

Background of the Monument

Minidoka Internment National Monument is located in south central Idaho, approximately 15 miles northeast of Twin Falls. From 1942 to 1945, the site was a War Relocation Authority (WRA) facility, which incarcerated nearly 13,000 Nikkei (Japanese American citizens and legal resident aliens of Japanese ancestry) from Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. Today, the 72.75-acre national monument is a small portion of the historic 33,000-acre center. The national monument site is within Idaho's second legislative district in Jerome County and is within a sparsely populated agricultural community. The authorized boundary of the national monument is defined by the North Side Canal to the south and private property to the north and west. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) retains a 3-acre parcel in the center of the national monument and a 9-acre parcel to the east of the national monument.

History of the Internment and Incarceration of Nikkei at Minidoka Relocation Center

Pre-World War II

The prelude to the incarceration began with Japanese immigration and settlement of the West Coast between 1880 and 1924. During the late 19th century, Japan underwent a severe and extensive economic and social revolution, in which farmers and peasants suffered from new national taxes and a dire economic situation. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 contributed to Japanese immigration as well, creating the perception that Japanese could fill a void in inexpensive farm labor. The first generation immigrants, known as Issei, came to the U.S. to work. Some hoped to make fortunes and return to Japan. In the U.S. labor jobs only provided living wages; however, most Issei recognized that their jobs in farming, fishing, and timber

offered more opportunities than in Japan. By the turn of the century there were 24,326 Issei in the U.S. with a male to female ratio of 33:1. Between 1901 and 1908, 127,000 Japanese came to the U.S., including wives, picture brides, and children who eventually evened out the gender and age gaps (Daniels 1962: 1, Appendix A). Nikkei communities developed rapidly, establishing churches, businesses, hotels, and schools in nihonmachi, or Japantowns, throughout the West Coast.

A number of debilitating laws, notably based on race, contributed to the marginal condition of Nikkei communities in the pre-war period. The Naturalization Acts of 1790 and 1922 prevented Japanese immigrants from being naturalized. Alien land laws, passed beginning in 1913, barred aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning and leasing land in Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. The Oriental Immigration Act of 1924 effectively stopped immigration from Asia until the 1960s. (For an accurate summary of the legal discrimination against Japanese, see the United

*A funeral ceremony
for Minidoka's
fallen soldiers.
Circa 1944.
National Archives.*

Diverse Terminology and Perspectives on the Treatment of Nikkei in the U.S. during WW II

Many different words have been and continue to be used to describe the U.S. government's wartime policy toward Japanese Americans and legal resident aliens of Japanese ancestry, the events through which the policy was implemented, the facilities that provided for implementation, and the impact on affected individuals, families and communities. Highly charged debates over words and terminology continue to reflect intense passions and diverse perspectives on whether the policy was appropriate and justifiable 60 years ago. To commemorate historic sites, such as Minidoka Internment National Monument, and to fulfill the National Park Service's responsibilities to the public, the National Park Service acknowledges the diversity of perspectives and opinions on the meaning and significance of various words. Instead of selecting certain words or sets of terminology as either "acceptable" or "correct," the National Park Service encourages reflection, education, and discussion about this aspect of American history.

A glossary of words and terms appears in the last chapter of this document. It includes terminology used by the government, the media, and various members of the public during World War II, as well as in subsequent and contemporary debates and discussions. The preparers acknowledge that certain words and terms have been used by various individuals, groups, and the government itself for diverse ideological purposes, such as denying the negative results of policy implementation, minimizing the impacts, or exaggerating its consequences.

Among the words included in the glossary are: evacuation, exclusion, detention, incarceration, internment, and relocation that have been used to describe the event of forcefully removing people from their homes and communities. The people themselves have been referred to with words such as evacuees, detainees, inmates, internees, nonaliens, and prisoners. Also, the people have been referred to as Japanese, Japanese Americans, Japanese legal resident aliens, Nikkei, and by their generation in the United States — Issei (first generation) and Nisei (second generation). Finally, the facilities used to implement the policy have been called assembly centers, camps, concentration camps, incarceration camps, internment camps, prisons, relocation centers, and War Relocation Centers. This document uses some of these words, depending on the specific context and the sources used and cited. However, for the purposes of this draft general management plan and environmental impact statement, the National Park Service uses the following words most consistently: incarceration, internment, internee, Nikkei, camp, and Minidoka Relocation Center. We acknowledge that readers may not always agree with the use of certain words in specific contexts.





Emily Inez Denny and Oyshu, Seattle. Circa 1890. Photographer: Faber. Permission of the Museum of History & Industry.

States Commission of Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (U.S. CWRIC), *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission of Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, with a new forward by Tetsuden Kashima* 1997). As a result of these laws, the Nikkei majority was economically and socially marginalized within the mainstream of American society. Thus, in the urban and semi-rural areas, Nikkei communities became tightly knit and self-reliant entities, where Nikkei lived or worked in and around the community neighborhoods. In rural areas, they attempted to establish Nikkei farming communities, where they often leased and bought land in the names of their American born children.

In the pre-war period, the tensions and differences between the Issei and their American-born de-

scendants, called Nisei, became increasingly evident. The Nisei were American citizens, who were educated in American schools, spoke English, and were culturally more Americanized than their parents. However, Nisei were still marginalized based on their Nikkei ethnic identity.

By 1940, roughly two-thirds of ethnic Japanese were American-born citizens. In Hawaii, there were nearly 158,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, three-quarters of whom were born in Hawaii. In the continental United States, there were 126,947 people of Japanese ancestry. A total of 112,353 of them lived in the West Coast states, with the majority concentrated in California. Roughly 240 people of Japanese ancestry lived in the Territory of Alaska. Nikkei represented a very small minority in the U.S., making up less than one-tenth of a percent of the total population.

Anti-Japanese sentiments were apparent from the beginning of Japanese immigration. The prejudice was based on economic competition, overt racism, and fear resulting from the first victory of an Asian nation (Japan) over a western one (Russia) in 1905 (Burton 1997: 26). "Yellow journalism" sponsored and incited racism against Japanese in all major newspapers along the West Coast. Anti-Japanese organizations developed at the turn of the century and intensified up to the forced removal of Nikkei from the West Coast in 1942.



Jimmy's Clothes Shop with owner Maasaki Usuda. Portland Oregon. 1940. Courtesy of May Hada and the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center.



Arima dairy farm, Christopher, Washington. 1919. Permission of the White River Valley Museum.



Instructors at the Portland Obukan. (Left to Right) Frank Tomori, Art Sasaki, Headmaster Bun-Uyemon, Senta Nii, Toru Kobayashi. ca. 1926. Courtesy of Jack Yoshihara and the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center.



Nikkei farmers donating food to the poor at Pike Place Market, Seattle. Circa 1922. Photographer: Webster & Stevens. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.



Nikkei stores on Jackson street in Japantown, Seattle. Circa 1919. Photographer: Webster & Stevens. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.



Japan Day celebration at Shattuck School featuring Nisei students with parents and teachers. ca. 1937. Courtesy of Lilly Irinaga and the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center.

“Walking home from school, I savored the May trees and floral colors. Suddenly, two gangly teenagers blocked my path, demanding, ‘Are you a Jap?’ I stammered, “N-no...no, I-I’m not a Jap, I’m Japanese.”

One boy stooped down to pick up something, I began to run. A stick struck my back. I ran faster. ‘You dirty yellow Jap, go back where you belong,’ the boys shouted. A stone brushed my hair, whizzed passed my left ear. Missiles kept coming until I was out of range, but I kept running and running until I turned right on Jefferson Street where I paused to peer over my right shoulder. With my heart pounding and beads of sweat rolling down my face, I stumbled into the lobby of my apartment building.”

-Sato Hashizume

Nikkei and World War II

Beginning in 1940, U.S. government listening posts were decrypting Japanese diplomatic code, in which Japanese were suggesting recruitment and collaboration with Japanese Americans living in the United States.(For more detailed account of this diplomatic code, called MAGIC, see: Herzig, John A. "Japanese Americans and MAGIC," *Amerasia Journal* 11:2 (1984). Lowman, David D. *MAGIC: The untold story of U.S. Intelligence and the evacuation of Japanese residents from the West Coast during WW II*. Utah: Athena Press: 2001. Robinson, Greg. *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 2001.) In early December 1941, Washington sent a warning to the U.S. Army and Navy of a



Damage at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941. Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.

possible attack on Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, Thailand or the Malay Peninsula by Imperial Japan. Then on December 7, Japanese fighter planes attacked Pearl Harbor, resulting in 3,500 American casualties. The U.S. declared war with Japan the following day.

Beginning on December 7, the Justice Department began arresting 1,500 Issei listed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as potentially subversive and dangerous. These Issei were deemed "enemy aliens" by the government, as they were Japanese nationals living in the U.S., and the U.S. and Japan were at war. Most arrested Issei were businessmen and community leaders involved in Japanese organizations and religious groups. Additionally, the bank accounts of enemy aliens as well as all American branches of Japanese banks were summarily closed. Without leadership or financial assets, the Nikkei community was immediately impacted by Pearl Harbor.

Deep resentment, discrimination, bitterness, and fear of Japanese-born immigrants and their Japanese American descendents living along the West Coast began to surface within the government, media, and general public. The media often sensationalized rumors of possible Japanese attacks and spy rings and characterized all Nikkei as the enemy; these actions incited hysteria and paranoia within the general public. Caucasian farmers along the West Coast capitalized on the hysteria, saying they wanted the Japanese off the West Coast, thereby removing Nikkei agricultural com-

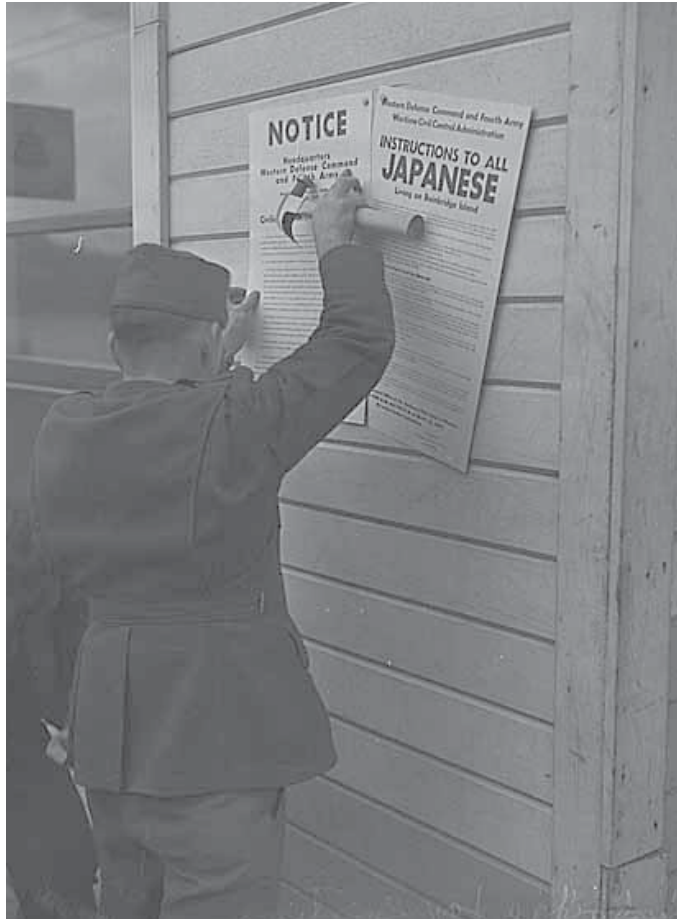
"Kindly give some thought to ridding our beloved Country of these Japanese who hold no love or loyalty to our God, our ideals, or our traditions, or our Government-They should never have been allowed here." -Letter to the President from a Seattle woman, January 24, 1942

The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on the United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted... It, therefore, follows that along the Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies of Japanese extraction are at large today. -Lt. General John L. DeWitt, Commanding General of the Western Defense Command, 1942

"The Hearst newspapers are putting on a typical Hearst campaign for the removal and sequestration of all the Japanese along the Pacific Coast. This would be a cruel and unnecessary step. In some places in California, people are refusing to buy Japanese truck farm products. The president told about a movie actress who said to him that she was afraid that the Japanese would poison their vegetables. This, of course, is purely hysteria." - Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, February 1, 1942

"Evacuation

*As we boarded the bus
Bags on both sides (I had never
packed two bags before on a vacation lasting forever)
The Seattle Times Photographer
said Smile!
So obediently I smiled
And the caption the next day
Read:
Note smiling faces
A lesson to Japan."
- Mitsuye Yamada*



"Soldier posting civilian exclusion order on Bainbridge Island." 1942. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.

petition. The anti-Japanese bandwagon was getting larger and stronger and pressuring the government to take action against Nikkei. One noteworthy exception was the *Bainbridge Island Review* in which the editor, Walter C. Woodward, continuously opposed the incarceration of Japanese Americans, particularly the Island's 227 Nikkei who were the first to be forcibly removed from their homes in March 1942 after EO 9066.



Man stacking radios surrendered by Nikkei in Seattle. December 29, 1941. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.

Meanwhile, within the government, there was mounting suspicion and fear of Nikkei espionage and an evident dilemma about how to separate loyals and disloyals. Reports of Nikkei subversive activities were also mounting, despite being unsubstantiated. Ultimately, "military necessity" was the government's justification for the restrictions, exclusion orders, and eventual internment and incarceration of Nikkei.

On February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin Roosevelt, giving the War Department the authority to establish areas from which any and all persons could be excluded. General John L. Dewitt of the Western Defense Command began the implementation of Executive Order 9066, with the creation of Military Area No. 1 that encompassed the western half of Oregon, Washington, California, and the southern half of

Associated Sites

Minidoka Internment National Monument Draft GMP/ EIS



Legend

- ▲ WRA Relocation Center
- Justice Department
- ★ U.S. Army Center
- WRA Isolation Center
- Temporary WRA or other Facility
- WCCA Assembly Center
- Unused Facility

Data Sources:
State Boundaries: ESRI
Sites: NPS, ESRI

Plot Date: August 5, 2004
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Map Prepared by: Pacific West Region - GIS Group



"Evacuation Sale" of store inventory in the Seattle. Circa 1942. Permission of Museum of History & Industry. (Top)

Sadji Shiogi carrying a single bag, between two G-men in dark hats and overcoats. December 7th, 1942. Permission of the Oregon Historical Society. (Bottom)



Sixth Avenue in Japantown, Seattle after mass removal. 1942. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.

Arizona, and Military Area No. 2 that included the remainder of the entire state of California Initially, voluntary resettlement to areas outside the exclusion zones was encouraged. Mandatory incarceration soon followed.

The navy regarded Bainbridge Island as a highly sensitive area, as Fort Ward on Bainbridge Island, Washington, was a strategic military listening post monitoring communication in the Pacific. As a result, the first exclusion order, Civilian Exclusion Order 1, was issued for Bainbridge Island, giving 54 Nikkei families only six days to prepare for their departure. At the Eagledale ferry dock on Bainbridge Island, the Nikkei families were escorted by armed soldiers as they walked down Taylor Avenue and on to the ferry *Kehloken*. When the *Kehloken* docked in Seattle, the Nikkei were transferred to a train destined for southern Califor-

nia, while hundreds of onlookers waved goodbye and witnessed their departure. Their destination in southern California was Manzanar, the first center to house incarcerated Nikkei during World War II. Roughly a year later, most Bainbridge Island Nikkei requested and were permitted transfer from Manzanar to Minidoka.

The Bainbridge Islander's departure, on March 30, 1942, alarmed Nikkei communities along the West Coast and substantiated the rumor that they would be removed soon. In preparation for their forced departure, Nikkei closed up businesses, consolidated their homes, and secured their possessions. Merchandise and possessions were sold in haste, since their future was uncertain. As a result Nikkei experienced significant economic losses in the process. When they left for the temporary assembly centers, they were allowed to bring only what they could carry without knowing where they were going or for how long.

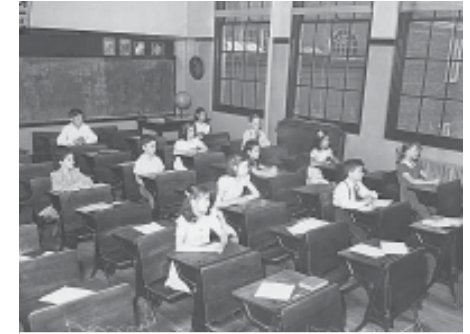
Under the direction of the army-controlled War-time Civilian Control Administration, all Nikkei living within the military areas were forcibly moved to 17 temporary camps, called assembly centers, situated primarily on fairgrounds between March and August. From northwestern Washington and Alaska, 7,682 Nikkei were sent to the Puyallup Assembly Center, coined "Camp Harmony" by army public relations officers. Camp Harmony was located at the Western Washington State Fairgrounds, where internees lived between April 28 and September 12, 1942. Among the Nikkei popu-

lation were native Alaska spouses and mixed native Alaska and Nikkei children. From northwest Oregon and central Washington, 4,290 Nikkei were sent to the Portland Assembly Center in the Pacific International Livestock Exposition Pavilion. Conditions in the temporary centers were later characterized as more severe than in the WRA centers. Internees noted the unsanitary conditions of living in hastily converted livestock stalls, where the smell of manure and horse flies was pervasive. The lack of privacy and communal living, as well as the security fences, watchtowers, and armed guards compounded the psychological trauma of the forced removal and incarceration.

The move to Minidoka from the assembly centers began before the camp was completed. The first to move were those who agreed to work on completing construction and preparing the camp for the arrival of internees in the autumn of 1942. Between August and September, 7,150 Camp Harmony internees were placed on trains and sent to Minidoka. In September, internees from the Portland Assembly Center arrived at Minidoka, totaling 1,927 people. Minidoka housed residents from three states: Alaska, Washington and Oregon. Washington state counties: King, Pierce, and Kitsap. Oregon counties: Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Yamhill, Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia. When 1,500 people arrived from Tule Lake in 1943, their home of origins were other counties in Washington and Oregon.



"Dressed in uniform marking service in the first World War, this veteran enters Santa Anita Park assembly center for person of Japanese ancestry evacuated from the West Coast." Photographer: Clem Albers. April 5, 1942. National Archives.



The Bailey Gatzert School in Seattle lost 45 percent of its student body when Nikkei were removed to Minidoka and other WRA camps during World War II. Circa 1942. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.



Internees arriving at the Puyallup Assembly Center. 1942. Permission of the University of Washington.

"Mrs. Nelson shook her head, saying, 'I don't understand why you are in here.' When we told her that we would soon be moved to Idaho, she began to weep. Through her tears, she asked, 'Why are they doing this to you? You are American citizens, born right here in Portland. It's wrong, all wrong. What is going to happen to you?'" - Sato Hashizume



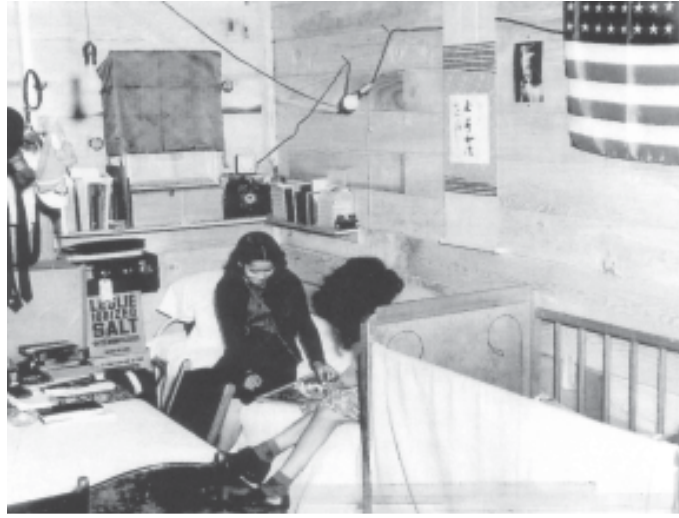
Portland Assembly Center located at the Pacific International Livestock Exhibition building in north Portland. July 8, 1942. Permission of Oregon Historical Society.



A family arrives and prepares to enter the Portland Assembly Center with the assistance of soldiers. Pacific International Livestock Expo Building in north Portland. May 3, 1942. Permission of Oregon Historical Society.



Police at Portland Assembly Center. Circa 1942. National Archives



Five person apartment of Reverend T. Terakawa (Buddhist priest), Hiroko Terakawa, daughter, and friend Lilian Hayashi at the Pacific International Livestock Expo Building in north Portland. May 31, 1942. Permission of Oregon Historical Society.



"Internees lined up in the rain at Camp Harmony, Puyallup." 1942. Permission of Museum of History & Industry.

Between September 1942 and October 1945, the Minidoka WRA Center was in custody of 13,078 people and 12,758 were admitted to the Center (Final Accountability Roster of the Minidoka Relocation Center 1945). However, the peak population was 9,500 persons in 1942. There were 489 births and 193 deaths. Minidoka constituted the 7th largest city in Idaho while it was operational between 1942 and 1945.

1942-1945: Minidoka Relocation Center Construction and Establishment

While Nikkei were incarcerated at the assembly centers, the WRA was hastily making plans for the construction and operation of more permanent camps, which were intended to be self-sufficient when operational. On April 13, 1942, the WRA stated its site requirements: "1. All centers must be located on public land so that improvements at public expense become public, not private, assets. Any land required for this purpose will remain in public ownership. 2. Because of manpower needs in the armed services and because the minimum guard unit can guard 5,000 persons as easily as smaller groups, first attention will be given to sites adequate for large projects. 3. Each center must provide work opportunities throughout the year for the available workers to be located there. All centers must be located at a safe distance from strategic works" (*War Relocation Authority quarterly and semiannual reports* March 18-June 30, 1942).



*Minidoka
Relocation Center
under construction.
Photograph by
Francis Stewart.
August 18, 1942.
Permission of the
Bancroft Library.*

Minidoka was one of the earliest selected sites. On April 22, 1942, negotiations between the Bureau of Reclamation and the WRA were initiated to discuss the siting of a camp at Minidoka. The site fulfilled all the WRA selection criteria: it was on a remote tract of public land; the railway line was located just 3 miles to the south; and electricity was accessible 6 miles to the south by the

Idaho Power Company. Water from the Milner-Gooding Canal could be used for irrigation once smaller canals were constructed and lands cleared. The North Side Canal water was concluded to be too costly, as it would require purchase of water rights from the North Side Canal Company and large scale pumping because it was lower than the site. Negotiations between the



Minidoka Relocation Center under construction. Photograph by Francis Stewart. August 18, 1942. Permission of the Bancroft Library. (Top)

Baggage, belonging to internees who have just arrived from the assembly center at Puyallup, Washington, is sorted and trucked to barrack apartments. Photograph by Francis Stewart. August 17, 1942. Permission of Bancroft Library. (Bottom)

WRA and BOR settled on the following agreements: 1) in exchange for occupation of the land, the WRA agreed to construct laterals and farm ditches and clear lands to raise food crops, 2) construction work would be performed under the supervision of the BOR, and 3) the land would be returned to the BOR after the war (BOR *Minidoka Annual Project History* 1942).

It was proposed that thousands of acres would be under cultivation by 1943 and would produce most of the food necessary for the incarcerated community. The Minidoka Relocation Project area was finally negotiated to include 34,063.35 acres and the central populated area encompassed 946.3 acres (BOR *Minidoka Annual Project History* 1942).

The WRA contracted the design and master planning of the camp to the architect-engineer firm of Glenn Stanton and Hollis Johnston, Architects of Portland, Oregon between May 20, 1942 to June 30, 1942 (with the last revision made on March 16, 1943) (WRA *Final Report of the Construction Division, Minidoka Relocation Center* 1946). The canals, basalt outcroppings, and uneven topography of the site led to the crescent shape design, spanning approximately 3 miles in length. Morrison-Knudson Company of Boise, Idaho, was awarded \$3,500,000 for construction of the camp and necessary roads. Work was to be completed between June 5 and December 31, 1942. A crew of approximately 3,000 local laborers were paid from \$72-\$300 a week, which was considered a very high wage at the time. The construction of the

camp and associated infrastructure helped south-central Idaho out of its financial depression (Arrington 1994, 88). By 1946, Minidoka had the highest per capita construction cost of all the of the WRA camps, totaling \$584 per internee.

The style and building construction techniques were based on a traditional military "Theater of Operations" design, intended for speedy construction and short duration. As a result, virtually all of the structures built to house the internees were simple timber frame buildings on concrete piers with tar paper walls (WRA *Final Reports, Minidoka Relocation Center* 1946). An oiled road from Perrine to the camp site was routed and built to avoid farmlands in the vicinity and became the only entrance to the camp (*North side News* June 4, 1942). A guard tower, military police building, and reception building were built at the entrance. The inner core area included the administrative area, military police buildings, hospital area, a sewage treatment plant, and warehouse area. Each area included a cluster of buildings surrounded by open space. Surrounding the inner core were the two residential areas divided into Area #1, which encompassed Blocks 1-20, and Area #2 for Blocks 21-44. Block numbers on the original master plan were changed after its construction and block numbers 9, 11, 18, 20, 25, 27, and 33 never existed. The camp was arranged by streets lettered A-H, and Avenues 1st-23rd. Plans for the lands to the north and east included a chicken and hog farm and agricultural fields. Four wells supplied water to two large water towers,

which was then distributed to mess halls and the lavatory/laundry buildings in each block.

The first stage of development, from June 5, 1942, to February 5, 1943, encompassed the construction of all the necessary elements for the basic functioning of the site. The living quarters for the internees consisted of 36 blocks, measuring 470' x 530'. Each block contained 12 barracks and one recreation hall arranged around a mess hall and "H"-shaped lavatory-laundry building. The barracks were 20'x120' and divided into six rooms of varying sizes; each room housed one family unit, or four to six single individuals. Barracks were constructed on concrete footings, had gabled roofs, three main entrances, and 22 windows. They were timber-framed with insulation board and black asphalt saturated roofing paper for walls and roofs. Each room had a light fixture and a coal-burning stove.

Other buildings at the camp served the overall operations of the camp, including the administration, staff housing, hospital, military police, and warehouse buildings. Many of the buildings in the hospital and staff housing area had wood paneled siding and interior walls, a step up from the rest of the barracks. The only permanent structures were the military police building and reception building constructed of basalt boulders. Other significant features included four wells, two large water towers, and two fire stations.

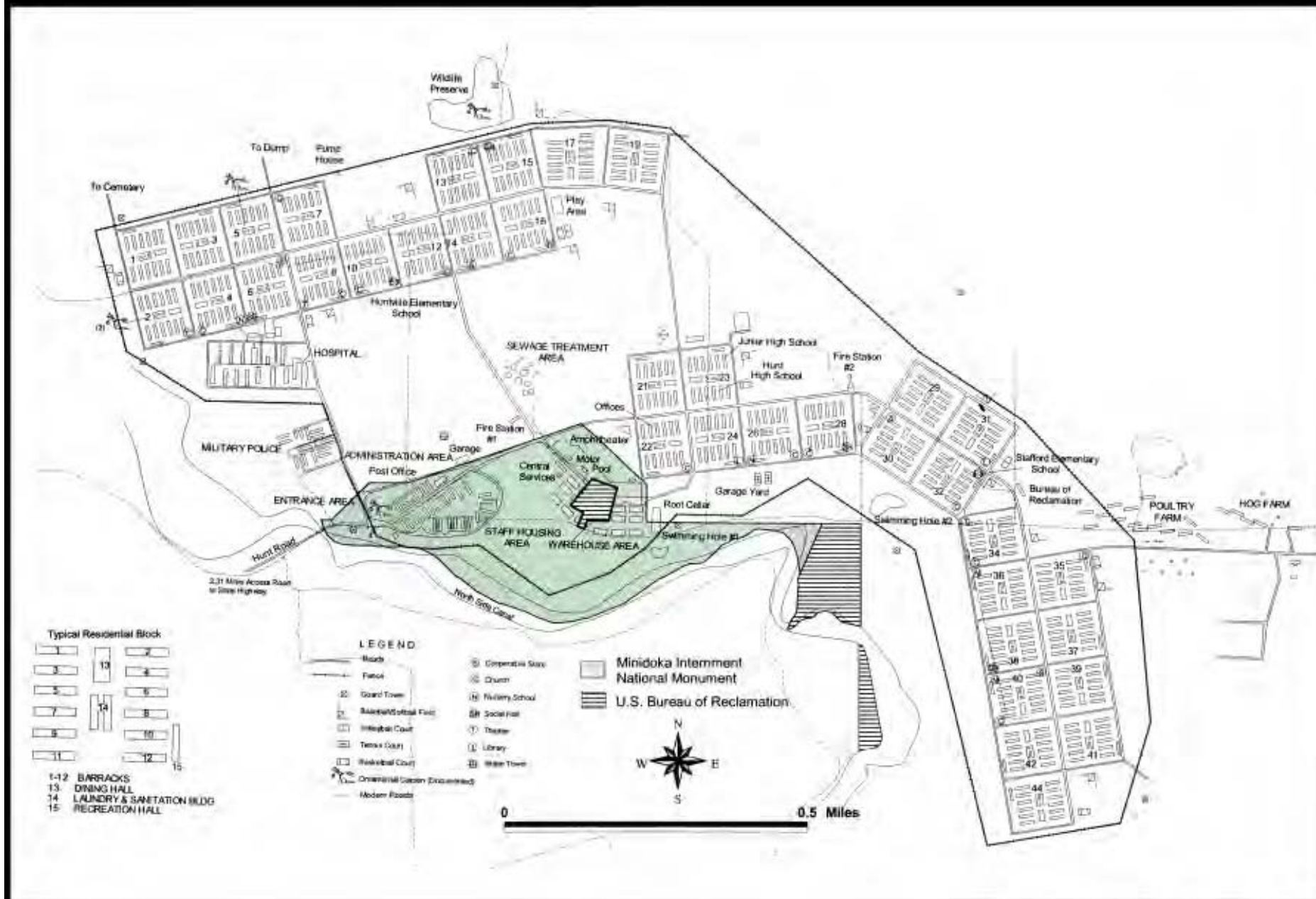
The camp had been under construction for two months when on August 10, 1942, 212 Nikkei



Aerial view of Minidoka Relocation Center. Circa 1943. Minidoka Interlude.

Minidoka Relocation Center-1945

Minidoka Internment National



Map Prepared by: Pacific West Region - GIS Group

from Puyallup Assembly Center arrived at the Eden. Beginning on August 16, internees arrived at a rate of 500 per day from Puyallup and then from Portland. By September 14, 1942, all internees had been transferred to Minidoka bringing the population to 8,381. However, many internees left on farm labor projects early on, decreasing the population during the farm seasons. For internees accustomed to the lushness of Northwest, the sight of the sagebrush, dust, and barracks was a dramatic and depressing change (Takami 1992, 38).

The camp was about 75% complete while internees were arriving. "Work was several times abandoned when dust storms brought about utter darkness" (Stafford, H.L. Letter to Mr. Dillon S. Meyer, Director of WRA, WRA Files, September 26, 1945). In addition, the lack of sewage utilities posed a severe problem, and many internees fell ill to pto-



Administration area at Minidoka. Circa 1943. Permission of Wing Luke Asian Museum.

mainie poisoning. There were two latrines to each block, which would flood regularly. Communal showers, toilet facilities, as well as thin walls between rooms generated an environment with little privacy.

During the fall of 1942, many of the internees helped the Morrison-Knudson contract laborers with the construction of the camp (*War Relocation Authority quarterly and semiannual reports 1942-46*). Rye was being planted to hold down the dust. The camp hospital was completed by October. Blocks 22 and 23 were organized into community enterprises and social services. From the Milner-Gooding Canal, a spur canal, called Lateral 21.5, was under construction. By fall, walkways in high use areas were being constructed, as the camp flooded with every storm. The sewage plant was under construction. Located in the center of the camp, near water tower #1, it included a pumphouse, digesters, clarifiers, filters, chlorine tanks, and a sewage lagoon 3 miles to the south. The lack of sewage facilities resulted in continuous outbreaks of diarrhea and ptomaine poisoning until February 5, 1943, when the plant began operation.

The organization of schools occurred in October and November of 1942. Nursery schools opened in Blocks 4, 16, 26, 36, and 40. Two elementary schools opened in mid-October. The Huntville Elementary School, located in Block 10, educated youngsters from Area #1; the Stafford Elementary School was located in Block 32, serving Area #2.



Minidoka post office in the administration area. Circa 1943. Permission of University of Washington.



The Minidoka fire crew in front of fire station #1. March 1943. National Archives.



The hospital at Minidoka. June 1943. Permission of Wing Luke Asian Museum.



Flooded area east of Block 3. Latrine and coal piles in the background. January 25, 1943. National Archives.

Hunt Middle School occupied half of Block 23. By mid-November, Hunt High School occupied the other half Block 23.

In November, a controversy began over the construction of the guard towers and barbed wire fence encircling the camp. Internees had been residing in the camp for months and respecting the 208 boundary signs before the fences and towers started going up. The guard towers and fence incited an even greater resentment against the internees' confinement and a conviction that the camps were actually concentration camps (*The Fence at Minidoka, WRA Files 1943*). There were outright protests, especially when the fence was electrified for a few hours on November 12. By December 5 the fence and guard towers were complete. Protests against the fence, and the argument that other camps were not encircled by barbed-wire led to its removal in the residential area in the spring of 1943. Two miles of the fence remained around the administration area (Ad Hill), the warehouse area, along the North Side Canal, across the entrance, and down to the hospital area until the closure of the camp in 1945.

As winter approached and temperatures dropped, coal for heating had not arrived. Internees cut and hauled sagebrush from the outlying areas to heat their rooms. Finally, after rumors of riots over the fuel shortage, coal arrived on December 20, 1942. Nearly every description of this early period cites the overwhelming dust and extreme temperatures, lack of plumbing and sewer facilities, and conse-



Elderly Issei woman collecting coal at Minidoka. National Archives.

quent hardships related to the fuel shortage. Stafford described this time as "the most regrettable part of the Minidoka history" (Stafford, H.L. Letter to Mr. Dillon S. Meyer, Director of WRA, WRA Files, September 26, 1945). More importantly however, the internees' endured psychological distress related to their forced removal, incarceration, and the uncertainty of their future.

Minidoka's agricultural project was to clear and bring in to cultivation "thousands of acres" by

1943. Yet, during the fall of 1942, just after the internees had arrived, nearly 2,500 internees went to the fields to help Idaho's farmers avert a severe labor shortage crisis. Many of these internees continued to help south-central Idaho's farmers in 1943 and 1944. In addition, once the Department of Defense allowed Nisei in to the military in 1943, the number of able laborers was cut even shorter. Hence, the WRA adapted its ambitious land development plans to only a minimum level necessary for sustaining the camp's population (BOR *Minidoka Annual Project History* 1943).

Agricultural development and farm work at Minidoka employed hundreds of internees. Large-scale poultry and hog farms were developed and maintained for egg and meat products. Two root cellars and a cannery and pickling plant were constructed by internees. Work on the Lateral 21.5



An internee clearing sagebrush. April 1943. National Archives.

from the Milner-Gooding Canal was completed by BOR employees, the D.J. Cavanaugh Company contractors, and Minidoka internees. Farm units were platted along the lateral, and small irrigation ditches were built to convey water to these areas. In addition, ditches were dug throughout the central camp area to provide water for gardens in the Residential Blocks. In 1944, the Center harvested 7,300,000 pounds of produce in the surrounding agricultural fields, making the camp completely sustainable. Meanwhile, victory gardens were planted throughout the central area of the camp adjacent to barracks and schools. Ornamental gardens were developed for personal and community appreciation throughout the residential and administrative areas.

Recreation areas were developed throughout the camp by internees. There were 13 softball/baseball



Internees clearing sagebrush at Minidoka. Circa 1943. National Archives.



Constructing the irrigation canal controls in Minidoka's agricultural areas. June 27, 1944. National Archives.

"Dust storm over, but everything inside the buildings is covered with a thick layer of fine soil, so thick that it takes several dustings to remove it all. Clearing the land of sagebrush and the absence of water make the dust hazard worse. Work clothes are much in evidence everywhere. Newcomers usually come the first day dressed as for a wedding, but afterward fall into line and dress to suit the environment." -Superintendent of Education Arthur Kleinkopf, Minidoka Relocation Center, October 21, 1942

“Be the causes what they may- economic, industrial, social, racial or all four, and if there be any other motives- the will of the people is the law of the government.” -Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, 1913

*Hunt High School,
located in Block 23.
Circa 1945.
National Archives.*



*Newly cleared agricultural fields at Minidoka. Circa 1943.
National Archives.*



*Hunt High School gymnasium/auditorium. Circa 1945. National
Archives.*



Mud from rain and melting snow at Minidoka. December 10, 1942. Permission of University of Washington.

“Getting to the bath is a job because our shoes get stuck in the swampy mud. When the ground is frozen it’s fine, until the sun comes out. When it snows or rains, we have to swim through the mud to get anywhere...” - Hanaye Matsushita, September 19, 1942, Minidoka Relocation Center



Internees playing baseball at Minidoka. Circa 1944. National Archives. (Top)

Dance performance at Minidoka. Circa 1943. Permission of Wing Luke Asian Museum. (Bottom)



Internees skating at Minidoka. January 5, 1943. National Archives.

fields, and numerous basketball, tennis, volleyball courts, swimming holes, and an ice-skating rink. On the banks of the North Side Canal, men used rock and sagebrush to build small fishing shacks. Playgrounds were erected throughout the site. An amphitheater was sited adjacent to Block 22 to accommodate large outdoor gatherings. A gymnasium/auditorium building was constructed between 1943 and 1945, although it was never completed

due to labor controversies and the closure of the camp. Additionally, a mile northwest of the camp, 3.64 acres of land was designated for use as a cemetery.

The Staff Housing Area was constructed between the administration buildings and the North Side Canal and was laid out in rows along a curving axis. The majority of the staff lived in Twin Falls and commuted to the site until the new staff housing was complete. The structures were more substantial buildings than the Theater of Operations standard barracks where the internees resided. Each apartment included a living and dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and one or more bedrooms.

Churches, community enterprises and activities, and a governing system of block managers were established to serve the internees and liaison with the WRA administration. The Minidoka newspaper, called the *Irrigator*, began publication in 1942. Operations for a community of roughly 10,000 people necessitated a wide variety of workers. Unskilled laborers were paid \$12 a month. Skilled laborers, such as carpenters, nurses, and cooks, were paid \$16 a month. Professional employees, such as doctors, engineers, and managers were paid \$19 a month. These wages were in stark contrast to the wages (\$72 to \$300 per week) paid to local construction workers who built the camp. Many internees had financial obligations from home; and these wages were inadequate to pay for mortgages and outstanding debts. As a result, many internees lost their homes, farms, and investments.

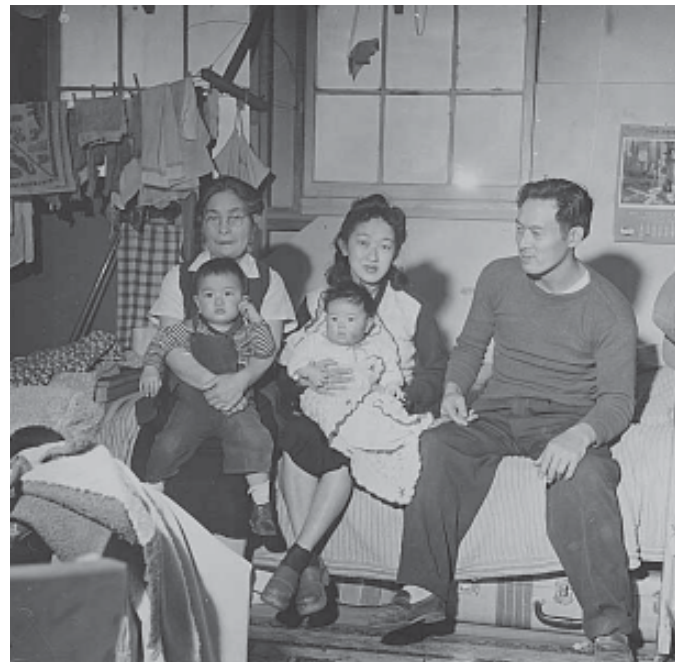
Life in Camp

Between 1942 and 1945, the internment and incarceration effected immeasurable change within the social structure of the Nikkei community. Events and movements during this period dramatically altered the social environment and dynamics within the camp. These events included the loyalty questionnaire, Tule Lake segregation, call for military service, agricultural labor projects, Indefinite Leave program, as well as constant social unrest.

It is widely recognized that the Issei generation was most impacted by the internment and incarceration experience. Not only were they denied citizenship, prevented from owning land, and were victimized by racism and discrimination in the pre-war period, they also suffered immeasurably as a result of their forced incarceration at Minidoka and other War Relocation Authority and Department of Justice and Army camps. Many Issei couples were separated for the duration of the war, with the men interned at Department of Justice and Army camps while the women were burdened with the family responsibilities of closing up their homes and businesses before the incarceration and then caring for the children and managing family affairs in the WRA camps. The Issei men's status as providers and leaders for the Nikkei community was directly impacted by government policies, and as a result, there was a noticeable and significant absence of Issei leadership in the WRA camps. This lack of Issei leadership forced Nisei to step forward to assist their families and communi-

ties, and their decisions and actions as representatives of the incarcerated Nikkei community occasionally gave rise to further tensions between the generations. Additionally, issues of loyalty and patriotism were exceptionally difficult for Issei, due to federal and state laws that prevented them from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens. The Issei bore significant losses due to loss of freedom, loss of property, loss of livelihood, and the weight of shame for being incarcerated as a result of their Japanese heritage.

The internees' daily lives were centered in the residential area and more specifically within each internee's residential block. Rooms provided the minimum requirements necessary for living, includ-



Yamaguchi family in their room at Minidoka. December 1944. Permission of Wing Luke Asian Museum.



Hunt Area A, Girls 1944 Basketball Champs. "Calmbanettes." Block 1,5, and 8. National Archives.

“We are proud that our government is of the people, by the people, and for the people. We are proud that our government is based on the principles of ‘Liberty and Justice for All.’ When people think or act not in accord with these principles, we feel that the government ought to inform them of their mistakes. It is our hope that our government will try to point out to her people the significance of the issues raised by our evacuation.” - Tom Takeuchi, editor of the Minidoka Interlude and Minidoka internee, 1943



Internee George Nakashima, an architect from Seattle, constructed and decorated his model apartment. George Nakashima and his family settled in Pennsylvania and founded his furniture design studio. He is internationally renowned as one of the greatest furniture designers of the 20th century. Photograph by Francis Stewart. December 9, 1942. Permission of the Bancroft Library.



Students in a free-hand drawing class. Photograph by Francis Stewart. December 9, 1942. Permission of the Bancroft Library.



Internees creating a garden at Minidoka. Circa 1943. Permission of Wing Luke Asian Museum.



Interned mothers mending and sewing for children at the Hunt Nursery school. Circa 1944. National Archives.



First Communion class of the Catholic Church at Minidoka. The Rev. L.H. Tibesar, Maryknoll missionary, is pastor. The nuns are Maryknoll sisters from Seattle where the Maryknoll group numbered 1000 Nikkei before WWII. September 8, 1943. National Archives.



Arts and crafts display in the auditorium. Circa 1945. National Archives.



Women doing laundry in washtubs. Circa 1943. Permission of Wing Luke Asian Museum.

“Three Japanese ladies secured a pass to go to Twin Falls to buy Sunday school and nursery school supplies... None of the three had been outside the camp since their arrival early in the summer. They were thrilled beyond words by the sight of trees, flowers, and green fields. One lady said, ‘Mr. Kleinkopf, I’d just like to get out of the car, walk over to one of those trees, touch it, and put my arms around it.’ A lump came into my throat as I tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, I’m sure, to understand, because only those who have experienced the sufferings and longings of a minority group whose members have been evacuated from their homes and all that home holds dear, can ever fully understand the feelings of the lady who wanted to caress the tree.” -Superintendent of Education Arthur Kleinkopf, Minidoka Relocation Center, October 16, 1942



An internee working in the administration area at Minidoka. Circa 1944. National Archives.



Interned Dr. T. Uchida, Chief Dentist, polished false teeth at Minidoka. Photograph by Francis Stewart. December 10, 1942. Permission of the Bancroft Library.



Adult education welding class along the fenceline at Minidoka. June 1943. National Archives.



Cooperative Store. Circa 1944. National Archives.

“A friend of mine who is visiting the project asked me if I felt afraid working here. He said he would always be looking over his shoulder expecting a Japanese with a knife. He seemed to believe I was not sincere when I told him that I had never entertained such thoughts and that there was no danger here.”

-Superintendent of Education Arthur Kleinkopf, Minidoka Relocation Center, November 7, 1942

ing cots, mattresses, blankets, a coal-burning potbellied stove, and a single electric light bulb. Family members resided together, with up to eight people per room. Internees did what they could to improve their sparse living conditions, including improving and personalizing their rooms with furniture built from scrap lumber and items that could be shipped from home. Also, internees began to garden in the areas around the barracks. Vegetable, flower, and ornamental gardens were developed throughout Minidoka.

The organization of internees into blocks had a profound impact on the traditional family structure. Issei men were burdened most by internment and incarceration, as their traditional familial role as patriarch and financial supporter had been completely undermined (Kitagawa 1967). For Issei women, the internment and incarceration relieved them of some traditional duties that included shopping, cooking, and cleaning. Dining together was no longer a family routine, as children and teenagers dined with friends and schoolmates, and family members were regularly on leave for agricultural labor.

Tensions between the Issei and Nisei were exasperated in the centers as a result of the WRA policies, emphasis on American culture, and breakdown of the traditional family structure. The WRA allowed only American born Japanese the right to hold representative political positions within the camps. This policy denied the Issei's social power as community leaders and had an even greater im-

pact on traditional Japanese cultural values related to honoring and respecting elders and family. As a result, the Issei had "little authority, responsibility, or opportunity to improve their futures or those of their families" (Tamura 1993: 207). For the Nisei, the experience posed a different set of circumstances, opportunities, and setbacks. They took the roles as community leaders and made life-changing decisions about their individual patriotism and family honor. Nisei children often saw the experience as an adventure away from home. A widening gap between the Issei and Nisei evolved over the duration of the Word War II, manifesting itself in the cultural characteristics and preferences of the more Japanese Issei and more American Nisei.

One of the most divisive issues during the historic period was the WRA's questionnaire, later termed the loyalty questionnaire, which was originally intended to determine the loyalty of potential draft-



"Tura Nakamura, block manager of block 42-44 presents ceremonial Tai fish to Project Director, H.L. Stafford and Philip Schafer, assistant project director, on behalf of the block managers as a token of appreciation for the manner in which the administration helped to make the Army volunteering program a success." April 1943. National Archives.