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ALTERED LIVES, ALTERED ENVIRONMENTS: CREATING HOME AT MANZANAR RELOCATION CENTER, 1942-1945

A Thesis Presented

by

LAURA W. NG

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2014

Historical Archaeology Program

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A Thesis Presented

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LAURA W. NG

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ABSTRACT

ALTERED LIVES, ALTERED ENVIRONMENTS: CREATING HOME AT MANZANAR RELOCATION CENTER, 1942-1945

August 2014

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This thesis seeks to understand how individuals exiled from their homes due to racial prejudice cope with institutional confinement. Specifically, this study focuses on the World War II mass incarceration of individuals of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast of the United States after Japan's attack on the American naval base Pearl Harbor. Under the guise of national security and without due process, the United States government forcibly removed over 110,000 Japanese Americans from their homes and imprisoned them in camps spread throughout the country. This thesis examines institutional confinement at one Japanese American carceral site: an incarceration camp in eastern California called Manzanar Relocation Center where two-thirds of the incarceree population were American citizens and all were confined to living behind a barbed wire fence in tarpaper-covered barracks. The research questions for this project

are centered on how incarcerees at Manzanar transformed their austere living quarters and the military-prison landscape into a place they could consider “home.” Two types of incarceree-created constructions are closely examined: basements dug underneath barracks apartments and elaborate ornamental gardens built in or near residential blocks. Drawing upon multiple lines of evidence such as oral history interviews, documentary sources, government records, and archaeological material from recent excavations, an analysis of barracks basements and ornamental gardens at Manzanar reveal how alterations to the camp environment helped incarcerees strengthen family ties and create community under the stresses of confinement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWRIC	Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians
JACL	Japanese American Citizens League
JANM	Japanese American National Museum
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NPS	National Park Service
WCCA	Wartime Civilian Control Agency
WRA	War Relocation Authority

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The terminology used in this study must be addressed and explained before proceeding. During World War II, the United States government applied the term "evacuation" in reference to the removal of Japanese Americans from their homes to sites of confinement scattered across the country. Today, many scholars (Kashima 2004; Daniels 2005; Yang Murray 2008) and Japanese American organizations oppose the use of the word "evacuation" because it is a euphemistic term that implies that Japanese Americans were rescued from a disaster when in reality, it was the United States government who deliberately imprisoned them. Similarly, "relocation" was a euphemistic term used by the U.S. government to talk about removal. For example, large confinement sites like Manzanar were named "relocation centers."

Relocation centers are often collectively referred to as "internment camps" though the usage is technically incorrect. Internment camps did exist during the war but they only held immigrants. As foreign nationals, interned individuals were subject to Geneva Convention rules (1929), which meant they could formally file petitions to improve living conditions. In constrast, "relocation centers" held civilians, most of whom were American citizens, so they fit most closely to the dictionary definition of a "concentration camp." When the American public became aware of the horrors of the Nazi-run concentration camps in Europe, however, the term "concentration camp" was deemed "too blunt" for use in describing American concentration camps (Daniels 2005:201).

Within the Japanese American community, several prominent organizations such as the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and Japanese American Citizens

League (JACL) favor the use of the term "concentration camp" or "incarceration camp" in place of "relocation center" in order to move towards language that is both accurate and non-euphemistic. The controversy lies with the fact that the term "concentration camp" has become strongly associated with Nazi death camps and Japanese Americans were never in any danger of being put to death or treated nearly as brutally. In 1998, JANM made the decision that they would use the word "concentration camp" in their museum exhibits though it was not without controversy (Ishizuka 2006:166). More recently, the JACL—the largest Asian American civil rights organization—composed a "Power of Words" resolution (2010) that stated their preference for terms such as "forced removal" instead of "evacuation" and "relocation," as well as a preference for the terms "concentration camp," "incarceration camp," and "illegal detention center," instead of "relocation center." The JACL resolution passed in 2011 (*Rafu Shimpo* 2011).

Utilizing non-euphemistic language is an important and necessary part of telling the Japanese American incarceration story. For the purpose of accuracy, I use the terms "incarceration" and "confinement" instead of "internment." The word "relocation" is avoided unless it is used as part of the name of a confinement site, e.g. Manzanar Relocation Center. Because "concentration camp" is still a controversial term, "incarceration camp," "WRA camp," or "camp" is used in place of "relocation center."

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese navy, the United States government entered into World War II. In a move now regarded as racist (CWRIC 1997), President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the removal and imprisonment of over 110,000 Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast. Confinement sites were spread across the country in remote areas. Manzanar Relocation Center in eastern California was one such site and held approximately 10,000 Japanese Americans, many of whom were United States citizens. Conditions in this incarceration camp were similar to the nine other "relocation centers": incarcerees were forced to live in hastily built tarpaper barracks surrounded by a perimeter fence and guard towers occupied by armed soldiers. Utilizing documentary, archaeological, and oral historical evidence, this thesis examines the ways in which Japanese Americans at Manzanar modified the living environments they were given and transformed space into place under institutional confinement, trying conditions, and unjust circumstances.

An analysis of archaeological data, photographic evidence, government records, and oral histories concerning Manzanar sheds light on the alterations incarcerees made to interior (indoor) spaces and exterior (outdoor) spaces. Modifications made to interior and

exterior environments ranged from homemade window treatments inside barracks to the construction of large-scale ornamental gardens. My research on individual and community efforts to improve living conditions provides a window into understanding how incarcerees coped with incarceration. Additionally, it contributes to a more complex understanding of incarceree agency by taking into the account the fact that Manzanar had a heterogeneous population made up of citizens and non-citizens, males and females, young and old, single individuals, and families.

Figure 1. Manzanar Relocation Center in Inyo County, California. Map by author

Thesis structure

The opening chapter is an introduction to this thesis project. It explains the research significance, research questions, sources of data, and the methods of analysis employed in my study. Chapter 2 situates my research in the greater archaeological study of institutional confinement as well as the archaeology and materiality of the Japanese American incarceration. The third chapter contextualizes the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans by providing historical background on Japanese immigration, labor, and anti-Asian sentiment in the United States. It illuminates the marginalized status of Japanese Americans prior to World War II and demonstrates how racism was the major factor that led the United States government to violate the country's democratic principles when it authorized the removal and incarceration of all Japanese Americans on the West Coast.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of interior living spaces at Manzanar utilizing residential basements as a case study while Chapter 5 is an analysis of the camp's exterior spaces utilizing ornamental gardens as a case study. In both chapters, multiple lines of evidence—oral histories, photographs, government records, and archaeological data—work with one another to demonstrate the various strategies incarcerees employed to shape and re-shape their environment and create a sense of home and community. The concluding chapter presents a discussion of the findings, outlines future directions for research, and links this study's relevance to issues in archaeology and heritage management.

Significance

This study is important on three levels. First it will contribute to existing scholarship on institutional confinement. Second it will broaden the range of stories that have become dominant in Japanese American incarceration narratives. Third it will provide additional case studies to the growing field of Japanese American incarceration archaeology (Branton 2000, 2004, 2009; Burton 1996, 2005, 2010; Burton et al. 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003; Burton & Farrell 2001, 2007, 2013; Camp 2010; Farrell & Burton 2011; Kamp-Whittaker 2010; Shew 2010; Shew & Kamp-Whittaker 2013; Skiles & Clark 2010; Slaughter 2008, 2013).

Casella defines institutional confinement as "a form of population management" designed to punish criminal activity, relieve poverty, or hold exiles (2007). Examples of carceral sites under that definition range from almshouses to prisons. The exile of Japanese Americans from their homes during World War II into incarceration camps also falls into the classification of institutional confinement. Race-based removal by the United States government is not unique to the Japanese American experience; Native American children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were taken away from their families and forced to attend boarding schools that utilized harsh discipline to assimilate them (Casella 2007). By examining the materiality of one Japanese American incarceration site—Manzanar Relocation Center—I seek to advance our understanding of how people who are unjustly imprisoned cope with institutional confinement.

An archaeological study of Manzanar also brings to the foreground voices that have been hidden by dominant narratives of the Japanese American incarceration. According to scholar Robert Hayashi, two "generic images" are privileged in popular

depictions of the wartime incarceration: compliant Japanese Americans who went into camps without protest and patriotic *Nisei* (second generation Japanese American) soldiers who fought overseas (2003:61). The "compliant image" portrays Japanese Americans as passive followers of unjust government orders and possessing the ability to endure the incarceration without resistance. The popular Japanese phrase *shikata ga nai*, which translates to "it cannot be helped," is often cited as an incarceree's mantra for coping with exile and confinement. Alice Yang Murray (2008) argues that this image of wartime compliance is problematic because it minimizes incarcerees' suffering. My study demonstrates that Japanese Americans at Manzanar were not passive prisoners and altered their interior barracks and external landscapes to combat the physical and emotional distress of confinement and exclusion.

The story of Japanese American heroism and patriotism by men who fought overseas in the United States Army is another dominant narrative. Soon after incarcerating Japanese Americans, the United States government needed more able-bodied men in the military and recruited Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the WRA incarceration camps for the war effort. Volunteers and draftees, however, were placed in a segregated unit called the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 442nd became the most decorated unit in United States Army history and stories of soldiers in both the 100th and 442nd have been recounted in a number of books over the years (Asahina 2006; Crost 1997; Duus 1987; Masuda 2008; Matsuo 1992; Tanaka 1997; Yenne 2007). Hayashi states that the "patriotic Nisei soldier" image privileges heroes in the incarceration narrative and leaves out stories of *Issei* (Japanese immigrants) and

women (2003:61). My thesis aids in providing a more complex image of incarcerees by examining the daily strategies Japanese Americans employed to cope with confinement.

Archaeological studies have already touched on overlooked incarceration experiences obscured by the dominant narrative. For example, research in Idaho focuses on a little-known all-male *Issei* internment and work camp called Kooskia (Camp 2010). Another example are recent investigations in Colorado at the Granada Relocation Center, also known as Amache, which has resulted in an M.A. thesis on forbidden *saké* procurement (Slaughter 2008) as well as theses on the lives of incarceree women and children (Kamp-Whittaker 2010; Shew 2010). These studies demonstrate the power that archaeological research has to illuminate lesser-known incarceration narratives such as those of the *Issei* who left few oral historical and documentary accounts. My study continues in the same vein by utilizing multiple sources of data to examine the ways in which a diverse cross-section of the incarcerated population at Manzanar dealt with institutional confinement.

Research questions

The research questions I intend to pursue in this thesis project pertain to a fundamental aspect of institutional confinement: understanding how people who are imprisoned deal with being deprived of familiar surroundings and personal freedom. More specifically, I examine the modifications that Manzanar incarcerees made to barracks, the "interior environment," and to spaces outside of the barracks, the "external environment." Understanding how incarcerees altered the limited areas they had access to advances our knowledge of how they coped with institutional confinement. The specific

research questions I address including the following: 1) How did incarcerees change their interior and exterior environment to create spaces that provided them with physical and mental comfort? 2) Were there discernable differences or similarities in the way these alterations were made within the camp? and, 3) Did demographic differences play a role in how environments were modified?

Sources of data

This thesis utilizes an array of data for analysis, which I detail in the sections that follow. My part in collecting original data involved participating in the garden excavation in Block 24 as well as cleaning and cataloging all artifacts from both the Block 24 and Block 33 garden excavations. I also conducted oral histories with fourteen former Manzanar incarcerees who answered questions specific to this research project. The ability to obtain new oral histories from living Japanese Americans who experienced the wartime incarceration adds an important line of evidence to an historical archaeology analysis of confinement. In addition, I utilize previously recorded oral histories, historical documents, government records, and historic photographs—all of which were accessible through digital archives such as Densho.org or at Manzanar National Historic Site.

Archaeology

New archaeological data on Manzanar Relocation Center are available for analysis because two incarceree-built ornamental gardens were recently excavated: the Block 33 Barracks 4 garden, which was uncovered in May 2011, and the Block 24 Barracks 5 garden, which was excavated in August 2012. Archaeological reports for those gardens are in the process of being published by Manzanar National Historic Site.

All of the archaeologically recovered artifacts were deposited during and immediately after the years Manzanar operated as a relocation center—1942 to 1945. An initial deposition occurred when people who passed by, lived near, or played around the gardens purposefully or accidentally dropped items into the garden. A second deposition took place when incarcerees dumped their trash into the gardens near the end of Manzanar's closing. The camp officially closed on November 21, 1945 and except for a few buildings in the administration and staff housing area, the entire camp was dismantled by December 2, 1946 (Burton 1996:107). During this dismantling period, most of the gardens were covered with dirt and razed structural debris by bulldozers and they have remained undisturbed since.

Oral history

Oral history is another primary data source utilized for this study. Fourteen individuals in total were interviewed for this project—ten men and four women. I interviewed four participants as an intern or seasonal employee of Manzanar National Historic Site and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Massachusetts Boston to conduct the rest of the oral histories. The IRB approval and consent forms can be found in Appendix A and B. Pseudonyms are used to conceal the identities of oral histories conducted under IRB approval. All interviewees were asked questions that pertained to my project's research focus on interior and exterior environments and participants were free to discuss any subject they wanted to. A sample of interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Oral histories are inherently biased because memory is selective, especially when interviewees are asked to recall events that happened seventy years earlier. An additonal

issue particular to this thesis project is that all participants interviewed are *Nisei* (second generation Japanese Americans). Those who were adults and elderly during the war, the *Issei*, have all passed on. When the *Issei* were alive, many were reluctant to talk about their imprisonment in the camps with their own children and grandchildren—the *Nisei* and *Sansei* (third generation Japanese Americans). Many of those who might have felt comfortable sharing their experiences died before Japanese American oral history projects began in the 1970s (Hansen 1995). Since then, virtually all oral history interviews have been conducted with the *Nisei* who were only children or young adults at the time of incarceration. Because the *Issei* have passed on, informants were asked questions about their adult parents' and neighbors' role in modifying internal and external surroundings. Biases and inaccuracies in these oral histories are checked against other lines of evidence.

Historic photographs

In my study, I analyze dozens of historic photographs of Manzanar Relocation Center from Manzanar National Historic Site's visual collection and the Japanese American Relocation Digital Archive's (JARDA) online collection. Toyo Miyatake, Dorothea Lange, Francis Stewart, and Ansel Adams shot the majority of known photographs of Manzanar. Miyatake, an incarceree at Manzanar, secretly smuggled a camera into camp (Alinder 2009:77). Even though it was forbidden for him to have a camera, the WRA later allowed him to photograph with the presence of a white staff worker. Still, his photography was restricted because his "ability to replenish his photographic supplies" was solely under the discretion of Manzanar director, Ralph Merritt (Robinson 2002:25). During Merritt's appointment at Manzanar, he invited his

photographer friend Ansel Adams to document the lives of the incarcerees, which resulted in some of the most well-known photographs of the camp. Another photographer who captured daily life at Manzanar was Dorothea Lange, who is famous for her Depression-era photos. Lange and Stewart were official photographers employed by the WRA.

When Adams arrived to photograph Manzanar, he was barred from shooting guard towers and the barbed wire fence. In fact, "military police sometimes accompanied [photographers] as they worked, steering them away from subjects deemed objectionable by the authorities" (Robinson 2002:20). Lange and Stewart's photographs differed from Adams', however, because they were out rightly intended to be government propaganda. As Robinson states, WRA images were used "in occasional reports to illustrate its benevolence" (2002:20). As for Miyatake, his main focus was to record the daily lives of incarcerees but unlike the other photographers mentioned, he found ways to capture barbed wire fencing and guard towers in several of his images.

Overall, these images of Manzanar help visually pinpoint the alterations incarcerees made to the camp environment.

Government records

Two types of government records are utilized for this study: 1) Manzanar's camp roster and 2) wartime relocation records from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Each of the ten relocation centers kept a roster of their incarceree population. The Manzanar roster, which is available in Microsoft Excel courtesy of Manzanar National Historic Site, lists over 10,000 incarcerees. This document contains information about an individual such as their date of birth, residence

before the war, citizenship status, marital status, date of entry and departure from Manzanar Relocation Center, as well as the names of members living in their camp household. Many individuals also have their camp address listed on the roster.

NARA records are available online and provide data similar to those found in the camp roster. One important difference is that NARA records contain information on an incarceree's city of birth, pre-war occupation, language ability, as well as parents' pre-war occupation and city of birth. Both types of records provide valuable demographic information for the analysis of interior and exterior environments.

Methods of analysis

This thesis project utilizes a historical archaeology approach to integrate and interpret data. Laurie Wilkie instructs historical archaeologists "to understand the relationship between different source materials, and how in practice to integrate diverse sources into meaningful narratives about the past" (2006:33). For my project, I identify biases within each source material while recognizing the fact that drawing upon multiple evidentiary sources mitigates those biases and strengthens interpretations.

My analysis for this thesis project is divided into two sections: the modifications incarcerees made inside barracks—the interior environment—and the alterations incarcerees made to the outdoor camp landscape—the exterior environment. An examination of Manzanar's visual record reveal the ways in which incarcerees transformed private living areas; this information is also assembled from interviews I conducted with former Manzanar incarcerees. For my case study on barracks basements, the names on barracks basement builders and users are retrieved from oral histories I

gathered for this thesis and from other oral history collections. I collect demographic information on those who constructed and used barracks basements from government records in order to link incarceree alterations to gender, age, generation, occupation, and geographic origins. My examination of interior spaces demonstrates how people in camp modified their private living spaces while they were under institutional confinement and whether demographic differences exist.

Analyzing the exterior camp environment relies on the full range of data as well. Photographs of Manzanar's exterior landscape provide views of gardens, landscaping, or other external alterations. Archaeological evidence also reveals some the modifications Japanese Americans at Manzanar made to their exterior environment and artifacts from garden ponds provide evidence of who utilized those spaces and how. Oral history interviews with former incarcerees yield information on whether or not they, their parents, or their neighbors engaged in altering their exterior environment. This examination of exterior spaces is also dependent on carrying out a demographic analysis wherein information collected from government records provides a way to link incarceree-built environments to gender, age, generation, occupation, and geographic origins. For my case study on ornamental gardens, archival research conducted by previous researchers provides vital information on the names of ornamental garden builders and the locations of those garden ponds.

Through a careful analysis of a diverse number of sources—oral historical, archaeological, photographic, and archival evidence—one can begin to address the question: How did Japanese Americans alter their environment to cope with institutional

confinement? Interrogating this through an archaeological lens will dismantle dominant narratives and help tell the story of incarceration at Manzanar from a broader perspective.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study seeks to address questions concerning four different dimensions of the Japanese American incarceree experience. The first relates to the archaeology of institutional confinement. Multiple sources of data are analyzed to understand how Japanese American incarcerees at one specific carceral site—Manzanar Relocation Center—coped with imprisonment. Second, this thesis is positioned to contribute to the current body of archaeological research on Japanese American incarceration. Much of that literature focuses on the themes of resistance and maintenance of a Japanese identity despite confinement. By analyzing a diverse cross-section of the Manzanar incarceree population, this study helps us better understand how incarceree strategies of resistance might have differed by gender, generation, or geographic origin. Third, this thesis examines Japanese American arts and crafts production within camps, as well as landscaping projects as part of the broader consideration of the role incarcerees played as agents during this time of dislocation. Fourth, my analysis of how Manzanar incarcerees transformed interior and exterior spaces in the context of institutional confinement and anti-Asian racism is situated within studies of agency. Each of these questions is linked to

larger issues that have served as a core focus of studies carried out by archaeologists and social scientists more generally.

Institutional confinement archaeology

Literature on the archaeology of institutional confinement is rapidly growing as evidenced by the volume of scholarly work that has appeared on the subject in recent years. In the book *The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement*, Casella focuses on the history of American penal systems and the insights that archaeology provide on the carceral experience (2007). Myers and Moshenska's *Archaeologies of Internment* (2011) and Mytum and Carr's *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-century Mass Internment* (2013) are two edited volumes of case studies that shed further light on the historical archaeology of confinement. All three books provide examples of archaeological research on the disciplinary power of carceral institutions, as well as the ways in which those who are imprisoned cope with confinement.

Covering American institutional confinement from the seventeenth century onward, Casella outlines three types of confinement: punishment, asylum, and exile. She argues that an archaeological examination of institutional confinement is the study of the "material manifestations" of the rules of imprisonment as well as the ways individuals react to confinement (2007). Casella states that archaeology can demonstrate how power functioned and how it was materially exerted over those confined; it also illuminates the diverse embodied experiences of everyday instiutional life (2007:2-3). She cites previous work on Japanese American incarceration sites as an example of how we can archaeologically investigate those concepts. My study makes a contribution to the

archaeology of institutional confinement by specifically examining the daily strategies Manzanar incarcerees utilized to endure their carceral experience.

Two recent publications, one by Myers and Moshenska (2011) and the other by Mytum and Carr (2013), showcase an international range of scholarly work on two specific types of penal institutions: "internment camps" and "prisoner of war camps." Myers and Moshenska's *Archaeologies of Internment* contain case studies that focus on the study of the material record of those who were incarcerated unjustly. "Internment" is defined as confinement in a camp that has surveillance and an enclosure, such as a fenced perimeter (2011). Myers and Moshenska argue that archaeological studies of "internment camps" can tell us about the "lives, strategies, personalities and forms of physical or mental escape" of incarcerees (2011:9). Besides escape, freedom is another recurring theme in the archaeology of institutional confinement, which includes physical freedom but also a more personal sense of liberation (Myers and Moshenska 2011:10). Manzanar provides an important case study in understanding mental escape from confinement; physical escape was not an issue since leave permits were granted to those who were able to find a place to live, work, or attend college outside of the West Coast.

Mytum and Carr's edited volume focuses on the historical archaeology of "prioners of war." "Prisoners of war" are normally defined as enemy combatants captured during a time of war, but Mytum and Carr's definition is broader as it includes individuals who are "normally fit, law-abiding, self-sufficient, and imprisoned only because of their allegiance in a conflict" (2013:3). Mytum and Carr's definition can be applied to Japanese Americans during World War II who were confined as civilians because of their *perceived* allegiance to Japan. Mytum and Carr argue that "prisoner of

war archaeology" differs from "mainstream archaeology" because the context of imprisonment is tied to war (2013:15). This thesis seeks to determine whether the limits that wartime regulations put on the ability of incarcerees to alter their internal and external environments can be observed in the archaeology of Manzanar.

Japanese American incarceration archaeology

Casella (2007) categorizes Japanese American confinement sites as "places of exile." Archaeological research on Japanese American World War II incarceration emerged in the 1990s, which mainly focused on recording the ten relocation centers, particularly Manzanar and Minidoka. Since then, archaeological work has taken place at a variety of war relocation centers, two internment camps, and a federal prison. The following section outlines the history of Japanese American incarceration archaeology and the current body of research.

Past and current research

Large-scale archaeological investigations of Japanese American sites of confinement were first instigated by NPS as cultural resource management (CRM) projects. Archaeologist Jeff Burton directed all of the early projects and is lead author on a number of Japanese American confinement site CRM reports. The first report produced was the three volume report, *Three Farewells to Manzanar: The Archeology of Manzanar National Historic Site, California* (Burton 1996), which was the result of "archival research, intensive survey of over 1,200 acres, detailed feature recording and mapping, repeat photography, controlled surface collection, and subsurface testing" (1996:177). The report was entitled "Three Farewells to Manzanar" in reference to the book *Farewell*

to Manzanar and the fact that the site had three periods of occupation: Manzanar Relocation Center (1942-1945), Manzanar townsite (1910-1920s), and Native American sites (3500 B.C.-1800s) (NPS 2006:213). After its publication, the National Historic Site boundary was expanded to include approximately 300 additional acres outside of the NPS boundary that Burton and his team identified as having significant features (Farrell 2014).

Following *Three Farewells to Manzanar*, NPS continued funding archaeological documentation of other Japanese American confinement sites. Burton, along with Mary Farrell, Richard Lord, and Florence Lord, conducted archaeological surveys of all ten relocation centers and published *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (2002). This book accomplished two important goals: 1) provided historical documentation of all Japanese American incarceration sites—from well-known relocation centers such as Manzanar to obscure detention stations and internment camps—and 2) described the physical structures and features that remain at the ten relocation camps. As a result, many of the confinement sites were recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places or as National Historic Landmarks (Burton et al. 2002; Farrell 2014). Following its designation as a National Monument, Burton led intensive archaeological investigations at the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho (Burton and Farrell 2001; Burton et al. 2003; Burton 2005). Survey, feature recording and mapping, and photography were first undertaken at Minidoka to provide information about the kinds of structural remains and artifacts still present from its use as an incarceration camp. The first report recommended that all the WRA camp-era features recorded were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Burton and Farrell 2001). Archaeological investigations were then

carried out at Minidoka's entrance to provide "baseline data for park management, interpretation, resource protection, and the in-progress general management plan" (Burton et al. 2003). Minidoka's dump was also recorded to recover information that could shed light on the daily lives of incarcerees and to "make recommendations for [Minidoka's] protection and management" (Burton 2005:1).

The archaeological work accomplished in the 1990s and early 2000s laid the foundation for research at sites of Japanese American confinement outside of the NPS system. In 2008, surveys and excavations at Amache relocation center in Colorado were initiated by Dr. Bonnie Clark, a University of Denver professor. Clark has since directed a bi-annual archaeological field school at Amache. In the summer of 2010, University of Idaho professor Dr. Stacey Camp began excavating at Kooskia, an all-male Japanese internment and labor camp in Idaho (Camp 2010; 2012). Excavations resumed in the summer of 2013 and long-term research is planned for the site. Another internment camp that has received recent archaeological attention is Honouliuli internment and POW camp in Hawaii. Archaeological investigations at Honouliuli took place from 2008 to 2012 through the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii and a University of Hawaii West Oahu field school and was preceded by a reconnaissance survey by Burton and Farrell (2007) of all Hawaiian internment camps.

Themes

Archaeological analysis of Kooskia and Honouliuli is ongoing but archaeological research on Manzanar, Amache, and the Catalina Federal Honor Camp have been published in the form of book chapters, theses, and dissertations. This section provides an

overview of the main themes that have been explored in the literature on Japanese American incarceration archaeology.

Resistance is a theme that looms large in Japanese American incarceration archaeology. At Manzanar, Burton and Farrell analyzed the grafitti left behind by incarcerees (2013) and found that a majority of the graffiti at Manzanar (64%) fit the category of "testimony" (inscriptions of names, initials, and dates) while 20% fit the categories of "identity" and "resistance." The identity and resistance inscriptions increased in 1943, which Burton and Farrell argue that might correlate with the fact that a "Loyalty Questionnaire" was issued in February of 1943. Further, Burton and Farrell found that the identity and resistance graffiti essentially stopped when "disloyals" were sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center (2013:256). The study of ceramics from Manzanar's dump also revealed acts of resistance. In Branton's master's thesis, she found a number of Japanese tablewares such as rice bowls and argues that owning them were defiant acts because it meant that incarcerees were cooking in their barracks, which was prohibited (2000). In Branton's dissertation, she discusses resistance in her examination of a different incarceration site, the Catalina Federal Honor Camp. The "camp" was a prison that held forty-five Japanese American "Resisters of Conscience" who refused to be drafted into the military during World War II until they and their families had been released from confinement. Utilizing a historical archaeology of landscape perspective, Branton argues that the former prison is a site of resistance because it now serves as a memorial that encourages storytelling, which helps dismantle the master narrative that all Japanese Americans were compliant when the order for mass incarceration was authorized (2004; 2009). Slaughter examines resistance at Amache relocation center

through *saké*, a Japanese liquor. The procurement and consumption of *saké* was prohibited and Slaughter contends that the presence of *saké* jug fragments in the archaeological record demonstrates incarceree resistance to the rules set by camp authorities (2013:299).

In addition to resistance, Branton's (2000) examination of Manzanar's Japanese ceramics and Slaughter's (2013) analysis of *saké* both make the case that the presence of Japanese objects indicate maintenance of Japanese ethnic identity—another major theme in Japanese American incarceration archaeology. Skiles and Clark (2010) conducted an archaeological survey of two trash dumps and two barracks blocks and calculated that "as many as one in twelve of the ceramic vessels at Amache were imported from Japan" (182). Similar to Branton (2000), they argue that procuring and using Japanese ceramics was an assertion of Japanese identity, which fits with previous research that shows that displaced people tend to surround themselves with familiar things (Skiles & Clark 2010). Shew and Kamp-Whittaker co-authored a book chapter on how the material record at Amache reveals activities that helped maintain a sense of a Japanese American community while under institutional confinement (2013).

Women, children, and reconciliation are other topics that have been researched in Japanese American incarceration archaeology. Shew wrote her M.A. thesis on feminine identity at Amache while Kamp-Whittaker focused her study on children at Amache. Shew (2010) argues that women at Amache were "involved in creating and defining new Japanese feminine identities" (133) and Kamp-Whittaker (2010) concludes in her thesis that adults actively sought to protect children from the trauma of incarceration by creating "structured play areas" (151). In a book chapter on the dedication of the Catalina

Honor Camp in 1999, Farrell and Burton argue that the archaeological site serves as a place of reconciliation. The 1999 ceremony was held to recognize the renaming of the former prison as the "Gordon Hirabayashi Recreation Site" in honor of Gordon Hirabayashi, its most well-known prisoner who was one of three Japanese Americans who challenged the constitutionality of the incarceration (Farrell and Burton 2011). The occasion marked the first time the site gained public recognition for its connection to the fight for constitutional and civil rights during World War II. Besides Hirabayshi, the prison held Japanese American "Resisters of Conscience" who were largely shunned by their community for decades following their refusal to be drafted. Farrell and Burton argue that the archaeological site played a role "in the reconciliation of disparate struggles for civil rights" (2011:89) and that "more important than the physical remains of buildings and pathways is the [prison camp] itself, and the remembrance, honoring, and healing that have occurred there" (2011:109).

My study contributes to the literature on Japanese American incarceration archaeology by acknowledging the heterogeneity of the camp population at relocation centers. Except for Shew (2010) who examines generational differences between Japanese American women in camp, few other archaeological studies examine differences in the ways incarcerees coped with confinement. This analysis is important because Japanese Americans at Manzanar and other "relocation centers" differed from each other in terms of age, gender, class, religion, generation, occupation, socioeconomic status, and birthplace. Toward that end, this thesis examines the varying strategies that incarcerated individuals utilized to deal with institutional confinement.

Arts & crafts production and landscaping

The third research context for this study is research on the material culture of Japanese American confinement, particularly the production of arts and crafts and landscaping. Scholars argue that engaging in those activities became strategies of coping with confinement and served as acts of resistance against incarceration.

Arts and crafts production and landscaping provided physical comfort. In her book *Artifacts of Loss: Crafting Survival in Japanese American Concentration Camps*, anthropologist Jane Dusselier (2008) classifies arts and crafts as furniture-making, painting, knitting, and even gardening. On one level, arts and crafts production served practical purposes. For example, furniture was often made because the WRA did not provide anything more than Army cots inside the barracks. Japanese Americans also created hand-made name and address indicators to hang right outside their barracks door in order to find their home among the monotonous rows of barracks (Dusselier 2008:38). Incarcerees landscaped confinement sites for similar reasons. For example, tamarisk and other trees were planted for shade at Manzanar (NPS 2006) and cottonwood trees were planted at Amache to break up the military order of the landscape (NPS 2007:12). In some assembly centers and relocation centers, victory gardens were planted close to barracks in order to raise vegetables that were unavailable; the produce grown was then given to the mess hall or cooked inside a residential barrack (Helphand 2006).

Arts and crafts production and landscaping also served as a strategy in coping with confinement. The creation of arts and crafts under incarceration is associated with an attitude called *gaman* (Hirasuna 2005). Translated from Japanese, *gaman* means "to endure." Dusselier believes the production of arts and crafts was a coping mechanism in

response to the trauma of imprisonment (2008). She argues that the creative energy involved in making arts and crafts allowed Japanese Americans to deal with the trauma of institutional confinement (2008). Helphand states that the same attitude applied to the physical transformation of the landscape at various assembly centers and WRA camps. He asserts that incarcerees transformed the physical landscape to relieve stress of camp life by "acting as mental oases" (Helphand 2006:192). Tamura argues that incarceree-built ornamental gardens are representations of *gaman* because they served as "restorative agents" (2004). In Tamura's landscape studies analysis of gardens at Manzanar and Minidoka relocation centers, she asserts that "gardening fostered a sense of empowerment, a way to ameliorate the camp conditions while contributing to the mental stability and physical well-being of the gardener and the incarcerated community" (2004:11).

In addition to providing physical and mental comfort, scholars argue that art and craft production and landscaping were ways of resisting confinement. Creating arts and crafts sometimes involved subversive acts. For example, incarcerees stole lumber to create furniture (Dusselier 2008; Hirasuna 2005). It has also been suspected that incarcerees at Manzanar stole cement for constructing garden ponds and other landscaping projects (Tamura 2004). Through an "urban and architectural analysis," Horiuchi (2001) makes the case that incarcerees' "auto-construction"—the creation of elaborate Japanese-style gardens, *ofuros* or Japanese baths, and areas for practicing Japanese martial arts such as *kendo* and *judo*—were building programs that defied the WRA through the appropriation of space. Tamura makes a similar argument for incarceree-built gardens and states, "For [Japanese Americans], appropriation of

government land affirmed a sense of communal solidarity while testing for WRA's supremacy" (Tamura 2004:16). For example, building a victory garden in a firebreak at Manzanar went against the WRA's directives regarding the proper use of space that was put in place to create military order on the landscape (Tamura 2001; 2004). Helphand argues that garden-making also facilitated resistance because building Japanese-style gardens was a way for incarcerees to assert their Japanese identity (2006:189). This assertion of ethnic identity can be interpreted as resistance because incarcerees were put in camps simply because they happened to be Japanese. For example, at Manzanar, authorities forbade incarcerees to speak Japanese during the first few months of confinement. My thesis project seeks a more nuanced understanding of resistance by examining the demographic backgrounds of people who physically transformed their living spaces and the outdoor landscape.

As described above, the literature on the materiality of the Japanese American incarceration focuses on the agency of incarcerees through their relationship with material objects and the landscape. My research builds upon previous scholarship that highlights the role that incarcerees played as agents during World War II, but carefully situates agency within the context of anti-Asian racism and institutional confinement.

Agency

One way historical archaeology is able to shed light on people who are left out of mainstream society is to acknowledge the agency of marginalized individuals or groups. Agency theory is the idea that "people are not uniform automatons, merely reacting to changes in the external world" (Dornan 2002:304). For archaeologists studying agency

within the context of race and racialization, Charles Orser Jr. cautions against "total free agency" (2010). He states,

> "The acceptance of total free agency in a particular sociohistorical setting may erase the limits that racism and bigotry place on freedom of movement and expression. Regarding race specifically, the understanding of agency must be constrained—in each historical moment—by the structures within which the social groups operate" (2010:128).

For my study on the Japanese American incarceration, agency is not only affected by the structure of racial hegemony, but also by the structure of institutional confinement. While it is true that Japanese Americans were not confined to individual jail cells and were even able to participate in a variety of recreational activities, one must remember that viewing this as freedom is inaccurate; their agency was restricted by the physical environment, psychological constraints, and the socio-historical context they were living in. Therefore, Manzanar incarcerees' alterations to their environment are analyzed as acts that were structured by institutional confinement and a racial hierarchy that marked "being Japanese" as inferior.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The United States entered World War II when the Japanese Imperial Navy bombed Pearl Harbor, an American naval base, on December 7th, 1941. A few months later, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the "evacuation" and incarceration of all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. Government officials claimed at the time that the forced removal was a "military necessity." Decades later, Japanese American activists politicized by social movements of the 1960s sought to prove that the incarceration was unjust. They launched a campaign called "Redress" and years of activism culminated in the passage of the 1988 Civil Liberties Act, which granted each survivor of the wartime incarceration a letter of apology from President Ronald Reagan, as well as $20,000 in reparations (Maki et al. 1999; Yang Murray 2008). The Act was passed as a result of the findings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), which had been formed as part of the Redress movement to investigate the wartime incarceration. The Commission issued a report in 1982 and concluded that Japanese Americans were not confined because of "military necessity" but as a result of 1) wartime hysteria, 2) failed political leadership, and 3) racism (CWRIC 1997). The racism that unjustly sent Japanese Americans behind barbed wire was not, however, simply borne out of wartime

hysteria. As discussed below, pre-war racism played a large role in determining the fate of Japanese Americans following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Japanese American history

Japanese immigrants began arriving on Pacific shores in the late nineteenth century shortly after Western countries sought to penetrate Asia in search of new markets. Japan attempted to "protect itself against European and American imperialist powers" by initiating a modernization program called the Meiji Restoration (Takaki 1998:43). In 1868, Japanese leaders implemented technological changes that brought rapid industrialization to the country. This modernization, however, negatively affected farmers who now had to pay a fixed tax on land. Many rural Japanese could not afford to pay the tax and lost their land. It was these Japanese farmers, mostly male, who would make the trans-Pacific migration to work as contract laborers in Hawaii's sugar plantations. Hawaii is an important site in Japanese American history because thousands of Japanese would make a secondary migration from Hawaii to the West Coast of the United States at the turn of the century.

The first wave of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii arrived in 1884. As contract laborers, Japanese men and women had grueling work schedules and laborers were subjected to both gender and racial inequality. For example, Japanese men and women both engaged in strenuous labor but plantation owners paid women less than men (Takaki 1998). As a group, Japanese laborers were viewed as racially subordinate and subjected to paternalism. For example, any perceived insubordination by workers would result in docked wages and physical abuse (Okihiro 1991).

After the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898 and prohibited contract labor, many Japanese moved to mainland states such as California, Oregon, and Washington. According to Takaki, "By early 1907, 40,000 Japanese had left Hawaii for the West Coast" (1998:148). Labor opportunities in Western states, coupled with continued social upheaval in Japan, brought more rural Japanese across the Pacific in the early twentieth century. A large number of these Japanese also immigrated directly to the United States instead of Hawaii. As early as the 1890s, Japanese American communities had formed up and down America's pacific coast (Spickard 2009).

Many of these first-generation immigrants, or *Issei*, had been farmers in Japan and found an economic niche in agriculture, which at that time was an undeveloped industry on the West Coast. Japanese laborers, however, soon found themselves in the same position as the Chinese, who had been barred from immigrating to the United States as laborers beginning in 1882. Anti-Japanese sentiment began to grow among white working class men and once again, politicians capitalized on the anger of groups such as the American Federation of Labor Leader who lobbied for Japanese exclusion (Daniels 1988). The result was the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement, an informal agreement between the U.S. and the Empire of Japan that barred Japanese laborers from immigrating to America. Japan agreed to the exclusionary agreement in exchange for the desegregation of schools in the United States that discriminated against Japanese American students.

The 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement prevented Japanese intending to be laborers from immigrating but did not prohibit Japanese living in the United States from bringing over wives. Unlike Chinese communities, which largely remained bachelor societies as a result of the 1882 Exclusion Act, many Japanese women were able to immigrate to the

United States as "picture brides" through arranged marriages made via the exchange of pictures across the Pacific (Lee 2003). Their children are often referred to as the *Nisei*—second generation Japanese Americans. While the *Nisei* were United States citizens by birth, the *Issei* were "aliens ineligible for citizenship" due to the 1870 Naturalization Act, which restricted naturalization to white immigrants (Hing 1993:30).

After 1908, exclusionist policies continued and threatened to endanger the growth of Japanese American communities. The press played a role in propagating anti-Japanese sentiment. Even before the First World War, newspapers began printing headlines that portrayed Japan as a threat and Japanese as "the yellow peril" (Daniels 1977). In response to anti-Japanese exclusionists in America, Japan's Foreign Ministry stopped issuing passports for picture brides in 1920 (Lee 2003:36). Four years later, Japanese immigration was completely restricted as a result of the Immigration Act of 1924. This act specifically barred any "alien ineligible for citizenship" from entering the United States. Previously, Japanese Americans had been able to enter as merchants, teachers, or students but under this new legislation, all immigrants from Asia were banned (Hing 1993:33). Additional discrimination came in form of Alien Land Laws, which were passed in California in 1913 and 1920. These laws prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land so the primary groups affected were Asian immigrants such as the Japanese (Spickard 2009:60).

The *Issei* were sometimes able to find ways around discrimination such as holding land in their American-born children's name, but legally, there was very little they could do to fight against the broad array of exclusionist policies directed at them. Barred from naturalizing, the *Issei* could not vote or hold political office. One Japanese immigrant,

Takao Ozawa, did attempt to appeal to the courts in order to naturalize as a United States citizen. In 1922 Ozawa argued that he was qualified for citizenship because the color of his skin was white. The judge agreed that his skin was white, but ruled against Ozawa because his interpretation of the law was that citizenship was only to be granted to those who fit the racial classification of a white person (Daniels 1977:98).

The history of Japanese in America clearly shows that racial prejudice was an everyday reality for this ethnic group prior to World War II. Like other Asian immigrants, they experienced exclusionary policies in labor, immigration laws, land ownership, and the right to naturalize. Therefore, the incarceration of Japanese Americans was not solely a kneejerk reaction to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor but a decision that fell in line with historical patterns of anti-Asian racism and exclusion.

Japanese Americans and World War II

Immediately following the December 7th bombing, the FBI began rounding up *Issei* despite any evidence of sabotage or wrongdoing. Men and women who were perceived to have ties to Japan or Japanese culture—language schoolteachers, Japanese newspaper staff, Buddhist leaders—all came under the government's suspicion (Irons 1993:22). Many were arrested in their homes and held in local jails or detention stations. Even though these *Issei* had done nothing wrong, they were nonetheless considered "alien enemies" because of their status as Japanese nationals. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, World War II was well underway in Europe. Anticipating participation in the war, the FBI began keeping tabs on Japanese, German, and Italian nationals eighteen months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor (Wegars 2010). The Office of Naval

Intelligence (ONI) gathered information on Japanese American communities while the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) followed individuals who were suspected of subversive activity. In 1940, the Smith Act was passed and required all Japanese, German, and Italian immigrants to register as aliens and be fingerprinted. A list of "enemy aliens" was compiled from the alien registry, as well as the ONI and FBI's list of identified "suspects" (Robinson 2009:47). One day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the FBI began arresting mainland Japanese Americans from that list.

Detention stations

Approximately 4,000 *Issei* were deemed "enemy aliens" and were taken from their homes and families by the FBI and imprisoned in various detention stations (Burton et al. 2002:379). Despite their residency in the United States, these immigrants could lawfully be treated as enemy aliens by the American government because the *Issei* had been prevented from naturalizing as citizens. Examples of temporary detention facilities included immigration stations such as Angel Island in San Francisco, California, Ellis Island in New York, and East Boston in Massachusetts. Individuals held in these facilities were considered "more dangerous" than the rest of the Japanese American population because they held a leadership role in the community or an occupation that had a perceived link to Japan or Japanese culture. Along with the *Issei*, some German and Italian nationals residing in the United States were also confined in detention stations. Most detainees were incarcerated for only 1 to 4 months (Burton et al. 2002:380). Germans and Italians who were released from detention stations were free from custody. Japanese immigrants, on the other hand, were all transferred to Justice Department internment camps run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Internment camps

Two-dozen Justice Department internment camps were scattered across the United States (Wegars 2010:17). These camps held Japanese immigrants or a combination of Japanese, German, and Italian nationals. Unlike those confined in WRA "relocation centers" like Manzanar, internees in Justice Department camps had an opportunity to go before a hearing board where they were given a chance to prove their loyalty to the United States. Witnesses could even be called in to vouch for an internee's character and allegiance (Wegars 2010). If a German or Italian detainee was successful in testifying to their loyalty to the United States, they were released. The Japanese, on the other hand, were sent to reunite with their families in WRA camps and those who had an unsuccessful hearing were transferred to internment camps run by the United States Army (Robinson 2009:198–199).

"Military necessity" and Executive Order 9066

Even after the *Issei* had been detained or interned following the FBI round-up, some people in the United States government argued that a distinction between loyal and disloyal Japanese could not be made (Irons 1993, Robinson 2009, Yang Murray 2008). Fueled by racism and anger over the attack, government and military officials set into motion plans to ensure that Japanese Americans would not pose a security threat to the nation. On February 19th, 1942, the president signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced removal of all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast—both citizens and non-citizens. The government's targeted mistreatment of this one ethnic group during World War II marks one the worst civil liberties violations in twentieth century American history.

The United States government justified Executive Order 9066 by claiming "military necessity." Top officials in the military and government such as General John DeWitt, Commander of Western Defense, argued that the proximity of Japanese American communities to the coast posed a security threat. 1940 census data reveals that Japanese Americans were indeed concentrated on the West Coast—89% percent of the overall population resided in California, Oregon, and Washington (Daniels 1988:115)—however, there was never any evidence of sabotage by a person of Japanese ancestry either before or after the signing of Executive Order 9066. In an attempt to bolster the argument that Japanese Americans posed a security threat to the United States, California's attorney general Earl Warren pointed out that absence of fifth column activity was actually proof that Japanese Americans were plotting an attack (Daniels 1971:76). Fallacious and racist arguments for the mass removal of Japanese Americans did not subside. In General DeWitt's *Final Report: Japanese Evacuation From the West Coast, 1942*, he recommended the need for "evacuation" because Japanese immigrants and the *Nisei* with United States citizenship still maintained "racial affinities" to the "enemy race"—the "Japanese race" (U.S. Department of War 1943). Three Japanese Americans—Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu, and Min Yasui—sought to challenge the constitutionality of the incarceration during the war. The Supreme Court ruled against the three cases based on the United States government's argument that removal and incarceration was "military necessity" (Irons 1993).

Military exclusion zone

With Executive Order 9066 in place, a military exclusion zone was set up that included all of California, eastern Oregon and Washington, and southern Arizona (Burton

et al. 2002). Notices informing Japanese Americans of Executive Order 9066 were posted in neighborhoods that fell within the exclusion zone. Citizens and non-citizens of Japanese ancestry were ordered to "evacuate," which meant they had to voluntarily leave the exclusion area or be forced to live behind barbed wire in a relocation center. The one area with a sizable Japanese population that was not "evacuated" was the United States territory of Hawaii. With Japanese Hawaiians accounting for over one-third of the population, the military government that was established on the islands by martial law realized that incarcerating all Japanese in Hawaii would have crippled the Hawaiian economy (Okihiro 1991:205).

On the mainland, the majority of Japanese Americans were not able not to move outside of the military exclusion zone. Most were left with no choice but to comply with the "evacuation" orders because their bank assets had been frozen by the United States government after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and few inland states were receptive to Japanese Americans (Burton 1996:18). All Japanese Americans living within the exclusion zone were told that they could only take what they could carry and some were given as little as two weeks to pack and prepare for incarceration (Burton et al. 2002). Fortunate individuals had sympathetic friends or neighbors who agreed to care for their left-behind belongings and property, but more often than not, Japanese Americans were taken advantage of during this vulnerable period. Many were forced to sell household items, appliances, cars, and even businesses, for much less than they were worth. When their departure date arrived, Japanese Americans were told to gather at "civil control stations" located near their homes (Burton et al. 2002). From there, they were transported by bus to temporary camps called "assembly centers."

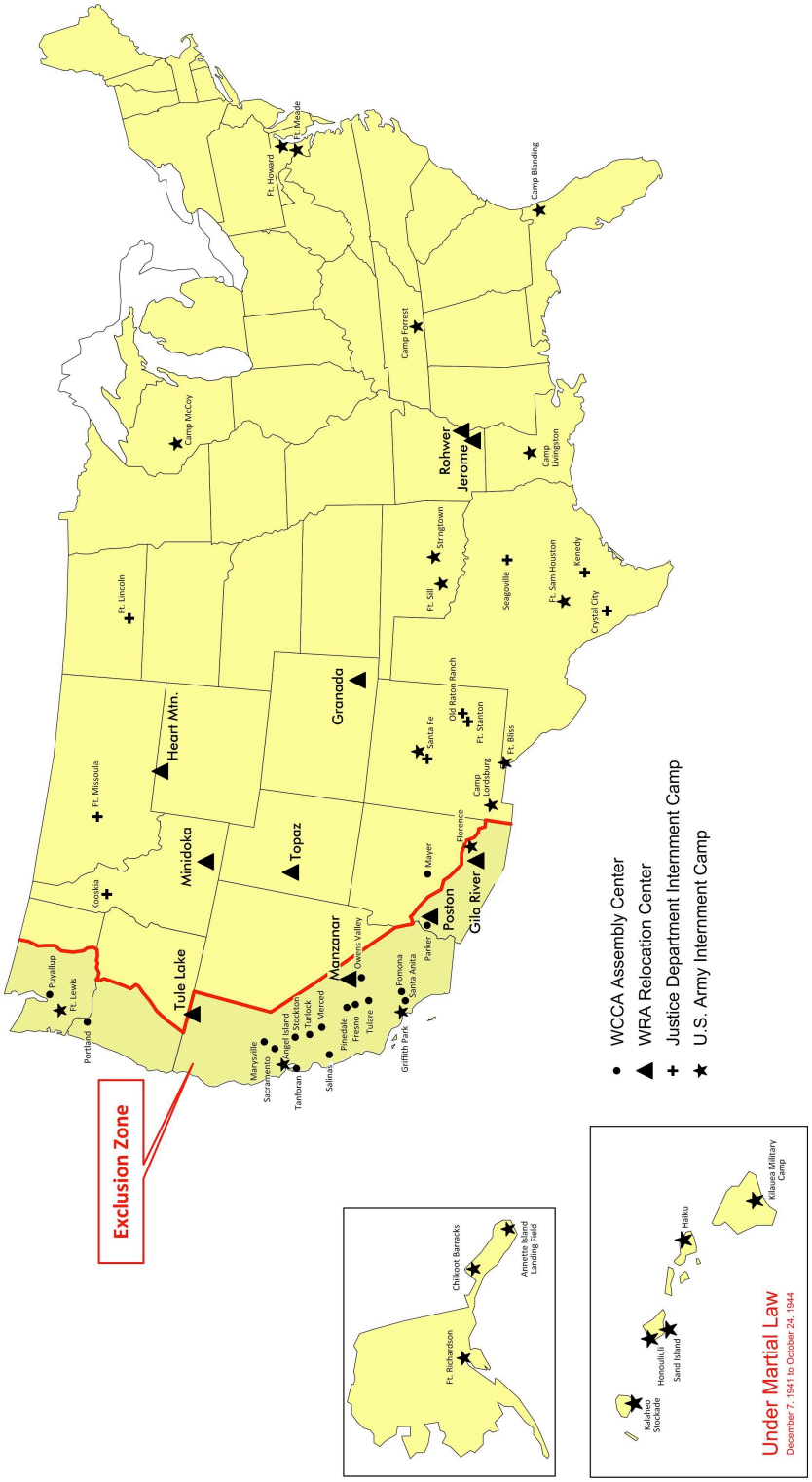

Figure 2. World War II Japanese American confinement sites in the United States and its territories. Map by Jeff Burton

Assembly centers

Most "assembly centers" were located near the towns and cities where Japanese Americans had resided. The Wartime Civilian Control Agency (WCCA) administered these centers. The government planned to hold incarcerees in "relocation centers," away from the Pacific coastline, but these confinement sites were still in the process of being built in the months following the signing of Executive Order 9066. While awaiting their construction, Japanese Americans were confined in "assembly centers," often located on property that normally operated as fairgrounds or racetracks. Many incarcerees were forced to live in horse stalls where the stink of horse manure was strong and thin walls separating living quarters meant a lack of privacy. Each "assembly center" was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and patrolled by armed military police (Burton et al. 2002:352). Japanese Americans were incarcerated there for a few weeks to several months before being moved inland to "relocation centers."

Relocation centers

"Relocation centers" were administered by a civilian agency called the War Relocation Authority (WRA). These WRA-run camps were located in remote and isolated areas such as deserts and swamps. There were ten WRA camps: Manzanar, Tule Lake, Granada (Amache), Topaz, Poston, Gila River, Minidoka, Heart Mountain, Rohwer, and Jerome. Figure 2 is a map that shows each Japanese American incarceration site's geographic location. Army-style barrack buildings served as living quarters and with the exception of the Gila River camp, all had armed military police in guard towers surrounding a barbed wire perimeter fence. Incarcerees were only granted leave permits if they were able to find work, locate a place to live, or gain acceptance to a college in an

area outside of the military exclusion zone. Later on, Japanese American men left WRA camps by joining or becoming drafted into the United States Army.

Figure 3. Row of residential barracks buildings at Manzanar. Photograph by Dorothea Lange. 1942. National Archives and Records Administration

Manzanar Relocation Center, 1942-1945

This study focuses on Manzanar located in the Owens Valley area of California. Situated in the remote interior of the state, this camp first served as an assembly center called the Owens Valley Reception Center. Approximately 1,000 incarcerees volunteered to go to Manzanar early because of public pressure to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast (Unrau 1996:53-54). Most of those who were sent to this "reception

center" stayed there after it became "Manzanar Relocation Center" on June 1, 1942. Other Japanese Americans were brought to Manzanar from "assembly centers" such as Santa Anita in Los Angeles or went directly to a WRA camp from their homes.

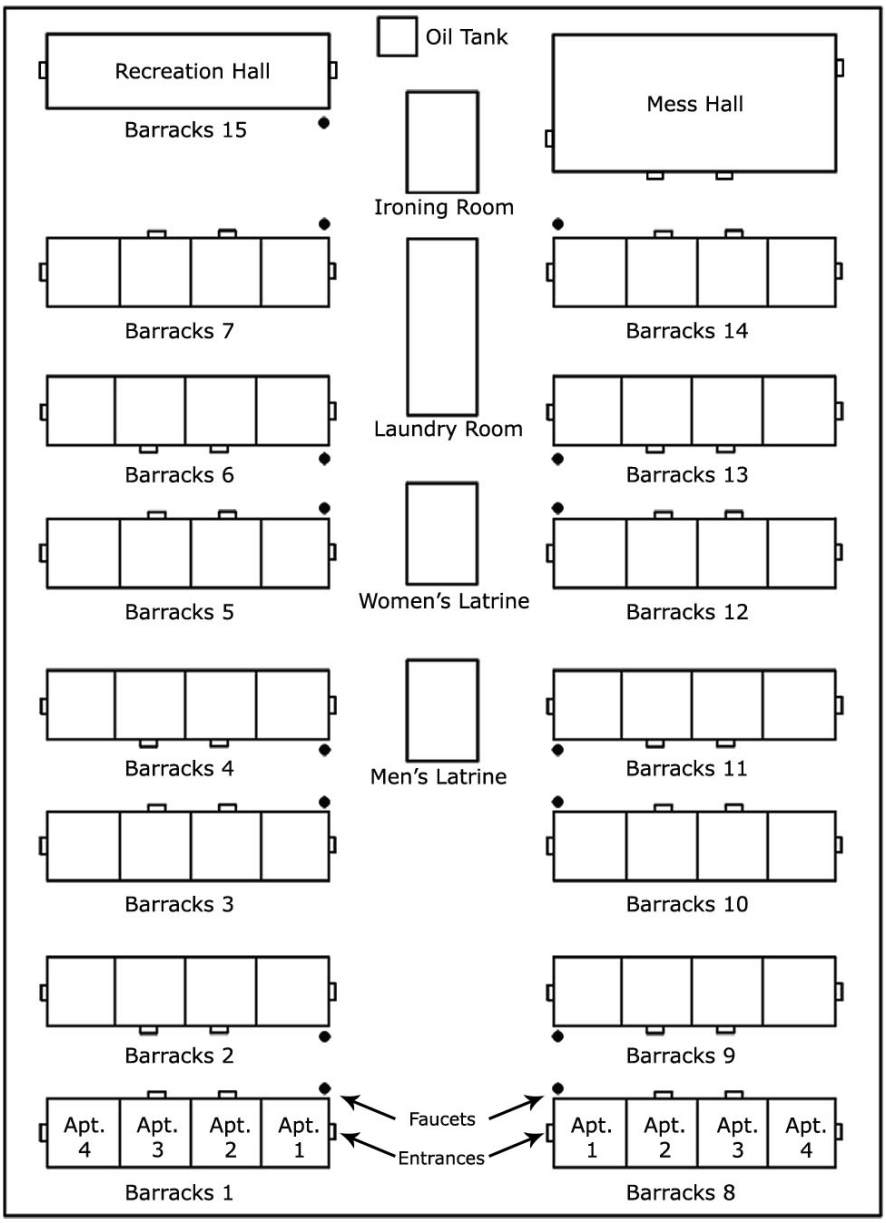

Figure 4**.** Typical block layout at Manzanar (not to scale). Illustration by author. Adapted from the National Park Service's "Manzanar: Camp Layout" brochure (2004)

Camp structure

A director oversaw an administrative staff that ran Manzanar Relocation Center. Employees of the WRA administration were all white and lived in housing blocks separate from incarcerees. Japanese Americans could be employed in a variety of positions such as mess hall workers, secretaries, and even as nurses and doctors in the relocation center hospital. Japanese Americans workers, however, were paid less than their white counterparts and the *Issei* were restricted from certain jobs, such as working at the camouflage net factory because it was part of the war effort (Unrau 1996).

Manzanar had thirty-six residential blocks with each block containing fourteen barracks, a recreational building, a mess hall where internees ate three times a day, separate latrines for men and women, a laundry room, and an ironing room. The WRA met the basic needs of those imprisoned in terms of providing food, shelter, and education for young children but incarcerees constructed or modified structures they felt were lacking such as an auditorium that was built for the high school. Additionally, unused barracks were converted into structures for religious services, a fish market, and a canteen (Unrau 1996). Empty spaces between blocks called "firebreaks" were used to plant "victory gardens" and for recreational activities such baseball and viewing films outdoors (Burton 1996:82).

Camp economy

Material goods came into Manzanar through a variety of channels. Japanese Americans were restricted to what to bringing what they could carry when they boarded buses or trains to Manzanar but additional baggage could be sent to the camp and incarcerees could receive packages from friends or family members via mail. These

channels account for how certain consumer goods such as Japanese ceramics ended up at Manzanar; they were likely possessions brought from home.

Incarcerees could also purchase items through mail order catalogs and the Manzanar cooperative store. Ordering goods through catalogs such as Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward was extremely popular at all Japanese American confinement sites. Those incarcerated at Manzanar were also able to mail order items from a J.C. Penney located in the nearby town of Lone Pine (Burton 1996:638). These catalogs often listed a wide variety items such as clothes, shoes, candy, toys, and household products. Goods could also be purchased from Manzanar's Community Enterprises cooperative, which included a canteen and a fish market. The canteen sold "food items, confections, smoking supplies, newspapers and periodicals, stationary, and drugs" (Unrau 1996:438).

Manzanar: a demographic profile

At the peak of its population, Manzanar held over 10,000 Japanese Americans. Incarcerees varied by gender, generation, citizenship status, age, and geographic origins. The demographic information I gathered on Manzanar incarcerees is taken from a WRA-published report titled, *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description* (1946).

Gender, generation, citizenship status, and age

Approximately 57 percent of incarcerees were male and 43 percent were female (WRA 1946:102). Three generations of Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II: 1) *Issei* (first generation), 2) *Nisei* (second generation), and 3) *Sansei* (third generation). The *Issei* are referred to as the first generation because they were the ones who immigrated to America from Japan. Two-thirds of the incarceree population at

Manzanar, however, were American citizens (WRA 1946:102). Most of those American citizens were *Nisei* while a much smaller portion were *Sansei*, the young children of *Nisei*. Scholar Eiichiro Azuma refers to the *Nisei* as bicultural because they were often bilingual and had the ability to move between American and Japanese culture (2005). There was also a small subset of the *Nisei* called the *Kibei* who had been educated in Japan at a young age and returned to United States after their studies were complete. Because of the amount of time they had spent in Japan, *Kibei* had a high degree of fluency in Japanese in comparison to the *Nisei*.

At Manzanar, the *Issei* ranged in age from young adults to elderly. Over 80% were between the ages of 35 and 64 (Unrau 1996:295; WRA 1946). The *Nisei* were younger in comparison; two-thirds were between the ages of 10 and 29 (Unrau 1996:295; WRA 1946).

Cities of residence

Most Japanese Americans at Manzanar came from the state of California and more specifically, from the Los Angeles area. Eighty-eight percent of those incarcerated at Manzanar were from Los Angeles County and 72 percent were from the city of Los Angeles (Unrau 1996:295). In Los Angeles County, Japanese Americans communities had formed in Terminal Island, Little Tokyo, East Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, Venice, Pasadena, Burbank, and the San Fernando Valley. Two of the most significant Japanese Americans neighborhoods in the city of Los Angeles were Little Tokyo and Boyle Heights. Located next to Downtown, Little Tokyo was a *Nihonmachi* (Japan town); it had Buddhist churches, Christian churches, along with restaurants, newspapers, and stores. Prior to the war, Little Tokyo was the center of the community for Japanese

Americans concentrated in nearby Boyle Heights, an ethnically diverse residential neighborhood in East Los Angeles (JANM 2005). Outside of Los Angeles County, a much smaller percentage of Manzanar incarcerees had been removed from the cities of Stockton (San Joaquin County) in central California, Florin (Sacramento County) in northern California, and Bainbridge Island (Kitsap County) in the state of Washington (Unrau 1996).

Occupations

When the *Issei* immigrated to the U.S., the majority lived on the West Coast and engaged in truck farming, gardening, landscaping, and the nursery business (Daniels 1988). Their lack of fluency in English and a tide of anti-Japanese sentiment kept the *Issei* from entering other industries. Even *Nisei* with college degrees found it difficult to find jobs in white-collar positions (Yoo 2000).

Marital status

Manzanar *Issei* were often married to another Japanese immigrant. A small number of *Issei* men at Manzanar were bachelors, which correlates with the fact that most of the Japanese who had immigrated to the United States had been men (Daniels 1988). Prior to the war, an anti-miscegenation law in California prohibited interracial marriages involving Asians, which meant that Japanese Americans could not legally marry outside of their race.

CHAPTER 4

INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

Japanese Americans imprisoned at Manzanar employed a variety of strategies to modify their bare living quarters. My analysis of the data reveals that incarcerees attempted to increase the comfort of their barracks apartments and to reclaim privacy that was lost as a result of confinement. This chapter builds upon previous work that focuses on how Japanese Americans confined during World War II altered their interior environment. For example, Dusselier argues that, "In their efforts to create physical comfort, internees laid the groundwork for remaking mental and physical landscapes of survival by using art to decorate their living quarters" (2012:94). Utilizing incarceree-built barracks basements as a case study, the evidence suggests that *Nisei* and *Issei* males actively modified their inadequate living quarters. Basements not only provided respite from the brutal summer heat, I argue that both their construction and use helped incarcerees develop and maintain familial connections made precarious by war and confinement. An examination of the data on barracks basements also indicates their subversive nature as well as the ways in which camp administrators dealt with the construction of unofficial modifications.

Figure 5. Interior view of the Tsurutani family's barracks apartment at Manzanar. Photo by Ansel Adams, 1943. Library of Congress

Interior spaces

Living quarters at Manzanar, as well as the other nine WRA camps, consisted of hastily built Army-style barracks buildings. These barracks were constructed of a wood frame, boards, tarpaper and supported on concrete blocks (Burton et al. 2002). Barracks were 100-feet long, 20-feet wide and divided into four to six units to accommodate different-sized families and groups of single people (Burton et al. 2002:43). Each apartment had sliding 4-light sash windows, a heating unit, a single drop light, and several Army cots (Unrau 1996:230). Upon their arrival at Manzanar, incarcerees were each instructed to stuff their mattress ticking with straw.

An analysis of oral historical evidence and photographs of Manzanar suggests that incarcerees altered their living quarters to: 1) create private spaces, 2) ensure cleanliness 3) add furnishings, 4) add decorative items, and 5) combat oppressive heat in the summer months. Barracks apartments were improved by using the meager possessions Japanese Americans were allowed to bring with them, ordering through mail order catalogs such as Sears Roebuck, purchases made at the Manzanar cooperative, and utilizing available resources such as scrap lumber.

Privacy and separation of space were important for Manzanar incarcerees. Several informants interviewed for this study recall how privacy was a priority for their parents and that one of the first additions were curtains to cover windows. Photographs depict cloth put up to simulate "rooms" within a barracks apartment. Informant A's older brother even went as far as to create a private "room" using scrap cardboard as a partition (2012). Between apartments were wooden partitions separating space but these "walls" did not reach the ceiling. Conversations could easily be overheard until later, when the WRA employed incarceree carpenters to extend the partitions to the ceiling.

Keeping living quarters clean was a constant battle since barrack buildings had raised floors made of wooden boards, "which quickly shrank and allowed dust and dirt to fly in" (Burton et al. 2002:43). Archaeological and oral historical evidence indicates that incarcerees tried to cover floorboard gaps or knotholes that fell out of the wood with nailed tin can lids. The WRA's solution to this problem was to install linoleum-like flooring called "Mastipave" and wallboard in each barracks to prevent dust from entering through the cracks.

Figure 6. Side view of a typical residential barracks building at Manzanar. Photograph by Dorothea Lange. 1942. National Archives and Records Administration

The WRA also replaced straw-filled mattresses on the Army cots with spring mattresses but Japanese Americans were never provided any other furnishings so they often resorted to making their own furniture or purchasing it. Mas Ooka (2012) recalls how his father made chairs and a table from scrap lumber and Informant H (2013), a *Nisei* teenager at the time of incarceration, attempted to make his own chairs.

An analysis of the historic visual record shows the presence of decorative items in living quarters though none of my oral history participants recall having any decorations on their walls. Common items in photographs of interior spaces include artwork and

children's drawings on walls, framed photographs on desks, vases with artificial flowers, and doilies.

Incarcerees also altered their environments to keep cool. In my interview with Informant A, she recalls how her older brother built a homemade swamp cooler, which cooled the temperature inside a hot barracks (2012). Mas Ooka also has recollections of his father building a swamp cooler for their barracks apartment (2012). Another way incarcerees kept cool was to build basements underneath barracks.

Basements

There were two kinds of incarceree-dug basements at Manzanar: mess hall basements—or cellars—and barracks basements. Burton outlines the use of basements at Manzanar and how they varied among incarcerees:

> "Historic accounts indicate that the evacuees constructed basements for cold storage (at the mess halls), as refuges from the desert heat, or to provide more privacy and room than the small and noisy rooms that served as family apartments. In some cases evacuees used their basements for activities that were forbidden in the relocation center" (Burton 2002:12).

A mess hall exhibit at Manzanar National Historic Site states that one incarceree—Mr. Hori of Block 4—was arrested by Manzanar's Internal Police for unsanctioned production of *saké*, a Japanese rice liquor, in his basement.

Mess hall workers were the primary users of mess hall basements. During the restoration of the Block 34 ornamental garden, Burton discovered a cellar underneath the block's mess hall. The underground room was likely utilized as a root cellar and was lined with concrete and rock. Oral historical information also sheds light on a mess hall basement in Block 29. Mess hall kitchen worker Ken Miyamoto recalls that the Block 29

mess hall was designated for hospital workers. The cellar was likely used primarily for food storage but in an interview with Manzanar National Historic Site, Miyamoto recalls utilizing the cellar to make liquor:

> "You know what I used to do? I used to get—the mess hall, all those fruit juices, you know? I'd dump in a bucket, then I'd get some prunes, dried prunes and raisins, I'd throw them in there, and then I'd make booze. You know, then after that thing ferments, put it in the cellar…" (Miyamoto 2007).

Incarcerees also constructed basements underneath residential barracks. One barracks basement is mentioned in Manzanar National Historic Site's *Cultural Landscape Report* (2006). The report states that an incarceree recalled digging a basement in Block 23; the unidentified builder described the basement as a six-and-a-half foot area beneath his barracks and notes that it kept his apartment unit cool and free of nesting scorpions (NPS 2006:72). A basement located in Block 8 Barracks 9 was partially excavated in 2002 (Burton 2002). In Burton's archaeological report on the basement, he points out that a barracks basement in Block 28 is also mentioned in the book *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973), which was dug by author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's father. Archeological data at Manzanar NHS tentatively identifies dozens of additional basements.

In the pages that follow, I provide an in-depth look at incarceree-built basements and basement builders at Manzanar drawing upon information about known basements, along with oral histories from the Manzanar NHS archive and interviews conducted for this thesis. The analysis provided here is concentrated on residential basements.

<u>Barracks basement builders & users: a demographic profile</u>

Below, Table 1 shows where barracks basements were located and the individual(s) responsible for working on the construction of each basement. This

information was gathered from various sources: archaeological investigation, oral histories, and informal discussions with former incarcerees at the 2012 Manzanar Reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Basement Location	Name	Age in 1942	Generation	Gender	Pre-war Occupation(s)	Head of Household?	Pre-war City of Residence	Area of Residence in Japan
Block 8, Barrack 9, Apt. 1	Miyoshi, Frank S.	43	*Issei*	Male	Nursery operator; Truck farmer	Yes	Culver City, Los Angeles County, CA	Shikoku Island
	Mr. Iwamasu	--	--	Male	--	--	--	--
Block 14, Barrack 12, Apt. 3	Higa, Roy	14	*Nisei*	Male	Student	No	West Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA	Not Applicable
Block 18, Barrack 5, Apt. 4	Okamoto, Toru	16	*Nisei*	Male	Student	No	Venice, Los Angeles County, CA	Not Applicable
Block 21, Barracks 12, Apt. 4	Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Block 22, Barrack 13, Apt. 2	Sansui, Tomoichi	42	*Issei*	Male	Wholesale manager	Yes	Los Angeles, CA	Southern Division
Block 28, Barrack 5, Apt. 5	Wakatsuki, Ko (George)	54	*Issei*	Male	Crop specialty farmer; Fisherman	Yes	Venice, Los Angeles County, CA	Southern Division
Block 30, Barracks 11 or 12	Tanikawa, Kenichi	57	*Issei*	Male	Fruit farmer	Yes	Sacramento, CA, Sacramento County	Southern Division
	Tanikawa, Kenjiro G.	21	*Nisei*	Male	Semiskilled chauffeur/ driver	No	Sacramento, CA, Sacramento County	Not Applicable
Note: Two dashed lines indicate unknown information.								

Table 1. Barracks basements and builders

The data reveal that basement builders shared some demographic similarities—all are male and are either *Issei* or *Nisei*. Three basement builders are young *Nisei* between the ages of 14 and 21. Four basement builders—Tomoichi Sansui, Frank S. Miyoshi, Ko Wakatsuki, and Kenichi Tanikawa—are *Issei* fathers in their 40s or 50s. I was unable to determine Mr. Iwamasu's identity and it is not known who dug the basement under Block 21, Barracks 12 but the barracks apartment was occupied by the Sakaki family.

The table below lists the names of individuals who utilized each known basement.

Basement	Name	Camp Address	Age in 1942	Generation	Gender	Pre-war Occupation(s)	Pre-war City of Residence	Area of Residence in Japan
Miyoshi Basement	Miyoshi, Masako	Block 8, Barrack 9, Apt. 1	33	*Kibei*	Female	Nursery and landscaping laborer	Culver City, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
	Miyoshi, Kazuko	Block 8, Barrack 9, Apt. 1	6	*Nisei*	Female	Student	Culver City, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
	Miyoshi, Yasuko	Block 8, Barrack 9, Apt. 1	4	*Nisei*	Female	Student	Culver City, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
Higa Basement	Higa, Roy	Block 14, Barrack 12, Apt. 3	14	*Nisei*	Male	Student	West Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
	Ioki, Sus	Block 14 Barrack 13 Apt. 1	14	*Nisei*	Male	Student	Venice, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
Okamoto Basement	Okamoto, Toru	Block 18, Barrack 5, Apt. 4	16	*Nisei*	Male	Student	Venice, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
Sakaki Basement	Sakaki, Aimee	Block 21, Barracks 12, Apt. 4	11	*Nisei*	Female	Student	Los Angeles, CA	Not applicable
	Informant D	Block 21	9	*Nisei*	Female	Student	*	Not applicable
Sansui Basement	Sansui, Bruce	Block 22, Barrack 13, Apt. 2	10	*Nisei*	Male	Student	Los Angeles, CA	Not applicable
	Ooka, Mas	Block 22, Barrack 13, Apt. 1	8	*Nisei*	Male	Student	West Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA	Not applicable
Wakatsuki Basement	Wakatsuki, Ko (George)	Block 28, Barrack 5, Apt. 5	54	*Issei*	Male	Crop specialty farmer; Fisherman	Venice, Los Angeles County, CA	Southern Division
Tanikawa Basement	Tanikawa, Shozo	Block 30, Barracks 11 or 12	15	*Nisei*	Male	Student	Sacramento, Sacramento County, CA	Not applicable
	Tanikawa, Etsuo	Block 30, Barracks 11 or 12	14	*Nisei*	Male	Student	Sacramento, Sacramento County, CA	Not applicable
	Informant H	Block 30	13	*Nisei*	Male	Student	*	Not applicable
*Information withheld to protect informant's identity								

Table 2. Barracks basement users

In some cases, basement builders are not included as basement users because it is unknown if they utilized the space for themselves. Looking at the table, one discernable pattern that emerges is that the majority of basement users are young *Nisei* and their peers

who lived in the same block, were of the same gender, and were of a similar age. The usage of these basements by two or more *Nisei* at a time indicates that basements served as more than just utilitarian spaces.

In the next section, I provide a discussion of the important roles basements played in the lives of basement builders and users. The analysis is derived from an examination of demographic data as well as historical accounts, oral histories, and previously recorded archaeological data.

Community building

According to information available and oral history interviews conducted for this thesis, basements were underground rooms built to temporarily escape the summer heat as well as spaces for socializing. My analysis shows that basements facilitated *Nisei* bonding and strengthened friendships.

Nisei teenager Roy Higa dug a basement underneath his barracks apartment when he was about 14 years old (2012). According to Higa, no one in his family utilized this basement except for him and his friends. Roy Higa explains why he decided to dig a basement underneath his barracks:

> "You know, it gets very hot at Manzanar, very windy, and in the summertime, there's nothing much you can do so I said, 'Well, since I grew up in a nursery, I know a lot about shovel work and I like to dig.' So I thought, 'Gee, sure would be nice if I had a basement where it'd be cool.' So I started digging and digging and digging and pretty soon, I had this nice little area" (Higa 2012).

He did not dig in secret and was never questioned about his digging activities by his parents or camp authorities. When completed, the basement was 5 by 5 by 5 feet and he remembers wetting the walls occasionally to keep the space cool. Higa and three other

friends would play the card game pinochle in the underground room; he even made a table and four chairs out of wooden crates he scavenged from the mess hall. A special entrance was also created for his friends so that they could go down into his basement without having to enter into his family's barracks apartment.

Roy Higa is the only basement builder I interviewed for this study but other oral history participants recall spending time in their friend's barracks basements. Bruce Sansui and Mas Ooka played in a basement underneath Bruce's barracks apartment; that basement was dug by Sansui's father in Block 18 (Ooka 2012). Sansui describes his memory of the basement here:

> "I don't remember when my father dug it out or how he dug it out. So, all I know is that we did have a cellar and especially in the summertime, it was nice and cool" (Sansui 2012).

Ooka thinks the Sansui basement "might've been 10 by 10 or something like that" and was "probably about 5 feet" deep. There was a ladder that led to the basement and the dirt that was dug out was used to cover the space between the ground floor and the barracks floor. A door was cut into the floor and individuals had to enter the basement from inside the Sansui barracks apartment. As Ooka recalls:

> "We were just sitting there on the floor ground, maybe with blankets or something, playing Monopoly. That was a lot of fun" (Ooka 2012).

Informant H also reports that he socialized in a basement in Block 30 built by block neighbor Kenichi Tanikawa and his son Kenjiro. The basement was "…small, enough for about six people" (Informant H 2013). He witnessed them digging the basement and recalled how Kenjiro got bit by a scorpion while shoveling dirt out. The basement itself had a small table and chairs, which were likely handmade. Informant H

recalls playing pinochle, monopoly, and poker in the basement with teenage Tanikawa brothers, Shozo and Etsuo.

Informant D reports that her friend Aimee Sakaki had a basement underneath her barracks in Block 21 (2013). It is unknown who dug that basement but Informant D recalls going underground to talk with her friend Aimee and that they would spend less than an hour there.

The construction of basements also helped strengthen neighborly ties. An interview with Kazuko and Yasuko Miyoshi in 2013 by Manzanar National Historic Site revealed that their family's barracks basement in Block 8 Barracks 9 Apartment 1 was dug by their father Frank Shigoyoshi Miyoshi and their neighbor in the adjoining apartment, Mr. Iwamasu. Kazuko and Yasuko Miyoshi, who were 6 and 4 years old when they entered Manzanar, recall the two men digging the basement together and divided the area into two with a wall made of wood so that each neighbor had an equal share of the underground room. The Miyoshi sisters described the basement as having a stairwell that went inside the apartment that went down into the cellar. They also say the basement was 6-ft tall but the basement was excavated in 2002 and the archaeological report describes the basement as having a concrete floor that was "5-ft below the present ground surface" and "extended the entire width of the barracks" (Burton 2002:10). According to the Miyoshi sisters, Mr. Iwamasu worked for the motor pool in camp and had access to the truck so when the two men dug out the dirt, they piled it into the truck and hauled it away. The Miyoshi sisters remember using the underground room to keep cool in the summer and spent time there eating snow cones. Their mother, Masako Miyoshi, would do her ironing in basement; this is probably due to the fact that the Block 8 ironing room

had been converted to a fish market. Additionally, the underground space was used by the family to store some of their valuable belongings such as dolls for the Japanese holiday Girls Day and a samurai helmet and white stallion figurine for Boys Day—items that were specifically brought into camp from home.

The evidence demonstrates that barracks basements allowed *Nisei* to escape the heat and gain a degree of privacy. Underground spaces served as areas for young *Nisei, both male and female,* to socialize with their peers without the discomfort of heat, which created and strengthened social bonds. The construction of basements also served as a type of community-building activity as exemplified by the case of *Issei* Frank Miyoshi and Mr. Iwamasu who constructed a basement for their respective households through each other's help.

Family

War and confinement tore apart families in many ways. For example, Informant J's parents had traveled to Japan prior to the start World War II and were unable to return to the United States because of travel restrictions so at Manzanar, she lived with her married sister's family (2013). Immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, some Japanese American fathers were picked up by the FBI and sent to Department of Justice or Army internment camps; many did not rejoin their families at Manzanar until months or years later. Relatives outside of the immediate family might have been sent to different WRA incarceration camps. For example, Informant C was forcibly removed to Manzanar with her husband while her parents had been sent to an incarceration camp thousands of miles away in Arkansas (2012). As others have noted (Branton 2004, 2008;

Dusselier 2008; Shew 2010) those who were able to stay as a family unit in WRA camps also saw a deterioration of the family structure. For example, Roy Higa recalls that when it came time to eat at the mess hall, "…we just always ate together with our friends, never with our family" (Higa 2012). Other oral histories echo his statement.

Residential basements reveal one way in which incarcerees altered their interior environment to strengthen family structures that became fragile under confinement. In the case of the Tanikawa basement, the act of digging a basement brought father and son together. A root cellar that Ko Wakatsuki dug out also facilitated family bonding through fruit picking. According to Wakatsuki's daughter Jeanne, family members would pick green fruit from the nearby trees her father had pruned and then store them in the basement (Wakatsuki Houston 1973:95). Basements also kept the family structure intact because as Table 2 shows, a large percentage of basement users were *Nisei* children and teenagers who spent time socializing in underground rooms located at or near home.

Subversive acts

The construction of underground spaces was a defiant act because they were unsanctioned alterations. In addition, illicit activities reportedly took place in barracks basements. Informant A states that she heard rumors that incarcerees were making alcohol or gambling in their barracks basements—both activities were prohibited at Manzanar (2002). Besides constructing a root cellar underground, Ko Wakatsuki also had a still underneath his barracks where he brewed liquor such as *saké* and brandy (Wakatsuki Houston 1973:97). Burton (2002) describes the artifacts from the Block 8

basement fill, which mostly consist of demolition debris, but none of the other cultural material recovered can be linked to gambling or illicit liquor production or consumption.

Basements also provide insight into how the WRA dealt with unsanctioned activity. Despite the unauthorized nature of constructing basements, they were not banned at Manzanar—at least initially. In fact, the WRA and camp authorities were well aware of these basements. In Burton's research on basements, he found that on December 4th, 1942 Japanese American block leaders had met with WRA officials to ask for two bags of cement to line mess hall cellars (2002:12). At that meeting, Manzanar's Acting Project Director pointed out that basements are against State regulation but that he would attempt to meet their request. Later on, camp authorities became concerned with basements but not for fear that illicit activities were taking place in these underground spaces; rather, they were worried that they posed a fire danger. In May 12, 1943, Manzanar fire chief Berry Tamura warned incarcerees to keep children out of cellars because "refuse collecting in them creates fire hazards" (*Manzanar Free Press*, May 1943). Residential basements were officially prohibited on June 18, 1943 when camp director Ralph Merritt told block leaders that no more cellars were to be dug because they were considered too dangerous (Burton 2002:12). A mess hall exhibit at Manzanar National Historic Site states that the basement ban was due to concern over "cave-ins, water seepage, and unsanitary conditions." As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one man in Block 4 was caught manufacturing *saké* in his basement and subsequently arrested but the arrest took place in 1944, long after the official ban on basements. It appears that as long as basements did not pose a danger to incarcerees, the WRA tacitly approved the unsanctioned alterations.

Conclusion

Utilizing barracks basements as a case study, this chapter illuminates the ways in which incarcerees altered and improved their barrack apartments to gain degrees of comfort as well as maintain cohesion within a family and among peers. The data reveal that individuals who built basements were *Issei* and *Nisei* males and that basements were often utilized by *Nisei* children and teenagers living within the same block. In four cases *Issei* fathers built basements underneath their barracks but the evidence shows that the use of those underground rooms helped strengthen their family structure. It is also clear that basements provided a space for the *Nisei* to participate in social activities such as playing cards or board games with their peers. The construction and use of basements also provide examples of incarceree defiance of regulations as well as insight into how WRA officials dealt with unofficial alterations to living quarters. Furthermore, the oral history interviews I conducted and the demographic information I gathered from government records provide descriptions and location information of previously unknown basements; this data will be useful for future archaeological projects and in the production of interpretive material at Manzanar National Historic Site.

CHAPTER 5

EXTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

Incarcerees at Manzanar found myriad ways to alter their exterior environment. Their modifications were, however, constrained by the circumstances of their forced removal. A review of Manzanar's archaeological survey report (Burton 1996) and archival research done for Manzanar National Historic Site's *Cultural Landscape Report* (NPS 2006) reveals that incarcerees altered their external environment through a variety of landscaping efforts. For this thesis project, I examine ornamental gardens as a case study for examining the ways in which internees modified their exterior environment to cope with confinement. Previous research has focused on ornamental gardens but my analysis differs because I examine demographic information of incarceree garden builders as well as newly excavated material cultural from garden ponds in Block 24 and Block 33. In addition, I integrate oral histories from Manzanar incarcerees who provide information regarding landscaping efforts.

An analysis of the data I examined indicates that many of Manzanar's garden builders often possessed knowledge of creating ornamental gardens prior to incarceration. Additionally, in most cases a garden building team was not linked together by geographic origins or even age, but by a familial or a neighbor relationship. Building ornamental gardens was a way to maintain family or social relations and impart garden skills and

knowledge to non-professionals. Ornamental gardens at Manzanar also represent incarcerees' strategy of preventing or ameliorating racial tensions.

Physical landscape

Manzanar was a remote incarceration camp that had a landscape that bore very little resemblance to the cities and towns that Japanese American incarcerees had come from on the West Coast. For example, the camp's military-style road system created "a regimented division of residential spaces and open areas" (NPS 2006:40). With eight guard towers and a barbed wire perimeter fence, Manzanar was clearly built as a prison complex. Living conditions for incarcerees were exacerbated by the camp's desert location, extreme climate, and frequent dust storms. Overall, these features created a challenging environment for the incarceree population to live in comfort and feel at ease.

Once incarcerees arrived at Manzanar, they immediately began modifying their outdoor living spaces utilizing material such as rocks, scrap lumber, wood from crate boxes, and cement. Basketball courts, gymnastic equipment, and wading pools were built in open spaces for recreational use (Burton 1996; NPS 2006). Additionally, numerous tamarisk, locust, and elm trees were planted because they grew quickly and could provide shade. An analysis of the data from Manzanar's first archaeological report (Burton 1996) reveal the specific alterations made to the camp landscape. All 36 blocks at Manzanar contain incarceree-built modifications with rock alignments and concrete stoops representing the most common features. The most elaborate surviving structures documented during the survey were ornamental garden ponds, which I describe in the next section.

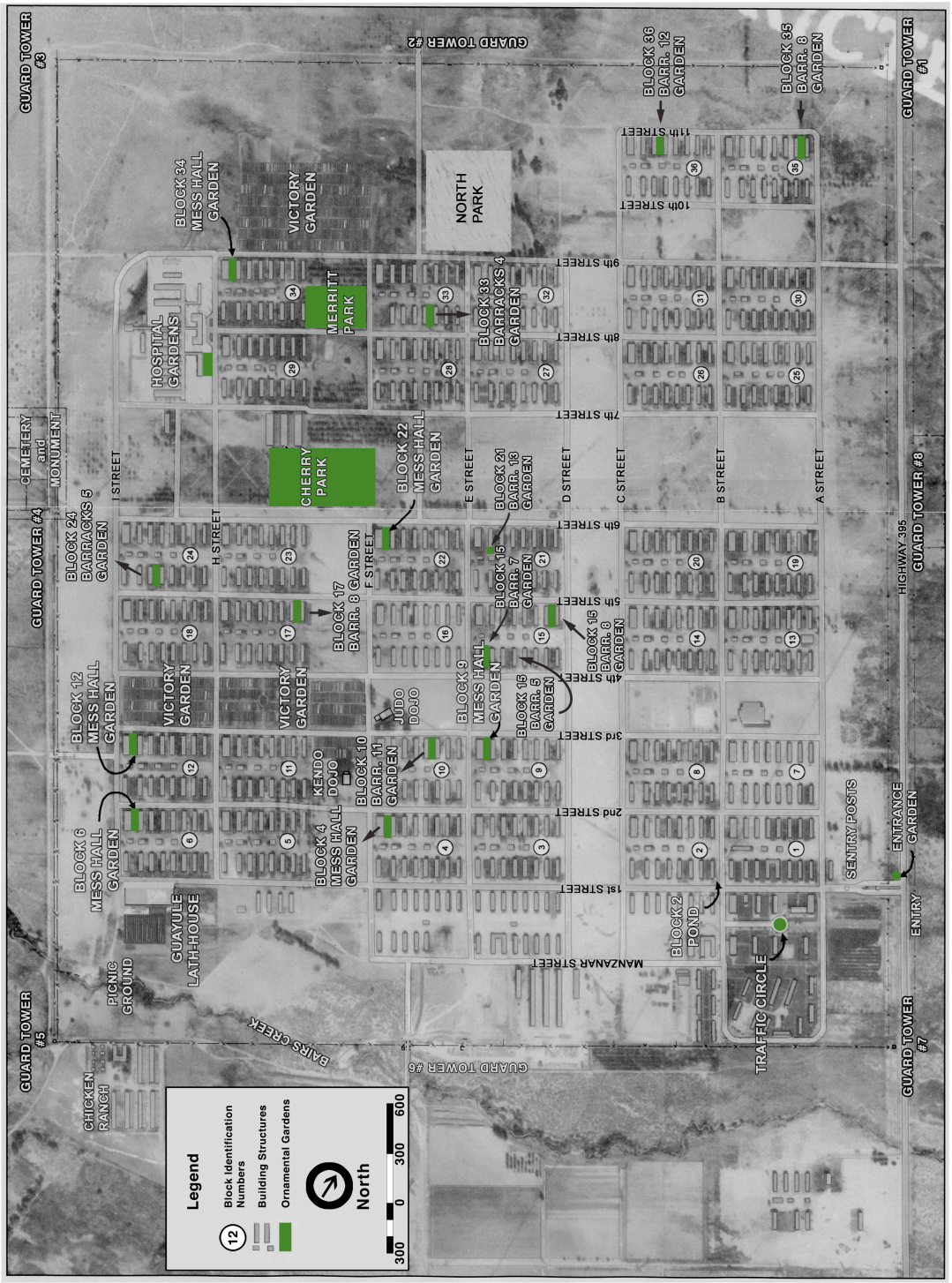

Figure 7. Known locations of ornamental gardens at Manzanar. Map by author. Adapted from *Cultural Landscape Report: Manzanar National Historic Site* (2006, Figure 59)

Ornamental gardens

Historic photographs, newspaper accounts, oral histories, and archaeological survey provide evidence that at least eighteen incarceree-built ornamental garden ponds dotted the camp landscape. Prior to confinement, Japanese Americans had a well-known reputation for creating ornamental gardens. Japanese garden historian Kendall Brown states that this is due in part to the fact that "Japanese gardens were popular in America from the 1890s as tourist attractions in cities" which made them highly sought after by well-to-do white Americans (2011).

Ornamental gardens at Manzanar were most commonly constructed as cement-lined pond structures, though a few were unlined. Garden ponds were frequently located in empty spaces within a residential block; those that were built adjacent to a block's mess hall are often referred to as "mess hall gardens" (Beckwith 2013; Burton 2010). In my study, I refer to ornamentals gardens built between residential barrack buildings as "barracks gardens." There were also ornamental garden structures at Merritt Park in Block 34, Cherry Park at the Children's Village, and the camp hospital, which I will refer to as "other ornamental gardens." In addition to ornamental gardens, vegetable and flower gardens were other landscape features located near barracks entryways or in empty spaces within a block. For example, incarcerees were known to plant row crops and victory gardens in firebreaks between blocks (NPS 2006:2).

To date, analyses of Manzanar's exterior environment have largely focused on the meaning and design of incarceree-built ornamental gardens. Tamura (2004) argues that ornamental gardens at Manzanar, as well as victory and flower gardens, served as

restorative agents and politicized sites of resistance while Beckwith (2013) focuses on identifying traditional Japanese garden elements within Manzanar's garden ponds. My research builds upon this previous research by examining the role that ornamental gardens played in building community. By analyzing a variety of data—demographic information, oral historical evidence, and material from recently uncovered ornamental gardens—I show how the construction and use of garden ponds strengthened social and familial bonds fractured by institutional confinement. Additionally, I argue that incarcerees constructed ornamental gardens in part as a way to negotiate the racism that structured their confinement.

Archaeological surveys at Manzanar and oral historical evidence reveal that ornamental garden ponds were once located near the mess halls of the following blocks: 4, 6, 9, 12, 22, and 34. Block 34 had an additional larger garden called Merritt Park with an unlined pond, teahouse building, and a walking bridge made of wood (NPS 2006). The gardens at Block 9, 34, the hospital, and Merritt Park have all been excavated by NPS while the ponds at Block 12 and 22 recorded by NPS archaeologists in 1993 did not need to be archaeologically uncovered because they had not been filled with a large amount of debris or sediment (Burton 1996). The mess hall gardens in Block 4 and 6 remain unexcavated.

The first ornamental barracks garden excavated was a cement-lined pond located in Block 2. Unlike most other ornamental gardens, the pond is very small. The second and third barracks ponds archaeologically uncovered were two gardens excavated in 2010 at Block 15 (Burton 2010). The following year, an ornamental garden in Block 33 between Barracks 3 and 4 was unearthed. In 2012, a garden pond was uncovered in Block

24 Barracks 5 and a cement-lined pond was excavated in 2013 at Block 17 between Barracks 8 and 9. Archaeological survey (Burton 1996) revealed the presence of ornamental gardens near barracks in Block 10, 35, and 36 but they remain unexcavated. During my oral history interviews, only one interviewee was able to recall an ornamental garden in their block. Informant D described a shallow two by three feet garden pond that was built by a neighbor in front of his building entrance in Block 21, Barracks 13, Apartment 1. Figure 7 is a map of all known ornamental garden ponds and their location within the boundaries of the Manzanar Relocation Center.

Ornamental garden builders

Tables 3, 4, and 5 below provide a breakdown of each ornamental garden at Manzanar and its garden builder(s). This demographic information is pulled from government records and lists each garden builder's residential address in camp, age, gender, generation, pre-war occupation, and geographic origins. Unless otherwise noted, information on garden locations and the identity of garden builders is derived from archival research done by NPS archaeologists and oral historical sources. Patterns that emerge from these tables give us insight into the backgrounds of ornamental garden builders and provide evidence of the ways in which they sought to build community through these garden ponds.

An examination of the tables that follow indicate demographic similarities and differences amongst garden builders. One difference is the fact that prior to being confined at Manzanar, ornamental garden builders lived in a variety of cities within Los Angeles County. Garden builders also appear to have emigrated from different

prefectures in Japanese. Although most garden builders are older adults, the age range is wide—26 to 76. When examining the demographic information of individual garden-building teams, differences are present in terms of in pre-war residence and city of origin in Japan.

Garden Location	Name	Camp Address	Gender	Age in 1942	Generation	Pre-war City of Residence	Pre-war Occupation(s)	Area of Residence in Japan
Block 10 Barracks 11	Kado, Ryozo	Block 17, Barracks 8, Apt. 2 or 3	Male	52	Issei	Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Central Division
Block 15 Barracks 5	Nakata, Yasaji (Dick)	Block 15, Barracks 5, Apt. 2	Male	62	Issei	Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA	Gardener/ groundskeeper	Kyushu Island
Block 15 Barracks 7	Muto, Keichiro	Block 15, Barracks 7, Apt. 3	Male	62	Issei	San Fernando, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Northern Division
	Sugiwara, Shinichi (Roy)	Block 15, Barracks 7, Apt. 2	Male	44	Issei	San Fernando, Los Angeles County, CA	Gardener/ groundskeeper	Northern Division
Block 15 Barracks 8	Muto, Takio	Block 15	Male	26	Nisei	San Fernando, Los Angeles, CA	Nursery operator	Not Applicable
Block 17 Barracks 8	Kado, Ryozo	Block 17, Barracks 8, Apt. 2 or 3	Male	52	Issei	Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Central Division
	Chomori, Raymond	Block 17, Barracks 9, Apt. 2	Male	15	Nisei	Glendale, Los Angeles County, CA	High school student	Not Applicable
Block 21, Barracks 13	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Block 24 Barracks 5	Katsuki, Manjiro (William)	Block 24, Barracks 5, Apt. 2	Male	60	Issei	West Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA	Gardener/ groundskeeper	Central Division
Block 33 Barracks 4	Arai, Hanshiro (Jack)	Block 33, Barracks 4, Apt. 4	Male	43	Issei	Los Angeles, CA	Wholesale manager	Urban Prefectures (Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo)
Block 35 Barracks 8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Block 36 Barracks 12	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Note: Two dashed lines indicate unknown information.								

Table 3. Barracks ornamental gardens and builders

Garden Location	Name	Camp Address	Gender	Age in 1942	Generation	Pre-war City of Residence	Pre-war Occupation(s)	Area of Residence in Japan
Block 4 Mess Hall	Nishimura, Chotaro	Block 4, Barracks 3, Apt. 1	Male	76	Issei	Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator; Gardener/ groundskeeper; Plumber	Urban Prefectures (Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo)
	Nishimura, Mokutaro (Mark)	Block 4, Barracks 2, Apt. 1	Male	44	Issei	Beverly Hills, Los Angeles County, CA	Nusery operator	Urban Prefectures (Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo)
Block 6 Mess Hall	Kado, Ryozo	Block 17, Barracks 8, Apt. 2 or 3	Male	52	Issei	Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Central Division
Block 9 Mess Hall	Kado, Ryozo	Block 17, Barracks 8, Apt. 2 or 3	Male	52	Issei	Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Central Division
Block 12 Mess Hall	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Block 22 Mess Hall	Nishi, Akira	Block 22, Bldg. 12, Apt. 2	Male	53	Issei	Pacoima, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Southern Division
	Takemura, Saburo (George)	Block 23, Bldg. 9	Male	61	Issei	Los Angeles, CA	Nursery operator	Shikoku Island
	Ueno, Harry	Block 22	Male	35	Kibei	Los Angeles, CA	Sales clerk	Not Applicable
Block 34 Mess Hall	Kayahara, Seiichi	Unknown	Male	42	Issei	San Fernando, Los Angeles County, CA	Retail manager and salesperson	Southern Division
	Kubota, Goichi George	Block 34, Bldg. 2, Apt. 4	Male	69	Issei	Los Angeles	Gardener/ groundskeeper	Southern Division
	Murakami, Futoshi (George)	Unknown	Male	41	Issei	Van Nuys, Los Angeles County, CA	Chauffeur (taxi, truck, or tractor)	Kyushu Island
Note: Two dashed lines indicate unknown information.								

Table 4. Mess hall ornamental gardens and builders

Garden Location	Name	Camp Address	Gender	Age in 1942	Generation	Pre-war City of Residence	Pre-war Occupation(s)	Area of Residence in Japan
Cherry Park	Katsuki, Manjiro (William)	Block 24, Barracks 5, Apt. 2	Male	60	Issei	West Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA	Gardener/ groundskeeper	Central Division
Hospital Garden	Ioki, Toyoshige	Block 14, Barracks 13, Apt. 1	Male	54	Issei	Venice, Los Angeles County, CA	Nusery operator	Shikoku Island
	Kado, Ryozo	Block 17, Barracks 8, Apt. 2 or 3	Male	52	Issei	Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, CA	Nursery operator	Central Division
	Ogami, Nintaro (William)	Block 16, Barracks 1, Apt. 2	Male	55	Issei	Glendale, Los Angeles County, CA	Landscape gardener	Kyushu Island
	Wada, Bunyemon	Block 6, Barracks 4, Apt. 2	Male	54	Issei	Compton, Los Angeles County, CA	Nusery operator	Southern Division
Merritt Park	Muto, Takio	Block 15	Male	26	Nisei	San Fernando, Los Angeles, CA	Nursery operator	Not Applicable
	Nishi, Kuichiro	Block 22, Barracks 12, Apt. 1	Male	56	Issei	Los Angeles, CA	Nursery operator	Southern Division

Table 5. Other ornamental gardens and builders

Demographic similarities among the garden builders are also revealing. The majority of garden builders are *Issei* though a few *Nisei*, including one *Kibei*, were involved as well. Another common denominator among garden builders is that team members were composed of neighbors. My data suggest that gardens located within a residential block were more often than not built by a group of individuals who lived in the same block or in a nearby block. The garden builders at Merritt Park, Cherry Park, and the camp hospital are the exception but those projects were funded by the WRA. Ryozo Kado is another exception; he is one of the few individuals who helped design or build non-WRA funded ornamental gardens for residents in other blocks. Another significant commonality among the garden builders is that many of them were employed as nursery operators or gardeners and groundskeepers prior to the war. In fact, “nursery

operators" and "gardener/groundskeepers" were the pre-war primary occupations of 75% of the garden builders.

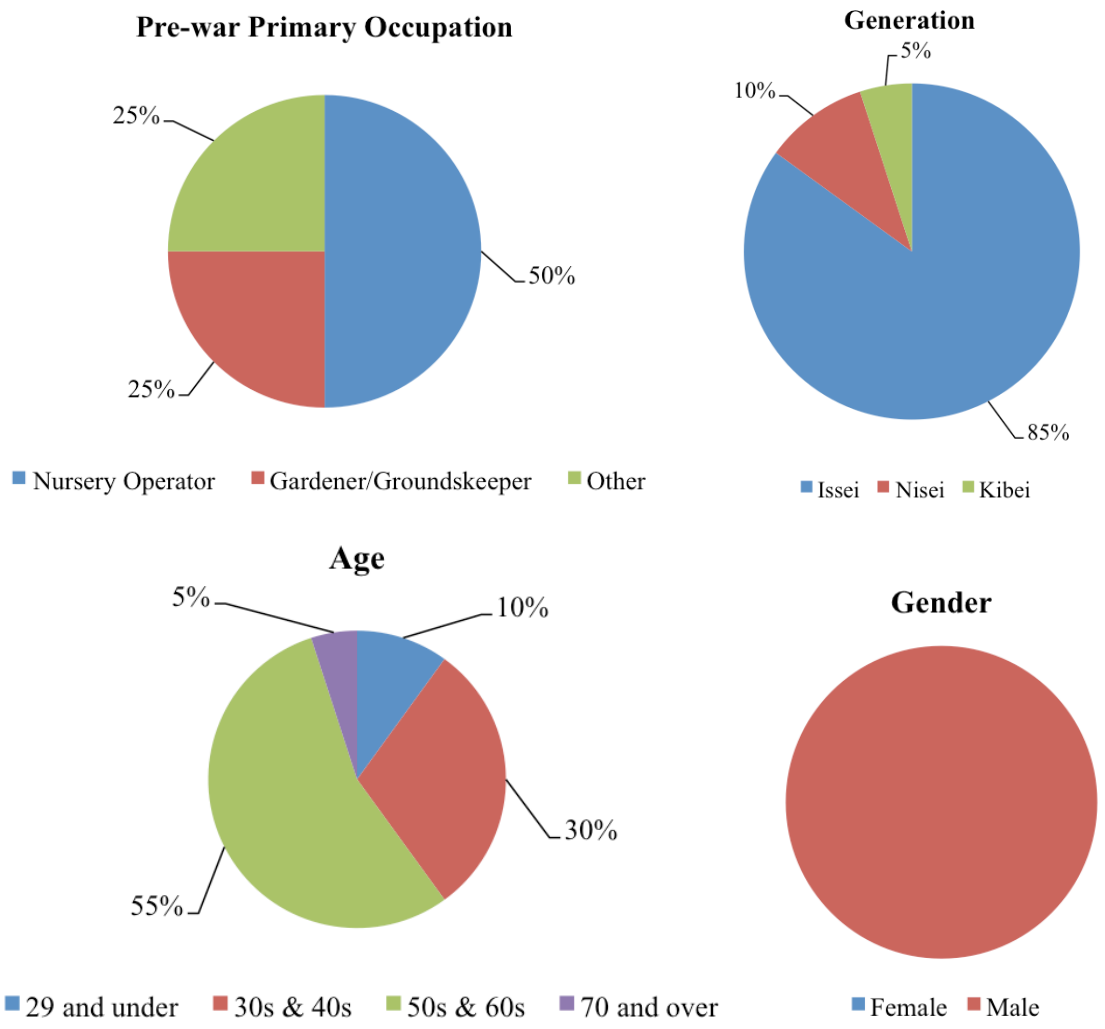

Figure 8. Occupational, generational, age, and gender comparisons of ornamental garden builders.

Japanese garden historian Kendall Brown argues that prior to the war, Japanese Americans in Southern California had been engaged in building ornamental gardens but not as full-time professionals (2000:37). Instead, many Japanese Americans found steady work as gardeners employed to maintain lawns or existing gardens. When the opportunity

arose, some of these gardeners, as well as nursery operators, turned to constructing Japanese-style ornamental gardens in order to earn extra income.

Did the garden builders at Manzanar have the skills and training to build gardens prior to their incarceration or did they gain these skills at Manzanar? My data show that a number of ornamental garden builders at Manzanar already had experience in building gardens prior to entering the camp. Ioki, Ogami, and Kado helped build the ornamental garden located at the camp hospital and they all came into Manzanar with those skills. Garden builder Toyoshige Ioki's background indicates that he was a nursery operator prior to the war. In my interview with Ioki's son, Susumu "Sus" Ioki (2012) states that his father had learned how to build ornamental gardens during a month-long trip to Japan prior to World War II. In fact, his father returned from the trip and built a Japanese-style ornamental garden in the family's yard. Manzanar incarceree and garden builder Nintaro Ogami also had a Japanese-style ornamental garden at his home prior to the war while he was working as landscape gardener (Ogami 2004). Ryozo Kado, who designed and built many of the ornamental gardens in camp, was a nursery operator prior to the war. His son Louis recalls in an oral history interview that his father had made Japanese gardens for several famous people prior to the war (Kado 2001). Ryozo Kado was a master stonemason who had apprenticed under Chotaro Nishimura. Nishimura had built the Crown Prince's Gardens in Tokyo, Japan but immigrated to the U.S. in 1910 and became a nursery operator (*The Saturday Evening Post* 1961). Nishimura was also incarcerated at Manzanar and helped build a mess hall garden in Block 4 with his son Mokutaro "Mark" Nishimura. According to family stories found on the website Ancestry.com, the younger Nishimura had been hired by Hollywood actor John Barrymore to build a Japanese-style

garden at his home. Kuichiro Nishi, the designer of Merritt Park, worked as a nursery operator prior to the war but also had a side business building Japanese-style gardens for celebrity clients (Nishi 2009). Another skilled garden builder at Manzanar was Manjiro (William) Katsuki who had been a gardener/groundskeeper by profession prior to the war doing landscaping work for wealthy households in Southern California (Brown 2000). His barracks garden in Block 24 Barracks 5 was the first ornamental garden built in camp (see Figure 12) and he was also charged with overseeing the construction of Cherry Park, a public park for orphaned children incarcerated at Manzanar (NPS 2006:126).

There were, however, incarceree garden builders who did not have any professional garden-building skills. Jack Arai, Harry Ueno, and two of the Block 34 Mess Hall garden builders—Seiichi Kayahara and George Murakami—diverge from the norm in terms of their prewar occupation. Ueno and Arai instigated their respective ornamental gardens even though they did not have prior garden-building experience. Ueno, who wanted to create a pond for the enjoyment of those waiting in the mess hall line, reports in an oral history interview that he received help on building the garden from *Issei* friends Akira Nishi and George Takemura (1998). Similarly, an oral history with Jack Arai's daughter Madelon Yamamoto reveals that her father got help from his friends in building the ornamental garden (2006). It is unclear which of the three garden builders initiated the Block 34 mess hall, but Seiichi Kayahara and George Murakami most likely took direction from Goichi Kubota because he was the only person in the trio with a gardener/groundskeeper background. Teenagers also played supporting roles in garden building. Ray Chomori and Kado's own son, Louis, were two teenagers who helped Ryozo Kado with his landscaping projects at Manzanar. Kado recruited Chomori, a

young *Nisei*, to help him with the Block 17 garden; he also put his teenage son Louis on his Saturday landscaping crew (Kado 2001). Kado reportedly invited youth to be on his crew to keep them out of trouble; he said:

> "We put the teenagers to work and kept them in hand…tempers are not normal in time of war"
>
> *The Saturday Evening Post*, August 5, 1961

Gardens as sites for building community

Ornamental garden ponds at Manzanar—from barracks gardens to WRA-funded garden projects at the hospital, Merritt Park, and Cherry Park—appear to be the result of community efforts. Other types of gardens—flower and vegetable—seem to be more individual projects. As the following analysis shows, construction of a garden, maintenance of a garden, and even proximity to a garden strengthened social ties between neighbors, family members, and friends.

Ornamental gardens were projects that brought people together. As Beckwith notes, gardens had to be group efforts because rather large rocks often had to be gathered and placed in these gardens (2013). My data indicate that the garden crew for most ornamental garden projects were almost always composed of individuals from the same block. There is also evidence that incarcerees living near ornamental gardens pitched in to help with construction or to add additional landscaping elements. For example, after Ryozo Kado completed the Block 9 mess hall garden, incarcerees living in the block stocked the garden pond with fish brought from an old river bed (Chomori 2005). Kado is also cited as the garden builder for the Block 6 garden pond but historic accounts indicate the mess hall's kitchen crew assisted in its construction (Burton 1996:89). When the

Block 6 mess hall garden was completed, plants and trees were donated by Miyo (Francis) Uyematsu, Munejiro Matsuyama, and Moichiro Tachibana (Burton 1996). My research indicates all of donators were former nurserymen who lived in Block 6. Even the WRA-supported garden pond at Merritt Park was a community project. Henry Nishi recalls that his father, who had designed Merritt Park in Block 34, received help building the park from many people living in that block, as well as individuals from the neighboring Block 35 (2011).

Gardens also played a role in maintaining family structure and literally keeping them together. Madelon Yamamoto's father built a barracks garden in Block 33 and their family remained tight knit because the garden pond kept her and her young brothers close to home. Yamamoto recalls in an oral history interview that she enjoyed feeding the fish in the pond regularly and that her younger brothers stayed close to their family's barracks because they and their friends would play in or around the garden (Yamamoto 2006). Gardens also strengthened familial ties when garden builders were related to one another. For example, the Block 15 Barracks 7 ornamental barracks garden was built by Keichiro Muto and Shinichi (Roy) Sugiwara who were probably related to one another because they were both *Issei* from Northern Division of Japan, had come from the San Fernando Valley, and lived in the same barracks building in adjacent apartments. Additionally, census records from 1940 show that prior to the war, they lived less than half a mile from each other. An ornamental garden that was built by two family members is the Block 4 mess hall garden. Chotaro Nishimura and Mokutaro Nishimura were father and son who were both *Issei* nursery operators and lived in adjacent apartments in Block 4. These two

pairs of garden builders strengthened their familial connection to one another through garden building.

The size and extent of ornamental barracks gardens also reveal the community characteristics of these areas despite the fact that they were in front of a garden builder's residence. For example, when the barracks garden at Block 15 Barracks 5 was uncovered, it was discovered that it actually encompassed several apartments and Burton states that the large size of the ornamental garden "suggest social interaction and community bonding on a multi-family level" (2010:7). Two recently excavated ornamental garden ponds—the Arai pond and Katsuki garden—support the idea that garden builders built them with the block community in mind. Both ponds had been filled in after the camp closed. After excavation, the size, extent, and exact location of both gardens was determined, which reveal information about how barracks ornamental gardens fit within a block community. Figure 9 is a map of the Katsuki garden after excavation and one can see that the garden is positioned along the entire side of Barracks 5, beyond Katsuki's own residence. Figure 10 is a map of the Arai garden after excavation and interestingly, it shows that the pond was positioned in the center of four apartments and not directly in front of the Arai family's apartment. Similar to the Block 15 garden ponds uncovered in 2010, the position of the two newly excavated gardens show that these ornamental gardens may have been purposefully positioned for neighboring residents to enjoy.

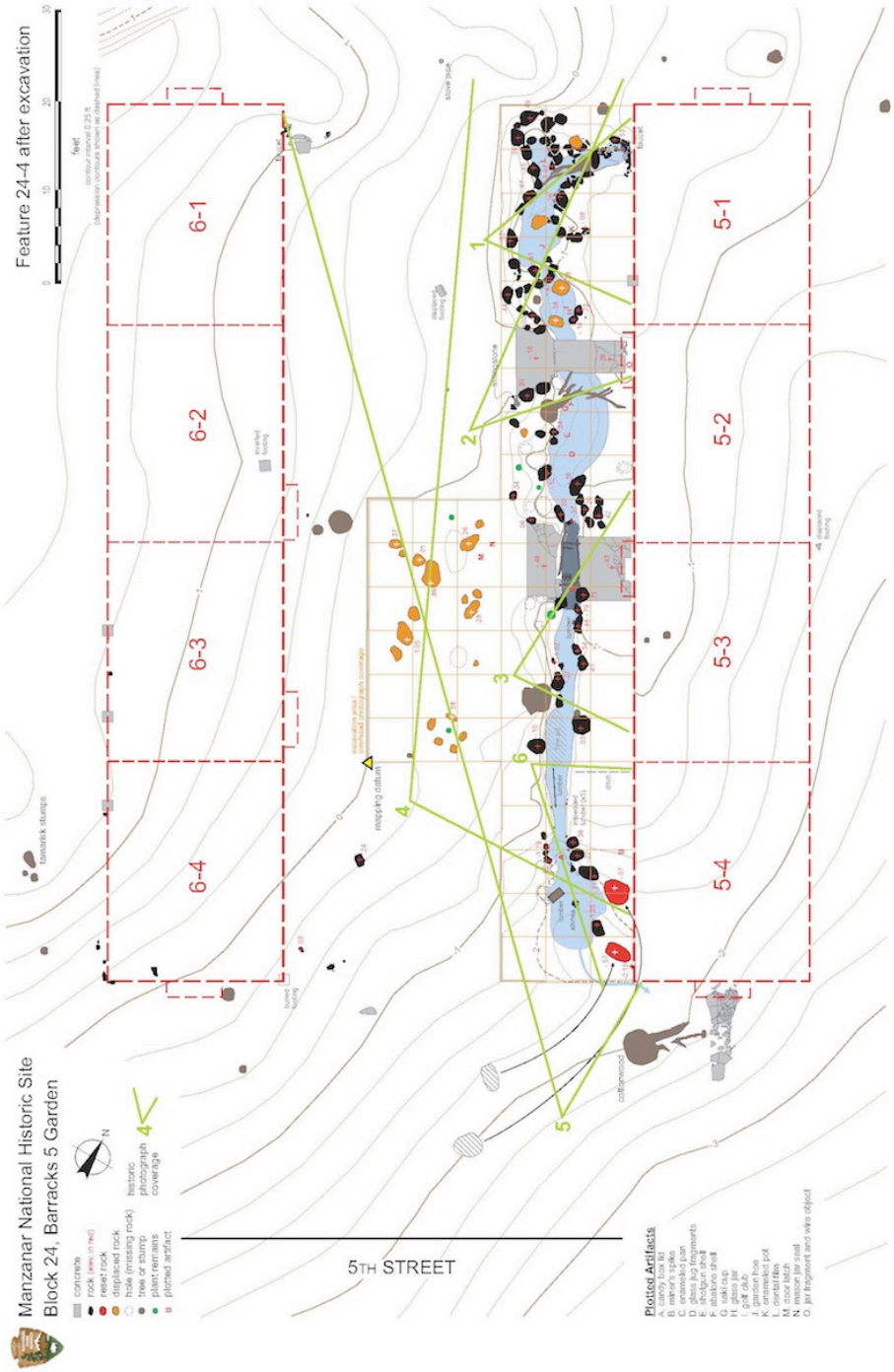

Figure 9. Katsuki Garden Pond at Block 24 Barracks 5 after excavation. Map by Jeff Burton, courtesy of the National Park Service.

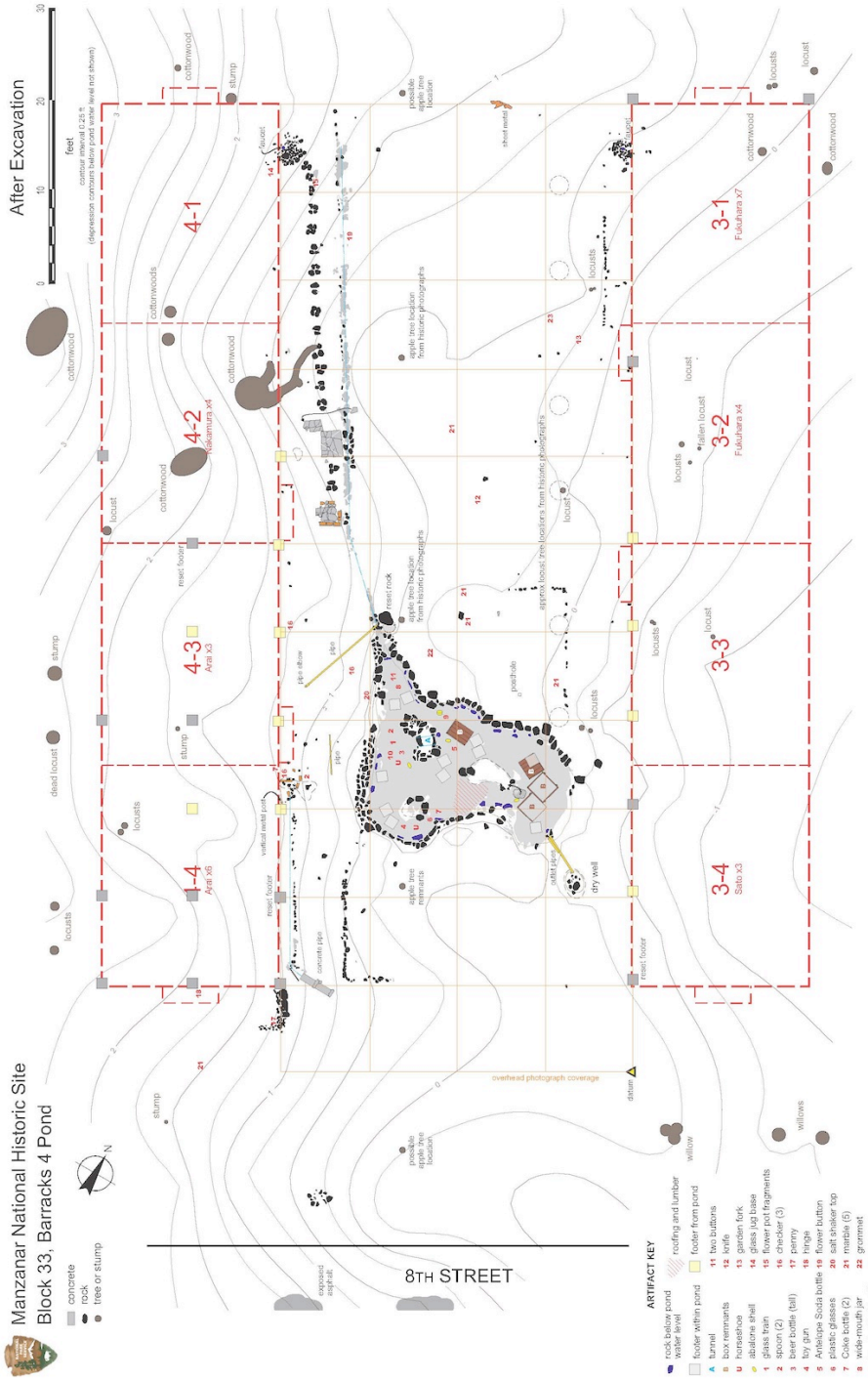

Figure 10. Arai Garden Pond at Block 33 Barracks 4 after excavation. Map by Jeff Burton, courtesy of the National Park Service

Artifacts from the Arai pond in Block 33 and the Katsuki garden in Block 24, which I cleaned and cataloged, were also analyzed for this thesis. My analysis of the material culture from both ornamental barracks gardens reveals their importance as social spaces for children. After the artifacts from the Katsuki garden were tabulated (Table 6), "Lesiure and Toys" stood out as a significant artifact category. Toys associated with boys include a small plastic warplane, the plastic base of a toy figure, two die cast miniature fire trucks, and 50 glass marbles. The three glass cup fragments are likely from a small teacup set, which are toys most associated with girls. An analysis of artifacts from the Arai Garden Pond also suggests it was an area frequented by children. As Table 7 shows, "Leisure and Toys" again represent a significant artifact category in relation to other material culture found. Some of toys found at the Arai pond include 3 rubber balls, a metal toy gun, several toy glass cup fragments, a whole glass train candy container, and 300 glass marbles. The fact that there are six times as many marbles in comparison the number found at Katsuki's garden might be an indication that the Arai pond was utilized more heavily as a play area.

Table 6. Katsuki Garden Pond artifact tabulation (n=5,787)

Object Classification		Glass	Metal	Other
Structural	Structural Materials*			
	Window Glass	1295		
	Hardware		34	
	Utilities	6	5	5
	Nails		3462	
Domestic	Beverage Storage	40	22	
	Food Storage	8	2	2
	Food Remains			31
	Food Serving			20

	Furnishings			
	Pharmaceutical		1	1
	Other		20	41
Personal	Clothing	1	6	19
	Grooming and Hygiene	3	6	11
	Money		1	
	Other		1	
Activities	Writing/Office		2	1
	Leisure/Toys	51	5	13
	Ammunition		4	
	Transportation		1	2
	Other		5	2
Unclassified		315	137	206
Total		1719	3714	354
* not tabulated				

Table 7. Arai Garden Pond artifact tabulation (n=2,794)

Object Classification		Glass	Metal	Other
Structural	Structural Materials*			
	Window Glass	9		
	Hardware		6	
	Utilities	101	3	
	Nails		1014	
Domestic	Beverage Storage	91	3	
	Food Storage	91	13	
	Food Remains			13
	Food Serving	1	2	32
	Furnishings		1	
	Pharmaceutical	53		4
	Other			
Personal	Clothing	1		
	Grooming and Hygiene	12	1	2
	Money		6	
	Other			3
Activities	Writing/Office	1	1	2
	Leisure/Toys	305	1	8
	Ammunition		3	
	Transportation		2	

Other			68
Unclassified	881	51	9
Total	1546	1107	141
* not tabulated			

The construction of ornamental gardens at Manzanar might also have served another important purpose: to impart skills and knowledge to the next generation. This is significant since, in the decade before the war, Japanese Americans born in the United States faced discrimination in applying for jobs and were resigned to work as gardeners or nursery laborers. Intergenerational collaboration occurred at Manzanar's other ornamental gardens, among older *Issei* and younger *Nisei*, but more frequently between older *Issei* and younger *Issei*. For example, an 18-year age difference separates Block 15 Barracks 7 garden builder Muto from Sugiwara, Block 34 Mess Hall garden builder Kubota is nearly 30 years older than his two co-garden builders, and Block 4 garden builder Chotaro Nishimura is older than his son Mokutaro by 32 years. Fully aware of anti-Japanese discrimination and not knowing about the future after the end of the war, perhaps the elder *Issei* were intentionally passing on their skills to younger *Nisei* and *Issei*.

Figure 11. Former nursery operator Toyoshige Ioki standing in his barracks flower garden. Photograph by Toyo Miyatake. Reproduced with permission. © Toyo Miyatake Studio

Incarceree-built vegetable and flower gardens also strengthened social relations among residents of a block. Informant A (2012) told me in an interview that her older brother had been a gardener and nursery worker and cultivated a vegetable garden in his block. She states that her older brother shared the vegetables he cultivated with his neighbors. Similarly, in my interview with Sus Ioki (2012), he recalls that his father, a former nursery operator, had a chrysanthemum flower garden along his barracks (above, Figure 11) and gave the flowers he grew in his garden away to friends and neighbors.

These examples show how other types of gardens also helped build community within a block.

Gardens as sites of negotiating racism

Japanese Americans were forced to go to Manzanar solely on the basis of their Japanese heritage yet Japanese-style gardens were highly visible landscape features scattered throughout the camp. Tamura (2004) explains that ornamental gardens were permitted by the WRA because they were considered acceptable expressions of Japanese culture. I extend that argument and contend that garden builders were aware that Japanese-style gardens were acceptable and used it as a strategic way to ameliorate racial tensions within the camp. I argue that this strategy is a continuation of prewar Japanese American practices of building and donating Japanese-style gardens as a symbol of "goodwill" in communities where they were the minority. The Japanese-style gardens at Manzanar served a similar purpose of preventing and abating racial hostility. An analysis of historical documents suggests that part of the reason the WRA permitted the creation of ornamental gardens and even lent financial support to their construction was in order to present an image of their benign treatment of their incarcerated population.

In the decade prior to the Japanese American incarceration, it was not unusual for Japanese American communities to build and donate Japanese-style ornamental public gardens. Brown explains this practice by arguing that, "In an age when anti-Asian racial discrimination was codified into law, yet Japanese gardens were widely praised, some sought to ease acceptance of Japanese Americans into Anglo society by donating public gardens" (2000:39). There are several examples of these gardens in Los Angeles County.

At Stoner Park in Sawtelle, several West Los Angeles *Issei* gardeners built a public Japanese-style ornamental garden in 1932 "to foster cross-cultural goodwill" (*Preserving California's Japantowns* 2014). The dedication of the garden reads: "The Japanese People of Sawtelle to The Public for The Promotion of Better Understanding." Gardens were also donated to schools in order to mitigate racism against Japanese American students. For example, in Sierra Madre, Los Angeles County, "*Issei* fathers of the two dozen Japanese American children who attended the Sierra Madre School built a small garden there as a gesture of good will to celebrate the completion of a new building in 1930" (*Los Angeles Times* 1994). The *Nisei* were also aware of the benefits they would gain from donating a garden. In 1937, the President of Japanese Students Club and other Japanese American students at Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles built and maintained a Japanese-style garden at their own school (*Discover Nikkei* 2010). Japanese Americans donated these "goodwill gardens" and placed them in visible public spaces and schools as a strategy for diffusing any type of racial tension. This was important for Japanese American in the 1930s because the majority of *Nisei* were just coming of age and the *Issei* still lacked rights and political power.

Brett Esaki makes the argument that prewar Japanese-style ornamental gardens signified "the symbolic inclusion of Asians in America" by white Americans because they met "Orientalist expectations" (2013:260). Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar likely understood that Japanese-style gardens represented positive aspects of Japanese culture and capitalized on that. An announcement of an ornamental garden-building competition from the editors of the Japanese section of the camp's newspaper illustrates this:

> "Six months ago Manzanar was a barren, uninhabited desert. Today, beautiful green lawns, picturesque gardens with miniature mountains, stone lanterns, bridges over ponds where carp play, and other original, decorative ideas attest to the Japanese people's traditional love of nature, and ingenuity in reproducing the beauty of nature in miniature. We hope through this contest we can publicize the gardens of Manzanar to the residents and to the outside public."
>
> *Manzanar Free Press*, October 8, 1942

The garden contest organizers were not only concerned that those living within the camp were able to see the gardens, they wanted the gardens to be known by the "outside public." The organizers knew the WRA and other white Americans would view these "traditional" Japanese gardens that reflected nature as innocuous expressions of Japanese culture. As Esaki argues, "closeness to nature" was a "common Orientalist claim that justified characterizing Asians as inactive, passive, and uncivilized" (2013:250). The exotic but nonthreatening nature of these gardens helped present Japanese American incarcerees as compliant and helped mitigate racial hostility towards them.

It is not surprising then, that the gardens uncovered at Manzanar contain Japanese elements—bridges, stone lanterns, ponds with carp. These elements met the WRA's "Orientalist expectations," which allowed ornamental gardens to proliferate in the camp and be utilized for the enjoyment of the incarceree population. As Burton point outs, the WRA supported incarceree landscaping because it helped propagate a positive image of "relocation" (2011). The WRA believed these gardens proved their benign treatment of Japanese Americans and is probably why, for example, photographs of ornamental gardens make their way into the visual record of the Japanese American incarceration. WRA photographer Dorothea Lange was allowed to photograph William Katsuki's

ornamental entryway garden at Block 24 and Ansel Adams took photographs of the garden at Merritt Park.

Figure 12. William Katsuki working in his ornamental garden pond in Block 24 Barracks 5. Photograph by Dorothea Lange, 1942, National Archives and Records Administration

Conclusion

My analysis of the data reveal that war, exile, and institutional confinement shaped garden building practices at Manzanar. A close examination of the demographic information on incarceree garden builders demonstrates that most of the ornamental gardens were constructed by people who were nurserymen or gardeners/groundskeepers who had learned how to build Japanese gardens prior to the war. Ornamental garden

building at Manzanar facilitated social cohesion and community formation in a number of ways. Garden building teams were composed of family members or those who lived in the same block, strengthening familial ties as well as social relationships with neighbors. Vegetable and flower gardens also strengthened social relations between because items grown were given away to friends and neighbors. Archaeological evidence suggests that ornamental gardens served the incarceree community within a block, even barracks gardens that we would likely view as gardens restricted for one family's enjoyment. Incarcerees also capitalized on the fact that ornamental gardens were an accepted form of Japanese cultural expression that would help mitigate racial hostility from WRA administrators and the outside public while the WRA viewed the gardens as symbols of their benign rule.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

How do individuals cope under institutional confinement? This thesis project is an attempt at understanding how one incarcerated population—Japanese Americans unjustly imprisoned at Manzanar during World War II—altered the camp environment in ways that helped them endure confinement. An examination of two types of space within residential blocks—living quarters, or interior environment, as well as outdoor areas, or exterior environment—facilitated a strengthening of social and familial connections to one another. This is particularly important since the incarceration destabilized family structures, created uncomfortable living conditions, and caused psychological distress.

One finding from this study is that demographic differences did exist amongst incarcerees who altered interior and exterior spaces. A close examination of barracks basements and ornamental gardens suggests they were constructed by certain demographic groups. In the case of ornamental gardens, garden builders were mostly male *Issei* who had been employed as nursery operators or gardeners/groundskeepers prior to the war and the skills to build garden ponds. The demographics of barracks basement builders are slightly more varied; builders fell into two categories: teenage male *Nisei* and adult *Issei* males who were heads of their households. These results indicate

that incarceree strategies of coping with confinement differed by gender, generation, and geographic origin; this adds a more nuanced depiction of incarceree agency.

Another finding from this study is that ornamental gardens in residential areas and barracks basements were alterations that fostered a sense of community through their construction and use as social spaces. My analysis of the data show that virtually all ornamental gardens were built by teams of people composed of two or more individuals. With the exception of WRA-funded ornamental gardens, the construction of mess hall and barracks garden ponds appear to have been collaborative efforts between neighbors or family members living in the same block. Barracks basements, on the other hand, were mainly individual efforts although collaborations with family members or neighbors living within the same block did occur in some instances. My analysis also reveals the important role barracks basements and ornamental gardens played as social spaces for the community, particularly at the block level. Based on my interviews and other oral histories, male and female *Nisei* children and teenagers spent time socializing with peers in the basements, mostly during the hot summer months. Ornamental gardens also served as important social spaces for *Nisei*, particularly children. The archaeological evidence suggests that these were attractive play areas for children—both male and female—because of the toy artifacts recovered from the Arai garden pond fill. Similarly, an excavation at the Katsuki garden yielded dozens of marbles and a variety of small toys from the pond fill.

Basements and ornamental gardens also served to strengthen familial connections. Family cohesion was a concern because close relatives such as grandparents might have been separated from one another at this time and camp life afforded children a greater

degree of independence from parents. The close proximity of basements and ornamental gardens to living quarters kept *Nisei* close to home and allowed *Issei* parents more surveillance over their children.

The evidence also indicates that Japanese American incarcerees altered their environments to undermine WRA authority. For example, my analysis shows how ornamental gardens were utilized as a way for incarcerees to appear compliant to WRA administrators and the local white community in order to prevent or lessen racial hostility. In the case of basements, their construction subverted WRA authority because they were built without permission from camp administrators. Additionally, oral historical evidence suggests that certain basements were utilized for illicit activities such as liquor production and gambling.

The new insights provided by this study are significant for several reasons. This thesis demonstrates how Japanese American incarcerees actively sought to create community spaces such as barracks basements and ornamental gardens as a strategy to survive the incarceration by keeping their family unit together and building community at the block level. While *Issei* men found community by collaborating on the creation of ornamental gardens that served their block, *Nisei* children and teenagers within a block used basements as social spaces and appropriated ornamental gardens for play areas. The fact that confinement coping strategies differed by gender, generation, and occupation is important because it demonstrates that the population at Manzanar did not respond to the incarceration in universal ways. By examining everyday strategies of coping, this research highlights incarceree agency and participation in subversive activities that is

obscured by the “compliant image” and the “patriotic image” that dominate the Japanese American incarceration narrative.

Based on the results of this thesis project, future research can take a number of directions. This research would benefit from further excavations of both mess hall cellars and barracks basements at Manzanar National Historic Site, which would provide important information about uses not covered by oral histories such as material evidence of banned goods or artifacts associated with illicit activities. Future investigations should also take advantage of the fact that there are several active archaeological research projects at other incarceration sites such as Amache, Kooskia, and Honouliuli. Utilizing this thesis project’s research design, research could focus on comparing Manzanar with other Japanese American incarceration sites in order to locate similarities and differences in coping strategies. The results would shed light on the unique, or shared, tactics Japanese Americans utilized to deal with their incarceration experience.

The research goal of this thesis project was to gain a clearer understanding of how Manzanar incarcerees modified their interior and exterior environment to ensure their own physical and mental comfort. My analysis of oral histories, material culture, government records, historic photographs, and historical documents provides new insights into the various strategies that Manzanar incarcerees employed to cope with their forced confinement. Barracks basements and ornamental gardens are two different types of built constructions—one is highly visible, public space, while the other is hidden, private space—but there are several striking similarities in the ways incarcerees used those altered environments to create stronger connections between family and between block friends and neighbors. These results counter common stereotypes found in the

Japanese American incarceration narratives, as well as add nuance to previous studies of agency and resistance related to the Japanese American incarceration. Ultimately, this study adds to a greater understanding of how individuals whose lives were disrupted by exile, racism, and war found ways to form family and community behind barbed wire.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UMASS BOSTON
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393
P: 617.287.5370
F: 617.287.5396
www.umb.edu/research/orsp

Date: March 19, 2012

To: Ms Ng
Laura Ng
7 Hallam St #3
Boston, MA 02125

From: Kristen Kenny, BFA
Administrator, Institutional Review Board
University of Massachusetts Boston

Title of Protocol: Altered lives , altered environments: Creating home in Japanese American Internment Camps
Type of Review: Expedited
IRB Approval Date: 3/16/2012
IRB Expiration Date: 3/16/2013
2012053

This Project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Massachusetts Boston IRB, Assurance # FWA00004634.

As Principal Investigator you are responsible for the following:

1. Submission in writing of any and all changes to this project (e.g., protocol, recruitment materials, consent form, etc.) to the IRB for review and approval prior to initiation of the change(s).
2. Submission in writing of any and all unexpected event(s) that occur during the course of this project.
3. Submission in writing of any and all unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
4. Use of only IRB approved copies of the consent form(s), questionnaire(s), letter(s), advertisement(s), etc. in your research.
5. Submission of a continuation prior to the IRB expiration date.
6. Submission of a final report upon completion of this project.

NOTE: Please submit actual recruitment flyer for IRB approval stamp.

The IRB can and will terminate projects that are not in compliance with these requirements. Please be aware of your expiration date, all research must have a yearly continuing review by the IRB. Please direct all questions, correspondence and IRB forms to me in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Please contact me by phone at (617)287-5374 or email at kristen.kenny@umb.edu.

Sincerely,

Kristen Kenny, BFA
Administrator, IRB

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CONSENT FORMS

UMASS BOSTON INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
No. 2012-
Approved
Exp.
UMASS BOSTON

Consent Form

Project Title: Altered Lives, Altered Environments: Creating Home in Japanese American Internment Camps

Principal Investigator: Laura Ng, University of Massachusetts Boston, Department of Anthropology

Introduction and Contact Information
You are asked to take part in a research project on the physical environment of Japanese American internment camps. The researcher is Laura Ng, a graduate student in Department of Anthropology. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have further questions later, Laura Ng can discuss them with you. Her telephone number is (617) 287-5657 and her email is laura.ng001@umb.edu. Laura's academic advisor, Dr. Stephen Mrozowski, can be reached by phone at (617) 287-6842 or by email at stephen.mrozowski@umb.edu.

Project Description:
This study seeks to understand how Japanese Americans altered their barracks and external surroundings in internment camps during World War II. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be interviewed for thirty to forty five minutes about your memories of the camp's physical environment.

Risks or Discomforts:
Minimal risk is associated with this study. If you encounter any questions that you are uncomfortable answering or you would simply prefer not to respond, you have the right to skip those questions and/or withdraw your participation at any point in time.

Confidentiality:
Your part in this research is **confidential**. That is, the information gathered for this project will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. Information gathered for this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet and/or secure computer that only the researcher will have access to.

Voluntary Participation:
The decision whether or not to take part in this research study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you can contact the researcher, Laura Ng, at (617) 287-5657 or at laura.ng001@umb.edu.

You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached at the following address: IRB, Quinn Administration Building-2-080, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. You can also contact the Board by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5370 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM INDICATES THAT I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____
Printed Name of Researcher

UMASS BOSTON INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Consent To Audio Recording & Transcription

Project Title: Altered Lives, Altered Environments: Creating Home in Japanese American Internment Camps

Principal Investigator: Laura Ng, University of Massachusetts Boston, Department of Anthropology

This study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio files or the transcript. Only the researcher will be able to listen to the tapes.

The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

Immediately following the interview, you will be given the opportunity to have the audio files destroyed if you wish to withdraw your consent to audio recording or participation in this study.

By signing this form you are consenting to:

- ☐ having your interview audio recorded;
- ☐ to having the audio file transcribed;
- ☐ use of the written transcript in presentations and written products.

By checking the box in front of each item, you are consenting to participate in that procedure.

This consent for audio recording is effective until the following date: (/ /). On or before that date, the audio files will be destroyed.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
No. 2012053
Approved 3/14/12
Exp. 3/14/13
UMASS BOSTON

APPENDIX C

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What did your barracks apartment look like when you first arrived?

Were any objects added to your barracks apartment (furniture, artwork, etc.) after you moved in? If yes:

> Who in your household added those items?
>
> Which of those items were brought from home?
>
> Which were purchased in camp or from a catalogue (e.g. Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward)?
>
> Which objects were made in camp?

Did you or your neighbor have a basement underneath your barracks?

Did you, anyone in your camp household, or neighbor design or build any types of garden in camp? If yes:

> Who participated in the creation of the garden?
>
> Where is the garden located?
>
> How large was it and what was its shape?
>
> Did the garden contain Western elements, Japanese elements, both, or none?

APPENDIX D

IMAGE COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

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_____date 3/7/14 _____date_____
Alan Miyatake Laura Ng

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January 12, 2013	Informant G
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January 12, 2013	Informant I
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