

Hemispheric Solidarity: Experiences and Memories of WWII Internment

Jason Boan



*"Volker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten Güter" (1895), Hermann Knackfuss. Also known as "Die Gelbe Gefahr" (the Yellow Peril).*

## Table of Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Background](#)
  - 2.1 [Roots of Orientalism in Canada, U.S., and Mexico](#)
  - 2.2 [Yellow Peril: Japanese](#)
3. [Hemispheric Solidarity: Internment](#)
  - 3.1 [United States](#)
  - 3.2 [Canada](#)
  - 3.3 [Mexico](#)
  - 3.4 [Central and South America](#)
4. [Conclusion](#)

## 1. Introduction

Stanley Hayami was like any other teenager growing up in Los Angeles in 1941. And like every other American he was devastated when he heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor. In his journal one year later, he remembers feeling “...as if we were in a nightmare.”<sup>1</sup> Stanley Hayami’s journal from the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Relocation Camp is one example of the types of memories people have of their experiences of being evacuated and relocated. Out of the nearly 120,000 Japanese interned in the United States during World War II nearly two-thirds were American citizens by birth, just like Stanley Hayami. He would later go on to serve in the 442nd Regiment in Italy, where he died fighting for his country. The Japanese of Canada and 13 South and Central American countries all have similar memories of the shock and worry upon hearing the news, of relocation and confinement for being Japanese, and of deportation for the security of others.

The United States’ push for hemispheric security during World War II led to the removal and confinement of people of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry from one end of the hemisphere to the other. How did the experiences in each country differ? Do the memories reflect the historical narrative associated with the collective memory? Each nation involved is responsible for providing their official historical narrative and ultimately shaping the collective memory. The experiences and memories of those interned are not confined to borders and official narratives. Due to its hemispheric scale, I argue that the internment system should be viewed as a single transnational system; I further contend that by weaving the memories of

---

<sup>1</sup> Online Archives of California, “Dec 7, 1942,” Japanese American National Museum, <https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf267n98tj/?brand=oac4> (accessed 14 April 2018).

those involved into that transnational historical narrative it will provide a more descriptive and vivid understanding of the events and their impacts. With an emphasis on Japanese in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, this paper will connect the history of the hemispheric solidarity attempted with the internment system to the visual memories of those interned.

## 2. Background

The painting *Volker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten guter* (1895) by Hermann Knackfuss was commissioned by Kaiser Wilhelm II. The painting depicts a dream the Kaiser had of the east invading the Christian lands of the west.<sup>2</sup> The Kaiser sent copies of the painting to the European powers as well as President McKinley in the United States; accompanying each copy was an interpretation of the painting.<sup>3</sup> While the painting speaks for itself, the full interpretation shows the pride and fear that Orientalism was built upon. The inscription as reported in the *Review of Reviews (London) 1895*:

On a plateau of rock bathed in light radiating from the Cross- that symbol in which alone Christians win their victories- stand allegorical figures of the civilized nations. In the foreground is France shading her eyes with her left hand. She cannot yet altogether believe in the proximity of danger; but Germany, armed with shield and sword, follows with attentive eye the approach of calamity. Russia, a beautiful woman with a wealth of hair, leans her arm, as if in close friendship, on the shoulder of her martial companion. Beside this group Austria stands in resolute pose. She extends her right hand in an attitude of invitation, as if to win the cooperation of still somewhat reluctant England in the common task. Italy stands between these two Powers, and like Germany, eagerly gazes on the calamity which menaces them. The rearguard of this group of noble female figures is formed by a young girl with ringlets of curling hair. She images the smaller civilized States, and she, too, carries a spear. In front of this martial group of many figures stands unmailed the winged archangel Michael, holding in his right hand a flaming sword. His countenance is turned towards the female group, his features reflect grave energy, and his outstretched left hand, which points to the approaching horror, also emphasizes the invitation to prepare for the sacred conflict.

---

<sup>2</sup> Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon & Shuster Paperbacks, 2015), 122-123.

<sup>3</sup> Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2014), 118—119.

At the foot of the rocky plateau stands the vast plain of civilized Europe. A majestic stream gushes across it. Lines of mountains bound the horizon, and in the valley cities are discerned, in the midst of which tower churches of various creeds. In the foreground is the Castle of Hohenzollern. But over these peaceful landscapes clouds of calamity are rolling up. Dark pitchy vapours obscure the sky. The path trodden by the invaders in their onward career is marked by a sea of flames proceeding from a burning city. Dense clouds of smoke twisting into the form of hellish, distorted faces ascend from the conflagration. The threatening danger in the form of Buddha is enthroned in this somber framework. A Chinese dragon, which at the same time represents the demon of Destruction, carries this heathen idol. In an awful onset the powers of darkness draw nearer to the banks of the protecting stream. Only a little while and that stream is no longer a barrier.<sup>4</sup>

The painting is also known as *Die Gelbe Gefahr*, the Yellow Peril. Many historians attribute the term “Yellow Peril” to Kaiser Wilhelm in 1895, this painting seems to be the source of that infamy. The term has been used to describe the racist and unjustified fear of Asians and an invasion from the east.<sup>5</sup>

In the decades prior to the start of World War II each of the countries in the western hemisphere had similarities as well as vast differences in their approach to people of Asian Descent. With the large influx of Chinese to many areas of the western hemisphere in the late 1800’s some countries, like the United States, began to worry about a takeover by Orientals. Mexico on the other hand began actively working with Japan in the 1880’s by implementing a treaty of reciprocal equality.<sup>6</sup> This was the first treaty based on equal treatment and freedom of migration between Japan and a Western (white) country. This paved the way for the first Japanese colony in the west that would be establish in Chiapas, Mexico in 1897.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Review of review* (London) 1895, 475.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps: North America: Japanese in the United States and Canada During World War II* (Florida: Malabar Publishing Company, 1993), 29.

<sup>6</sup> Jerry Garcia, *Looking Like the Enemy: Japanese Mexicans, the Mexican State, and US Hegemony, 1897- 1945* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Garcia, 24.

## 2.1 Roots of Orientalism in Canada, U.S., and Mexico

While credit may be given to Kaiser Wilhelm II for coining the term “Yellow Peril,” the ideology and practice of Orientalism began prior to 1895. Throughout the Americas in the mid to late 1800’s the fear and hatred of Asians was directed at the Chinese immigrants. The “Chinese Problem” was a transnational issue that connected the countries of the Americas in policy and cooperation against a global threat.<sup>8</sup> Given that the United States had the largest population of Chinese in the period between 1849 and the early 1900’s it was viewed as the expert on Chinese immigration. Canada and Mexico both looked to and respected the United States expertise on the “Chinese Problem” and used it as a means to prepare for anticipated invasion to their countries.<sup>9</sup> The west coasts of both the United States and Canada, in particular California and British Columbia respectively, were the hotbed of the growing racism towards the Chinese.

Immigration from China started in conjunction with the gold rush in 1849.<sup>10</sup> The Chinese migrants became the source of cheap labor for everything from mining to railroad construction.<sup>11</sup> As Chinese workers became more visible and their numbers increased (almost tripling between 1860 and 1880) fear, hatred, and laws against the Chinese began to emerge. These laws were initially related to Chinese taking jobs away from white workers, however it quickly became about white superiority over Orientals.<sup>12</sup> Much of the racism toward the Chinese was based on their perceived immoral (anti-Christian) lives. This encompassed all

---

<sup>8</sup> Erika Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas; A Hemispheric Approach to Asian American History,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no. 3 (October 2005): 238.

<sup>9</sup> Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 238-239.

<sup>10</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 3.

aspects of their lives- diet, female prostitutes, and men engaged in “women’s” work.<sup>13</sup> With the Workingmen’s party slogan of “the Chinese must go!” in the 1870’s, efforts to control the Chinese immigration eventually lead to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.<sup>14</sup> The Chinese Exclusion Act barred labor immigrants from China and required those seeking entry as non-laborers to be qualified by the Chinese government.<sup>15</sup>

The Chinese experience in Canada largely mirrored that of those in the United States with British Columbia leading the charge against them. The Chinese in Canada were also cheap labor that took railroad jobs from white Canadians. British Columbia began passing a series of laws intended to bar Chinese from settling in the province, however, most were struck down by the Canadian government and courts system.<sup>16</sup> The anti-Chinese sentiment was not isolated to British Columbia and the government did pass the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 which implemented a tax on Chinese, it began at \$50 in 1885 and eventually reached \$500 per head in 1904.<sup>17</sup> Again, similar to the United States, during this time period the Chinese population in British Columbia tripled.<sup>18</sup> In 1885 British Columbia was able to stop Asians from voting or becoming citizens but were not able to prevent Chinese immigration as the United States, Australia, and New Zealand had done.<sup>19</sup>

The anti-Chinese sentiment and rhetoric in Mexico mirrored the United States also, however the Chinese did not. Mexican views on Chinese were also related to their immoral

---

<sup>13</sup> Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 239.

<sup>14</sup> Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 240.

<sup>15</sup> National Archives, *Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)*, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=47#> (accessed 28 March 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 172.

<sup>17</sup> Canada, Chinese Immigration Act 1885, <http://www.asian.ca/law/cia1885.htm> (accessed 28 March 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 241.

<sup>19</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 172.

lifestyle as well as on economics and commerce. Newspapers in Mexico spread terms like “Yellow Plague” and “Mongol Invasion.”<sup>20</sup> In northern areas of Mexico the Chinese did not take low wage manual labor jobs, but rather became entrepreneurs and dominated the local commerce.<sup>21</sup> Unlike their neighbors to the north, Mexico did not pass any sweeping laws intended to curb Chinese immigration. Another key difference is that, while some restrictions were done at the local level, Canada and the United States largely attempted to control the “Chinese Problem” at the federal level and the Mexican government left the issue up to local governments.

## **2.2 Yellow Peril: Japanese**

The redirection of racism from the Chinese to the Japanese immigrants occurred around 1888 and in 1892 Dennis Kearney of the Workmen’s party was now heard shouting “The Japs Must Go!”<sup>22</sup> A marked change in the “Yellow Peril,” in relation to the Japanese specifically, can be traced to 1905. The Japanese victory over Russia that year marked a significant challenge to white military superiority in the world.<sup>23</sup> The increase in Japanese militarism between 1905 and the outbreak of World War II will add to the fear of the “coming” invasion by Asians. The United States saw its largest number of Japanese immigrants in the period just prior to 1905. The sudden visibility of Japanese immigrants in the United States brought the rumors and fears home.

---

<sup>20</sup> Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 241.

<sup>21</sup> Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 241.

<sup>22</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 10.



As with the anti-Chinese views, the leader of the anti-Japanese movement in the United States was California. From 1905 until 1945 the California legislature would introduce and vote on at least one anti-Japanese bill every session.<sup>24</sup> San Francisco specifically, was at the forefront of the racism toward Japanese. Anti-Japanese organizations such as the Japanese-Korean Exclusion League lobbied for “Absolute Exclusion of Asiatics.”<sup>25</sup> In 1906 the San Francisco school board caved to their pressure and segregated its schools forcing all Koreans and Japanese kids to attend the Oriental school with the Chinese students.<sup>26</sup> This drew the rebuke of the Japanese government and the involvement of the Roosevelt administration. While President Roosevelt called for the Japanese students to be returned to public schools, of the ninety-three Japanese students concerned, twenty-five were American born citizens. This created a problem since previous court cases allowed for segregated schools. The United States government had an obligation based on an 1894 Treaty with Japan that granted “most favored nation” status and guaranteed equal treatment.<sup>27</sup>

In the midst of all of this, President Roosevelt briefly broke with the popular narrative of grouping all Asian races together. He called for Japanese to be treated equally with the white European races, this was based solely on their military strength.<sup>28</sup> However, President Roosevelt, aware of the opposition to this idea, did not pursue it. While there is no way to know the outcome had Roosevelt chosen to fight congress, this is major point of contingency in

---

<sup>24</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 125.

<sup>26</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 125.

<sup>27</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 13.

Japanese-American history. In addition to the school segregation, San Francisco began to see an increase in violence directed at Japanese with reported attacks in 1906 reaching almost 300.<sup>29</sup>

The patriotism of San Francisco spread north to Seattle and quickly to British Columbia. When the United States began to legislate racism towards the Japanese some began to move and subsequently led to an increase in Japanese immigrants in Canada and Mexico.<sup>30</sup> President Roosevelt's executive order 589 in 1907 prohibited Japanese to move to the continental United States from Hawaii, which had become a stepping stone for Japanese immigrants.<sup>31</sup> This action lead to a direct increase in Japanese immigration to British Columbia.<sup>32</sup> Feeding off the anti-Asian mob violence started in California the year prior, Canadians enacted similar types of attacks in Vancouver in 1907.<sup>33</sup> As a result of the violence against the Japanese citizens, the governments of Canada and the United States had no choice but to intervene. Rather than condemn and confront the violence at its source, the governments of each country negotiated with Japan to restrict immigration by means of Japan stopping issuance of passports to laborers intending to travel to North America.<sup>34</sup> Both Gentlemen's Agreements were negotiated individually, however, they were nearly identical and signed three days apart; January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1908 for the United States-Japan; January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1908 between Canada-Japan.

While the progression of government sanctioned racism towards the Japanese grew in Canada and the United States, the Latin American countries of Central and South America had

---

<sup>29</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 126.

<sup>30</sup> Lee, "Orientalisms in the Americas," 240.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Congress, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Washington, DC, 1982/83), 33.

<sup>32</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 126.

<sup>33</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 175.

<sup>34</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 129.

mixed sentiments towards Japanese. Brazil and Peru are examples of countries that followed the leadership of the “United States of North America.”<sup>35</sup> Prior to the early 1930’s, the Japanese immigrants in Brazil and Peru had mixed success and acceptance. Some, like Seiichi Higashide, an Issei, first generation Japanese, in Peru, struggled to get established, but once he did he became a successful businessman.<sup>36</sup> However, by 1934 and 1936, laws in Brazil and Peru drastically restricting Japanese immigration were passed.<sup>37</sup> The legislation of both countries were very similar to that of the United States and Canada.

Mexico, on the other hand, embarked on a drastically different relationship with Japan. As previously mentioned, the United States and Canada entered into agreements with Japan with the goal of Japan limiting the number of its citizens it allowed to immigrate. Mexico entered into agreements with Japan to facilitate reciprocal rights and migration between the two countries. The 1888 treaty of Amity, Navigation, and Commerce paved the way for the establishment of the Enomoto Colony in Chiapas in 1897.<sup>38</sup> The 1888 Treaty was the first treaty that guaranteed equal and reciprocal treatment of citizens of Japan and a non-Asian nation.<sup>39</sup> While the original thirty-four members of the Enomoto Colony did not succeed as coffee farmers, the act itself began a period of cooperation between the two countries and eventually put Mexico in the middle of Japan and the United States.

---

<sup>35</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 135.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 69.

<sup>37</sup> Masterson, 72.

<sup>38</sup> Garcia, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Mexico, Japan’s First Equal Treaty Partner,” *Amigos Across the Ocean: Episodes in Japan-Latina America Relations*, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/latin/latin\\_e/episode.html#Mexico](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/latin/latin_e/episode.html#Mexico) (accessed 14 April 2018).

The treaty between Japan and Mexico was mutually beneficial, however, each country's reason for entering into it was extremely different. From 1855- 1876 Mexico had been on a quest to attract European (white) immigrants.<sup>40</sup> Mexico associated the prosperity and modernization of the United States to whiteness and a result of European business investment. Much of the rhetoric was similar to that of U.S. immigration history. One Mexican newspaper in 1870 had an article stating Mexico's need for "...people of Christian countries that can introduce the customs and morals of Christian civilization and its capital."<sup>41</sup> Rather than the permanent European investors they hoped for, Americans began buying land in Mexico for cheap and dividing it up to sell back to Mexicans at higher prices. While Japanese were initially viewed as similar to Chinese, that is non-white, the strong military and economic power of Japan was more in line with white nations than Asian ones.

Moving into the end of the nineteenth century, Japan was engaged in colonizing just as the western powers were. Jerry Garcia divides Japan's colonization into two categories that can be summed up as active and passive.<sup>42</sup> The active colonization involved military occupation of an area, such as Korea. The passive colonization, which was undertaken in Mexico, was non-military and focused on commerce and relationships. As Japan began to see itself as a world power it sought to learn about the western powers to have an advantage should the need arise.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Mexico was also a strategic location for observation of the United States. This

---

<sup>40</sup> Garcia, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Garcia, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Garcia, 22.

<sup>43</sup> Garcia, 23.

observation was not solely for military strategy, but also about industrialization methods as well as world influence.

Many of the individuals arriving in Mexico as part of the colonization process were single males. Unlike in the United States and Canada, these males integrated more into Mexican life than traditional Asian immigrants did. Many of the male Japanese actually married Mexican women and owned businesses. The cordial relationship between Japan and Mexico continued until the attack on Pearl Harbor. During the period leading up to the attack, the United States was actively engaged in an anti-Japanese propaganda campaign and active military operations in Mexico.<sup>44</sup> Despite all this, Mexico and Japan remained committed partners. There are unsubstantiated rumors of Japan and Mexico discussing Japanese naval bases on the pacific coast of Mexico and an oil pipeline to be run from the Gulf of Mexico to its pacific coast. With the attack on Pearl Harbor Mexico is put in a difficult position between Japan and the United States; ultimately the United States wins its call for hemispheric solidarity.

### **3. Hemispheric Solidarity: Internment**

The United States reacted quickly following the attack by Japan on the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. While the identification, movement, and confinement of Japanese from the west coast of the United States appeared to be a reaction, surveillance of Japanese, Germans, and Italians that were living in the United States had been going on for years.<sup>45</sup> President Roosevelt and FBI Director Hoover had been secretly surveilling Germans and anyone that

---

<sup>44</sup> Selfa Chew, *Uprooting Community: Japanese Mexicans, World War II, and the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), 49.

<sup>45</sup> Jan Jarboe Russell, *The Train to Crystal City: FDR's Secret Prisoner Exchange Program and America's Only Family Internment Camp During World War II* (New York: Scribner, 2016), 5.

could be a threat to the nation, this included those of Japanese heritage. Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor the FBI began arresting Germans, Japanese, and Italians, all of whom were in the United States legally, based on secret interviews and accusations by neighbors and friends.

In addition to the long-term surveillance that was being conducted in the United States, the American government was active throughout Central and South America. In 1942 the FBI produced a report titled “Plan of Japanese Invasion Through the Republic of Mexico,” the title is self-explanatory as to the content.<sup>46</sup> The FBI was not the only U.S. agency working in Latin America in the pre- and early war period. In order to coordinate intelligence efforts, the Office of Strategic Services was created, the OSS eventually became the Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>47</sup> The United States justified its work in Latin America as necessary for hemispheric security.

This hemispheric security required not only the surveillance but also the removal of Axis nationals and their families from the Latin American countries. The U.S. State Department oversaw the removal to the United States of over 6,000 German, Italian, and Japanese people from Latin America.<sup>48</sup> The United States presented mass internment as the only way to prevent subversive agents from gathering intelligence and planning attacks. In the end Canada and 13 Central and South American countries showed their commitment to hemispheric solidarity by cooperating with the United States to various degrees.

### **3.1 United States**

---

<sup>46</sup> Garcia, 112.

<sup>47</sup> Heidi Gurke Donald, *We Were Not the Enemy: Remembering the United States Latin-American Civilian Internment Program of World War II* (New York: iUniverse, 2008), 95.

<sup>48</sup> Donald, xvii.

As mentioned, arrests happened quickly following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Many of those detained had families, children that were American citizens by birth. These families were affected by the news of the attack the same as any other American. Henry Sugimoto, who arrived in Hanford, California as a child, has captured his memories of confinement in over 100 paintings. After graduating high school, he attended the University of California, Berkley and several art schools in California and France; he returned to the U.S. where his work was featured in art exhibits.<sup>49</sup> None of this mattered after December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Despite spending World War II in several internment camps, Henry Sugimoto continued to paint his experiences. His painting *Untitled* (News of Peral Harbor) 1942 depicts a distressed Japanese family in California listening to news of the attack on the radio. They are in any American kitchen with a portrait of Abraham Lincoln on the wall, an America flag, and young boy looking out the window. In place of the ceiling is a scene of the attack itself.<sup>50</sup>

In February of 1942, President Roosevelt issued executive order 9066, which authorized the establishment of secure zones and the removal of anyone deemed a threat to national security.<sup>51</sup> This order set in motion the mass removal of all Japanese and their families from the west coast of the United States. This order was selectively enforced with the different

---

<sup>49</sup> *Densho Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Henry Sugimoto," by Greg Robinson, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Henry\\_Sugimoto/http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Henry\\_Sugimoto/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Henry_Sugimoto/http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Henry_Sugimoto/) (accessed 14 April 2018).

<sup>50</sup> Henry Sugimoto, "Untitled (News of Pearl Harbor)," Japanese American National Museum, <http://www.janm.org/collections/item/92.97.104/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

<sup>51</sup> National Archives, "Executive Order 9066: Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese (1942)," Ourdocuments.gov, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=74&page=transcript> (accessed 10 April 2018).

nationalities- Germans and Italians were carefully selected for confinement while the Military required the removal of all people of Japanese heritage.<sup>52</sup>

The first stop for many of the Japanese families was one of the 15 assembly centers located along the west coast. The assembly centers were racetracks and fairgrounds converted to barbed wire enclosed prisons manned by armed military guards.<sup>53</sup> The Mambo family's experience of being relocated and confined was captured by Bill Mambo and his camera. A portion of his memories have been compiled and edited by Eric Muller.<sup>54</sup> The Mambo family was ordered to report to the Santa Anita Assembly Center, which had previously been a racetrack. At Santa Anita and others like it, such as the Tanforan Assembly Center (also a racetrack) families were given converted horse stables to live in.<sup>55</sup> Once processed at the assembly centers the relocation began.

The families were sent to camps all over the country with a variety of names, such as "evacuation," "relocation," and "internment" camps. I place these words in quotations because they are some of the official words used by the government and are contested today. None of them accurately describe what the camps really were. The camps were not for the individuals safety or as a result of unavoidable dislocation by the people in them, such as in the event of a natural disaster. None of the people placed in them were charged with nor accused of committing any crimes. The people were placed in them solely because of their race. Roger

---

<sup>52</sup> Eric Muller, ed., *Colors of Confinement: Rare Kodachrome Photographs of Japanese Incarceration in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 5.

<sup>53</sup> Muller, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Muller, ed., *Colors of Confinement: Rare Kodachrome Photographs of Japanese Incarceration in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> Dorteia Lange, *Impounded: Dorteia Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment*, ed. Linda Gordon and Gary Okihiro (New York: Norton and Company, 2006), 142.



Daniels has addressed this issue head on by presenting the changing government terminology.<sup>56</sup> He points out the fact that the government, including the President, used the term “concentration camps” until word of what was going on in German concentration camps surfaced. When incorrect words are used, as in this case, it can fundamentally change the collective memory of an event. The words used imply criminals and victims of natural disasters rather than victims of governmental racism.

The Mambo family was ordered to the Santa Anita Racetrack in April of 1942, where they stayed until they were sent to the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Relocation Camp in September 9.<sup>57</sup> Stanley Hayami was a high school student from Los Angeles that was also sent to the Heart Mountain Camp. Stanley Hayami, whose diary is now housed at the Japanese American National Museum, details the life of an American teenager behind barbed wire.<sup>58</sup> His entry from December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1942 marks the one-year anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Like many Americans, he recounts where he was when he heard the news. Stanley remembers feeling as if “...we were in a nightmare.”<sup>59</sup> Stanley Hayami was an American and the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor resonated with him as it did with many of the Nisei or second-generation Japanese, those born in North and South America to Japanese parents. Stanley did what many American teenagers did during this time, he joined the U.S. Army in June of 1944; he died less than a year later, April 1943, in Italy trying to save a fellow soldier.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 46.

<sup>57</sup> Muller, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Online Archives of California, “Guide to Stanley Hayami Diary, 1941- 1945,” Japanese American National Museum Collection Guide, <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf687004zq/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

<sup>59</sup> Online Archives of California, “Dec 7, 1942,” Japanese American National Museum, <https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf267n98tj/?brand=oac4> (accessed 14 April 2018).

<sup>60</sup> Online Archives of California, “Guide to Stanley Hayami Diary, 1941- 1945,” Japanese American National Museum Collection Guide, <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf687004zq/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

Stanley Hayami's story is not unusual in the history of the internment system. The U.S. Army created the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment so that Nisei could serve in the army. The U.S. government even instituted a draft for the Nisei.<sup>61</sup> The 442<sup>nd</sup> went on to become the most decorated army unit during the war. Interestingly, members of the 442<sup>nd</sup> that had been in and still had parents in U.S. internment camps helped to liberate the Dachau Concentration Camp. The unit was made up of volunteers and draftees. This is not to say that all Nisei were eager to join the Army and fight for a country that has taken away their rights and freedoms. A number did refuse the draft and were tried and sent to prison.<sup>62</sup>

The Nisei struggled navigating between being part of a Japanese family and being an American kid. All the while being imprisoned just like the enemy that was attacking their country. The younger Nisei, teens and children, held on to their pre-war American identity the best. A touching example of this is the Miss Breed Collection.<sup>63</sup> Clara Breed was a children's librarian at the San Diego Public Library.<sup>64</sup> Many of the children that frequented Miss Breed's library after school were Japanese-Americans. These children were caught up in the mass relocation in 1942. Once interned a number of the children wrote Miss Breed letter; not only did she write back, but she sent the kids' books. Yoshiko Kubo writes back to thank her for the book and to share some important news: "...I receive your book. I was very surprised to go to the post office and find a package waiting for me."<sup>65</sup> Yoshiko continues with the big news about

---

<sup>61</sup> Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 65.

<sup>62</sup> Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 65.

<sup>63</sup> Japanese American National Museum, Clara Breed Collection, <http://www.janm.org/collections/clara-breed-collection/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

<sup>64</sup> Joanne Oppenheim, *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference* (New York: Scholastic Nonfictions, 2006), 9.

<sup>65</sup> Japanese American National Museum, "[Letter to Clara Breed from Yoshiko Kubo, Arcadia, California, April 25, 1942]," Clara Breed Collection, <http://www.janm.org/collections/item/93.75.31HN/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

the "...opening of a circulating library soon." In all, Miss Breed received over 300 letters from children during the internment period.

The memories of those discussed above are reflective of the experiences of many of those that lost their freedom in the name of hemispheric security. These experiences are not just limited to the United States, hemispheric solidarity stretched from the arctic nearly to the subarctic. While the physical memories of the individuals are not as readily available, a brief overview of the internment systems in Canada and Mexico will be presented presently. There will be similarities and differences when compared to that of the United States, that does not change the fact that the United States was at the center of all that happened in the name of hemispheric security.

### **3.2 Canada**

Canada had been actively involved in World War II prior to the attack that officially drew the United States in. Canada not only had troops engaged in the conflict but it was also a destination for some of England's prisoners. England's POW camps were overflowing with German and Austrian POW's, thousands of which were sent to Canada.<sup>66</sup> Canada's response to the attack on Pearl Harbor followed United States in time and magnitude. Less than a week after the President Roosevelt issued EO 9066 the Canadian government issued P.C. 1486.<sup>67</sup> This order allowed for the removal of Japanese from the pacific coast of Canada. In the end 20,000 Japanese Canadians were removed from a 100-mile protective zone.<sup>68</sup> After decades of trying

---

<sup>66</sup> Nicole Brunnhuber, "After the Prison Ships: Internment Narratives in Canada," *Totally un-English?: Britain's Internment of Enemy Aliens' in Two World Wars* (2005): 165.

<sup>67</sup> Canada, "P.C. 1486," Orders in Parliament, 1942.

[https://archive.org/stream/proclamationsord06cana/proclamationsord06cana\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/proclamationsord06cana/proclamationsord06cana_djvu.txt) (accessed 14 April 1942).

<sup>68</sup> Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War* (Ottawa: Ann Gomer Sunahara, 2000), 1.

to remove the Japanese at the provincial level, British Columbia was on its way to being Japanese free. Those initially confined were adult males who were sent to various work camps.<sup>69</sup>

The camps were different from the barbed wire enclosures guarded by soldiers of the United States. The Canadian government used the physical terrain and weather to keep the Japanese Canadians confined.<sup>70</sup> Leading up to confinement, Japanese Canadian fishermen were required to surrender their boat. The Canadian Navy seized approximately 1200 fishing boats from Japanese Canadians.<sup>71</sup> The Canadian government took it a step further and began selling the confiscated property which led to a lengthy court battle of which the Japanese Canadians were on the losing side of.<sup>72</sup>

Without fences and the restrictions of the American camps, the memories of daily life in Canadian camps differed. One internee remembers being allowed to fish on Sundays.<sup>73</sup> Not all memories bring a smile, however. This same person recounts “In a concentration camp and paying unemployment (tax).” Similar to U.S. camps, Canadian Japanese were paid for their work and required to cover certain personal expenses themselves. Aside from the method of confinement and the confiscation and sale of personal property, the Canadian Japanese experience was very similar to the experiences of Japanese in the United States. While outside of the scope of research conducted, the post-war experiences of Canadian Japanese differed greatly from that of the Japanese in the United States.

---

<sup>69</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 185.

<sup>70</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 186.

<sup>71</sup> Sunahara, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Martin Strong, “Japanese Canadians and the Internment: The Role of the New Canadians as an Agent of Resistance, 1941- 1945” (Honors Thesis, University of Victoria, 2017), 14.

<sup>73</sup> Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 186.

### 3.3 Mexico

Japanese Mexican experiences during World War II are complex and vastly different from the Japanese in Canada and the United States. The experiences also varied depending on the location of Japanese Mexicans within Mexico. The Mexican response to the United States can be viewed from different perspectives, as it is by historians. Erika Lee argues that when compared to the Latin American countries “...Mexico alone engaged in a large-scale forced evacuation of Japanese Mexicans...”<sup>74</sup> While it is true that Mexico required all people of Japanese ancestry to move from designated protective zones, they were not forced into internment camps as in other countries. Jerry Garcia highlights the decentralized nature of the forced relocation and lack of oversight as the cause for voluntary internment of many of the Japanese Mexicans.<sup>75</sup>

The Mexican government made it clear from the start that it would not create internment camps. The order declared by General Sanchez not only established the 150-mile protective zones from which all Japanese Mexicans to leave, it also stated that “there will be no concentration camps.”<sup>76</sup> Unlike the United States and Canada however, the Mexican government did not do anything to facilitate this relocation order. Each state individually chose whether or not to enforce the order. Some states and towns chose to accept bribes to allow Japanese Mexicans to stay, while others, such as Chiapas with a long history of residents of Japanese heritage, took responsibility for their Japanese Mexican citizens. Chiapas was the site of the first Japanese colony in Mexico and the Japanese Mexicans were an integral part of the

---

<sup>74</sup> Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 228.

<sup>75</sup> Garcia, 171.

<sup>76</sup> Garcia, 144.

local community. Many of the Japanese men married local Mexican women and operated businesses. While Mexico did not create and operate internment camps, the Japanese in Mexico did. The Comité Japonés de Ayuda Mutua, CJAM (Japanese Mutual Aid Committee) was responsible for creating, administering, and funding the haciendas that the Japanese used as “internment camps.”<sup>77</sup>

For the Japanese, self-exile to one of the haciendas run by the CJAM was about protection from outsiders and resistance to their forced relocation. While reclusion was voluntary, relocation and dangers of persecution were not. The Mexican government established several surveillance and anti-espionage agencies and had two facilities in which it confined Japanese Mexicans that it deemed dangerous. General Sanchez mentioned them in his relocation order: “...we will not imprison them unless they are charged under the Espionage Law.”<sup>78</sup> The response by Mexico was not as heavy-handed as that of the United States, but it did achieve similar results.

### **3.4 Central and South America**

The pre- and post-war experiences of Japanese Latin Americans in Central and South America are as varied as the countries themselves. No two countries responded to the Japanese in the same manner. With over 248,000 Japanese, Brazil had the largest population of Japanese in the western hemisphere leading up to 1940.<sup>79</sup> The large Japanese Brazilian population prevented the mass relocation and confinement of them. While they were not forced into

---

<sup>77</sup> Garcia, 164.

<sup>78</sup> Garcia, 144.

<sup>79</sup> Masterson, 131.

internment camps or rounded up and deported to the United States as those in Peru were, they were subject to strict laws, had their bank accounts frozen and businesses taken away.

The five nations of Central America quickly confined and deported their Japanese citizens to the United States, while Paraguay's single colony was left untouched.<sup>80</sup> Chile and Argentina claimed neutrality and Cuba imprisoned all of its male Japanese population on a prison island. Costa Rica not only imprisoned all of its Japanese, but it also confiscated their property and auctioned it off.<sup>81</sup> Similar yet different responses were seen in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Caribbean. In many of the countries no one was safe from the hemispheric security policy being enacted. One man in Nicaragua fought evacuation by showing he was a veteran of the United States Navy; in the end the United States nor Nicaragua took his status as a veteran into account.<sup>82</sup>

#### **4 Conclusion**

On the morning of December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, the United States had been at the center of the Orientalism in the western hemisphere for almost a century. The attack on Peral Harbor was the proof people had been warning of for nearly 100 hundred years. Even though the attack was directed solely at the United States, and some would argue was not unprovoked, the call to action was eagerly answered by most of the western hemisphere. The resulting relocation and confinement of over 150,000 Japanese across 15 countries transcended borders. Natural born citizens were detained and shipped to the United States for "repatriation" to countries they had

---

<sup>80</sup> Masterson, 140- 141.

<sup>81</sup> Masterson, 141.

<sup>82</sup> Masterson, 141.

never been to. The United States organized and lead the transnational structure of racism and fear that, after 80 years, continues to affect those involved.

Many have shared their memories in various forms. These memories augment, enhance, and in some cases challenge the historical narratives produced by the nations. Up to this point memories have been used to tell an individual's story or to present an isolated view walled off from the larger system. By inserting the memories into the context of the system as one transnational structure, the collective memory will shift from one of nationalism to one that focuses on the people. The internment system was instituted on the claim of hemispheric solidarity and security, it is only fitting that the memories and historical narrative be presented as a single transnational event that shapes the hemispheric collective memory.



## Bibliography

- Brunnhuber, Nicole. "After the Prison Ships: Internment Narratives in Canada." *Totally un-English?: Britain's Internment of Enemy Aliens' in Two World Wars* (2005): 165- 178.
- Canada. Chinese Immigration Act 1885. <http://www.asian.ca/law/cia1885.htm> (accessed 28 March 2018).
- Canada. "P.C. 1486." Order in Parliament, 1942.  
[https://archive.org/stream/proclamationsord06cana/proclamationsord06cana\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/proclamationsord06cana/proclamationsord06cana_djvu.txt)  
(accessed 14 April 2018).
- Chew, Selfa. *Uprooting Community: Japanese Mexicans, World War II, and the U.S.- Mexico Borderlands*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015.
- Daniels, Roger. *Concentration Camps North America: Japanese in the United States and Canada During World War II*. Florida: Krieger Publishing, 1993.
- Daniels, Roger. *Prisoners Without Trial" Japanese Americans in World War II*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.
- Donald, Heidi Gurke. *We Were Not the Enemy: Remembering the United States Latin-American Civilian Internment Program of World War II*. New York: iUniverse, 2008.
- Garcia, Jerry. *Looking Like the Enemy: Japanese Mexicans, the Mexican State, and US Hegemony, 1897- 1945*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014.
- Hayami, Henry. "Untitled (News of Pearl Harbor)." Japanese American National Museum.  
<http://www.janm.org/collections/item/92.97.104/> (accessed 14 April 2018).
- Japanese American National Museum. "[Letter to Clara Breed from Yoshiko Kubo, April 25,

1942].” Clara Breed Collection. <http://www.janm.org/collections/item/93.75.31HN/>  
(accessed 14 April 2018).

Lange Dorothea. *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese Internment*.

Edited by Linda Gordon and Gary Okihiro. New York: Norton and Company, 2006.

Lee, Erika. “Orientalisms in the Americas: A Hemispheric Approach to Asian American History.”

*Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no. 3 (October 2005): 235- 256.

Lee, Erika. *The Making of Asian America: A History*. New York: Simon & Shuster Paperbacks,  
2015.

Masterson, Daniel and Sayaka Funada-Classen. *The Japanese in Latin America*. Chicago:  
University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. “Mexico, Japan’s First Equal Treaty Partner.” Amigos Across  
the Ocean: Episodes in Japan-Latin America Relations.

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/latin/latin\\_e/episode.html#Mexico](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/latin/latin_e/episode.html#Mexico) (accessed 14 April  
2018).

Muller, Eric, ed. *Colors of Confinement: Rare Kodachrome Photographs of Japanese American  
Incarceration in WWII*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

National Archives. *Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)*.

<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=47> (accessed 28 March  
2018).

National Archives. “Executive Order 9066: Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese (1942).”

Ourdocuments.gov. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=74&page=transcript>.  
(accessed 10 April 2018).

Okihiro, Gary. *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2014.

Online Archives of California. "Guide to Henry Sugimoto Diary, 1941- 1945." Japanese American Museum Collection Guide.

<https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf687004zq/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

Oppenheim, Joanne. *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and A Librarian Who Made a Difference*. New York: Scholastic Nonfiction, 2006.

*Review of Review (London)* 1895.

Robinson, Greg. "Henry Sugimoto." In *Densho Encyclopedia*.

[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Henry\\_Sugimoto/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Henry_Sugimoto/) (accessed 14 April 2018).

Russell, Jan Jarboe. *The Train to Crystal City: FDR's Secret Prisoner Exchange Program and America's Only Family Internment Camp During World War II*. New York: Scribner, 2016.

Strong, Martin. "Japanese Canadians and the Internment: The Role of the New Canadians as an Agent of Resistance." Honors Thesis, University of Victoria, 2017.

Sunahara, Ann Gomer. *Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War*. Ottawa: Ann Gomer Sunahara, 2000.

U.S. Congress. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*.

Washington, DC, 1982/83. <https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/justice-denied> (accessed 1 April 2018).