Knowing your family's story . . . and why it matters

DESCRIPTION

During World War II, the government of the United States authorized the arrest and relocation of every Japanese American on the West Coast. 120,000 Japanese Americans, the majority of whom were citizens, were forced into concentration camps for the duration of the war. During this time, Japanese-American men still served in the U. S. military even as their families were held prisoner at home. Although the Congress passed the Evacuation Claims Act in 1948, which allowed internees to make a claim against the government to recover a small percentage of their losses, this program was a failure. It was not until 1988 that the U. S. government issued a formal apology and attempted in earnest to make reparation for the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

This lesson plan uses the story "Hidden Memory" by professional storyteller Anne Shimojima. In this story, Shimojima tells about the experience of her family in the United States, especially during the time of World War II when some of her family were sent to the internment camps.

This two-day lesson plan offers an accessible way to address this sad episode in our history. Students will learn about how easily racism and xenophobia arise during times of war and national panic, but they will also learn about the ability of a people to overcome even the worst prejudice.

While this lesson plan is designed to take two 40-minute class periods, it could be completed in one class period if students read and/or listen to the story on their own. Students can read and listen to "Hidden Memory" by going to www.racebridges.net/schools, clicking on "lesson plans" on the sidebar menu, and then choosing "Hidden Memory: Japanese American Internment." There they can download the story excerpts in pdf format and listen to the audio excerpts. Make sure students have access to computers that can open pdf and audio files.

Recommended Method: *Although this will take more time, the best way to complete this lesson plan is to listen to the excerpts in class, stopping after each excerpt to allow students to answer questions and discuss their responses to the story.*

PURPOSE

- To Teach about the Internment / Relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II
- To Examine How National Crises and Propaganda Can Lead to Xenophobia and Racism
- To Equip Students with Skills to make Critical Judgments during National Crisis

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OUTCOMES
By the end of this lesson, each student will

- Be familiar with the history of the internment / relocation of Japanese Americans
- Understand how national crisis can lead to xenophobia and racism
- Understand the subtlety of institutional racism
- Respond to the issues and themes of the story
- Relate their own experience to the story

MATERIALS

- Teacher Instructions
- Handout #1: Excerpts from "Hidden Memory" by Anne Shimojima
- Handout #2: Discussion Questions

LESSON PLAN ***[the times will change depending on audio clips]***

SESSION ONE

1. Introduction and Summary of "Hidden Memory" (10 minutes)
2. Excerpt #1 and Pair Share (10-12 minutes)
3. Excerpt #2 and Pair Share (10-12 minutes)
4. Wrap Up (5-10 minutes)

SESSION TWO

1. Review and Introduction to Excerpts 3 and 4 (5-8 minutes)
2. Excerpt #3 and Pair Share (10-12 minutes)
3. Excerpt #4 and Small Group Discussion (12-15)
4. Class Discussion and Wrap Up (7-10 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

SESSION ONE

1. INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY OF "HIDDEN MEMORY" (10 minutes)

Place students in pairs; students will discuss story excerpts #1-3 with their partner and excerpt #4 with their partner and another pair. Begin with students in pairs so that they can begin discussing excerpts as soon as they finish listening to and/or reading them. Do not let students choose their own partners; either have them count off into random pairs or place them in pairs you believe will be most productive.

Introduce your students to the story "Hidden Memory" by Anne Shimojima. Explain that they will have the chance to discuss each of the excerpts after listening to and/or reading them.

Today we're going to begin listening to [and/or reading] excerpts from the story "Hidden Memory" by Anne Shimojima, a Japanese-American storyteller. In this story, Shimojima tells the tale of her family living on the West Coast and what happened to them when the government authorized the internment (this means the forced confinement of people during wartime) of Japanese Americans during World War II; Shimojima includes historical

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information to help understand her own family's story and information about her own experience growing up Japanese American.

Shimojima's story develops many themes, many of which we can all relate to no matter what our ethnic background is. In this story, we encounter the author's experience of learning her own family's story for the first time as an adult. We learn some very specific information, such as about Japanese "picture brides"; the difference between the *Issei* (first generation Japanese Americans) and the *Nisei (*second generation Japanese Americans); and the valor of the all-Japanese-American 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team, which is still the most-decorated unit in the history of the U. S. military. This story also addresses more general issues, such as the tendency for countries to blame and stereotype "the other" when it is at war, under attack, or in some other kind of crisis and what it is like to grow up in a culture where you rarely get to see people who look like you on television, in the movies, as your teachers, or in magazines.

Today, we will listen to [and/or read] the first two of four excerpts from this story. After each excerpt, you will have the chance to share briefly your reactions and thoughts. Tomorrow, we will finish the last two excerpts of the story, and we will end with an opportunity for a longer opportunity to share your own experiences.

2. EXCERPT #1 & PAIR SHARE (10-12 minutes)

I'm going to give you a handout with an excerpt from "Hidden Memory" and a handout with discussion questions. We will listen to the story aloud and you can follow along if you like. After we listen, I will ask you to jot down a few of your thoughts and then share them with a partner.

Hand out the excerpts and discussion questions; play excerpt #1. Give students one minute to respond on their own in writing to the questions associated with the excerpt (they should choose the ones they find most interesting). Then ask students to discuss their answers with their partner; each person should take 30-60 seconds to share his or her answer. Ask a few pairs to share their answers with the class; take no more than 1-2 minutes for this. Be sure to keep students moving so that there is time to get to the next excerpt.

3. EXCERPT #2 & PAIR SHARE (10-12 minutes)

Play excerpt #2. Give students one minute to answer the questions associated with the excerpt (again allowing them to choose the ones that attract them). Then ask them to share their answers with their partner; each person should take 30-60 seconds to share his or her answer.

4. CLASS WRAP UP (5-10 minutes)

Have pairs share their general reactions to the excerpts with one another and then with the whole class. You may want to have the class brainstorm some lists together, such as what they found most surprising in the excerpts, what the themes of the story are so far, the connections they can make between this event and more recent events (i.e., America's responses after 9/11, etc.), and so on. You might also want to get them thinking about the excerpts they will read during the second day of the lesson plan and have them forecast what they think will happen to Shimojima's family or share their hopes for how the story will end.

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SESSION TWO

1. REVIEW & INTRODUCTION TO EXCERPTS #3 & #4 (5-8 minutes)
Review with students what you heard, read, and discussed during Session One. Consider having a student summarize the readings and discussions that took place during that class to include students who were absent during the lesson and to get everyone "on the same page" for the second half of the lesson. Let students know that they will listen to two more excerpts and have more time for small group and whole class discussion and that they will have the opportunity to share experiences of their own that relate to the story "Hidden Memory." Ask students to get together with their pair share partners so that they are ready to begin discussing as soon as the excerpt ends. Be sure to find partners for the students who were absent on Session One; you may want to place those students with already formed pairings so they can catch up quickly.

2. EXCERPT #3 and PAIR SHARE (10-12 minutes)
Make sure students have the discussion questions from the day before; if they don't, hand out more. Play excerpt #3. Give students one minute to respond on their own in writing to the questions associated with the excerpt (they should choose the ones they find most interesting). Then ask them to discuss their answers with their partners; each person should take 30-60 seconds to share his or her answer. Have some pairs share their responses.

3. EXCERPT #4 and SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (12-15 minutes)
Listen to the final excerpt and then ask pairs to join another pair to make a group of four. You may need to have one group of six if there is not an even number of pairs. Ask students to identify a time keeper for this activity to make sure they do not exceed the time allotted for discussion.

4. CLASS DISCUSSION and WRAP UP (7-10 minutes)
Call students back together and have each group share one major concept, impression, or feeling that they will take away from the story and their discussion. Students may share their own personal experiences. Consider asking students to do some writing on this topic for homework or extending the lesson with one of the ideas below.

LESSON EXTENSION IDEAS

1. Ask students to keep a log while watching television for the next week. They should note details of the show or commercial, such as the name and genre (comedy, reality, drama, music video, etc) and the day, time, and channel on which it appeared. Students should then track how characters of different races are portrayed. Are the characters complex or flat? Do we learn about their backgrounds? What kinds of jobs do they have? How are they portrayed (responsible, lazy, loudmouthed, sexy, partyer, etc.)? Are we meant to admire or judge them? Have students pay special attention to the Asian and Asian-American characters. How often do they appear? How are they portrayed the same as or differently from other characters? Do they behave in any stereotypical ways? Have students share their logs and then lead a discussion of how characters of different races are portrayed and hypothesize about why they are portrayed differently. Speculate about the effect that seeing characters of different races portrayed in these ways might affect viewers of different races differently.

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2. Have students learn the history of the internment / relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II. How did Americans of other backgrounds respond? How was this reported in the news? What was the reasoning used by the U. S. government to justify forced relocation? Why weren't other Americans originally from other Axis powers put in internment camps? Assign different groups of students to research different parts of the story and bring it all together in a class presentation.

3. Have students interview older members of their family who were alive during World War II to find out what they knew about internment camps during and after the war. Ask what kind of stereotypes they and others had about Japanese Americans at that time and how those have changed.

4. Go to the lesson plan database in the "Resources" section of the web site www.discovernikkei.org for more lesson plans about the history of Japanese Americans generally and the internment camps specifically.

5. Buy a copy of the curriculum *Kaleidoscope: Valuing Difference and Creating Inclusion* and teach diversity in a more in-depth way. (See Resource list below.)

6. Watch one of the videos listed in the resource list and discuss it in class.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Gruenewald, Mary Matsuda. *Looking Like the Enemy: My Story of Imprisonment in Japanese American Internment Camps*. Troutdale, OR: NewSage Press, 2005.

Houston, James D. and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston. *Farewell to Manzanar*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. A memoir of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and her time with her family in one of the internment camps during World War II. Written for younger readers (9-12), but interesting for all.

Kivel, Paul. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. Philadelphia: New Society, 1996. Written primarily for a white audience but useful for people of all backgrounds.

Loewen, James W. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: Touchstone, 1996. Loewen critiques the way that history has been taught in American classrooms, focusing on its bland, Eurocentric bias. He urges educators to focus on real, diverse stories that make up our history. Eye opening for teachers and students alike.

Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. Illustrator: Dom Lee. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1995. Although meant for a grade school audience (grades 1-4), this book about a boy and the hope brought by baseball while living in an internment camp will help introduce all age levels to this shameful episode of racism in American history.

O'Halloran, Susan. *Kaleidoscope: Valuing Difference & Creating Inclusion*. Available at www.susanohalloran.com. A two-level curriculum for schools about diversity, race and dealing with difference. O'Halloran approaches diversity, race, and racism in a way that makes an often intimidating subject approachable and even fun. O'Halloran avoids blame and empowers students to uncover their own biases and to recognize institutional racism and to work for both personal and societal change.

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Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*. New York: Basic Books, 1997. Written by a professor of psychology for a diverse audience. Focuses specifically on race, racism, and the construction of racial identity among adolescents.

VIDEOS

Berhaag, Bertram (Producer/Director). *The Complete Blue Eyed*. Available at www.newsreel.org. This edition contains multiple versions of the "blue-eyed/ brown-eyed" experiment that demonstrates how swiftly prejudice affects people. Originally used with grade school students, this exercise has been used with adults with the same results. This edition comes with a facilitator's guide. 93 minutes total; can be watched in shorter segments.

Lucasiewicz, M. (Producer). *True Colors*. Northbrook, IL: MTI Film & Video, 1991. An ABC video with Diane Sawyer that follows two discrimination testers, one black and one white, as they look for jobs and housing and try to buy a car. A good look at institutional racism. 19 minutes.

Nakano, Desmond. *American Pastime*. Available at www.amazon.com. This feature film examines the internment of Japanese Americans through the lens of baseball and includes a DVD extra of interviews with survivors of the camps. 106 minutes.

Okazaki, Steven (Director). *Days of Waiting*. Available at www.amazon.com. This documentary examines the life of Estelle Peck Ishigo, a Caucasian woman who entered the internment camps with her Japanese-American husband. Often used by high school teachers, this documentary examines through one person's eyes what it was like to live in limbo for four years in the camps and the lifelong consequences of that imprisonment. 28 minutes.

Okazaki, Steven (Director). *Unfinished Business*. Available at www.amazon.com. This documentary examines the lives of three men who defied order 9066, ordering Japanese Americans living on the west coast into "relocation camps." Newsreel footage, including of the camps, help take the viewers back to this unbelievable event in U. S. history. 58 minutes.

Reid, F. (Producer/Director). *Skin Deep: College Students Confront Racism*. San Francisco, CA: Resolution/California Newsreel, 1995. Available at www.newsreel.org. Examines a multi-racial group of students discussing race and racism; demonstrates the possibility of changing attitudes through dialogue. 53 minutes.

ORGANIZATIONS and WEBSITES

Densho. www.Densho.org. An organization and website devoted to collecting the oral histories of Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. This site provides lots of resources, links, and lesson plans. Their "Causes of the Incarceration" section of the site takes the visitor through a thorough exploration of how internment was possible by examining such things as the history of racism in the U. S., wartime hysteria, and economic motives. The "Learning Center" provides very thorough lesson plans, complete with primary sources.

Discover Nikkei. www.discovernikkei.org. A website devoted to cross-cultural understanding through sharing information about the experience of *Nikkei*, people of Japanese descent who live in places other than Japan. This site has a wealth of resources and lesson plans about numerous cultural topics and historical events.

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Japanese American Citizens League. www.jacl.org. The oldest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. They provide a thorough history of Japanese American experience in their "Education" section.

A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U. S. Constitution. An on-line exhibit from the Smithsonian Institute. This interactive site examines the history of the internment of Japanese Americans through images, text, photographs, and individual stories. http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/experience/index.html

Teaching Tolerance. www.teachingtolerance.org. Started by the Southern Poverty Law Center, it provides teachers with free educational materials that promote respect for differences and appreciation of diversity in the classroom and beyond.

Exploring The Japanese American Internment Through Film & The Internet. Text, images, video and audio clips, and discussion questions that cover three topics: World War II and Roundup, The Camps Experience, and Post War & Impact Today. http://www.asianamericanmedia.org/jainternment

Go For Broke National Education Center. Lesson plans, veteran oral history videos, a clip from the documentary "A Tradition of Honor", and a photo gallery. http://www.goforbroke.org/default.asp

Primary Documents

MAP OF TULE LAKE
http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/anthropology74/images/figure13.12.jpg

WWII EXCLUSION ORDER FOR JAPANESE AMERICANS
http://www.jacl.org/edu/ExclusionPoster.pdf

If you would like to engage Anne Shimojima to perform at your school, go to www.storytelling.org/shimojima or contact her at ashimojima@comcast.net.

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Handout #1: Story Excerpts

Part I

It all started when I bought a new computer. I wasn't really due for a new computer, but I had been drooling over the new iMacs for months. So I gave in and brought one home, and when I did, I discovered that I could make a hardbound book of photographs with one of the programs. So I decided to make a book of Shimojima family photos.

I asked my family members for old pictures. I didn't tell them what I was doing, just that I was "working on a family project." I wasn't expecting really old photos. In the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the Japanese Navy attacked a U.S. Naval Base, there was a lot of panic among Japanese-American families. The FBI was searching homes. Many families got rid of priceless family possessions—photographs, books, swords, calligraphy scrolls, dolls—anything that would make them seem suspicious or disloyal to the United States.

But I was lucky. I discovered that my cousin in Colorado had inherited our grandmother's photo album, something I didn't even know existed. She sent me a big package, and when I opened it, I found treasures. The oldest photograph was from 1901. I was looking at photos of my grandparents as young people. I had never seen them young. The first time I saw a picture with my grandfather dressed in a kimono I thought, wow, we really are from Japan! Along with photographs, my cousin sent my grandparents' passports—big, full-page documents with fancy calligraphy all over them—and their original marriage license.

I started scanning photographs. Many of them had Japanese writing on the back, so I took them to my Auntie Haru from Japan, who could read and translate for me. I found one photograph of my grandfather, a young man in a Western suit that looked homemade, dated July 26, 1906. On the back it said that it was taken the day he left Japan.

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Soon I realized that it wasn't enough to put together a photo album. My grandparents were gone, but there was one surviving member of my father's generation—his older sister Mary, my 91-year-old aunt.

Now, I'm a storyteller. When I've taught courses in storytelling I tell my students—go home, talk to your family members, find out your family's stories. But did I follow my own advice? Never. In my family no one told family stories about the early days, no one talked about World War II or the internment camps or what it was like to be an immigrant in a new land. I guess I internalized the feeling that it wasn't something to be done. But I realized time was running out. So I took a tape recorder over to my aunt's house. We sat at her dining room table and she told me about the Shimojima family.

My grandfather, Seitaro Shimojima, was from Nagano—the area in which the 1998 Olympics were held. His family had a silkworm farm and made silk. He was not the oldest son, so he would not inherit anything. To avoid going into the army he left Japan in 1906 with a group of friends and landed in Seattle, Washington. He became one of the Issei, the first generation of Japanese to live here. He moved to Portland, Oregon and became a cook. After several years, when he wanted to marry, he did what many Japanese young men did when he couldn't afford the long trip home to his village. He sent his photograph home.

We think my grandmother was a picture bride. Imagine it—you're a young woman and you go halfway around the world to a strange place where they speak a different language to marry a man you've never met. You've only seen his photograph.

My grandmother, Shikiye Ito, came from Matsumoto, a city in Nagano. In a country that is to this day less than 1% Christian, her father was a Christian minister. She was a teacher. She couldn't come to the United States unless there was a family member here, so she had to get married to my grandfather by proxy while she was still in Japan. We know she did this because the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles found a copy of the ship manifest that lists her name as Shikiye Shimojima. She landed in Seattle on January 5, 1913, and married my grandfather, for real this time, on the very next day.

They settled in Portland. My grandfather was a cook for the Portland Commercial Club and he made pastries. My aunt remembers his apple pies, that most American of desserts. After several years, he bought a grocery store with a friend. By now there were

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four children: Mary, the oldest; George, my father, the second child and the oldest son; Rae, another daughter; and Henry, the baby of the family. The children grew up, like other Nisei, second generation Japanese—totally American. They went to school, worked in the grocery store, listened to American music, and ate American food.

Part II

My aunt does not remember a lot of prejudice directed at her or the family in Portland. They were lucky. In California, the Alien Land Law kept aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning land or renting land for longer than three years. Trade unions blocked Japanese-Americans from membership. Japanese-American teachers couldn't get jobs. Japanese-Americans had trouble getting served in restaurants and risked rocks thrown through their store windows.

My father, however, did experience some of this prejudice. When he graduated from college in Oregon, he couldn't get a job. It was too difficult on the west coast. He heard there were jobs in Hawaii, so he settled there. It was a lucky thing, because he met my mother there. He was lucky, too, because he spent the next few years there and did not experience what was to come.

In 1941, my grandfather had made a life in the United States for 35 years when, on a Sunday morning in December, everything changed. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 plunged Japanese-Americans into fear. My grandmother thought they would be sent back to Japan. My grandfather started selling down the inventory in the store because he knew that bad times were coming.

Soon, wartime hysteria and racial prejudice totally took over. The rumors started flying. Japanese-American farmers in Hawaii had planted their crops in the shape of huge arrows pointing to Pearl Harbor. Japanese-American fishermen were really secret officers in the Emperor's navy. All of these were false, of course, but white Americans were only too ready to believe the threat of sabotage.

Lt. Gen. John DeWitt, the Western Defense Commander, said in his final report, "The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken." He also said, "A Jap's a Jap. It makes no difference whether he's an American citizen or not."

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Two months after Pearl Harbor, in February, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the internment of ethnic groups. It did not specifically mention Japanese-Americans, but they were the target. Because of this order, 120,000 Japanese-Americans were locked up in internment camps, two thirds of them U.S. citizens, just like my family.

They had broken no laws, and were not charged or convicted of any crime. Two people of note did object: J. Edgar Hoover and Eleanor Roosevelt, who tried in vain to change her husband's mind.

More weeks went by, with my family living in fear, not knowing what was going to happen. Then the signs went up, ordering Japanese aliens and non-aliens to report to assembly centers. Now, what is a non-alien? It's a citizen. It's as if the United States government could not bring itself to admit that it was imprisoning its own citizens without due process of law.

My family was told they had to leave their home. They didn't know where they were going or for how long. They had less than two weeks to get rid of everything they owned. They could take only what they could carry—clothing, towels and bed linens, tableware. No pets were allowed. Japanese-Americans had to sell their businesses and belongings for a fraction of their value.

My grandfather sold the grocery store. Years later my uncle Henry told me, "You wouldn't believe what he had to sell the store for." He wouldn't tell me the amount, and almost fifty years later, I could hear the bitterness in his voice.

They had to get rid of everything else. There was a German family who lived across the way who had gone through World War I and understood what my family was going through. They offered to keep some things for them. My aunt thinks that they held the family piano, for instance.

In California, many of the Japanese-Americans were farmers. They had to leave their crops. This was the summer and everything was growing. One strawberry farmer asked permission to stay until harvest. He was denied. He was so upset he plowed his crops under. Then the FBI charged him with sabotage and sent him to jail.

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In June, 1942, the Battle of Midway crippled the Japanese fleet. U.S. Naval Intelligence told President Roosevelt that the threat of Japanese invasion of the U.S. was over, but still the plans for mass evacuation continued.

Part III

My father was in Hawaii, working, so it was the rest of the family who had to move—my grandparents and the three other children, ages 28, 23, and 20. First they were sent to an assembly center. The camps were not yet built, so the government had to temporarily put people into already existing places that could hold thousands. The Portland Japanese-Americans were sent to the Portland International Exposition Center. There, they lived in a horse stall, one stall per family. The stalls were filthy and smelly. They spent the summer there, thousands of people held there, with the heat, the smells, and the flies. The conditions were so awful that my auntie Mary got permission to leave and go to Tule Lake to help prepare the camp.

Tule Lake was one of ten internment camps. By the end of the summer in 1942, 16,000 people lived there. The camps were mostly built in desolate, desert areas. I had gotten a map of Tule Lake and I brought it to my aunt's house and spread it out on her dining room table. Together we looked at the drawings of the rows and rows of barracks, long wooden buildings, built in such a hurry that they used green and unseasoned wood which dried and shrank, leaving large cracks in the walls. The barracks were covered with tar paper and had no insulation against the 100+ degrees in the summer or the bitter cold in the winter.

Each building was 20 by 100 feet, each with four apartments, each apartment just one room of 20 by 25 feet, one room per family.

There were 13 or 14 barracks to a block. Each block had a dining hall and buildings for laundry, lavatories, ironing, and a recreation building. My aunt remembered that the family lived in block four.

She remembers that all they were given were cots, bags to stuff with straw for mattresses, and a pot-bellied iron stove. Any other furniture had to be made from scrap wood. There was no running water in the barracks. She remembers the communal shower room, the toilets lined up in a row, no partitions between them. There was no privacy. Each family was one thin wall away from the next family.

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She remembers the long lines—for meals at the dining halls, for showers, for toilets.

She remembers the dust that blew in through the cracks, the constant dust over everything in the room, everywhere. The dust they could never get rid of, no matter how they tried.

She remembers the barbed wire and the searchlights that swept the camp at night. She remembers the guard towers, with guards holding guns that pointed in, not out.

Well, the people tried to set up some semblance of a normal life. There were schools, churches, a newspaper, stores, a clinic, clubs, sports teams. They planted gardens and raised food. They worked various jobs. The highest rate of pay was $19 a month for doctors and other professionals.

Family structure suffered. My grandfather was no longer the head of the family, the authority, the family breadwinner. He had lost his position. At mealtimes, children ran off to eat with their friends. The Issei, my grandparents' generation, couldn't speak much English, and so they were powerless.

The following year, in 1943, the government decided to let Japanese- Americans serve in the military. The War Department developed a questionnaire to test the loyalty of those who might serve. Everyone had to answer the questionnaire, even the Issei too old to serve.

Two questions became the focus of controversy. Question #27: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the U.S. on combat duty, wherever ordered? Question #28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the U.S. and faithfully defend the U.S. from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor, to any other foreign government, power, or organization?

People agonized over these questions. The first asked men if they would serve in the military for a country that kept their families imprisoned behind barbed wire. First sons were especially torn. They had the traditional responsibility of caring for their aging

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parents, and to answer "yes" meant that they might have to leave their parents to an uncertain future. And would they find themselves fighting against a Japanese relative?

The second question – would they renounce allegiance in any form to the Japanese emperor - was especially troublesome for the Issei, the first generation to live in the U.S., my grandparents' generation, because they were not allowed to become U.S. citizens. If they answered "yes," they would become people without a country. But if they answered "no," would they be deported?

The controversy raged. People were angry, upset, and scared. Most did answer "yes" to the first question and "yes" to the second. My grandparents did, too. My two aunts were no longer there – both had received permission to work outside of camp. My uncle answered the questionnaire and served in military intelligence in the Philippines.

Tule Lake became the camp where the government sent the no-no's, as those who answered "no" to questions 27 and 28 were called. From there, many were sent back to Japan. My grandparents were sent to Minidoka, a camp in Idaho. They remained there until the camp closed in 1945. As they departed, the government gave each internee $25 and a train ticket. Twenty-five dollars for three years of imprisonment, lost homes, lost businesses, and a lost way of life. We're not sure if my grandparents went back to Portland to collect what they had left there. Eventually they found their way to Chicago and a new life. My grandfather never worked again. He was sixty when he left Minidoka. He felt he was too old to start over.

Part IV

In 1946 my father met my mother in Hawaii and they decided to marry. Since he was the oldest son, it was his responsibility to care for his parents, who were now in Chicago, so he and my mother moved there to marry. Eventually, all of his siblings ended up in Chicago as well.

During World War II, a few people were convicted by the U.S. government of spying for the Japanese—all were white. The Japanese-American soldiers, the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team, became the most highly decorated unit in the history of the U.S. military. A unit of the 442nd helped to liberate Dachau concentration camp in Germany. There was also the rescue of the Lost Battalion. In 1944, in Italy, a

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battalion of Texans got trapped behind enemy lines for several weeks. A battalion of the 442 was brought in. To rescue 211 Texans, 800 Nisei soldiers were killed or wounded. The grateful Texans named the Nisei honorary Texans.

My ex-husband's father was one of those who rescued the Lost Battalion. Thirty years later he was traveling, when he met a man about his age. They started talking.
"Where are you from?"
"Chicago."
"Where are you from?"
"I'm from Texas."
"Oh," said my father-in-law, "I'm an honorary Texan!"
The other man looked at him and said, "You must be one of the men who rescued me. I have wanted to meet one of you for the last thirty years."

It was not until 1976 that President Ford revoked Executive Order 9066. President Jimmy Carter signed legislation to create the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. The Commission's report stated that the decision to imprison the Japanese-Americans was based on racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership. In 1990, internees who were still living began receiving redress payments of $20,000 and a letter of apology from the U.S. government.

My grandparents were the Issei, the first generation to live in the United States. They were the courageous pioneers who made a life in a strange land with different customs and a different language.

My parents are the Nisei, the second generation, the ones who fought in the war and had to find their way between two lands, two cultures.

My generation is the Sansei, the third generation. We are as American as can be, but there are always reminders of the legacy that we carry.

When I was growing up in the fifties, there were no Asian-Americans to be seen on television, in magazines, or in movies. Occasionally you'd see people from Japan, but they seemed so foreign—or worse, stereotypes. I remember when Asian-Americans began to appear in commercials on TV. This was so astonishing that you had to stop whatever you were doing and call everyone else in the house to come and see.

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When I was in my twenties, I went to Japan. I knew, of course, that almost everyone who lives in Japan is Japanese. However, I was not ready for the reaction I had when I actually went there. I was still in the airplane, and we had just landed in the airport in Narita. I looked out of the window and saw men running around the field, the airport technicians. And they were all Japanese! I was so shocked that I turned to my husband and starting hitting him on the arm, saying, "Look, look! They're all Japanese! They're all Japanese!" I had never before been in a place where everyone looked like me. It was the most amazing thing I had ever seen. I felt as if I had landed in an entire country of my family. For the first time, I was part of the majority.

When I was in my early thirties, I went to a play that had only two actors, both Japanese-American men. It was the first time I had ever seen Asian-Americans on stage. As I sat and watched it, I had the sensation that because I could see them there, I existed. It was that profound. Because they were there, I was here. It was then that I first realized how invisible I had felt all my life. When you grow up and never see people who look like you in the popular culture, in the media, it's like looking into the mirror of life, and there's no reflection.

When I became a storyteller, I had to battle my own Japaneseness. Japan has a very strong group culture. You are not supposed to draw attention to yourself or stand out in any way. There is even a saying—the nail that sticks out will be hammered down. As a storyteller, I would find myself standing in front of large audiences, hundreds of people, with everyone looking at me. A Japanese part of myself that I didn't even know was there rose up and said, "No, you shouldn't do this." I had to get over this—and when I did, I discovered that I liked it! I love performing and being the channel for truth in story. It's ironic. From a family that didn't tell stories about its past, I became a storyteller.

I worked on this story, the family history project, for six months. I scanned over four hundred photographs from our four generations and created a hardbound book that showed our family from its days in Japan to my generation's high school days. But there were so many photos—another thirty-five years' worth—that I created a DVD with slide shows for the different generations.

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It was ready just in time for Christmas. The family didn't know what I was creating, just that I was working on a family project. I told them, "I have something to show you," and they all trooped down to the family room and gathered in front of the TV, cousins, aunts, grandparents, grandchildren, and I played the DVD for them. We smiled and laughed, watching the years go by before our eyes. This moment was for my grandparents, a gift to recognize their gift to us - the many sacrifices they made, the indignities they suffered, and the hopes they had for our future. I wish they could have been there. Perhaps they were, in spirit, smiling down on us all.

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Knowing your family's story . . . and why it matters

Handout #2: Discussion Questions

Directions
After listening to each excerpt, take a minute to read the following questions and write down your reactions. You may not have time to address all the questions; focus on those that grab your attention. Then share your answers with a partner.

Excerpt #1

Anne decides to create a photo album from family photos. In the process, she is drawn into learning about her grandparents, about how and why they immigrated to the United States.

1. Anne writes that many Japanese Americans got rid of their family possessions after Pearl Harbor. Why did they feel that was necessary? How might that affect future generations?

2. Anne is able to learn about some of her family's history from a cousin who had saved their grandmother's photo album. Why do you think Anne thinks "wow, we really are from Japan!' when she sees a picture of her grandfather in a kimono? Why hadn't she seen this photograph before?

3. Anne must go to her Auntie Haru in order to have the handwriting on the back of photos translated. Why does she need to go to her aunt for this?

4. Why do you think Anne, a storyteller, had never heard the stories of her family's history before?

5. What challenges did Anne's family face in immigrating to the U. S.?

Excerpt #2

Although her aunt does not remember a lot of prejudice directed at their family for being Japanese American, Anne provides evidence that there was institutional racism that prevented Japanese Americans from being treated equally. This racism becomes more virulent after Pearl Harbor, when both U. S. citizens and the government give into wartime hysteria, stereotyping Japanese Americans as "the enemy" and making it legal to arrest and relocate Japanese Americans to concentration camps for the duration of the war.

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1. How do you make sense of the information in this excerpt? Was there anything that surprised you?

2. If you know about the internment camps, how did you learn about them?

3. If you don't know about the internment camps, why do you think you never heard about them?

4. How were Japanese Americans stereotyped by the general public? By the government and government officials?

5. Why did general bias and discrimination against Japanese Americans become legal racism?

6. Even though the majority of Japanese Americans living on the West Coast during World War II were U. S. citizens, *all* Japanese Americans were rounded up and sent to internment camps. How could that happen? Why weren't Italians and Germans also interned since both Italy and Germany were the enemies of the U. S. during World War II?

7. How might the fact of internment camps affect the situation of Japanese Americans even now?

8. Does this story relate to any contemporary events?

Excerpt #3

Anne describes how internment camps were built and the harsh conditions in which Japanese Americans had to live once they were sent to these camps. She also tells how family structures were damaged and how Japanese Americans were forced to make wrenching choices between their "Japaneseness" and their "Americanness" while in the internment camps.

1. Describe how you felt when you read about the conditions in which Japanese Americans had to live in the internment camps.

2. The camps were like prison—why did the government construct them in this way when no one interned had been charged with or convicted with a crime?

3. How must it have felt to be Japanese American, relocated to an internment camp where guards were "holding guns that pointed in, not out"?

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4. Family structure and authority were affected by being in the camps. How? How might that still affect families today?

5. What was at issue in answering questions 27 and 28 in the questionnaire that tested the loyalty of Japanese Americans in order to admit them into the military? What were the risks of answering "no"-"no"? Of answering "yes"-"yes"?

6. When released from the camps, the government gave each internee $25 and a train ticket. How might that small compensation have affected people's lives?

Excerpt #4:

For this final excerpt you and your conversation partner should join with another pair to discuss any of the following questions that interest you. Assign one of you as a timekeeper so that you finish in the time allowed.

Anne tells how her family ended up in Chicago after the war, the proud history of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, what it was like for her to grow up in a country that had very few public images of Asian Americans, and how she found her voice as a storyteller.

1. What is ironic about the history of the 442nd? Why are they "honorary Texans"? Describe how you would feel if you were part of the 442nd even as you knew your family was living in an internment camp.

2. What do you think about the reparations given to Japanese Americans in 1990, nearly 50 years after World War II?

3. Do you regularly see images of people like yourself (in ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) in the media (television, movies, and magazines), in textbooks, and as leaders in government, business and education? Are those images accurate or are they stereotypes? If you don't often see people like you, how does it feel when you do? What is the effect of not seeing people like ourselves reflected in media, leadership, religion, and education?

4. Even though Anne discovered a lot about her family and their painful history during the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, she ends her story with a sense of joy of having brought her family together and of offering a gift in honor of her grandparents. Why do you think she ends the story this way?

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