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From Jerome to Dermott: Comparing the Treatment and Experiences of Japanese Americans and German Prisoners of War in Arkansas During World War II

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Abstract

During WWII the US government housed German POWs at a camp in Denson, Arkansas that it had previously used to incarcerate Japanese Americans. This thesis compares how US authorities treated the camp's two different inmate populations—one composed of enemy soldiers and the other US residents, about 70 percent of whom were citizens—to analyze larger questions surrounding how the US government interpreted race, citizenship, gender, and nationhood during the war. Federal authorities regulated and surveilled Japanese Americans at Jerome concentration camp with more vigor and energy than they did German prisoners of war at Dermott POW camp. Moreover, US officials provided German POWs at Dermott with more funding, support, and autonomy than they did the inmates at Jerome. This disparity in treatment within the camps reflects the US government's larger conceptualization of their wartime enemies—the war with Japan was against a race of people, as depicted in US WWII propaganda, whereas the war with Germany was one against a political ideology, Nazism.

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For the sake of this thesis, despite the Issei generation of Japanese immigrants being legally barred from becoming citizens or naturalized under the Naturalization Act of 1790 and similar subsequent acts, this work will refer to all peoples of Japanese descent in the United States as Japanese Americans regardless of their citizenship status. Furthermore, there is much debate over the terms "internment" and "concentration" as to which should be used to describe the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Meriam-Webster defines a concentration camp as "a place where large numbers of people (such as prisoners of war, political prisoners, refugees, or the members of an ethnic or religious minority) are detained or confined under armed guard." Therefore, according to this definition, the War Relocation Authority camps were indeed concentration camps. However, for the sake of this research, the terms internment and concentration will be used interchangeably as to avoid redundancy.

Introduction

In the summer of 1944, in racially segregated Chicot County, Arkansas, members of the Yoshida family found themselves in a painfully familiar situation. Mr. and Mrs. Yoshida carried most of their worldly possessions in their hands as they stood with their married daughter waiting, once again, on a train. Not a train back home, though, but rather to one of the nine remaining War Relocation Authority concentration camps as the Jerome camp, which had housed the Yoshida's and 8,497 other Japanese Americans since October 1942, was closing at so that the camp could be converted to a prisoner of war (POW) camp for German officers. Train tracks and train cars were painfully familiar to all Japanese Americans interned at Jerome as it was cramped train cars that had shipped families from their homes near the West Coast to the unfamiliar swamps of southeast Arkansas.

For the Yoshida family, however, the sound of an approaching train was even more painful. Just months earlier, on Sunday, January 17, 1943, 23-year-old John Yoshida escaped from the concentration camp at Jerome. Around mid-day, he passed through a gap in the barbed wire fence that surrounded the desolate camp despite the armed guards stationed in the nearby guard towers. It was not uncommon for inmates to slip by the fencing to go into the nearby woods to fish, collect rocks, or just venture out. By the next day, however, John's father and

stepmother reported him missing to the camp officials. A quick sweep of the area and the nearby camp at Rohwer, where the Yoshida's other child lived with her husband, yielded no clues as to the location of the Santa Anita, California, native.

A day after his parents reported him missing, John Yoshida stood in the dense twilight fog by the railroad tracks nearly a mile away from Jerome. Standing next to the train tracks, a notable symbol of Japanese American internment, Yoshida took off his jacket and folded it neatly next to him along with his hat and a folded piece of paper. As the clunking of a train neared closer, Yoshida laid down and put his chin over the rail of the tracks. The Missouri Pacific Railroad conductor never saw him as the first light of dawn had yet to breach the tall pine trees lining the tracks. In the morning, work foreman J. W. Womack discovered the scene and found John Yoshida's head severed from his body along with a note about contemplating taking his own life due to the hopelessness of "relocation."[1] In the face of oppression and the forced removal of his entire family from their home in California, Yoshida decided to take his own life, the most drastic choice that can be made when in a world with limited possibilities.

A year and a half later, Japanese Americans including Yoshida's father and stepmother left Jerome for good as the US government closed the camp and shipped them off on trains, busses, and trucks once again. However, the US government would reopen the camp just months after its closing. This time, under a new name, Camp Dermott, and with new occupants, German prisoners of war, arriving via the same trains. The US government incarcerated Nazi prisoners in the same barbed wire prison deep in the racially segregated Arkansas delta as they had Japanese Americans. This research aims build off the little secondary literature comparing how the United

[1] "Center Resident Ends Own Life," *McGehee Times*, January 21, 1943, https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/exhibits-online-japanese-american-internment/352/; John Howard, "John Yoshida in Arkansas, 1943," *Southern Spaces*, February 2008, https://doi.org/10.18737/m7630f.

States treated those it perceived to be threats who were incarcerated at the same location (albeit at different times) in order to understand more about the limitations of American democracy. Specifically, the illiberal views held by federal authorities and white Americans on race, class, gender, sexuality, nationhood, citizenship, religion, and nationalism during World War II and within the narrative of Japanese American internment.

By analyzing internment experiences and spatial realities of both the Jerome Camp and Camp Dermott, this study shows that federal authorities regulated the daily lives of Japanese Americans, 70 percent of whom were US citizens, with more surveillance and vigor than they did German prisoners of war. Through instruction, indoctrination, and coercion, Jerome officials sought to transform those that they considered to be an alien people into compliant residents who, even if they could never become truly American, did not threaten the American way of life. Federal officials at Camp Dermott, though, pursued a different approach. They sought to convince the POWs that the American way of life was superior to that offered through Nazism. This difference in treatment reveals a deeper understanding into how the US government interpreted race, national identity, and citizenship during World War II. The comparison between Jerome and Dermott shows that the US government in Arkansas saw German POWs as closer to equals in the world community than Japanese Americans and thus more deserving of better resources and conditions. Here, once again, it is clear that the Japanese Americans' ability to "be American" was limited by their skin color, religious association, and language; legal citizenship status or nativity meant very little. Federal authorities hoped to transform the Japanese Americans into compliant residents rather than active citizens. While federal authorities were not trying to necessarily "Americanize" POWs at Dermott, they did expose them to some of the privileges of being white in America. Moreover, they allowed German POWs at Dermott far

more autonomy within the camp and restricted their daily lives far less than they did Japanese Americans at Jerome. The comparison of the interment experience of Japanese Americans in Jerome and German POWs in the same space highlights the construction of what it means to be "American" and details the checklist of attributes needed for better treatment under the US government. Moreover, the physical set up of the camp and the intended uses of each space designed by camp officials led to unintended consequences upon the gender, class, and generational norms of Japanese Americans in Arkansas.

The disparate treatment of US citizens of Japanese descent at Jerome and German prisoners of war at Dermott echoes ways that US government propagandists portrayed the nation's larger fight against Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. The federal government conceived of the war in Europe as a fight against an ideology, Nazism, rather than a battle against the German people. The war against Japan, though, was portrayed as a fight against a race of people, who were often depicted as essentially dangerous and rat-like.[2] Therefore, officials at Dermott saw themselves as evangelists for the American way of life and granted German POWs a fair degree of autonomy within the camp. Officials at Jerome, on the other hand, saw their job as containing an alien threat, even if those aliens were US citizens. This highlights the fact that race is far more important than citizenship in securing better treatment from the federal government. Thus, this unique instance in Arkansas history adds to the understanding of the limits of American liberalism and its promise of equality to all citizens. If America is to ever live up to its ideals, the treatment of its citizens must be without discrimination. There can be no list of attributes that make one "American" and therefore worthy of better treatment and more autonomy.

[2] Nancy Brcak and John R. Pavia, "Racism in Japanese and U.S. Wartime Propaganda," *The Historian* 56, no. 4 (1994): pp. 671-684, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24449072.

There are limitations to comparing the experiences and spatial realties between Jerome and Dermott. There are some obvious demographic differences such as the fact were no women and children in Dermott. Additionally, Germans in Dermott were military men, specifically officers, rather than farmers, business owners, workers, professionals, etc. Therefore, there are moments in this narrative where the comparison between the two camps cannot be made. However, when possible, the shared spatial reality between the two groups and the differences in treatment by the US government is a valuable tool and will be utilized. By highlighting the differences in treatment, this thesis is providing more context to both narratives and providing new evidence that proves that US citizenship and one's ability to avoid persecution in America is based on the social construct of race rather than citizenship status. There is certainly a great disparity between the treatments of both groups and German POWs generally faired far better than Japanese Americans. However, this is not to say that either group was treated well on the whole. Both were inmates behind barbed wire and guard towers. Each group experienced abuse at the hands of the US government and Arkansans. The similarities shared between the two groups are that they both were prisoners. Moreover, both camps were permeable to the extent that inmates in both camps were often able to go outside the boundaries of the fences and even visit nearby stores and towns. This acknowledgement of the limitations of comparative analysis and the similarities between the two groups are critical to keep in mind when discussing the disparities between the two internments.

This thesis is not an encompassing analysis of either Jerome or Dermott and the day-to-day activities of those incarcerated. Nor is it a broad overview the War Relocation Authority camps or prisoner of war camps. Other works on the topic that come closer to this type of analysis include, but are not limited to, John Howard's *Concentration Camps on the Homefront*,

Richard Reeves' *Infamy*, Eiichiro Azuma's *Between Two Empires*, C. Calvin Smith's "The Response of Arkansans to Prisoners of War and Japanese Americans in Arkansas, 1942-1945," Merril R. Pritchett and William Shea's "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas," and Derek Mallett's *Hiter's Generals in America*. Most importantly, Howard's work seeks to incorporate the two Arkansas WRA camps into the larger historiography on the subject.[3] Howard contends that the concentration camps were not an isolated incident of a failure in American democracy. Rather he argues they are an extension of American imperialism and racial oppression of Japanese Americans. Moreover, he argues that federal authorities continued their subjugation of Japanese Americans once in the camps through extensive "Americanization" efforts. He also argues that camp life had various impacts on social dynamics within the Japanese American communities at Jerome and Rohwer including more autonomy to women and increased accessibility to same sex relationships. Reeves provides an encompassing narrative of Japanese American internment on the whole and gives more agency to Japanese Americans than previous works. His book unearthed more Japanese American voices and stories in order to reframe Japanese Americans as more than just passive victims. Azuma explores the complicated process of identity formation and national belonging for Japanese Americans in the early 20th century. He argues that Japanese Americans are forced to take on an "inter-national" identity that is neither Japanese nor American. Thus, they are caught between two nations and forced to operate in a liminal space

[3] John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Richard Reeves, *Infamy: The Shocking Story of the Japanese American Internment in World War II* (New York: Picador, 2016); Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); C. Calvin Smith, "The Response of Arkansans to Prisoners of War and Japanese Americans in Arkansas 1942-1945," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1994): pp. 340-366, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40030890; Merrill R. Pritchett and William L. Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas, 1943-1946," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1978): pp. 3-22, https://doi.org/10.2307/40023162; Derek R. Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" In *Hitler's Generals in America: Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence* (University Press of Kentucky, 2013), pp. 107-132, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjz4f.8.

with no national identity. This position causes Japanese Americans to encounter numerous obstacles from both nations and their citizens, including the WRA camps. His work is critical to understanding the positionality of Japanese Americans between America and Japan. Pritchett, Shea, and Mallet's work represent the scarce secondary literature over the existence of German prisoners of war in Arkansas and are all crucial to understanding the often-complicated nature of the POW camps in the state. This work builds upon C. Calvin Smith's broader comparative work on how Arkansans treated Japanese American internees and German and Italian POWs. Smith argues that Arkansas officials provided greater opportunities and were more accommodating to the POWs. Whereas Smith's essay mostly looks at what happens outside of the camps, this thesis focuses on the federal government's treatment of those within Jerome/Dermott. This list is certainly not exhaustive as this research draws upon the secondary works of countless others. In addition, this thesis aims to use archival material from the US government, interviews from inmates, and personal collections held in various research facilities and online databases to show that federal authorities went to extreme measures to monitor nearly every aspect Japanese Americans' lives in Jerome, especially when compared to the treatment of German POWs in Dermott.

Rather than a deep dive into the day-to-day activities of each camp, this research highlights certain aspects of both camps that are made more comparable by the use of the same space. In doing so, the ways in which the US government surveilled and regulated Japanese Americans far more than they did German POWs become apparent. By revealing this disparity in treatment, the racist, xenophobic, and nationalist reasoning used by federal and camp authorities, as well as white Americans, becomes clear. This is not to say that this thesis is an evenly weighted comparison between Japanese Americans and German POWs. On the contrary,

German POWs at Dermott are used as a sharp contrast to Japanese Americans for multiple reasons. The first being that they inhabited the same camp as Japanese Americans and therefore used the same space as the inmates of Jerome, albeit with different artificial spaces set up by the US government. This makes the space both groups share a common denominator that allows for this comparative narrative to exist. It would be less useful or accurate to compare Japanese Americans at Jerome to a POW camp in Wisconsin. The other reason being that German POWs, while white, were not US citizens like the majority of Japanese Americans in the United States.

This thesis opens with a brief background history of Japanese Americans in the United States as well as the creation of the camp. This chapter sets up the comparison with Dermott and introduces many of the issues that plagued Jerome for the entirety of its two-year operation in order to build the argument that federal authorities treated Japanese Americans worse than German POWs. More importantly, this chapter begins to highlight the bleak condition of Jerome and the ways in which federal authorities revoked and limited the freedom of Japanese Americans the moment they arrived in Jerome.

The next chapter analyzes the collectivization of living at both camps in order to reveal some of the intended and unintended consequences of group meals, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and living quarters. This chapter argues that collectivization led to increased surveillance as well as more autonomy for Japanese American women and shifts in the overall gender and family dynamics for Japanese Americans. This chapter also uses collectivization to argue that Japanese Americans had far less autonomy compared to German POWs and suffered under the poor conditions and lack of funding by federal authorities.

Chapter 3 analyzes the educational programming in both camps and highlights the ways that camp officials carefully monitored the type and level of education Japanese Americans in

Jerome had access to and shows how, in contrast, the US government granted German POWs more opportunities, resources, and space when compared to Japanese Americans. The educational program in Jerome attempted to indoctrinate Japanese American Nisei in order to subdue them into a subordinate role within the larger social hierarchy of the nation. These efforts furthered the divide between Nisei and Issei as children related less to their parents as the federal government became the ultimate authority in their lives.

Recreational programming is also examined in order to how camp officials supported more "American" forms of leisure time activities such as baseball and dance concerts by federal authorities in Jerome over "Japanese" activities, like sumo, reveal more about the segregating and indoctrinating efforts of federal authorities. In Dermott, federal authorities provided German POWs more funding and support as they enjoyed distinctly German forms of leisure time recreation such as expensive concerts with the music of German composers and sports like handball and soccer. This chapter also argues that recreational programming once again allowed for more autonomy for German POWs and highlights another way federal authorities viewed German culture, and Nazism, as two separate entities.

Lastly, religion in both camps also highlights a difference in terms of the regulatory measures placed on Japanese Americans compared to the inmates of Dermott. Federal authorities were confronted with Buddhism which challenged the Protestantism that many in the country saw as central to Americanism and the greater good. Authorities tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to suppress Buddhism by denying space but allowed Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Protestantism to flourish in Dermott. Germans POWs were largely left to their devices and given adequate resources and space to practice what they wanted and how they wanted, while the Japanese Americans' exercise of Buddhism was spatially and materially restricted by federal authorities.

Religion also had an impact on Japanese American women as they achieved more social mobility by taking up leadership roles in the Christian church. Federal authorities suppressed Buddhism while simultaneously promoting Christianity in the camp in order to evangelize (indoctrinate) the small number of protestant inmates at Jerome.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to add more depth to the field of internment histories and the larger historiography of World War II by revealing more about how America conceived race, citizenship, gender, and democracy at the time through the use of these two camps. More broadly, this thesis aims to provide some insight into this unique moment in Arkansas and World War II history where the US government used the same concentration camp deep in the segregated south to house Japanese Americans and then German prisoners of war. Within this shared spatial reality, federal and state authorities monitored and controlled the daily lives of Japanese Americans more than they did German prisoners of war.

Chapter One

Days of Infamy: Meeting and Constructing the Camps

Just east of Highway 165 in the southeast corner of Arkansas sat a piece of desolate swampy land that was covered in overgrown foliage. Since the early 1900s, several private firms did their best to drain the land in order to create a suitable farmland that could be divided up and sold to potential farmers. However, these attempts were unsuccessful and the land sat dormant until the 1930s. As a part of the depression relief efforts, the Farm Security Administration purchased the land in the early 1930s. The goal once again was to drain and clear the land in order to create small homesteads for low-income families during the Great Depression. Once again, after a few years of work, the FSA gave up as the dense overgrowth and drainage problems proved to be overwhelming. Therefore, the 9,374 acres sat dormant and in the hands of the federal government until 1942, when the War Relocation Authority purchased the land in order to once again try to drain and clear the land.[4] Except this time, these efforts were not to be done in order to create suitable farmland for Americans, but rather they were done to build the Jerome Relocation Center, a concentration camp to hold Americans. Like its predecessors, the WRA was unable to properly drain or clear the land, but that did not stop it from following through on its plan. As detailed in this chapter, the group that would finally solve the drainage problems by building ditches and cutting foliage and trees would be the Japanese American population at Jerome. US authorities forced Japanese Americans to finish the construction of not only their own prison but what would eventually become a prison for German prisoners of war. Federal authorities built Jerome, and therefore Dermott, through the use of largely Japanese American labor and cheap private construction firms that caused problems for both the physical

[4] Brian Niiya, "Jerome," *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed May 6, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Jerome.

camp and the inmate population themselves. Here lies the origins of Jerome concentration camp and the beginning of the harsh reality Japanese Americans faced when they arrived at the camp in the fall of 1942.

These brutal beginnings are only part of the terrible manner in which federal authorities treated those at Jerome. The desolate state of the camp, lack of preparedness, and brutality of the WRA only made the already hopeless situation for Japanese Americans at Jerome even worse. This chapter seeks to explain how the camp came into existence and detail the struggles particular to the first opening months of Jerome since these troubles set up many of the hardships inmates at Jerome had to endure for the duration of the camp's existence. Moreover, the construction period allowed federal authorities to monitor and dictate the daily lives of Japanese Americans at Jerome.

Long before either camp's existence, Japanese immigrants lived in various urban and rural settings across the United States. As with other minority populations in America, the federal government used de facto and de jure discrimination against Japanese immigrants upon their arrival. Following the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the end of the shogunate, Japan began to speed up its urbanizing and industrializing efforts which led to a decline in agricultural work and a social disruption that led many Japanese citizens feeling like their opportunities were being diminished by the competitiveness of the job market and the loss of their farmland. This economic and social shift, paired with the lift of legal barriers that previously barred emigration from Japan, led to Japanese subjects looking beyond the island for new opportunities. The Japanese government endorsed this process as a part of its imperial ambitions and would often select and assist young and ambitious individuals to emigrate throughout the Pacific Rim, including the Hawaiian Islands or the US Pacific coast. Between 1886 and 1911, approximately

400,000 Japanese citizens immigrated into the United States or US territories. This first generation of Japanese migrants who were born in Japan were called Issei, which translates to "first generation" in Japanese. Their children, if born in the US, are called Nisei and were US citizens under the 14th amendment. Despite only making up a miniscule percentage of the America's population in the first twenty years of the 20th century, organized campaigns against Japanese immigrants began to mount up quickly. Following pressure from organizations like the Asiatic Exclusion League and the San Francisco Board of Education, the United States and Japan signed the "Gentlemen's Agreement" in 1907 intended to curtail the immigration of Japanese working people (but not businessmen and professionals) into the United States. By this point, Japanese in the United States had formed small communities and worked as small business owners and agricultural workers mostly along the west coast. Japanese migrants were largely unaffected by the Gentlemen's Agreement if they were married or related to a Japanese US resident. Japanese migrants were also legally barred from becoming US citizens under the Naturalization Act in 1906, therefore Issei were unable to be naturalized. The children of the Issei generation, the Nisei, were US citizens if they were born in the United States, which is why more 70% of those interned were American citizens. In 1924, as a product of mounting pressure from labor and groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924, effectively ending Japanese immigration to the United States.[5]

Historians, especially Eiichiro Azuma and Michael R. Jin, dive far deeper into the challenges Japanese immigrants faced once they arrived in America. Both authors analyze the

[5] Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright, 2018); W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); "Japanese: Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History: Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress: Library of Congress," The Library of Congress, accessed June 29, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/japanese/.

positionality of the Issei in terms of their national belonging. Azuma argues that Japanese Americans were forced to take on an "inter-national" identity, meaning they are placed somewhere in between Japan and American with little in terms of rights in either nation.[6] Similarly, Jin calls Japanese immigrants "stateless," a feeling that will only be made more apparent during the forced removal of Japanese Americans from their homes in 1942 under Executive Order 9066. Both authors debunk arguments made by scholars such as Eileen Sunada Sarasohn that position Japanese immigrants as pioneers in a new land.[7] As examined later, this pioneering myth was turned on its head by federal authorities in order to justify internment and reframe "relocation" as yet another case of the pioneering spirit of America.

The December 7, 1941, attack at Pearl Harbor sparked the incarceration of Japanese Americans along the West Coast and marked the beginning of this chilling portion of American history. As a part of Executive Order 9066, issued February 19, 1942, by Franklin Roosevelt, federal authorities rounded up Japanese Americans along the west coast of the United States and sent them to ten internment camps across the nation operated by the newly created War Relocation Authority. Two of these camps—Rohwer and Jerome—were located in southeastern Arkansas. The latter was located on the border of Chicot and Drew County in the Arkansas delta.

When the US government made it clear that Arkansas was a prospective location for one or more camps, the WRA face opposition from white officials in Arkansas, especially Governor Homer Adkins. In February 1942, Adkins told John Tolan, the chairman of the House Committee Investigating National Defense Migration: "Our people are not familiar with customs

[6] Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michael R. Jin, *Citizens, Immigrants, and the Stateless a Japanese American Diaspora in the Pacific* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022).
[7] Eileen Sunada Sarasohn, *The Issei, Portrait of a Pioneer: An Oral History* (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1990).

or practices of the Japanese…the only way I can visualize where we can use them [Japanese Americans] at all would be to fence them in concentration camps under wire fence and guard…I doubt the wisdom of placing any in Arkansas."[8] In April 1942, WRA regional supervisor E. B. Whitaker met with Adkins and his advisors to discuss the prospect of having WRA camps in Arkansas. Whitaker reported back to Milton Eisenhower, the newly appointed head of the War Relocation Authority, that Adkins was "not enthusiastic" about having Japanese Americans in the state.[9] This was a considerable understatement as Adkins, who historian Ben Johnson called "the state's most overtly racist governor in the modern era," thought of Japanese Americans as the enemy and racially inferior. Whitaker relayed Adkins' demands despite the governor having little leverage in the scenario. Adkins ultimately agreed to the construction of the two Arkansas camps, after a federal guarantee that armed white guards would patrol and watch the Japanese American inmates. Furthermore, Adkins forced the WRA to promise that not one Japanese American family would remain in the state after the war. He also demanded that Japanese American laborers be paid less than Arkansans and that the state would have no responsibility for the discipline or safety of the internees.[10] After the construction of the two camps had begun, Adkins relayed more of his feelings in a letter to a Memphis newspaper editor, "In the very beginning, when the Army and the Federal Government talked of locating the relocation centers in Arkansas, it was with considerable reluctance that I consented to their location in this state, although they may have located them regardless of my opinion in the matter."[11] As a part of his

[8] Homer Adkins to John H. Tolan, February 27, 1942, Box 4, Folder 112, Item 7, Homer Adkins Papers, Arkansas State Archives.
[9] Jason Morgan Ward, "'No Jap Crow': Japanese Americans Encounter the World War II South," *The Journal of Southern History* 73, no. 1 (February 2007): pp. 75-104.
[10] Ward, "'No Jap Crow,"; Ben F. Johnson, *Arkansas in Modern America since 1930* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press), 74.
[11] Governor Homer Adkins to Mr. Edward J. Meeman, June 16, 1943, Adkins Papers, Accessed May 23, 2022, https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/exhibits-online-japanese-american-internment/69/

efforts to ensure no Japanese American family remained in the state after the war or be able to purchase land in Arkansas, Adkins wrote to California secretary of state to request a copy of the state's Alien Land Law: "It is my understanding that you have a statute in California that prevents races, including Japanese, from owning land in your state…I would appreciate having a copy of this statute."[12] Several other Arkansas politicians echoed Adkins' animosity toward Japanese Americans. Senator C. B. Ragsdale from Stuttgart wrote a bill to further ensure that no Japanese American had any property rights in the state. Confident in his bill, Ragsdale told reporters it would pass because "I don't believe anybody wants a Japanese person in Arkansas. And if I had my way we'd put them all on a ship and have the ship torpedoed."[13]

Despite the resistance from Arkansas officials, planning for construction at Jerome began in the summer of 1942. The WRA had 10,000 acres for a community anticipated to be 8,500 individuals, a little more than an acre per person. However, due to the cost of transportation and the inability of the WRA to control the population over such a large area, the camp ended up being roughly one square mile in size. In order to sustain and organize 8,500 people into a 640-acre space, WRA planners saw community organization and collectivization as vital to the camp's ability to function. Historian John Howard noted that these planners were influenced by a generation of urban planners, reformers, and industrialists who saw collectivization and centralized control over resources as optimal for organizing small farming and factory towns. Thus, Jerome's design was the product of utopian blueprints for cost-effective, efficient, and modern community organization in many ways that did not take into account the habits or wants of the Japanese American population.[14] That Japanese Americans in Jerome would use

[12] Ward, "No Jap Crow," 87.
[13] William Cary Anderson, "Early Reaction in Arkansas to the Relocation of Japanese in the State," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1964): pp. 195-211.
[14] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Homefront*, 70.

collectivization and scales of economy to assert agency and challenge the structures of power does not negate the fact that the collectivization of nearly every aspect of life in the camp came at a significant cost to Japanese Americans. The spatial realities of the barracks, bathrooms, laundry, and showers caused further humiliation, hardship, and strife for Japanese Americans in Jerome.

As the government started acquiring land for the camps in the late spring of 1942, the WRA set up an office in the nearby town of Jerome in July. The A.J. Rife Construction Company of Dallas won the contract to build the camp at the cost of $4,703,347, breaking ground on August 1, 1942.[15] The construction company hired approximately 5,000 workers to clear the land so they could build fences, roads, and buildings.[16] Rife Construction built Jerome

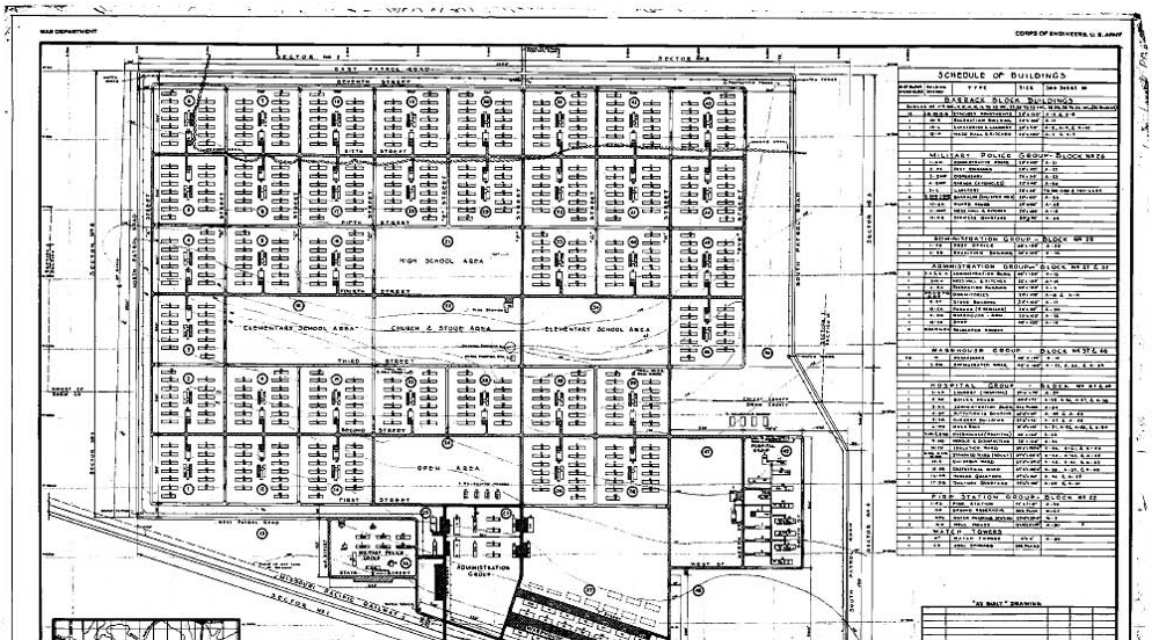

Figure 1. Map of Jerome Concentration Camp. (War Relocation Authority, Jerome Relocation Center central area, 1943, National Parks Service, http://npshistory.com/series/anthropology/wacc/74/chap7.htm

[15] Russell E. Bearden, "Jerome Relocation Center," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, accessed June 29, 2022, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/jerome-relocation-center-2399/#:~:text=Rife%20Construction%20Company%20of%20Dallas,Japanese%20Americans%20at%20it.
[16] US War Department, *Final Report, Japanese Evacuation From the West Coast* (Washington, 1943), 350. In comparison, the cost for Rohwer was $4,800,558 and the total cost of all ten concentration camps was $65,000,000.

with the same square grid blueprint the WRA used for most of their "relocation" camps. Rather than families being spread out over 10,000 acres and having to construct hundreds of miles worth of roads navigating around hills, swampy bogs, and other natural barriers, WRA planners created a grid system for the camp. Set up like many urban spaces, the camp's streets created a checkerboard pattern filled with 90-degree angles (See fig. 1). Despite having over 20 miles of streets, they all were contained within a roughly square mile radius. Thus, it was much easier to maintain, monitor, and move about the camp. Jerome's inmate area was essentially a grid of thirty-six square blocks within a large square. Thirty-three of these blocks were residential, while two of the other three were used as a school, and the third, block 36, was utilized as an administrative building used by WRA officials and inmates. Japanese Americans would be assigned blocks, barracks, and unit letters when they arrived at the camp. Each person in Jerome had a camp address that followed the block number, barrack number, unit letter format, e.g., 14-2-D, which was the address of Kiyoko Hiroyasu and her family.[17]

The barrack designs at Jerome were bleak and lacked privacy, heating, insulation, and running water, all of resulted in more hardships for Japanese Americans. Each of the thirty-three blocks had twelve barracks that were 20 x 120 feet and split into six "apartments." An apartment was supposed to have one bed per person, a wood-burning stove, one electrical outlet, and a door. The residential buildings had wood flooring and concrete foundations with uninsulated tar paper walls wrapped around a wooden frame. There were also no partitions inside each apartment, allowing for no privacy between family members; therefore, families installed makeshift gypsum boards as partitions. Without central heat in the brutal winter months that

[17] "Train List for Closing of Jerome," 1944, p. 96, reel 200, box 197, folder 4, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed June 28, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6jh3t9n/?brand=oac4.

were far colder than anything they had experienced on the West Coast or Hawaii. Japanese Americans would have to rely on scrap wood to heat their dwellings as camp officials did not plan on providing any wood or coal.[18] In the end, Jerome's layout resembled a square grid of buildings, but constructing a concentration camp in Arkansas swamp proved to more difficult than the United States originally thought.

Federal authorities did not adequately prepare Jerome for the thousands of inmates it would soon hold. When the first Japanese Americans arrived at the camp in the fall of 1942, the camp was far from complete. On October 6, 1942, the first group of Japanese Americans arrived at Jerome following a cramped multi-day train ride from the Pacific Coast. They found "lumber strewn all over from uncompleted barracks" and "mud piled high in front of the barracks."[19] Camp director Paul Taylor admitted that during the height of arrivals in October, "in no single instance was the block to be occupied made available to the WRA until after the train arrived."[20] This meant that upon arrival at their new swampy prison, Japanese Americans were forced to wait hours before they were allowed to enter the cramped barracks that were assigned to them. One instance saw a group of 462 internees arrive at 6:45 in the morning and not move into their unfinished barracks until 4:30 in the afternoon. According to accounts, it rained most of the day and even when the group was permitted to enter their barracks, they had to install their own "light fixtures and assist the contractors in order to obtain lights in one entire block."[21]

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[18] Paul A. Taylor, "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1943, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, Online Archive of California, Accessed May 13, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.
[19] Yukiko Miyahara interview by Kirk Peterson, Segment 10, April 10, 2009, San Diego, California, Manzanar National Historic Site Collection, Densho Digital Repository, Accessed June 14, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-manz-1-62-10/
[20] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.
[21] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.

Inmates had to do much more than install lights though upon their arrival at the camp. Images taken by Tom Parker, a photographer hired by the government to run the War Relocation Authority Photographic Section, show Japanese Americans at Jerome building their own prison. Images depict Japanese Americans digging and constructing drainage ditches, cutting timber for building materials, and clearing out foliage around the campsite that the construction company had yet to clear (See figs. 2 and 3).[22]

Figure 2. (Photograph by Thomas Parker*, Men drainage ditches, Arkansas, United States, 16 Nov 1942*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft72900702/?order=2&brand=oac4.

[22] Tom Parker, "Men digging drainage ditches," November 11, 1942, Series 1, Box 1, Image 20, U.S. War Relocation Authority Jerome Relocation Center Records, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

Figure 3. (Photograph taken by Thomas Parker, November 18, 1942, Rising Above Digital Repository, https://risingabove.cast.uark.edu/archive/item/2622).

More challenges existed in the opening months on top of collecting building materials, draining the camp, and finishing the construction of their camp. In the first months of camp hot water, toilets, and wood stoves were missing in some blocks. Wood burning stoves to heat the poorly constructed barracks were the last items to arrive, with some not being installed until mid-December, well into the start of the bitterly cold winter weather. Temperatures at night had already been as low as 26 degrees before the end of October. The winter conditions and unheated tar paper barracks resulted in miserable nights and cases of pneumonia in some instances. Once the stoves were installed, internees had to go out into the surrounding forest and chop their own wood since none was ever furnished by the WRA.[23] Since jobs such as woodcutting, collecting

[23] Miyahara interview by Peterson, https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-manz-1-62-10/.

firewood, ditch digging, and other forms of similar labor were necessary to complete the camp and heat their barracks, women and children often participated in these unpaid forms of labor. These jobs were critical to the survival of Japanese Americans in Jerome, which led to women taking up positions and work that they previously had not participated in prior to camp life. This is especially true for those Japanese American families who came from more urban environments where activities like cutting wood were far less common when compared to rural areas. Mary Tsukamoto remembered how the bitterly cold nights pushed everyone, including women, "to go into to woods to chop wood." The lack of coal from the WRA exacerbated the need for wood to heat the barren barracks. Tsukamoto also recalled that "everything stopped and was closed and the young people were told to go out and work. They brought the wood in, and the women helped saw it" (See figure 4). The lack of supplies and support from camp officials

Figure 4. Inmates cutting firewood. The photo was sent from Sally Sakaye Sasaki at the Jerome camp to Mitzi Masukawa Naohara at the Poston Camp. Mitzi Naohara photo album (csudh_nao_0200), page 16. https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-csujad-38-286/?format=im.

caused inmates to "get greedy and selfish," as "people started to hoard wood…there wouldn't be enough for some people," according to Tsukamoto. The WRA's forced Japanese Americans to figure out ways to heat their own homes and survive the brutal winter nights in the opening months of the camp. The lack of preparedness, support, and supplies caused inmates to resort to hoarding wood in order to keep their families warm in the tar paper cladded buildings.[24]

While finishing the construction on their prison, inmates at Jerome had to navigate and interact with the white construction workers still trying to finish the camp. These interactions represent some of the first interactions Japanese Americans had with white Arkansans and they went as one would sadly suspect. Reports emerged of contractors and engineers taking "every opportunity to abuse evacuees."[25] According to a report by Director Paul Taylor, one supervisor, Mr. H. H. Hobbs, "had a verbal battle with one of the evacuee truck drivers," and charges were pressed against the truck driver but later dropped after Taylor's intervention.[26] These instances of abuse and difficulties speak to the racial dynamics within the camp between WRA officials, white construction workers, and the Japanese American internees.

Hardships, harassment, and neglect characterized the entire two years the Jerome camp was open. However, the opening months were plagued even further by the unfinished state of the camp and the unwillingness on the part of the WRA to alleviate the issues that existed. Here, the spatial reality of the camp once again impacted how Japanese Americans experienced Jerome and how they responded to the hardships surrounding the lack of necessities and unfished nature of the camp

[24] Smith, "The Response of Arkansans to Prisoners of War and Japanese Americans in Arkansas 1942-1945," 343.
[25] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.
[26] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.

As Japanese Americans moved into Jerome, anxieties rose as many Arkansans believed conditions inside Jerome were better than outside the camps, especially in terms of the amount and quality of the food allotted to internees.[27] These anxieties over conditions as well as racial tensions often played out as Japanese Americans ventured into the communities outside the camp. As historians of Japanese internment have noted, the camps were often highly permeable as WRA officials granted day passes for a select group of internees to shop in town, handle business matters, seek medical attention, attend organization and religious meetings, and take temporary work leaves among other things.[28] These interactions between Japanese Americans and the racially segregated communities outside the camp led to a series of different types of interactions, relationships, and sometimes violent conflicts. For example, on November 9, 1942, Pvt. Louis Furushiro, a member of the Eighth Ordinance Service Company, was on leave in the town of Dermott visiting his family and friends who were interned at both Jerome and Rohwer. Furushiro was one of the many Japanese Americans who volunteered for military service despite being held against their will in concentration camps. Furushiro was having breakfast at a diner in town when W.M. Wood, a local farmer with two sons in the military, heard a Japanese man eating at a "whites only" diner in town. Wood arrived at the café with his shotgun and asked Furushiro, "Are you a Jap?" as the soldier answered, "yes," Wood shot a shell of squirrel shot into his chest. Furushiro collapsed to the ground in the café but managed to survive the attack on his life.[29]

[27] "Adkins Finds Japanese Not Pampered", *Arkansas Gazette*, November 10, 1942, Robert Allen Leflar Papers, Box 15, Folder 4, Item 4, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
[28] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 127.
[29] "To Investigate Attack on Soldier," *McGehee Times*, November 12, 1942, Rising Above Digital Repository, Accessed May 18, 2022, https://risingabove.cast.uark.edu/archive/item/1433.

The US government shipped Japanese Americans, most of which were citizens, to a desolate, unfinished camp, with little explanation. Once there, the lack of support and general discrimination from federal, state, and camp officials became immediately apparent. In the face of adversity and limited choices, the inmates at Jerome made the best with what they had and try to pick up the pieces of the lives they were kicked out of back on the West Coast. The next chapter analyzes how the spatial reality of both camps impacted these choices and determined most of the internment experie1nce for both Jerome and Dermott.

Chapter Two

Collective Living

On a cool night in the middle of September 1943, Jack Yamashita and Masao Asahara stayed up late drinking and talking as they walked along the road outside Yamashita's barracks. Near unit 9-7-F, a secluded apartment at the end of the row of barracks, a security officer spotted the two men. When the guard flashed his light on them, the two men were kissing, and their clothes appeared disheveled. The two men quickly put on a charade to cover their actions and insisted they were simply a bit intoxicated and celebrating Yamashita's recent approval for resettlement. While suspicious of the two men, the camp guard decided against charging the men with indecency and to only report the drunkenness of the pair as they were drinking alcohol illegally brought in from outside the camp. Camp officials at Jerome had been told to "inspect periodically and irregularly the assigned district and . . . be observant of all persons seen in [the] district and especially of those out late hours or in unusual places." As John Howard and Peter Boag have shown in their works, same sex activity is often found in dark corners and pockets where there is less surveillance.[1]

The physical layout of the camp, specifically the collectivization of everyday life, increased individuals' access to such spaces. More importantly, collectivization had intended and unintended consequences upon the inmates at Jerome and Dermott. The collectivization of Jerome led to increased surveillance over the inmate population and allowed federal authorities to supplant Japanese American men as the patriarchal head of Japanese Americans at Jerome. Collectivization increased opportunities for women and children, as well as access to same-sex

[1] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 115.

relationships. Whereas the WRA disrupted traditional Japanese American gender and generational roles, defense department officials reinforced and validated pre-existing social hierarchies among German soldiers. At Dermott, collectivization takes place, but camp authorities ensured that high ranking officers remained mostly in control. While still controlling their whereabouts of both Japanese American internees and German soldiers, federal authorities allowed the POWs more autonomy in their daily lives than they did Japanese Americans. Lastly, federal authorities spent more energy, effort, and money to make camp life comfortable for those at Dermott than they did for Japanese Americans at Jerome.

In *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, John Howard notes that "as towns, Jerome and Rohwer were largely successful in generating…the material foundations of day-to-day life." This, as Howard points out, is in large part due to the combined energies and efforts of the Japanese American populations at both camps and camp officials. The WRA centrally organized food, shelter, and clothing and adequately met the inmates' barest basic needs.[2] This by no means suggests that life in the camp for Japanese Americans was comfortable or that the WRA provided everything they needed. On the contrary, Japanese Americans' time in Jerome is a testament to the human capacity to survive and work to make any situation as bearable as possible. The most basic components of living conditions in any space often revolve around sleeping, eating, child-rearing, and maintaining a standard of hygiene and health. Thus, the barracks, mess halls, bathrooms, hospital, schools, stores, and other buildings associated with these basic tenets of life represent a great starting point for examining the living conditions at

[2] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 69.

both camps, how these spaces impacted race, class, generation, and sexuality, and the relationship between the imprisoned and the US government.

At Jerome, the mess halls were 40 x 100 buildings with five double doors, one single door between the dining and kitchen areas, and twenty-two half windows. Each mess hall could house 304 which was enough to feed the entire block at once if needed. Upon construction, all thirty-three blocks had a mess hall with a Japanese American kitchen steward who ran the hall, hired, and fired workers.[3] These tar paper covered buildings with long cafeteria style tables, chow lines, and an attached kitchen further convey how the spatial realities of Jerome impacted internment for Japanese Americans.

The construction of the mess halls was severely delayed, and when the first groups of Japanese Americans arrived there were only a few mess halls operational. Moreover, camp officials who had little to no experience feeding thousands of people did not have enough food to adequately feed Japanese Americans during the first few weeks of camp being open. The WRA ordered cheap foods such as Vienna sausages and spam in bulk and served them for breakfast, lunch, and dinner during the opening phase of the camp. Camp officials prided themselves on how little they spent on each resident, including their price per meal. The cost allowance for food across WRA camps was 45¢ per person per day, but camp director Paul Taylor excitedly reported to his superiors in Washington that the average cost at Jerome was just 37.6¢.[4] In order to keep the cost of feeding the population at Jerome to a minimum, camp officials sought to

[3] War Relocation Authority, "Closing Report, Administrative Management Division, Supply Section, Mess Unit," 1945, Box 198, Folder 5, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, Accessed June 3, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6cv4qvv/?brand=oac4.

[4] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.

requisition cheap and surplus food goods. Camp cooks served items like tripe, beef hearts, and boiled turnips, most of which were either painfully eaten or wound up in the trash bins outside the mess halls.[5] Inmates at Jerome would go months without meat as the WRA bought surplus "salty old fish" and other cheap food items.

Despite the poor quality and quantity of the food in Jerome, anxieties began to bolster among Arkansans outside the camp confines over the food being allotted to Japanese Americans. Citizens in the surrounding communities and towns outside of Jerome were often food insecure especially under war ration stipulations. Thus, when Arkansan families saw train cars and military trucks delivering food to the camp, they became enraged. These complaints by Arkansans outside the camp further the idea that Japanese Americans were thought of more as the enemy than US citizens. State politicians felt pressured to assure the public that Japanese Americans at Jerome were "not pampered" and indeed treated as lower class citizens.

The outrage by the surrounding communities reached such a height that state politicians were sent to inspect the quality and quantity of food at the camp. Governor Homer Adkins personally visited Jerome after rumors that Japanese Americans were being treated better than Arkansans in terms of rations. However, as reported by the *Arkansas Gazette*, Adkins found the inmates at Jerome, to his satisfaction, "not pampered".[6] Brooks Hays, another politician from Arkansas, also visited the camp during his congressional campaign trip and Hays found the camp's food "satisfactory." He compared the diet of the inmates to "an Army Class B diet" and

[5] Hana Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six: Food - Densho: Japanese American Incarceration and Japanese Internment," *Densho*, September 22, 2021, Accessed April 12, 2022, https://densho.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Campu_Food_Final-Transcript.pdf.
[6] "Adkins Finds Japanese Not Pampered", *Arkansas Gazette*, November 10, 1942, Box 15, Folder 4, Item 4, Robert Allen Leflar Papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

was delighted to find that inmates ate large amounts of "Arkansas rice," the "favorite" among those at Jerome.[7]

That there are no reports of Arkansans being concerned over the quality and quantity of food allocated to German POWs at Dermott suggests that local Arkansans' animosity towards the Japanese Americans at Jerome was much greater than that towards those who had killed U.S. soldiers in Europe and North Africa.

Not only was the quality of the food suspect, but also the wait to get the food was often incredibly long. Long lines were customary at Jerome, "Everything was a line up…it was embarrassing to line up like that," recalled Mitsue Matsui, and mess halls were no different. Often times, especially during the first few months of operation, those who were in the back of the line would get stuck with the scraps as the kitchens nearly always almost ran out of food each meal.[8] Long lines at meal times represent some of the failures of collectivization and are evidence of how the physical set up of these facilities impacted the daily experiences of Japanese Americans.

On hot summer days or frigid winter weather, Japanese Americans were forced to brave the conditions as they waited to eat. Jerome resident Taigoro Jack Miyahara, a barber from Hawaii, said he would stand in line for hours with his young child "like a relief bum…It wasn't worth it most of the time because all we got was slop, just plain dirty old slop."[9] Long lines impacted the daily lives of Japanese Americans at Jerome and characterize one of the many side effects of collectivization. There are no reports or evidence of long lines for German POWs at

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[7] "Hays Finds Japs Colony 'Satisfactory'", *Arkansas Gazette*, 1942, Box 15, Folder 4, Item 3, Leflar Papers.
[8] "Peggie Nishimura Bain Interview Segment 31: Densho Digital Repository," *Densho*, accessed April 12, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-densho-1000-170-31/?_ga=2.100584921.692040319.1649700585-1095128980.1642715524.
[9] Taigoro Jack Miyahara interview by Charles Kikuchi, reel 075, box 280, folder 1.923, The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement: A Digital Archive, Bancroft Library, University of California. Berkeley, Accessed July 18, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/28722/bk0013c5627/?brand=oac4.

Dermott suggesting that the mess halls were adequately run well enough to serve all the inmates in a quick and orderly fashion, especially when compared to Jerome.

While the quality of the food only slightly improved over the entire existence of Jerome, meals became more bearable as Japanese Americans found solutions to make mealtimes more familiar to those they enjoyed prior to the war. The initial period of Vienna sausages and Spam, meals were heavily starch based. Foods common in military meals, like potatoes and bread, were featured often in meals at Jerome.[10] Inmates at Jerome, particularly those belonging to the older Issei generation, were not accustomed to such a starch-based diet and longed for the types of food they ate regularly before the war. Food was an important method of maintaining some semblance of cultural identity tied to Japan for many Japanese Americans, especially for first generation Issei. Thus, foods like rice, miso, and kimchi were prominent in the diets of many Japanese Americans living across the United States prior to the war. Following complaints about the meals and the number of potatoes and bread particularly, camp officials agreed to some changes in the mess halls.[11]

However, this decision by camp officials was not done out of benevolence for the inmates at Jerome, but rather to save money. In order to incorporate foods like rice, miso, and kimchi, inmate cooks and chefs, with the approval of camp officials, inmates used an empty recreation hall to make miso soup and condiments that were associated with traditional Japanese cuisine. Inmates used soybeans, salt, and rice koji to make miso soup, all ingredients that were readily available and more importantly, cheap for camp officials to order. As mentioned before, camp officials prided themselves on how little they could spend on Japanese Americans in the

[10] Miyahara interview by Kikuchi, reel 075, box 280, folder 1.923, The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement: A Digital Archive, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/jarda/ucb/text/cubanc6714_b280t01_0943.pdf.
[11] Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six."

camps. Therefore, when presented with an opportunity to save money on meals by ordering rice, vegetables, and the ingredients to make miso rather than more expensive foods such as potatoes, meat, and bread, camp officials jumped as the opportunity. WRA officials presented the shift to Japanese foods as an act of benevolence when it was really just a convenient way to spend less on the inmates at the camp. In the closing report of Jerome, the WRA cited the reason for making Miso was because the "soybeans could be grown in the Center and was comparatively cheap to make miso instead of purchasing a high priced product on the outside."[12]

Despite the inclusion of rice, miso, kimchi, and fish, meals still included foods such as spam, Vienna sausages, and powered dairy products.[13] This led to the creation of unique dishes that incorporated traditional Japanese foods with surplus ration food items as inmate chefs were forced to use the little supplies they were given by the WRA and turn them into meals fit to serves hundreds of inmates at a time. Results included meals such as the "weenie royale" which consisted of hot dogs, powered or real eggs, white rice, and soy sauce, all of which were cheap and in abundance.[14] Dishes that combined spam and Vienna sausages with white rice or miso exemplified not only the cultural blending of Japanese and American identities but also the frugality of federal authorities in Jerome. The younger Nisei generation was far fonder of these culturally syncretic dishes as they tended to gravitate more towards American food and culture than their first-generation parents.[15] Dishes like the "weenie royale" still exist today and serve as an example of the legacy and cultural impact of Japanese internment. More importantly however,

[12] The Kitchen Sisters, "Weenie Royale: Food and the Japanese Internment," NPR (NPR, December 20, 2007), accessed May 20, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2007/12/20/17335538/weenie-royale-food-and-the-japanese-internment; "Closing Report, Administrative Management Division, Supply Section, Mess Unit," 1945, Box 198, Folder 5, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6cv4qvv/?brand=oac4.
[13] "Families, Food, and Dining," National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), accessed July 1, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/miin/learn/historyculture/families-food-and-dining.htm.
[14] Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six."
[15] Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six."

these meals serve as examples of Japanese Americans being forced to make do out of the little resources that were offered to them under the collectivization of the camp.

The quality of the food within a block's mess hall in Jerome depended on the skill of the chef assigned at the mess hall. Some cooks could turn the surplus food items into decent meals while others struggled to create edible meals with the scraps given to them. Eiko Yamaichi, a young Japanese American woman at Jerome, recalled that her family's mess hall had a gardener as their chef. Like many of the chefs in the Mess halls at Jerome, this gardener "wasn't really a cook per se, but he was trying to be creative and do whatever…it was edible."[16] Traditionally, Japanese American women cooked the food, but due to the collectivization of meals, men were now in charge of cooking meals.[17] This is yet another impact collectivization had on the gender roles of Japanese Americans.

Japanese Americans were assigned a singular block to eat all their meals depending on which block they lived in. There were no opportunities for Japanese Americans to eat at different mess halls within the camp.[18] Meaning, if one block was primarily Japanese Americans from Hawaii, then their mess hall reflected the desires of that community. The same goes for the all-male group housed in Block 1. These rules against eating at different blocks discouraged the intermingling of groups which reinforced the cultural, generational, and gendered boundaries of the camp.

The collective eating of meals in Jerome changed the traditional family structure of Japanese Americans as men, women, and children often dined in separate generational and

[16] Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six."
[17] Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six."
[18] Miyahara interview by Kikuchi, reel 075, box 280, folder 1.923, The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement: A Digital Archive, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/jarda/ucb/text/cubanc6714_b280t01_0943.pdf.

gendered groups. Ben Tonooka was a teenager when he was in Jerome and, like many teenagers and Issei in the camp, he ate nearly all his meals with his friends rather than his family. "This is, this is one of the sad things that happened in the camp, is that it broke up the family structure because we no longer needed our parents, you know…at first we used to eat with our family and then later on we started eating with our friends, so we really lost contact. That was a sad part."[19] These accounts of the breakdown of family relations are common among those in the WRA camps as many younger Issei inmates, particularly those in the teenage to twenties age group, were able to bond with classmates and friends far easier than their Nisei parents. A prime area for this lack of contact and breakdown of the family was at mealtimes.[20] Thus, fathers and husbands were no long the patriarchal head of the household at the dining table and no longer had the control they once held over the whereabouts, actions, or earnings of their wives and children.

Mess halls did however provide waged labor for women who now could be paid for the unpaid work many of them did prior to internment. The collectivization of labor reconfigured the gendered division of labor in the mess halls, as is the case for labor in general across the camp, as men took on roles as cooks and chefs with uniforms and women usually served and washed dishes. Regardless, women who were once burdened with domestic chores such as cooking, and cleaning now took home wages over which they had substantial control. Women and girls who did not work outside of the home or farm before the concentration camps now took on various jobs around the camp, including the mess halls. With more autonomy and less supervision from

[19] Maruyama, "Campu Episode Six."
[20] "Families, Food, and Dining."

her father, Eiko Yamaichi, who was fifteen when she arrived at Jerome, got a job as a dishwasher for twelve dollars a month washing dishes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.[21]

Collectivized childcare also disrupted traditional Japanese American gender norms. Mothers' education programs, well-baby clinics, and infant care provided Japanese American parents with resources even if they were offered from camp officials' paternalistic standpoint. Moreover, attending school was mandatory for Japanese American children. The school year was longer to account for all the time children missed during the lengthy and horrendous process of removal. Prior to incarceration, some children on the West Coast stayed home from school to help on the family farm or small business. Furthermore, increased, and mandatory education benefitted Japanese American girls since sons' education sometimes took precedence in some families prior to the war.[22]

The communal bathrooms, showers, and laundries that the WRA forced upon Japanese Americans at Jerome also undermine traditional notions of privacy and health. Only a few buildings in each block had running water. There were twelve barracks in each six-acre block arranged in two rows of six buildings each. The only two points in each block that got direct water and sewer lines were the washhouse and the mess hall. Showers and toilets located in the wash facilities were collectivized the same way meals were in the mess hall.[23] These facilities were housed in an "H" shaped bathroom/laundry room with 20 x 90 wings connected by a 20 x

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[21] Eiko Yamichi Interview, *Densho Digital Repository*, Manzanar National Historic Site Collection, July 15, 2015, Accessed May 23, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-manz-1-175-21/.
[22] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Jerome: Education Section," 1944, pp. 113–18, box 197, folder 5.004, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement record, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed April 23, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k61j9hxz/?brand=oac4.
[23] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report: Operation Division/Engineering Section," 1944, p. 2-4, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k61j9hxz/?brand=oac4; Ben Tonooka interview by Martha Nakagawa, Los Angeles, California, February 6, 2012, Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Repository, accessed April 23, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-390-transcript-33e54e0acf.htm.

20 section that housed a 1,320-gallon coal-burning water heater. There were eighteen sinks in the laundry wing and an area for folding and ironing. The collectivization of washing clothes in a communal laundry room allowed women to do laundry in the company of neighbors and friends, which would have been a rarity prior to incarceration, especially for those living in rural areas on the West Coast. While not being paid to do the camp's laundry, women worked collectively to reduce the amount of work and time it took to wash items by pool loads, heat water, make soap, fold and hang items, and ironing. Moreover, removing laundry from the private space made the workload required to clean and clothe the camp more visible to other Japanese Americans and camp officials. Placed in the center of each block, laundry rooms made this fundamental process of community life, and those who did the work made this aspect of incarceration more visible.[24]

In addition to being limited, the water supply was also contaminated at Jerome which led to even more issues for Japanese Americans at the camp. The water supply from the wells that ran to the showers and latrines was considered "soft water." Jerome camp director Paul Taylor admitted to officials in Washington, nearly "every person…suffers a 1-to-3-day case of acute dysentery, upon first arriving at the project," due to the lack of sanitary conditions and a sulfite compound that was incorrectly used to seal pipes in the camp water system.[25] The Rife Company contractors made this mistake as they struggled to finish the camp's construction even months after the first groups of Japanese Americans had arrived. Ben Tonooka recalls that the water felt odd when they showered and recalled that it "seemed like we couldn't wash the soap off us."[26] In

[24] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front,* 100; Tonooka interview by Nakagawa, Densho Visual History Collection, https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-390-transcript-33e54e0acf.htm.
[25] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.
[26] Tonooka interview by Nakagawa, Densho Visual History Collection, https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-390-transcript-33e54e0acf.htm.

the case of the poor conditions of the bathrooms, showers, and water supply, the collectivization and physical setup of the camp lead to disease and misery for Japanese Americans. In contrast to Jerome, the inspections by the Swiss Legation of Dermott never mention these types of issues for German POWs.

As for the restrooms, when the first group from Fresno Assembly Center arrived at Jerome in the fall of 1943, there were no partitions in between the toilets, and the showers were communal. The lack of partitions between toilets and the conditions of the restrooms, in general, were humiliating for Japanese Americans. Ben Tonooka, a high schooler at the time, remembers how his pregnant sister and other women "just couldn't use the restroom…and would wait 'til late in the evening where maybe there won't be much people or anybody there," due to the lack of privacy in the bathrooms. Eventually, as the camp was slowly finished up and complaints Japanese Americans furnished about the bathrooms, flimsy wood board partitions were put up between toilets, but there were never doors on the partitions.[27] The humiliation suffered due to the lack of privacy in latrines is a well-documented example of the type of dehumanization that occurred within the WRA camps.

While collectivization had many side effects, most of them negative, it also created gendered spaces that were more frequent and accessible than they were prior to camp. These spaces however were also a source of embarrassment and a place of stereotypical homophobic anxieties. This phenomenon is represented in cartoonist George Akimoto's character "Lil Dan'l," that appeared in the Rohwer newspaper. "Lil Dan'l," with his buck teeth, narrow eyes, and raccoon skin cap, resembled that stereotypical Japanese male found in American cartoons. In one

[27] Tonooka interview by Nakagawa, Densho Visual History Collection, https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-390-transcript-33e54e0acf.htm.

strip, the diminutive character is seen in the crowded communal shower with other men as he shouts, "Move Over!" His actions represent his awareness of the homophobic anxieties associated with such naked, all-male, spaces. However, the outraged and embarrassed reactions of the other men in the cartoon quickly reinforced these anxieties and showed some of the reality behind such spaces in the camp. Showers were also one of the many examples of how the physical characteristics of the camp and the collectivization of living allowed for same-sex interactions, possibly romantic ones, that were not as accessible prior to camp life. Showers were gender segregated spheres that did not frequently exist outside of camp life except perhaps in the local YMCA gyms that Japanese Americans were forced to leave back home. Thus, the forced collectivization of hygiene allowed for possible new relationships and interactions that were previously less possible, especially within urban settings where such encounters would have been noticed more easily and less accessible.

Another spatial reality of Jerome that increased accessibility to same-sex interactions was Block 1, which housed approximately two hundred unmarried men and was situated at the far northwest edge of the camp. Its inhabitants mainly consisted of unmarried Issei men who had very little if any family in the United States. This "Bachelors Row" block, as it came to be known, was an exemplary community known for its impeccable landscaping, gardens, and overall quiet stillness.[28] The existence of a completely sex-segregated living space provided a space in the camp where men could regularly develop friendships, relationships, and same-sex intimacy. Since Dermott consisted of only German soldiers, every space, including the barracks,

[28] Charles Mace, “One of the Many Small Victory Gardens Seen throughout the Rohwer Center. Photographer: Mace, Charles E. McGehee, Arkansas.,” June 16, 1944, Volume 12, Section B, War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, Online Archive of California, accessed April 15, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft9m3nb5v7/?brand=oac4. Photographs taken by Charles Mace show Block 1 with manicured flower beds, planted trees, shrubs, and neat walkways that outshine Jerome's other blocks in terms of appearance. Block 1, known as Bachelor’s Row.

was an all-male space. Using the arguments and analysis in Peter Boag's book, *Same-Sex Affairs*, regarding all-male living spaces such as Block 1 in Jerome and every block in Dermott, it can be concluded that such a spatial reality would cultivate intimate interactions such as the sharing of beds, cots, and bodies.[29] These spaces provided a level of accessibility to same-sex relationships that was not possible to either population prior to the war. A high level of surveillance in urban settings from other community members made such interactions and relationships more difficult on the West Coast and Germany. The queer spaces that Japanese American men inhabited in urban settings would have been predominantly white gay spaces, increasing the likelihood of racial discrimination. In rural areas, the lack of population density would have made these spaces even fewer and farther between. Despite the WRA camps taking away essentially every freedom from Japanese Americans, this is another example of how the physical attributes of the camp opened up new opportunities for same-sex relationships and intimacy to form.[30]

Perhaps because of the swampy conditions, disease plagued Jerome at a higher rate than most of the other WRA camps. In December 1943 a flu epidemic infected 888 inmates at the camp and delayed the reopening of schools after the holiday break in 1944. In response to the outbreak, camp officials prohibited mass gatherings and community events, but cases still spread rapidly.[31] There were also twelve malaria cases, two typhoid cases which were the only ones in any WRA camp, two syphilis outbreaks, and 394 cases of conjunctivitis which was also the highest number recorded in any WRA camp.[32]

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[29] Peter Boag, *Same-Sex Affairs Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
[30] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 116.
[31] "Denson Tribune Vol. II No. 2 ," *Denson Tribune*, January 7, 1944, Vol. II No. 2 edition, pp. 1-1, accessed April 14, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-144-131/.
[32] Niiya, "Jerome."

The hospital in Jerome, located in block 49, southwest of the main inmate area of the camp, was staffed by white and Japanese American medical professionals. The authority of Japanese American doctors and nurses was usurped by white supervisors. Seen as a threat to the racial hierarchy and power dynamic of the camp, federal authorities did not allow Japanese American medical professionals to practice without the supervision of white doctors and nurses. Doctors like Kikuo Taira, Skaye Shigekawa, and Kazuo Miyamoto, a trailblazing Nisei female doctor, were all practicing professionals prior to the war. But now, under the US government and the WRA, they were forced to work for far less money and in spartan conditions.[33]

The hospital at Jerome was not equipped to handle all of the health issues exacerbated by the poor conditions of the camp and the collectivization of living. Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga, who was originally held in Manzanar (a desert camp in California) with her husband's family, traveled by train for four days with her young daughter to see her ill father at Jerome. In a 1994 interview she recounted the experience: "That train trip was a nightmare. I was not, I didn't have a seat reservation, so I had to sit on my suitcase for two of the four days, and my child had pneumonia at that time… And so here I had a sick baby, sitting on my suitcase, getting across from California to Arkansas on this old train." It took three days on the train until "an American soldier took pity on me and let me have his seat." Yoshinaga arrived the night they moved her father, a businessman from California, to the hospital. For ten days, she visited her father with her daughter, who prior to Jerome had never met her grandfather being that she was still less than a year old. Recounting the night before her father's passing, which happened to be Christmas Eve, Yoshinaga noted the poor conditions of the hospital and the inadequate supplies and

[33] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.

resources. “The lights for some reason did not work in the whole camp that night. We were told that you could not use candles…and there was an inadequate supply of flashlights in the hospital.”[34] While collectivization had some unintended consequences that positively impacted some, it also had plenty of negative effects on the physical and emotional well-being of the inmates at Jerome.

The layout of the Jerome camp and the WRA’s forced collectivization exacerbated preexisting cleavages within the broader Japanese American community. The Japanese American population in America at the start of World War II was diverse in terms of differences in class, generation, regional origins, and culture. This is especially true for those in Jerome as the camp housed an incredible variety of Japanese Americans with distinct differences: Japanese and English speakers, business owners and farmers, Nisei and Issei, birthright citizens and immigrants barred from citizenship, rural folk and urbanites, Christians and Buddhists, and Hawaiians and “mainlanders.” This last difference between Japanese Americans from Hawaii and those living on the west coast is especially significant for Jerome. Jerome was the only WRA site to receive a sizeable group of Japanese Americans directly from Hawaii. Adding to this uniqueness, groups from Hawaii arrived later than those who came in October 1942 from the temporary assembly centers in California. From November 1942 through February 1943, three groups of inmates from Hawaii arrived. The first group consisted of 107 and arrived at the end of November and consisted of Japanese Americans from Honolulu. The second group had 443 individuals were sent to Jerome in January 1943 and came from islands other than O’ahu. The

[34] “Aiko Herzig Interview Segment 12,” Densho, March 20, 1994, Densho Digital Repository, Accessed March 28, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-densho-1002-8-12/.

final group of 260 arrived a month later and contained mostly fishermen and their families from Honolulu.[35]

Jerome's Hawaiian internees not only arrived later, their incarceration was not a product of Executive Order 9066. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, anxieties swirled among US military and political leaders over possible acts sabotage and espionage on the islands committed by persons of Japanese descent and many Issei and Nisei men were arrested and detained without cause. These fathers, husbands, workers, and leaders in their communities that were deemed extra suspicious by the FBI were shipped off to "Enemy Alien Detention Centers" in Idaho, Montana, and Oregon. These centers were different from the ten WRA camps as they exclusively held men and were shipped off before Roosevelt signed the Executive Order 9066 in February 1942. Akiko Shiotani, a high school student in Jerome whose father was a Japanese School teacher in Hawaii, wrote in a paper for his English class, "dad and I were always great friends and I never dreamed that someday we would have to be separated. But on that unforgettable morn of December…I saw that queer look on Dad's face and did not realize what it meant until a week later, he was interned."[36] The separation of families was a common thread in the government's internment of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Families were torn apart without explanation in Hawaii and the mainland, but for those living in Hawaii, this process occurred much faster and in even more heartbreaking fashion. Children like Shiotani were forced to adjust to living not only under Martial Law but also

[35] War Relocation Authority, "Weekly Reports (1 of 3)," February 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1.06, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft library, University of California Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed July 18, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.
[36] Akiko Nakashima, "Akiko Shiotani Nakashima Autobiography," January 1943, item 136, folder 3, box 1, series 2, Virginia Tidball US War Relocation Authority, Jerome Relocation Center [Hereinafter Tidball Papers], Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

without their fathers. Later in the autobiographical essay Shiotani recounts that "I was very lonesome, but after a while I got used to living without Dad. Then on December 22, 1942, the Army notified us to be evacuated to the mainland. I was overjoyed to learn that I would be able to live with Dad on the mainland, but when I got to my destination, I couldn't seem to locate that familiar smile which was so habitual of him."[37] Many families from Hawaii came to Jerome with hope of being reunited with their fathers/husbands, but the reunions were rarely as happy as hoped for.

Those from Hawaii in Jerome were mostly fishermen, farmers, and cannery workers. These blue-collar families arrived in clothing that was not suited for the cold and soggy climate of southeast Arkansas. Thus, other Japanese Americans at Jerome, not the camp officials, raised funds and donated clothing and blankets to the new arrivals. Despite this act of unity between internees, camp officials did their best to segregate the rest of Jerome's population from the Hawaii groups. Therefore, reflecting this desire to keep the groups divided, the WRA assigned the Hawaii groups to Blocks 38, 39, and 40 which were located in one of the far corners of the camp.[38]

The attempt to divide and thus more easily monitor and control Japanese Americans in Jerome was somewhat successful as the two communities, those from the mainland and those from Hawaii, tended to hang around with members of their respective groups. The physical layout and regulations of the camp reinforced these divisions as internees within the same blocks were only permitted to use their assigned mess halls, washrooms, laundry rooms, and recreation

[37] "Akiko Shiotani Nakashima Autobiography," January 1943, item 136, folder 3, box 1, series 2, Tidball papers.
[38] Niiya, "Jerome."

halls.[39] These rules were not always followed, but the fact that they existed speak to the goals and overall thought process of camp officials.

Historically, people of Japanese ancestry living in Hawaii were more culturally aligned with Japan than those from the West Coast. In Jerome, these preferences were reflected by the fact that it was mostly Japanese Americans from Hawaii who spoke Japanese and attended services in the Buddhist temple in the camp.[40] In the eyes of camp officials, preferences for Buddhism over Christianity and Japanese over English made internees from Hawaii more alien and a greater threat than those from the West Coast. Therefore, WRA workers in Jerome often cast the groups from Hawaii as the villains in the camp who "disrupted the project" and thus favored those from the West Coast because they aligned more closely with what camp officials thought was "American" and thus white.[41]

This division, reinforced by the spatial realities of the camp, caused tensions to build between the two groups which led to violent episodes on a few occasions in Jerome. In March 1943, two attacks that resulted in the hospitalization of two different Japanese American men occurred at the suspected hands of a "gang of youths" from Hawaii. On March 6, a stranger asked Dr. T.T. Yatabe to step outside of his dental clinic in the camp. Dr. Yatabe suspected that the stranger wanted to discuss a labor grievance within the camp since Dr. Yatabe was a member of the Fair Practice Committee which acted as a makeshift union for Japanese American workers at Jerome. However, according to an official report by camp director Paul Taylor, when the

[39] Miyahara interview by Kikuchi, reel 075, box 280, folder 1.923, The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement: A Digital Archive, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/28722/bk0013c5627/?brand=oac4.
[40] Michael R. Jin, *Citizens, Immigrants, and the Stateless a Japanese American Diaspora in the Pacific* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022).
[41] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.

young Nisei dentist rounded the corner into a corridor of the camp hospital, "a group of men who were crouched down jumped up…broke his glasses, scratched his face and bruised him considerably around the head."[42]

The other attack happened just a few minutes after the one on Dr. Yatabe. This time a Christian reverend named John M. Yamazaki heard a knock at his barrack door and found a young man who asked him to come to the recreation hall located next door to his barracks. As the two men approached the recreation hall, a group of young men jumped out from behind a stack of wood. Before the Reverend could do anything, the boy who brought him to the hall punched him across his face. Rev. Yamazaki, a 61-year-old Issei man, said that he did not resist the attackers at all as they "beat him about the head, knocked him down in the mud, and kicked multiple times."[43] According to Taylor's report, the reverend asked the men why they were attacking him and they replied, "You know why." Yamazaki also said that the entire exchange of words was in Japanese rather than English which led him to believe that the group was mostly likely from Hawaii.

Camp director Paul Taylor and his captain of internal security, Mitsu Kimura, believed the group responsible for the attack was from Hawaii as they spoke more Japanese than English and because they were said to be wearing long army overcoats. According to Taylor, "this would mark them as being Hawaiian evacuees who had been interned on Terminal Island where they handed out those coats."[44] Eventually a group of young men from Hawaii was brought in and

[42] "Dr. Yatabe Attacked by Gang at Jerome Relocation Center," *Pacific Citizen*, 11 March 1943, Accessed April 12, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-pc-15-10/.
[43] "Dr. Yatabe Attacked by Gang At Jerome Relocation Center," *Pacific Citizen.* https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-pc-15-10/.
[44] "Weekly Reports," October 31, 1942, reel 138, box 193, folder 1, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6tb1f1h/?brand=oac4.

questioned. The group expressed their desire to be repatriated to Japan but did not admit to the attacks. The fact that the two victims were prominent individuals who had, in the eyes of the group, collaborated with the US government and sold-out Japanese Americans in the camps reveal some of the intent behind the attack. Upper class Japanese Americans were often put into leadership roles within associations such as the Japanese American Citizens League, the Temporary Community Council, the Co-Op, and other similar organizations within the camps.[45] Therefore, class tensions between Japanese Americans grew as blue-collar Japanese Americans, such as those agricultural and fishermen from Hawaii, saw upper- and middle-class Japanese Americans as apologists and puppets for the US government.

The narrative around Japanese American concentration camps often fails to capture the anxieties between classes and paints middle- and upper-class Japanese Americans as "real Americans" who made the best out of a terrible situation. These divisions certainly existed, but they were completely reinforced and maintained by the spatial reality of the camp and thus the US government. At Jerome, the barracks and the manner in which they were segregated by the US government reflects the cultural national identities of the group housed within them. For the "bachelor's row" barrack, rather than geographic origins and cultural identity being the dividing factor, gender identity is reflected in the spatial reality of the barrack. In typical colonial overlord fashion, the WRA set up the camp in a way that split and divided the subjugated those incarcerated. This is not to say that the United States government was responsible for the attack, but their maintenance of these divisions and the fact that they treated one group better than the other certainly contributed to these dynamics within the camp. Moreover, the physical separation

[45] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, Community Government," 1945, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed June 3, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?brand=oac4.

of both groups in terms of where they ate, slept, did laundry, and showered reflects these intentions of the US government.

The bones of Jerome served as a starting point for the US government as it planned the POW camp. With little more than the dark shells of tarpaper cladded buildings left, the War Department began rebuilding the camp on the 960-acre piece of flat delta land.[46] The War Department took advantage of the buildings, fences, and roads that remained from Jerome. However, the fact that the WRA had sold off and shipped much of the furniture and other materials from Jerome allowed the War Department to construct their POW camp on a somewhat clean slate. This resulted in a similarly desolate and spartan style camp to Jerome, but with a more military base aesthetic and functionality.[47]

News about the coming of a German POW camp began to swirl in the small towns of Dermott, Denson, and McGehee just weeks after the closing of Jerome.[48] Just like with the construction of POW camps across the country, the US government was scrambling to make space for these German and Italian soldiers. This haste to create space can be seen in the manner in which these camps were quickly constructed and the nature of the closing of Jerome. Despite plans to close Jerome being in place for months before its closure, the short period between the shipping of Japanese Americans out and the opening of Dermott speak to the time sensitive nature POW situation in the United States as well as the general disregard the embodied much of the US authorities treatment of Japanese Americans.

Just a few short months after the US government crammed those living in Jerome into trucks, trains, and busses, Jerome began its transformation into Camp Dermott. Prior to the first

[46] Pritchett and Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 6.
[47] Pritchett and Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 7.
[48] "German Prison Camp at Jerome Is Now Assured," *Dermott News*, October 19, 1944, accessed April 20, 2022, https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/exhibits-online-japanese-american-internment/173/.

arrival of Germans soldiers, hundreds of construction workers hired by the War Department descended on the uninhabited camp. Workers hastily erected sixteen new guard towers and new fencing around a 640-acre lot that would house multiple POW compounds.[49] Inspectors from the Swiss Legation noted upon their first survey of the camp that the location for the camp "had not been well chosen" due to poor drainage and the hot and humid nature of the area. Regardless, the War Department sought to refurbish and redesign the camp so that the space could hold multiple POW compounds that could be fenced off from one another if needed. The fact that most of the inmates were of the same level within the existing social hierarchy within the camp meant that there was less of an effort by camp officials to separate German POWs at Dermott. Federal authorities saw the intermingling of German POWs as less of a threat to the collective security of the camp than they did Japanese Americans. This is represented by the fact that Dermott did not erect fences between the four compounds in order to generate a freer flowing democratic environment.[50]

Like Jerome, however, by the time the first group of POWs arrived at Dermott in the Fall of 1944, the camp was unfinished and incomplete. The barracks left behind from the Jerome era of the camp were not yet put back together completely and the buildings that were sold off by the WRA had not yet been replaced. Additionally, the wooden walkways between barracks built by Japanese Americans had fallen apart and the vegetation within the camp fences had become overgrown once more.[51]

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[49] Pritchett and Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 6.
[50] Derek R. Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" In *Hitler's Generals in America: Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2013), pp. 107-132, accessed April 2, 2022, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjz4f.8.
[51] Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 109.

Like the other Arkansas camps, Dermott held POWs fresh off their capture in North Africa. Unlike the other camps, though, Dermott housed more German officers than the two other Arkansas camps. Chaffee and Robinson, which were predominately filled with enlisted men.[52] Dermott's were mostly officers, including some higher-ranking ones from Rommel's Afrika Korps. The difference between officers and enlisted men reflected a class difference since most German officers were well educated, middle-class, men while enlisted soldiers mostly came from working-class families. Due to the constant shuffling of Axis prisoners and the existence of the web of work camps, the population of POW camps, including Dermott, constantly fluctuated. Despite this, weekly and semi-monthly reports indicate that the number of German POWs at Dermott was as low as 2,000 and as high as 7,000. Thus, the density at Dermott was always less than that of Jerome.[53]

The unique demographic makeup of Dermott set it apart from the other camps and impacted the physical layout, functionality, and goals of the camp. US officials sought to make Camp Dermott into a special POW site designed to accommodate cooperative German officers in hopes that they would persuade enlisted men to cooperate. Moreover, Washington aimed to utilize captured German generals in their propaganda machines. Therefore, the US government sought to set up Camp Dermott as an enclave for German officers that would rival Britain's Trent Park, a POW camp in the UK that was used to house high ranking German officers.[54]
There were some differences between Dermott and Trent Park, though, Trent Park was used in an attempt to sway some German officers into giving up Nazi secrets to the allies. The high-

[52] "Fort Chaffee," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, May 19, 2021, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/fort-chaffee-2263/; Steve Rucker, "Camp Joseph T. Robinson," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, March 13, 2020, accessed May 23, 2022, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/camp-joseph-t-robinson-2262/.
[53] Pritchett and Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas," p. 3-22; "Field Service Reports Office of the Provost Marshal General for Prisoner of War Camps at Dermott and Lake Village," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
[54] Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 108.

quality housing, medical care, and food were used to gain favor with the German officers held there. The British even bugged some of the bedrooms in the camp in order to listen to military secrets shared between German officers.[55] The mission at Dermott was not the same as Trent Park. Federal authorities wanted to create a camp with similar, less spartan, conditions seemingly because they wanted to impress high ranking German officers with the American way of life and the benefits of American-style liberalism.[56] The idea of learning about and coming to appreciate the tenets of American democracy was part of the ideological campaign against Nazism.

The physical layout of Dermott looked similar to other camps. However, the fact that the site was previously used to house Japanese Americans allowed the War Department to utilize some of the existing structures, drainage systems, and roads, most of which were built by Japanese Americans. The camp consisted of four compounds that housed the prisoners and separated enlisted men from officers. Unlike the other POW camps, however, Dermott did not have fences separating each compound, meaning that German POWs could move freely between the compounds and mingle with whom they chose. This spatial setup, according to scholar Derek Mallet, was a deliberate effort by the US government to foster a more democratic environment and thus influence the prisoners living there in order to gain favor with the German officers.[57] While Mallet seems to insinuate that there was a larger movement occurring, it is unclear if federal authorities ever considered trying to sway the German officers at Dermott to divulge information as the British did at Trent Park. According to a report from the War Department, officials chose to house German officers at Dermott because "it provided an opportunity to better

[55] Jason C, "Who Were the German Generals?", Trent Park House (Trent Park House, October 21, 2020), accessed 6 July 2022, https://www.trentparkhouse.org.uk/latest-news/who-were-the-german-generals.
[56] Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 108-111.
[57] Mallet, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 108.

the internment conditions of these general officers."[58] A local YMCA official, Frank Stolzfus, inspected the camp in December 1944 and noticed that the open atmosphere allowed one to move "over a wide area within the wire fence without the annoying additional blocked-off areas of barbed wire enclosures." Despite there being four different compounds, "one would not know of it because there were no fences to block passage from one to another, and the movement everywhere was free and easy for one and all."[59]

Despite the renovations and rebuilding of Jerome going well into the winter of 1944, the barracks and conditions at Dermott were soon far nicer than they ever were under the WRA. Just a few weeks after the opening of Dermott, camp officials reported that the barracks left over from Jerome still needed "remodeling and repairing," but that most inmates were "already comfortably housed."[60] In addition to standard military-style barracks with bunk beds set up for lower-ranking officers and some enlisted men, the War Department and Provost Marshal General Office (PMGO) also built thirteen new buildings each containing four apartments each "for possible future occupancy by German prisoner of war general officers."[61] Each apartment had one or two bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, a bathroom with a shower, hardwood floors, and a front and back door. According to Mallet, federal authorities went beyond the basic standards of living required by the Geneva Convention. This was far more space and amenities than were allotted for Japanese Americans at Jerome, who had one room per family with no furniture besides a bed or two and a wood-powered stove. Additionally, unlike Jerome's barracks with holes in the tarpaper, which allowed for the outside elements such as rain, snow, sand, and wind

[58] F.M. Smith, "Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, from F.M. Smith, assistant to Major General W. D. Styer," undated, Record Group 165, Entry 383.6, Box 590, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.
[59] Mallet, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 108.
[60] "Field Service Reports, Office of the Provost Marshal General (1945) for Prisoner of War Camps at Dermott and Lake Village," 1945, box 1, folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records.
[61] Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 109.

to blow into the apartment, Dermott's apartments were fully insulated. Moreover, while the WRA forced Japanese Americans to share mess halls, bathrooms, and showers with the other barracks in their compound, these German POWs had their own kitchens and running water in each apartment.[62] The disparity in conditions between the camps further cements the fact that German POWs at Dermott were treated far better than Japanese Americans in southeast Arkansas.

While Paul Taylor, the director of Jerome, did his duty with a mix of paternalism and condescension, the commanding officer of Dermott, Colonel Victor W.B. Wales, treated the prisoner population "face to face" and did not look down upon the German POWs within his camp. YMCA inspector Frank Stoltzfus noted that he had never seen prisoners of war "express such wholehearted admiration for their camp commander." Wales evidently gained many of the inmates' respect when he attended a funeral for one of the German officers in the camp.[63] There are few details of the event but it is safe to say that camp officials most likely helped organize the event.

Food at Dermott was also served in a collectivized manner in cafeteria style mess halls, but federal authorities seemed less inclined to save money on meals and micro-manage meals in the same way they did at Jerome. At Dermott, inmates were also assigned to specific mess halls but camp officials did not attempt to regulate mealtimes with the same energy they did at Jerome.[64] By putting less restrictions on dining, camp officials at Dermott successfully removed one of the authoritarian aspects of the camp and allowed for higher ranking POWs to maintain control over lower ranking inmates. By doing so camp authorities did not supplant high ranking

[62] Mallet, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 108
[63] Mallet, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 109.
[64] Mallet, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 109.

POWs as the head of the social hierarchy like they did to Japanese American men in Jerome. Rather, they allowed most of the existing power structure to remain. In fact, federal authorities left the existing German military hierarchy intact because they believed it disrupted the inmates less and thus allowed the camp to function more efficiently.[65] This phenomenon, when juxtaposed to the treatment at Jerome, once again highlights the fact that federal authorities saw German POWs as closer to equals to themselves than they did Japanese Americans.

At Dermott, food appeared to be more plentiful than it was at Jerome. Nothing attests to this as much as a Red Cross report on Dermott that explained that "the average gain of weight over a thirty-day period is 15 pounds for 1,100 men."[66] The Geneva convention and war rations in the United States determined how much food a prisoner of war was to receive in prison camps. Of course, as the demands of the war changed, so did food rations across the country and thus in the camp as well. This is reflected in the summer of 1945 when food rations were cut slightly at all POW camps across the country to prepare for the possible invasion of Japan. However, this was only temporary and even at the pinnacle of these reductions, German POWs still ate at or just above what the Geneva convention required. Federal authorities quickly increased food rations in POW camps in the Fall of 1945 which put German inmates in Dermott eating approximately the same quantity of food as those living in Drew and Chicot Counties.[67] It is difficult to calculate the exact price of what it cost to feed German POWs per day, but given that the men gained weight while at Dermott, it was surely more than the $0.37 per day per inmate at Jerome.

[65] Mallet, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 110.
[66] Smith, "The Response of Arkansans to Prisoners of War and Japanese Americans in Arkansas 1942-1945," 344.
[67] Mallett, "Reeducating Hitler's Generals?" 120.

The physical set up and collectivized nature of both camps had intended and unintended consequences on both internment experiences. After they were done finishing the construction of their own prison, Japanese Americans were provided little in terms of resources, food, privacy, and health care. Collective living undermined existing social hierarchies by displacing Japanese American men as the patriarchal head of the household and opening the door for more autonomy for women and children. Federal authorities used collectivization to lessen privacy, cut costs, and thus more closely monitor and control Japanese Americans in Jerome. In Dermott, Federal authorities designed and ran the camp in a way that did not disrupt the existing hierarchy and monitored them far less when compared to Jerome. German POWs, while still prisoners in a foreign land, inhabited a camp that was set up to foster a democratic environment and indulge its inmates in the hope of allowing them to understand the superiority of American-style liberalism.

Chapter Three

Education and Indoctrination

At Dermott, assistant executive officer Captain Alfred Baldwin spent lavishly on reading materials for the German POWs in his charge. Nearly $54,000 went for three hundred subscriptions to the *New York Times*, a thousand issues of *Time*, and two hundred copies of the *Chicago Tribune*.[1] All told, the War Department spent nearly $254,000 on materials for the Dermott library. In contrast, the WRA spent $123,279 on the entire education program at Jerome, which included teacher salaries, buildings, supplies, and books.[2] The sheer difference in the resources allocated for the education of Japanese Americans and German POWs speaks to how federal authorities saw each group. The POWs were rational beings, who given the proper resources would realize the folly of the Nazi ideology and become productive members of the world, but the authorities had little hope that those of Japanese descent—either on the home islands or in the United States—could ever join the community of nations. Whereas the POWs were to be empowered through education, the Japanese were to be controlled.

The educational programming in both camps shows how federal authorities sought to indoctrinate Japanese American youth in Jerome's primary and secondary schools versus impress German POWs at Dermott with the plethora of higher education level courses offered. These two different goals largely reflect the overall purpose of each camp. At Jerome, the federal authorities viewed Japanese Americans as eternally foreign, incapable of becoming completely assimilated. Therefore, the goal of Jerome was to subdue the "threat" Japanese Americans posed and control

[1] Swiss Legation, “Report of Visit to Prisoner of War Camp, Dermott, Arkansas, June 4-6,” 1945, Record Group 389, Entry 459A, Box 1612, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.
[2] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Jerome: Education Section,"1944, Reel 138, Folder 1.05, Box 193, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Online Archive of California, Accessed May 24, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k61j9hxz/?brand=oac4.

them rigorously. At Dermott, officials in Washington wanted to show German POWs, especially officers like those in Arkansas, the benefits of democracy and American society. Germans' white skin color was their ticket to joining a new postwar liberal international order. The vast disparity between the education offered, in terms of, opportunities, funding, materials, and space, between the camps further cements the idea that the United States government saw German POWs as worthy of the same level of higher education offered to all privileged white men at the time.

The WRA failed to construct proper facilities and provide adequate supplies, and funding to the education program at Jerome. The initial plan was to construct school buildings that would be the size of two blocks put together. There would be a north and south elementary school and then a large single high school in the center of the camp. However, given the delays in constructing the camp, these plans fell through. Thus, Block 23 became the only elementary school in the camp, and Block 33 was adapted into a combined junior high and high school. Both blocks were standard resident blocks and had to be retrofitted into makeshift schools. Both schools also had to adapt and use the recreational halls, mess halls, laundry rooms, and residential barracks as well as they could. The elementary school used Block 23 as the main building, Barracks 5 and 6 as the preschool, Barrack 12 for the offices, art room, and storage, and the mess hall as the auditorium. In the barracks, partitions were taken out in order to fit three small classrooms into each barrack. The junior high and high school housed in Block 33 used Barracks 1 as an office, the mess hall as an auditorium, and the laundry room as both the girl's physical education room and the science lab. Portions of the high school, such as the band room and boys' physical education room, also expanded into other blocks. The only part of the original school plan at Jerome actually built was the main auditorium at the center of the camp. However,

the auditorium did not open until April 1944, only two months before Jerome closed.[3] Once again, the camp did not accommodate the barest educational necessities of Japanese American children and young adults at Jerome.

Much like the schools, the library at Jerome was incredibly limited in terms of space, books, and staff. A librarian, Arkansan Evra Haselden, was not even hired until February 1943. However upon her onboarding, there was still no permanent or dedicated library facility. Instead, the library was located in the kitchen portion of Block 33, which was the high school's block. According to final WRA reports, the capacity of the library in the kitchen of the mess hall was thirty-six and the space was "extremely crowded". Reports do not indicate why, but eventually camp officials canceled the plans to build a permanent library building and decided to move the library to one of the living barracks in Block 32. Based on speculation and the WRA track record, it was most likely a move to lower the cost of operating Jerome once again. However, camp officials had to move residents out of the barrack before turning it into a space suitable for a library, and the library did not move into the space until the summer of 1943. On August 23, 1943, Haselden and four "assistant librarians," Carol Sumida, Haruko Jofuku, Alice Umeda, and Shizuko Nishikawa, opened the new library.[4]

Camp officials made little effort to secure equipment, books, and furnishings in a timely manner. In response to this inaction, internees took matters into their own hands. Workers in the camp's cabinet and wood working shop made bookcases and desks. More pressing was the lack of books and reading materials for the library. By August 1943, the library had roughly 2,500

[3] Niiya, "Jerome."
[4] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, The Center Library," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, Online Archive of California, accessed June 18, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?brand=oac4.

books. Eventually, donations from local libraries and the YMCA pushed the number of books to 5,981. Of those 5,981 books, 4,424 were donated to the camp rather than bought or requisitioned by federal authorities. The library eventually added 500 more books that the WRA had previously seized at the assembly centers on the west coast due to the fact that they were all written in Japanese rather than English. According to the final report on Jerome's library, demand for books was high and these Japanese reading materials made up nearly a fourth of the library's circulation per month.[5] Although they eventually allowed some of these Japanese language pieces of literature through, federal authorities clearly saw them as a potential threat to their mission.

The WRA devoted most of the $123,279 it spent on educational program to the creation of schools for Japanese American children. In the eyes of camp officials, Japanese American children were more assimilated than their Issei parents. Thus, there was more of a chance to indoctrinate them into mainstream American society, albeit as a well-behaved minority. The education program at Jerome contained assignments, lessons, and curriculum that was designed and controlled by the US government. As the editor of the *Community School Forum*, a pedagogical publication circulated by the WRA, highlighted, federal authorities saw the educational program as "an opportunity to carry on a magnificent job of Americanization."[6]

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[5] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, The Center Library," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?brand=oac4.

[6] War Relocation Authority, "'Community School Forum, Vol. I, Nos. 1-4," 1942-1943, reel 029, box 45, folder 2.63, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed May 21, 2022, http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6ns12xj/?brand=oac4.
The *Community School Forum* was a pedagogy publication circulated by Washington D.C. to all ten camps. For more on the "Americanizing" aspects of education programs at the other camps see Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, MA:Harvard University Press, 1987). See also Jan Fielder Ziegler, *The Schooling of Japanese American Children at Relocation Centers during World War II: Miss Mabel Jamison and Her Teaching of Art at Rohwer*, Arkansas (Lewiston, NY: Edward Mellen, 2005).

Historian John Howard put it: “Officials of the WRA viewed camp schools as unique opportunities to inculcate the tenets of nationalism in the impressionable minds of young captives.”[7] To federal authorities, educational programming at the camps was another way to ensure that Japanese American youth would not threaten the nation or the American way of life and the curriculum reflected that.

To ensure that Jerome’s schools functioned to indoctrinate and control Japanese American children the WRA required that classes be led by white teachers and refused to hire Japanese American teachers living inside of the camp as full teachers. Those Nisei teachers that worked in the schools could only serve as "assistant teachers" under the supervision of white teachers.[8] By placing white teachers in the supervisory role over Japanese American teachers and students, the US government could more easily dictate the type of curriculum taught to the impressionable Japanese American students.

The Jerome school superintendent Amon G. Thompson, an Arkansan educator from Chicot County, led efforts to find white teachers in Arkansas willing to relocate to the swampy concentration camp. As imagined, this was a tough sell to white Arkansans as very few wanted any part of teaching Japanese Americans. Therefore, the WRA turned to financial compensation as a way to bring in teachers. Teachers at Jerome and Rohwer were paid up to $2,000 a year, which was more than double what many Arkansan teachers made, especially in the Arkansas Delta. Not wanting to lose their staff and unable to match the proposed salaries, Arkansas school districts objected strenuously to the WRA picking off their teachers. In response, the WRA

[7] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 152.
[8] A.G. Thompson, "Jerome Center Schools, Final Report for the Education Section," 1945, box 197, folder 5.003, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed May 22, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k65b08n7/?brand=oac4.

reluctantly agreed not to hire more than one or two educators from any single school district. Additionally, Arkansas school districts had to provide the WRA with permission to recruit and contact their teachers. Thus, many school districts in rural areas where teachers were harder to come by rejected efforts to recruit their teachers.[9]

Despite the decent salaries offered to teachers, turnover at Jerome was high due to the difficult conditions at the camp and the schools. At its peak, Jerome employed forty-two Arkansan teachers and eleven administrative staff members. The white teacher staff was augmented with inmate "assistant teachers," all of whom had some college training or full degrees in education but lacked experience, given that few school districts in California would consider hiring Nisei teachers.[10] The number of Japanese American teaching assistants fluctuated frequently due to the segregation and resettlement programs, but there were approximately thirty-five to forty Nisei teachers employed at a time.[11]

White Arkansan teachers often held the xenophobic, racist, and nationalistic attitudes of the US government, which reinforced the notion that Japanese Americans could never assimilate into the nation and become true Americans. In a 1944 interview, Chiyoko Elizabeth Suzuki, an inmate teacher, recalled that some of her colleagues "didn't like my methods of teaching about racial tolerance so much." She added that "[m]any of them had patronizing attitude toward Nisei students and I had to combat against that. It was much worse in the high school than in the elementary school."[12] At Jerome, the battle for the hearts and minds of Japanese American

[9] "Jerome Center Schools," 1945, box 197, folder 5.003, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k65b08n7/?brand=oac4.
[10] Niiya, "Jerome."
[11] "Jerome Center Schools," 1945, box 197, folder 5.003, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k65b08n7/?brand=oac4.
[12] Chiyoko Elizabeth Suzuki, interview by Charles Kikuchi, January 27, 1944, p. 94-95, reel 076, folder 1.956, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, accessed May 23, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/28722/bk0013c577h/?brand=oac4.

children between white Arkansan teachers and Japanese American teachers was an ongoing struggle.

The lack of equipment and facilities, along with staffing issues stemming from the reluctance of the WRA to hire Japanese Americans as full-time teachers, delayed the start of school year from November 1942, until January 1943.[13] Once the school year finally started, the WRA had two goals in mind when developing the curriculum for its camps. The first was to provide an educational curriculum that was equivalent in quality to what is offered outside the camp. This half-hearted goal was never achieved in any regard at Jerome nor any other WRA camp. Even Thompson admitted in his final report that the lack of funding, materials, books, and overall support from the WRA made it "doubtful" that this goal was ever achieved. The second goal, and perhaps more important to the WRA, was to foster a camp-specific program of national allegiance and patriotism.[14] In order to build such a curriculum at Jerome, superintendent A.G. Thompson determined that "goals and outposts must be firmly placed to indoctrinate the child with the fundamental principles of Democracy."[15] In order to implement such a curriculum, the WRA and federal government instituted as many pro-American displays, assignments, and lessons into the educational program. Each day at Jerome started and ended with carefully

[13] "Jerome Center Schools, Final Report for the Education Section," 1945, box 197, folder 5.003, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k65b08n7/?brand=oac4.
[14] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 152; "Jerome Center Schools, Final Report for the Education Section," 1945, box 197, folder 5.003, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k65b08n7/?brand=oac4.
For more on the curriculum in the Jerome Schools see John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front,* p. 150-154; also see Ali Welky*, A Captive Audience: Voices of Japanese American Youth in World War II Arkansas.* Little Rock, AR: Butler Center Books, 2015; and Imahara, Walter M., and David E. Meltzer, *Jerome and Rohwer: Memories of Japanese American Internment in World War II Arkansas.* Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2022.
[15] A.G. Thompson, "Relating to the Schools at the Japanese Relocation Center of Jerome and Rohwer, Arkansas 1942-45," 1945, p.52, Roll 1, A.G. Thompson Papers, Special Collections, Arkansas Historical Association and State Archives, Little Rock, AR.

orchestrated nationalist displays.[16] As directed by the camp's school handbook, "at 8:15, the sound of the bugle calls every student to attention while the flag is raised…the pledge of allegiance is then recited in every classroom. At the dismissal hour the students again stand at attention for the lowering of the flag."[17] These displays, particularly the raising and lowering of the American flag, led some inmates to knock over the flagpole in an act of resistance. After the original flagpole was destroyed, camp officials cut down a tree from the woods surrounding the camp to serve as the new mast for the flag. According to the camp's newspaper editor, Paul Yokota, "the 40-foot pole was about the sturdiest flagpole" ever seen. Yokota sarcastically insisted that the pole "ought to stand for some time."[18] Unsurprisingly, English was the only language permitted in the schools and in the curriculum. No class, insisted by superintendent Thompson in a report to Washington, was offered in Japanese nor was the language permitted in the school buildings.[19]

John Howard has skillfully analyzed the school curriculum at Jerome and Rohwer and highlighted some of the most striking aspects of the WRA's "Americanization" tactics. He notes that school periodicals put together by students but edited by white teachers and the high school's magazine, *The Condensor*, were filled with nationalist rhetoric. Lyrics of the Arkansas state song were printed in the magazine, a song that ironically says that a "welcome awaits every stranger" in the state. This, as Howard dutifully notes, simultaneously happening as the state legislature put in place laws that ensured Japanese Americans could not own land or stay in the state after the end of the war. The high school yearbook in 1943 was dedicated to the racially segregated 442nd Combat Team, who were "valiant defenders of the American way." School

[16] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 152.
[17] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 153.
[18] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 153.
[19] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 153.

ceremonies and events started with renditions of "America the Beautiful" and "The Star-Spangled Banner" and mandatory salutes to the flag.[20] Furthermore, when put into contrast with the education system at Dermott, the tone and message of this biased curriculum shifts from one of indoctrination and infantilization to one that seeks to impress, share, and welcome German POWs into the benefits of white America.

WRA director Dillon Myer outlined and reemphasized all WRA schools' nationalist mission in a 1943 speech given to the American Legion, a veterans group known for being incredibly ardent in their "Americanization" mission. Myer assured the group that the WRA had "established the curriculum for our schools with particularly heavy emphasis on the history of American traditions and American institutions" and added that he saw the camps as "an almost unparalleled opportunity to inaugurate a vigorous educational program from positive Americanism."[21] As with all histories, including the ones taught at Jerome, which stories are told, and how there told, meaning what is hidden and what is brought to the forefront is often dictated by a larger motivation or mission. In an ideal world, history is taught with all of its blemishes and truths, no matter how difficult they are to grapple with, in order to allow students to use the past to better understand the present. However, in Jerome this larger mission driving their history curriculum was to indoctrinate Japanese American students through a curriculum that presented "American" ideas of classical liberalism and a mythical version of the United States.

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[20] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 153; "Commencement Exercises, February Class of 1944, Denson High School," Box 1, series 4, folder 1, Tidball Papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

[21] Dillon S, Myer, "The Relocation Program," November 16, 1943, The War Relocation Authority & the Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II, Harry S. Truman Library, National Archives, accessed June 20, 2022, https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/speech-transcript-relocation-program-dillon-s-myer-meeting-state-commanders

Despite the challenge of working underneath white teachers and the Americanizing curriculum, some of the most prominent women and leaders within the Japanese American community were educators in Jerome. Before the outbreak of war, Mary Tsukamoto was a Sunday school teacher at the segregated Methodist Church for Japanese Americans and a recognized leader in the community in Florin, California. Upon the issuing of Executive Order 9066, Tsukamoto was "hastily appointed" the emergency executive secretary of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). According to government officials, Tsukamoto and other members of the JACL "took charge of urgent tasks related to the impending evacuation" and "worked frantically with the US Army, the WCCA [Wartime Civil Control Administration, the WRA's predecessor organization], the Federal Reserve Bank, Farm Security Agency and social welfare workers to coordinate the needs of Florin evacuees."[22] More importantly though, Tsukamoto is an example of the shift in gender roles caused by internment. Due to the collectivization of living in Jerome and the need for staffing within Jerome's schools, Tsukamoto and other Nisei teachers seized jobs as educators. By obtaining these positions, Japanese American women secured wages for their labor during their time at Jerome. Additionally, due to their ability to obtain teaching jobs at the camp, albeit subservient ones, many Japanese American teachers were able to secure roles as educators in segregated schools after the war.[23] Meaning, not only did camp life impact their wages and role during internment, but also afterwards as well.

Japanese American teachers, like Tsukamoto, worked underneath white Arkansan teachers, which led to tensions over how and what to teach students. However, not all white

[22] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 65.
[23] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 20.

Arkansan teachers harbored such staunchly prejudiced views over race and citizenship. Virginia Tidball, a University of Arkansas graduate, accepted a teaching position at Jerome in the fall of 1942. Tidball developed close relationships with her students and became someone that students could confide in, a rare attribute for white camp officials. After his move to Michigan in the "resettlement" program, former student Bob Kiino wrote to Tidball on multiple occasions to provide her with updates of his new life in Kalamazoo. On the topic of an upcoming Halloween hayride that required a date, Kiino wrote: "Boy, I'm in a jam. . . . I wish a Japanese girl was out here." A few weeks later Kiino reassured his former English teacher that at last he was "getting along swell in school and socially. Well as for the girl, I've found one and a Japanese at that and she's very cute too."[24]

Despite the indoctrinating and controlling efforts of the WRA's education programming, opportunities for resistance existed for Japanese American students. In English class, Tidball asked students to write autobiographical essays, and opinion essays on "evacuation" and the "resettlement" program, the latter a movement pushed by the WRA to get young Japanese Americans to move to the Midwest for work. These assignments were pre-planned by the WRA and part of the "Americanizing" and inculcating curriculum developed by federal officials. Ironically, these assignments gave students the opportunity to voice their criticisms of the WRA's understandings of citizenship, race, "relocation," and hypocrisy. Japanese American students, most of them high schoolers, wrote varied opinions on their forced exodus and subsequent imprisonment. The essays clearly show that nearly every student understood that the seizure of their civil rights, private property, and freedom, had ensued them simply based on the

[24] Bob Kiino, "Bob Kiino to Virginia Tidball," November 7, 1943, Box 1, Series 1, Folder 1, Item 2, Tidball Papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

fact that the color of their skin was the same as the enemy of the state. This difficult truth is even harder to grapple when put in contrast to the treatment German POWs and German Americans, who were treated far better than Japanese Americans by the US government. This hypocrisy was not lost on the students. Jitsuo Nakano, a high school student, pondered "how is that persons of German and Italian parentage are not in relocation centers?"[25]

Other students, like eleventh grader Aileen Okumoto, also saw the hypocrisy of internment and spoke out against "relocation". Many students detailed their families' long journeys from leaving their homes for assembly centers on the west coast to the long train rides to Jerome. Regardless of their opinions on internment on the whole, some like Okumoto realized the hopelessness of the situation for Japanese Americans – "My home for the duration of the war will be in this center, although there is no life here."[26] Another student questioned why as a race, Japanese Americans were being put into the camps:

> "Our fathers who came to this country 30 or 40 years ago, perhaps some even fi or sixty years, and still not being able to receive their American citizenship.4 Was this racial prejudice? I cannot help but believing it so. Because of this they ha go through many hardships and plenty of unnecessary handicap.... Taking these experiences of our fathers as an example, we Nisei have to think the matter seriously more than ever."[27]

As scholar Hui Wu expertly points out in her article, "Writing and Teaching Behind Barbed Wire," Tidball, while certainly grappling with her own opinions and the racist propaganda on Japanese Americans and "relocation," allowed her students to write critically of the United States government and possibly encouraged them in her lack of responses within the

[25] Jitsuo Nakano, "Relocation," 1943, box 1, series 2, folder 3, item 98, Tidball Papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
[26] Aileen Okumoto, "Japanese Americans In Relocation Centers," 1943, box 1, series 2, folder 3, item 113, Tdiball Papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville;
[27] Hui Wu, "Writing and Teaching behind Barbed Wire: An Exiled Composition Class in a Japanese-American Internment Camp," *College Composition and Communication* 59, no. 2 (2007): pp. 237-262, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20456994, 246.

student essays. Tidball wrote very few, if any, remarks or corrections on the student essays. One of the few Tidball comments was in a longer essay that heavily criticized the WRA and the US government for forcing Japanese Americans into the camps and detailed how the policy was rooted in racism and hypocrisy, and she simply wrote, "Good views," at the bottom of the page.[28] According to Wu, Tidball's "silence that resulted in empowering her students, who consequently taught her about their lives, transforms the classroom from a passive, ideologically suffused environment to one that allows, indeed listens to, voices of dissent."[29] This collection of essays serves as the collective memory of segregated and racially profiled students that when read, remind the reader that the main story of America so far is not that of classical liberal ideas such as democracy and equality, rather hypocrisy, racism, nationalism, xenophobia, and the disenfranchisement of its citizens. As Wu ultimately concluded, Tidball, along with all of the teachers and students at Jerome, were forced to "negotiate together the political meanings of civil rights in a complex environment where they were required to learn and teach democratic ideals and a discourse that conflicted with reality-the classroom behind barbed wire."[30] Perhaps Wu is giving Tidball too much credit and reading too much into the absence of Tidball's voice in the archives, after all, as John Howard put it, "even the most liberal teachers such as Tidball could get only so far outside their American prejudice."[31] Regardless of her intent, the fact remains that the education program at Jerome, designed to indoctrinate and subdue students, ironically provided a platform and forum for Japanese American voices of resistance to be heard and preserved.

[28] Wu, "Writing and Teaching behind Barbed Wire," 253.
[29] Wu, "Writing and Teaching behind Barbed Wire," 238
[30] Wu, "Writing and Teaching behind Barbed Wire," 239.
[31] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 16.

While Jerome provided educational programming, albeit severely selective in terms of curriculum, for grades Kindergarten through 12th grade, educational opportunities stopped at the 12th grade thanks to Arkansas governor Homer Adkins who prohibited Japanese Americans from taking courses offered at Arkansas universities and colleges. State officials in Arkansas wanted Japanese Americans to have as little contact with the rest of the state as it threatened the existing segregated social hierarchy. Therefore, when the National Japanese Student Relocation Council reached out to several Arkansas schools and universities to see if they could accommodate Japanese Americans students, Adkins hastily telegrammed Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy to ensure that no Nisei student be allowed to enroll in any higher education classes in the state. In every other state where a WRA camp existed, aside from Arkansas and California, state schools agreed to provide some level of higher education to inmates and cooperated with the National Japanese Student Relocation Council. However, to Adkins, a staunch segregationist, and former KKK member, Nisei students' enrollment in Arkansas schools would allow an "entering wedge" for African Americans who were barred from attending colleges under the state's Jim Crow laws.[32] Therefore, Adkins refused every attempt made that would allow Japanese Americans in Jerome and Rohwer to take college credits remotely or in person.[33]

Ralph B. Jones, the state commissioner of education, reached out to the presidents of the schools and universities around the state to ensure they do not accept any Japanese American students. State and WRA officials, therefore, suggested that a list of "weak or defunct denominational schools" in parts of the country "where minority groups are already well

[32] Ward, "'No Jap Crow," 82.
[33] Ward, "'No Jap Crow," 82.

represented" be made for Nisei students.[34] When the president of the Agriculture and Mechanical College at Monticello learned that his school had been accidentally put on this list of schools where Nisei students could apply to take classes remotely, he was outraged and embarrassed. He immediately declared that "my school does not want any Japs" and other universities and schools around the state followed suit and publicly declared their stance on accepting any Japanese American students.[35] The racially charged motivation for this exclusion from access to higher education was made even more apparent when German POWs in Dermott are allowed to enroll in correspondence classes from the University of Arkansas. On top of remote classwork from the state's land grant university, German soldiers at Dermott were offered college courses inside the camp by instructors and professors from around the state.[36]

In contrast to Jerome, federal authorities established and helped set up correspondence and in-person college classes at Dermott. POWs at Dermott took hundreds of college-level classes as the US government attempted to impress German inmates by showing them yet another benefit of being white in America, higher education. Nearly 90 percent of all German POWs in the state of Arkansas were enrolled at some point in college correspondence courses sponsored by the University of Arkansas. Neither Homer Adkins nor any other federal official stood in the way of the education of German POWs as they did Japanese Americans at Jerome. Camp officials appointed only the most "reliable teaching and supervisory staff" to teach college-level courses to the POWs. In total, almost 300 POW instructors taught a catalog of 439 courses over 200 different subjects, totaling more than 13,000 student classroom hours per week.

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[34] Ward, “No Jap Crow,” 82.
[35] C. Calvin Smith, *War and Wartime Changes: The Transformation of Arkansas, 1940-1945* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986), 66.
[36] Smith, “Response of Arkansans to Prisoners of War,” 348.

Dermott also had a massive library of books and specimens, including nearly 9,000 volumes valued at nearly $200,000. The number of books and funds spent on the library is even more striking when compared to Jerome's library program, or lack thereof. Unlike Jerome where nearly 75% of the books were donated, the federal government purchased all 9,000 of Dermott's library. In addition to having more books than Jerome, the library at Dermott contained more books written in German than they did English.[37] Whereas Japanese language texts, as already discussed, were difficult to come by inside Jerome. This difference in the regulation of texts and language further shows the discrepancy in treatment by federal authorities between the two groups. YMCA inspector Olle Axberg toured the camp in the summer of 1945 and was "astonished" by the number of classes offered and the number of resources available to the inmates.[38] The sheer difference in the resources allotted illuminates the fact that federal authorities saw German POWs as having a greater potential to becoming part of a liberal postwar order than Japanese Americans and thus more deserving of better and higher education.

Federal authorities went beyond hiring qualified educators to teach at the camp by allowing some of the German POWs at Dermott to teach themselves. With "many of the best artists in Germany" in the camp, according to camp officials, some POWs operated and ran educational courses, specifically art classes, on their own. These classes put on art exhibits and shows within the POW compounds of the camp and received positive reviews from War Department workers who attended the shows.[39] Allowing an inmate to teach a course without

[37] Office of the Provost Marshal General, "Field Inspection Reports, Office of The Provost Marshal General (1945) For Prisoner of War Camps at Dermott and Lake Village," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
[38] "Prisoner of War Camp, Camp Dermott, Arkansas," October 17-20, 1945, Record Group 389, Entry 461, Box 2660, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD; "Report of Visit to Prisoner of War Camp, Dermott, Arkansas," October 17-18, 1945, Record Group 389, Entry 459A, Box 1612, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.
[39] Mallet, "Reeducating Hiter's Generals?" 110.

supervision and not in an "assistant teacher" role empowered German POWs and shows that camp officials trusted and respected the inmates enough to put them in a leadership role. Also, the acknowledgment by federal authorities of particular inmates' lives and skills prior to camp life, such as being an artist, is far more respect and autonomy than was afforded to Japanese Americans in Jerome. Jerome also had artists in the camp, but they could be found digging drainage ditches, chopping wood, making soap, or bussing tables rather than teaching courses on their craft.

The education system at Jerome subjected inmates to Americanization efforts that, when paired with the Christianization efforts of federal and camp authorities that will be discussed later, made up the indoctrination campaign of the WRA. The War Department purchased the vast majority of the educational materials, specimens, instruments, subscriptions, movies, and other educational resources, which shows the desire of federal authorities to show off the level of education that comes with being white in America, a classification that federal authorities had already bestowed upon German POWs in Dermott. Once again, to most historians, the level of education offered to Nazi prisoners, specifically officers, comes as little surprise. However, when put in direct contrast to Japanese Americans, who just months prior to the arrival of German POWs, walked in the same marshy mudhole of a camp, the disparity between the two groups becomes even more evident, and larger ideas of race and citizenship in America become more visible as well.

Chapter Four

Recreation and America's Pastime

Federal authorities at Jerome and Dermott interpreted the leisure time activities of Japanese Americans and German POWs differently. One of the popular sports in Jerome was sumo, a historically significant leisure time activity in Japan. Therefore, federal officials saw the activity as a threat since it was inherently tied to Japanese culture. In Dermott, inmates enjoyed popular activities associated with German culture such as classical music and soccer and federal officials fully supported both activities in terms of funding, space, and resources. The main difference is that sumo reinforced already held beliefs that the Japanese Americans were aliens, and their culture was threatening, while federal authorities understood soccer and classical music as existing apart from Nazism. The War Department was careful to distinguish between the German people, who had the capacity to join the postwar liberal order, and Nazism, which was a menace to world peace. Since, as already stated, the war with Japan was directed at the Japanese people, rather than a political ideology, federal authorities neglected sumo wrestling in Jerome as it they saw it as Japanese, and thus believed it was a threat.

In both Jerome and Dermott, inmates participated in various sorts of recreational activities, but it is clear that the federal government offered more funding, better facilities, and more autonomy to German POWs than to Japanese Americans. At Dermott, camp officials once again wanted to show German military officers show the superiority of the American way of life and therefore spent tens of thousands of dollars on their recreational programs. Federal authorities sought to keep Japanese Americans at Jerome busy and discourage any possible discontent for as little funding as possible and steer those eligible towards "American" and "patriotic" forms of leisure time. The WRA filled young Nisei's time and energy with sports,

clubs, organizations, dances, and more to distract them and channel their energies toward activities, like baseball, that did not threaten the war effort or the broader American way of life. Japanese Americans in Jerome took advantage of these efforts by organizing sporting leagues, clubs, bands, and events that all created spaces where they could forge bonds with one another and create more opportunities for themselves. Moreover, baseball represented a cultural middle ground, even if federal authorities did not recognize it, that allowed inmates at Jerome more opportunities and the ability to express their multinational identities. Recreational programs in Jerome also offered Japanese American women opportunities that did not exist or were less accessible prior to the war. Thus, the recreational programs at Jerome undermined traditional gender roles for Japanese Americans.

The German officers at Dermott, with more free time on their hands because officers were exempt from the type of physical labor required of enlisted POWs, also engaged in a wide variety of recreational activities, some of which were uniquely German. But unlike the WRA officials who discouraged sumo for fear that it was an expression of Japanese nationalism, War Department officials encouraged soccer and concerts featuring music from their nation's finest composers even though both could be understood as expressions of German national culture. The critical difference is that sumo reinforced already held beliefs that the Japanese Americans were aliens and their culture was threatening, while federal authorities understood soccer and classical music as existing apart from Nazism. The War Department was careful to distinguish between the German people, who had the capacity to join the postwar liberal order, and Nazism, which was a menace to world peace.

The unfinished state of the camp, brutal winter weather, and the lack of necessities like wood, hot water, and food rations restricted the start of the recreational programs at Jerome. In

the early months of camp, Japanese Americans at Jerome took it upon themselves to organize activities that required little to no money, dedicated facilities, or any other resources. Without the support of the WRA, which was preoccupied with trying to complete construction, inmates organized community events such as talent shows, sing-alongs, and dances. These activities provided some much needed escape from the bleak setting of the camp and allowed Japanese Americans to start to build some sense of community with one another. After all, most inmates were complete strangers upon arrival at the camp. Camp officials also benefitted from these low-budget recreational activities since they did not have to spend much money on recreational activities, which was always a goal of federal authorities, and distracted the internees. The programs helped calm the inmate population during the brutal first few months of camp. Even camp director Paul Taylor recognized how recreational programs served the WRA's larger agenda. As he noted, they "helped quell unrest and encouraged friendly relationships among virtual strangers."[1]

Moving into the winter of 1942, inmates at Jerome started putting together musical activities as the construction of the camp finally began to end. Frank Tashima orchestrated an eleven-piece dance band called the "Densoneers" and used second-hand instruments requisitioned by camp officials. On November 24, 1942, the band played its inaugural show and continued with weekly performances for the entirety of the camp's existence.[2] These dances created social spaces where the younger Nisei generation, who, like many young Americans in

[1] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, Community Government," 1945, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed June 3, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?brand=oac4.
[2] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, Business Enterprises," 1945, box 197, folder 5.005, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed June 13, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6ws91c5/?brand=oac4.

the 1940s, could engage with potential romantic partners outside of the purview of their parents and the surrounding community. These spaces granted more autonomy to younger Japanese Americans and contributed to the deterioration of parental authority. The older Issei generation, who likely did not enjoy the same types of loud dance bands, sporting events, or movies, did not have many forms of recreational programs they could be a part of like their children did. Thus the recreational activities aimed at the younger generation further divided Japanese Americans at Jerome, at least in the opening few months of the camp. In interviews and accounts of life in any of the WRA camps, younger Japanese Americans, especially those who were in their teens and twenties, tend to recall hanging out with friends and participating in various different sports and organizations.[3] In contrast, in postwar interviews, older Japanese Americans often speak of a sense of loneliness, lack of social life, and the "breakdown" of their families within the camp.[4] However, by early 1943 recreational activities, including variety and talent shows and once-a-week movie screenings in the mess halls catered more to Issei tastes.[5]

The musical events in Jerome, the most important being the performances by Tashima's "Densoneers," pale in comparison to the massive concerts put on by German POWs at Dermott, particularly in terms of federal funds spent on instruments and the facilities made available. Inspectors from the US Department of State reported that Dermott had purchased over two hundred musical instruments valued at $30,000 for the POWs. Nearly a thousand prisoners could be seated inside the massive concert hall to enjoy the camp's orchestra performances, dance band, chorale, theatre groups, and several soloists. The origin of the building and details about its

[3] Saburo Masada Interview, *Densho Digital Repository*, September 11, 2014, accessed June 2, 2022, https://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-manz-1-157-12/.
[4] "Masamizu Kitajima was born and raised in Hawaii. His father was arrested by the FBI after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and Masamizu and his family went to Jerome during the war to reunite with him.," *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed June 2, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-denshovh-kmasamizu-01-0019-1/
[5] Niiya, “Jerome.”

construction are difficult to find, but the fact that it was built by the War Department suggests that they thought the German POWs were deserving of a dedicated facility to hear high quality concerts. In the summer of 1945, visiting Swedish YMCA inspectors attended an "incomparable concert" that lasted over four hours and included works by Johan Strauss, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Shubert, and Joseph Haydn, and some original pieces by inmates at Dermott.[6] That the Dermott authorities allowed the iconic works of German/Austrian composers to be played suggests that they considered the enemy to be the Nazi ideology rather than the Germanic peoples.

Also, while movies in Jerome were shown only once a week, federal authorities in Dermott put on two movies per week and catered to the tastes of their inmates. In a November 1943 Provost Marshall General Officer report, federal authorities announced that "non-propaganda" films could be shown to inmates and that "the Army Motion Pictures Service has approved the use of their facilities for this purpose," meaning inmates could attend pictures in War Department Theaters.[7] Also, camp officials made notes over the types of films inmates seemed to enjoy and tried to obtain more of those types of films. According to an inspection by representatives of the Geneva Convention, inmates preferred "musicals, historical pictures, action pictures, and good westerns," and disliked romantic dramas.[8] Once again, the vast discrepancy between the space made available by federal authorities as well as the money and efforts spent by camp officials on inmates at Dermott versus Jerome proves once again the racial

[6] Merrill R. Pritchett and William L. Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas, 1943-1946," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1978): pp. 3-22, https://doi.org/10.2307/40023162, p. 9-13.
[7] "Field Service Reports, Office of the Provost Marshal General (1945) for Prisoner of War Camps at Dermott and Lake Village," November 26, 1943, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, Special Collections University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
[8] Pritchett and Shea, "The Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 10.

ideologies of federal authorities and their tendency to provide better accommodations for Nazis than US citizens.

Many of the distinctions seen in the musical and movie activities at the camps are also apparent in the sports programs. Sports provided camp officials with low-cost recreational activities that allowed them more control over the leisure time activities in Jerome and simultaneously produced a veneer that the camps were not so bad inside the barbed wire fences. While federal authorities allowed inmates at Jerome to play baseball, basketball, and football, they discouraged activities like sumo. In contrast, at Dermott, federal authorities did not discourage distinctly German activities such as soccer and concerts celebrating German composers. The US government did not see German sporting and cultural activities as a threat because they focused the fight on the Nazi ideology rather than German culture and people.

Sporting leagues in Jerome got off to a late start due to the incomplete state of the camp and the winter weather. However, by the Spring of 1943, a softball league and three baseball leagues with a total of seventy-five teams started playing regularly scheduled games. Inmates also formed thirty-six basketball teams that participated in three leagues. The basketball league was scheduled to start on March 14, 1943, along with the baseball and softball leagues, but, according to a piece written by Jerome inmate Seico Hanashiro in the camp's magazine, "bad weather, lack of equipment and material, and shortage of manpower to erect backboards" delayed the season. An attempt to move the games outside of the camp to the Jerome High School gymnasium was vetoed by camp officials who feared alarming the local population.[9]

[9] Seico Hanashiro, "Sports Flip-Up," *Denson Magnet*, April 1943, box 194, folder 1.25, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed June 26, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k64m9bqt/?brand=oac4.

Teams in Jerome primarily adopted their prescribed block numbers as their team names, but some took on the names of their hometowns back in California. In the basketball league, “the Hares, Gauchos, Skippers, Lobos, Bronco Babes, and 20th Century El Bees" made up the six teams in the top division or "A-league," with the "Hares" being the favorite to win the league according to Hanashiro.[10] By the Fall of 1943, a volleyball, football, and soccer league had formed and began playing games in the swampy fields that separated buildings within the camp. With no help from camp officials, inmates at Jerome built their own baseball field. To clear the field, inmates dynamited tree stumps left over from the construction of the camp.[11] Despite playing more stereotypical American games, federal authorities did little in terms of offering adequate spaces for such activities.

The games proved to be extremely popular. Baseball and basketball games featuring Nisei soldiers from the nearby military camps, Shelby and Robinson, drew as many as two-thousand spectators. Another significant sporting event was a softball game held on June 28, 1943, when the "Tribune Depressors," a team of Japanese Americans from Jerome, took on a team made up of white male camp officials, the "Personnel Bi-Tri-Focals."[12] The game, held on the appropriately named "Chigger Field," represented a rare occasion where white camp officials competed against Japanese Americans. While it is unclear who won the match, such a game was jeopardized the racial hierarchy set up by federal authorities, which so often ideologically infantilized Japanese Americans.

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[10] "Sports Flip-Up," *Denson Magnet*, April 1943, box 194, folder 1.25, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k64m9bqt/?brand=oac4.
[11] Kerry Yo Nakagawa, *Through a Diamond: 100 Years of Japanese American Baseball* (San Francisco: Rudi Pub., 2001), 77-80. For more on how baseball operated within all ten WRA camps during the war, see Nakagawa’s book.
[12] War Relocation Authority, “Softball Game, Tribune vs. Personnel,” July 28, 1943, Rising Above Digital Repository, https://risingabove.cast.uark.edu/archive/item/2599.

Baseball was the most popular sport in Jerome and muddled the artificial lines between the two cultures drawn by US authorities. Baseball was popular in Japan in the middle of the 20th century in many of the same ways it was in the United States. First introduced in Japan in 1872 by American professor Horace Wilson at the Kaisei Academy in Tokyo, baseball grew steadily in popularity culminating in Japan's first organized team, the Shimbashi Athletic Club, in 1878. By the early 20th century, Japan's high school and college teams competed regularly in tournaments and games that drew thousands of spectators. Professional teams and leagues formed in the 1920s and toured the United States to play American teams in exhibition games. In return, American teams traveled to Japan each year after the World Series until 1935.[13] Baseball quickly became a common thread that connected Japanese and American cultures. Photographs of baseball legends Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth shoulder to shoulder with Japanese teams cemented the notion that the sport represented some level of cultural syncretism between the two nations.[14] Federal authorities were surely aware of this mutual infatuation for the sport but still saw baseball as something uniquely American. This shared love of "America's favorite pastime" might have reminded white Americans that Japanese Americans are just as American as themselves, but it did not.

Due to the sport's popularity among both camp officials and inmates, baseball was one of the few sports where Japanese Americans would sometimes play against camp officials and, on one occasion, a local Arkansan team. On August 23, 1943, the Florin Athletic Club team dominated Arkansas A&M 6 to 0 in a game played within the Jerome camp. Herb "Moon"

[13] Daniel Métraux, “Baseball in Japan and the US: History, Culture, and Future Prospects,” Association for Asian Studies, May 25, 2020, https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/baseball-in-japan-and-the-us-history-culture-and-future-prospects/.
[14] “Baseball in Japan and the US: History, Culture, and Future Prospects,” Association for Asian Studies, May 25, 2020, https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/baseball-in-japan-and-the-us-history-culture-and-future-prospects/.

Kurima, who got his nickname because his father made moonshine before the war, pitched the shutout for the Jerome team.[15] While it is unclear how the game between the two teams came to fruition, it is an event that allowed Japanese Americans to challenge white Arkansans and thus the racial hierarchy. It may come as a surprise that camp officials allowed this game to occur. However, American officials saw baseball as a healthy distraction for the Japanese American internees at Jerome. More importantly however, it highlights the increased autonomy granted to those who participated in sports and recreational activities familiar to those in the American mainstream.

Recreation and leisure time activities also created sex-segregated spaces and opportunities for inmates at Jerome to forge connections and relationships with one another. For men in Jerome, sports allowed inmates, particularly young Nisei, to prove their athletic ability and engage in competitive activities with other men. This phenomenon is not uncommon and certainly existed in the lives of Japanese American men prior to camp life. However, sports and recreation such as softball and volleyball gave Japanese American women empowering same-sex spaces and communities that may not have been as accessible prior to camp life, especially for those women from more rural areas. With more autonomy due to the collectivization of living in the camp, women had more leisure time and access to community programs such as the softball league in Jerome. The leagues were made up of mostly Nisei women as the older Issei generation tended to be less interested in such activities.[16] On occasion, the best teams from the two Arkansas internment camps would play one another in primetime matchups that drew large

[15] Vicky K. Murakami-Tsuda, "Japanese American Baseball," *Discover Nikkei*, April 11, 2007, http://www.discovernikkei.org/pt/journal/2007/4/11/2319/.
[16] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, Community Activities Section," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkely, Online Archive of California, accessed June 3, 2022. http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?brand=oac4.

crowds and attention from each camp's local newspaper. According to Rohwer's camp newspaper, the "Denson All-Stars" from Jerome "proved too much for the Rohwer Girl's all-star nine as they went down to defeat, 4-1, on July 31, 1943."[17] Table tennis leagues also provided all-female spaces that allowed for women in Jerome to forge relationships and friends outside of their household. Like in softball, these interactions between women transgressed the camp boundaries at times during competitions with the neighboring Rohwer camp. According to the *Denson Tribune,* Momoyo Watanabe, Alice Ikegami, Helen Fukutomi, Mary Hidaka, and Babs Inamasu all traveled from Rohwer to take on Jerome's table tennis team on July 31, 1943.[18] The relationships, communities, and interactions of women within sporting activities in Jerome are another unintended side effect of the WRA camps and the collectivization of living that provided women with more free time and access to one another.

While camp officials encouraged sports such as baseball, basketball, softball, volleyball, soccer, and football as they were cheap, represented everyday "American" activities in the camp, and were tailored to mostly younger Nisei inmates, they discouraged sumo wrestling. Sumo, a sport that dates back nearly 2,000 years in Japan, represented an essential part of Japanese American life prior to the war that crossed generational and class lines. The sport originated from agricultural and harvest traditions in Japan and thus was extremely popular in more rural areas of Japan.[19] Therefore, the sport became prominent in many rural areas of Hawaii and central California as Japanese immigrants settled in those areas. Eventually, Japanese immigrant parents passed on their participation and love for the sport to their Nisei children. Those Nisei who

[17] "Jerome Girl's Team Whips Rohwer Nine," *Rohwer Outpost*, July 31, 1943, Rising Above Digital Repository, https://risingabove.cast.uark.edu/archive/item/852.
[18] "Jerome Girl's Team Whips Rohwer Nine," *Rohwer Outpost,* https://risingabove.cast.uark.edu/archive/item/852.
[19] Brian Niiya, "Sumo," *Densho Encyclopedia*, June 15, 2012, accessed June 12, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Sumo/#:~:text=Extremely%20popular%20in%20prewar%20Japanese,held%20during%20World%20War%20II.

enjoyed and participated in sumo were mostly Kibei, meaning they were born in the United States but then mainly educated in Japan. Working-class Nisei and Kibei farmers made up the majority of the wrestlers in the sport and thus in the camps. Inmates also organized sumo wrestling matches which took place within Jerome and represented another popular spectator sport in the camp. However, the WRA pushed more western leisure time activities and sports over sumo in order to expose younger Japanese Americans to more mainstream "American" sports like baseball and football. In a 1944 report to congress, WRA director Dillon Myer stated that "The WRA has stressed typically American activities," and believed that their "efforts to further American-type activities have been highly successful." In fact, Myer and the Community Management Chief, John Province, concluded that the WRA had successfully "prodded" inmates to take up "American" sports such as baseball and softball.[20] The use of "American" sports by the government, organizations, and churches to "assimilate" immigrants is common in many immigrant histories in the United States. However, in the WRA camps, the intent of federal officials was even more sinister, and the promotion of "American" sports simultaneously neglected traditional Japanese sports.

The WRA's opposition to sumo was most clearly seen in its infamous "loyalty questionnaire." Federal authorities forced all adult inmates across every WRA camp to answer a series of questions that aimed to weed out those "not loyal" to the US, and find Japanese American recruits for the military. Questions initially crafted by the Office of Naval Intelligence sought to determine the level of "Americaness" or "Japaneseness" and asked about membership in a sumo or judo club. Those who belonged to such clubs were given lower scores on the

[20] Memo from Charles F. Ernst to Dillon S. Myer, War Relocation Authority Papers, "Recreation," July 20, 1943, box 414, folder 5, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park; Samuel O. Regalado, "Incarcerated Sport: Nisei Women's Softball and Athletics During Japanese American Internment," *Journal of Sport History* 27, no. 3 (2000): pp. 431-444, accessed July 18, 2022, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43609778.

"Americaness" scale, while those who played games such as baseball and football or participated in Boy Scouts were given higher scores. Although the internees were placed on an "Americaness" scale, they were never considered "American." [21]

Inmates at Dermott also participated in sports, mainly soccer, handball, tennis, and baseball. In contrast to Jerome, federal authorities went above and beyond to supply adequate space and materials for sports in Dermott. In fact, according to a final report from the Provost Marshall General Office, German POWs at Dermott played so much soccer that there was a severe shortage of soccer balls in the state at the end of the war and camp officials complained about it.[22] Dermott's captives had far nicer and more readily available sports facilities. Federal officials ordered POW camp commanders to "make adequate provisions for and give every encouragement to the development of a recreational and athletic program to provide for the leisure time of prisoners of war." The order went further to say, "Where not already done, the recreation area at each camp will be cleared of high grass and weeds and so laid out to as to provide for a maximum of activities."[23]. German POWs at Dermott not only had a large fieldhouse facility that could be used for soccer, handball, and other sports that required considerable indoor space but also the best equipment available.[24]

Nearly all inmates at Dermott participated in some team or individual sporting activity. Once again, camp officials allowed German soldiers to retain their existing social hierarchy and power structure by allowing each compound to vote on an inmate athletic director whose job was

[21] Cherstin Lyon, "Loyalty Questionnaire," *Densho Encyclopedia*, June 25, 2012, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty_questionnaire/.
[22] Pritchett and Shea, "Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 9.
[23] "Field Service Reports Office of the Provost Marshal General for Prisoner of War Camps at Dermott and Lake Village," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records.
[24] Pritchett and Shea, "Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 10.

to organize sporting activities.[25] While baseball was played at Dermott like it was at Jerome, soccer and handball represented the most popular sporting activities. Handball's popularity did not stretch much further beyond Europe and would not have been known very well by federal or camp authorities. Soccer, while more familiar than handball, was also not a common American leisure time activity, especially when compared to baseball, football, or basketball. Despite both sports being distinctly European and incredibly popular in Germany, camp officials had no problem supporting, funding, organizing, and building facilities for these sports.[26]

Federal officials at Jerome also encouraged certain types of recreational and leisure activities in order to prevent mix-raced dating and miscegenation. the same could not be said for racially segregated Nisei military unit stationed in nearby Mississippi. Government officials concerned with the off-duty activities of members of the two Japanese American military units, the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, both stationed nearby in Mississippi, went to extraordinary measures to regulate Nisei soldiers' lives outside of working hours.

Federal authorities at both Jerome and Camp Shelby worried about the possibility of interracial dating between Japanese Americans and either white guards at Jerome or white civilians surrounding camp Shelby. Therefore, WRA officials aggressively promoted dating and marriage among Japanese Americans. These efforts in Jerome increased even more when a story emerged that a white guard at Jerome had taken "an evacuee girl" to dinner in the nearby town of McGehee at the Greystone Hotel. WRA attorney Jerome Robert Leflar did his best to squash the rumor fearing it would promote even more animosity from the local white community.[27] The

[25] Pritchett and Shea, "Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 9.
[26] Pritchett and Shea, "Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 9-12.
[27] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 135.

general public also feared the possibility of Japanese Americans dating white civilians, especially at Camp Shelby, where Nisei soldiers had more access to the communities surrounding the camp. In the summer of 1944, a local county clerk refused to issue a marriage license between a Nisei soldier and white Arkansan woman. Ulys Lovell, one of the WRA attorneys at Jerome, reported the incident to his superiors and said that he believed "the clerk was clearly within his legal rights in doing that."[28] In the eyes of the federal authorities, dances and events between the women at Jerome and the Nisei soldiers at Shelby were a way to kill two birds with one stone. This series of dances, held every other month, was the most visible example of government intervention in courtship and the regulation of Japanese Americans' social lives. The level of planning and organization on behalf of government officials, which included invitations, registration, surveillance, housing, dancing, and a ten-hour bus ride, show the efforts that the WRA and War Department were willing to go to regulate and monitor the social, recreational, and romantic lives of Japanese Americans.[29]

Although met with initial enthusiasm, the women of Jerome soon became wary of the dances. Reports emerged that the first group of women visiting camp Shelby were "handled roughly by the men" and took advantage of the traveling inmates.[30] The desire to participate in these dances dwindled among the women at Jerome, and few wanted to participate in the events in fear that they may be forced to fraternize with men who did not have the same intentions they held. By the time the second dance was to be held, only forty-three of the one hundred invited women volunteered to make the trip. Patriots and pro-administration Japanese Americans at

[28] Ulys Lovell to EB. Whitaker, July 13, 1944, Box 1, Folder 1, Item 26, Ulys A. Lovell US War Relocation Authority Jerome Relocation Center Records, University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.
[29] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 135; "Camp Shelby Dance," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, June 29, 2022, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/media/camp-shelby-dance-17557/.
[30] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 136.

Jerome were embarrassed that the women failed to answer the call "from the lonesome soldier boys" and thus their patriotic duty to the country. As expert John Howard put it in his book on the two Arkansas camps, “The notion of warfare as an exercise in protecting womanhood was an enduring historical cliché. Many women at Jerome were having none of it.”[31] John Naganimi, a columnist in the camp's pro-administration *Tribune* newspaper, wrote this in an effort to get more women to volunteer: "What those boys really need is a bit of that maternal touch. Though they may seem like a rough cut diamond outwardly, a little feminine polish would bring out the priceless quality of these Nisei servicemen…it’s a worthy cause.”[32] The decision not to attend the dances stemmed from more than just fear of the treatment they might receive at Camp Shelby. Women at Jerome did not want to be pimped out by the US government and subject to abuse at camp Shelby. The manipulative and controlling intentions of federal authorities were not lost on the women at Jerome, as they viewed the state-sanctioned intra-ethnic dating events as another way the state was infantilizing Japanese Americans and adding insult on top of the abomination of incarceration.

Federal authorities did not regulate the social lives and interactions of German POWs in the same manner they did Japanese Americans, as seen in the interactions between Arkansans and Germans created largely through labor obligations. German POWs were used to alleviate the labor shortage during WWII and that prisoners were often allowed to leave the camp to work underneath farmers and foremen. Due to the agricultural labor shortage in the area surrounding Dermott, plenty of POWs would regularly leave the camp to work on farms near the camp. Under the Geneva Convention, prisoners were paid a small wage for their labor for which they

[31] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 137.
[32] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 136.

used to buy cigarettes, extra food, or any other items from mail-order catalogs.[33] Relationships between prisoners at Dermott and the white farmers they labored for were mostly amicable. It is well documented that local families often worked alongside German POWs and invited them to eat meals with the family and participate in recreational activities. The permeable nature of Camp Dermott and the lack of supervision on work details allowed German prisoners to engage with the community outside the camp and develop relationships with the local white population. Mr. E. D. Gregory employed German POWs at his farm near Camp Dermott to pick cotton. After the war, Gregory received numerous letters from the POWs who had toiled on his land. The POWs shared what happened to them after the war, the conditions in Europe, and asked what the conditions in America were like as many of them desired to immigrate back to the country. Gerhard Schnauss, a POW who was living in the rubble of West Germany at the time of his letter, wrote the following to Gregory: "I presume you are interested in my fate, as you were so kind as to speak to me personally so many times during the time of our detail."[34] Civilian animosity certainly existed towards the German POWs at Dermott. However, these letters signify the manner of the bond between the German POWs and Gregory and thus the type of close relationships that German POWs could develop with the local white community, all of which were promoted and organized by federal authorities. This level of access granted to the local white community and the lack of apprehension and even fondness for German POWs by many white civilians highlight that skin color mattered a great deal more than citizenship.

It is clear that federal authorities provided more resources and autonomy to German POWs than Japanese Americans in terms of their leisure time activities. Moreover, the neglect of

[33] "World War II Prisoner of War Camps," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas,* accessed March 10, 2022, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/world-war-ii-prisoner-of-war-camps-2398/.
[34] Ernest D. Gregory, "German POW Letters," May 25, 1946, folder 1, box 1, German POW Correspondence, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

sumo displays the US government's inability to separate Japan, the nation the US is at war with, from the Japanese people. Additionally, the disproportionate support for more "American" sports reveals more about how federal authorities favored Japanese Americans who appeared, to them, as more submissible into subordinate minorities in American society. In contrast, federal authorities did not see soccer and classical music as a threat because they associated those interests with the German people, rather than Nazism.

Chapter Five

Religion: Christmas, Consumerism, Christianity

Just a few months after the opening of Jerome in October 1942, Paul Taylor, the director of the camp, kicked the Buddhist congregation out of its temporary temple in the Block 23 dining hall. In many ways this action was not surprising. Buddhism was distinctly foreign religion in the eyes of federal authorities and seen as a threat to both WRA's ability to control the camp and mainstream American culture. Members of the congregation, which consisted of nearly 70% of Jerome's population, were outraged. A few days after the booting, Taylor found a formal petition requesting that signed by residents of blocks 7, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 25, and 26 on his desk.[1] Given the fact that the majority of the camp was Buddhist and this was such an outright display of hostility towards the Buddhist congregation, Taylor reversed his decision.

Religion is another way to measure the disparity in treatment and regulation between Jerome and Dermott. The majority of the inmates at Jerome were Buddhists, nearly three quarters reported to camp to be specific.[2] In Dermott, the majority of German inmates were unsurprisingly Catholic or Lutheran.[3] The WRA tried (unsuccessfully) to discourage Buddhism by denying its adherents space, but the Defense Department took a hands off approach to allow religion to flourish how it pleased in Dermott.

[1] "Residents of Blocks 7, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 25, and 26, Petition, 9" February 1943, Record Group 210, entry 48, box 262, folder 68, War Relocation Authority Records, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.
[2] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, Buddhist Church," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed July 1, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?.
[3] Provost Marshall General Office, "Field Inspection Reports, Office of The Provost Marshal General (1945) For Prisoner of War Camps at Dermott and Lake Village," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

Federal authorities discriminated against Buddhists in Jerome for the same reason as they discouraged sumo wrestling and the use of Japanese language in the educational program. Japanese American Christians had clear advantages inside and outside of the camp, while Buddhists and Buddhist temples encountered obstacles such as harsher treatment, fewer opportunities, and less overall support and funding. Being Christian, like speaking English or playing baseball, increased one's standing on the "Americaness" scale. As John Howard puts it, "central to Americanization was Christianization."[4] However, while Howard is spot on, he does not document into the increased surveillance and regulating capacity that religion granted WRA officials. Church events, baptisms, and services afforded the federal government another platform to indoctrinate Japanese Americans into Christianity.

The US government perceived Christians as more "American," while Buddhists were seen as "unassimilable" and loyal to Japan. According to scholar Duncan Williams, who writes on Japanese American Buddhism during WWII, "The government's view of being American meant learning more English, converting to Christianity and joining organizations like the YMCA/YCCA."[5] Despite the fact that nearly 70% of the population at Jerome was Buddhist, there is very little mention of the Buddhist congregation or various organizations such as the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) in the weekly, monthly, annual, and final reports written by camp officials at Jerome. While this is frustrating for researchers, when read against the grain, the lack of material produced by white officials reveals the unwillingness of local officials to share what was going on with their superiors.

[4] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 151
[5] Duncan Ryuken Williams, *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War* (Belknap Harvard, 2020) 268.

Even before the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, the FBI had already composed a list of Japanese American leaders in California and Hawaii and designated the Buddhist priests on the list as "dangerous." The FBI targeted Buddhist priests with particular vigor after Pearl Harbor and sent men like Shigeru Matsuda, who owned a bookstore that sold Japanese and English language literature, to special Department of Justice (DOJ) camps. Hearing of the federal round ups, many priests burned their religious texts in fear that possession might constitute a crime. According to scholar Williams, the DOJ's actions "reflected the government's fear of social elements that seemed foreign and un-American and reflected the addition to racial discrimination of religious discrimination." Federal agents and camp officials in the temporary "assembly centers" also confiscated Japanese literature and participated in book burning. A proclamation issued at the temporary assembly centers asserted that "Japanese print of any kind, such as newspapers, books, pamphlets, periodicals or other literature, with the exception of approved Japanese religious books (Bibles and hymnals) and English-Japanese dictionaries, are not authorized."[6] Therefore, Buddhists in Jerome faced immense opposition and challenges.

In spite of the WRA's opposition, the camp's Buddhists practiced their faith. Every Sunday morning Buddhists at Jerome met in dining hall 23 and participated in services that opened with meditation and a flower offering. Reverend Tadao Kouchi, led the group through hymns, prayers, a sermon, and then a short symbolic story that correlated to the message of the day. For example, one sermon from Kouchi preached that "life is like a journey in a dream" and discouraged attachment to material possessions. Near the end of the service the congregation recited the Golden Chain, a traditional and common recitation among Buddhists. "I am a link in

[6] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 163; Williams, *American Sutra*, 256-258. It also must be noted that Buddhist temples and their congregations faced decades of violence such as the burning of temples, state sanctioned oppression, and lynchings in Hawaii and the West Coast prior to WWII. For more see Duncan Ryuken Williams, *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War* (Belknap Harvard, 2020).

Lord Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong. I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself."[7] Buddhists had few texts for their congregation and organizations. Most material goods associated closely with Buddhism such as books, statues, altars, and other relevant religious artifacts were destroyed or confiscated before internment. Buddhists at Jerome did their best to replace the material portion of their religion by making new ones out of the scarce resources at their disposal in the camp. The Young Buddhist Association (YBA) printed a regular newsletter and published approximately 1,200 copies of the 1994 Buddhist calendar, 350 religious textbooks, and nine hundred copies of a Gatha sermon book.[8] Some families used scrap wood from the surrounding forest to build altars and shrines to keep in their private barracks.[9] The reliance on homemade Buddhist items and the overall grassroots nature of Buddhism embodied by the YBA in Jerome in general suggests the unwillingness of camp officials to support the most popular religion in the camp.

Camp officials did all discouraged Buddhism by prohibiting the celebration of Buddhist holidays. This reflected national WRA policy. Director Dillon Myer sent a memo to all ten camp directors advising them that "Under the present policy no Japanese holiday shall be recognized…including religious festivals."[10] While David Williams and John Howard both highlight the strength of the Buddhist congregation in Jerome and analyze how organizations such as the Young Buddhists Association doubled down on Buddhism as a manner of resistance,

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[7] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front,* 161.
[8] "Final Report, Community Management Division, Buddhist Church," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?.
[9] "Butsudan-Buddhist Altar," Smithsonian Institution, accessed July 10, 2022, https://www.si.edu/object/butsudan-buddhist-altar%3Anmah1131491.
[10] Dillon Myer, "Japanese Holidays," April 2, 1943, Ulys. A. Lovell War Relocation Authority, Jerome Relocation Center Records, Folder 1, Item 2, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

their narratives fall short of proving true resistance and fail to mention the fact that the Buddhist Church at Jerome split into two factions during internment. Little is known about the specific details of the split outside of the fact that one faction believed that Japanese Americans should repatriate to Japan while the other saw their future in America despite being held in a concentration camp.[11] The split in the group is hard to dissect accurately without more information, but it is a fair assumption that the WRA would not have done much to prevent such a split. Harsh segregation tactics such as the unfair "loyalty questionnaire" exasperated divisions among Japanese Americans and could have contributed to such a split. Camp officials most likely relished the division considering a united Buddhist congregation in Jerome consisted about 70% of the camp's population.

The WRA, with the aid of outside protestant churches and associated organizations, encouraged "missionary work" and with the hope of converting the Buddhist population. Visiting priests and congregations regularly traveled to Jerome to speak at services or perform baptisms. In contrast to the vast number of Christian related visitors in and out of the camp, there was never any Buddhist priest or speaker on the guest list at Jerome. One night, Dr. Stanley Jones, a longtime Methodist missionary, came to the camp to give a talk at a WRA sponsored event. On the evening of his talk, many attendees expressed their desire to be baptized. The event quickly became a discussion over the benefits of being baptized and dedication cards were handed out to all the attendees. After the event, camp officials tried to downplay the belief that the event's goal was to proselytize the inmate population, but they admitted in a report that "the young Kibei

[11] Niiya, "Jerome."; "Final Report, Community Management Division, Buddhist Church," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?.

Buddhists who attended said they felt uncomfortable."[12] Through religious, specifically Christian, programming, federal authorities closely monitored and simultaneously indoctrinated the inmates at Jerome. Similar to education, federal authorities believed the best way to minimize the supposed threat of Japanese Americans is to eliminate the attributes that do not categorically fit into American culture.

While federal officials seized Buddhist literature and artifacts, the WRA encouraged Protestant activities. The WRA helped Protestant churches ship books and supplies to Jerome's Christian population.[13] Churches from Kansas, Ohio, Alabama, Pennsylvania, New York, and Nebraska sent various "Sunday School supplies" to supplement the small library of religious texts held at Jerome.[14] This outside support from other Christians reflects the fact that the American general public also believed that Japanese American Christians were less of a threat to mainstream American society and the security of the US. Moreover, the facilitation of these donations by the WRA reflects the overall support of Christianity over Buddhism in Jerome.

Unlike their suppressive methods at Jerome, camp officials at Dermott allowed Catholicism, Lutheranism, and other forms of Protestantism to thrive by allowing German prisoners autonomy as well as whatever relevant space and resources required. The American propaganda machine targeted the Nazi ideology rather than the Germans as people. In contrast, propaganda portrayed the war in the Pacific as a fight against the Japanese as a race, often

[12] War Relocation Authority, "The Christian Mission Week, Jerome Relocation Center, Community Analysis Section, May 26, 1943," Microfilm publication M1342, reel 19, War Relocation Authority Records, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.
[13] War Relocation Authority, "Final Report, Community Management Division, The Christian Church," 1944, box 198, folder 5.006, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Online Archive of California, accessed July 1, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6s188m9/?.
[14] Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 165.

depicting them as subhuman, similar to rats or savages.[15] Moreover, federal authorities saw German POWs as racial equals and therefore respected them more than the Japanese Americans. In the case of the Germans at Dermott, the majority of them practiced Catholicism and Lutheranism and were unhindered by camp officials as they provided adequate physical and metaphorical space as well as the required materials for their religious needs.

While little has yet been written by scholars about the religious activities inside Dermott, the official PMGO reports that show that federal authorities provided German POWs with ample facilities, materials, and resources for their religious practices. According to a June 6, 1945, report, Dermott Catholics and Lutherans used Jerome's firehouse as a chapel. The structure was one of the few buildings not taken down or sold after the WRA camp closed. Weekly Catholic mass at the camp averaged 350 prisoners between two Sunday services.[16] The attendance of weekly Mass inside the facility demonstrates the fact that the old firehouse was much larger than the makeshift barracks federal authorities reluctantly allowed the Buddhists in Jerome to use. Moreover, federal authorities provided an organ to accompany the Catholic services.[17] Additionally, Dermott officials allowed for a multitude of religious programming and educational courses to occur. According the same PMGO report in June 1945, Dermott held the following services and classes weekly: two Sunday services, weekday evening services, bible lectures, daily conferences, theological community lectures, and seminar courses on various topics such as, "the new testament, Bible history, the Hebraic language, and Church history."[18]

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[15] Hannah Miles, "WWII Propaganda: The Influence of Racism," *Artifacts Journal*, accessed July 11, 2022, https://artifactsjournal.missouri.edu/2012/03/wwii-propaganda-the-influence-of-racism/.
[16] "Field Inspection Reports," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.
[17] "Field Inspection Reports," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.
[18] "Field Inspection Reports," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

The variety and quantity of Catholic, Lutheran, and other Protestant programming supported by US authorities compares favorably to the makeshift services and programs of the Buddhists in Jerome.

Dermott authorities permitted German POW clergy to lead the services rather than an outside minister or Army chaplain, and allowed services to be conducted in the German, rather than English.[19] Here it is once again clear that Federal authorities did not restrict the use of German language with the same vigor they did the Japanese language. While the reports do not detail the daily religious life of those held at Dermott, it is clear that federal authorities provided more than enough funding, facilities, programming, and materials to allow all religions in the camp to prosper and grow.

This analysis, while perhaps not striking, and admittedly based on limited archival materials, and therefore is subject to criticism, does continue the narrative of the thesis that federal authorities regulated German POWs in Dermott with less vigor than they did Japanese Americans in Jerome because they viewed one group as less of a threat than the other despite the citizenship status of the Nisei. All of which adds to our understanding of the limits of democracy, citizenship, race, and religion in America during this time period.

[19] "Field Inspection Reports," 1945, Box 1, Folder 3, World War II Prisoner of War Records, University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

Conclusion

In December 1944 the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the WRA "relocation centers" in *Korematsu v. United States* effectively prolonging the existence of the concentration camps.[1] By that time, though, the Jerome camp had already been closed to make way for Camp Dermott. The Japanese Americans who had made Jerome home were sent to other camps including nearby Rohwer, allowed to move out of camps, or entered some form of service. When Rohwer closed on November 30, 1945, state officials made clear that the Japanese Americans who had spent time in the camps were not welcomed to stay in the state. Governor Adkins had secured a promise that no Japanese American would remain in the state after the war, and the General Assembly had passed a law prohibiting them from owning land. As they were finally released, most Japanese Americans were given a mere $25 and a bus or train ticket to leave the state.[2]

For the German POWs, it was a different story. They remained in Arkansas long after the end of the war across the Atlantic. Although the War Department working in conjunction with the Allies and Axis powers had planned to return all Axis soldiers to their homelands by the start of 1946, Arkansas politicians and their counterparts in other states put up a fuss. The labor shortage caused by the war still ravaged the United States, particularly in the South. Therefore, President Truman put a two month hold on repatriation efforts as southern politicians called for the continuation of the use of POW labor. Esekiel Candler Gathings, an Arkansas Congressman, pleaded the case and declared that Arkansas was still "absolutely dependent upon the relief that

[1] "Facts and Case Summary - Korematsu v. U.S.," United States Courts, accessed July 14, 2022, https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-korematsu-v-us.
[2] Mitchell T. Maki, "How Japanese Americans Fought for-and Won-Redress for WWII Incarceration," History.com (April 29, 2022), accessed July 2, 2022, https://www.history.com/news/japanese-american-wwii-incarceration-camps-redress.

can be obtained from prisoner-of-war-labor."[3] Gathings, though, did not get his wish. They POWs would not work the 1946 harvest as the last German and Italian prisoners in Arkansas boarded trains in May 1946 for the East Coast where they would be put onto boats and sent back to Europe.[4] What was left of Dermott was sold off at auctions and the land once again became nothing more than poor farmland deep in southeast Arkansas.

It was a fitting end to the incarceration of the Japanese Americans and German POWs in Arkansas, entirely consistent with how Jerome and Dermott operated. Japanese Americans were still seen as eternally foreign by the US government and treated as such after the war. When the war ended in Europe, most German POWs went back to just being Germans rather than Nazis. The identity the federal government assigned to Japanese Americans—that they were essentially alien--did not go away after Jerome closed. Within the same spatial reality, US authorities suppressed, regulated, and discriminated Japanese Americans, including the 70% who were US citizens, in Jerome with more vigor than they did German prisoners of war in Dermott. This analysis adds to the evolving understanding of how the US government interpreted race, citizenship, national identity, sexuality, and gender during World War II.

[3] Edward J. Pluth, "The Administration and Operation of German Prisoner of War Camp States During World War II" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ball State University, 1970) Cited and quoted in Pritchett and Shea, 21. Pluth concluded that the War Department went above and beyond the standards set by the Geneva Convention "with unusual perseverance."
[4] Pritchett and Shea, "Afrika Korps in Arkansas," 22.

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