

NIKKEI SOUTH SIDE:

Japanese and Japanese Americans in Hyde Park and its Vicinity

Chicago's South Side has long-standing but little-known relationships with Japan. In 1893 the Japanese Garden in Jackson Park was established for the World's Columbian Exposition. In the same year the University of Chicago conferred its first-ever doctoral degree—upon a Japanese Divinity School student named Eiji Asada. Taking this momentous year as a point of departure, this exhibit highlights more than a century of connections between Japanese and Japanese Americans and the University and Hyde Park area.

During Japan's Meiji and Taisho periods (1868–1925) the University of Chicago was a frequent destination for so-called “government students” from Japan. These elite scholars were sent by the Japanese government to acquire advanced knowledge in various fields, then to bring their expertise back home. Showcased are the campus activities (self-run periodicals, participation in cultural events) of some such students; letters of two notable alumni: Jiuji Kasai (class of 1913, and a long-term friend of the University) and Heita Okabe (a student of Amos Alonzo Stagg); and the baseball exchange program between the University of Chicago and Waseda University in Tokyo (established by Stagg and his student Fred Merrifield, who had taken a coaching position at Waseda).

Also recognized are several notable Japanese and Japanese American educators. Toyokichi Iyenaga (Far Eastern studies) was a popular lecturer in the University Extension, whose teaching received press coverage on multiple occasions. From the University Archives come letters by Professors Joseph Kitagawa (Divinity School), Akira Iriye (history), and Tetsuo Najita (history)—all eminent scholars in religious and intellectual history—that evidence their work in lobbying for visits by members of Japan's imperial family, and in procuring from the Japanese government financial support for Japanese studies at the University. In the case of another reputable scholar, Yoichiro Nambu (theoretical physics), a glimpse into his 1950s research notebooks is afforded.

World War II substantially affected the University's relationship with Japan. Due to U.S. wartime policies, Japanese students and scholars needed to leave the institution after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Because of its contracts with the U.S. Military (which concerned not only research for the Manhattan Project, but the conversion of some campus facilities into training sites for soldiers), the University was barred from admitting Japanese American students for over a year—even though the Oakland/Kenwood/Hyde Park area at the time had Chicago's largest population of Japanese Americans that had been relocated from incarceration camps. The University's wartime dilemma is traced through official correspondence with—and internal memos about—Japanese American applicants. Meanwhile, thanks to contributions from former residents, a large portion of the exhibit is dedicated to celebrating the once-bustling Japanese American community on the South Side.

Acknowledgements

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Japanese American Citizens League, Chicago Chapter

Japanese American Service Committee

Project 120

Asada, Ienaga, Kasai

Eiji Asada

Eiji Asada 浅田栄次 (1865–1914), a student of William Rainey Harper, earned the University of Chicago's first doctoral degree, conferred in 1893 for a dissertation entitled "The Hebrew Text of Zechariah 1-8, Compared with the Different Ancient Versions." After returning to Japan he took a teaching position at Aoyama Gakuin University, and then at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. A devout Protestant, he contributed to the development of English teaching and the promotion of Esperanto in Japan. The Center for East Asian Studies offers an annual B.A. thesis prize in his honor.

Items

Eiji Asada

The Hebrew Text of Zechariah, 1-8 Compared With the Different Ancient Versions
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1896 BS1662.A75 ArcMon

"Chicago History Brief." [reproduction]
UChicago Magazine, v. 80 no. 3

Mikako Asada

Asada Eiji Tsuikairoku =: Memoirs of Dr. Asada

Tōkyō: Asada Mikako, 1916 CT1838.A8A3 ArcMon

Asada's Esperanto translation of the Japanese fable "Tongue-cut sparrow" (synopsis: a kind old man saves an injured sparrow, and receives a treasure basket; meanwhile his ill-minded wife, who never cared for the sparrow, meets misfortune).

Toyokichi Iyenaga

Toyokichi Iyenaga [Ienaga] 家永豊吉 (1862–1936) worked as a lecturer for the University Extension Division from 1901 to 1910. He was a popular and engaging public speaker, whose subjects covered international politics in the Pacific Rim and Far East. After leaving the University, Iyenaga moved to New York, established the East and West News Bureau, and continued lecturing and publishing on topics concerning Japan's international relations.

Items

"The Religious Outlook in Japan" [reproduction]
The Daily Maroon, vol. I no. 194, July 24 1903

"Dr. Iyenaga Back for Lectures on Far East" [reproduction]
The Daily Maroon, vol. VII no. 114, April 7, 1909

Jiuji Kasai

Jiuji Kasai 笠井重治 (1886–1985) received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University in 1913. He continued his studies in a graduate program at Harvard before returning to Japan in 1918. He pursued a career as a politician, and in 1947 founded the Japanese-American Cultural Society. In 1973 he received an award of special recognition from the Emeritus Club for his service to the cause of Japan-U.S. relations. In 1966 he was awarded the Decoration of the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Second Class, by the Japanese government for his dedication to Japan's international relations.

Items

Jiuji George Kasai

The Mastery of the Pacific

Chicago: [University of Chicago Press], 1913 JX1428.J3K2 Gen

In 1913, Kasai won the Julius Rosenwald Prize for Excellence in Oratory for a speech that was an appeal for the importance of friendship between Japan and the United States. The Center for East Asian Studies founded a summer research grant program in his honor.

Letter, April 16, 1975

Office of the President, Wilson Administration Records

This letter shows that Kasai was on the lookout for opportunities for Chicago to be part of U.S.-Japan relations. He used his connections to include Chicago as a destination for the Emperor's tour of the United States in 1975.

Heita Okabe

Heita Okabe 岡部平太 (1891–1966) had a long career as an athletic coach and sports-event director, and is best known for introducing American football to Japan. After working for several years as a physical education teacher at Tokyo Higher Normal School (a university equivalent), Okabe came to the University of Chicago in 1917 to study sports management under Amos Alonzo Stagg (1862–1965). He stayed in the United States for two years, learning various sports including boxing, wrestling, and swimming, and visiting other universities in the Midwest and on the East Coast to learn different management styles.

Stagg and Okabe stayed in touch after his return to Japan. In 1921 Okabe took a position as a physical education manager for the South Manchuria Railway Company. He continued to write to Stagg, for instance, to report on the results of the Far Eastern Championship Games.

After World War II, back in Japan, Okabe worked toward establishing Japan's position in international sports competitions. With Shisō Kanaguri 金栗四三 (1891–1983), Okabe founded a team to train strong marathon runners in Japan, which efforts reached fruition when the first Japanese—Shigeki Tanaka 田中茂樹 (b. 1931)—won the Boston Marathon in 1951. Okabe visited Stagg in California on his way back to Japan from Boston.

In his later years Okabe worked as a coach for various institutions, while publishing on coaching and sports management. A bust of Okabe is displayed on the grounds of the Heiwadai (Peace Hill) Athletics Stadium in Fukuoka—the field that he helped to get constructed in 1948 for the third National Sports Festival, after successfully convincing GHQ to return the site to the city of Fukuoka.

Items

“Judo Experts Oppose Match” [reproduction]

Japan Times & Mail, March 2, 1929

Okabe was a direct apprentice of Jigorō Kano 嘉納治五郎 (1860–1938), the founder of judo; but in 1920 Kano and Okabe had a feud over a proposed match between American wrestlers and Japanese judo practitioners, which resulted in Okabe's departure from Kano's prominent judo institute. Eventually Kano called off the match. This is a newspaper clipping that Okabe probably sent to Stagg, along with a letter dated on March 6, 1921, in which he writes: “I believe you will agree with my proposition. I think it is not my theory but Stagg's theory.”

Letter, October 19, 1919

Amos Alonzo Stagg Papers

Okabe travelled to Urbana several weeks prior to the University of Chicago football team's 1919 game there against the University of Illinois. What Okabe intended to be a professional visit to observe another coach's style, Illini Coach Zuppke perceived as an attempt at athletic espionage. Distraught, Okabe writes to his mentor back in Chicago.

Letter, October 14, 1919 *Amos Alonzo Stagg Papers*

Letter, September 23, 1930 *Amos Alonzo Stagg Papers*

Letter, June 30, 1930 *Amos Alonzo Stagg Papers*

Letter, January 8, 1918

Amos Alonzo Stagg Papers

In this early letter, Okabe thanks Stagg for agreeing to instruct him, then details his agenda. Okabe laments that Japan's newfound interest in physical education has thus far focused mainly upon calisthenics ("gymnastics") in the German-Scandinavian mode. By contrast, Okabe seeks Stagg's council in developing training systems for more "interesting" avocational sports and games suitable for "vigorous and healthy young men."

Heita Okabe

Supōtsu angya

Tōkyō: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1931. GV351.O533 1931 Gen

Okabe often referred to Stagg and what he had learned from him in his publications, and Stagg remained his teacher for the rest of Okabe's life. Okabe asked Stagg to write the preface to his book about his experience in and observation of college sports in the United States.

"Maroons' coach has tough time..." [reproduction]

Chicago Tribune, September 22, 1917

This Tribune article describes Okabe's vigorous personality.

Photographs [reproductions]

Images courtesy of Ko Tanaka

Waseda-UChicago Baseball Exchange

The history of the baseball exchange program between the University of Chicago and Waseda University of Japan began when Waseda's coach Fred Merrifield, a Divinity School graduate and erstwhile Maroons pitcher-infielder, approached Amos Alonzo Stagg in 1907. The Maroons visited Tokyo in 1910 for the first time, and Waseda was invited to Chicago the following year. The exchange continued so as to foster an amicable relationship between the two institutions (and nations) through a shared love of sports.

After a halt during the war years, an attempt at resuming the exchange was made in 1950. However, it was not until 2008 that the University of Chicago team once again paid a visit to Waseda for a baseball game.

Waseda University's baseball team was founded by Isoo Abe 安部磯雄 (1865–1949), who is better known as a socialist in Japanese politics. Lesser known is that he is credited as the "father of Japanese baseball." Waseda University's school color is maroon, which is said to have been taken from the University of Chicago's. Make sure to check out the memorabilia displayed in the entrance hall of the Gerald Ratner Athletics Center.

Items

Mid-West Schedule of Waseda University, 1936
Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

"'Pat' Page Describes Reception of Maroons" [reproduction]
The Daily Maroon, vol. IX no. 17, October 27, 1910

Postcards, 1910
Frederick "Fritz" Steinbrecher Collection

Men's *haori* jacket, 1910
Archival Textile Collection

This commemorative jacket was a gift to catcher G. W. Benton during the Chicago-Waseda baseball exchange in 1925. The appearance of the player's name on the lining suggests that each player would have received his own personalized jacket.

Education Out of Forcible Internment

For young incarcerated Japanese Americans, going to college was both freedom and a tangible way to create a future in America. Unfortunately, for most of World War II, the gates of the University were closed to Japanese Americans. In June 1942, University President Robert M. Hutchins found that it was “deemed inadvisable” to accept Japanese Americans due to the “extensive naval and military work” at the University. After this initial self-imposed policy, the University found it increasingly difficult to continue to reject prospective students based only on their Japanese ancestry. In response to one request in February 1943, President Hutchins wished he “could do something...[but] we are, for all practical purposes, a military reservation.” As the war progressed, hundreds of Japanese Americans enrolled at other colleges in Chicago and thousands moved to Chicago’s South Side, but the restrictions continued. Here, a selection of documents which capture reactions from the campus community, administrators, and Japanese Americans is presented.

“I think this restriction placed by military authority upon our freedom to admit Japanese-American students is both unwise and unjust. Nevertheless it exists.”
~Dean of the Social Sciences Robert Redfield to Philip Nagao, July 12, 1943

Items

Anita Kuapp Hutchinson to George Ogawa, March 17, 1943

On loan from the Ogawa Family

This letter from George Ogawa, incarcerated in Minidoka, Idaho, is an example of the unusual admissions process Japanese Americans faced. Instead of becoming admitted, Japanese Americans were admissible contingent on permission from the military.

Trudy King, National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, to Robert Redfield, Dean of the Social Sciences Division, January 3, 1944

Social Sciences Division Records

With this letter, the University finally began to receive some semblance of clearance from the military to enroll Japanese American students. While this letter seemingly cleared the University, procedural hurdles remained until September 1944 which further delayed any possible enrollments.

Richard P. McKeon to Robert M. Hutchins, June 11, 1942

Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

In response President Hutchins’ decision that it was “deemed inadvisable” to admit Japanese Americans as students, Dean of Humanities Richard P. McKeon stated his opposition and requested that the University’s policy be revised to include a statement of regret.

Royal H. Fisher, American Baptist Home Mission Society, to Robert M. Hutchins, February 2, 1943

Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

This letter from Royal H. Fisher captures the struggles Japanese Americans faced when attempting to continue their education after their incarceration. The University received many recommendation letters such as this one, but Japanese ancestry singularly disqualified applicants regardless of their individual qualifications.

Business Manager William B. Harrell to Vice President Emery T. Filbey, September 26, 1942
Emery T. Filbey Papers

The Office of Scientific Research and Development, headed by Vannevar Bush, administered the University's Metallurgical Project, which produced the first controlled nuclear reaction.

Robert M. Hutchins to Royal H. Fisher, February 9, 1943
Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

Katsuki James Otsuka to Robert M. Hutchins, September 12, 1943
Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

Katsuki James Otsuka poignantly challenged the University's Japanese American policy. Three months later, Vice President Emery T. Filbey would respond that:

“officers of this University regret the introduction of this limitation upon its freedom to accept students and seriously doubt that it is wise or just. The University has acceded to it because, if it wishes to do its part in wartime research, it was given no real choice in the matter...that the temporary exclusion of certain Americans of Japanese origin from student privileges is not an expression of University policy, but is something imposed upon it...”

Memo, Robert M. Hutchins to Robert Redfield, undated
Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

Robert Redfield to Robert M. Hutchins, October 4, 1943
Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

Robert Redfield to Philip Nagao, July 12, 1943
Social Sciences Division Records

Memorandum from Robert Redfield, June 17, 1942
Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records

This case was curated by Eric Langowski, MS '20, University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy

Japanese Garden in Jackson Park

The history of the Japanese garden in Jackson Park goes back a long way. After the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the Japanese government presented the Hō-ō-den (Phoenix Pavilion) to the city of Chicago as a gesture of friendship.

The facility and the surrounding area were used for social gatherings, but they gradually deteriorated over the years due to a lack of upkeep. In the early 1930s the city invested \$22,000 for renovation of the pavilion and enhancements to the site. Also new was a Japanese tea house, part of Japan's presentation for the Century of Progress International Exposition of 1933–1934, that was relocated to Jackson Park at the expo's conclusion. This tea house (with tea-serving girls) was then managed by a Japanese man named Shōji Osato—until his incarceration during World War II. In 1946 the pavilion suffered two fires, and the site was abandoned for many years.

In the 1970s, as Chicago and Osaka developed a sister-city relationship, the garden was restored; it was christened the Osaka Japanese Garden in 1993. In 2012 the non-profit organization Project 120 initiated a new phase of revival for the garden and the surrounding area; the garden—now renamed the Garden of the Phoenix—is due for further renovation with funding from local donors and from the Japanese government.

Items

Kakuzō Okakura

The Hō-ō-den (Phoenix Hall): An Illustrated Description of the Buildings Erected By the Japanese Government At the World's Columbian Exposition, Jackson Park, Chicag

Tōkyō: Chicago: K. Ogawa [W. B. Conkey Co., printers], 1893

T500.C1O2 1893 Rare

Photographs [reproductions]

Courtesy of Robert Karr

Najita, Iriye (Irie), Kitagawa, Nambu (Nanbu)

The University of Chicago has had eminent professors who were either Japanese Americans or naturalized citizens born in Japan. Some non-academic activities of Professors Iriye, Najita, and Kitagawa are introduced here. For Professor Nambu, a glimpse into his thoughts of the 1950s is showcased.

Items

Letter, May 14, 1975

Office of the President, Wilson Administration Records

In 1975, Professor Najita reported to Professor Harris (University Vice President) that he and Professor Iriye had been consulted by Japanese government officials for help in arranging a tour of the Chicago area for the Emperor of Japan and shared his thoughts on the significance of the Emperor's visit.

Memorandum of a conversation with Okazaki Hisahiko of the Japanese Embassy, 1973

Office of the President, Levi Administration Records

In this 1973 letter Professor Iriye reports on his and Professor Najita's meeting with Mr. Okazaki of the Embassy of Japan to tout the University's robust Japanese Studies program. The pair succeeded in garnering from the Japanese government a million-dollar donation, which would otherwise have gone to UCLA.

Memo and letter, January 7, 1965 [reproductions]

Office of the President, Beadle Administration Records

This memo by Professor Kitagawa, along with a letter to him from Prince Mikasa of Japan, indicates that Prince Mikasa had solicited a princely visit to the University. Indeed, the prince visited during his U.S. tour in 1965.

Notebook: Mesons II, 1950

Yoichiro Nambu Papers

Notebook: Dichtung und Wahrheit, 1950

Yoichiro Nambu Papers

Japanese club (students' organization)

During Japan's Meiji and Taisho periods (1868–1925) the University of Chicago was a frequent destination for so-called government students from Japan. These elite scholars were sent by the Japanese government to acquire advanced knowledge in various fields, then to bring their expertise back home. They formed a student organization called the Japanese Club, which ran two periodicals (*The Japanese Student's Annual* and *The Japanese Students' Review*) and hosted various events to introduce Japanese culture to the campus community.

Items

“Nations Combine for International Night” [reproduction]

The Daily Maroon, April 13, 1912

The Japanese Student: A Bimonthly for Japanese Students in America. February 1917.

Tōkyō: Yūshōdō, 1917

“Right Here It Is—in Black and White— Japanese Praise of Chicago Varsity”

“Chicago U, Praised in Song” [reproductions]

The Chicago Daily Tribune, December 3, 1910

Cap and Gown, v.13 1908 *Cap and Gown*, v.15 1910 [reproductions]

The Japan Review: A Herald of the Pacific Era

Tōkyō: Yūshōdō, 1919 LC3171.J32 c.1 CJK

The University of Chicago's Ellis Hall was the home of a North American journal for international students from Japan from 1916 to 1922. It began as *The Japanese Student*, and served as a newsletter that included articles on Japanese society and politics, as well as information on who was enrolled at which universities. After changing its title to *The Japan Review*, the periodical began to focus on discussions of political matters.

The chief editor was Katsuji Katō 加藤勝治 (1885–1961), who studied religion and psychology at the University. He then received a doctoral degree in medicine, and eventually became a pediatrics professor. His career at the University ended after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor; he was able to get on one of the ships that carried Japanese government officials back home in 1942. He dedicated the rest of his life to the practice of medical science in Japan.

Imperial visits (see the “Imperial family visits” subfolder under M4 Visitors from Japan)

[3 sectional panels]

Prince Takamatsu (1905–1987) and Princess Takamatsu (1911–2004) visited Chicago in 1931 during their fourteen-month tour of Europe and the United States (which substituted for a proper honeymoon). The younger brother of Emperor Hirohito, Prince Takamatsu was charged with making official visits to strengthen relations between Imperial Japan and powerful Western nations like Britain and Germany. *The Daily Maroon* reported that the couple had stopped by the campus to meet with students from Japan.

In 1965 the University welcomed three more visitors from Japan’s imperial family: Prince Mikasa (1915–2016) and Princess Mikasa (b. 1923), with their eldest daughter Princess Yasuko (b. 1944). They traveled to the United States for cultural purposes rather than with a diplomatic agenda, and the campus visit required discretion to keep it unofficial. The prince being a scholar of the ancient Middle East, the Oriental Institute was a natural choice for his campus tour. The University Archives preserves a letter inviting him back to teach courses on the ancient Middle East, but there is no record that this offer ever came to anything.

In 1975 Emperor Hirohito (1901–1989) and Empress Nagako (1903–2000) toured the United States, an excursion highly publicized as a manifestation of the reformed Japan–U.S. relationship. As evidenced in other exhibit cases, Mr. Kasai and two Japanese-studies professors at the University worked behind the scenes to have Chicago included in their itinerary. During their stay in Chicago, the empress made a brief visit to the Silvain and Arma Wyler Children’s Hospital at the University of Chicago to observe a play-therapy session.

Items

“Another royal visitor...” [reproduction]

UChicago Magazine, 1976

“Emperor’s visit excites older Japanese- Americans here: Younger ones not very interested” [reproduction]

Chicago Tribune, October 7, 1975 When Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako toured the United States in 1975, Empress Nagako made a short visit to the Silvain and Arma Wyler Children’s Hospital at the University of Chicago.

“Hirohito’s agenda here” [reproduction]

Chicago Tribune, October 7, 1975

“Japanese Royalty to meet students” [reproduction]

The Daily Maroon, May 8, 1931

"Chicago meets Japanese royalty" [reproduction]

The Chicago Daily Tribune, May 13, 1931 Prince and Princess Takamatsu visited Chicago in 1931 during their honeymoon tour of Europe and the United States, and stopped by the University campus to meet with students from Japan.

Prince Mikasa Letter to Beadle, May 14, 1975

Office of the President, Beadle Administration Records

Prince Mikasa visit schedule

Office of the President, Beadle Administration Records

Japanese American Community Life

The city of Chicago already had migrants from Japan by the end of the nineteenth century, and the University of Chicago had Japanese American students as well. But Chicago saw an influx of Japanese Americans during the latter years of World War II, as they began to be released from the incarceration camps. Release was granted for Japanese Americans who were able to find employment and housing, and who could prove themselves good citizens. Since they were not allowed to return to the West Coast, they were dispersed to large cities east of the Rocky Mountains for resettlement.

Chicago soon became the largest hub for such resettling Japanese Americans, as they began new lives in following neighborhoods: Oakland and Kenwood, Hyde Park and Woodlawn, Near Northside, Far Northside, and greater Westside. Oakland and Kenwood boasted the largest concentration with about thirty percent of Chicago's Japanese American population; and after the war the area continued to welcome formerly incarcerated Japanese individuals, Japanese American war veterans, and Japanese war brides.

New zoning laws in the late 1940s quickly changed the racial demography of the area, and the Japanese and Japanese Americans—once the largest non-white group in the neighborhoods—became the second largest by the early 1950s. Because of the intensifying racial tension and negotiation as well as a series of urban renewals ensued, more people chose to leave the area, which led to the community dissolving.

The existence of this once-bustling community of Japanese and Japanese Americans on the South Side was easily forgotten. The racial categorization at the time was simply "white" or "non-white," and a shrinking population of Japanese Americans was no longer a vital part of the community, as they became a small minority within the non-white category.

But thanks to contributions of former and current residents, presented here is a bricolage of their past everyday lives.

Items

Alice Murata

"Stardust and Street of Dreams: Chicago Girls Clubs"

Chicago History, Spring 2001 F548.1.C5 c.1 Gen

Chicago Resettlers Committee *4th Annual Report*, 1949

Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

Oakland-Kenwood Neighbors, Vol. 2 No. 2, April 1950

Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference

A Report to the Community: a preliminary review of area problems and possibilities, 1951

Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

Hyde Park High School varsity letters
Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

Hyde Park High School All-School Reunion Badge, 2002
Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

Ray Chronicle, Vol. 10 No. 3, June 1947
Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference
"Fight Pushed on Slum Owners" Conference News Letter, Vol. 8 No. 2
September 1956
Hyde Park Historical Society Collection

LP
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family

Ellis Community Brochure
On loan from the Harano Family

Assorted card games and toys
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family
This assortment of toys and games comes from a Japanese American family. The card game with Japanese characters was for children to learn the language, and the card game with illustrations is of a traditional kind familiar to any Japanese. The red felt doll was made by one sister for another when they were kids.

Certificates
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family

Graduation ribbon
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family

Girl Scout accessories
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family

Bowling contest ribbon
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family

Child's ready-to-wear *obi* and *tabi* socks, and photograph
On loan from the Shiraiwa Family

This assortment of toys and games comes from a Japanese American family. The card game with Japanese characters was for children to learn the language, and the card game with illustrations is of a traditional kind familiar to any Japanese. The red felt doll was made by one sister for another when they were kids.

Wooden mailbox

On loan from the Harano Family

This mailbox was made from scrap wood by the Mayewaki Family while they lived in an incarceration camp in Jerome, Arkansas. The Japanese inscription reads “endurance,” and the three blue stars represent the three sons who volunteered to serve in the United States Army: Master Sergeant Ben Mayewaki, Technical Sergeant Hachiro Mayewaki, and Private First Class Charles Mayewaki. The irony was that these American sons fought for the country, while their Japanese parents had to endure the life of internees.

Photograph [reproduction]

Courtesy of Wendell Kimura

Albert Kazuo Kimura was a Japanese American student from Hawai'i who migrated to Chicago as a teenager. He attended Hyde Park High School, and worked as a houseboy for an Irish family in Bronzeville. Then he attended the University of Chicago in 1920–1922, while serving as vice-president of the Hawaiian Student Society of Chicago. This photo—selected by his grandchildren Cheryl Lund and Kevin Miyazaki—portrays Albert as a young Japanese American man sitting at the bottom of the monument in Lincoln Park, aspiring to make something of himself in America.

Ito Hattori family portrait [reproduction]

Courtesy of the Shiraiwa Family

This portrait is of the Ito or Hattori Family, who was in the Hyde Park area around the turn of the century. The mother and son continued living in the area after World War II.

New Testament Bible

Hiroko Miyakawa Collection

This Bible was given to Robert (Bobby) Azumaby the Granada Christian Church when his family was living in the Amache camp in Colorado. Many Christian groups made efforts to teach “American” (Christian) values in the camps.

The photographs in this collage were contributed by the following:

Julie Azuma

Sadako Fujii

Ross Harano

Pam Hashimoto

Albert Kimura

Eric Langowski

Junko Mizuta

Alice Murata
Mariko Ventura
Kristine Yatsuke