaz Times quoted a Japanese American minister as saying, "We are again the pioneers, blazing the road into the wilderness of our social frontiers. Not that we alone march but that we follow the ever guiding pillar of the divine wisdom and light."

While thinking of themselves as advancing in a journey, the Japanese Americans also took pains to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States. This was done through the words of others or more directly through their own words. For example, in the Manzanar Free Press, an article appearing in a local Idaho newspaper that praised the Japanese American volunteers working in the beet fields was reprinted. With the headline, "Showing their Loyalty," part of the article read: "By volunteering to come here and help save the sugar beet crop, these Japanese are showing their loyalty. Certainly no Japanese, American or foreign born, not loyal to this country, would volunteer to come here to go into the beet fields—about the hardest work one can find." In several of the newspapers' issues, writers reinforced their U.S. citizenship and their patriotism more directly through their own words. For example, a Poston Chronicle editor wrote, "In passing, this editor, on behalf of the thousand upon thousands of loyal Japanese American citizens and their parents, repudiate our allegiance to Mr. Roosevelt and for all that he symbolizes, 'that government of the people, for the people, and by the people shall not perish from this earth.' The dedication to the United States, even among those Japanese who did not receive citizenship, also was stressed. For example, the obituary line for a Japanese man who died while volunteering to work in the beet fields of Montana read, "He was just a bachelor who died while serving America, his adopted country."

In contrast to this reaffirmation of their American identity, the internees appear to have been attenuating their Japanese identity. While such American activities as the Boy Scouts, baseball, and football were highlighted in the newspapers, traditional Japanese activities were hardly mentioned. The only noticeable exceptions were mentions of judo practices in some of the newspapers and announcements of the Buddhist services that appeared regularly in all newspapers. It is important to note, however, that even these were not featured prominently in the newspaper layouts; often they were at the bottom of the last couple of pages. It was expected that perhaps

This drawing, showing Japanese Americans working in the internment camp in Topaz, Utah, appeared in a special Christmas publication printed by the Topaz Times in 1942. Some of those in the camps also worked outside them.
traditional Japanese New Year’s celebrations would be mentioned in
the newspaper issues. Announcements about general New Year’s
festivities did appear in several of the issues, but neither Japanese
games nor activities were listed among the events.

Such omissions or downplaying of Japanese-related activities
and events may be explained by the possibility that the Japanese
American journalists were willingly engaging in self-censorship to
suit the needs of the camp administrators. In interviewing a former
camp journalist who worked during the early stages of internment,
however, that appears to not have been the case. Working as a re-
porter and later as the managing editor of the Manzanar Free Press
published in the Manzanar, California, internment camp, Sue Kunitomi Embrey
recalled that when they first entered the camp, the internees were trying to “stay
away from Japanese activities” as much as possible. She recalled,

Because of the hostility outside of
the camps, we were staying away from all
of that. Except when New Year’s came,
we had Mochizuki [a traditional pounding
of sticky rice], and I think we did have
some celebration, but not a lot. We Nisei
[Japanese Americans] were trying to stay
away from anything Japanese. The camp
became an American city. Basically En-
lish speaking, baseball, other American
sports activities and dancing to the popu-
lar music of the day. I think pretty much
90 percent of us were trying to be as
American as possible to show that we
were loyal.9

Thus, during the early stage of
internment, it appears that the papers were
reflecting the need of the internees to ex-
hibit their loyalty by either expressing their
pro-American ideas and thoughts or by
downplaying their Japanese side. It was
not until the second phase of the intern-
ment experience that the Japanese side
would begin to reappear.

Phase II - Emergence of a New
Identity

 Newspaper issues during this mid-stage of the internment ex-
perience reflected an identity that had emerged among the internees.
The writings had a renewed sense of pride and a burgeoning confi-
dence. No longer did others serve to voice opposition toward the
actions of the authorities on behalf of the internees; they now voiced
opposition for themselves. Assertions of being American were boldly
articulated, and signs of their Japanese identity were unhesitatingly
displayed. Two specific events that took place during a period leading
up to the middle phase of internment may have played roles in
promulgating their willingness to openly assert their identity as Ameri-
cans of Japanese ancestry. The first was the adoption of the loyalty
review program, and the second was the creation of an all-Japanese
American army military outfit.

The United States government adopted the loyalty review pro-
gram in February 1943 as a means of determining which Japanese
American internees should be cleared for army recruitment and which
should be targeted for segregation.93 The program entailed the ad-

ministering of a loyalty questionnaire to all camp internees who were
the age of eighteen or older. In addition to asking internees to pro-
vide their individual and family background, the questionnaire re-
quired them to respond to two key questions: were they willing to
serve in the United States armed forces and would they swear
allegiance to the United States and “forbear any form of allegiance or
obedience to the Japanese Emperor, or to any other foreign govern-
ment, power, or organization.”94 Responding to either of the ques-
tions with a “no” called into question the internee’s loyalty to the
United States. Those who negatively responded to both questions
were retransferred to a relocation center that was designated for those
who were deemed disloyal or who were thought to be troublemakers.

Many of the Japanese Americans are
said to have felt frustrated and distressed
by the questionnaire. They felt that their
loyalty was unjustly being challenged be-
cause the questionnaire “assumed that
they were automatically loyal to Japan.”95
Embrey recalls how she and her mother
felt about the questionnaire:

When it came time to sign the loy-
alty oath, my mother really didn’t want to
sign. She decided to sign because every-
body else was doing it. I don’t think it was
a matter of disloyalty. I just think she felt
the injustice of it. I was disillusioned be-
cause I thought I was pretty American. I
had studied English in high school, and I
had memorized all of the patriotic spe-
cches of the founding fathers and the
American poets. And I really believed in
the American dream. Just to suddenly have
all that taken away and being challenged
was kind of a disillusion.96

In the camp newspaper editorials and
articles appearing during the time when
the program was first announced and ini-
tiated, however, resentment at having to
sign a loyalty questionnaire was not di-
rectly conveyed. The requirement was
rather straightforwardly reported. The re-
sentiment of having to prove their loyalty
through such a questionnaire was later expressed mid-way through
the internment period around the spring of 1944, when news regard-
ing the battlefield victories of the all-Japanese American combat units
was reaching the internment camps.

Early in 1943, the War Department under the authority of
President Roosevelt made the decision to recruit Japanese
Americans into a “Japanese Combat Team.” From this decision
emerged two predominantly Japanese American combat units
in the U.S. army, the 442nd regiment and the 100th battalion.97 By
1944, both units experienced military successes in the European theatre and
were continuously being applauded and decorated by the United States govern-
ment.98 Several researchers who have written about them have attributed the units’ high degree of effectiveness in

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the valor of the Japanese American combat units while also expressing the exasperation that the Japanese Americans continued to feel at having to prove their loyalty to the United States. For example, an editorial appearing in the Manzanar Free Press on August 5, 1944, said:

There is no more conclusive proof of the loyalty of Americans of Japanese ancestry than that provided by the thousands of Japanese Americans who are today fighting in the uniform of the United States. The record of the nisei soldier is one of which Japanese Americans and all who believe in democracy may be proud."

In a way, the internees seemed to have been drawing strength from news of the Japanese American combat units’ accomplishments and regaining from it their sense of pride as Americans. This strength also seemed to have inspired them to voice opposition toward the injustices perpetuated upon them by either the U.S. government or the public at large and to point out the inherent contradictions in the government’s actions toward the Japanese Americans. For example, the following editorial appeared on the second page of the Topaz Times on April 15, 1944:

We will continue to be inducted and serve loyally in whatever assignment is given us for we are grateful for the opportunity to serve. However hard it is for us to accept assignment to segregated units, we look upon such limited service as better than no service at all… It is apparent the War department still does not wholly understand the nisei—we look to the time when race will not be a reason for segregation.39

This refurbished fortitude among the Japanese Americans also was expressed in another Topaz Times editorial on April 8, 1944: “Just as our Saviour, 1944 years ago, arose from his grave, so are the nisei going to rise out of the barbed wire enclosure which is the relocation center to be reborn as free men in a free country to fight for freedom and a just peace.”40

However, several of the editorials that expressed renewed hope that the Japanese Americans would overcome the hardships they encountered in the camps also stressed that it would not be a simple task. A Granada Pioneer editor wrote on March 22, 1944, about the children in the camps:

In their daily classes, they learn about democracy and its ideals. Most of these tots in some form have learned at one time or another that they are detained “because we had the wrong ancestors.” The longer they remain in relocation centers, the harder it’s going to be to shake off those undesirable shackles they acquired in their confinement. It’s going to be tough even for well-prepared nisei, so it’s going to be doubly difficult for our little kid brothers and sisters.39

Unlike the early internment period articles on the Japanese Americans’ loyalty and dedication to the United States, which seemed to have been directed at those in authoritative positions, the later articles seemed targeted at internees. For example, in an April 21, 1944, Denson Communiqué editorial that conveyed the contents of a letter written by a Japanese American soldier on the battlefield, the editor wrote: “Letters such as the above, should not only make us aware of our inadequacy as the ‘home front’ but make us proud as AMERICANS, that ‘our boys’ are not only serving for the right and opportunities and privilege of the Niseis, but are serving for the betterment of a greater America.”40 Instead of being written out of a need to show an outward allegiance to the United States, these articles appear to have been written as an expression of a re-commitment to their identities as Americans. Such a sentiment was poignantly expressed in a short story in the Topaz Times on April 1, 1944. Entitled “The Fruit Picker,” the story was set in an orchard where an elderly Japanese field worker, Mr. Sakamoto, sang out while picking his fruit. The following are excerpts from the story:

Sakamoto, high up in the tree, sang with increased gusto. “Ah, America, this one is for you. Here is another for you. This one too. Another, another. I come seeking for gold in America. I will be rich in a year or two, I said. I will go back to Japan, I said. I will forget America, I said. I will forget America, I said. With gold jingling in my pockets I will sail for Yokohama, I swore. Ten years. Twenty years. Forty years. Sakamoto is still here, my friends.”

This cartoon appeared in the Topaz Times on October 27, 1942, and alluded to censorship on newspapers in the Japanese American internment camps during World War II.


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"An old man like you should stop work and take it easy," Jack the foreman advised.

Sakamoto looked at the foreman incredulously. "Stop? But what for? Sure, I can retire. But why should I stop work when my boy is serving for America? I too am an American. I built that boy up. I am a father of an American soldier."74

As noted earlier, while the American identity was being reaffirmed, the Japanese identity also was now being openly expressed in the newspapers. Writers frequently referred to Japanese Americans as "American citizens of Japanese ancestry," thus affirming their American identity as well as their Japanese.75 Japanese terms and reports on traditional Japanese activities now appeared—announcements for Japanese record concerts, Japanese dances, and Japanese movies were quite often published—and newspapers reported on preparations in the various camps for such traditional festivals as the Japanese spring flower festival, "Hana Matsuri."76 Moreover, these announcements, instead of being buried in the last pages, were printed in bold type and were usually at the top of the second page of the newspapers. Announcements for Buddhist services and meetings also were unabashedly displayed in the papers. A newfound equilibrium seemed to have emerged between the internees' American and Japanese cultural identities, and this continued into the third and final stage of the internment camp experience.

Phase III - Identity Fortitude

With the loyalty demonstrated by many Japanese Americans during the course of World War II, the United States government began to find it difficult to justify continuing the exclusion of people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast. After much heated debate within government circles regarding the issue, the U.S. War Department revoked the mass exclusion orders on December 17, 1944, and the War Relocation Authority announced on the following day that all internment camps would be closed by the end of 1945. Coinciding with these actions, the U.S. Supreme Court also handed down a major ruling on December 18 regarding the internment program. Although the court upheld the constitutionality of the relocation program by agreeing with the government's argument that the program was in the interest of national security, in the "Hirabayashi" case of Mitsuye Endo, the court ruled that the WRA had no authority to detain American citizens who were "concededly loyal" to the United States.77 Following this court decision and with the government's decision to revoke the mass exclusion orders, Japanese Americans who demonstrated loyalty by signing affirmatively on the loyalty questionnaire were free to leave the internment camps.78

It was perhaps these important decisions that further bolstered, during the final internment phase, the Japanese Americans' confidence in their identities as Americans and in their ability to explicitly express resentment at what the U.S. government had done to them. The writers for the newspapers were now openly and vociferously critical of the government's actions. In an editorial in the "Heart Mountain Sentinel" on July 3, 1945, the efforts of several southern U.S. senators to disband the Fair Employment Practice Committee, which had been created to ensure fair employment opportunities during the war for individuals regardless of race, sex, or religion, was discussed. The editor, who was highly critical of such efforts, wrote: "The first thought striking those of us who are made conscious of 'our' color by prejudices and discrimination is: 'How can this nation hope to enter and lead a world peace movement embodying racial equality, when our own racial situation is continuously prodded into an infectious [sic], festering sore?' The editor then added, "We want the day when those Senators from the South give more than lip service to the principles of democracy, not only for the world, but for themselves as well."79 In a cartoon appearing in the June 9, 1945, "Minidoka Irrigator," "Uncle Sam" was depicted as looking from the distance at the shores of a crumbling Germany with the words "Nazi Empire/ Racial Hatred" embedded in the shores. The caption over "Uncle Sam" read, "There is a lesson there for me."77

Several articles also suggested that the U.S. government should be accountable for what it had done to the Japanese Americans. For example, in a Topaz Times article appearing in 1945, the editors quoted the American Council on Race Relations as having stated, "The government which assumed full responsibility for moving them (Japanese evacuees) out of their homes should assume equal responsibility for facilitating their return."80 In the "Manzanar Free Press," excerpts from a column written by actor Orson Welles in the New York Evening Post were presented:

There are good and loyal Japanese Americans, and there are plenty of them. Their wholesome devotion to the American principle (and the beating they've taken as a result of it) now casts a very sober light on the whole question...81

Unluckily we were politically shortsighted as we were recklessly harsh in our treatment of these Japanese Americans. We have added little value to our knowledge of Fascism—and done irreparable harm to their knowledge of American democracy. Their faith isn't completely severed, but we have surely worn the bonds fearfully thin. They still want to believe in us if only we'll let them.82

In this last stage of internment, the newspaper content, while communicating hope for a swift closing of the camps, also reflected a certain degree of trepidation among internees at the prospects of having to leave the camps for a world that was not always welcoming. However, the articles did convey the sentiment that the Japanese Americans were unwilling to yield to their fears and concerns about that outside world.

Although several articles and editorials concerned racist acts against the Japanese Americans who were returning to their homes, others referred to the courage of those who had to confront such racism or attempted to offer courage to those who might face similar forms of racism. In the "Robber Outpost", one writer attempted to offer courage to his readers by relaying a story concerning a Japanese American soldier fighting in the Pacific. After describing how the soldier had just finished reading a letter from his mother, who was about to leave her internment camp, he wrote:

The soldier slowly looked away, and his eyes were a trifle misty. His mind went back to those peaceful days before evacuation when they were so happy and contented, when there were no wars or relocation centers and men weren't killing and maiming one another like they were doing now.

He recalled the evacuation and his mother's tearful face when they learned of the exclusion order and the never-to-be-forgotten day when they said goodbye to friends and left their home for the assembly center....

And on this battle-swept Pacific island, a Nisei soldier knelt to pray.

"Dear God," he pleaded, "watch over my aged mother and father, my kid brother and sisters, as they return to California. Don't let them be shot at, cursed at, or reviled. Please don't let their hearts
be broken again, God. They have suffered enough . . . .

Suddenly, he straightened up, put the letter back into his pocket, and wiped the mist from his eyes.

He and his buddies had a job to do there, and he briskly resumed his duties.

Numerous laudatory articles about the Japanese Americans who had been fighting in the war also appeared to reinforce such writings of courage. For example, in an article appearing in the Robруш Outpost, the reporter explained how the all-Japanese American 442nd army regiment had "set a high standard of training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi," and had gone on to become a "crack outfit" serving as "the vanguard of the Fifth Army's great offensive" in Northern Italy. Exuberant pride could be detected in a T-Opaz Times article on August 24, 1945; the article's bold headlines located at the top of the first page read, "Nisei Troop to Lead V-J Day Parade in Italy." In a Robруш Outpost editorial, the writer discussed how many of the Japanese American soldiers died in battle not only to help their nation but also to help their fellow Japanese Americans. He wrote:

These boys didn't die just to help crush Nazism abroad. That was part of the job. They died also to establish the right of Japanese Americans to call this our country and to live in it like other Americans.

They have earned that right for us beyond a shadow of a doubt. More than any other single factor, the magnificent work of the Nisei soldiers contributed to better understanding and acceptance of our people.

During this last phase, the internees' Japanese identity also was clear in the camp newspaper articles and editorials. Certain Japanese words or phrases appeared in the English sections of the papers, and traditional Japanese activities continued to be announced. For example, the Heart Mountain Sentinel on July 7, 1945, and the Robrush Outpost on June 13, 1945, both prominently announced the holding of "Obon," a religious tradition in Japan where the spirits of one's ancestors are called upon to join in an annual celebration before they are again sent off to the other world. Therefore, although the internees' American identity appeared to hold a prominent position, their Japanese cultural identity also was well acknowledged.

When commencing this study, it was speculated that perhaps the Japanese Americans interned in the government-established camps during World War II experienced an identity conflict that ultimately led them to drop their Japanese identity in favor of their American identity. It was believed that this would occur as a dynamic process in which one identity would ultimately submerge the other. Content from the camp newspapers, however, suggest that this was not the case. A struggle for identity appears to have taken place but in a manner that allowed them to retain both identities.

During the initial phase of internment, it appears that the internees attempted to emphasize their American identity while suppressing their Japanese cultural identity in their camp newspaper writings and drawings. Besides the overt expressions championing the United States' war effort, subtle expressions of opposition against the U.S. authorities' actions against Japanese Americans seem to have been an attempt to assert an American identity. While such expressions were present, acknowledgement of the internees' Japanese cultural identity was virtually missing.

However, by the middle phase, around the end of 1943 and into 1944, a new identity was emerging that allowed the Japanese Americans to take pride in their American side and to begin acknowledging the importance of their Japanese side. The Japanese cultural identity re-emerged and began to solidify with the increasingly strengthened American cultural identity. As the internment period ended, rather than a state wherein the American identity prevailed over the Japanese identity, both identities appeared to coalesce into a new one.

Thus, it appears the Japanese Americans who eventually left the camps did not leave with the same cultural identities that they had brought with them into the camps. Rather, a newfound identity emerged that was formidable and of their own creation. To borrow the words of Williams, it appears that the "dominant" cultural identity (i.e., American) clashed with the "residual" cultural identity (i.e., Japanese), and what came forth was an "emergent" cultural identity, an identity that can truly be characterized as Japanese American.

A limitation of this study is that since examinations of most of the newspapers were concentrated on issues published during the beginning, middle, and end of the internment period, findings about the struggles and changes in identity among the Japanese Americans cannot be conclusive. What does lend credence to the findings here, however, is that despite the distinct qualities of the internment camps, a certain degree of continuity among the camp newspapers existed in how they reflected the identity changes among the Japanese Americans. For a future study, it would be interesting to examine the Japanese-translated sections of the camp newspapers to investigate whether a variation existed in terms of what was being expressed, both textually and visually (i.e., drawings), in English and in Japanese.

Although scholars have published various essays and studies concerning the Japanese American internment camps, it is hoped that this article has added new light to the understanding of the internment experience by focusing on the roles that the newspapers played in the camp settings. It has taken a different approach from past research by focusing on reflections of cultural identities in the newspapers. While recognizing the potential threat of camp newspaper censorship, either by the governing authorities or by the editors themselves, which appeared to subtly exist, this study examined the veiled or even overt expressions of the Japanese American identity in the newspapers. The purpose was to see whether the newspapers would reveal any cultural identity conflicts brought about by the forced confinement of the Japanese Americans. The findings indicated that the Japanese American identity was reflected in the newspapers and that the nature of that identity appeared to change.
over the course of the internment period.

Some who have studied the concept of identity have asserted that identities do not easily fluctuate and are rather static in nature. This research, however, suggests that identity does change, often in concert with crucial external changes. The newspaper articles appeared to show that the Japanese American identity shifted with the major events involving Japanese Americans that took place during the internment period (e.g., battle victories of the Japanese American troops and the loyalty oath requirement). For the internees, the events appeared to either spur on a new sense of who they were as Japanese Americans or partially revive a former identity that had been quelled.

The closing of the last gates to the internment camps on November 30, 1945, marked the end of a dark chapter in the history of the United States. Thousands of Japanese Americans had suffered financially, psychologically, and often physically due to racist hysteria on the part of the U.S. government and the public at large. This time of crisis for these Japanese Americans wreaked havoc on their sense of personal identity. However, as reflected in the camp newspapers' written and visual elements, through perseverance and determination, they withstand the hardships brought on by the crisis and forged a new identity. It was an identity that was reminiscent of the past, and yet it was energized and solid enough for them to affirm their positions as part of the United States.

Despite its limitations, it is hoped that this research has shown that the examination of media content allows us to study and understand how various cultural identities emerge and evolve over the course of time, not through a linear and static process but rather through a dynamic process. Such emergence and evolution are often prompted by times of societal upheavals or crises. It is also hoped that this research has in some way contributed to the understanding of individual potential even during times of dire stress and subjugation by a domineering power. In attempts to shape individuals to suit the needs of societal elites, it appears that individuals have the strength and fortitude to resist. This research suggests that while cultural identities are influenced by surrounding events, they cannot be simply molded or changed by a strong source in a forceful manner. Through a dialectical process of opposing and receiving, the individual actively participates in the creation of his or her identity.

NOTES


6 Mass, "Psychological Effects of the Camps on Japanese Americans," 160. Kristine Kuramitsu, in her exploration of how artwork (i.e., paintings, drawings, and sculptures) were used as means of articulating identities in the camps, also wrote of the constant negotiation of identities that the Japanese Americans incurred due to internment. See Kristine C. Kuramitsu, "Internment and Identity in Japanese American Art," 47, 4 (1995): 619-58.


12 See Weglyn, "Years of Infamy," 5; and Sandra C. Taylor, Jewel of the Desert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 50.


16 The term "Nisei" refers to the second-generation Japanese Americans. "Issei" refers to the first-generation Japanese Americans.

17 Kessler, "Fettered Freedoms," 73.

18 Using the same secondary and primary governmental sources listed in this article, research regarding the existence or degree of WRA sanctioned censorship which took place among the internment camp newspapers was presented by the author at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference in Anaheim, California, in August 1996. See Catherine A. Luther, "Cultural Identities in Conflict: The Experiences of the Japanese Americans during World War II as Told by Camp Newspapers." E.F. Cress, May 26, 1942, War Relocation Authority, Central File 61.000, Entry 16, Record Group 210, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

19 O.J. Buttedahl, Feb. 18, 1943, War Relocation Authority, Central File 61.000, Entry 16, Record Group 210, National Archives.

20 Angelo M. Girardo, May 1, 1944, War Relocation Authority, Central File 39.057, Entry 16, Record Group 210, National Archives.

21 D.S. Myers, Dec. 4, 1944, War Relocation Authority, Central File 22.419A, Entry 16, Record Group 210, National Archives.


Table 1 lists all the camp newspapers and provides information regarding which issues were examined in this study and the reasoning behind the selection.

The decision was made that a discourse method would be the best means of carrying out a study that relies on text to understand changes in identity. Richard Merritt, in his study on how colonists began to view themselves as Americans instead of English, did an impressive job of using a content analysis method to decipher identity change. Because he relied on a frequency count of certain identified symbols, however, he lost much in the way of providing a context for his analysis. See Richard L. Merritt, Symbols of American Community, 1735-1775 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Richard E. Beringer, Historical Analysis (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), 227-33.


Ibid.

See, for example, “A Close Call,” Granada Pioneer, Nov. 18, 1942; and “A Privilege and a Duty,” Minidoka Irrigator, Oct. 2, 1942.

See, for example, “Teacher Holds Sessions to Discuss Problems,” Heart Mountain Sentinel, Nov. 7, 1942; and “Visitor,” Tulean Dispatch, June 15, 1942.


“This Merits Your Help,” Denson Communicante, Jan. 19, 1943.

“Rising Watchtowers to be Community’s Guardians,” Manzanar Free Press, June 6, 1942.


With the establishment of the War Relocation Authority (WRA) under Executive Order No. 9102 on March 18, 1942, one of the powers conferred upon the WRA was to secure employment for internees who wished to relocate in areas outside of the designated “military zones” of Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona. On July 20, 1942, the WRA adopted a policy that allowed certain Japanese Americans, after careful screening, to leave the camps for work in the Midwest. See “Establishment of the War Relocation Authority: Executive Order No. 9102,” 174-80.


Ibid.

“Too Live is to Fight,” Poston Chronicle, Jan. 1, 1943.


“Showing Their Loyalty,” Manzanar Free Press, June 25, 1942.

“We Pledge Allegiance to FDR—An Inspiration to All Free Men,” Poston Chronicle, Jan. 31, 1943.


Telephone interview, Sue Kuniotomi Embrey, Sept. 30, 2002. She worked as a reporter and managing editor for the Manzanar Free Press in the Manzanar Internment Camp from June 1942 to October 1943.


Ibid. See also Richard Drinnon, Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 78-82.

Telephone interview, Embrey.

See, Weglyn, Years of Infamy, 135-36.

Japanese Americans also were sent to the Pacific for combat and to serve as interpreters for U.S. army units. See Masayoshi Umezawa, Unlikely Liberator: The Men of the 100th and 442nd, trans. Peter Duus (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 231.

Ng, Japanese American Internment During World War II, 63. See also Thomas Murphy, Ambassadors in Arms (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1954), 151-76; and Duus, Unlikely Liberator, 50-137.


“Discrimination Non-discrimination,” Topaz Times, April 5, 1944.


Nisei in Khaki,” Denson Communicante, April 21, 1944.


See, for example, “Recollecting With Pride: Without Bitterness,” Minidoka Irrigator, Feb. 5, 1944; and “Evacuated Nisei Plan to Overcome Prejudice by Proving Their Loyalty,” Granada Pioneer, March 22, 1944.


With the backing of the American Civil Liberties Union, in July 1942, a writ of habeas corpus petition was filed on behalf of Mitsuwe Endo while he was being held at the Tanforan Assembly Center in San Francisco. As a U.S. citizen of Japanese ancestry who spoke no Japanese and whose brother was serving in the U.S. army, the argument was made that Endo was an individual, model loyal U.S. citizen, should be released from the Center. The case was presented to the United States Supreme Court and on Dec. 15, 1944, the Court ruled that Endo, as a “concededly loyal” citizen, was entitled to her liberty. See “Ex Parte Endo,” in Rosenman, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, vol. 13, 180. See also Ng, Japanese American Internment During World War II, 86-89.

Note that even with the freedom to leave, many internees, fearful of the hatred and ostracism that might await them in the outside world, chose to remain in the camps until the official camp closures at the end of 1945. See Ng, Japanese American Internment During World War II, 97-99.


“Building on Sand,” Minidoka Irrigator, June 9, 1945.


“442nd in Offensive,” Robozer Outpost, May 9, 1945.


For examples of other articles about the gallantry and achievements of the Nisei troops, see “Nisei Pacific Units Recognized,” Poston Chronicle, Oct. 2, 1945; and “Liberated 442nd Member Relates Grim Experiences: Germans Feared Combat Prowess of Nisei Combat Teams, Nezu Says,” Minidoka Irrigator, June 16, 1945.


Williams, Marxism and Literature, 121-27; Raymond Williams, The Politics of Modernism (London: Verso, 1989), 60-42.

The Tule Lake Segregation Center, which held internees who were deemed disloyal or as troublemakers, officially closed on March 20, 1946. See Ng, Japanese American Internment During World War II, 89.