

# From Internment to Indiana Japanese Americans, the War Relocation Authority, the Disciples of Christ, and Citizen Committees in Indianapolis

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On the eve of World War II, Indiana possessed almost no Japanese population and certainly nothing that could be called a Japanese American community. The attack on Pearl Harbor brought this tiny and obscure segment of the state's population into sudden prominence. On that fateful day, the *Indianapolis Star* managed to find two Japanese Americans to interview: Professor Toyozo W. Nakarai, a teacher of Semitic languages and literature at Butler University, and Harry Sasaki, operator of a coffee and tea stand in the City Market. Both proclaimed their support for the United States government, and, as the *Star* headline read, "Will Fight if Necessary, Say 2 Long Residents of Indianapolis."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Indianapolis Star*, December 8, 1941. On the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, Nakarai submitted a letter of resignation to the dean of the College of Religion, who accepted the letter, tore it into small pieces, and said no more about it. Nakarai continued on the faculty at the college (later the Christian Theological Seminary) and became a prominent scholar of the Dead Sea Scrolls after their discovery in 1947. *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, September 12, 1965; Keith

That Nakarai and Sasaki were among a very small number of Japanese in Indiana in the early 1940s was the end result of a historical pattern that dates back to the late nineteenth century. As the American population diversified, Hoosiers held to an anti-immigrant position that was noticeably out of step with the expanding and increasingly urban Midwest. Even as most Indiana residents looked inward and tried to resist intrusive change from outside, however, a few had reason to take a much more transnational view. Among them were religious denominations with ties to the international scene through their missionary operations. I will show how a Protestant denomination with its international headquarters in Indianapolis, the Disciples of Christ, took a leading role in a well-coordinated, national public and private effort to move Japanese Americans out of internment camps and resettle them in towns and cities across the nation's heartland. While the number of resettlers in Indiana would remain small in relation to nearby states, the efforts of this dedicated group resulted in a tenfold increase in the Hoosier state's Japanese American population by the end of World War II.

The Asian presence in Indiana had never been very conspicuous. Twenty-nine persons of Chinese descent resided in the state in 1880; a decade later their numbers were augmented by a handful of Japanese (see Table 1). The increased presence of Japanese immigrants here and elsewhere coincided with the beginning of the "new" or second wave of immigration that also brought growing numbers of southern and eastern Europeans to America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most of the Japanese settled on the West Coast; those who came to the Midwest followed the pattern that James Madison notes of other second-wave immigrants, who settled in other states of the Old Northwest in much greater numbers than they did in Indiana. By 1920 Indiana had the largest proportion of white, native-born citizens in the nation.<sup>2</sup>

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Watkins, *Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis: A History of Education for Ministry* (Indianapolis, 2001), 277. Sasaki operated his Japan Tea Company from 1912 until his death in 1971, after which his widow continued the business. He was well known in the market area for his black felt hat, smoking pipe, and sense of humor. *Indianapolis Star*, January 19, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (1986; Bloomington, Ind., 1990), 173; Madison, *Indiana Through Tradition and Change: A History of the Hoosier State and Its People, 1920-1945* (Indianapolis, 1982), 3. Histories of Indiana written at mid-century allude to, but do

Table 1  
Indiana Japanese and Chinese Population, 1880-1940<sup>3</sup>

	Japanese	Chinese
1880	0	29
1890	18	92
1900	5	207
1910	38	276
1920	81	283
1930	71	279
1940	29	208

Economic factors account, in part, for Indiana's relatively low proportions of Japanese and other new immigrants in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indianapolis lagged behind other large mid-western cities both in its total population and in the total number of industrial jobs. Ball State professor of social sciences Robert L. LaFollette rejoiced in the pages of this journal in 1929 that Indiana had all but missed "the pollution of the stream of political and social intelligence" by the influx of Roman Catholic southern and eastern Europeans into the region. He attributed this anomaly to Indiana's comparative lack of economic opportunity and heavy industry, to its early land settlement by old-stock Europeans, and to its lack of a hinterland that would feed a central metropolis.<sup>4</sup>

More recent historians have identified the anti-foreign attitude typified by LaFollette as a reason in itself that immigrants tended to bypass Indiana—Hoosiers had a reputation as backward and nativist. The state's

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not attempt to explain, the low number of immigrants in Indiana during the period of industrialization around the turn of the twentieth century. John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana from Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth* (New York, 1954), 298-300; Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, 1968), 365, 368-69.

<sup>3</sup>U.S., *Eleventh Census, 1890: Vol. 1, Population*, 474; U.S., *Twentieth Census, 1980: Vol. 1, Population*, 16-26.

<sup>4</sup>Robert L. LaFollette, "Foreigners and their Influence on Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 25 (March 1929), 22-23. LaFollette (1894-1967) was a relative of Wisconsin Senator Robert M. LaFollette.

upland southern and New England settlers, according to James J. Divita, were traditionally wary of any trend that could bring diverse or multicultural elements into their environment. In 1907 the Indianapolis Board of Trade called for the restriction of foreign immigration, a sentiment shared by other civic groups such as the Indianapolis Commercial Club. Madison observed that “the belief that Hoosiers were generally alike, that they avoided extremes, that they held on to past traditions, that they represented what was typical and perhaps even best about America—all this provided a leitmotif running through the history of the state in the period 1920-1945.”<sup>5</sup>

The story of the small but significant influx of Japanese Americans into a state with so little historical record of welcoming new immigrant groups begins in the aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the military to establish restricted zones and to exclude any and all persons from these areas. By the end of the year the army would evacuate the entire population of Japanese and Japanese Americans—approximately 120,000 people—from California, western Oregon, western Washington, and southern Arizona. The internees went first to local assembly centers and then to ten internment camps in eastern California, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming. Forty years later, in 1983, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians would conclude that the evacuation and internment were not justified by military necessity but were prompted rather by race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.<sup>6</sup>

Few Americans at the time, however, raised their voices against such anti-foreign, even xenophobic, sentiments. Conspicuous among the dissenters to Roosevelt’s action were representatives of the multi-denominational home missions establishment. For several decades,

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<sup>5</sup>James J. Divita, “Without Tenement: The State of Indiana Ethnic History,” in *The State of Indiana History 2000*, ed. Robert M. Taylor, Jr. (Indianapolis, 2001), 91-124; Madison, *Indiana Through Tradition and Change*, 6.

<sup>6</sup>U.S., Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority, *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation* (Washington, D.C., 1946), viii, 13; Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (1988; Seattle, 1995), 214-17, 338. Upon the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the U.S. government issued a formal apology and a redress payment to all surviving internees.



Street scene, 1943, Manzanar Relocation Center, California

Photograph by Ansel Adams, Courtesy Library of Congress

American churches had been sending missionaries to Japan, resulting in a cadre of active and returned missionaries of many denominations. In 1908, the Home Missions Council of North America organized in New York City for interdenominational cooperation in matters of population growth, declining rural areas, and immigrant welfare.<sup>7</sup> In the days after Pearl Harbor, Dr. Frank Herron Smith, superintendent of the Japanese Methodist churches in California, took the initiative in coordinating their efforts to stop what they feared would be the mass evacuation of Japanese Americans. Dr. Mark A. Dawber, executive secretary of the Home Missions Council, hurried to the West Coast, where he commissioned Smith's group to establish the Protestant Church Commission for

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<sup>7</sup>Everett L. Perry, "National Council of Churches," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, ed. William H. Swatos, Jr. (Walnut Creek, Calif., 1998), 321. A January 1943 letterhead of the Home Missions Council described it as "The Interchurch Agency of Home Missions Boards and Societies of Twenty-Three Denominations," including Methodist, Presbyterian, the Society of Friends, National Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Christian Methodist Episcopal.

Japanese Service, with the Rev. Gordon K. Chapman, formerly a Presbyterian missionary in Japan, as its executive secretary. Smith and Chapman—along with Galen M. Fisher, a former Y.M.C.A. secretary in Japan; W. C. James, a local Quaker; and Dr. C. A. Richardson, a secretary of the Methodist board—called on General John L. DeWitt, the Western Defense Commander, to urge him to hold hearings for individual Japanese, offering church buildings and returned missionaries to act as interpreters. DeWitt refused to meet with the group personally and sent a substitute in his place.<sup>8</sup>

When Congressman John H. Tolan arrived on the West Coast to hold investigative hearings on the Japanese American issue, he found church people among the most active in testifying against wholesale evacuation and internment. Dr. Paul Reagor, president of the Northern California Church Federation, supported by Smith, Chapman, Fisher, and James, spoke at the San Francisco hearings. Floyd Schmoe, a Quaker connected with the American Friends Service Committee, reported that eight of the twelve people who spoke against evacuation at the Tolan committee's Seattle hearings on March 11, 1942, were church-related. Outnumbered four-to-one by people testifying in favor of internment, opponents failed to convince the committee, which was, in any case, merely advisory to the military authorities under General DeWitt.<sup>9</sup> On March 18, Roosevelt's Executive Order 9102 created the War Relocation Authority (WRA) to oversee the evacuation and relocation of Japanese Americans.

Unable to influence federal policy, the missionary community focused its attention on helping the west coast Japanese population. One member denomination of the Home Missions Council, the Indianapolis-based Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) operated a mission church serving the Japanese in California. Direct oversight of the Indianapolis group's efforts fell to the United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS), an arm of the church formed in 1920 by the union of several Disciples of Christ mission groups—the wealthiest (and therefore most powerful) of

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<sup>8</sup>Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York, 1946), 13-14.

<sup>9</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 15; Floyd Schmoe, "Seattle's Peace Churches and Relocation," in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, ed. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H. L. Kitano (rev. ed., Seattle, 1991), 117-22.

which was the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Like the parent church, the UCMS maintained headquarters in Indianapolis.<sup>10</sup>

In early March 1942, UCMS President Robert M. Hopkins sent a representative, William R. Holder, to Los Angeles in response to a plea from the Japanese Christian Church and Institute, a key Disciples congregation established before the war. Holder spoke to the congregation on Sunday, March 8, and met with the church board that afternoon. On March 9, he filed his report to the home office, which published it in the April 1942 issue of *World Call*, the UCMS magazine. The report gives an interesting snapshot of the church's desperate attempts to deal with the looming Japanese American crisis. At the time of its writing, evacuation seemed certain but internment did not. Rumors suggested that the people would be "assigned for resettlement in places as yet undetermined." Holder wrote, "The picture of them wandering about, wanted nowhere but forced to keep moving, haunted one's mind." Disciples of Christ members at other churches in southern California were asked to offer their homes as places where members of the Japanese American congregation could store their household goods.<sup>11</sup> By May, as one local pastor would later recall, "nearly forty years of concerted effort of Disciples of Christ abruptly came to an end" as the evacuation project began in earnest.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars and popular writers often use the term "relocation" to refer to the removal of Japanese Americans from their homes in the West to the internment camps, but the WRA quickly came to see its work in a different light—as literally the "relocation" of people from one part of the country to other regions. Sensitive to the "hostility, doubts and fears of the public at large," the agency tried to prepare host communities in advance of the "controlled relocation" that it proposed for the west coast evacuees. The WRA's official policy, which entailed not only relocation but also dispersal, rested on the agency's belief that small numbers of

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<sup>10</sup>Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis, 1975), 344-51. The Disciples maintained missions in Japan, out of which convert Toyozo W. Nakarai came to Butler University. *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, September 12, 1965.

<sup>11</sup>William R. Holder, "Love Not Evacuated," *World Call*, 24 (April 1942), 14.

<sup>12</sup>Kojiro Unoura, "Christian Ministry in Exile," *World Call*, 26 (November 1944), 19.

Japanese Americans could be resettled in new areas of the country with less opposition than large numbers.<sup>13</sup>

The policy of dispersal was more than a wartime exigency. Government officials hoped that assimilation would provide a permanent solution to the "Japanese problem" by eliminating west coast Japanese enclaves altogether. Japanese Americans were therefore urged to take advantage of relocation opportunities in many different parts of the country; once resettled, they were asked not to associate with each other but rather to try to blend in with the local population. This philosophy was shared at the highest levels. President Roosevelt, speaking in a November 1944 press conference, reported that "a good deal of progress has been made in scattering them through the country, and that is going on every day . . . 75,000 families scattered around the United States is not going to upset anybody."<sup>14</sup> As historian Roger Daniels writes in his standard history of the subject: "Both Franklin D. Roosevelt and his War Relocation Authority had high hopes that, after the war, the new Japanese American communities would contain the majority of the Japanese American population."<sup>15</sup>

In attempting to relocate thousands of people, the federal government looked first to the Intermountain West. However, racial prejudice and hysteria there echoed the mood of the Pacific Coast, and all of the region's governors (except Ralph Carr of Colorado) refused to cooperate with the resettlement program. Meeting in Salt Lake City on April 7, 1942, the governors and their attorneys general raised every kind of protest from fear of mob violence to economic and fiscal concerns. These bitter complaints were heard by Colonel Karl R. Bendetsen of the Western Defense Command, Tom C. Clark of the Wartime Civil Control

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<sup>13</sup>U.S., Department of Interior, WRA, *The Relocation Program* (Washington, D.C., 1946), 4, 14-15. The vanguard group leaving the camps was the so-called "College Nisei," second-generation, American-born Japanese. By 1945, eight Indiana colleges hosted 25 Japanese American students: DePauw University, Earlham College, Franklin College, Hanover College, Indiana Technical College, Manchester College, St. Mary's College, and Valparaiso University. Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 112-39; Justin Libby, "Japanese," in *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience*, ed. Robert M. Taylor, Jr., and Connie A. McBirney (Indianapolis, 1996), 298-312.

<sup>14</sup>Roosevelt quoted in Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York, 1993), 80. Roosevelt may have meant "people," not families, as the total number interned was approximately 120,000.

<sup>15</sup>WRA, WRA, 132-33; Daniels, *Asian America*, 286-87.



Administration, and Milton S. Eisenhower, at that time the director of the WRA. The meeting drove home the point that if Japanese Americans were to be resettled away from the West Coast, they might find a warmer welcome farther inland, especially if the people of the states receiving them could be carefully prepared.<sup>16</sup>

In response to the challenge of building a more favorable attitude toward relocation and dispersal, the WRA turned its efforts to developing public-private partnerships that would bring the government's mission together with those of local church groups and citizen committees. Among those groups, the WRA found willing partners among members of the national church missionary community that had already mobilized to support resettlement. Indianapolis's Disciples of Christ were, as we have seen, actively engaged in the task of supporting their Japanese American members in California. The church's efforts were coordinated by its UCMS Committee on War Services, formed in 1941, and headed by Willard M. Wickizer, director of the Home Missions Division of the UCMS. Additional committee members came from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.<sup>17</sup> Through this committee, the UCMS continued to shepherd its flock of approximately 900 Japanese American Disciples of Christ members, now being scattered throughout the nation.<sup>18</sup> In the late summer of 1942, at its International Convention at Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Disciples of Christ's general assembly passionately discussed Japanese American internment. The UCMS, with the approval of its cabinet and board of managers, put forward a resolution expressing concern for the maintenance of democratic principles in wartime and calling the internment of more than 100,000 people—70 percent of them American citizens—without the filing of charges or conviction for any crime, contrary to American ideals of justice. The resolution called for hearing boards for internees, release of those judged loyal, aid in securing jobs, and compensation for losses. After removing some language deemed critical of

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<sup>16</sup>WRA, *The Relocation Program*, 6-8; Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, *The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of Japanese-Americans During World War II* (London, 1969), 116.

<sup>17</sup>Willard M. Wickizer to Committee on War Services, January 18, 1945, Committee on War Services (hereafter CWS) collection (AC #81-40), box 1 (Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tenn.); McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 394-95, 407. Other Indianapolis members included Cleo Blackburn, Clifford H. Jope, Mrs. H. B. Marx, and William T. Pearcy.

<sup>18</sup>"James Sugioka to Important Post," *World Call*, 24 (September 1942), 20.

the government, "The revised document was passed by an overwhelming vote, despite the frantic efforts of one or two delegates to encompass its defeat."<sup>19</sup>

With consensus forged, the denomination was well prepared for the September 24, 1942, joint meeting held between the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches in New York City.<sup>20</sup> At this meeting, two WRA representatives, Thomas W. Holland and John H. Provinse, explained in detail the strategy for resettlement and made recommendations as to how the churches could assist. When asked how the WRA intended to start the project, Holland replied that "we intend to concentrate effort in a relatively few places like Chicago, Cleveland, Minneapolis or Des Moines—nine or ten mid-west communities. This would be the resettlement of the first thousand." The discussion also addressed Catholic and Jewish collaboration, conditions for release of internees, and methods of assisting with job placement. Asked whether periodic check-ups on the resettlers would be necessary, Holland replied, "I would like to see these people restored to complete freedom, wards of nobody. But it might be well, in cases where single girls are employed, for someone on the local committee to investigate carefully the position open and then after she begins work to keep an eye on how she gets along."<sup>21</sup>

At a second joint meeting two weeks later the church representatives established the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans. Fourteen constituent denominations, including the Disciples of Christ (represented by Miss Dale Ellis, executive secretary of institutional missions for the UCMS), joined forces to initiate the committee's work of organizing local support groups and finding jobs and housing for resettlers. They agreed on a budget of \$10,000-\$15,000 for administration. The YMCA and YWCA sent representatives to the third meeting of the Committee on Resettlement, held in Chicago on October 25, 1942. Toru Matsumoto, an assistant and later director for resettlement on the

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<sup>19</sup>"Convention Resolutions," *World Call*, 24 (September 1942), 16.

<sup>20</sup>The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America was organized with thirty-three Protestant denominations in 1908 as part of the Social Gospel movement's push toward ecumenism. In 1950, the Council of Churches and the Home Missions Council merged with ten other organizations to form the National Council of Churches.

<sup>21</sup>"Minutes of Special Group Called to Consider Plans for Japanese Resettlement," September 24, 1942, New York City, CWS, box 1; *Disciple Herald*, 1 (December 1945), 2.



Packing up, 1943, Manzanar Relocation Center  
A crowd gathers to say farewell to the young women (left foreground)  
preparing to leave for resettlement

Photograph by Ansel Adams, courtesy Library of Congress

committee's staff, wrote that "as those present expressed their views, representing wide ranges of community life, resettlement came to seem not only possible but highly desirable." By the end of October, George E. Rundquist, a Quaker who had given up his publishing business to work voluntarily on behalf of Japanese Americans, assumed the position of executive secretary for the committee.<sup>22</sup>

Just over two months later, on January 4, 1943, the government's first midwestern field office opened in Chicago. During the course of the

<sup>22</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 55-56; J. Quinter Miller (secretary-treasurer of the Committee on Resettlement) to committee members, November 10, 1942, CWS, box 1. The fourteen constituent bodies were Church of the Brethren, Congregational and Christian Churches, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Church, Evangelical and Reformed Church, Society of Friends, Mennonites, Methodist Church, Northern Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Protestant Episcopal Church, Reformed Church in America, United Brethren Church, and United Presbyterian Church. The same group of churches was active on the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, which took responsibility for working inside the relocation camps. The commission cooperated with the Committee on Resettlement but operated independently.

year, additional “area” offices opened in Cleveland, Kansas City, Salt Lake City, Denver, New York City, and Little Rock, with approximately thirty-five smaller “district” offices established in secondary cities. These offices handled contacts with potential employers of Japanese Americans, monitored and tried to improve public attitudes toward the resettlers, and provided services to newly arrived evacuees from the camps.

Not all midwesterners approved of the new federal policy. In Indiana, the Marion County Building Trades Council fired off an immediate protest, which was delivered to Washington, D.C., by Congressman Louis Ludlow. WRA deputy director E. M. Rowalt assured Ludlow that Indiana would not receive evacuees unless the sentiment of each community was first ascertained. Rowalt further attempted to soothe the objectors by noting that the candidates for resettlement were accustomed to working in agriculture and service occupations, not in high-paying war plants.<sup>23</sup>

Four months later, an article in the *Indianapolis Star* announced the opening of a WRA field office on the sixth floor of the Circle Tower in downtown Indianapolis. Edmond T. Cleary, the relocation officer for Indiana, promised that evacuees would be placed only in those Hoosier communities where positive sentiment already existed. To ensure that existing workers would not be displaced by cheap labor, Cleary affirmed that the Japanese Americans would receive the prevailing wage rates in local communities. “We are here only to fill a need if the need exists,” he proclaimed, adding that the evacuees had received security clearances and were available for farm labor.<sup>24</sup>

The week after Cleary announced his arrival in Indianapolis, George Rundquist sent a letter to representatives of two local church groups—executive secretary Howard J. Baumgartel of the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis and Dale Ellis of the UCMS. Rundquist advised Baumgartel and Ellis to contact Cleary and to begin the task of assisting the government’s relocation efforts: “I believe now is the time for you to organize your forces to open up homes for evacuees who might resettle in your city. Possibly you could arrange also to meet some of the evacuees at the station as they arrive, and plan to render

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<sup>23</sup>WRA, *The Relocation Program*, 19; *Indianapolis News*, January 29, 1943.

<sup>24</sup>*Indianapolis Star*, May 13, 1943.

other services you may deem necessary to help in the satisfactory relocation and assimilation of these people into the community." Rundquist also asked the church officials to keep his staff informed of resettlement activities undertaken by the churches in Indianapolis.<sup>25</sup>

The Church Federation had already formed an opinion regarding how it would respond to the Japanese American crisis. At a March 11, 1943, meeting of the Federation's Inter-racial Committee—a group of black and white clergy and laymen organized in 1926 to deal with matters concerning African Americans and African American churches—Baumgartel brought up the plans to resettle Japanese Americans in midwestern cities. Much discussion ensued, but because some members felt that Indianapolis was not ready to accept the Japanese, the committee could not reach an agreement. In fact, "the talk also pointed out that the members of this committee themselves were not in accord about their attitudes toward the situation." The issue was therefore tabled, and minutes of Church Federation records bear no evidence that the question was ever discussed again.<sup>26</sup>

The Disciples of Christ, on the other hand, were fully committed and determined to conduct the work of the national Committee on Resettlement. The UCMS had already hired James Sugioka, an elder in the Hollister (California) Christian Church before the war, to assist relocated Japanese Americans in Colorado's Arkansas Valley.<sup>27</sup> In 1944 the UCMS brought Sugioka to its Indianapolis office and charged him with the task of maintaining contacts both with the internment camps and with Disciple congregations across the country.

Historian Sandra C. Taylor has enumerated the challenges faced by the Committee on Resettlement in its efforts to aid Japanese American

<sup>25</sup>George E. Rundquist to Dale Ellis, May 18, 1943, CWS, box 1; WRA, *The Relocation Program*, 89.

<sup>26</sup>Inter-racial Committee, Minutes, March 11, 1943, in Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, Records, 1886-2002 (M0755), box 89 (Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis); Edwin L. Becker, *From Sovereign to Servant: The Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, 1912-1987* (Indianapolis, 1987), 21, 38-39.

<sup>27</sup>Sugioka fled California to settle in Colorado with his family. After the war ended, Sugioka stayed on with the UCMS, eventually becoming an ordained minister in the Disciples of Christ church and interim minister at three Indiana churches. Girdner and Loftis, *The Great Betrayal*, 117; Kathleen Van Nuys, "Retired Minister Recalls Nightmare," *Indianapolis News*, December 7, 1977.

relocation.<sup>28</sup> In parallel with the practical problem of finding jobs and housing, she points to two public relations issues: reassuring internees inside the camps about their prospects if they were to relocate and convincing those outside the camps to support the effort. In the latter case, they were guided by a church coalition “Plan for General Promotion” (a copy of which had been attached to the minutes of the September 24, 1942, joint meeting), which called for “publicity in the public press and, in particular, in the religious press toward this same end.” On the copy of the report now filed in the Disciples of Christ archive, the phrase “publicity in the public press” has been crossed out—evidently on the advice of WRA representative Holland, who had reasoned that “a wide publicity campaign would probably arouse the country unnecessarily. It would get communities excited over a ‘Japanese invasion,’ for example.” To a follow-up question about publicity within the churches, however, Holland responded, “You should make them fully aware of the mechanics of the project and of what is involved. This is different from putting items into the local newspapers.”<sup>29</sup> Protestant groups approached the public relations issue by publishing literature: bulletins for the internees that reported conditions in specific eastern and midwestern cities, and pamphlets for their congregations aimed at stirring up favorable sentiment toward the resettlers.<sup>30</sup>

The WRA also fostered the “inside” public relations campaign. In August and September 1943, the agency sent photographer Charles E. Mace to the Midwest. Beginning in Chicago on August 18, Mace proceeded to Cleveland, then spent four days in Indiana (August 24-27), before heading to St. Louis and Kansas City, with the assignment to depict the amenities of life in order to attract more internees to the area. The caption for one Indiana photograph reads: “The residents of Indianapolis are for the most part amusement lovers. The city boasts dozens of theaters, both legitimate and movie. One of the latter is the Indiana, shown here.” Another photograph shows “A street scene in The

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<sup>28</sup>Sandra C. Taylor, “‘Fellow-Feelers with the Afflicted’: The Christian Churches and the Relocation of the Japanese During World War II,” in *Japanese Americans*, ed. Daniels et al., 126.

<sup>29</sup>“Minutes of Special Group Called to Consider Plans for Japanese Resettlement,” September 24, 1942, CWS, box 1.

<sup>30</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 142-44; Gordon K. Chapman, “Memorandum on the Scope, Function, and Policies of the Western Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service,” December 9, 1942, CWS, box 1.



Marie Kitazumi, Indianapolis, August 25, 1943

WRA photographer Charles Mace depicted Japanese Americans in Indianapolis engaging in patriotic activities. Here, resettler Marie Kitazumi, employed as a secretary in Indianapolis, purchases a war bond under the auspices of the Colonial Dames

Photograph by Charles E. Mace, courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Circle, the hub of the Indianapolis business district. In the center are shops, theatres, restaurants, a church, etc. Buses to and from all parts of the city take on and unload passengers here.” Mace also photographed the countryside west of Indianapolis and all along his route. He presents good farm land and a shot of Plainfield with the caption: “A small town typical of those found in the Midwest farming regions.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup>War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement (BANC PIC 1967.014—PIC), vol. 43, section E, WRA nos. H-193, H-188, H-199 (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley), online at <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/dynaweb/eac/calher/jvac/> (click on Container Listing, Series 12, Group 84).

Mace photographed four Japanese Americans in Indianapolis—all young women, three employed as secretaries and one as a waitress. Two, Marie Kitazumi and Monica Itoi, are shown “at the entrance to a church where they attend services.” Their clothing and hair styles could not be more “American.” Kitazumi is also shown purchasing a \$100 war bond at a Colonial Dames booth, “with money saved from her salary.” Mace’s photographs and their captions, in other words, not only try to show Indianapolis in its best light, they also portray the resettlers as model citizens who fit in well in their new communities.

As depicted in the photographs, the resettlers who came to Indianapolis would seem to be typical of the demographic group most likely to leave the camps, which Dorothy Swaine Thomas characterized as “the most highly assimilated segments of the Japanese American minority” or “Christian-secular nonagricultural Nisei.” In other words, one problem that the local committees did not have to deal with, at least initially, was that of cultural adjustment. Most of the early resettlers were not immigrants; as Nisei, they were middle-class, English-speaking citizens who had grown up in American schools and neighborhoods. At the time of World War II, the Nisei would have been people in their twenties and thirties.<sup>32</sup>

The WRA worked to form favorable “outside” public opinion as well. On November 16, 1943, WRA director Dillon S. Myer came to Indianapolis to speak at a meeting of state commanders and state adjutants of the American Legion.<sup>33</sup> Acknowledging his dismay at the negative sentiments about the relocation program, which the Legion had expressed in various resolutions, he welcomed the chance to give them “full and accurate information.” Myer explained in detail the WRA’s method of compiling a comprehensive docket on each individual who applied for release from the internment camps. He emphasized the dif-

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<sup>32</sup>Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Salvage: Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement* (Berkeley, Calif., 1952), 125, 128. Thomas, a UC-Berkeley sociologist, directed the Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study, a large-scale independent research study conducted in four of the internment camps and in Chicago during the war.

<sup>33</sup>Two months earlier, an international labor publication had commended the Indiana chapter of the American Legion for “exposing” a “powerful coalition” in its “widespread campaign of propaganda” to “saturate the Mid-West” with cheap Japanese labor relocated from the Pacific Coast. “Deport All Japs, Says Legion,” *International Teamster*, 40 (September 1943), 33; “Jap Girl Lectures to Churches on Jap ‘Culture,’” *International Teamster*, 40 (November 1943), 26.



ference between these camps and the internment camps built by the Department of Justice to imprison suspicious enemy aliens, declaring that the purpose of the WRA's camps was "to provide places where the evacuees could be quartered while we were developing an orderly program of relocation in normal communities." Myer did not neglect to point out the pragmatic arguments for resettlement: the expense of maintaining the camps, their consumption of goods and materials needed elsewhere, and the nationwide manpower shortage. But he also appealed to the Legion's desire to promote American ideals, something impossible to do in "an atmosphere which makes a mockery of our American traditions." Myer considered this speech, which was reported in the *Indianapolis Star*, to be a significant step forward, remarking in a memorandum the following month that within the leadership of the American Legion, "unfriendly though it has been, we have secured a substantial amount of understanding and support."<sup>34</sup>

The Disciples of Christ eventually joined in this effort to sway "outside" public opinion. At the church's international convention in Columbus, Ohio, October 17-22, 1944, the delegates issued a resolution on the "Restoration of Rights to Americans of Japanese Descent." The resolution, duly reported in *World Call*, expressed thanks to the federal government for its efforts in resettlement work, to the Home Missions Council for its service in the relocation camps, and to "churches around the country which have helped to find employment for these people, have secured community acceptance, and have supplied them with spiritual guidance." It then pointedly thanked the FBI and the War Department for making public the fact that these people were *not* guilty of sabotage in Hawaii (as had been widely reported) and the Selective Service for allowing Japanese Americans to serve in the armed forces and for publicizing their "exceptional record on the European Front as well as in the South Pacific." In conclusion, the delegates called upon the federal government to remove "whatever restrictions have been imposed

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<sup>34</sup>*Indianapolis Star*, November 17, 1943; Dillon S. Myer, "The Relocation Program," speech to the American Legion, November 16, 1943; Myer, memorandum to the staff of the WRA, December 21, 1943, Papers of Dillon S. Myer (Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri), online at [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/japanese\\_internment/docs.php](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/japanese_internment/docs.php). Myer added: "There are a great many people in this country who feel that all persons of Japanese ancestry should be confined under heavy guard for the duration of the war. I want to say right here and now that I consider such a proposal fundamentally un-American."

upon these people because of race" and restore to them "all of the freedoms which other Americans enjoy."<sup>35</sup>

The UCMS Committee on War Services stepped up its efforts to carry out its "inside" communications task in January 1945, when it began publishing a newsletter for its scattered Japanese American flock. The *Disciple Herald* provided information about life on the outside for internees who might be thinking of leaving the camps. "In this period of unparalleled readjustment," wrote the committee's executive secretary, Willard M. Wickizer, "we want to be of every possible help." News items about Japanese Americans who had resettled in Chicago, Rochester (Minnesota), Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati appeared in the first issue. "Generally speaking, prejudice is less, east of the Missouri River, or roughly, east of 95 degrees latitude," declared the *Disciple Herald*, although it also warned against some states with discriminatory laws. Admitting that housing was a major headache, the publication advised resettlers to start with leads from friends, newspapers, or a committee. It also summarized the favorable employment picture: domestic jobs ("usually a stepping stone to something better for those with ability"), industrial jobs ("even for those with language difficulty"), farming opportunities in both the North and South, and, most enticingly, professional positions ("skilled trade, clerical and so on—all for the applying and taking").<sup>36</sup>

Occasionally, the *Disciple Herald* reported opportunities in Indiana, such as an offer by Otto Frenzel of Carmel to provide \$150 per month and a furnished five-room bungalow in exchange for the services of a couple. G. Ikeda of Knox advertised for a family interested in farming, noting a school bus service and location "near Bass Lake, a famous fishing spot." Offering a salary of \$80 to \$90 per month, electricity, five tons of coal per year, one gallon of milk per day, 400 pounds of meat per year, a place to raise chickens for family use, and a plot of land for a home garden, Lawrence Lindley of Hagerstown commented: "Salary may seem low but it is no lower than those prevailing in that area and a man is able to save."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup>"Actions at Columbus," *World Call*, 26 (December 1944), 36.

<sup>36</sup>*News Bulletin*, 1 (January 1945), 2-3; *News Bulletin*, 1 (March 1945), 1-2; copies in CWS, box 1. After its first issue, the bulletin was renamed *The Disciple Herald* and seven additional issues were published before it ceased operation in October 1946.

<sup>37</sup>*Disciple Herald*, 1 (July 1945), 3; "An Opportunity," WRA correspondence file, box 2 (Disciples of Christ Historical Society).

In Indiana, the Committee on War Services also worked to locate jobs in its role as liaison for the state. In July 1943, Miss Jessie M. Trout, a Disciples missionary, along with Paul Sato and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Tsukamoto, toured rural Indiana communities under the sponsorship of the UCMS and WRA. Seeking to survey the farm labor situation and gauge community sentiment toward Japanese Americans, they met with more than 1,700 people, including farm groups, church groups, town officials, and industrialists. The *World Call* reported: "Even when there was early evidence of suspicion or apathy, the simple telling of the story almost invariably won friends."<sup>38</sup>

The public-private effort also engaged the assistance of local volunteers to find housing in Indianapolis. On one level, the WRA solicited recommendations via an advisory committee led by Rowland Allen, personnel manager of L. S. Ayres and Company department store, and Mr. and Mrs. Howard J. Baumgartel (he had been unable to mobilize the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis). Other participants included Howard Nyhart (executive secretary of the city's Chamber of Commerce) and his wife, William Book, Eugene Foster (of the Indianapolis Service Foundation), and Alvin T. Coate (a "prominent Quaker"). An aside in a WRA report notes that the problem with the black community "disappeared under some of our able Negro leaders' guidance. Mr. Cleo Blackburn, known throughout the city, has been our principal aid."<sup>39</sup> Additional support came from social and governmental agencies, such as the YWCA and the United States Employment Service, whose manager, a Mr. Bennett, attended some of the committee meetings. In Fort Wayne and South Bend, the secretaries of the YWCA took an active part in helping the relocation officers, arranging meetings for *them with the heads of other agencies in their communities*.<sup>40</sup>

One of Mace's Indiana photographs portrays a meeting of the "committee on housing," a group of nicely dressed women, including one or two African Americans. They are "discussing ways and means of

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<sup>38</sup>"A Truly Christian Service," *World Call*, 25 (September 1943), 4.

<sup>39</sup>Blackburn was the executive director of Flanner House, an ordained Disciples of Christ minister, and a member of the UCMS Committee on War Services. Michelle D. Hale, "Cleo W. Blackburn," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Bloomington, 1994), 323-24.

<sup>40</sup>"Final Report of Indianapolis District Office," 2-3, Records of the War Relocation Authority, record group 210, box 6, folder 2D (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).



A meeting to consider Japanese resettlement in Indianapolis, August 26, 1943  
Mrs. Royal McLain (standing left) addresses a group discussing accommodations for incoming  
resettlers (local WRA officer Edmond T. Cleary is seated at table center)

Photograph by Charles E. Mace, courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

finding suitable quarters for the many relocatees who are finding employment in Indianapolis.”<sup>41</sup> Organized late in 1943, the committee wrote to all the women leaders of all the churches in Indianapolis regarding the housing dilemma. The committee was disappointed, however, when Hoosiers offered only temporary housing, excluding families with children. The relocation office found only one viable method of obtaining housing for families—“having employers furnish a house along with the job if they wanted to secure Japanese help.”<sup>42</sup>

The combined public and private efforts drew 254 Japanese Americans (202 of them American born) to Indiana. Who were they? We do not know a lot about them, as there are very few documentary sources specific to Indiana or Indianapolis. Some were regular folks, like Mrs. T. Kawada, a beautician, and her daughter, Alyce, who studied music and worked part-time in the city library. A small number had a military connection. When the war began, Japanese Americans were already serving in the armed forces of the United States, and some enlisted or were draft-

<sup>41</sup>WRA Photographs, H-183.

<sup>42</sup>“Final Report of Indianapolis District Office,” 5.

ed during the months between Pearl Harbor and the evacuation from the West Coast. When the army moved 250 of them inland to Fort Benjamin Harrison on the east side of Indianapolis—where their weapons were taken away and they were assigned to menial tasks—the relocation program allowed their wives and fiancées to follow. Some of the Japanese American soldiers from Fort Harrison eventually went to fight in Europe with the 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team, but others remained throughout the war and settled in Indianapolis permanently afterward. For example, after an honorable discharge, Henry Nishida hired on with a local trucking firm.<sup>43</sup>

In February 1946, the Indianapolis district office of the War Relocation Authority closed its doors. The following year, the WRA reported that over 25,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans had relocated to the Midwest. Chicago drew the largest number; other popular destinations included Cleveland, Detroit, and Minneapolis/St. Paul (see Table 2). The recurring historical pattern of low migration rates to Indiana, as compared with the other states of the Old Northwest and upper Midwest, held true for this diaspora. Why, comparably, did Indiana draw so few resettlers? Why did the city of Des Moines attract more than the entire Hoosier state? Indiana may have been distinctive, but it was not alone in its history of low immigration and anti-foreigner attitudes.

Table 2  
Midwestern Destinations of Evacuees by State (and City)<sup>44</sup>

Illinois (Chicago)	12,776	(11,309)
Indiana	254	
Iowa (Des Moines)	641	(378)
Michigan (Detroit)	3,047	(1,649)
Minnesota (Minneapolis)	2,046	(1,354)
Missouri (St. Louis)	1,108	(469)
Ohio (Cleveland)	4,422	(3,089)
Wisconsin (Milwaukee)	769	(422)
Total	25,532	

<sup>43</sup>*Disciple Herald*, 1 (January 1945), 3; Frances Ito, interview by author, March 15, 2004. Baumgartel reported that the Church Federation had made one contribution to the relocation effort: encouraging citizens to welcome these soldiers, some of whom had been invited into churches and also into homes. Inter-racial Committee, Minutes, March 11, 1943.

<sup>44</sup>WRA, WRA, 203-205.

One reason for Indiana's lack of attraction may have been lukewarm positive influences rather than outright negative factors. As evidenced by the need for the inside publicity campaign, people in the internment camps were generally reluctant to venture out into unfamiliar and potentially hostile parts of the country. Even though the majority had been cleared to leave by July 1943, many hesitated because they feared public reaction and, having suffered economic losses, were worried about jobs and housing. To counteract this uncertainty, employers from some cities, driven by the shortage of home front manpower during the war, recruited workers aggressively. The Stevens Hotel in Chicago, for example, hired several hundred evacuees through strong recruiting efforts. Cities such as Chicago, Minneapolis, and Cleveland could also offer more jobs and a wider range of occupations. Finally, although housing remained scarce, church groups in Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Des Moines, led by the American Friends Service Committee and the Brethren Service Committee, operated hostels to provide reasonably priced living accommodations until resettlers could find permanent housing.<sup>45</sup> There is no indication that Indianapolis or other Indiana cities offered any of these incentives to relocating Japanese Americans.<sup>46</sup>

Michael Albert, one of the first scholars to write about resettlement in the Midwest, points out three factors that influenced the choice of Minnesota as a destination for Japanese Americans leaving the internment camps. One was the presence of the Military Intelligence Service Language School that recruited Japanese-speaking Nisei from the internment camps to serve as translators in the Pacific. The Minneapolis/St. Paul area also had many colleges and universities that accepted Nisei students, including Macalester, Hamline, St. Catherine's, St. Thomas,

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<sup>45</sup>WRA, *The Relocation Program*, 30-31, 33, 40, 46; Taylor, "Fellow-Feelers with the Afflicted," 126. In his discussion of the wartime experiences of resettlers in Cincinnati, Allan W. Austin makes special mention of Cincinnati's Friends Hostel. Austin, "'A Finer Set of Hopes and Dreams': The Japanese American Citizens League and Ethnic Community in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1942-1950," in *Remapping Asian American History*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Walnut Creek, Calif., 2003), 87-90.

<sup>46</sup>To the contrary, an international labor publication cheered the combined efforts of the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organization, and Hoosier laborers in Michigan City and South Bend for blocking employer plans to offer jobs to relocating Japanese. "No Jap Help Wanted Here—Unions Keep Them Out of Two Mid-West Cities," *International Teamster*, 41 (January 1944), 23.

St. Cloud, and Carleton. Finally, Albert remarks on “the prompt mobilization of Minnesota agencies to aid resettlers moving into the area.”<sup>47</sup>

Thomas M. Linehan suggests that Cleveland’s popularity as a destination for Japanese American resettlers, second only to Chicago, may be attributed in part to the city’s well-developed network of charities and social service agencies, which in turn contributed to the effectiveness of its citizen group, the Cleveland Resettlement Committee for Japanese Americans. By mid-1945 the committee had a membership of 75, with a 15-to-20-member executive committee. Linehan’s research also indicates the participation of several different Protestant denominations, as well as Jewish and Catholic charities.<sup>48</sup>

Two final reports submitted to the WRA also provide explanations for the state’s lack of success in placing resettlers. However, these documents offer two very different interpretations of what happened in Indiana. The first theory is found in the “History of the North Central Area,” written from the viewpoint of the Chicago area office, which served as a headquarters for the region. This report noted the Midwest’s overall success in its resettlement campaign, compared with other regions of the country. The writer argues that it could hardly have been the physical characteristics of the area, still less the climate, that attracted Japanese Americans. Rather, it was the “excellent reception given to resettlers by the people of the Middle West.” Relocation officers had anticipated great difficulty in convincing employers to hire the Japanese Americans. Instead, their clients were eagerly sought after and easily placed, requiring minimal assistance.<sup>49</sup>

As a result, the North Central Area report praised the *laissez-faire* approach that developed in Chicago and Minneapolis (“one job, one housing, and you’re on your own”) as wholesome, normal, and supportive of the resettlers’ return to independence. In contrast, the report criticized the Indianapolis office’s “protective attitude” as “tending to

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<sup>47</sup>Michael Albert, “The Japanese,” in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State’s Ethnic Groups*, ed. June Drenning Holmquist (St. Paul, Minn., 1981), 559.

<sup>48</sup>Thomas M. Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement in Cleveland During and After World War II,” *Journal of Urban History*, 20 (November 1993), 54-80.

<sup>49</sup>“History of the North Central Area,” 12-26, Records of the War Relocation Authority, record group 210, box 6, folder 1A. The report comments: “The climate of the area is somewhat rugged and while we have heard thousands of expressions of dislike for it by resettlers, we have heard no compliments” (p. 16).



Mary Matsamura, Indianapolis, August 26, 1943

Indianapolis employers carefully supervised the hired resettlers. This WRA promotional photograph shows Indianapolis restaurant owner Walter Eaton with Mary Matsamura, whose pin bears two service stars representing her husband and brother in the armed services

Photograph by Charles E. Mace, courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

continue the paternalism of the relocation center.” The citizens’ committee and relocation officers in Indianapolis carried on a policy of “pre-selection,” scrutinizing applications from internees and approving only those they considered “superior people,” well-educated and highly desirable. According to this report, committee members and relocation officers in Indianapolis (and, to some extent, St. Louis) slowed down the resettlement process by insisting on taking resettlers personally to prospective employers and by housing them as domestics in carefully selected homes. In contrast, the members of the Milwaukee committee merely lent their names to the letterhead and assumed almost no actual responsibilities.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup>“History of the North Central Area,” 13-14, 19-20.



The report that the Indianapolis office submitted to the WRA paints a very different picture. In this opinion, "Indianapolis' acceptance of the Japanese Americans seemed highly improbable in the beginning." Within an otherwise articulate and grammatical report, there is an odd statement that hints at endemic conservatism and caution: "Hoosiers have a very substantial background. They do not make over strange faces." The first representative of the WRA to visit Indianapolis, Ted Waller, found "negative responses" in the political situation and with the labor unions. He perceived opposition from the International Teamsters' Union (with its national headquarters in Indianapolis) as well as the Marion County Building Trades Council (a fear verified by their quick protest of the Indianapolis WRA office).<sup>51</sup> In contrast, he found the C.I.O. to be a staunch supporter of resettlement. Waller recommended that the WRA's officers in Indianapolis consult individuals in labor, the American Legion, government, and business before "releasing Japanese Americans in Indiana." In addition, the report states that the first major problem was the "anti-Japanese attitude of the Negro community towards the arrival of a new minority." This prejudice apparently stemmed not from hatred of people of Japanese ancestry, but rather from fear on the part of African Americans that the newcomers would threaten the recent gains in employment which they had enjoyed as a result of the wartime shortage of manpower. The report explains the housing difficulty as resulting from the influx of defense workers and the boom town conditions that had already hit Indianapolis by the time the relocation office began its work.<sup>52</sup> Thus, Hoosiers seeking to bring Japanese Americans from internment to Indiana worked against prevailing prejudices in the community, in competition with contemporary job seekers, and in spite of limited recruiting efforts on the part of the state's employers and universities. They combined careful scrutiny and close supervision of resettlers with the willingness to counteract local attitudes and to promote the cause of justice.

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<sup>51</sup>Henry Tani, who visited Indianapolis in early 1944 at the invitation of Immanuel Evangelical and Reformed Church to speak in support of the relocation program, indicated that the opposition of the American Legion and the Teamsters had made it impossible to find jobs for more than 50 Japanese Americans in the city. "Hostile Japs Hoodwink Churches—Spread Propaganda for Jobs in War Centers," *International Teamster*, 41 (February 1944), 17-18.

<sup>52</sup>"Final Report of Indianapolis District Office," 1-5.

Regardless of the regional relocation patterns, what is so striking about the process as seen from the vantage point of Indianapolis is the level of coordination and the flow of information around the country, which in turn enabled churches and committees to take action. It was a truly cooperative interdenominational and interagency effort. For example, the hostels for new resettlers were sponsored in the midwestern states by the American Friends Service Committee (Cincinnati and Des Moines), the American Baptist Home Mission Society (Cleveland), the Detroit Council of Churches (Detroit), the Lutheran Church (Minneapolis), and “cooperating Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic groups” (Kansas City). Others around the country were operated by various committees, councils, and churches. Membership in this network, and dedication to its ideals, may have prompted the Indiana groups that assisted with the relocation program to go against the prevailing local attitude of suspicion regarding outsiders and Japanese Americans in particular.<sup>53</sup>

As the relocation program came to an end, Japanese Americans living in the Midwest could either return to the West Coast or stay in their new homes. A December 1945 letter from relocation officer Marie Kitazumi advised resettlers who wanted to return to their former homes on the West Coast to hasten their applications for financial assistance for travel or shipping of property held in WRA warehouses. For those who decided to stay, however, she promised that other agencies in the area would continue to provide services to resettlers. A directory later published by the WRA listed the following Indianapolis agencies: Legal Aid Society, Y.W.C.A., Council of Social Agencies, Church Federation, Department of Public Welfare, and United States Employment Service. Kitazumi concluded her letter by writing, “I hope that you, like most people who have come in this district during the past several years, are planning to make your new home a permanent one. I know that you will continue to find opportunity and security here.”<sup>54</sup>

The censuses of 1950 and 1960 demonstrate that many Japanese Americans remained dispersed throughout the nation (see Table 3). In

<sup>53</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 144-45.

<sup>54</sup>Marie Kitazumi to resettlers, December 31, 1945, CWS, box 2; WRA, *A Directory of Agencies, Groups, and Individuals Who Have Made their Services Available to Resettlers in the North Central Area* (n.d.), CWS, box 2.

the North Central region, the numbers were impressive. Illinois had seen an increase from 462 in 1940 to 11,646 in 1950. Substantial gains were also recorded in Michigan (from 139 to 1,517), Minnesota (from 51 to 1,049), and Ohio (from 163 to 1,986). In 1940 the region was home to only 1.24 percent of the total mainland Japanese American population; in 1950, its share had grown to 13.21 percent.

Table 3  
Japanese American Population by Mainland Region, 1940-1960<sup>55</sup>

	1940	1950	1960
Pacific Coast	112,353 (88.5%)	98,310 (69.4%)	178,985 (68.8%)
Mountain West	8,574 (6.8%)	14,231 (10%)	17,549 (6.8%)
North Central	1,571 (1.2%)	18,734 (13.2%)	29,318 (11.3%)
South	1,049 (0.8%)	3,055 (2.1%)	16,247 (6.2%)
Northeast	3,400 (2.7%)	7,438 (5.3%)	17,962 (6.9%)
Total	126,947 (100%)	141,768 (100%)	260,061 (100%)

Historians and investigating commissions have chronicled the dire effects of the *removal* on Japanese Americans—in terms of lost homes, possessions, and livelihoods—but they have only recently begun to examine the significant effects of the *dispersal* on both the Japanese population and the nation as a whole. An emerging consensus suggests that, because of wartime conditions, Japanese Americans who went east benefited from unprecedented employment opportunities outside the ethnic enclave, in industrial work, white-collar work, and other professions. The Midwest is clearly a key part of this emerging story, illustrated in the following passage from a memoir by one resettler: “Hoping to find employment in a hotel, I journeyed to Chicago. No sooner had I arrived than I discovered that beauty operators were in great demand, so I was able to obtain work in my profession. . . . Despite the war, I found very

<sup>55</sup>Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States,” Working Paper Series No. 56, Population Division, U. S. Census Bureau, 2002, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056.html>.

little discrimination in the Midwest compared with California. I also found a warm neighborhood church.”<sup>56</sup>

If, as the saying goes, all that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing, then the corollary might be that for good people to do something, they have to think globally, organize nationally, and act locally. Indianapolis was called upon to do its part in Japanese American resettlement because then, as now, although not in the very top rank, it was “on the map” at the national level, both as a major city and as the headquarters of prominent national organizations. When the call came, there were people in Indianapolis who were prepared to answer. This group was not large, and it did not gain widespread support in the community, but those who took on the mission of aiding Japanese Americans during World War II acted with courage and conviction in a state that presented them with many challenges.




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<sup>56</sup>Grace Nakano, “Full Circle,” in *Triumphs of Faith: Stories of Japanese-American Christians During World War II*, ed. Victor N. Okada, (Los Angeles, 1998), 91. U.S., Department of the Interior, War Agency Liquidation Unit (formerly WRA), *People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans* (Washington, D.C., 1947), 147-48; an example of recent scholarship is Charlotte Brooks, “In the Twilight Zone between Black and White: Japanese American Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942-1945,” *Journal of American History*, 86 (March 2000), 1655-87.