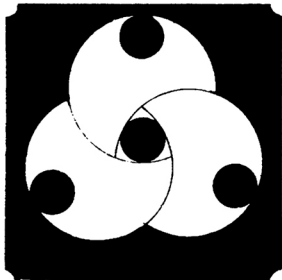


Enduring Cultures: Communities Working Together in a Time of War: My Friends Behind Barbed Wire



Teacher's Guide to Classroom-Based Assessment Activities

**Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community
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Overarching Focus Question:

What was the role of religious organizations during the relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II?

View the film, *My Friends Behind Barbed Wire*. Present the students with the reflection questions prior to watching the film, and use them as a catalyst for discussion.

Reflection Questions for the film:

1. How was the Andrews family a “bridge” between two cultures?
2. What caused the Japanese American community in Seattle to become suspect as “the enemy”?
3. Why did Brooks Andrews and his family feel that somehow they were also considered “the enemy” during wartime?
4. If you were part of an interned Japanese American family, what would you consider your most valuable or essential possessions to take with you if you could only “take what you can carry”?
5. What acts of prejudice did the Andrews family and Japanese Americans experience during the war?
6. Could this happen again? What are the parallels between the Japanese American internment story and the Muslim community today?

For additional information on the Andrews family, refer to the attached pdf file for a 2007 article on Brooks Andrews and his family from the *Bainbridge Islander*, published by the *Kitsap Sun*.

Classroom-Based Assessment Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Religious Organizations and the Japanese American Internment

Read each passage on religious organizations. Choose two organizations and compare and contrast the experiences of each in relation to the Japanese American community.

Society of Friends (Quakers)

The AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) played a major role in resettlement efforts from concentration camps, and helped relocate many students from the camps into colleges and universities. The (AFSC) is a Quaker service organization which, while it did not actively oppose internment, was active in providing services for the internees. Many AFSC members helped internees settle their business affairs, and when the war was over, helped them to come back to their communities or resettle in other areas. The AFSC also operated toy loan centers for imprisoned children, and provided other services that helped make life easier for the internees far from home.

Buddhist Church

Several Buddhist churches stored the belongings of imprisoned Japanese American families on church property during the war. Non-Japanese friends and neighbors watched over them to protect the Church and the belongings from vandalism and theft. It was difficult for Japanese American members of these churches to practice their religions in the camps. At the outbreak of WWII, Japanese Issei ministers were arrested and sent to Department of Justice Camps, and the U.S. government banned everything written in Japanese, which included Buddhist church materials. There were very few Buddhist religious writings translated into English at the time. The Shinto religion (another traditional Japanese religion) was prohibited outright, on the pretext that it represented connections to the Emperor of Japan. After the war, many Buddhist churches reopened as hostels and places of refuge for Japanese Americans returning to their homes.

Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church

Members of a Los Angeles church that opposed the internment did what they could to help Japanese Americans sent to concentration camps. Knowing their friends would soon be gone, they went door to door, getting keys and promising to look after their houses and care for their lawns and yards. When the Japanese Americans from the Mt. Hollywood, California, neighborhood returned years later, the church people welcomed them back to their perfectly maintained homes, and presented them with their keys. Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church is a Just Peace Church of the United Church of Christ, with a history of dedication to peace and reconciliation. The church sheltered conscientious objectors in the 1940s and helped establish churches in the camps. Its members supported internees for medical care, holiday gifts, arts and crafts materials, and even blood for transfusions, and helped former internees find jobs and housing after the war.

Church of the Brethren

The Church of the Brethren, one of only three churches in the United States dedicated to pacifism, took a leading role in a well-coordinated, nationwide public and private effort to move Japanese Americans out of internment camps and resettle them in towns and cities across the Midwestern United States. They also sponsored Japanese American students to attend Brethren college and university institutions in the Midwest. While the number of those who returned to Indiana to live would remain small in comparison to nearby states, the efforts of this dedicated church group resulted in a tenfold increase in Indiana's Japanese American population by the end of World War II.

ACTIVITY 2: Research Questions

Choose one of the questions below and write a persuasive paper or presentation. Explain significant similarities and/or differences related to challenges and responses to the challenges with specific, supported examples.

1. Many Japanese Americans were of Shinto or Buddhist faith. How did the internment affect the practice of their religious beliefs? Were other basic rights also affected? How was the experience of Japanese Christians different from those who practiced Shintoism or Buddhism?
2. What is the tradition of religious organizations in opposition to war and in support of victims of injustice? Research two of the groups below (or one below and one of your choice that's not listed*), and using graphic organizers, write an opinion paper comparing and contrasting the two groups. How were their actions similar? How were they different?
 - Jehovah's Witnesses
 - Quakers
 - Mennonites
 - Church of the Brethren
 - Jewish Pacifists
 - Seventh Day Adventists
 - Another religious group of your choice*

ACTIVITY 3: Examining Ordinary People Who Became Extraordinary By Acting When Others Did Not.

Read each of the following short stories of heroism in support of the Japanese American community during World War II. Choose one story, and from the point of view of the personal story, write a letter to the editor in support of some aspect of the Japanese American community during internment. You can conduct additional research on the people before writing your letter to gain additional information and perspectives.

Mildred and Walter Woodward, Editors

The co-owners and editors of *The Bainbridge Review*, a small-town newspaper on Bainbridge Island, Washington, were among a very small number who openly opposed the internment of the Japanese Americans. At the outbreak of the war, *The Review* published a "War Extra" that featured prominent articles about the loyalty of Japanese Americans and set an example for the community to show support for their friends and neighbors.

In late March, 1942, Bainbridge Island Japanese Americans were the first to be removed to concentration camps. Walt Woodward openly spoke against the internment in his paper, and received threats and hate mail for his position. Walt and his wife, Millie, hired Bainbridge Nisei to report back from the Manzanar Concentration Camp (and later Minidoka, where Bainbridge Island Japanese Americans relocated) on the everyday lives of Island internees. The Review printed weekly items on who had the chicken pox, who won the camp's softball game, and who died from pneumonia. Many of the interned Bainbridge families also subscribed to *The Review*, which provided them with a connection to home. At the end of the war, the Woodwards also wrote editorials to support the return of Japanese Americans to Bainbridge Island. The Woodwards strong commitment to civil liberties continued throughout their lives.

Clara Breed, Librarian

A children's librarian named Clara Breed was at the train station in 1942 to see off the young Japanese Americans she had come to know through her work at the San Diego Public Library. They were on their way to concentration camps so she handed out stamped, self-addressed postcards, urging them to write to her when they reached their destination. This remarkable librarian saved her collection of more than 250 postcards and letters from Japanese American children describing their life in the camps in Arizona and California. Clara Estelle Breed's collection was later donated to the Japanese American National Museum, and made into a book, *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference*.

Clara Breed was a friend and reliable correspondent to her young Japanese American friends, sending them books and supplies, and telling them about news at home. She also spoke out against the internment policy, believing that democracy "must be defended at home as well as abroad." Breed's collection of letters and postcards give a glimpse into the everyday life in the camps: their school, their families, and the things they did for work and recreation. Through her actions, Clara Breed served as a role model and inspiration for friendship and social justice.

Floyd Oles, Produce Shipper and Community Leader

An ordinary Sumner, Washington, man who managed the Washington State Taxpayer's Association and the Washington Produce Shipper's Association, was one of the few who spoke out about the commercial motives of White growers in promoting the removal of Japanese American farmers. For expressing his views publicly, Floyd Oles received hate mail and telephone threats from California agricultural concerns.

Floyd Oles was in regular contact with many Japanese American produce cooperatives and packing companies through his work. He spoke on behalf of the West Coast residents of Japanese descent in hearings regarding their removal to concentration camps, and their contributions to agriculture in Washington State. He cited the efforts of California farming corporations to support removal of Japanese farm cooperatives who were in direct competition with big business.

Earl Finch, Rancher and Businessman

A young rancher from Hattiesberg, Mississippi, became a "one-man USO" in 1943 for the local Nisei. He noticed some GIs from nearby Camp Shelby one day, and invited them home for dinner. This generous and kind-hearted man was Earl Melvin Finch, who said, "They looked like the loneliest human beings in the world." The soldiers turned out to be Japanese American volunteers from Hawaii, part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Finch continued to welcome Japanese American soldiers at barbecues and picnics at his home, and helped them find comfort and friendship although they were far from home. Members of the Hattiesberg community threatened and vilified Finch as a "Jap lover." The military suspected him of spying for Japan, and the FBI screened his mail, looking for evidence of wrongdoing for his opposition to racism and social injustice.

Finch continued to host special outings, and parties, and his efforts to make Hawaiian boys feel at home became legendary. After the war, Finch continued to help Japanese American GIs, visiting veterans in hospitals, helping them to find jobs, and loaning money to others to start their own businesses. The Hawaii Hochi, wrote an editorial that said the Finch had opened "new channels for the outflow of a spirit of love and respect" and a "new faith in the tenets of democracy."

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Below are examples of graphic organizers for use with *Enduring Cultures: Communities Working Together in a Time of War: My Friends Behind Barbed Wire*. Use them to help organize your report or presentation.

| SIMILARITIES | | |
|----------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Quakers | and | Seventh Day Adventists |
| anti-war philosophy | | conscientious objectors |
| social justice goals | | pacifists |

DIFFERENCES

| Quakers | Seventh Day Adventists |
|---------------------------|--|
| Ministers came to camps | Many parishioners and ministers in camps |
| Ministers all Caucasian | Japanese Americans in ministry |
| Not many in U.S. or Japan | Strong religion in Japan and U.S. |
| No dietary restrictions | Many are vegetarians |

Definition of Terms:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Conscientious objector | The legal definition of a conscientious objector is a person who objects to participation in all forms of war, and whose conviction is based on a religious, moral, or ethical belief system. |
| G.I. | An enlisted person in or a veteran of any of the U.S. armed forces, especially a person enlisted in the army. The acronym "G.I." comes from the term, "Government Issue." |
| Hakujin | Japanese word for Caucasian; literally means "white person." |
| Issei | First generation Japanese who immigrated to the United States (or other country). |
| Nisei | Second generation Japanese American who have United States citizenship by birth. |
| Pacifist | Someone who believes that violence of any kind is unjustifiable and that one should not participate in war. |
| Religious Society of Friends | Also known as the "Quakers," the Religious Society of Friends emphasizes the personal experience of God in one's life. Quakers affirm the equality of all people before God regardless of race, station in life, or sex; this belief leads them into a range of social concerns including pacifism, equality, and simplicity in living. |
| Shinto | The native religion of Japan which involves the worship of kami, or spirits. Many Japanese cultural practices have origins either directly or indirectly rooted in Shinto. At the time of WWII, Shinto was considered the national religion of Japan. |
| USO | The United Service Organization is a civilian, voluntary, nonprofit organization serving the morale needs of U.S. military personnel and their families worldwide. USO was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941, who determined that private organizations should handle the on-leave recreation of the rapidly growing U.S. military. During World War II, USO became the G.I.'s "home away from home," and began a tradition of entertaining the troops that continues today. |

References:

Flewelling, Stan. 2002. *Shirakawa: Stories from a Pacific Northwest Japanese American Community*. Auburn, WA: White River Valley Museum.

Neiwert, David A. 2005. *Strawberry Days: How Internment Destroyed a Japanese American Community*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Seigel, Shizue. 2006. *In Good Conscience: Supporting Japanese Americans During the Internment*. San Mateo, CA: AACP, Inc.

Best websites for basic information, photos, and archival materials:

Densho, the Japanese American Legacy Project website: www.densho.org

Japanese American National Museum website: <http://www.janm.org/>

Smithsonian Institute History Museum Japanese American Internment website, *A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution*.
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/experience/index.html>

Selected references for specific classroom-based assessment activities:

A Brief History of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center and the Japanese American Experience by Mike Mackey. <http://chem.nwc.cc.wy.us/HMDP/history.htm>

Buddhist Churches of America from Wikipedia.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_Churches_of_America

Letters from the Japanese Internment Smithsonian Institute and the Japanese American National Museum, the letters of Clara Breed.
http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/japanese_internment/index.html

Mystery boulder by Burl Burlingame in the Honolulu Star Bulletin, on Earl Finch.
<http://starbulletin.com/2005/04/10/travel/story2.html>

Naya Works on U.S. – Asia Trade by Cindy Ellen Russell in the Honolulu Star Bulletin, on Seiji Naya, adopted son of Earl Finch.
<http://starbulletin.com/2004/05/09/business/story2.html>

Religion as a Peace Movement by Kevin Alverson, 2005.
<http://www3.eou.edu/hist06/Religion.html>

From Internment to Indiana-Japanese Americans, the War Relocation Authority, the Disciples of Christ, and Citizen Committees in Indianapolis by Nancy Nakano Conner.
<http://www.historycooperative.org/cgi-bin/justtop.cgi?act=justtop&url=http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/imh/102.2/conner.htm>