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NAKAMA: THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND PRESERVATION OF
THE JAPANESE AMERICAN FAMILY FURO IN
HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OREGON

by
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“Nakama: The Cultural Significance and Preservation of the Japanese American Family Furo in Hood River County, Oregon,” a thesis prepared by Christopher S. Bell in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program: Historic Preservation. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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At the turn of the 20th century thousands of first generation Japanese immigrants, *Issei*, came to the Americas seek their fortune. Many tried to strike a balance between casting off their heritage in favor of western lifeways in a forlorn quest for acceptance, and preserving traditional cultural practices of their homeland. On *Issei* farms, the Japanese bathhouse, the *furo*, emerged as one of the few physical manifestations of Japanese tradition. This cultural transference indicated both the functional and symbolic import of the *furo*. Once ubiquitous, they have disappeared like the *Issei*, leaving only a handful of inactive yet partially intact *furo*. This thesis documents five extant *furo* found in Hood River County, Oregon; interprets them contextually; and puts forth a proposal for their preservation. By highlighting a discrete traditional cultural practice, this thesis also aims to help others seek out other immigrant landscapes that demand a modicum of cultural fluency.

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While the object of my thesis may have been the furo, the subject has been the people who built and used them. The list of Nisei I have interviewed, formally or informally, would fill volumes. Thus I will suffice it to let this work stand to acknowledge the many Nisei whose interest in preserving a part of their parents heritage has made this possible. Before I recognize my committee, however, I will start with a principal *Sansei*-in-law (third-generation Japanese, hereafter “Sansei”) who has had bearing on this project from day one: Maija Yasui. By marriage to Flip Yasui, Maija Yasui has become the enthusiastic glue for the Japanese-American community in Hood River. Generous, conscientious, and knowledgeable, Maija started me out on a wonderful wild Japanese barn hunt only to find the rare cultural treasure of the furo. This thesis has a distinctively Maija Yasui stamp on it. And for those who know her, that is a very good thing.

My thesis committee has been steadfast partners in scholarly crime. Between their formative comments during the early stages of my work, and their valued presence throughout, they have been integral to this work. Stephen Kohl, a long-time scholar of Japanese literature with a particular interest in early relations between the Japanese and American cultures, engaged me early on with the Japanese American community, and through his invitation, brought me into the ASPAC (Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast) conference which permitted me to refine and gain feedback on my studies from scholars who knew both Japanese and Japanese-American culture well.

Kingston Heath, the director of the Historic Preservation program as well as a scholar on culture interfacing with architecture, helped with consistent leads toward relevant literature and methodology. His own work on the triple-deckers of New Bedford, Massachusetts, as well as work he is currently undertaking on patterns in cultural weathering, greatly influenced my reading of the forces that shaped the Japanese-American furo. His current model on interaction of architectural form and place is singular in the field of vernacular architectural studies.

Final homage is due to my thesis committee chair and Liebermeister, Howard Davis. A longtime researcher and writer on the subject of international vernacular architecture, he has consistently encouraged me along in my travels, provided space when needed, and offered insight and guidance in person, either coming over to see drawings, or traveling up to Hood River to see the wonders of these hidden bath houses. Howard's mind is ceaselessly active, his humor was consistent throughout, and his scholarly input and review has been second to none.

This thesis honors all who challenge inequality, particularly those who have swum upstream to do so. In this fashion, I dedicate this to my parents, sisters and grandmother. Each of them have been incredible examples of standing up for what they believe.

PROLOGUE

If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn't be called research, would it?¹

- Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein's quote puts a favorable edge to the magnitude of work that precedes a thesis. To say the least, the scope of this research has been ambitious. In short, I am seeking to characterize at multiple levels the Japanese baths in Hood River County, Oregon. But in order to do so, one needs to have an understanding of Japanese baths generally, in the United States, and then, of course, originally, as they existed previously in Japan. This requires, as one of my advisors had once been told by the noted cultural anthropologist, Dr. James Deetz, "seeing the object as it was seen by those who used it," thereby getting as close an understanding of the history and context, above and beyond the object itself.² This requisite breadth offered a number of challenges, and I offer this prologue as a review of those which with persistence and a touch of luck, can be hopefully surmounted.

The first immediate challenge in trying to capture this holistic understanding is the risk of creating a homogenous portrayal, in this case of Japanese and their bathing habits. Eventually, through research, you realize that general principles of social organization, customs, habits, etc. did (and do) exist in Japan, and similarly here in the

¹ Exact context and origin of this quote is difficult to discern, despite a fairly lengthy perusal of the web and Albert's work, at which point, I chose to leave it alone and enjoy it for its capturing of my mindset.

² Discussion with Dr. Kingston Heath, one of the members of my thesis committee, in May of 2004.

United States, and can be fairly accurately characterized in broad terms. General characterizations can help us understand a culture better. In hindsight, it is clear that the individual behavior and the overarching behavior inform or relate to one another, and one should not be discounted over the other.

Another major challenge is presented whenever a thesis entails the study of not just a foreign culture, but a culture where the researcher does not speak the native tongue. While confined to translations, and histories in English, nothing appeared to have been written on the American *furo* [Japanese bath, henceforth “furo” without italics] in Japanese that had not been translated.³ There were some texts I did not read that were on the Japanese *furo* in Japanese, but there were a number of texts in English that more than accounted for multiple readings of the Japanese *furo*.⁴ What could have been a sticking point turned out to be a minor speed bump.

On the interview side, English was always the first language. The *Nisei* [second-generation Japanese-Americans, henceforth “Nisei” without italics], with whom I conducted my interviews, could speak Japanese to some degree and often understand it, but English has always been their first language. Listening to the interview recordings, outside the content, it often is difficult to discern which of us is of Japanese ancestry.

³ Further research has shown there are a number of excellent, non-translated texts on the subject of the Japanese in America, though I was obviously not able to see if the *furo* was included (see bibliography of *Planted in Good Soil*, an extensive two-volume set on the Issei agricultural experience in America. By far one of the best researched and exhaustive studies on the subject).

⁴ Foremost among these is *Issei* by Kazuo Ito, written in 1973, is a huge compilation of Issei stories translated into English. While cumbersome and poorly indexed, if you read all 1016 pages you get a sincere, personal and first-hand sense of the Issei experience with occasional mention of the *furo*.

While their parents maintained Japanese as their first language and spoke to their children in Japanese, school and surroundings permitted the Nisei to be bilingual.⁵

A third challenge to a cultural scholar who again is studying from an outsider perspective is picking up cultural clues. During my interviews, for example, I frequently learned about a cultural tradition I did not know about pertaining to the bath, or one that I had not imagined was carried forward in the United States. *Geta*, for example, are wooden shoes common in Japan. While interviewing Charlie Akiyama of Odell, Oregon, I learned, they were frequently made simply by the *Issei* [first generation, hereafter “Issei”] father’s for their family, or purchased at the local Japanese import store, like the Yasui Bros Store in Hood River, Oregon. I subsequently began seeing them in a colored pencil illustration of a mother and child going to the bath at one of the internment camps, provided to me by the Japanese-American National Museum in Los Angeles.⁶ They appeared again at the recent exhibition of the Yasui Bros. collection at the Oregon Historical Society.⁷ Ideally, an ethnographer should be fluent in the cultural traditions of community researched from the outset to allow for a thorough comparative understanding. In absence of such, flexibility and careful listening go a long way.

A fourth challenge with a positive spin is the story of the *Issei* in America has been comparatively well-documented.⁸ In addition to the volumes on their immigrant

⁵ Although by their admission, many have lost their ability to speak Japanese altogether.

⁶ A copy of this illustration is included in the appendix, including the contact information for those who would like to receive an electronic copy for a modest research fee.

⁷ The exhibit, “Oregon, My Oregon” is a compilation of various characteristically Oregon communities, or businesses, incorporating their collection into a life-like recreation of the business or enterprise. The Yasui Bros. store was among the exhibits, and inside the “shop window” hung a pair of *Geta* from the inventory which was turned over to OHS by the Yasui family when the store closed with the evacuation and internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII.

⁸ Compared, especially, to other ethnicities, like the Finnish or Indian (from Asia) communities that similarly came as a working population (railroad, timber) at the same time (early 20th century) to Oregon.

history, culminating with the internment and post-internment periods, there are infinite essays, books and theses on nearly every topic ranging from a close study of all anti-Japanese legislation nationally to community-level studies on small Japanese-American communities.⁹ For the first two months of my thesis, my research was confined to reading as many of these experiences as Inter-Library Loan could provide, taking notes along the way. How this bottomless pit becomes negotiable is when the story of Issei across the West began to strike a consistent beat. Getting back to the idea of finding the balance of the general and the specific, you seek out those important differences and the common threads. Like the omnipresent meal of tofu and rice across the Issei or the *mochitsuki* [a New Year's tradition] celebration, reading through these community documentaries you find out what was integral and consistent within the early *Nikkei* [people of Japanese descent, hereafter "Nikkei"] life.

Fifth on my list of critical research steps is covering the non-traditional bases. Across Washington and Oregon, I have read through newspapers, city directories, telephone books, early promotional materials for the Hood River Valley, a local Fruit Grower magazine, records from a state-sponsored agricultural research station going back to 1914, county tax records, county plot maps, fire insurance maps, photographs, family memoirs, documentaries on Hood River County Issei, Issei in general, and even Japanese bathing. Often covering these bases is more important than the yield. Take the agricultural research station in Hood River, for instance. Three days and several emails and a host of files did not yield exactly what one might have imagined (plot plans, farm inventories, etc.). Yet it was important to uncover that reality. The lesson learned was

⁹ The bibliography is not a complete compilation of such, but lends evidence to this range.

that within reason, exploration is important, even if it is a dead-end, and more often than not, some tidbit or clue or contact will lead you somewhere you would never have gone, and more than make up for "lost" time.

One final insight is that one should use the participant-observation technique as one might employ if this study were conducted in Japan, where the furo is still active. Not a single furo studied was in service, and thus nothing beyond reenactment was possible with those families still living on their original homeplace [term used by Nisei interchangeably with "farmstead" or "farm"]. Only in one case did I meet a Nisei who had a furo *and* physically was able to walk me through the experience.

BATH WORDS

There are many words associated with bathing. Two words which will continually recur and require further elaboration is furo and o-furo.¹⁰ These words carry with them images and other symbolism of bathing. They are the primary words with which all the bathing symbolism is associated.

Furo to the Nisei means a hot water bath. *Furoba* means "bathing place," and yet in the U.S. context, it never surfaced. Many say "o-furo" which is simply adding an honorific, respectful feature to the word, like "Mr." to a person's name. Oddly enough, some Nisei made sure I said "furo" and others were certain it was "o-furo." Either way, when a Nisei would say he or she is going to take a bath, they would usually say that he

¹⁰ When furo is used in conjunction with another word it is often pronounced "buro" as with the furo of *Goemon* is *Goemonburo*.

or she is going to enter the o/furo. The term can indicate bathtub itself¹¹; it may refer to the act of taking a bath; or it may recall symbolic meanings, feelings, and images. Originally it referred to a steam bath.

Another word that surfaced in various contexts was *kudo*. According to my thesis advisor and professor of East Asian Language and Literature, Stephen Kohl, “kudo is a firebox...often used in reference to the kitchen stove, but it can also be for the firebox of the bath. It is the opening where one would put in the...firewood and I expect it has strong female implications.”¹² Interesting to note, as *kudo* was authored by women, and as was often the case with the furo in addition to the stove, tended by women.



Kay Kiyokawa holding the *sana* above the furo.

A final word on the word “furo.” According to Professor Kohl, it is composed of two kanji, “the first means ‘wind’ and the second means ‘spine.’”¹³ We are still seeking further understanding here as well. A curious combination, but no doubt rife with symbolism.

Sana is a word used frequently by the Issei in reference to the board, shown to the left, between the base of the bath, hot like the bottom of a cooking pot, and your feet. Further investigation into this word and its etymology is forthcoming.

¹¹ There are other more specific terms for bathtub in Japanese, but no Nisei confirmed any other word than furo was used as such.

¹² Kohl, Stephen. <kohl@uoregon.edu> "Ofuro." 24 May 2005. Personal e-mail (25 May 2005).

¹³ Ibid.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: AN OUTLINE IN APPROACH

One of the most distinctive ethnic markers in the rural landscape associated with Japanese-Americans was the family furo.¹

- Gail Dubrow

In a delicate balance between embracing a new and different community while preserving strong beliefs and practices of the homeland, the domestic Japanese bath house, the family furo, existed as one of the only *physical* manifestations of the Japanese-American heritage.² Throughout the western United States, Japanese-American farmers, either as tenants or land-owners, were rarely without the furo. Today, none of these furos are believed to be in use across the United States; most were abandoned or destroyed during and after the internment of the Japanese-Americans.³ This study documents the few extant examples of this bath type found in Hood River County, Oregon, interprets the furo in the context both locally and regionally, and puts forth a proposal for the preservation of the five remaining furo in Hood River County. This study highlights evidence of a traditional cultural practice likely still visible in a western ethnographic landscape, and aims to help the reader seek out culture-specific characteristics that demand an awareness otherwise unfamiliar to the eyes of the Western world.

¹ Gail Dubrow, "Asian American Imprints on the Western Landscape," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, ed. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 167.

² Ibid.

³ No records indicate any were "destroyed" by U.S. government officials or locals, though often they were taken down by time, passing of the Issei, or changing of traditions (indoor bathing, showers, etc.).

In short, the study's methodology evaluated three different culture-specific characteristics, namely (1) the furo's physical function, (2) its social purpose and (3) its cultural and symbolic meaning.

(1) Much of this work is grounded in the technical, physical, object-based evaluation starting with the field drawings which reference the form, inside and out, of these five different furo. With a clear understanding of the object, one can read the physical interweave with the larger cultural forces that surround it. This is the crux of vernacular building studies: deciphering of the architectural form in how it adapted, if it did, to the available resources or lack thereof and the regional forces acting on it. All of this hinges on an understanding of function and physical form of the furo in its original context in Japan in addition to its place within Hood River County. Metaphorically, this localized adaptation⁴ of the furo was part-American, part-Japanese, much like the people who used it.⁵

In evaluating the family furo's (2) social purpose in Hood River County, the primary and secondary sources made plain that the furo physically imparted, not always consciously however, an emotional and physical fraternity both with Japan, and within these struggling young families and communities. This and the next subject of study will try to put the first study area, the physical object itself, in the time and place which the furo existed.

⁴ "Vernacular," a term ambiguous and fraught with misuse, will be more fully explained with reference to its purpose and place in this study in Chapter One.

⁵ James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1977), 108.

The third principal research area is the (3) cultural, spiritual and symbolic import of the study of the furo. This secular act daily bathing reveals a revered tradition of cleansing that has long transcended the physical, but is derived from a prescribed ancient pre-Shinto practice. Its symbolic import as a conclusion of the work or school day, transition to family life, and as a physical salve to aching muscles, created a positive association with the sight of a furo.⁶ The furo is thus a cogent metaphor for the lives of these early Japanese-Americans: it imparts cultural memory and ritual, spiritual as well as physical cleanliness, and an antidote to the climate of acculturation.

OBJECTIVES

With the overarching purpose of furthering the fields of American ethnic studies and historic preservation, this study seeks to contribute with four major objectives in mind. The first and most evident is adding to the current body of knowledge of Japanese-American settlement in Oregon, specifically in Hood River County. In spite of many studies undertaken on the Japanese-American settlement and tumultuous existence in the United States, only a handful have attempted to evaluate their physical manifestations – with little mention of the furo, one of the few Japanese cultural features in their *barnscape*.⁷ Considering this research yielded five, largely intact furo in Hood River County, this work can provide a diverse and insightful look at the furo.⁸ This is a

⁶ See interview with Charlie Kageyama in Chapter Four.

⁷ Term used to suggest purview of a collection of farm buildings.

⁸ There are many other sites and former furo locations found in Hood River, however they could not be easily understood without major archaeological assistance, and for the purpose of preserving still tangible

singular opportunity considering in each case there is also a living Nisei connected to each of the five furo, offering a rare first hand discussion of the subject of study.⁹

The second objective is to promote the emergence of ethnic history within the field of historic preservation, recognizing how ethnographic elements of our landscape are often overlooked due to an inability to read the landscape beyond its conventional meaning. In his work *In Small Things Forgotten*, cultural archaeologist James Deetz notes, "...people whose history has not been a part of the Anglo-American past hold...cultural treasures in trust. We are not...conscious of these other patterns...but they are there."¹⁰ If possible, walking the sites with members of that cultural community is one of the few ways to read an ethnographic landscape. Therefore in addition to representative drawings and photographs of each furo, interviewing a family member who remembers it as a functioning part of their life has permitted an understanding of its technical function, in lieu of interviews with the now-deceased Issei, who built them. This study will signal those character defining features which will allow the reader to discern the furo in the landscape and prepare the way for a National Register nomination, in addition to an evaluation of the furo itself.¹¹

furo, five fit that bill. I do suspect, however, a few more may "surface" with the completion of this study and hopefully some local press on the matter. And in 2 cases, "furoba" is all we have, in that we just have the building, not the furo itself.

⁹ Five living at the beginning of this project, however I am saddened to report that one, Charlie Kageyama, passed recently (Summer 04), not more than two weeks after her interview.

¹⁰ Deetz (1977), 159.

¹¹ To many Nisei, second generation Japanese-Americans, the idea of "finding the furo" comes naturally. "Everyone had a furo" and it existed behind the house, usually separate from it, etc. However, in discussions with many Sansei, the third generation Japanese-American, or white contemporaries of the

The third major objective for this study is to determine the many layers of importance ascribed to the furo within the Japanese-American community. When were these furo built? By whom? Why were they built? What remained from the furo experience in Japan, and what changed? Through oral histories, written local histories, as well as primary resources, a clear and consistent story emerged surrounding the central significance of the furo to those Japanese-American families in Hood River County as well as Japanese-American communities in North and South America.¹² This study seeks to aid others in realizing a fuller understanding of early Japanese-American life through this traditional cultural practice.

The fourth and final objective is to utilize months of study, research and collaboration with the family furo owners, and provide a preservation plan for their cultural resource. Given the scarcity of information on the family furo, particularly at centers of Nikkei research like the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, or locally at the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center in Portland, seeking a mutually beneficial solution which would preserve the furo in part, or in its entirety, is both prudent and necessary.

It is these four objectives which this thesis aims to meet. While outside of its scope, a preservation effort such as this can frequently lead to awareness which in turn

Nisei (as I did in Hood River County), rarely knew anything about the furo. The point is to those in the know, it is obvious. To the majority who are not, it is not.

¹² Related studies of *Issei* communities in Brazil, Peru and British Columbia, found in the bibliography, provide locations for likely perpetuation of the furo in these farming communities outside the 48 states, not to mention in Hawaii and Alaska, where many Nikkei communities existed and still exist.

leads to increased scholarship.¹³ To this end there is ample research left to be done, in particular with topics like the American *sento*, the public bath house in urban Japanese communities; the decline of the *furo* after the World War II; and the persistence of cleanliness in the Japanese-American psyche, to name a few. Unfortunately, with the rapidly changing landscape and passing of the Nisei, time is not on our side.

SITE SELECTION

Hood River County is singular location to study the *furo*. The county was home to nearly 500 Japanese-Americans up to World War II, a comparably large number for a community of its size. In fact, per capita, it was one of the densest Japanese-American settlements in the nation.¹⁴ The outlying community has changed very little *physically* since World War II, allowing for a fairly accurate evaluation the context for the *furo*.¹⁵ In light of the fact that there are very few *documented* rural bathhouses in the United States,¹⁶ discovering five distinct and mostly intact occurrences presents a tremendous opportunity. Finding five when even Nikkei locals thought there were one or none left

¹³ Presently the Hood River Museum is setting up a permanent exhibit on the Japanese families of Hood River County, and this thesis will be providing the material and information on the family *furo*.

¹⁴ County data was taken from a 1941 survey of Japanese living in the United States. Placer and San Bernardino Counties had slightly higher percentages, though arguably Hood River County, which had declined in population 11% (from 1930) by then, was higher previously.

¹⁵ Comparatively, of course, many of the farms are largely unchanged, an example being the treasure trove of artifacts (Japanese and otherwise) that exists above the Kageyama barn in Dee.

¹⁶ Gail Dubrow, in *Sento at Sixth and Main*, (Seattle: Seattle Arts Commission, 2002), gives a relatively in depth reading of the Hori *furo* in Auburn, Washington, which still exists and in her "Asian American Imprints..." She noted on Bainbridge Island, WA, there exists a *furo*, however this author could not find anything but remnants of a foundation with the help of a local historian and a Nisei dentist living on Bainbridge, who conducted the field work. It may have been demolished since her essay.

implies, however, that with a trained eye and some good due diligence of similar rural, formerly or currently Japanese-American populated communities, furos, in one form or another, may still be standing. Much of this study is an effort to help others seek these cultural treasures in trust.

SCOPE AND RESULTS

This study is limited to the period of use for the domestic furo of the Japanese-American settlement in Hood River County. While difficult to pin down, the majority of the discussion begins in the 1910s, through the complete evacuation of Japanese-Americans from Hood River County, on May 13, 1942, and some limited discussion after the war, when the furo began to decline in use with the fading of the Issei. After the internment, only 40% (186 out of 462) returned to the valley.¹⁷ As previously mentioned, more study should be undertaken, for example bathing at the internment camps, or while in transitory camps (*i.e.* logging, railroad construction, etc.). The thrust of this study is not to see how and why the furo tradition faded after the War, but inevitably, some discussion is included based on interviews and documentary evidence.

The results of this study are measured drawings of the primary elements of each furo in addition to photographic documentation. This study will offer an interpretation of the furo within the context of the site, the community, and the furo as cultural phenomena in the United States. Finally, the study will present a plan to preserve the furo, predicated

¹⁷ Linda Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 226.

on community and owner input as well as best practices in the field of cultural heritage preservation.

The thesis chapters are based on reviewing several notable theses stored at the University of Oregon's Historic Preservation suite (now deceased),¹⁸ which helped inform a logical pathway of introducing, discussing and concluding the subject at hand, and therefore take the following form: Chapter Two describes the discipline of cultural heritage preservation, and why it is important. Chapter Three sets down the methodology this thesis is grounded in. It is a review of the principal types of study conducted under the aegis of vernacular architecture and how each of these will fold into the current work. Chapter Four summarizes the history and development of bathing in Japan, including discussion of bathing in the domestic context, which is of primary interest here.

Chapter Five discusses the context for the large-scale Japanese emigration and settlement which occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, including the context for Japanese settlement in the Hood River area. One component that draws the furo into the forefront of preservation and educational opportunities, in particular, is the psychological and physical salve the furo unconditionally offered. This contrasted with the long days and restless nights for Issei families, constantly striving to work in harmony with the land and the dominant culture, the latter often less forgiving than the former. Numerous Issei oral histories will be principal in providing the context of the day-to-day lives of their journey through the first half of the century.

¹⁸ See bibliography of MA theses.

Chapter Six will discuss the five furo, their creation, location, design, site and setting, based on field documentation and interviews with resident Nisei. In addition, many valued citations from oral interviews of Issei and other Nisei, who lived in other farming communities like Hood River, will be included to provide as rich an understanding of the building and practices as possible.

Chapter Seven is the final chapter, and one which will use incorporate the latest preservation strategies, including reasonable expectations given the local situation, to preserve and sustain the legacy of the furo for future generations. In particular, this final chapter will be a suggested course of action for follow-up with the community and families to see that these ethnic markers are honored properly.

CHAPTER 2: PRESERVING OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND CULTURE

CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

The National Register of Historic Places, the U.S. government's central accounting of our historic resources, permits a wide range of historic property types to be nominated to its registry. It is open to the diversity of this nation's history and culture, though nominations of such are few and far between.¹⁹ "Culture" is broadly defined in the National Register program to include the traditions, beliefs, practices, lifeways, arts, crafts, and social institutions of any community, be it an Indian tribe, a local ethnic group, or the people of the nation as a whole.²⁰ One kind of cultural significance a property can possess which would make it eligible for inclusion in the Register is *traditional cultural significance*.

"Traditional" in this context refers to those beliefs, customs, and practices of a community that has been passed down, often orally or through practice. The traditional cultural significance of an historic property, then, is significance derived from the role the property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.

Examples of properties possessing such significance, according to National Register

¹⁹ While no one has attempted to perform an accurate count, and there is plenty of gray should the effort be undertaken as to what is a "cultural resource." A cursory sampling reveals archaeological sites aside, comparatively little has been tracked or recorded of minority immigrant cultures and their sites of historic significance in the United States.

²⁰ Patricia Parker and Thomas King, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties," Washington, DC: US Dept of the Interior, 1990, Appendix A.

Bulletin 38 issued in 1990 on the subject by Patricia Parker and Thomas King of the National Park Service, include:

- a location associated with the traditional beliefs of a group about its origins, its cultural history, or the nature of the world;
- a rural community whose organization, buildings and structures, or patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its residents;
- an urban neighborhood that is the traditional home of a particular cultural group, and that reflects its beliefs and practices;
- a location where religious practitioners have historically gone to perform ceremonial activities in accordance with traditional cultural rules of practice; and
- a location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its historic identity.²¹

A traditional cultural property, then, can be defined generally as one that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of that community.²²

While this is largely geared towards Native American communities, the furo and its related history can be easily described by the final bullet point, namely a “cultural practice important in maintaining [the Japanese community’s] historic identity.” A

²¹ Parker and King, 2.

²² Ibid, 4.

representative furo could also be appropriate for inclusion in the National Register by virtue of the first bullet point, namely its long rooted practice within the Japanese history and while extinct as a practice, its existence is important to the cultural memory and identity of that community.

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL STUDY

A key lesson offered by Parker and King is in how traditional cultural values are central to the way a community or group defines itself, and maintaining such values is vital to maintaining the group's sense of identity and cultural dignity. Properties to which traditional cultural values are ascribed often take on this kind of vital significance. As a result, it is clear that when studying traditional cultural properties significant consideration should be given regarding the ramifications of the study, and the eventual proposed preservation strategies. Even with the passing of the tradition and the generation which held its practice so dear (Issei), as the case is with the furo, this level of sensitivity has been a guiding force with all interactions with the property holders.

Traditional cultural properties are often hard to recognize. As a result, such places may not necessarily come to light through archeological, historical, or architectural surveys. The existence and significance of such locations often can be ascertained only through interviews with knowledgeable users of the area, or through other forms of ethnographic research. The subtlety with which the significance of such locations may be expressed makes it easy to pass over them; or conversely, makes it difficult to distinguish

between properties having real significance and those whose putative significance is spurious. As a result, clear guidelines for evaluation of *each* property type are necessary.

In the 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act, the Secretary of the Interior and the American Folklife Center were directed to better understand the tangible and intangible elements of our cultural heritage. Their specific charge:

[To] preserve, conserve, and encourage the continuation of the diverse traditional prehistoric, historic, ethnic, and folk cultural traditions that underlie and are a living expression of our American heritage.²³

The report responded directly to Section 502, entitled "Cultural Conservation," and was submitted by the Secretary of the Interior to Congress and the President on June 1, 1983. In sum, it recommended those traditional cultural resources associated with historic properties and those without specific property ties, be systematically addressed in implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act by the National Park Service. The Service was directed to "prepare guidelines to assist in the documentation of tangible and intangible cultural resources, to coordinate the incorporation of provisions for the consideration of such resources into Departmental planning documents and administrative manuals, and to encourage the identification and documentation of such resources by States and Federal agencies."²⁴

²³NHPA 502; 16 U.S.C. 470a

²⁴ Parker and King, draw from a version now available electronically, accessed on October 29th, 2004 [<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb38/nrb38%20introduction.htm#tcp>].

To that mandate, this thesis will be an aid those who seek to determine if a Japanese-American farm has cultural significance. Seeing the patterning of the furo in Hood River Country will facilitate Federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), Certified Local Governments, and other historic preservation practitioners with a guide towards evaluating such properties for inclusion in the National Register.

Beyond the National Register realm, Oregon is in need of a broad and unified response to David Peterson del Mar's quandary in Oregon's Promise: An Interpretive History on how we can work toward vanquishing Oregon's history of racism. One clear way is through a public and educational forum, keeping the lessons of the past fresh for future generations by preserving and interpreting the folkways of Oregon's ethnic roots.²⁵ In this way we can tangibly illustrate that cultural diversity was and remains a significant aspect in our State's experience, and that segregating a people or a community is inherently racist.

This thesis is also heeding the call for the preservation of cultural markers of Japanese-American history, before they are gone, a cause championed by cultural historian Gail Dubrow, a leading voice in historic preservation's move toward identifying, recording and interpreting Asian American imprints in the Western Landscape. This is her plea:

²⁵ David Peterson del Mar, *Oregon's Promise: An Interpretive History*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2003), 280.

Traditional cultural properties are...the most poorly documented types of landscapes associated with Asian Americans in the West.²⁶

In light of Diaspora, it is important to celebrate the rare examples where [Japanese American] communities have retained access to their tangible heritage. There is...a pressing need to develop new strategies for interpreting the past and presenting it to the public...[h]opefully a deeper knowledge of this history will inspire new claims on the past, including a movement to preserve what remains of Japanese American heritage.²⁷

To the degree that this thesis will seek some performance to Dubrow's plea and Peterson del Mar's quandary, while utilizing the cautionary and suggested courses of action relative to preserving cultural traditions, will be the subject of Chapter Seven.

²⁶ Gail Dubrow, "Asian American Imprints on the Western Landscape," in Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America, ed. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000, 159.

²⁷ Dubrow (2002), 4.

CHAPTER 3: THESIS METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

VERNACULAR VS. FOLK ARCHITECTURE: THE CULTURE OF BUILDINGS

Material culture, anthropology, archaeology, cultural and historical geography, ethnography and historic preservation all come to bear on this project. Yet here they are all cast under the rubric of “vernacular architecture,” the dubious term whose meaning is highly subjective to context and author. The most accurate definition for its meaning in this context is taken from the recent work of historian and preservationist, Kingston

Heath:

Vernacular architecture represents a localized response to broad cultural systems, historical events, and environmentally determined regional forces...when manifested in built form, such buildings and their settings are capable of imparting a contextually rich bounty of learned cultural codes, patterns of behavior, local building processes [and practices], and social rituals.²⁸

One of the challenges to vernacular scholars is the separation between “folk” and “vernacular,” which are often used interchangeably, meant to suggest traditions or behavior of a localized culture. Returning to cultural archaeologist James Deetz and his work *In Small Things Forgotten*, Heath offers this visual delineation with reference to Deetz’s ideas of folk and vernacular, and early settlement architecture in New England, in **Table 1** below.

²⁸ Heath (2001), 185.

Cultural Response	Time Period	Building Forms
<i>Diverse Borrow Forms</i> “Folk” Cultural persistence in the transmission of ideas	(1620 – 1650)	• Post Hole • Long House • Single/double cell • Hall and parlor house
<i>Regional Forms</i> “Vernacular” Adaptation, accommodations or rejection of old formulas	(1650-1725)	• Mass. Bay Jetty • Plimoth Colony Vertical Plank Siding • R.I. Stone Ender • Piscataque Long Garrison House

Table 1. Heath’s Distinction of Folk versus Vernacular

Heath demonstrates how “folk and “vernacular” can be defined based on the cultural response. Clearly this type of evolutionary behavior is not exclusive to the 17th and 18th century along the Eastern seaboard, as used in this model. By looking at the physical evidence, in light of written and oral histories, this thesis will evaluate the furo to see if it shifted from a “folk” to a “vernacular” response. Part of interpreting the physical will be to document both the evidence of the furo against its Japanese predecessor, noting any variations across the five furo. Was the furo ever a rote copy of the original? Is it now a regionally influenced adaptation? While there is very little anecdotal and literally no written evidence of alterations made to any of the furo, as is customary in the practice of historic preservation, an informed interpretation will be made by a thorough review of the physical evidence.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE METHODOLOGY AND THEORY: CULTURAL ANALYSIS

An interpretation of [an object's] meanings and functions, its possible extensions in context is, at its most controlled, an act of pure courage. But hypothesis and a bit of scholastic overreaching are better than nothing.²⁹

Describing the interrelation of culture, behavior and cultural material through a methodological process, as Henry Glassie observed above in reference to his seminal study of historic houses in Virginia, can be dubious. When applying an ethnohistorical process, you run the risk of either over emphasizing cultural differences, or under representing cultural significance. In other words, an outside researcher is taking a giant leap to understand a temporal cultural behavior that is wholly unfamiliar. But, as Glassie and noted ethnoarchaeologist Susan Kent have suggested, speculation represents an attempt to integrate behavior with cultural material in order to view a whole entity.³⁰ In the context of this study, there is a singular opportunity to assemble oral history, physical data, and historical data within the sub-culture of Hood River and the Hood River Japanese-Americans down to the level of the family unit. With that information this study can juxtapose the experience of Japanese-Americans, before and after they came to the United States and the concurrent, relevant historical events nationally and around the globe. In fact, with this spectrum of understanding you run the *opportunity* of understanding the cultural forces more contextually than the participants themselves may have understood them.

²⁹ Glassie (1975), 117.

³⁰ Susan Kent is author of two works that informed this opinion. The first is *Analyzing Activity Areas: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of the Use of Space* (1984) and *Method and Theory for Activity Area Research: An Ethnoarchaeological Approach* (1987). Please see the bibliography for complete references.

As noted, the focus of this study is to understand the bathing practices of the Issei and their families in the Hood River Valley through recordation and documentation first, then folding in an understanding of the physical with a larger sense of the cultural and symbolic value, and finally a development of a preservation and interpretation strategy. This study methodology is a hybrid of multiple methodological approaches. However, in reviewing methodologies for vernacular architecture, ethnography, archaeology and even anthropology, there is a fundamental current that runs through all of them. So in this review of the components within this approach, there will be a regular and obvious thematic recurrence, which became the core of methods which informed my study.

The first and major informant for my methodology has been James Deetz. Deetz has again blazed a pathway for ethnographers, particularly for seeing the artifact, or the community, with the appropriate cultural lens, as he demonstrated in his review of the 18th c. African-American community of Parting Ways outside of Plimoth Plantation, Massachusetts:

In our world today, other lessons gained from thinking about artifacts might be applicable. The little community of Parting Ways was probably seen by its contemporaries as simply a collection of houses occupied by people who for all intents and purposes were little different from them except their station in life. Yet America was not a melting pot in the eighteenth century, and it is not one today. In their own way, the black settlers of Parting Ways maintained their cultural heritage in the face of adversity. And today people whose history has not been a part of the Anglo-American past hold similar cultural treasures in trust. We are not usually conscious of these other patterns, for our own culture is an awesome presence, but they are there.³¹

³¹ Deetz (1977), 93.

This statement transcends the idea of “cultural amnesia,” for in order for there to be amnesia; you have to have had the cultural memory to lose.³² As was that case with Parting Ways, and as well as my field of study, the memory resided with the minority, and rarely did its traditions and cultural practices commingle with the dominant society.³³ Methodologically, we learn from Deetz an important general lesson of cultural sensitivity, “for in the seemingly little and insignificant [recurrence of] things...the essence of our existence is captured.”³⁴ Nothing should be taken for granted. An outdoor fire pit, in the case of a Hood River Issei farm, often symbolized the place where rice was cooked for three seasons (spring, summer and winter). Yet this can be applied both ways. Don’t assume everything is culturally unique. The outhouses, for example, at the farms owned by Japanese families, look and operate the same as an outhouse of a white farmer in Hood River. A multidimensional study, as we will see, is critical for avoiding these kinds of pitfalls.

The second major informant for this study is taken from the burgeoning field of ethnoarchaeology. Ethnoarchaeologists hold that material culture is consistently patterned and interrelated with object function, and with that, behavior is also

³² At least among the dominant culture, within a given culture, this term is most applicable, certainly in light of the fading of the furo tradition from Issei to Nisei to Sansei.

³³ As an example, in the entirety of my research, I never *once* came across mention of the Japanese baths in newspaper reports on the Japanese in Hood River, or anything to this end. The only such mention came in a report on logging camps by a state officer of health, who noted how the Japanese were unusually clean. State Board of Control of California, *California and the Oriental: Japanese, Chinese and Hindus*, Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1920.

³⁴ Deetz (1977), 94.

patterned.³⁵ In this way culture, even with all of its ambiguity, is patterned. Patterning, leading ethnoarchaeologist Susan Kent believes, is critical for ethnographers to recreate an understanding of space.³⁶ As related to the Japanese furo, patterned behavior will help with understanding (1) how people organized and used the space; (2) the variables potentially influencing this behavior, and (3) its interrelationship with cultural materials and aspects of culture. With five different furo to study, these will us to see the threads of cultural behavior consistent across them, and also determine idiosyncratic behavior where such exists.

Patterning, however, cannot work alone. Revolutionary archaeologist of the 20th century, Lewis Binford felt that ethnohistorical information was necessary to facilitate an understanding of context.³⁷ Ethnohistorical research involves a close study the life of those that would have used the artifacts. This thesis attempts to capture that period of early settlement in Hood River, complete with racial bias and language barrier. As much as historical record will allow, the Deetz axiom applies: see the object as it was seen by those who used it.

Processual archaeology is the term given to that axiom of study. Its genesis is commonly linked to the 1958 work of Wiley and Phillips, namely *Method and Theory in American Archeology*, which stated that "American archeology is anthropology or it is

³⁵ Kent (1987), 3.

³⁶ Kent (1984), 49.

³⁷ Binford (1962), 21.

nothing".³⁸ Idea being the goals of archaeology and anthropology were the same; that is to better understand the course of humanity. While archaeological in approach, much of the methodological process in historic preservation and vernacular architecture, and a process which I drew upon, is derived from these fields, thus discussion herein is valuable.

In their 1958 work, Wiley and Phillips countered the conventional study of the Culture-Historical phase in which archaeologists thought that any information artifacts contained about past people and past lifeways were lost once the items became included in the archaeological record. All that could be done was to catalogue, describe, and create timelines based on the artifacts.³⁹ Conversely this new phase in archaeology claimed that, with the rigorous use of the scientific method, it was possible to get past the limitations of the archaeological record and begin to learn something about how the people who used the artifacts actually lived, the bedrock of material culture study today.

Lewis Binford added intellectual fuel to the fire first with, "Archaeology as Anthropology" in 1962 and later with his book *New Perspectives in Archaeology* in 1968.⁴⁰ In these works Binford states that archaeology should not just describe the past, it should explain it. Binford did not want to only know the "what" but also the "why." To quote Binford, "The archaeologist's task... lies in abstracting from cultural products

³⁸ Wiley and Phillips (1958), 2.

³⁹ Trigger (1989), 148.

⁴⁰ Binford (1962, 1968).

the normative concepts extant in the minds of men now dead".⁴¹ Fortunately, while the Issei are now dead, many of the Nisei, a living connection to the object of study, are not, permitting a connection which otherwise would be left up to inductive reasoning based on limited physical record and very little written record or an assumption of continued patterns from Japan, an equivocal statement at best.

Binford believes the theoretical context that is at the heart of Processual archaeology is cultural evolutionism. Processual archaeologists are, in almost all cases, cultural evolutionists. It is from this perspective that they believe they can understand past cultural systems through the remains they left behind. This is because Processual archaeologists adhere to White's theory that culture can be defined as the extrasomatic means of environmental adaptation for humans.⁴² Essentially, culture takes the place of biological adaptation as a means of increasing fitness relative to the environment. While this may be difficult to imagine in a primitive survival setting, in the context of a Japanese community in Hood River and elsewhere, the strength in Japanese culture relative to the adaptation to is repeatedly made clear through examples of cooperatism, persistence of national and religious holidays and beliefs, down to farming practices and social customs, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. This idea of cultural over functional adaptation does fail, however, with reference to improved fitness of the furo, which changed in ways that were purely functional, and to some, almost counter-

⁴¹Binford (1965), 196.

⁴²White (1959), 8.

cultural.⁴³ As Processualism accurately portrays extrasomatic changes in the ancient history context, in the modern adaptation of Issei to Nisei to Sansei, the slow erosion of cultural traditions and behavior in favor of the dominant culture is equally clear. Processualism's rise revolutionized American archaeology, and its relevance beyond archaeology is evident here.

Among the cross-currents between this hybrid of ethnography, archeology and anthropology, with vernacular architecture theory, is the broad focus groups for ethnohistorical study. Binford described three core fields of study: they are technomic, socio-technic and ideotechnic.⁴⁴ These three terms are articulated differently within an integrated cultural system. *Technomic* signifies those artifacts having their primary functional context in coping directly with the physical environment. The explanation of the basic form and structure of the *socio-technic* component of an artifactual assemblage lies in the nature and structure of the social system which it represents. Observable differences and changes in the socio-technic components of archaeological assemblages must be explained with reference to structural changes in the social system and in terms of processes of social change and evolution. The third major facet of ethnographic study is *ideotechnic*. This is to understand the objects in how they signify and symbolize the ideological rationalizations for the social system and further provide the symbolic milieu in which individuals are acculturated. This pan-systemic set is the basis for the

⁴³ Fuller discussion in Chapter Three, but the example cited would be the use of horse watering troughs as a furo, as was frequently done. While "disgraceful" in theory to a prideful culture, in practice, it was preferred to the alternative (no furo).

⁴⁴ Binford (1968), 219-220.

recognition of cultural significance, according to preeminent archaeologists Ralph Beals and Harry Hoijer:

One of the main functions of [material culture]...is to reinforce belief, custom and values.⁴⁵

By understanding the cross-section of belief, custom and values, we can return to the study of the material culture, and see how the two interfaced. In this way, processual archaeology has factored into this thesis to provide a framework for seeing the artifact within the historical and cultural impacts.

Returning to the field of vernacular architecture, the core field for this thesis, architectural historian Dell Upton has aggregated four predominant methods of vernacular study.⁴⁶ Many studies utilize one or two of these types. Upton believes the best work utilized all four. This project sought to not only tap on all four, but blend Binford's three realms of material culture study; ultimately they are closely related. As previously mentioned, there is a great deal of cross-over between the archaeological and anthropological fields previously described and vernacular architecture, usually the former influencing the latter. With that in mind, the four areas of study were the focus of this thesis. Those four areas will be briefly described here, as presented by Upton:

⁴⁵ Beals and Hoijer (1955), 548.

⁴⁶ Dell Upton, "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," *American Quarterly*, 35 (1983): 262-79.

OBJECT-ORIENTED STUDIES

Dating back to Norman Isham and Albert Brown's 19th century study of Rhode Island housing, Upton notes there were two prevailing traditions, one deductive, one inductive.⁴⁷ Upton concludes that the inductive work of Isham and Brown has, with a few notable exceptions, not been matched in the field of Object-Oriented Study since. Their emphasis was on the recording of the individual buildings in measured drawings in *meticulous* detail. Work of that era is contrary to the current mode of relying on "common-sense functionalism and on aesthetic trickle-down theories,"⁴⁸ or in other words, deductive reasoning. Upton forcefully argues that the single most important change in vernacular architecture studies has been use of objects as evidence about past and present human behavior. While he does not cite the work of HABS or HABS-like studies which are entirely grounded in the object, the inference one can make is that vernacular studies are best when they bridge the careful study of object with the historical context. In other words, the object is nothing without its context.

SOCIALLY ORIENTED STUDIES

The possibilities for studying social change using architectural evidence are extensive, yet Upton feels this aspect of vernacular architectural history has been underutilized.⁴⁹ When Upton wrote this in 1983, the idea had yet to become the

⁴⁷ Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses: An Historical and Architectural Study* (Providence: Preston and Rounds), 1895.

⁴⁸ Upton, 61.

⁴⁹ Upton, 63.

significant feature it now has in current vernacular studies. Two significant works were in the offing and are given as examples among many, namely Gwendolyn Wright's *Building the American Dream* was on the verge of being published, and three years later, Clifford Clark wrote *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*. Both of these works delved into the social currents that informed the architectural idiom of the prevailing domestic vernacular of America. Numerous works have followed in this vein, though increasing narrow in scope, for example the 1996 work of Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Town*, a study of the dynamic forces of social, economic and political workings which influenced the shape and design of the Company Town architecture. Socially oriented studies, therefore, offer a perspective which could be easily obfuscated by returning to the context under which the artifact originated and evolved.

CULTURALLY ORIENTED STUDIES

Culture, as Upton defines it, is a learned behavior that embodies the enduring values and deepest cognitive structures of a social group.⁵⁰ Among the earliest investigators of vernacular architecture in this mode were cultural geographers. Starting with the assumption that built forms are enduring aspects of any migrating group's culture, the geographers traced the distribution of major building types like the I-house.⁵¹ The intention was to understand the patterns of cultural movement and integration.

Henry Glassie's *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* is a large-scale application of the methods of cultural geography to a variety of artifacts including buildings.⁵² Glassie identified four areas of the East Coast from which the material folk culture of the eastern United States emanated and demonstrated the contribution of each to the distinctive artifactual landscapes. In the process, Glassie delineated the character of folk culture and its pattern of change, as an important tool for scholars of vernacular architecture. Distilling Japanese folk culture from the contingencies of site and resources is foremost in this study to understand its initial design. Fortunately the pattern of change is easy to understand through direct, or near direct, interaction with the user (*i.e.* interviews and oral history).

In another example, folklorist John Michael Vlach, followed the lead of historian Robert Faris Thompson who suggested that many Euro-American and Native-American

⁵⁰ Upton, 271.

⁵¹ Upton, 271.

⁵² Henry Glassie (1968).

forms have been reinterpreted in characteristically Afro-American ways.⁵³ Vlach painstakingly traced the history of the shotgun house, a domestic form built in large numbers in the twentieth century, particularly along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Vlach was able to show that the shotgun was formed in the West Indies from the conjunction of a Caribbean Indian and an African house type with a French structural system, while unified by African-derived proxemic values. The shotgun house is a truly African-American form, a new entity created from elements of multiple ethnic traditions.⁵⁴

Glassie took this type of analysis one step further by codifying architectural traits into bits of language and then trying to read it as a cohesive whole in his *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*. Applying generative linguistics to architecture, the first part of Glassie's work consists of a lengthy lexicon of the traditional architecture of a small section of Piedmont Virginia, a set of rules from which, starting with a basic geometrical concept – the square – from which one could see regional derivation. Having constructed his lexicon – a statement on the architectural competence of all eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Middle Virginians – Glassie was able to show how the new ideas were understood, reworked, and incorporated into the local tradition. In the second part of the book, he moves away from the competence to the performance – to what was actually done by the builders, as opposed to what they knew how to do. Here he set aside

⁵³ Robert Faris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, New York: Random House, 1983.

⁵⁴ John Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," *Pioneer America* 8 (January – July 1976): 47-70.

the generative lexicon in favor of an investigation of cognition based on the anthropological research of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Robert Plan Armstrong.⁵⁵ Glassie concluded that within the bounds of a mental outlook structured around binary oppositions, the Virginians built houses that were increasingly private, artificial, intensive, practical, symmetrical, repetitious, and closed. Tradition is revealed not always as a repetition of previous examples but as a shared body of knowledge in which choices, like the perpetuation of the *furo*, arise out of that tension between individual inclinations and social context.

Rather than correlating ethnicity with house types or population migration with house types, Glassie attempted in *Folk Housing* to use artifacts to probe the mental constructs of the community. His work stands in direct opposition to that of members of the object-oriented school, who assume behavior to understand artifacts. In this case, neither course is exclusive to understanding the folk bathhouses of the Japanese-Americans. Behavior has directly influenced the artifacts, such is the ritual that is part of the Japanese culture which was initially and directly transferred to the United States. Yet the artifacts indicate behavior. Some can be correlated to cultural persistence and some artifacts are adaptive. As a cultural phenomena, the recurrence of the *furo* is somewhere between cultural persistence and necessity – interrelated extremes.

⁵⁵ Upton, 67.

SYMBOLICALLY ORIENTED STUDIES

Symbolism is a form of social interaction that is core to anthropologists and linguists, and much of the symbolically oriented study of architecture, vernacular or otherwise, draws upon those disciplines in its search for the meaning of buildings.⁵⁶ Upton's view of symbolism in 1983, however, did not extend into the ethnographic component, which is where this study is most interested, but the line of study he raises is important. What symbolic import did a Japanese bathhouse have to a family, or to guests, or the Japanese community as a whole? A review of the placement and design hierarchy can help achieve a least a hypothetical position about the role that symbolism may have played in the deliberate or implicit decision-making about the furo's existence.

CONCLUSION

In this purview of related methodology and theory, distilled are seven methodological informants. The first is ushered in by Deetz: take nothing for granted. This study got its legs from this belief, findings furos where there were thought to be none. As to performance, this axiom requires that the sensitivity to the words of the users and details of the artifact, will aid in getting the localized context right and pervades the thesis throughout. Second, as Kent and Binford have stated, behavior is patterned. Knowing the patterns of behavior can inform the cultural persistence of form or social customs, and lend an understanding to consistency across five distinct furos and will be part of the conclusions drawn in Chapter Five. Third, Binford and others have shown the

⁵⁶ Upton, 68.

importance of seeing evolutionary changes in the furo through a cultural lens, which picks up on the Deetz/Heath model of “folk” vs. “vernacular.” Evolutionary changes need to be considered from both a functional and a cultural viewpoint. The final four points are carried forward by both Binford and those who see archaeology as a multidisciplinary field as Upton and many scholars of vernacular architecture do.

Therefore the fourth methodological inquiry is object-oriented research, which to include Binford, would focus on the object and its *technomic* function. This understanding forms the basis of all other vernacular architecture research: first and foremost it should be grounded in an intimate, first-hand knowledge of the artifacts. No amount of theory or methodological structure can account for an inadequate grasp of the physical evidence.

The fifth component is the socially oriented field of study, or *socio-technic* in Binford vernacular. That is, seeing the object in the nature and structure of the social system which it represents. This method will utilize the inside and outside cultures, that of the social parameters within the Japanese community, and that within the regional and national community.

The sixth method of study is the culturally-oriented one. Binford's *ideotechnic* view is included here, related to the cultural dynamic which would include the ideology, religious or otherwise, of a culture. In reference to our study, it will evaluate the learned behavior of Japanese bathing and its evolution in the American context. This will be largely the subject of chapters three and five.

Lastly, the seventh informant is the symbolically oriented method. To the extent symbolism played a role in the physical and spiritual recreation of the furo, based on an historical review and some interviews which substantiate this view, it will be further discussed in chapter six while the contextual discussion will be included in chapter three.

Architecture cannot be adequately understood apart from its contents and its context. Upton asks for histories of vernacular architecture that integrate furniture, yards, farmsteads and ultimately settlement patterns into the whole. Glassie demonstrated such with his *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community*. This study of a small Ulster town integrates the architecture and furnishings of the town with its oral literature, fusing the four VA models of study (object, social, cultural and symbolic) into a single powerful entity. While scaled back in breadth and depth, this study aims to integrate as Glassie has done, the physical, the social, the cultural and the symbolic to roundly understand the built form of the furo.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT – JAPANESE BATHING CULTURE

When a person dies, they prepare a single coffin...when the funeral is over, all members of the family go into the water to cleanse themselves in a bath of purification.⁵⁷

BATH HISTORY IN JAPAN

The origin of bathing in Japan occurred before the Japanese used a written language.⁵⁸ The above quote from the *History of the Kingdom of Wei* shows that the Japanese were doing ritual bathing in 297 A.D., at the beginning of the Tumulus (Kofun) period. This chapter will outline the general development of bathing in historical times from the ancient type of steam baths up to the time when the Issei immigrated to the United States, with the intent of setting the stage for the customs and built traditions of bathing pre-immigration. In sum, it is a story of technological development, cultural change, and continuity, not unlike the story repeated in the United States, in a fraction of the time.⁵⁹

When discussing Japanese history, designating periods or eras rather than simply dates provides a meaningful context for the nature or study of Japan. **Table 2** on the next page outlines the periods and eras with the approximate inclusive dates as referred to in

⁵⁷ Ryusako Tsunoda, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 4-5.

⁵⁸ Scott F. Clark, "Social and Symbolic Context of Bathing in Japan," (Ph.D diss., University of Oregon, 1989), 27.

⁵⁹ With the possible exception of continuity, yet that is not fully studied here.

this study.⁶⁰ Scott Clark, who wrote his Ph.D. on the subject of Japanese baths, has easily written the most authoritative, exhaustive study of the bathing custom in Japan. In general, this recapitulates his study here. Where original texts were available in English, this author reviewed them and attempted to develop an independent sense of the bath history through Clark's example. However, much of the legwork Clark did was in Japan, as a near-native speaker, and therefore it is difficult to seek out information on the many various types of furo without either Japanese language or two or three years to digest the Japanese custom and history. Therefore, it is with great indebtedness I begin this history, having distilled his near 300 page dissertation into roughly 10% of that, 30 pages.

Period	Years
Jomon	To 300 BC
Yayoi	300 BC to 300 AD
Kofun	300 to 552
Asuka	552 to 646
Nara	646 to 794
Heian	794 to 1185
Kamakura	1185 to 1392
Ashikaga	1392 to 1568
Momoyama	1568 to 1603
Edo	1603 to 1868
Era	Years
Meiji	1868 to 1912
Taishō	1912 to 1926
Shōwa	1926 to 1989

Table 2. Clark's Japanese Era Timeline

ANCIENT JAPAN

Whether people bathed regularly before the Kofun period and how often during that period is unknown. Bathing in the cold water of rivers and streams could have begun

⁶⁰ Clark, 28.

at any time in the past. Archaeological evidence of such bathing would not necessarily exist. The archaeological record may not show the use of heated water or steam for baths either. The technology to heat the water or make steam for bathing does not need to differ significantly from that of other purposes, such as cooking or the making of pottery. There are sites from the Jomon, Yayoi and Kofun periods around hot spring areas.⁶¹ But only an assumption can be made that the people of those times used the hot springs for soaking and bathing.

Bathing, however, was well developed in ancient China. By the beginning of the Chou dynasty at about 1000 B.C, numerous terms existed for various types of bathing.⁶² Historian Edward Schafer summarizes a broad range of bathing customs in China. These include hot spring baths, purification baths before religious ceremonies and at springtime rituals, and baths for newborn nobility.⁶³

Other Asian peoples bathed regularly according to the ancient records, including Cambodians and Koreans. Schafer suggests that early Japanese steam baths "...probably developed under the influence of Korean sweat baths, which in turn related to the sweat baths of primitive Siberia, Russia and Scandinavia, and perhaps ultimately to those of the American Indians."⁶⁴ Certainly ancient widespread religious practices and material culture, including such things as rice and bronze mirrors and bells, indicate that many

⁶¹ Clark, 29.

⁶² Edward H. Schafer, "The Development of Bathing Customs in Ancient and Medieval China and the History of the Floriate Clear Palace," *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 76 (1956): 57.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

customs through most of the East Asian continent and Japan may have a common origin.⁶⁵

With the importation of Buddhism and learning from China, the Japanese experienced a cultural revolution. New arts and ideas were imported in huge quantity. Undoubtedly, the privileged aristocracy was affected perversely by this importation of Chinese lifeways and artifacts. The common folk, outside the evolving cultural pathways, continued in their traditions largely uninitiated. Among the most important imports was the written language. Records provide invaluable information about the ancient Japanese. They also furnish our first insights into the ancient bathing traditions of Japan.

During the seventh century, Japan imported the Chinese writing system. The oldest documents in Japan, *Kojiki*, Record of Ancient Things⁶⁶, and *Nihon Shoki*, Chronicles of Japan⁶⁷, written in the eighth century, contain information of previous periods. These works are largely mythical and legendary, although the latter part of the *Nihon Shoki* is considered factual. Their purpose was, at least partially, to legitimize the ruling family. In a number of myths, various gods cleanse themselves by bathing. Other old records relate the discovery and use of various hot springs. Dogo Hot Spring near Matsuyama has a legendary history of 3,000 years. The *Izumo Fudoki*, Natural Features

⁶⁵ Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1975), 16.

⁶⁶ Donald Phillippi (trans.), *Kojiki*, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968). Briefly reviewed for background. Suggested reading for those seeking background on Japanese history.

⁶⁷ W.G. Ashton, (trans.), *Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972). Same as above footnote.

of Izumo⁶⁸, tells of people using Tamazukuri Hot Spring near Izumo for bathing and healing in 737 A.D. Tamazukuri (literally, “Jewel-Making”⁶⁹), is a site where the making of the *magatama*, curved stone jewels, has been carried on for centuries.

Few records exist which tell of the regular bathing habits, if any, of this period. Nevertheless, the accounts of ritual purification indicate that the Japanese had already developed a faith in the cleansing power of water for spiritual pollution and physical dirt.

⁶⁸ Michiko Yamaguchi Aokii (trans.), *Izumo Fudoki*, (Tokyo, Sophia University, 1971). Same as above.

⁶⁹ Clark, 31.

EARLY STEAM BATHS

Iwaburo, literally “rock bath”, and *kamaburo*, “oven bath,” are the oldest types of baths recorded in Japan. The *iwaburo* is primarily located around Japan’s Inland Sea. They are found in many of the ports on the main islands of Shikoku, Kyushu, and Honshu as well as on smaller islands throughout the Inland Sea. In Shikoku’s case, the *iwaburo* extended inland along rivers and is also found on the Pacific Ocean side of the island.

These baths remained popular for hundreds of years. By the end of the Edo Period (1860s) tens of thousands of these baths are reported to have existed.⁷⁰ However, at the beginning of the Meiji use of these baths virtually ceased.⁷¹

The *iwaburo* was a small room made from rocks and usually covered with earth. In some cases a natural cave was used or, alternatively, a small cave was carved into rock. An example of the latter is the Sakurai bath in the Ehime Prefecture.⁷² The caved room has a very small entrance, where they still burn wood inside the *iwaburo* for several hours to heat the inner walls and a set of rocks. After the *iwaburo* reaches a suitable temperature, sea water is poured on the hot rocks, creating a steam bath. As is customary, bathers with sweat profusely, eventually exit and cool off, then repeat the procedure.

⁷⁰ Zenkoku Koshuyokujogyo Kankyoeisei Dogyokumiai Rengoaki, *Koshuyokujoshi*, (Public Bathing History), (Tokyo: Zenkoku Koshuyokujogyo Kankyoeisei Dogyokumiai Rengoaki, 1973). Not translated or read, but referenced in Clark, 33. Henceforth, ZKKDR.

⁷¹ Clark, 32.

⁷² Ibid.

The dimensions of the *iwaburo* vary depending on the site. The Sakurai bath mentioned above is 26 feet long, roughly 10 feet high, and as wide as 11 feet. A cramped *iwaburo* at Koi in Hiroshima is 12 feet long by 4 feet high by 10 feet wide.⁷³ After the start of the Meiji period in 1869, a separate, smaller women's bath was constructed out of the rock at Sakurai. Before the start of the Meiji, bathing in at the Sakurai bath was sexually mixed, yet still modest in practice. Men wore loincloths, *fundoshi* and women wore a *koshimaki*, a wraparound skirt, while bathing.⁷⁴

The *kamaburo* were predominantly located inland. They were constructed in the shape of a large kiln with clay and rocks. In the same manner as the *iwaburo*, wood was burned inside the bath, in addition to green leaves and branches. The steam thereby came from these tree branches and leaves and was reputed to have medical properties.⁷⁵

The earliest use recorded for the *kamaburo* was by the Emperor Temmu in 672 A.D., the first year of his rule.⁷⁶ As legend has it, the Emperor was wounded in the back by an arrow during battle. It was recorded that he visited a *kamaburo* to recuperate, which he did. That place came to be called the "Yase", near Kyoto.

The *iwaburo* and the *kamaburo* are functionally very similar. Clarks' review of diaries and records showed the terms *iwaburo* and *kamaburo* were used

⁷³ Clark, 32. Clark offers the dimensions in meters, which I converted to feet.

⁷⁴ Osamu Oba, *Furo no Hanashi* (Bath Story), (Tokyo: Kashima Shuppankai, 1986), 7. Not translated to date, but is tied to reference given in Clark, 33.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Clark, 34.

interchangeably.⁷⁷ Rather than immersion in water, they both work with heat and steam akin to the Finnish Sauna, or the Native American sweat lodge. Clark could not, however, tell from research and readings of these early records if washing with water accompanies the use of these baths, something core to the *furo* today.

TEMPLE BATHS

Edward Schafer states that bathing for ceremonial purposes in India and the related “attitudes developed there spread with Buddhism into Tibet and Turkestan, and finally into China and Japan, where they mingled with native customs.”⁷⁸ The importation and development of Buddhism in Japan from the sixth century had a profound influence on the bathing practices in Japan. At large Buddhist temple compounds there were often seven major buildings. One of these was a bathhouse for the washing of the Buddha statues and ablutions of the monks. These were first used only for the monks, but later, common people were invited to use them. The bath’s popularity caused many larger baths to be constructed for the use by the common people. Many Japanese rulers, as well as wealthy citizens, would show their piousness or charity by sponsoring baths where the common people could bathe.

Emperor Shommu was responsible for the official promulgation of Buddhism. Among other things, he directed the construction of the Todaiji Temple at Nara. The primary building here contains the largest statue of Buddha in Japan. A secondary

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Schafer, 61.

building, the Ni-Gatsu Do (Second Month Building), contained facilities for drawing water from a river for the cleansing of the statue.⁷⁹ The Ni-Gatsu Do also served as a bathhouse for the priests and congregation.

The stylistic biases of Buddhism heavily influenced the architecture of this period. This Buddhist style became so closely associated with the bath that the private baths of the powerful and wealthy demonstrated the same stylistic effects and workmanship, though on a smaller scale. A bath of the famous warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi is preserved and displayed at the Nishi Honganji Temple in Kyoto.⁸⁰ The steam room has a distinctively Buddhist temple style to it. It became one of the traditional visual signals of the bathhouse.

While in the bath at these temples, the bathers wore a white robe called *yukatabira*. In later years, these robes began to be worn after a bath and by the Edo Period became popular as hot weather wear.⁸¹ In ancient times the Shogun, arising from the bath, the bather was not dried with towels, but dressed in succeeding *yukatabira*, soaking up the moisture, until dry. During the Kamakura Period, the wearing of the *yukatabira* while bathing ceased, except for religious purposes. However, the bathers still wore a limited covering, as previously noted, namely the loincloth, *fundoshi*, for men and a wrap-around skirt, *koshimaki*, for women.

⁷⁹ Clark, 35.

⁸⁰ Clark, 35.

⁸¹ Clark, 35-36.

PUBLIC BATHHOUSES

From all accounts, including Clark's, the beginning of the public bathhouses in Japan is not clear. The public bathhouse is distinguished from the temple baths in that it is owned by private concerns, or in some cases local government institutions rather than religious organizations. Writings by court nobles indicate that some form of public bath may have existed as early as the beginning of the eleventh century.⁸² After the beginning of the Ashikaga Period, many nobles were using public baths, but because of fear of pollution by contact with common people, the baths were rented temporarily for use only by nobles. By the year 1401 A.D., the use of the word *sen*to appeared.⁸³ *Sento* is a combination of two characters, "sen" (money) and "to" (hot water, the alternate pronunciation is "yu").⁸⁴

These early references to public bathing facilities are very short and the nature of the institutions is not clear. It is clear, however, that public bathing facilities existed long before the Edo period. At the end of the Ashikaga period and into the Momoyama period, the commercial town of Sakai had an area known as Yuyamachi, Bathhouse Town. However, little else could be discovered about these early public bathhouses, and it is hoped research to this end is forthcoming.

As a side bar, in Hood River County there was record of a public bath, a *sen*to, in the city of Hood River. There were also *sentos* in the The Dalles, east of Hood River.

⁸² Clark, 35.

⁸³ ZKKDR, 58-59.

⁸⁴ Peter Grilli, and Dana Levy, *Furo: The Japanese Bath*, (Tokyo: Kondansha International Ltd., 1985), 19.

Yet little is recorded about these manifestations of the public bathhouses in the United States, and similarly a fuller study of the *senjo* is overdue.⁸⁵

TUBS

The baths described to this point were primarily all steam baths. Yet tubs for hot water were also used in the temples, public baths, and private baths. Historic records and depictions indicate these tubs were made of either wood or iron.⁸⁶ The existence of these is largely known through drawings and descriptions of the baths in the Court.⁸⁷

The wood tubs were typically made with staves in circular or oval shapes or were made into rectangular box shapes. This box shape resembled that of a boat and it so came to be called *yubune*, or “hot water boat.” Water was heated in a separate container and then put into the wooden tub.

Tubs were used for ablutions at the Great Thanksgiving Festival (*Daijosai*) following the enthronement of an Emperor and also for daily baths. From the Heian Period until the beginning of the Kamakura Period, servants heated water in a vessel outside the bathroom. Pipes were eventually provided for the hot water to be transferred into the tub.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ This study was not able to fully investigate the *senjo* in Hood River due to limited resources and time, however outside of this thesis it is hoped that the author might produce a short article about what he has found. It was discovered through the combined research efforts for Homer Yasui, who helped decipher some of the historical records with the author, until we learned that, indeed, a *senjo* *did* exist for a short period in the core area of Oak and 1st, in Hood River, where the Japanese community was centered.

⁸⁶ Clark, 37.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 38.

⁸⁸ Clark, 39.

At the beginning of the Kamakura period an iron bath was the predominant type. These baths looked like cauldrons, and typically heated by a fire underneath it, though there were instances where hot water was carried to the tub.⁸⁹ These vessels ranged in size from small ones which would only admit one person at a time to large ones which allowed several people to bathe at once. A large iron tub was put in the bath of the Todaiji Temple at the time of its rebuilding and was first recorded in 1203 A.D.

During the Ashikaga Period, the use of the circular and oval wooden tubs became popular. Making and fitting the staves for these barrel-like tubs and finally tying them together with bamboo took a high degree of skill. The requisite skills were present at least as early as the Heian Period, where there are numerous examples of containers made of wooden staves to hold liquids. Therefore, Clark has found that wooden tubs may have been more prevalent than is indicated by historical records earlier than the Ashikaga period. During this period the water was heated in other vessels and transferred into these tubs. It was not until the Edo Period that a heater was placed directly *inside* the tub.

In this review of the bath types of pre-Modern Japan the entomology of the bath type has aided in distilling the permutation in the United States. In Japan, there were wood baths and there were iron baths. Rarely, if ever, did you see a mixture of the two, and yet, in the baths in the United States, the combination is what you find almost exclusively, as will be fleshed out in chapter six.

TODANBURO

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The steam bath remained popular throughout the early history of Japan. Construction of baths at the temples and in the towns, however, necessitated a form different from the *iwaburo* and *kamaburo*.⁹⁰ One popular form was the cabinet bath, *todanburo*. This bath consisted of a small room with wood floors. Water was heated in a shallow tub beneath the floor or in an adjacent room. In order to keep the steam in the room, sliding doors were placed at the entrance. This bath looked very much like a cabinet, *todana*. The *todanaburo* remained popular into the Edo Period and examples of it were found in Japan until the early years of the Meiji.⁹¹

THE EDO PERIOD

Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi were at last successful in unifying Japan after a long period of internal wars. In 1603, Tokugawa Ieyasu succeeded in taking over the government. After the decisive battle of Skigahara, he began to build his castle in the small village of Edo, present day Tokyo. The castle grounds were apparently lavish, and covered nearly 250 acres.⁹² Immediately the small town grew into a bustling community. Craftsmen, artisans, and warriors came from all over the country. The country remained unified under one central government from this time through the modernization of Japan.⁹³

⁹⁰ Clark, 40.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Clark, 40-41.

⁹³ Clark, 41.

The Tokugawa or Edo Period saw the crystallization of the class system in Japan. Although it had been developing before this, the Tokugawa government legalized the class system, forbidding the movement from one class to a higher one.⁹⁴ With this freezing of social position, strict forms of interaction between the classes became the rule. The relative peace of these years allowed the warrior class to become completely involved in the administration of government. With political stability, urbanization of Japan began and Edo, in particular, grew.

This period has come to be thought of as the “traditional” Japan. A proliferation of arts, crafts, theater, and literature record the lifestyles of the times. Meanwhile the bath developed architecturally and socially. It became a center, in urban areas, for communication, recreation, and social interaction. For Clark, what solidified the station of the bath as intrinsic to the society is how the *furo* and its various forms are recorded in essays, poetry, history and the art of the period.

The influx and crowding of population created special problems. One of the most feared catastrophes was fire. At several points, fires raged, threatening all of Edo. As a consequence, strict fire regulations were formulated and fire fighting teams and equipment were assembled. One of the regulations limited the number and types of fires which could be started. A major consequence to this was many common people in Edo were unable to heat baths at home. Only the top officials and their families were allowed to have baths at their home. The samurai who served and lived in a house of one of the lords usually could not bathe there. Consequently, the public bathhouse became an

⁹⁴ Ibid.

absolute necessity and quickly became a social meeting place for the masses of the Edo population.

EDO BATHHOUSES

Bathhouses were common in all urban areas during the Edo Period, but the ones in Edo itself are most important having become, like the Edo Period in general, the roots of what are considered to be a traditional Japanese bath. Early writings of life in Edo nearly always discuss or depict the bath, if only briefly. *Edo Minzokushi*, a book with simple sketches and explanations about the folkways of the Edo Period, has an illustration of an Edo public bath on the title page.⁹⁵ The baths were often recorded in the literature and art of that time.⁹⁶ Sanba Shikitei wrote a particularly valuable work *Ukiyoburo*, Floating World Bath, in 1810.⁹⁷ A large number of *ukiyoe*, floating world pictures, depict the bathhouses and people, usually women, bathing.

The first public bath in Edo, constructed in 1591, the year that *Ieyasu* first entered Edo, was probably of the “cabinet bath” type with sliding doors.⁹⁸ These baths were effective in heating the bather. However, the continual entering and existing of visitors allowed the steam and hot air to escape. When the bath was busy, a proper bath was

⁹⁵ Clark, 43.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Sanba Shikitei, *Ukiyoburo*, (Floating World Bath), (Tokyo: Ichyobon Kankokai, 1954). From Clark, in Japanese.

⁹⁸ Clark, 40.

difficult to obtain. This led to the development of the *zakuroguchi* in the middle of the Edo Period.

ZAKUROGUCHI

The *zakuroguchi* is an entrance to the bath which captures the steam and hot air without having moving doors. The entrance is low. A bather has to bend over to enter.⁹⁹ Upon entering, there is a low wall which serves as the front edge of the tub as well as a sitting place. This lower wall extends up above the lower edge of the entrance. Thus the steam and hot air is trapped. The tub itself usually was only deep enough for immersion to the waist when seated. Therefore, it was a combination of the hot water, hot air, and steam in which the bather is heated, or bathed.

The entrance to the bathing area usually had the form of a *torii*, the gateway to a Shinto shrine, or a Buddhist temple roof. Often a painting of some type was placed within the spaces above this entrance. There were no lights in the interior of the bath. The entrance, which would effectively capture the steam and hot air, also limited the amount of light let in. The bather frequently could not see who else was in the bath or what might be floating in the water. There are a number of stories of encounters with undesirable objects floating in the water, including dead bodies. It was the responsibility of the owner or manager to assure that the bath was clean. While cleanliness was likely at an acceptable level most of the time, it was this darkness and the possibility, or fear, of uncleanness that led to the abandonment of the *zakuroguchi* type of bath at the

⁹⁹Clark, 41.

beginning of the Meiji Period. The importance of, and fixation with, cleanliness throughout Japanese history cannot be overestimated.¹⁰⁰

TWO STORY BATHHOUSE

With the prohibition of *yuna* (bathing attendants), a new form of bathhouse became almost immediately popular. This bathhouse had a second story where males could go. There they could play chess, drink tea, and socialize. Usually, women served the tea and talked and otherwise entertained. The government, through an absence of regulation, apparently found nothing wrong with this type of arrangement.

MIXED BATHING

Single sex bathing is a recent, modern phenomenon in Japan. Historically, bathing was mixed more often than not. The *Izumo Fudoki* mentions it in the seventh century. However, clothing of some type was worn in the temple baths and public baths anciently. The wearing of the clothing suggests that total nudity was not acceptable even while bathing at the temples.

The oldest records mainly describe events in the upper class of society. These records of the nobles indicate that proper order was followed for the bath. The men bathed first, women later. Among those of the same sex, order was established based upon social position. Among these people of the highest social strata, mixed bathing was therefore not possible if the bathing order was followed.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, 45.

During the Edo Period, mixing bathing at the public bathhouses was commonplace. Many of the sketches and paintings of baths in this period show both sexes bathing together. The government did not embrace mixed bathing, for several times it attempted to ban it during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those bans were at least partially effective in Edo. Baths were established for men only and women only. Baths also existed which set aside special times for women only. Baths which could accommodate both sexes at the same time without mixing were not as common. Indeed some baths which did so, accomplished the letter of the law by placing a barrier, sometimes only a board or bamboo pole, across the bath with women on one side and men on the other. Sometimes the washing or dressing area in the baths was mixed even though bathing itself was divided.

Other places in Japan appear to have been less concerned with the separation of the sexes. Generally, mixed bathing was commonplace until the start of the Meiji. In 1869, just one year after the start of the Meiji, the government, concerned with international relations and cognizant of the critical attitude of westerners towards this seemingly promiscuous behavior, banned mixed bathing at public bathhouses in Tokyo. The government had seen and was acutely aware of the nature of the travel diaries that had been published about Japan's mixed bathing. Joao Rodrigues, visiting Japan in the sixteenth century, was seemingly taken with the bath, although the Jesuit priest Valignano prohibited the bath in Jesuit homes in Japan at the time.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Michael Cooper (trans. ed.), *This Island of Japon, Joao Rodrigues' Account of 16th Century Japan*. (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1973), 103-104.

The custom of taking a bath is universal throughout all Asia...[b]ut the Japanese seem to excel everybody else in this matter, not only in the frequency with which they bathe during the day, but even more so in the cleanliness and dignity which they observe in that place, and in their use of most precious and medicinal wood in the construction thereof.¹⁰²

Yet the following comments are typical of the frequently critical attitude taken by Western visitors in the late nineteenth century:

Towards the latter part of the afternoon or at an early hour of the evening, all ages and both sexes are intermingled in one shameless throng...without signs of modesty...or moral decorum...[this is] one of the most licentious races in the world.¹⁰³

While passing through the village of Simoda we saw more of the licentiousness and degradation of these cultivated heathen than we had seen before. It is common to see men, women and children, -- old and young, married and single -- bathing in the same large open bath house.¹⁰⁴

A scene at one of the public baths, where the sexes mingled indiscriminately, unconscious of their nudity, was not calculated to impress the Americans with a very favorable opinion of the morals of the inhabitants.¹⁰⁵

I went into a bath house...-- they invited us to join in and take a wash -- but I was so disgusted with the whole breed, with their lewdness of manner and gesture that I turned away with a hearty curse upon them...¹⁰⁶

OTHER TYPES OF BATHS

¹⁰² Grilli, 69.

¹⁰³ George Smith, *Ten Weeks in Japan*, (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1861), 103-104.

¹⁰⁴ Allen Cole, *A Scientist with Perry in Japan, The Journal of Dr. James Morrow*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1947), 175.

¹⁰⁵ Francis L. Hawks, *Narrative of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, Performed in the Years 1853, 1853, and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M.C. Perry, United States Navy*, (Washington: Beverley Tucker, 1856), 405.

¹⁰⁶ Allen Cole, *With Perry in Japan, the Diary of Edward Yorke McCauley*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), 108.

Clark notes other prevalent types of bathing including one that is mentioned in early history called the *gyuzui*. The term first meant “ritual religious washing,” but eventually was used to refer to a common bath.¹⁰⁷ This is washing with heated or unheated water. During the Edo Period, *gyuzui* is recorded often in writings and art.¹⁰⁸ Although it may be done at a stream or well, the common image of *gyuzui* is in a shallow wooden tub in the yard or street. When using cold water, this form of bathing uses little effort and no money. *Gyozui* remained common through the Edo Period.

Public baths were not the only place to relax in hot water and get clean. Baths were available at teahouses. As previously mentioned, some of the bathhouses which had women bathing attendants, converted to “teahouses” after a ban on the attendants was enacted. But baths were available at teahouses under less auspicious terms. In the work of Kazuma Mitani, whose wrote about common life and manners in the Edo period, Mitani states that Edo restaurants almost invariably had a bath.¹⁰⁹ Diners took a bath before eating, sometimes changing into clothes provided by the restaurant for the purpose.

Baths were also a popular feature in the inns along the roads. Travelers set out early on journeys, walked all day, and looked forward to relaxing in the hot bath and then

¹⁰⁷ Katsuzo Takeda, *Furo to Yu no Hanashi*, (Story of the Bath), (Tokyo: Haniwa Shobo, 1967). Not read as it is in Japanese, but the work cited by Clark for this quote, sadly without page numbers – Clark seemed to use them little.

¹⁰⁸ Clark, 51.

¹⁰⁹ Kazuma Mitani, *Edo Shomin Fuzoku Zukai*, (Pictures of Edo Commoner Manners), (Tokyo: Miki Shobo, 1975), 62. Noted and citation through Clark.

dinner.¹¹⁰ This notion, of the reward of the upcoming bath, renewal of the bath itself and then dinner (or often dinner then bath), is one of the chief features of the Japanese-American bath as will be seen later.

Another bath which became popular and seen frequently was the “street-corner bath,” *tsujiyo*. The first one of these recorded was in Kyoto in 1680.¹¹¹ During this period, various vendors and performers used street corners, paths to temples and shrines, and other convenient places along the streets to market their wares and skills. One of these vendors was the man who provided a bathtub and hot water for money. These baths were portable and moved around from place to place.

Another moveable bath was the “boat bath,” *yubune*. Small boats with baths on them plied up and down rivers of Edo, providing baths to those who lived close to them. These boats were also to be found in the harbors of Tokyo and Osaka where sailors took baths after voyages or fishing trips.¹¹²

Bathtubs were occasionally taken out to be used at some other traditional activities. Going to look at the blossoms, *hanami*, snow, *yukimi*; or other natural phenomena has a long history in Japan. Placing a bath where these activities could be enjoyed while soaking in hot water existed during the Edo Period.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Clark, 52.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Clark, 53.

¹¹³ Oba, 76.

Early in the Edo Period, means of heating water directly in a wood tub were devised. All of these were depicted by Edward Sylvester Morse, an American scientist invited in 1877 to teach at the Imperial University in Tokyo, in his *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*.¹¹⁴ One of the most prevalent was known as *teppoburo*, “gun bath.” The name comes from the form of the heater. At one end of the bath a steel pipe was placed vertically into the tub.¹¹⁵ Fuel was put in the top and ignited. This then heated the water. The shape of the pipe, loading it, and the smoking issuing from the end all suggest the barrel of a gun. Similar to the *teppoburo* is the *hesoburo*, “naval bath.” A metal box was inserted into the side of the bath at the lower edge.¹¹⁶ Fuel was placed in the box and burned, heating the bath. The *komochiburo*, “bath-with-child.” This bath had the large tub connected to a smaller vessel by a pipe. The water was heated by fire in the smaller vessel which then flowed into the tub by thermosiphoning principles.¹¹⁷

The most widely known type of small bath was the *goemonburo*, the bath that dominated the countryside in Japan and would similarly be the mainstay *furo* in the Americas. This bath was usually round in shape but was occasionally oval. It was heated directly on the bottom by a fire built beneath the bath. Some of the *goemonburo* had a steel bottom with wooden sides (originally these were referred to as *choshuburo*); others were made entirely of metal in the shape of a large cauldron. *Geta*, wooden clogs, were

¹¹⁴ Edward Sylvester Morse, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904).

¹¹⁵ Morse, 203.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 204.

worn on the feet in order not to be burned when entering the bath. More commonly, a wooden mat was placed in the water which was pushed down with the feet to the bottom upon entering the bath. A ubiquitous comment among those who know this type of that is that a certain amount of dexterity is required to push this mat down without it turning over and coming back up while the feet get burned on the bottom. The term “goemonburo” was also used in a more general sense to indicate a bath which is heated with wood or charcoal.

The name of the bath derives from a story of the execution of an early ninja named Goemon Ishikawa, who was sentenced to be boiled to death in oil in such a pot, together with his young son. Goemon was forced to sit in the pot, under which a fire was kindled. As the heat became increasingly unbearable, Goemon lifted his little boy over his head to keep him as far from the heat as possible, but when he felt himself begin to weaken, he suddenly and resolutely plunged his son deep into the bubbling oil, to kill him as quickly as possible and thus shorten his suffering.¹¹⁸ Goemon was a hero to the common people, and so the bath naming is both in relation to the similar form of heating and in honor of his heroism.

Many other forms of baths were known less widely. Several of them were small baths similar to goemonburo, but only used a little water and some kind of cover in order to provide a steam bath for one person at a time. These baths provided the advantages of having to get less water from a well or river to fill the bath and also using less fuel to heat

¹¹⁸ Jack Seward, *The Japanese*, (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972), 49-50. There are other versions of this story that say the rescuers got there not in time to save Goemon, but his arms had stiffened such that the baby remained alive above, and was thus saved. While unsubstantiated, I could envision that version being told to the youngsters.

the water. Similar considerations made the public bathhouses provide steam baths more commonly than hot water to soak in, *i.e.* the *zakuroguchi*, and *todanaburo*. This economy of effort and materials was second nature to the Japanese, a trait that was carried on in the United States.

THE MODERN ERA

With the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan moved rapidly towards modernization, which at the time meant Westernization. Scholars, politicians, businessmen, and leaders all over the country studied Western ways to formulate and carry out the international emergence of Japan. It was an exciting time, perhaps matched only by the early importation of knowledge from China many centuries before. Political structures, social structures, architecture, clothing, education, and many other aspects of the culture were rapidly affected and changing. Bathing was also affected by the importation of new technologies, but the Western bath, such as it was, was largely ignored. The Japanese bath itself was modernized.

In the beginning of the Meiji period, a bathhouse building boom occurred. The numbers of public bathhouses increased threefold.¹¹⁹ This was due in part to the elimination of the warrior class with its top echelons which had to be able to maintain private bathing facilities. Another factor was the selling and tearing down of the

¹¹⁹ Clark, 57.

buildings that housed the large warrior families which provided cheap materials for the use of the bathhouses. It was a time of great economic opportunity for bath operators.¹²⁰

These bathhouses at first continued using the already well established *zakuroguchi* style of bath. But in the tenth year of the Meiji period a man named Tsurukawa Monzaemon built a new type of bath based upon the style existing at the hot springs. This bath was still made of wood, but he eliminated the steam room. He built a large tub out of wood and filled it with water. He raised the ceiling of the bathing area and fitting it with windows to allow more light in and release the steam upon demand. This development led to cleaner bathhouses. For reasons difficult to surmise, seven years later the Meiji government prohibited *zakuroguchi* type bathhouses. The use of the existing ones continued in some areas as late as the first decade of the new century, but in conjunction with Tsurukawa's bath type, this spelled the end of the *zakuroguchi* in the main.¹²¹

During the second decade, tile began to be used for the tubs and floors of the bathing areas. Cleaning became even easier with this development. With continued improvement in the public waterworks and interior plumbing, water taps with running hot and cold water began to replace the tubs of hot water for use in the washing of the body.

Despite the changing technology, the bathhouse remained distinctively Japanese. The exterior of the building retained the Buddhist influenced architecture. The dressing

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid, 58.

area retained much of the flavor of the Edo Period bathhouse, while the bathing area itself exhibited the newer, cleaner, brighter atmosphere eagerly greeted by the customers.¹²²

With the industrialization of Japan, further urbanization took place. Housing units were constructed at factories for their workers. These contained large communal baths. The apartment complex came into being but unit baths were not provided. The apartment dwellers had to go to the public or factory baths. The public baths continued as community and social centers in urban areas.

In 1923, the Kanto area suffered a devastating earthquake. Tokyo was largely destroyed by fire. The bathhouses were gone. People bathed where they could, even in puddles.¹²³ Relief organizations and the government set up temporary bathhouses soon thereafter. With the building of new bathhouses some changes were instituted. The most common of these was the virtual elimination of the morning bath, *asayu*.¹²⁴ Other innovations included baths built on the second floors and in basements. However, the basic structure and form for most bathhouses remained the same.

Meanwhile baths in the houses changed less dramatically. Builders were interested in the Western house and saw improvements which they could incorporate into the Japanese home. However, the bathroom and the toilet, always separate, were not adopted as quickly. The conception of the toilet as dirty and the bath as clean provided

¹²² Clark, 58.

¹²³ Shigeru Ochiai, "*Arau*" *Bunkashiwa* (The Cultural History of Washing), (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1973). Read by Clark, again, no reference beyond the book itself for this information. In Japanese.

¹²⁴ Toshiro Ueda, *Hadaka no Tengoku* (Naked Heaven), (Tokyo: Miyagawa Shobo, 1967). Read by Clark, not referenced beyond book title. In Japanese.

one reason for the rejection of the Western bath. Also, the West was not yet using elaborate baths, except for the wealthy.¹²⁵

The first real change in Japan was the shift from the portable type of bath which had been placed in an earthen floored room on the house or in a convenient place outside, to a fixed one. Sometimes these were built into the house. Because of fire danger, however, separate small buildings were usually constructed for the bath. These baths were often of the *goemonburo* or *choshuburo* type. They were sometimes set in concrete or brick which aided in the maintenance of the heat. Wood baths continued in use, but because of the maintenance and cleaning problems were often replaced with steel baths.¹²⁶ Further developments, although relatively slow in reaching all areas of the country, was the placement of the heater's door outside the bathroom itself and of a chimney which vented the smoke to the exterior of the building. Many of these elements carried over into the American variety of bath. As far as this study is concerned, the relevance for the Issei generally ends with the beginning of the Shōwa Era (1926 – 1989).

The study of bathing in Japan and how it interrelates with other aspects of the culture make its prominence self-evident. With this background, we can see how bathing developed, the significance it holds for the Japanese people, and how the activity and the symbolism are incorporated and maintained in the culture literally throughout the life of the nation.

¹²⁵ Clark, 59.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

THE BATHING RITUAL

With a sense of the variety and evolution of the bath, there is a need to understand the ritual, or formalities of bathing as would have been the case in Japan at the time the Issei left the country. As Clark found, a proper bath not only cleans, refreshes, relaxes, and invigorates the Japanese body, but also the *kokoro*, heart or spirit.¹²⁷ A thorough wash and soak will obviously clean the body. But because of social, religious and cultural factors, the bath also promotes the psychological well-being of a Japanese person.¹²⁸ Consequently, bathing in Japan has long been an important aspect of the culture related to social, recreational, medical, economic, and religious activities and beliefs.

It seems that anyone who has written about Japan has made some kind of comment about the bath. In 1917, Alfred M. Hitchcock writes, "No traveler who has written anything whatever concerning the Mikado's realm has failed to speak of the bath."¹²⁹ Studies of other subjects in Japanese culture and society often make short references to bathing, each indicating that bathing is important in the culture.¹³⁰ Most

¹²⁷ Clark, 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 3.

¹²⁹ Alfred M. Hitchcock, *Over Japan Way*, (New York: Henry Holdt and Co., 1917), 27.

¹³⁰ Clark references a number of authors to this end, all works listed in full in the bibliography: Beardsley, Hall and Ward, 1959, bathing in villages; Benedict, 1946, short description and mentions mother bathing with baby; Dore 1958, increase of and gregariousness in bathhouses; Dore 1978, increase of domestic baths; Embree 1939, short description of neighbors bathing together; Lebra 1976, hot springs good places for interaction and bathing important for parent-child bonding; Lebra 1984, mother-child co-bathing; McClain 1982, short description of bathhouses in the 17th century; Norbeck 1954, short description and mentions women do not enter bath for seven days after giving birth; Norbeck 1965, mentions bath in rural and urban settings; Plath 1964, bathing at hot springs as a traditional form of leisure; Reisman and Reisman 1967, bathing is a type of ceremony; Seidensticker 1983, bathhouse as a community center; to name a few).

such references are little more than a sentence or two; none are most than a few paragraphs. In fact, Clark makes the case in his introduction that each and every work on Japan will frequently state that bath is fundamental to Japanese culture, yet the topics addressed in the works are not specifically about the bath. Clark argues that it is so much a part of everyday life, that it is partly why it has been overlooked.¹³¹

One work that has been printed and reissued, Furo, The Japanese Bath¹³² contains beautiful pictures and is informative. However it includes no footnotes or bibliography, therefore leaving the would-be scholar of delving deeper into the broad historical commentary, dry. According to Clark, one scholar of Japanese history referred to a dictionary of anthropology published on Japan, yet it contains no references to bathing.¹³³

As Clark points out, many aspects of Japanese culture have been studied in depth and attributed great cultural significance. He offers the example of the tea ceremony. More people participate in bathing, both individually and in groups, and more often than in the formal tea ceremony. Yet, scholars have paid only a tiny fraction of the attention to bathing that has been accorded to the tea ceremony. Bathing is, as evidenced, one of those subjects so common that it escapes much consideration by the native participant scholars and has not been specifically addressed by foreign ones.

In my research of the bath in the United States, it is therefore no surprise that there is an even greater dearth of information available. Not only is the bath largely

¹³¹ Clark, 5.

¹³² Grilli and Levy, 1985.

¹³³ Clark, 6.

undocumented in Japan, the same goes for its existence in the United States. Ironically, it is one of the few cultural markers in the Japanese-American landscape, so it is not out of competition for other features, like the tea ceremony. However, its significance pales in comparison, arguably, to the Internment Camps, about which much has been written. And yet, that is not the reason alone. Not unlike Clark's assessment, as evidenced by countless formal and informal interviews, the bath was a common feature to the lives of the Japanese-Americans. It was different, but seemingly routine. It had a short life, and as quickly as primary language of Japanese shifted to English in one generation, the use of the furo vanished in the same period, without anyone, including the Nisei for the most part, taking note.

HOW TO TAKE A JAPANESE BATH

To distinguish the Japanese bath from the Western bath, here is a short list of how the Japanese bath differentiates itself from the American variety:

- You take a hot bath not only to wash yourself but to relax and soak
- You do not wash yourself in the bath-tub, but wash and soap outside the tub
- The hot water in the bath-tub is used by more than one person.
- The procedure:
 1. In the bath-house, take off all your clothing and put it in a basket or hang them from hooks or on the shelf
 2. Wash yourself thoroughly outside the bathtub, using the bath water
 3. Use soap outside the bathtub only

4. Wash off the soap by pouring hot water over your shoulders, drawn from the tub with a ladle or pan
5. Now enter the bathtub and place yourself in the hot water almost up to your chin. Unwind your muscles and nerves in the penetrating hot water.
6. If the water in the bathtub is too hot, turn on the cold water faucet to adjust the water temperature, but take care not to make the water too lukewarm.
7. Do not pull out the plug in the bath-tub when you leave¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Japanese Inn Group, 1986, 3.

THE FAMILY FURO – THE DOMESTIC BATH

In Japan, bathing in a neighbor's bath, *moraiyu*, has a long tradition in rural areas. Even where most of the people had a bathtub of their own home, they sometimes went to other houses for a bath. This practice allows great savings in time, fuel, and labor for the families. But perhaps just as importantly, it was a social occasion for the farmers. Early 20th century Japanese scholar John F. Embree has provided an example of the practice and its special role for women in Suye village:

The bath is heated every afternoon about five o'clock. The labor of filling the bath (women's work) with buckets from the nearest well and of heating it is considerable; there is also the value of the firewood to be considered. So, although nearly every house had a bath, as a rule one woman lights a fire under her bath, and two or three neighbors come to use it...

The evening bath plays an important role in the household life, especially of the women. After the menfolk have bathed, the women will take their turn. If a woman has, as she may well have, one or two younger children, they all sit in the tub together...Frequently, two or three women will bathe together, one being in the tub at a time, the others standing by and talking. There is a warm intimacy about these evening chats at the bath which keeps close the relationships between the women of three or four neighboring households and helps to make up for the social bonds they lack by being born in different *mura* (villages).¹³⁵

In this small farming village Embree noted that the social opportunity afforded women at the evening bath. Sometimes men normally bathed first (as would be expected in Japanese society), but when it was more convenient for women to do so, women bathed first. Men also socialized at these times. Tea and perhaps some other treat was served. After bathing, the men often sat around chatting about crops, news, and other topics of common interest. If projects requiring mutual labor were imminent, people developed plans and made assignments at these evening baths.

¹³⁵ Embree, 1939, 92-93.

Most tubs were crafted of wood – Japanese cypress, cryptomeria, chestnut, Chinese black pine – or iron, and were heated simply by burning wood or charcoal beneath them. Morse, in *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*, offers his view of them:

There are many forms of bathing-tubs, all of them being large and deep. Means for applying the heat direct, which is of course the most economical, is attained in various ways...A very common form of bath in the country consists of a large and shallow iron kettle, upon the top of which is secured a wooden extension, so as to give sufficient depth to the water within. The fire is built beneath the kettle, - the bather having a rack of wood which he sinks beneath him, and upon which he stands to protect his feet from burning. This tub is called a *Goyemon-buro* [sic], named after Ishikawa Goyeman [sic], - a famous robber of Taiko's time, who was treated to a bath in boiling oil.

There are doubtless other forms of bath-tubs with conveniences for heating the water, but the forms here given comprise the principal kinds. There is no reason why similar conveniences might not be adopted in our country in cases where aqueducts or city supply is not available.¹³⁶

The suggestion of creating an “American” furo no doubt fell on deaf ears, though unbeknownst to Morse who resided in Salem, Massachusetts until his death in 1925, they were being built on the other coast. What can be drawn in a timely fashion from this writing in 1885, is the exacting description of the Goemonburo, which gives us great insight into how closely the pre-immigration version of the furo would have looked and operated relative to the recreated version as studied in Hood River County.

“A very common form of bath” aides us in seeing that while impossible to survey with any real accuracy, the common occurrence of this bath type, the goemonburo, is clear. The discussion of “applying the heat direct, which is of course the most

¹³⁶ Morse, 203-205.

economical” suggests that like the American counterpart, efficiency and thrift are consistent virtues in bath design. In design, a “shallow iron kettle, upon the top of which is secured a wooden extension, so as to give sufficient depth” indicates a similar make-up to the American design, wherein metal is used sparingly, and appropriately adjacent to the fire, and yet the necessary depth is critical for a proper Japanese bath. Finally, “fire is built beneath the kettle, - the bather having a rack of wood which he sinks beneath him, and upon which he stands to protect his feet from burning.” In exactly the same fashion, the Japanese goemonburo is akin to the American goemonburo, which until the later addition of hot water to the farm, was the only form of bath found in Hood River County and elsewhere. Chapter six includes further discussion of the baths and their form and function.

SKINSHIP

To the Japanese, bathing with your children is part and parcel with raising them. The development of a bond between parent and child is felt to be deepened by bathing. Clark cites the intimacy shared by the child and its mother while bathing and in other skin-to-skin contact situations, such as breastfeeding, as essential.¹³⁷ It is felt that there is a kind of communication which goes on while engaging in this type of activity, important for both the child and the mother.

In the American experience, very little changed. In interviews with the Nisei, consistently they described their earliest years and memories in the furo with their

¹³⁷ Clark, 72.

parents: first their father, later, their mother. Shige Imai recounted, “early on, we all took a bath with mom, though since she usually bathed last. As we got older, we switched over to dad, and before too long, it was just a few of us boys, or by ourselves, depending.”¹³⁸ Consistently, all those interviewed reflected on eventually bathing alone, but prior to that, either with mom or dad depending on the chores, timing and other contingencies of the post-dinner hour. To the extent that skinship played a role in developing the familial relationship, the Issei perpetuated its practice.

FATHER FIRST, NEW BRIDE LAST

An emphasis on social position requires the Japanese to be continually aware of the relative position of themselves to others. Traditionally, relative positions with the family are reflected in the order of bathing. In interviews, I was told that the proper order in traditional Japan was for the household head to enter the bath first, followed by other male members of the household in descending age order. After the males had bathed, the females also bathe in the age order, the socially lowest member of the household bathing last. A new bride occupied the lowest social position and had to bathe last.¹³⁹

This tradition of bathing order is known have existed among members of the warrior class prior to the Meiji restoration. Documents from earlier periods indicate that prominent warrior families and noble families had a bathing order. After the Meiji

¹³⁸ Shige Imai, interview by Chris Bell, audio recording, July 15, 2004, Imai residence, Dee, Oregon.

¹³⁹ I read a story about the bath water having to be changed when an ignorant bride entered the bath before her husband. The informant related the story to me to indicate how strict the bathing order had to be adhered earlier in the 20th century. However, the fact that the bride was ignorant of the proper order suggests that the custom was only selectively practiced.

Restoration, brought about by the warrior class rather than the peasants; the ways, thoughts, and values of the warriors were extended to the peasant class rather than the peasants' lifeways moving into the upper classes.

These rules of conduct within a family were derived from Confucianism.¹⁴⁰ These principles included a hierarchy, in which one's lord came before one's family, and parents before spouse and children, together with an unquestioning acceptance of authority. Deeply rooted in the community, these traditions were reasonably carried forward in the new nation, though not with the sort of ironclad consistency one would seem in the homeland.

In my interviews with the Nisei, they told me that in their families, baths were taken in an order of convenience rather than of relative position. The age-sex order was followed only upon special occasions, such as a New Year's bath or when a guest was visiting their homes.

The mother did bathe last in most instances, however. The reasons offered were not stated in terms of superior/subordinate but in terms of division of labor. The mother frequently washed the clothing. This was done with the remaining bath water. Consequently she bathed last and then did the laundry. Additionally, since the bath followed dinner, the mother of the house frequently either did or orchestrated the dish cleaning among the children, and put the kitchen and eating area (sometimes a "dining room" sometimes just a table in the kitchen).

¹⁴⁰ C.J. Dunn, *Everyday Life in Traditional Japan*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), 5.

“In the summer, even on the hottest days, the hot water feels good,” recounted Kay Kiyakawa.¹⁴¹ He continued, “the bath not only got rid of the dirt of the day, it cleaned the pollution of the outside world from mind.”¹⁴² According to Clark, Toshiro Ueda, in *Hadaka no Tengoku* (Naked Heaven) calls it *inochi no sentaku*, life’s washing, or *furo wa tengoku*, bath is heaven.¹⁴³

BATHING AND BELIEF

Japan is a country with abundant water. It is an island surrounded by water and has many rivers and streams. Rainfall is abundant. The water is more than a mere natural feature. It is inherent to the nature of Japan. Since the introduction and widespread adoption of wet rice agriculture over a thousand years ago, water has been closely associated with food production. Given the abundance of water and the dependence upon it for so many resources, the fact that the Japanese developed beliefs and customs related to water is not surprising.

Water and washing play an important role in religious and customs worldwide. Christianity has baptism, Hindus bathe in the Ganges, Finns have saunas, and the Turks have steam baths, to name a few. While purification with water and special baths are present worldwide, Japan is famous for its elaboration of bathing. As a facet of daily Japanese culture, bathing encompasses a set of beliefs and activities related to other

¹⁴¹ Kay Kiyakawa, interview conducted on July 16, 2004.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ueda, 26, as cited in Clark, 80.

aspects of the culture. Religious purification is a major one of these. Earliest records show reference to purification by bathing in a river after a death. Shintoism contains many purification rites. Buddhism also has several. The Buddhist ones came from India through China to Japan.¹⁴⁴

Other activities are related to health beliefs and special ritualistic observances. Some of these practices are so common that they receive little conscious attention from the participants. This could be said of bathing in this country, by the Nisei, whose connection to the larger meaning of bathing in Japan was not as integral as it may have been for their parents, who grew up in Japan. Their history has been often without the context that the *furo* had in their ancestral home, and therefore its importance, as born out by the complete disappearance of the practice, was never as strong as it was for their parents.

MYTHOLOGICAL BATHING

Bathing pervasive in Japan to the extent that much of the mythological stories have bathing featured centrally. In the *Kojiki* or "Record of Ancient Matters," the creation of the world and gods with their various relationships are recounted. The Japanese islands were created by the dipping of a spear by the creator deities into the sea. Subsequently many gods were created. Izanami, the female creator deity, died giving birth to the Fire God. Izanagi, the male creator and Izanami's spouse, sought her in the

¹⁴⁴ Clark, 169.

underworld. The trip to the underworld and contact with death polluted Izanagi greatly. Upon returning, he purified himself in a river.¹⁴⁵

Twelve deities were created from articles worn on Izanagi's body. Fourteen deities were born while washing his body. Among the latter, two deities are very important. Amaterasu, or Sun Goddess, came into existence when he washed his left eye. Amaterasu is perhaps the most important of the Shinto deities and was enshrined at Ise. Izanagi gave Amaterasu a bead necklace which may be symbolic of passing of spiritual power.¹⁴⁶

Another deity, Susa-no-o (who is connected with the oceans), came into existence when Izanagi washed his nose. Susa-no-o was rude and caused trouble. He angered Amaterasu who then hid herself in a cave, withdrawing her light from the world. The gods gathered and with many careful plans and preparations, including a dance on an upturned tub, coaxed Amaterasu out of the cave. Reentrance to the cave was stopped by a rope and Amaterasu resumed her place.¹⁴⁷

Later in the *Kojiki*, the practice of bathing a new born baby to purify it from the pollution of birth is mentioned.¹⁴⁸ Other accounts of purification by water may be found in the *Kojiki* and also the *Nihongi*, or *Chronicles of Japan*¹⁴⁹. The ones mentioned here are among the most striking and illustrate the importance of bathing for religious

¹⁴⁵ Clark, 167.

¹⁴⁶ Phillippi, 71, as cited in Clark, 167.

¹⁴⁷ Clark, 168.

¹⁴⁸ Phillippi, 217, as cited in Clark, 168.

¹⁴⁹ Ashton, no page referenced, as cited in Clark, 168.

purification, assisting us in putting the ideological context in place for bathing, both in Japan and in the United States, or those places Issei emigrated.

POLLUTION AND PURITY

Pure : impure, inside : outside, up : down; three oppositional sets “deeply embedded in the Japanese world view and ethos.”¹⁵⁰ Cultural anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney argued that they more precisely “represent a symbolic correlation between two sets of spatial categories: inside : outside :: above : below, whose meaning is purity : impurity.”¹⁵¹ Namihira has discussed the concept of pollution in Japan:

The word “pollution” (*kegare*) never fails to evoke a kind of psychological tension. The state and the images that the word calls to mind are rather different from those evoked by “impurity” *fujo* or by “dirt” *yogore*, or “uncleanness” *kitanasa*. The two latter roughly correspond in their meanings to what...has [been] called “dirt” and refer to physically chaotic conditions and physiologically dirty things such as excreta and decayed matter that are not in themselves the object of religious avoidance. The word “impurity” is closest in meaning to “pollution” and has a religious connotation, but “pollution” evokes a stronger sense of avoidance, fear, and mystery and, in connection with these, of discrimination and rejection.¹⁵²

This sense of pollution is very strong in Japan. As Ohnuki-Tierney points out, people wash their hands when coming in from the outside.¹⁵³ There is a symbolic equation of outside with pollution and inside with purity.

¹⁵⁰ Emiko Namihara, “Pollution in the Folk Belief System,” *Current Anthropology* 28 (1987): S70, as cited in Clark, 170.

¹⁵¹ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan: An Anthropological View*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 31, as cited in Clark, 170.

¹⁵² Namihira, S71, as cited in Clark, 170.

¹⁵³ Ohnuki-Tierney, 17, as cited in Clark, 171.

Shoes are removed at the entrance to houses. Special slippers are worn in the toilet room which is considered to be polluted. Returning from a funeral, customarily salt will be sprinkled at the entrance of the home before entering. These actions are to eliminate the pollution encountered “outside” before entering the home.

The Japanese clearly continued this passion for personal hygiene when they ventured across the Pacific to seek their fortune and their future, often in places where you would be least likely to find it. In Ronald L. Olson’s 1924 study of Washington mills entitled “The Orientals in the Lumber Industry in the State of Washington,” he found the conditions of the Japanese communities comparable if not favorable to those of the white communities, although it also signifies a desire on the part of the Japanese to assimilate or copy local practices outwardly, as much as they could:

It is quite extraordinary the way conditions among the whites are reflected among the Japanese. If the white camp is shabby and unkempt, the Japanese camp is almost sure to present a similar appearance. If the buildings are neat, painted and well-kept, the Japanese houses will in most cases compare favorably with them. In one respect – that of lawns and flower beds – the Japanese rank far above the whites in every instance.¹⁵⁴

Similarly, in a 1920 report entitled “California and the Oriental” provided to the State Board of Control of California, the Chief Sanitary Engineer Edward Brown issued a letter on “Japanese Housing” in which he described their arrangements inside in the camps:

At every camp where Japanese are employed, a bath is provided. (Japanese type.) The Japanese are very clean about their persons, not so much about the living

¹⁵⁴ Ronald Leroy Olson, *The Orientals in the lumber industry in the State of Washington*, s.l.: s.n., ca. 1924. Reproduction of typewritten copy. As a sidebar for vernacular scholars, Olson is author of “Adze, Canoe and House types of the Northwest Coast” from 1927.

quarters; open toilets, open drains from the kitchen sink, unscreened dining and cooking quarters, and living quarters generally littered with boxes, bags, etc.¹⁵⁵

Further in the report, in a section entitled "Japanese and Hindu Housing," Elmer J.

Walther of the State Commission of Immigration and Housing reports:

On farms, especially in the rice districts, the Hindu tenant picks out the best quarters for himself and his own race and the white help and others take what is left. They, as well as the Japanese, are very particular about their baths and there is usually a Hindu style bath house provided.¹⁵⁶

The Japanese reluctance to settle in this country became the brunt of the American resentment toward the Japanese in their evaluation of their housing – yet without fail, the Japanese communities always had a bathing facility. And even through the ethnocentric lens of these housing inspectors, the importance of the bath and cleanliness made a definite impression as being a noticeably different cultural behavior.

MISOGI

Purification is the fundamental practice of Shinto. Perhaps it would be not too extreme to call [S]hinto a religion of purification. Not only is it important for Shinto rites, but also it is essential in daily life, because life itself must be supported by purification to maintain the true state. Life which loses its pureness is not pleasing to the *kami* (gods), and becomes an anti-Shintoistic life full of sin, pollution and disaster.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ State Board of Control, *California and the Oriental: Japanese, Chinese, and Hindus. Report of the State Board of Control of California to Gov. Wm. D. Stephens*, Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1922, 109.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 111.

¹⁵⁷ Sokyo Ono, *The Way of Purification: The Shinto Case*. William Woodward Collection, Special Collections, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene. Undated. Cited in Clark, but without page numbers. Special Collections was closed during the Spring and Summer of 2004, so as of yet, I have been unable to take this analysis further, if possible.

Professor Sokyo Ono lists six subdivisions of purification in Shinto. The most important of these are *harae* (or *harai*), “purification by casting off things,” and *misogi*, “purification by water.”¹⁵⁸ The concepts of purification in Shinto have been influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. The respective influences are identified, studied, and discussed by scholars of Japanese religion. The following will discuss principally the influences belonging to Shinto and since this study is focused upon the *furo*, only *misogi*, purification by water, will be examined.

A type of *misogi* is *mizugori*, literally water-purification. Anciently, the term *mizugori* appears to have been interchangeable with *misogi*.¹⁵⁹ When performing *mizugori*, the supplicant dresses in white, another symbol of purity, then pours cold water over himself. The water is poured repeatedly for a period of time. Alternatively, he may stand under a waterfall. Depending on the reason for performing this ritual, this act may take several hours, occasionally through an entire night.¹⁶⁰ The ritual may be done at a stream or a well. The ritual also symbolizes strengthening the spirit and resolve.

Water, then is a common means of removing pollution, of removing the *kegare* (impure, wicked, unfortunate) and approaching the *hare* (pure, virtuous and fortunate).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Clark, 176.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Namihira, 30, as cited by Clark, 173.

While *Misogi* was never mentioned in interviews or literature about the Issei or Nisei to my knowledge, the concept of ritual purification by water seemed part and parcel to the bathing experience.

BUDDHISM AND PURIFICATION

Although most forms of ritual purification are often closely associated with Shinto, the religious beliefs of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism are often interrelated. Yet because of the great number of Issei who were Buddhist and many of their associations with Buddhist customs, it is included with respect to Buddhism and purification.

As discussed earlier, the importation of Buddhism, art, writing and learning from China caused many changes in Japanese culture. The importation, popularization, and propagation of Buddhism in Japan affected the belief systems and world view of the Japanese. This change was not one way. Buddhism did not survive in an unaltered form. The Japanese quickly adapted it to better fit their culture.

At all of the largest Buddhist temples the clergy constructed a building especially for baths. Here priests performed the rite of *mizutori*, drawing the water for purification of the Buddha. The statue of Buddha was washed in regular rituals to purify it. The monks also bathed here, purifying themselves for special ceremonies or simply cleaning their bodies. Thereby, Buddhism promoted a culture of cleanliness in the same way Shintoism has. It is no surprise, however, that bathing is something that Hindu workers in the United States maintained a ritual bathing practice in much the same way the

Japanese have. In both cases, these well established beliefs and customs were strong enough to be retained in the new land, at least for the course of one generation.

BATHROOM PLACEMENT

As with many other buildings, objects, and rooms, the auspicious placement of the bath is determined by various divination procedures imported from China. Although most American furo I studied did not particularly conform to the principles outlined here and most Nisei professed no conscious consideration for them, the principles will nonetheless be offered up for future interpretation of other furo.

There are twenty four directions on the compass for determining where objects should or should not be placed in relation to the center of the home. In the case of the bath, the bath should not be placed on the north, northeast, northwest, south, southwest, east or west. If they are, disaster to the house or its inhabitants may result.¹⁶²

According to a diary account of the German doctor-scientist Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), who recorded his travels with the Dutch trading mission in Nagasaki, we have a very detailed account of the furo as it existed in the country-side. Kaempfer delighted in the Japanese predilection for cleanliness both of body and of the living environment:

The bagnio, or bathing place, is commonly built on the backside of the garden. They built it of cypress wood. It contains a Froo [sic], as they call it, a hot-house to sweat in, or a Ciffroo, that is, a warm bath, and sometimes both together. It is made warm and got ready every evening, because the Japanese usually bathe, or

¹⁶² Kikukiro Tanaka, *Jutaku Unmei Taikan* (Residence Fates), (Osaka: Shinreikan, 1924), 365, as cited in Clark, 211 and Saburo Yamagata, *Kaso*, (House Reading), (Kyoto: Gakugei Shuppansha, 1971), 108-109, as cited in Clark, 211.

sweat, after their days journey is over, thinking by this means to refresh themselves and to sweat off their weariness....For the satisfaction of the curious, I will here insert a more particular description of their Froo, or hot-house, which they go into only to sweat. It is an almost cubical trunk or stove, rais'd about three or four foot above the ground, and built close to the wall of the bathing place, on the outside. It is not quite a fathom high, but one fathom and a half long, and of the same breadth. The floor is laid with small plan'd laths or planks, which are some few inches distant from each other, both for the easy passage of the rising vapors, and the convenient out-let of the water people wash themselves withal.¹⁶³

This passage gives us great insight into the Edo period furo. Its location is situated apart from the house, thus a separate building, and one that is adjacent to the garden, mentioned often in the American context for the purpose of permitting the draining of the used water serve another, final purpose. At this time, "furo" or "Froo" as was genuinely recorded, was still used in reference to "steam bath" and "furo" literally means "steam bath." "Ciffroo" may have been the Goemonburo, also know as the "Chosoburo" at that time. A fathom is nearly six feet, which is to suggest this furo room is modestly sized (9' X 9'). Like all bathhouses, the notation of the separated floor boards to permit the washing prior to bathing points to that long-standing tradition, a construction detail found in Hood River, 250 years later.

One final note is the comment regarding the purpose and ritual of the bath, "it is...got ready every evening, because the Japanese usually bathe, or sweat, after their days journey is over, thinking by this means to refresh themselves and to sweat off their weariness." As posited for Hood River and the recurrence of the furo in this nation, the combination of unwinding the day, to refresh themselves in body, but also of spirit. Their

¹⁶³ Grilli, 70-71, originally from Kaempfer's three volume *History of Japan*, an extraordinarily detailed and accurate eyewitness account of Japan.

tireless lives in Japan would only be complicated later by their racial differences and the challenges that confronted them for the better part of their lives in this country.

HYGIENE AND HABIT

An important factor in keeping disease in check was the care taken over personal hygiene and the cleanliness of home. At least from the Edo period forward, it was considered a good idea to go to bed as soon as possible after hot bath in winter to conserve the warmth acquired from it.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, in the Meiji period, on long winter nights, "when the fire was left going, people took off their obis, warmed their backs and stomachs thoroughly, and then dived into their straw mats to sleep."¹⁶⁵

This tradition was strongly felt among the Nisei interviews, often citing the lack of heating in the house, often heated only by a wood stove.¹⁶⁶ As to washing, soap was an expensive item, and while some families made their own,¹⁶⁷ also bags of rice-bran were used instead in the preliminary wash.¹⁶⁸ No large towel was used for drying; the *tenugui*, a piece of cotton cloth about nine inches by two feet, was used for this, the procedure being to use it wet, rubbing the body with it and then ringing out the water. One did not finish up quite dry after this, but dry enough for the remaining moisture to be

¹⁶⁴ C.J. Dunn, *Everyday Life in Traditional Japan*, (New York: Putnam, 1969), 162.

¹⁶⁵ Yanagida Kunio, *Japanese Manners and Customs in the Meiji Era*, trans. Charles E. Terry, (Tokyo: Obunsha, 1967), 52.

¹⁶⁶ Misako Takasumi, interview.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, Misako cites her mother-in-law's penchant for thrift and chickens, the latter produced lots of lard, the former led her to make us of it, in the form of soap.

¹⁶⁸ Charlee Omori, interview.

taken up by the clothes. The coolness that came from this evaporation was very pleasant in summer.¹⁶⁹

CULTURAL TRANSFERENCE

One of the hardest things for Issei, and later Nisei and Sansei was the degree to which they were American. Linda Tamura asked some self-effacing questions about their heritage connection to the few living Issei in Hood River in the 1980s. Mrs. Itsu Akiyama's response indicates that feeling of placelessness:

Well, I am a worthless person. If I could, I would like to be more *shinko* [devoted to faith]. This I find most difficult. *Americajin* or *Nihonjin*? I am an American citizen, but everything I do is still *Nihonjin*. I eat *gohan* [steamed rice], I speak *Nihongo*, and I think *Nihonjin*.

If one inquires of Nisei why they bathe in their distinctive manner, the answer is likely to be framed in terms of their parent's tradition, the need for heating the body during cold winter, cleanliness, etc. Such answers do provide rationalizations for the widespread, enduring Japanese bathing habits, which manifested themselves in the United States. They tend, however, to conceal the meanings – with a common theme or metaphor, renewal – which allows these aspects of bathing to persist through tremendous social and material changes that have occurred in Japan during the last two centuries.

BATHING AS A SYMBOL OF BEING JAPANESE

Japanese immigrants adopted features, words, and the American culture at an astounding rate, particularly compared to other “eastern” races working as immigrant

¹⁶⁹ C.J. Dunn, 162.

labor in the United States. They nevertheless maintain their “Japaneseness”, their cultural identity in certain ways. As mentioned one of the ways this was commonly done was to maintain Japanese Language schools, eat traditional Japanese foods, participate in the celebration of the Japanese New Year making mochi or practice Judo or Ikebana or even baseball, which was both American and Japanese, as it was widespread in Japan prior to the great exodus of Issei. The furo, certainly in both design and function, preserved a cultural practice that was, and still is, distinctly Japanese.

Kokoro no furusato. *Kokoro* means “heart” or “spirit”.¹⁷⁰ *Furusato* means “home” in the sense of one’s home town or place of one’s roots.¹⁷¹ It has a very nostalgic meaning to it. *Furusato* is where one returns for important celebrations. It is a place which symbolizes refuge, tranquility, and safety. *Nihon no kokoro*. To know the furo is to know the “soul of Japan.”¹⁷² The connection of bathing in this manner to the essence of Japan and being Japanese is hard to separate.

A METAPHOR FOR RENEWAL

This study has documented how bathing has developed over a long period of time, the meanings it has for the participants, and the ways in which the activity and associated symbolism are linked, changed and maintained through a broad range of cultural/social activities and beliefs in a dynamic, rapidly changing society.

¹⁷⁰ Clark, 246.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

A reader not familiar with Japan might conclude from this chapters that the Japanese spend an inordinate amount of time in the bath (and relative to certain cultures this may be true), and consequently, overestimate the place of the bath in Japanese culture. Bathing, however, is only a portion of Japanese daily life and culture. Much of the time, bathing is subordinated to other forms of activity, although rarely neglected. Japanese culture would still be very much in existence and very much Japanese without the bathing component. Bathing does not equal Japanese culture or life. However, bathing has permeated numerous aspects of the culture and of peoples' lives. It had flooded many interstices of social activity and meaning. It also has its own, not insignificant, space. Bathing possesses broad and deep cultural symbolism. While scholars of Japanese culture must be careful not to overestimate the place of bathing, neither can they ignore the power and place it had and still has in the lives of the Japanese.

That power and place live in how bathing is a metaphor. Throughout this study, the themes of rejuvenation and revitalization occur in the symbolism of the furo. Bathing is renewal. In its various contexts, the bathing act renews vigor, energy, health, warmth, tradition, status, purity, cleanliness, relationships, and, most importantly, self. All of these are important elements in the lives of the Japanese. Bathing is a metaphor of life renewal.

When bathing is understood as a metaphor for the renewal of life (at least important elements of life), the attention paid to the bath by Japanese people and the retention of bathing in this new context of the United States through the dramatic social

and cultural changes are no longer surprising, yet still, remain remarkable, and as the case will continually be made, unconditionally worthy of preservation.

CHAPTER 5: CROSSING THE OCEAN

In the state of Oregon, there is a small town called Hood River. There I have cleared a piece of land, by cutting down the trees, and digging out the stumps. I have planted small apple trees, and also built a small house. That is where we are going.¹⁷³

LEAVING JAPAN

After more than two hundred years of the Tokugawa Shogunate government's seclusion policy, Japan opened its doors to the outside world in the middle of the nineteenth century. The new Meiji government lifted the ban on emigration, opening it first to Queensland, Australia, and then to Hawaii in the 1880's. In order to promote industrialization, the government imposed heavy land taxes on farmers. This had devastating results for many farming areas with resultant rural exodus. Urban industries proved unable to absorb the uprooted rural population. By the late 1890's, more than 50,000 Japanese had gone to Hawaii to work on sugar plantations. Meanwhile, labor shortages following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had also begun to encourage Japanese immigration to the mainland United States. After the annexation of Hawaii by the United States in 1898, this migration to the West Coast took on major proportions. According to the 1900 population census there were some 24,000 Issei in the mainland United States. Popular guides beckoned would be sojourners from Japan:

Come, merchants! America is a veritable human paradise, the number one mine in the world! Gold, silver and gems are scattered on her streets. If you can figure out away of picking them up, you'll become rich instantly to the tune of ten million and be able to enjoy ultimate human pleasures.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Shizue Iwatsuki, "The Making of an American," *OHQ*, 518. A quote to Shizue by her husband, Kamegoro, while they were still in Japan. Kamegoro had come back to Japan ostensibly to see family, but hopefully, marry.

¹⁷⁴ Lauren Kessler, "Spacious Dreams: A Japanese American Family Comes to the Pacific Northwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Summer-Fall '93, 145.

And American bosses liked Asian labor. The Chinese had been industrious willing to work for low wages , and generally uncomplaining about work conditions – traits that made them simultaneously appreciated by employers and despised by unions. But since the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the situation was getting desperate to the extent that labor contractors for American railroads began to dispatch agents to Japanese port cities to recruit laborers, offering three to five times the wages they were making at home and in some cases, advancing them money to purchase steerage tickets to Seattle or Tacoma, Washington.¹⁷⁵

As these wages beckoned Japanese villagers, their own government's policies seemed to conspire to push them from their homeland. To finance the industrialization and militarization of Japan, the Meiji government began requiring farmers to pay a fixed annual tax on their land; at the same time, policies were enacted that depressed the price of the farmers' rice. Caught in the middle, more than 300,000 families lost their land.¹⁷⁶ Farmers in southwestern Japan were particularly hit hard. Although the family kept its property, the late-nineteenth century was neither a profitable nor a happy time to be a farmer in Japan.

Adding to the hardships imposed by agrarian depression, stricter conscription laws appears in the 1880s, followed by the draft for the Sino-Japanese war of 1894. All males up to age forty were subject to military service. In earlier years heads of households and

¹⁷⁵ Yuji Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contractors and Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroad Companies," *Labor History*, Summer 1980, 21, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Ito, 346.

only sons were exempt, and those who could afford to buy their way out of service were permitted to do so. But by the late 1880s the government had clamped down, and only young men studying abroad were granted exemptions.¹⁷⁷

Enticed by tales of a promised land, facing both an unpromising future as a farmer and possible conscription into the army, many Issei left the farm in the hands of brothers, sons, wives or extended family, and headed into the city, lined up work with a railroad agent and eventually boarded a steamship for the long, grueling journey to America. Like most of the 27,000 other Japanese who emigrated in the decade before the twentieth century, they saw themselves as *dekasegin*, or temporary sojourners.¹⁷⁸ Their plan was simple: Work hard for three to five years, saving every penny possible; then return triumphantly to Japan either to rebuy the land they had lost to taxes or to expand their holdings and fund new ventures. The sacrifices would be great but the reward, they hoped, would be greater.¹⁷⁹

From 1901 to 1907 almost 110,000 Japanese – most of them young, male, literate, and from the respectable farming class – ventured to America.¹⁸⁰ The Japanese government was careful about who was sent abroad. There was a morals examination by a special review board designed to determine each applicant's fitness, both physical and mental, for emigration.¹⁸¹ The examination checked for literacy, good character, and

¹⁷⁷ Kessler, 146.

¹⁷⁸ Ito, 345

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 356

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 360.

¹⁸¹ Tamura, 45.

capable of maintaining Japan's national honor abroad. These boards carried out the government's determination to ensure that Japanese immigrants would conduct themselves ethically, virtuously, and conservatively in their adopted land. By exercising such caution in the screening, Japanese officials reasoned – incorrectly as history would show – that their countrymen would be treated better than the Chinese immigrants who preceded them.¹⁸²

By the early 1900s, more than 13,000 Japanese men were working on the railroad in the western states.¹⁸³ Meanwhile, the Japanese made substantial contributions to Oregon's agriculture, despite the many difficulties caused by anti-Japanese sentiment and discriminatory legislation. From contract farm laborers they climbed the agricultural ladder to become independent farm operators, either as share or cash tenants or as land owners. Through "picture bride" marriages, many of them established families. They typically engaged in small-scale, intensive farming activities, growing fruit, truck and nursery crops. Often the land farmed by them was marginal, considered by *hakujin* (white) farmers to be unprofitable. Around Portland, the Japanese became important suppliers of fresh truck crops and nursery products. Their success was as much due to the assistance of their many well-run cooperative organizations as well as their experience in intensive farming.

One of the many reasons young women were lured to the United States was to escape the duties ascribed to a young bride in new husband's house. Many of the chores

¹⁸² Kessler, 149.

¹⁸³ Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924*, (New York: Free Press, 1990), 86.

that had been the responsibility of the mother-in-law were transferred to her. Many mothers-in-law began a life of leisure and of bullying the new arrival, including combing out her mother-in-law's hair, massaging her shoulders when she complained of being tired; she had also to look after her husband, a duty which would range from providing his meals to matters like cleaning out his ears and washing his feet when he came home from working in the mud.¹⁸⁴ The day when she, too, became a mother-in-law could not come soon enough.

Similarly, for many young men, land-holdings were normally handed on to the eldest son, and younger sons were often obliged to work for their brothers, or other farmers. While previously this had led to migration to expanding towns, the temptation of leaving the country, given the lucrative stories of money being made, would have been an overwhelmingly attractive alternative.

When taxation became oppressive, particular in lieu of several years of draught and no apparently relief in taxation, a farmer would naturally think of abandoning his land and moving off to seek employment elsewhere, either in more favorable rural areas or in developing towns, and eventually, once available, in America. Often the alternative in staying was grim. Historian of the late Meiji period C. J. Dunn points out, "farmers were continually being pressed for money, and if they had no good crops to sell, and could not leave their village, they had to seek other ways of raising it. Many were forced to sell their daughters into what amounted to slavery."¹⁸⁵ And yet upon return, a young

¹⁸⁴ C.J. Dunn, 71.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 75.

girl would be desirable because of the education and experience of the world outside the village.¹⁸⁶ It is painfully clear that while there was comfort in familiarity of culture, people and context, the opportunities abroad, particularly one that offered a release from the cycle of poverty was worth the great risk of the unknown.

JAPAN IN OREGON

Documented facts of Japanese in Oregon date back to 1834, when shipwrecked sailors landed on the coast.¹⁸⁷ One of them, Kinzō Suzuki, arrived in Vancouver, then a part of the Oregon Territory, and is considered to be the first Japanese to step foot on Oregon soil. Six years later, he boarded an English vessel for China.¹⁸⁸ In 1891 the first group of Japanese immigrants, six in number, landed in Portland and underwent extreme hardship resulting from their unfamiliarity with the language and customs of the new land where there were no predecessors to give them guidance. Some of these early arrivals are said to have been discovered living in a miserable state under bridges, weeping with loneliness and want. As a direct result of an investigation launched by Consul Sutemi Chinda of San Francisco, the Japanese government for a time terminated Portland as a port of entry for its immigrants.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 76.

¹⁸⁷ Barbara Yasui, "The Nikkei in Oregon, 1834-1940," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 76 (September 1975): 225.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Majorie R. Stearns, "The History of the Japanese People in Oregon." Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1937, 1-2, and Yasui, 225-230.

Subsequently, however, Japanese immigration through Portland increased. Many of the Issei arrivals were channeled into railroads, sawmills and agricultural labor. By 1900 there were 2,501 Japanese in Oregon.¹⁹⁰ Utilizing their savings derived from such labor, the Japanese stepped into independent farming in such agricultural centers as Portland, Salem, Hood River and The Dalles.¹⁹¹ Unlike California, the Issei in Oregon were never a dominant force in agricultural labor supply.¹⁹²

Comparatively, the history of independent farming among the Issei in Oregon is short; there were only a couple of farms at the turn of the century. By 1909 the number had increased to over 90. Their distribution was as indicated in **Table 3** below.¹⁹³

NUMBER OF JAPANESE FARMERS AND ACREAGE FARMED IN OREGON, 1909

District	No. of Farms	Ac. Leased	Ac. Owned	Total
PORTLAND	71	1,087	80	1,167
HOOD RIVER	8	70	58	128
THE DALLES	10	---	1,680	1,680
SALEM	1	---	150	150
QUINCY	1	---	80	80
TOTAL	91	1,157	2,048	2,048

Table 3. Number of Japanese Farmers and Acreage Farmer in Oregon, 1909

¹⁹⁰ U.S. Census, Census Reports, 1900, *Population*, (Washington: U.S. Census Office, 1902), vol. 1, Pt.1 cxxii.

¹⁹¹ Masakazu Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil: A History of the Issei in the United States Agriculture*, (New York: P. Lang, 1992), vol. 1., 508. For a time between 1897 and 1907 there was 3,000 Issei railroad workers in Oregon. Shinzaburō Ban was a pioneer Portland Japanese railroad labor contractor and merchant whose contributions to Japanese immigration history is noteworthy.

¹⁹² Stearns, 2.

¹⁹³ U.S. Congress, Senate, Doc. 633, 61st Congress, 2nd Session, Reports of the Immigration Commission (RIC), *Immigrants in Industries*, Pt. 25: Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States, vol. 2, Japanese and East Indians (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 522.

Generally, the Issei were cash renters, the average payment per acre being about \$11. In almost all cases they owned horses, 28 percent with at least one, 61 percent with two or three, and one percent with between four and nine such animals for farm work.¹⁹⁴ The apparent reason for owning draft animals was the practice of landowners not to provide tenants with horses although they furnished the implements whose usage was included in the rent.

Taking over land was that essentially unimproved, the Issei developed it into acreage suitable for the intensive cultivation of berries and vegetables. The time required for this process and the very nature of the crops, such as strawberries that took several years before fruition, dictated the lease term in Oregon, which was usually five years in duration.

Where economic realities precluded an Issei from launching a farming career, he resorted to partnerships. Although an owner of a farm usually operated it by himself, about 40 percent of the tenant farmers in Oregon had from two to four partners. This arrangement, prevalent at the time, is understandable inasmuch as the majority of the Issei farmers had been in the United States for only a short time and were yet without sufficient economic strength to carry on independently. Of 29 males surveyed in 1909, 83 percent had been in the United States less than 10 years.¹⁹⁵

In the early years of Oregon agricultural history, the Issei were not considered serious competitors; their entry into agriculture did not drastically affect prices of

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 943, Table 364.

¹⁹⁵ RIC, 945, Table 370.

produce. In fact, their produce sold for from 5 to 10 percent less than that grown by the Italians, but this was explained on the bases of the lesser quality of their vegetables and not on price-slashing techniques.¹⁹⁶ Poor soil of the land operated by the Issei and their lack of technical skill in raising vegetables, were reasons given for the differences in quality, a pattern seldom noticed in California in this period. Competition, however, did not prevent the development of antagonism toward the immigrants from Japan by Italians, Chinese, and other more established growers because there was even at this early stage fear that the Issei would in time become serious contenders in the industry.

Sensitivity to such feelings no doubt accelerated the formation of farm associations or, in essence, ethnic cooperatism, among the Issei. As early as 1906 an association of Japanese farmers comprising about one-half of their number in Oregon was established with the basic objective of protecting their common interests, among them being the avoidance of competition among themselves.

In the later phase of the Issei era, the Japanese population of Oregon had by 1930 doubled since 1900 and thereafter declined slowly as the figures in **Table 4** indicate.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Iwata, 510.

¹⁹⁷ U.S. Census, Census Reports, 1940, Vol. II, Pt. 5, *Population* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 964.

JAPANESE POPULATION IN OREGON, 1900 TO 1940

YEAR	POPULATION
1900	2,501
1910	3,418
1920	4,151
1930	4,958
1940	4,071

Table 4. Japanese Population in Oregon, 1900 - 1940

In relation to the farm population, a breakdown of location and acreage is shown in **Table 5** below.¹⁹⁸

NUMBER OF JAPANESE FARMS AND ACREAGE IN OREGON, 1930

DISTRICT	NO. OF FARMS	ACREAGE	AVERAGE ACRES PER FARM
COLUMBIA	27	540	20
MONTEVILLA	9	270	30
MILWAUKIE/ OREGON CITY	25	375	15
GRESHAM/TROUTDALE	82	2,460	30
WESTPORT	1	40	40
CANBY	2	70	35
SHERWOOD	13	555	43
BANKS/CORNELIUS	36	1,040	29
GASTON	12	400	33
SALEM	20	720	36
INDEPENDENCE	2	85	43
MEDFORD	3	90	30
HOOD RIVER	50	1,500	30
PARKDALE	21	462	22
DEE	17	260	15
PENDLETON	1	30	30
ONTARIO	12	1,560	130
OTHERS	5	150	30
TOTAL	338	10,607	31

Table 5. Number of Japanese Farms and Acreage in Oregon, 1930

¹⁹⁸ Iwata, 511.

It is apparent that the average acreage of the Oregon farms was relatively small, roughly 31 acres, with the exception of those in eastern Oregon around Ontario, denoting the intensive nature of Japanese farming.

In the Portland region, the Issei concentrated on the production of vegetables and berries, while in the Idaho border district of Ontario, onions and potatoes were grown extensively. The crops that were shipped outside of the state included strawberries, cauliflower, celery, peas, onions, and potatoes. The Japanese farmers' annual shipments came to no less than 1,500 carloads of produce.¹⁹⁹

The Issei worked with a whole range of soils, from extremely good to very poor. As a generalization, western Oregon soils are acidic while those of eastern Oregon are alkaline in nature. The soil in mid-state communities like the Hood River Valley, as we will see, led to some of the best orchard conditions in the country.

¹⁹⁹ Iwata, 512.

JAPANESE SETTLERS IN HOOD RIVER COUNTY

*The untouched ground of America
I began to hoe
This virgin soil.*²⁰⁰

The source from which the vast majority of the Japanese immigrants were drawn was the agricultural population. The Japanese, "small as his country is, is essentially the son of the soil."²⁰¹ In the days of feudalism the farmer ranked next only to the samurai in the social scale. In the pre-industrialist times, the samurai looked with contempt to those who were in the counter Confucianism art of money-making, and to the farmer he saw a productive pursuit free from sordid phases of commerce. Furthermore, with the pre-Meiji policy of exclusion, the country necessarily attached great importance to men who tilled the soil and produced the necessities of life.²⁰²

These farmers were largely skilled in their pursuits. With emigration forbidden, with the importation of foreign commodities banned, and with the group of small islands offering roughly one-twelfth of its total area for cultivation, one would wonder how Japan managed to secure enough food-stuff to feed the ever-increasing population.²⁰³ The answer is by developing farming into a near state of perfection. It was not so much the science of today, but rather the experience of centuries of how to wrest from the earth all that is could yield without impoverishing the soil. Thus agriculture was treated like a

²⁰⁰ Honda Fugetsu, quoted in Eiichiro Azuma, *In This Great Land of Freedom*, (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 1993), 14.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 16, apparently a well-known an adage in Japanese.

²⁰² Kiyoshi Kawakami, *The Real Japanese Question*, (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 82.

²⁰³ Iwata, 67.

fine art, and men who embraced the occupation were regarded not as mere tillers of the soil but as gentlemen with a sense of honor and self-respect.²⁰⁴

This is the sort of population from which most Japanese immigrants are derived. It is natural, therefore, that the Japanese in America would show a strong preference for farming and farm labor. In the long run these educated Japanese agriculturists proved to be valuable assets in this country, largely due to their intelligence, adaptability, and their ability to imbibe American ideas and adopt American customs accordingly.

In 1912, the Japanese owned 31,812 acres of farm land and leased 225,046 acres.

Distributed among various States, the figures are as follows in **Table 6**:

State	Owned	Leased
California	17,763	172,512
Colorado	525	15,997
Texas	10,390	2,330
Idaho	(not permitted)	12,174
Washington	(not permitted)	12,136
Utah	123	5,659
Oregon	1,892	2,033
Nebraska	--	1,189
New York	603	325
Florida	364	120
Other States	152	571
Total	31,812	225,046

Table 6. National Farm Acreage Ownership, 1912

Kiyoshi Kawakami, who collected this data and was a prolific Japanese-American pre-war journalist, beginning in 1904, provided a mixture of internationalist pronouncements and nationalistic sentiments set in an increasingly nationalistic era.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Kawakami, 83.

²⁰⁵ Iwata, 79.

Kawakami's writings on Japanese-American relations focused on the issues of Japanese immigration, the naturalization of Japanese, anti-Japanese sentiment and actions, and the "Japanese question." In his work in a national periodical, *The Forum* from 1913, entitled "The Japanese on Our Farms," Kawakami takes pains to set the record straight on Japanese land ownership:

There is not plausible reason for prohibiting the Japanese from acquiring land....They argue that the Japanese does not know how to care for the soil...This is a calumny pure and simple. The Japanese, instead of ruining good soil, enriches poor one, redeems waste land and renovates impoverished farms. Back in his old country, he never heard of such a thing as an abandoned farm...No, the Japanese cannot afford to abandon any farm...If he migrated from one section to another, deserting the old farm and taking up the new, as many do of our farmers, he would soon have to stand on the brink of the ocean – so small is his country...Because of the care which they lavish on the soil, the farm rented to a Japanese commands an unusually high price.²⁰⁶

While the likely answer to the last question is due more to the willingness Japanese were to pay a higher than market rate in part due to their ability to intensively farm the soil, desire to purchase land regardless of price, and the often crude practice of using this position of power to sell at a higher than market price, the balance of his statement proved to be true over and over again with countless Issei stories of cultivating stumpland into fruitful bounty, though failure was not unknown to these farmers just the same.

Kawakami takes an interesting side step in his praise for the Japanese farmer and admits his disgust with the current state of Japanese homes and gardens. It is something he feels they are rightly accused of not maintaining or investing in, and a theme which is clearly felt nationally, and published in *The Forum*, and as locally as Hood River, as

²⁰⁶ Kawakami, 86.

indicated by the Nikkei effort to make "Better Homes, Better Gardens."²⁰⁷ Believing the hostility felt is not a racial or cultural, but one of aesthetics is a hopeful wish, and yet the sort of complaint that is understood by a fastidious culture, and one that informs us of an almost universal understanding among a widely dispersed community of nationals:

It must be admitted that most Japanese farmers, like their compatriots in the city, are not yet in a position to cultivate a refined tastes. Their dwellings are not yet what they can be proud of, and their modes of living show little refinement, though they are fastidious and even extravagant both as to food and clothing. But no Japanese will admit that this is to be their ultimate condition. So far from it, they are ambitious not only to acquire wealth but to elevate their social standing. Eager to learn English, they are even more anxious to....understand our institutions and customs. Time is not yet far back when even the Irish, among whom there are to-day talents and geniuses American may well be proud of, living in an infelicitous condition which their American neighbors made an object of ridicule and sarcasm.²⁰⁸

Kawakami again is innocent, it would seem, to the difference between the Irish and the Japanese that will take generations (and marriage outside the race) to overcome: skin color. Yet he also points out a very important notion that has otherwise missed historical record of the Japanese farmer and their penchant for native foods and newness to American food culture, in particular:

The anti-Japanese agitators argue that the Japanese can live for almost nothing. The fact is that it costs the Japanese just as much to live as it costs people in the corresponding class...[in fact]...Most Japanese...cater to their...palates...for...edibles imported from their native country. Including duties and the cost of transportation the price of such food-stuffs is exorbitant...What is more serious, neither they nor their helpmeets know how to utilize for table such materials as can be easily obtained on the farm...if his wife, like the wives of American farmers, [learns] how to cure ham, churn butter, convert sour milk into breaks and cakes and cook eggs in a hundred and one wonderful ways, his cost of living will

²⁰⁷ Hood River News, September 15, 1921, 16.

²⁰⁸ Kawakami, 87-88.

be greatly reduced. Then money thus saved could go a long way toward the improvement of his dwelling.²⁰⁹

In Hood River, it was not only the cost, but the travel and time to get into town, yet the success of Yasui Brothers store would certainly indicate that regardless, the demand for Japanese dry goods, curios, and "notions," as indicated in the Hood River phone book, is high.²¹⁰

During the 1900s, many Japanese immigrants moved into agricultural work. At first, the Issei were drawn by better wages to work on farms. In 1909, farm laborers represented more than a quarter of the 3,873 Japanese in Oregon. Known as *buranke katsugi* (blanket carriers), they were seasonal migrants, carrying blankets with a few other daily necessities. Many of these men subsequently invested their earnings and rose above the class of common laborers to sharecroppers, leaseholders and farm owners. According to the Portland Japanese Consulate Report, the number of Japanese farmers jumped from 71 to 233 between 1907 and 1910.²¹¹

Japanese Immigrant farmers tended to gather in restricted areas. Montavilla and Gresham-Troutdale were prominent among the many Japanese farm settlements in the eastern part of Multnomah County. Starting around 1904, Japanese emerged as berry and vegetable farmers in these areas. Land prices were high, from \$500 to \$800 per acre, so most Japanese were tenant farmers with three-to-six year contracts. Initially, white

²⁰⁹ Kawakami, 88-89.

²¹⁰ Hood River Telephone Directory, (Hood River, Oregon, 1926), 56.

²¹¹ Azuma, In this Great Land of Freedom, 14.

landowners welcomed the Japanese on their land because they paid the highest rents, usually \$15 an acre.²¹²

Because of its close proximity to Portland, Montavilla was the first Japanese farming settlement with a sizable population. In 1908, 36 Japanese farmers held a total of 665 acres.²¹³ Three years later, the community had approximately 200 Japanese residents with an additional hundred laborers during the harvest seasons. Half of the total acreage in the area was under Japanese control by then.²¹⁴ The first Japanese producers' association in the state was established here. Montavilla was indeed, as a Japanese immigrant writer called it at that time, "the Japanese farm village."²¹⁵

Sixty miles to the east, Hood River County became one of the major farm settlements of Japanese immigrants in Oregon. The small valley was underdeveloped until the turn of the century. When Japanese immigrants first came to the area around 1904, they were neither tenant farmers nor field hands. Many were employed to cut trees and to clear land by local landowners. They were given five acres in exchange for clearing 15 acres under a unique working arrangement with their employers. This arrangement enabled the immigrants to become landowners without accumulating capital.²¹⁶ By 1909, several Japanese owned five to ten acres by this method, and a dozen others were clearing land in order to acquire the acreage. In years to come, Hood River

²¹² Ibid, 15.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Iwata, 115.

²¹⁵ Ibid. Montavilla is completely gone, as it now exists as the Mt. Tabor neighborhood in NE Portland.

²¹⁶ Tamura, 67

became a very distinctive Japanese community in which most of the farmers were settled landowners.

Outside of Multnomah County, Hood River was the largest Japanese farming settlement. Many Japanese farmers appeared during the early 1910s. Between 1910 and 1913, the farming population in Hood River, Dee, and Parkdale rose from 12 to 53. Japanese land ownership went from 137 acres to 767 acres, while their leasehold increased from 73 acres to 105 acres.²¹⁷ Thereafter, the number of Japanese immigrant farmers did not increase as sharply, but their acreage continued to grow. In 1920, some 70 Japanese were reported to farm 2,050 acres, of which they owned 1,200 acres. As a result, the average Japanese farmer in Hood River held larger acreage than his counterpart in other locales.²¹⁸ This was indicative of the strength of the Issei farmers in Hood River.

Masuo Yasui played an important role in the rapid development of this farming community. Born in Okayama Prefecture, he came to Seattle in 1902 at the age of sixteen to join his father and brothers, who were railroad workers. After going to Montana, he worked as a cook for a Japanese railroad gang. When he was eighteen, Yasui moved to Portland. After a few months, he found a position as a domestic worker with a white family and enrolled in night school. He learned English quickly and acquired a good command of the language. Working as a labor-contractor, he became an active leader of the Portland Japanese community.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 69.

²¹⁸ Kessler, 151.

In 1908, Masuo Yasui established the Yasui Brothers General Store in Hood River with his brother, Renichi Fujimoto. When he visited the small valley community the previous year, he was impressed by the beauty of the area and inspired by business opportunities he saw serving the increasing number of Japanese residents. Furthermore, the local Japanese led the sort of life that he himself believed in: permanent settlement in America. Shortly after his visit, Masuo Yasui wrote a thirty-page letter to his brother, Renichi, in which he stressed this belief:

People always talk about "Going back to Japan as soon as possible." Should it really be the ultimate goal to live an idle life [in Japan] with American dollars?...I hope that you summon your wife and make a peaceful home in this great land of freedom. What is the use of going back to Japan and spending the rest of your life in that countryside?"²¹⁹

Yasui envisioned his store playing a pivotal role in the development of the Japanese permanent settlement in Hood River. Eventually, Renichi was persuaded to invest his savings in a general merchandise store.

The store became the hub of the community activities for the Japanese living in the Hood River Valley. As Masuo Yasui had envisioned its mission, the store was a meeting place, an information center, a rooming house, a mail drop and a travel and insurance agency for the convenience of local residents. Masuo, with his command of English, served as a liaison between the Japanese and the local white residents, assisting the farmers in buying land and the laborers in finding employment. Opposing isolation

²¹⁹ Ibid.

from the white community, he urged his fellow countrymen to spread out and mingle with their white neighbors.²²⁰

Masuo offered settlers his financing and management skills. He showed his fellow Issei farmers the potential of such a new crop as asparagus and inspired them to try their hands at it. With the leadership of Yasui, Japanese asparagus farmers later established the Mid-Columbia Vegetable Growers' Association which annually shipped 50,000 crates of asparagus to eastern markets.²²¹ In large part, Masuo Yasui helped Hood River Valley become the most concentrated community of Japanese settlers in the Northwest.

FAMILY LIFE

The rapid development of Japanese farm communities in Oregon was marked by the emergence of families. The early Japanese immigrant society was primarily a world of young bachelors. During the 1910s, the migratory nature of the community changed as more and more immigrants established their own families. As an unexpected consequence of the 1907-8 Gentlemen's Agreement between Japan and the United States, there was a massive influx of Japanese women, including "picture brides."²²² Between 1910 and 1920, the Japanese female population in Oregon rose approximately fivefold from 294 to 1,349. The newly-established couples were the foundation of Japanese

²²⁰ Tamura, 72.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Azuma, 25.

farming settlements. In Hood River, most of the Issei farmers were married by 1920, making the male-female ratio four-to-three in the community.²²³

The Japanese immigrant family in Oregon was a microcosm of new sociocultural forms that emerged in the process of Japanese adaptation to Oregon society. Like other immigrants, the Issei brought their culture and traditions from Japan, but upon settling in Oregon they began to adapt to the new environment. Some cultural elements were discarded while others were reinterpreted and renegotiated in response to the changing realities of life in America and the changing definition of what it meant to be Japanese in Oregon.

One new sociocultural form was evidence in the changing definition of gender roles in Japanese immigrant families. In Oregon, the Issei wives played multiple roles, breaking out of the confinement of traditional subordination. Not only did they take charge of domestic chores and child rearing, but they also played an indispensable part in the family economy. An Issei woman recalled those days:

Helping my husband, I worked so hard that I was amazed at myself. If we did not work hard, we couldn't go on living. When my husband failed in his business, I worked all the harder in order to help him start again.²²⁴

An Issei man also described the hard work of the women with admiration:

When harvest season began, housewives got up at 5 a.m., fixed breakfast and looked after the horses. At 7 o'clock wives and husbands went to the orchards. They worked until 6 p.m. for twelve [sic] hours a day, except for one hour at lunch, day after day. Especially wives worked like plough horses, and even after dinner worked with their husbands, boxing the fruit. Then after everyone else was in bed, they

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ito, 499.

cleaned up and put things in order. For about a week every year they slept by their husbands in bed without even taking off their shoes, just cat-napping.²²⁵

Likewise, the men took on tasks that they would never have done in Japan. Since the delivery of a baby cost \$20 to \$50, many Issei husbands acted as midwives for their wives. One man remembered how he had learned the necessary techniques of delivering babies from simple medical books, another had delivered as many as eight babies.²²⁶

²²⁵ Ito, 500-501.

²²⁶ Ibid, 501.

FARMING PRACTICES

The Hood River Valley was one of the singular regions of Issei agriculture. Here the Issei were involved almost entirely in fruit production: apples and pears. Since orcharding implied a long-term concept in agriculture, the Japanese in the area became landowners. About 95 of the Japanese orchard operators owned a total of 2,200 acres that they controlled during the Issei era.²²⁷

Fruit production was not a foreign idea to many Issei, especially those who hailed from the Central and Southern provinces of Japan. Farming villages, apart from the flat rice-fields, had dry fields on which other crops were grown, including, according to region, pears, oranges, grapes, persimmons, plums and apricots to name a few.²²⁸

Given the constrained land, the Japanese farmer was quite adept at maximizing the land use and creating as much home-spun industry, both agricultural and otherwise, from the land. By way of irrigation, water for the fields either came by gravity-fed channels, led to and from the fields by a complex arrangement of water-gates or bamboo tubes, or, in flat areas, it was raised by mechanical means. The farmers also worked cooperatively, particular for the seeding of the rice, one of the great occasions of the year:

It was organized as a communal operation with persons from a group of farms co-operating. The actual planters were usually young women, partly...because of their dexterity, but mainly from a traditional feeling that their potential fertility as child-bearers would transfer itself to the rice....the work is very arduous, done with bent backs and requiring speed, rhythm and endurance; in many places songs were sung accompanied by music and dancing...as much to relived the tedium...as to celebrate the joy of restarting the crop cycle.²²⁹

²²⁷ Iwata, 514.

²²⁸ C.J. Dunn, 51.

²²⁹ Ibid, 56-57.

Thrift, while not exclusive to any culture and often a chief feature in the successful farmer, it was seen as a virtue in Japan, and integrated into the outlook of many peasant farmer families. Many Japanese fables tell of prosperity gained not by chance, but by working unceasingly, morning and evening, hard enough to wear out "his spade and his hoe."²³⁰ After the hard work of cultivating silk from the silkworms, it was typical of farmers that hardly any of the silk was discarded – even ill-shaped or diseased cocoons could be used for some purpose, even though the thread could not be clearly reeled off.²³¹

In addition to combating poverty, this degree of thrift was actually mandated, as shown here in a few selections of ordinances that were issued to villages in 1649:

Farm work must be done with the greatest diligence. Planting must be neat, all weeds must be removed, and on the borders of both wet and dry fields beans or similar food-stuffs are to be grown, however small the space.

Peasants must rise early and cut grass before cultivating the fields. In the evening they are to make straw rope and straw bags, all such work to be done with great care.

Men must plant bamboo or trees round the farmhouse and must use the fallen leaves for fuel so as to save expense.

The husband must work in the fields, the wife must work at the loom. Both must do night work. However good-looking a wife may be, if she neglects her household duties by drinking tea or sightseeing or rambling on the hill-sides, she must be divorced.²³²

When considering the conditions and life of the Issei previous to their arrival to the United States, the difference in culture, both the physical and the traditional forms of

²³⁰ Ibid, 64.

²³¹ Ibid, 63.

²³² C.J. Dunn, 64.

a culture, rank among the most dramatic shifts for an immigrant population in the history of the United States.²³³

The famous Hood River apples had become widely known throughout the United States as the result of the carload that was shipped out of the valley for the first time in 1905 during the Lewis & Clark Centennial Celebration. Thereafter, Eastern investors arrived to stimulate the apple industry in the state. Consequently, the price of land rose from \$200 an acre to as high as \$1,500 per acre by 1912, making land difficult for the Issei to purchase unless it was cheap, undesirable stump-land.²³⁴

The Hood River Valley first saw Japanese in 1896 when railroad and farm laborers arrived. Many of the Issei drawn to the area participated in the clearing operations that were essential in converting forested land to agricultural purposes.²³⁵ According to Sagorō Asai, a pioneer Hood River Valley Issei who arrived in the district in 1902, there were about 600 Issei laborers in the valley in the first decade of the century clearing land for the white landowners by day and gambling away their earnings by night.²³⁶ Senator Frank Davey, in his report to the governor of Oregon on the Japanese situation in 1920, describes the role of the Japanese in land clearing in the Hood River Valley:

In the Hood River Valley, there are about 70 Japanese farmers who own in aggregate about 1,200 acres, of which a considerable part is still in timber or rough land and

²³³ Ibid, 66-67.

²³⁴ Iwata, 515.

²³⁵ Iwata, 515.

²³⁶ Ibid.

held under lease or on a share basis with the owners...about 850 acres. The reason why the Japanese holdings in Hood River are comparatively larger than those in other parts of the state is...that originally the Japanese were invited to come there by American landowners who were eager to see their land cleared and, as the result, in many case, Japanese were given the tracts they now hold in exchange for their labor. In certain districts in the Hood River Valley, Japanese were first into the parts where very few farms existed. The lands were mostly logged off or brush lands, and it was after years of incessant hard labor that they succeeded in clearing these tracts, and produced many farms, on which white farmers later settled and now outnumber the Japanese. In other parts of the state where Japanese own the farm land, large parts of such lands are still in timber or brush, which needs to be cleared by their labor.²³⁷

By 1916, many of these Issei had settled in the valley and begun to acquire land and set out strawberry plants as a preliminary step to establishing apple orchards; until 1919 this was the only fruit crop raised in Hood River Valley. A natural calamity in that year was responsible for the diversification of crops thereafter. A killer frost damaged the apple crop so badly that after 1919 pears and cherries were introduced, making the district less reliant on one variety of fruit. Hood River products were shipped aboard to England and France through an effective growers association, the Hood River Apple Growers Association, which in time made this region of Oregon universally known as a fruit-producing center.

The life of the pioneering Issei of Hood River Valley was far from easy, as a review of Issei interviews reveal.²³⁸ The land they acquired was frequently uncleared tracts of timberland. The Issei undertook the task of cutting down the trees on the hilly terrain, removing the stumps either with dynamite if they had the money to purchase the

²³⁷ Frank Davey, *Report on the Japanese Situation in Oregon*, (Salem, Or: State Printing Dept., 1920), 14.

²³⁸ See Tamura, and Ito, two published works that are comprised entirely of Issei accounts, Tamura specific to Hood River Valley, Ito includes many Hood River Valley residents in addition to others through the U.S. Iwata is less heavy on the Issei accounts, but occasionally has some.

explosives or digging them out manually, and burning the uprooted tress and brush. The Issei farm wives often joined their husbands in this arduous work. Sagorō Asai, who died in 1969, related that Issei women worked like slaves.²³⁹ The wife raised the children, often talking them out to work with her while she labored alongside her husband, came home to prepare meals, and attended to household chores until midnight after putting the children to bed. “Women even helped with the dynamiting,” Asai said.²⁴⁰ One Issei farmer’s wife of his remembrance could not afford to purchase shoes for herself so she wrapped her feet in gunny sacks and worked. With no money to obtain dynamite, she dug out stumps by hand. “Issei women laborer harder than the men,” Asai conceded, “and the Japanese men are thankful for their dedicated service although we do not express this orally.”²⁴¹ A frank commentary on Japanese familial relations.

Another Hood River Issei reminisced about the difficult earlier years. Hitoshi Nakamura recalled days when there was no money, meat, or fish n the house for the family.²⁴² A trip to Hood River by horse took almost an entire day so purchases of groceries when circumstances permitted were made once a week. Often his family ate only one meal a day. Nakamura described the first home he built, a hovel constructed of used lumber which was carried piecemeal up the hilly slope. “There were cracks in the walls, and in subzero weather one froze even while snuggled up to the stove,” the Issei

²³⁹ Iwata, 515.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 516.

²⁴² Iwata, 517.

related. "To keep body and soul together," he went on, "I planted peas and peddled them at two cents a pound. This was hardly enough to merit my buying rice for the family, so we ate the peas and when we had rice, added peas to augment it."²⁴³

Nakamura remembered well the depression years, and especially 1933, when there were no funds to purchase food for the New Year. "I went to the store in Hood River operated by the Yasuis to buy two tangerines to put on the God-shelf. When I asked for them, the clerk brought out two boxes of the fruit. I had to explain to him that my request was only two tangerines because that was all I could afford to buy."²⁴⁴

It is fascinating to review the stories of how Issei survived with what little they had. Sagorō Asai explained that in 1904 work shirts sold for 25 cents. When they wore out, the men made a patchwork garment out of the still-usable parts of several garments. Poverty is the mother of ingenuity.

JAPANESE UNSETTLEMENT IN OREGON

Japanese settlement in Oregon, at least for the first half of the 20th century, is a misnomer. It is well documented that they were solicited from Japan to work on the railroad among other occupations, came over after great scrutiny by both their motherland and immigration officials in this country, and ultimately were placed far and wide throughout the western states to perform the menial labor untenable for white settlers and left increasingly vacant due to the effectiveness of the Exclusion Act of 1882

²⁴³ Iwata, 517.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

of the Chinese. Still, this chapter sets out not to recount the settling of the Japanese in Oregon, but the unsettling experiences of the Japanese in Oregon, so as to provide framework for the furo, which while at first a cultural memory and habit, increasing served as a salve to both the body and soul, given the circumstances.

In 1909, Frederick George Young stated that Oregon had experience few of the “anti-Oriental” hostilities, common in Washington.²⁴⁵ Subsequent to that a study by Frank Davey in 1920, appointed under Governor Olcott, and graduate student Marjorie R. Stearns at the University of Oregon in 1937 and in 1966 Marvin G. Pursinger all came to the same conclusion: relations between the Nikkei and whites were, by and large, cordial.²⁴⁶ Yet on two levels, both the Anti-Japanese Legislation review by Daniel P. Johnson, and the subtext that Tanaka explored with the Toledo, Oregon incident, it is clear that relations, albeit mostly quiet in a physical respect, racial intolerance was more the rule than the exception during the first four decades leading up to the complete Nikkei deportation in 1942.²⁴⁷

Nationally speaking, six noteworthy events during the course of this time in Oregon against the Asian community include the Portland anti-Chinese riots in 1886; the 1898 railway riot northwest of Portland; the formation of the Hood River Anti-Alien League in 1919; the George Shima incident in Deschutes County; the passing of the

²⁴⁵ Frederick George Young, *Sources of the History of Oregon*, Eugene: University Press, 1910.

²⁴⁶ Stefan Tanaka, “The Toledo Incident,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, July, 1978, 116.

²⁴⁷ See bibliography and then Tanaka for a thorough review of the Toledo Incident of 1925, and Johnson for a review of the Anti-Japanese Legislation in Oregon from 1917-1923, though he carries it to 1949, when the Alien Land law was finally revoked.

Alien Land Law in 1923; and the Toledo incident of 1925. While not all violent, the center piece to each were the stereotypical anger felt toward this hungry and different immigrant group, arguing they were culturally “incompatible” and therefore un-American, working long hours for low wages, trying to buy land and settle down and start life in Oregon. Irony is, in the not too distant past, all “nativists,” had done the same, or their ancestors had, as newcomers in a new land, in a daily struggle for survival.

As if race and culture were not enough, domestic suspicions ran rampant with Japan’s expansionism in the post-war (WW I) period. The transfer of the U.S. naval forces to the Pacific reflected the government’s perception that Japan was a threat to national interests.²⁴⁸ Many envisioned a Japanese military takeover of the Hawaiian Islands and the entire Pacific Coast of the United States. In the midst of this climate many Americans – particularly those living on the Pacific Coast, where the Japanese presence was the greatest – feared a “peaceful” invasion of Japanese immigrants that would overrun the United States, absorbing land and jobs previously held by whites, even if they were foreign.²⁴⁹

In the case of Toledo, Oregon, for instance, the reality of recent white foreigners created a conflict in their own exclusionist policy. The town passed a resolution to protest the introduction and employment of Japanese, Chinese and other foreign labor. But by including the words “any other foreign labor” in their resolution, the townspeople

²⁴⁸ Daniel P. Johnson, *Anti-Japanese Legislation*, 183.

²⁴⁹ Ichihasi, *Japanese in the United States*, 214-24; Millis *Japanese Problem*, 250-275; Hosokawa, *Quiet Americans*, 107-8; Daniels, *Asian America*, 40; “Mastery of the Pacific,” *HRN*, July 2, 1919, 4; and “War with Japan,” *OV*, December 20, 1919, 478-81.

included not only nonwhite immigrants, but also white aliens. On May 12, the Business Men's League corrected the ambiguity of the resolution, introducing one small but significant change to exclude only "Japanese, Chinese, Negroes, Hindus, or any Oriental labor."²⁵⁰ Putting a decidedly racial point to it, the businessmen added, "many foreigners...are desirable citizens."²⁵¹ Color and culture clearly figured prominent.

This nativism reached across the communities, including in some cases, the seemingly last outpost of tolerance, the church. On Sunday, May 17, 1925 Frank Purnell, the state evangelist for the Christian churches of Oregon, gave a sermon detailing the four main ingredients of the 100% American. Initially, one might have seen a tolerant approach, as each were seemingly inclusive:

1. One must obey laws
2. Tolerant of other citizens regarding faith and opinions
3. There must be religious liberty
4. One must serve his country

Yet Purnell concludes his sermon seeing this country, not unlike many statesmen in the 1920s who knew their audience, though he may well have felt this intrinsically, through a myopic lens:

America has a great mission to perform in the world and to fulfill this mission it must remain a white-man's country. The soul of the Oriental is as good in the sight of God as that of the white-man, but in the providence of God this country is meant for the white-man.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ *Lincoln County Leader*, May 14, 1925.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Leader*, May 21, 1925.

In the midst of this overt racist sentiment, there were individuals who stood out, few and far between, but offered a degree of comfort for the modern historian that as much as there were white supremacists at every level, from Oregon Governor Walter Pierce (1923-27) on down, there were those who fought against it. And not always strictly on the grounds of the Japanese contribution to the economy, or relations with the Japanese government, or desire to leave the decision and policy up to the Federal, not state, government. Those who did not hide in these capacities, but genuinely acted in ways that, it would appear, were in the interest of a community and culture that should be full participants in this country of freedom.

C. D. Johnson is among those who may feel this way, though concrete evidence is difficult to provide given the posturing of historic records. President of Pacific Spruce Corporation (PSC) in Toledo, Johnson had worked hard to earn the community's respect. While a shrewd businessman, he also created amenities and opportunities for the town and its employees which demonstrated his keen interest in the mutual well-being of town-company relations. Yet when the green chain, the notoriously difficult role along the critical production line maintained a high vacancy, he sought to fill the void with labor that had proven successful elsewhere, Japanese labor. Despite the town's overwhelming desire to fight this, Johnson persisted. When told "if you're persistent in this, you won't have any mill, anymore than a boxcar," to which he replied, "Well – I can rebuild the mill."²⁵³

²⁵³ Tanaka, 120. Interview with Leo Martin, Newport, Oregon, Spring 1973.

Distilling whether this was financial, or personal, is difficult, though the loss of a mill versus the filling of a green line indicates it may have been arrogance and ignorance. Yet Johnson stood at the head of the pack of employees and town marshals to turn back the angry crowd of 75, 300 or 400, depending on which account you trust, seeking to literally oust the newly arrived 35 Japanese (men, women and children) from the little community Johnson had built for them. Johnson, however, failed to stop them, and they Japanese were forced onto various means of transport back to Portland after a mere 48 hours in Toledo.²⁵⁴

What is more, Johnson's effort started something greater and more important than his personal views of the Japanese's place in this country. The incident created national exposure, began a serious pro-Japanese sentiment in light of such mob-like and blatantly racial actions, but principally it lead to a successful lawsuit on behalf of the expelled, as reported, notably on the opposite coast, in the *New York Times*:

Undoubtedly the verdict will make for international comity in that it establishes in practical working force the rule that aliens – Japanese and other – legally in the country have rights which may not be nullified by the will of local populations.²⁵⁵

The Toledo incident even altered the tenor of the editorials in regional newspapers. The *Portland Telegram*, for example, in an editorial entitled "Toledo's Offense," condemned the violence against "peaceful, law-abiding Japanese workers who had been brought into the town with assurance of the equal protection of the laws of the

²⁵⁴ Tanaka, 121.

²⁵⁵ *New York Times*, August 8, 1926, 16.

United States...”²⁵⁶ Yet just a few years earlier, the *Telegram* had attacked rather than defended the Oregon Japanese: “Unless restricted and finally extinguished...[they] will wipe the American order off the Pacific Coast.”²⁵⁷

Senator W.W. Banks of Portland similarly led a lonely crusade for what he felt was right. House Bill 102 was introduced on January 20, 1921, which would have prohibited aliens ineligible for citizenship, or corporations made up a of a majority of such aliens, from owning or leasing land. Needless to say it would have been crushing, enough so that U.S. Senator Charles McNary of Oregon sent a telegraph to every member of house requesting that they postpone consideration indefinitely, in light of newly elected President Harding and letting his administration handle such matters.

Still, the bill passed decisively, and the senate was left with the decision. After furious debate, Sen. Banks moved that it be postponed indefinitely.²⁵⁸ The motion was approved, and the prospect of passing an alien land law thus ended for the 1921 session. Banks paid a heavy price for his efforts to stop the bill: He was defeated in the Republican primary in his Portland district the following year.²⁵⁹ Oddly enough, where many senators actions would have been grounded in matters like McNary’s warning, Japanese-American relations, or even the lobbying of the Portland Chamber of Commerce who saw the Japanese trade and community as vital to its business interests,

²⁵⁶ Portland *Telegram*, “Toledo’s Offense,” July 31, 1925, 6.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, “The Japanese Among Us,” April 11, 1922, 6.

²⁵⁸ *Hood River News*, February 24, 1921.

²⁵⁹ *Oregon Voter*, November 18, 1922, 244.

Mr. Banks appeared to have acted less on posture and more on belief. Why would Banks have risked his political career to oppose anti-Japanese legislation? Four of the eight sponsors of the bill were from Portland, thus making it unlikely to be a trade or relations matter necessarily. His record of consistently fighting the Oregon senate to turn back anti-Japanese legislation at the apparent cost of his career indicates that principled senators were among the lot.

The Methodist Church also consistently stood on the side of the Japanese, starting from the very beginning when they came off the boat. The mission and dormitory in Portland was a safe haven for the lonely, disoriented young Japanese immigrants, most of whom knew neither the language nor the customs of their new country. Here might be the only place they could find a friendly white face, a person who could help them understand and cope with the challenges they faced. Here also they could find clean and inexpensive housing and help in securing employment. And here they were exposed to the Methodists' moral guidance and religious teaching, and many as a result, converted to Christianity at this point in their lives.²⁶⁰

While the vast majority of Issei laborers kept the faith of their homeland, a number of the most successful Japanese immigrants left Buddhism behind. Their acceptance of a western faith seemed to take the edge off their foreignness, making them more "palatable" to the dominant white protestant society.

By far the single most damaging piece of legislation to pass was the Alien Land Law, and while in practice it had little effect, in principle, it put Oregon on the anti-alien

²⁶⁰ Kessler, 156.

map. The victory of governor Walter Pierce over incumbent Ben Olcott in the gubernatorial race demonstrated the coming of a xenophobic era for Oregon. Pierce had publicly supported the compulsory school bill, aimed primarily at Catholic parochial schools spearheaded by the KKK. Pierce received active support of the Klan, while Olcott had publicly denounced the Klan and the school bill, and had attempted a middle ground with the Japanese question, though his commissioned survey of the Japanese in 1920 proved to be one of the great resources for historians of that era and indication that he wanted to know their role in Oregon better empirically, not based on hysteria.²⁶¹

Governor Pierce had strongly favored the passage of an alien land law while he served as a state senator, and he reaffirmed his support for such a law during his campaign for governor. Then, in his opening message to the legislature, he called for "enactment of a law prohibiting selling or leasing of land...to Mongolians."²⁶² Members of the house responded with H.B. 34, introduced on January 10, 1923, which intended to prevent aliens ineligible to citizenship from holding any interest in real property in Oregon.

Debate ensued for weeks, until Representative L.N. Blowers of Hood River summed up the house judiciary committee's majority opinion: "Gentlemen, there are other considerations in this matter than dollars and cents [reference to Portland Chamber of Commerce's sizable opposition]. All I have heard is the almighty dollar. I wish

²⁶¹ *Oregon Voter*, May 27, 1922, 4.

²⁶² *Oregon Voter*, January 15, 1923, 4.

Commodore Perry had stayed home and minded his own business – we would all be better off...Boys, Hood River is behind your bill.”²⁶³

On January 29, 1923, the house judiciary committee returned the bill to the full house with a recommendation for passage.²⁶⁴ Subsequent debate on this and related measures reinforce the impression gained from earlier debates: The “Japanese question” had become an issue that posed economic considerations against so-called “American values.”

During the debate in the full house only Representative D. E. Fletcher of Independence spoke strongly in opposition to the bill, and only because he believed the Japanese were vital to specific industries whose jobs were disdained by white workers. The bill passed the house, with Fletcher casting the lone dissenting vote. Then on February 14th, 1923, the senate voted unanimously in favor of the bill, and on February 16 the legislature received work that the Governor had approved and signed it. The law would take effect on May 25, 1923.²⁶⁵

The passage of anti-Japanese legislation in 1923 indicated that economic and national political considerations had finally been outweighed the perception that the Japanese were a threat to American values. Although these economic and national considerations had been decisive in delaying passage of discriminatory legislation for years, nativist feelings were now at a peak in the state and the time was ripe for passage.

²⁶³ *Hood River News*, February 2, 1923, 4.

²⁶⁴ *Oregon Voter*, February 23, 1923, 5.

²⁶⁵ “Debate on the Anti-Jap Bill,” *Oregon Voter*, February 10, 1923, 194-98.

After all, Oregonians, prodded by Klan-supported elected officials, had only months earlier voted to ban private schools as a threat to American values.

The other major blow in the 1920s in Oregon and nationally to the Japanese community was the 1924 Immigration Act, which was designed specifically to regulate the racial composition of the United States, set ceilings on all immigration, using 1890 as a base year thus discriminating against immigration from Asia, since many of these immigrants had entered the United States after the base year. The act also prohibited the immigration of aliens ineligible for citizenship. The November 13, 1922, Supreme Court decision in *Ozawa v. United States* had placed Japanese aliens in that category.²⁶⁶

Before the *Ozawa* decision, many Japanese aliens had held out hope that they might be naturalized citizens like other immigrants. The ruling deepened the humiliation of the Japanese and added to their disillusionment about their role in American society. As a nation, Japan regarded this complete exclusion of further Japanese immigration to the United States as an unforgivable insult, and relations between the two countries deteriorated, as some believe, irreconcilably.²⁶⁷

This overarching undercurrent in Japanese settlement along the Pacific coast provided a continual sense of the Nikkei being different, unwanted and misplaced. Across the income spectrum, from George Shima, one of the leading Japanese American citizens in the country both on account of wealth and stature, down to the recently arrived

²⁶⁶ *Takao Ozawa v. United States*; 260, U.S. 178, 1922. The Supreme Court's decision was based solely on race; Ozawa was, in all other respects, fully qualified for naturalization.

²⁶⁷ Ichioka, 244-54..

wage earner picking strawberries, “acceptable” adaptation was near impossible due to their physical and cultural make-up.²⁶⁸

The three chief reasons the Japanese were purportedly “rejected” were as follows:

1. The Japanese never adapted themselves to the American manners and customs, and never assimilated with the Americans.
2. They were diligent and worked at low wages, so the white laborers lost their jobs
3. They saved money and sent it to their families in Japan, or took it home: that is, they never enriched America

In reality, the Japanese were adopting themselves increasingly by the day, both in words (language) and in practice. In a 1920 report, published in “Resident Orientals on the Pacific Coast of America: Their Legal and Economic Status,” an Issei farmer from California bears witness to this:

I am a farmer who has devoted his life to the development of the delta district of the Sacramento Valley...We live here. We cast our lot with California. We are drifting farther and farther away from the traditions and ideas of our native country. Our sons and daughters do not know them at all. They do not know them at all. They do not care to know them. They regard America as their home.²⁶⁹

As he bears witness to a changing dynamic, off-spring who speak little Japanese, in American clothing and absorbing American ideals, and how his own fortune is wedded to California where he and his family toil, making likely a significant impact on local economy and productivity of the land and community. In another example, it is plain to

²⁶⁸ Toshio Yoshimura, *George Shima: Potato King and Lover of Chinese Classics*, (Fukushima: Taiseido, 1981), 26.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 28.

see, as they are “unconsciously adapt[ing] ourselves to the ideals and manners and customs of our adopted country...we no longer entertain the slightest desire to return to our native country.”²⁷⁰ As the tide turned for this, and many farmers and workers in the United States, they were increasingly dedicated to and sacrificial for the United States, both as a reflection of their cultural upbringing, but equally in an effort to demonstrate their filial devotion.

As Issei were having children, their connection to the soil became more than a financial stake, but a stake in raising native born, American children of Japanese descent. One mother clearly indicates what her intent was for her children, with hope for their achieving a kind of integration she could never know, “a son was born to us, and two years later, a daughter. My goal was to rear them to be useful citizens of this country. This was my great hope.”²⁷¹

When the third Liberty Loan during World War I was issued, for instance, the newly arrived and generally cash poor Japanese in California contributed \$761,000. To the fourth Liberty Loan there contributed \$1,200,00.²⁷² Nearly each and every Japanese family in some counties were members of the American Red Cross.²⁷³ In addition to this commitment, the Japanese communities also remained relatively subdued with respect to

²⁷⁰ Yoshimura, 28. Later on in this biography of Shima, when reviewing the reasons for his return to Japan in 1926 (he died just before departing), was to have his children, who had never been before, “see Japan and learn about Japanese things.” This sentiment was echoed in many of the Nisei who recall why their families returned – a frequent WW II inquiry, and an answer met with great suspicion.

²⁷¹ Iwatsuki, “The Making of an American,” 520.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Yoshimura, 27.

the pressures of racist and nativist groups, not permitting any show of anger or resentment.

Despite hostility, this same Sacramento Valley farmer spoke in words and sentiment that likely echoed that of the farmers in Hood River Valley:

To a practical farmer, who has all his life been guided by horse sense and little else, it would seem that there should be and is a way to adjust the Japanese question without stirring up bad blood everywhere by unnecessary agitation. The Japanese...have not lost their heads. They are calm and quiet, and are willing to listen to any reasonable proposition for readjustment...the World is entering upon a new age, in which the idea of just and fair playing is going to be the dominant note in human dealings...[otherwise] all the sacrifices of the late war have been in vain.²⁷⁴

Plainly spoken and felt, but sadly that reality had many years ahead of it in this country. On September 18, 1925, the Joint Council of Japanese on the Pacific Coast promulgated a message that the Japanese in America would change their traditional ways of living, observe American laws and regulations, follow American's good customs, and do their best to cultivate personal perfection and character.²⁷⁵ There is this consistent and constant effort being undertaken, a deliberate one, to assimilate, acculturate, to make firm resolutions to plant these deep roots into American soil. Not in a spirit of anger or offense, but in a spirit of acceptance of the charges against them, and a genuine offer to "cultivate personal perfection and character." They are essentially offering to revoke their inherent persona in favor of one that is more generally acceptable by society – submission to acceptance at the highest level. And yet what could not be erased or removed was their skin color, and in many ways, their cultural make-up, at least not

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 28-29.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 29.

overnight. And at its root, those inherent cultural and racial differences forever set the Nikkei apart.

When it came to wages and jobs, the Caucasian position was one of jealousy. Despite the claims contrary, the booming agricultural business of the west could not be supported by white labor alone. Foreign labor, both for the scale of work demanded, and often the positions which were most arduous and thus frequently vacant, required those hungry and willing enough to take them on. In Toledo, for instance, the sole purpose in importing Japanese labor was centered on filling in the critical but oft vacant position on the "green chain." A revolving chain carried green lumber away from the saws. Workers had to remove the lumber from the chain and pile it according to size and grade. Given the weight and size of this green lumber, not to mention the rapidity it came down the chain, it was prone to rapid turnover and high absentee rate.

Yet the Japanese were diligent workers, willing to do nearly anything to stake a place in this country, and many mills in Oregon, such as the West Coast Lumber Company in Linnton and the Westport Lumber Company in Westport were using Japanese labor on green chains because of the attrition rates of white laborers.²⁷⁶

This is concurrently found to be the case across the West coast. J.D. Mackenzie, head of the Bureau of Labor in the State Government of California reported in "A Survey Report on the Japanese Agricultural Laborers in California,"

[Japanese laborers] are arduous and diligent workers. They purchase the waste and cheap lands given up by the Americans, cultivate them by doing their best,

²⁷⁶ *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, July 16, 1925 (Ides Report).

and build their houses in order to reside there permanently. The prices of such lands purchased by Japanese farmers are never lowered but rather elevated.²⁷⁷

Oregonians, however, in particular white residents of Hood River County, joined in the racial hysteria directed against the Japanese and their landholdings. After a number of valley ranchers and other residents met “to discuss the rapidly increasing purchases of land by Japanese here,” the group formed the Anti-Alien Association and, by unanimous vote, passed the following resolutions: “That American is for Americans; That no child born in this country should become a citizen unless his parents belong to a race eligible under the constitution of the United States; That no one but a natural born...or fully naturalized citizen be allowed to own or lease land.”²⁷⁸ Thereby the Hood River Anti-Alien Association was devoted to the prohibition of landholding, via purchase or lease, by Japanese aliens. More ominously, however, the group sought to limit the constitutional rights of certain citizens on the basis of race. Thus the nativist ideals of “100 percent American” were reflected in the association’s resolve to preserve “America for Americans.”

Other groups in Hood River, notably the American Legion, also espoused anti-Japanese ideas. In 1919 the Hood River American Legion post voted to oppose further sales or leases of land to Japanese, and to support a constitutional amendment barring American-born children of Japanese residents from citizenship. The group

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 30-31.

²⁷⁸ “Japanese Buy More Property,” *Hood River News*, July 30, 1919, 1.

unconvincingly claimed that its actions were not directed against Japanese then residing in the valley but rather sought to prevent further Japanese incursions.²⁷⁹

Editorials published in late 1919 in Hood River, as well as other community newspapers, outlined many of the anti-Japanese fears harbored by the majority population: The valley was in serious danger of falling into alien hands; the Japanese held unfair advantage over whites because of their willingness and ability to work longer hours; because of their low standard of living, the Japanese could pay more than average market price for land; the Japanese, interested only in profiting sufficiently to enable their return to Japan, had no commitment to the land; and the Japanese were unassimilable, had not wish to become Americans, and “failed to exhibit those qualities which are required by the majority...They refuse to live up to the standard which is required of Americans.”²⁸⁰ The *Oregon Voter*, in stating its support for anti-Japanese legislation, warned that if Japanese immigration were not checked, the West Coast would be vulnerable to race problems similar to those in the South.²⁸¹

The Japanese in Hood River were quick to respond. In the week following the formation of the Anti-Alien Association, they held their own meeting, attended by almost every Japanese landowner in the valley as well as by other Japanese residents. They tried to refute the charge that there had been a huge influx of Japanese aliens to the valley, and they pointed out that most land recently acquired by Japanese had been previously owned

²⁷⁹ “Japanese Discuss Valley Situation,” *Hood River News*, September 17, 1919, 1.

²⁸⁰ “Japanese Buying Land,” *Oregon Voter*, November 1, 1919, 172-173.

²⁸¹ “Japanese Buying Land,” 172-73.

or leased by Japanese. Moreover, they defended themselves by asserting that it was only natural that they “seek to own a piece of land with the soil of which they were acquainted.”²⁸²

Attempting to demonstrate their commitment to the valley, the Hood River Japanese furthermore resolved to improve the conditions and appearance of their homes, thereby bringing their community’s standards up to those of their non-Japanese neighbors. Many Japanese had purchased raw stumpland in the valley and had invested considerable time and money in cultivating it, prompting the Hood River Japanese spokesman, Masuo Yasui, to argue that the Japanese deserved praise for their hard work, and could not be blamed if they had “similar desires as...Americans to own a piece of land in the valley that all appreciate.”²⁸³

Given the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in the first decades of the twentieth century, the move toward anti-Japanese legislation in Oregon was a predictable development. The initial effort to enact anti-Japanese legislation in Oregon took place in 1917. State Senator George Wilbur of Hood River, arguing that legislation was necessary because the Japanese were acquiring large real estate holdings in the United States, introduced Senate Bill 61 on January 15.²⁸⁴ Intended to prevent further acquisitions of land by Japanese aliens, S.B. 61 was similar to the 1913 California Alien

²⁸² Johnson, 186.

²⁸³ “Japan Discusses,” 1; “Japanese Plan Improvements, Yasui,” *Hood River Gazette*, September 18, 1919, 1. Although the Hood River press was often hostile to the Japanese, news of that community, such as the meeting that followed formation of the Anti-Alien Association, was reported in a reasonably balanced and thorough way.

²⁸⁴ State of Oregon, regular session, *Journal of the Senate and House*, Salem, OR, 1917, 13.

Land Law. When the bill was referred to the senate judiciary committee, of which Wilbur was a member, all six other committee members opposed it. On February 2 the committee permitted Wilbur "to withdraw the bill by unanimous consent," allowing the legislation's author to avoid the committee's unfavorable recommendation.²⁸⁵ An interesting benchmark as to the anti-Japanese feelings in Hood River versus the balance of the state. This disparity of feeling was similarly held by senator Frank Davey, who in a state-wide survey requested by Governor Olcott, described the tension as "more acute in Hood River than in any other place in Oregon."²⁸⁶

Truly one of the great ironies in this racist time was the similar experience the non-Japanese community experienced in the recent past. As honored in Hood River, the "Pioneer Woman" by Aatto Annala, a Finnish immigrant, stood to symbolize strength through the "hardship and toil of the pioneers in a strange new country."²⁸⁷ For those who left secure, familiar homes in the East along the arduous path West, their struggle will never be forgotten. It is, however, the struggle and hardship of those who left familiar homes in the Far East, to settle in a strange, new country, that are seemingly less heralded, and for their contribution to this country and its growth, their story and life is ripe for further understanding, and preservation, beyond the remarkable stories of the Issei.

²⁸⁵ *Journals*, 1917, 104, 157; and State of Oregon, regular session, *Journals of the Senate and House*, Salem, Oregon, 1917, 13.

²⁸⁶ Davey, 7.

²⁸⁷ Hood River Historical Society, *History of Hood River County*, Vol. 1, 1982, p. 2.

ETHNIC COOPERATIVISM

Mutual support was the new social norm on which Japanese immigrants built their families, communities and industries. Commercial and agricultural alliances, as well as individual diligence and persistence, were the best resources that the Issei had to achieve social and economic advancement in Oregon. In Portland, Japanese merchants formed the Hotel Owners' Union, the Grocery Association and the Laundry Union. Complying with the regulations and labor conditions set by the mainstream unions, these Japanese unions maintained good relations with the white business community, which promoted a favorable commercial environment in Portland.²⁸⁸

Issei farmers organized cooperative organizations which assumed a variety of roles ranging from supplying farm necessities to financing loans and from packing to collecting marketing.²⁸⁹ A number of Japanese growers' guilds were formed specializing in the production of cauliflower, green peas, strawberries, celery and asparagus.²⁹⁰ Based on mutual cooperation, Japanese farmers produced 90 percent of the state's cauliflower and broccoli, 75 percent of the celery, 60 percent of the green peas, and 45 percent of the asparagus by 1941.²⁹¹

²⁸⁸ Yasui, 249.

²⁸⁹ Yasui, 250. The farmers associations included the Oregon Cauliflower Growers Association, the Portland Cauliflower Growers Association, the Oregon Pea Growers Association, the Oregon Celery Growers Association, and the Oregon Strawberry Growers Association. Some of these had their own cold storage and packing facilities.

²⁹⁰ Namely in Portland vicinity, Hood River and Lake Labish, in Salem.

²⁹¹ Marvin G. Pursinger, "Oregon's Japanese in World War II, A History of Compulsory Relocation," Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1961, 64.

Community institutions constituted another layer of sociocultural evolution in Japanese immigrant society. In order to meet the needs of the Issei, many organizations appeared within Japanese communities. They provided the residents with vital services ranging from administrative to religious and recreational to economic. First and most importantly, each Japanese settlement had a Japanese association.²⁹² The Japanese Association of Oregon in Portland functioned as a central organization, encompassing a number of local associations in Oregon, Idaho and Wyoming. In a sense, the network of local associations around this central body was the basis of community identity and solidarity among the Oregon Japanese. That network also enabled the associations to become the community spokespersons, representing the best interests of the immigrants to the dominant society and even to the Japanese government.

The Japanese associations were crucial in the everyday life of the Issei. Under the Gentlemen's Agreement, if an immigrant wanted to re-enter the country and/or to summon his family members, he had to prove, with an official certificate issued by the Japanese Consulate that he was a bona fide resident who had been in the United States prior to 1908. To obtain a certificate, the immigrant applied to his local association. After checking the applicant's data, the association endorsed the application before the Japanese Consulate in Portland issued the appropriate certificate.²⁹³ In the same way,

²⁹² In Oregon, there were local Japanese associations or equivalents in the communities of Montavilla, Gresham-Troutdale, Columbia Boulevard, Sherwood, Banks, Clackamas, Dee, Hood River, The Dalles, Baker, Independence, and Medford.

²⁹³ Yasui, 250.

local Japanese associations helped Issei men obtain the certificates they needed to defer Japanese military service every year.

Other community institutions included Japanese Christian churches, Buddhist churches/temples and prefectural associations. All these organizations helped the Oregon Japanese to adapt to the new environment by satisfying their differing needs. Various cultural and sports groups, such as the *haiku* and *tanka* poetry societies and Japanese baseball leagues, added creative and recreational elements, both integral to the Japanese experience previously.²⁹⁴ Within the close knit community, they also had their own newspaper. Established in 1904, the *Oshu Nippo* was a prime source of information for both Portland residents and those in outlying areas of Oregon and Idaho. Although the Oregon Japanese were dispersed widely throughout the state, they were well informed of what was going on in their community.

NAKAMA

In order to understand this conceptual idea of fraternal connectedness, as it relates to the Issei, it is necessary to also look at the nature of cooperation practiced in rural Japan in the late nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century.²⁹⁵

The feudal regime under the Tokugawa Shogunate, which was established at the beginning of the seventeenth century, brought new stability to a society accustomed to

²⁹⁴ Baseball was introduced in Japan in the late 19th century, well ahead of the Issei arrival.

²⁹⁵ Three references aided in this research, in particular G.M. Fisher, "The Cooperative Movement in Japan," *Pacific Affairs*, 11 (1938), 478-491, and the books, K. Ogata, *The Co-operative Movement in Japan*, (London: P.S. King & Son, 1923) and T.R.H. Havens, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan, Agrarian Nationalism, 187-1940*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

warfare and social disorder. The feudal system, with its agricultural base, had supported local clans as well as the central government. Farmers were bound to their land to produce staple foods for their own needs and for the payment of taxes to feudal clans. The culturally cohesive characteristics of rural Japan developed under this long-lived and strong feudal regime. Each village was governed by local officials, *nanushi* or *shoya*, and *kumigashira* (head of group) while villagers were under the *goningumi* (neighborhood group of five) system. This *gonigumi*, in which five households had joint responsibilities, imposed payment of taxes and a prohibition against practicing Christianity. The group also functioned as a mutual help and assistance unit in the village. Another type of control was *teraukeseido* in which commoners were required to be registered at a local Buddhist temple. This system, originally an anti-Christianity measure, also functioned to handle census registration.

The Japanese position in American rural society before World War II contrasted sharply with that of European immigrants. The latter, especially those from northwestern Europe, were valued as superior farmers who, in helping settle the American frontier, would leave a constructive legacy. The Japanese, late comers in America's immigration history, began to arrive on the West Coast in the late 19th century after the Chinese exclusion controversy. But the mass immigration movement came later, after the turn of the century. They were welcomed as farm laborers in Hawaii's sugar plantations as well as in Washington, Oregon and California's expanding agricultural industries. When the immigrant Japanese started to climb the agricultural ladder, a perceived threat to the Anglo majority, they immediately became victims of anti-Japanese sentiment, agitation

and restrictive legislation. The Japanese were excluded from many white-established organizations, both in rural and urban areas.²⁹⁶ Such exclusion stimulated the development of ethnic cooperativism among the Japanese immigrants in every phase of their life and economy. Clearly under such conditions they felt more comfortable with their own kind, maintaining cultural ties and a mutual trust as well as a common language of communication.²⁹⁷

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – HOOD RIVER COUNTY

Today, the rolling hillsides of Hood River Valley emits an aura of tranquility and lushness, yet it also provides the mix of beauty and function that accompany the hills of Tuscany, with orchards of fruit trees in ceaseless rows, giant aging barns which are falling back into the earth, and the occasional farm stand with a cash box unattended.

Off in the distance to the south stands the immutable Mt. Hood, mostly snow-capped and just over 11,200 feet, it dominates the southern viewscape. To the north, there is Mt. Adams, which has an equally impressive vertical posture, completely covered in snow. With the rushing Hood River, and the more majestic cavernous setting of the Columbia River, it is not difficult to surmise the ease with which The Commercial Club, the early 20th century equivalent to the Chamber of Commerce, solicited wealthy easterners to consider setting up a summer “cottage” in Hood River:

²⁹⁶ John Modell, “Class or Ethnic Solidarity: The Japanese American Company Union,” *Pacific Historical Review* 38 (1969) : 193-207; Stephen S. Fugita, “A Perceived Ethnic Factor in California’s Farm Labor Conflict: The Nisei Farmers League,” *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* 1 (1978), 51.

²⁹⁷ Noritaka Yagasaki, “Ethnic Cooperativism and Immigrant Agriculture; a study of Japanese floriculture and truck farming in California,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1982), 6-7.

Hood River Valley is a gem all by itself. It lies in the northwestern part of Wasco county, 23 miles west of the The Dalles, the county seat, and 66 miles east of Portland, on the line for the O.R. & N.R.R., the valley extending to the Columbia river on the north...the tillable land will reach 50,000 acres, about one-fourth of which is in cultivation... Nowhere else has there been a spot on earth found where the apple, cherry and strawberry are grown, that can approach the matchless size, flavor and color of these fruits as sent out over the country from Hood River.²⁹⁸

On the surface, the architecture of the Hood River Valley, and that of the City of Hood River, would reflect that of a small-scale farming community with a small urban center for commerce. In the City center, there are 12 blocks of significant commercial density, surrounded by residential and industrial buildings. With a range of buildings in age and scale, the predominance of the brick and stick 2-4 story buildings are built within a thirty year range of 1900 to 1930.²⁹⁹ There are secondary commercial areas in the Valley, namely in the outlying agricultural and logging communities of Dee, Parkdale, Oak Grove, Odell and Pinegrove, and a secondary commercial center in Hood River, elevated from the lower blocks and thus called "The Heights."³⁰⁰ Yet like many agricultural communities in Oregon at that time like The Dalles or Gresham, there was a distinctive minority community present: Asians.

In Hood River, this evolved over time, in minority and capacity. Beginning in the late 1880s, through the early 1900s, the Chinese operated several businesses in the City of Hood River.³⁰¹ Connected with their work on the Oregon Short Line railroad,

²⁹⁸ Hood River Commercial Club, promotional brochure, undated (c. 1910), 2.

²⁹⁹ Howard Davis, *Building at the End of the Trail*, (S.l. : s.n. 1997), 2.4.6.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, .2.4.4.

³⁰¹ Tamura, 44.

businesses were relatively limited, as least those recorded, in the downtown. Laundry and restaurants were noted, and the occasional Chinese name appeared in the city directory over that time, but nothing compared to their presence in The Dalles, for instance.³⁰² Yet conversely, as the Chinese presence faded from historical record, the Japanese began to appear.

The Chinese largely arrived in the Oregon Territory in the early 1850s. Most of the immigrants were young, male farmers from the Kwangtung (now known as the Canton) province of southeastern China. Many Chinese from this area lived in poverty because of war, famine, and overpopulation, and thus were eager to be recruited by the railroad companies who took advantage of Chinese willingness to work long hours for relatively little pay. Wasco County, the predecessor to Hood River County, when it was subdivided into its own county in 1908, attracted many Chinese laborers in the 1880s to work on the construction of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company along the Columbia River. The U.S. Census reveals that in 1870, 27 Chinese lived in Wasco County; by 1880, there were 1,158.³⁰³

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had curtailed the West Coast supply of Chinese laborers. By 1897, when the Alaska gold rush drained the Northwest of laborers, the transcontinental railroads began to solicit Japanese workers as an inexpensive labor force.³⁰⁴ As a result, the number of Issei in the United States increased from 2,039 in

³⁰² Ibid, 45.

³⁰³ Ibid, 56

³⁰⁴ Robert Wilson and Bill Hosokawa, *East to America*, (New York: Morrow, 1980), 116.

1890 to 24,326 in 1900 and 72,157 by 1910.³⁰⁵ In Oregon, the numbers grew from 25 in 1890 to 2,501 in 1900 and 3,418 by 1910, or less than 5 percent of the Japanese population in the United States.³⁰⁶

Hood River Valley maintained a population between 300 and 500 from 1910 to 1942, and during that time several businesses in support of this community appeared, specifically related to Japanese goods, services and food. Industrial and entrepreneurial, Matsuo Yasui was a leader among the minority businesses, providing loans where he could or supplies to these merchants, and together they formed a few pockets of Japanese mercantile. Outlined in the Sanborn are the locations of these businesses over time. At its epicenter, in its prime between 1904-1941, 1st and Oak Street, there was a close a feel to a *Nihonmachi*, a Japantown, as one could get in a small town. There was the Oriental Café, situated in the Mt. Hood Hotel Annex. There was Kuga's Noodle Factory, which produced Japanese foodstuff kitty corner from the Annex.

Without photographs of these buildings outside the Yasui Bros store, it is not possible to speculate whether these incorporated any design characteristics other than the typical commercial storefront form, yet this we know: The Yasui Bros, easily the largest and most prominent of the Japanese merchants, built a brick, two-store building from scratch in 1930. Yet it would be a stretch to ascribe any of its design or layout to be anything other than prototypical commercial design for that period, which, conversely, may have been by design.

³⁰⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Printing Office, 1920.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

As the 1930s decade of poverty came to a close, the 1940s were a signal to many of a chance to finally set some permanent stakes down. Through thrift and hard work, many were now seeing success in the farming, and life for the Issei families in the Hood River Valley had begun to push its way through the dirt and was ready to flower:

My husband's orchard developed into a splendid orchard [third try], the crop increasing year after year. Now, I thought happily, we could build the ideal house that we have been dreaming of for so long, with a wide lawn bordered with flowers. The fish pond was completed; odd-shaped rocks served as ornaments here and there, and in the house lovely furniture that I had wanted for so long was placed, one piece of furniture at a time... "This is our permanent home," I thought.³⁰⁷

The lawn bordered with flowers and the fish pond and rock garden offer an interesting mix of American dreams and Japanese culture, not unlike the Issei. Yet the country where the Issei were born would shortly be at war with the country their children were born, and that would forever derail that glimpse of 'normalcy' which many felt they were finally going to achieve.

³⁰⁷ Iwatsuki, "The Making of an American," 525.

CHAPTER 6: THE FAMILY FURO IN THE UNITED STATES AND HOOD RIVER COUNTY

ADVENT OF FURO

While the furo was a fixture in transient working camps as much as permanent farm settlements, they were clearly more likely to be permanent and established in the latter example. Statistics reveal that in the 1920s the Japanese in Hood River increasingly abandoned wage labor in favor of private agricultural entrepreneurship. In the 1920 Oregon Bureau of Labor reported that of 196 adult Japanese males in Hood River County, all but 5 were employed as wage laborers. The Japanese population also included 81 adult females, all married, and 106 children, 29 of whom were born in 1919. In 1922, the same bureau reported 202 adult males, of who 71 were now farming land either owned or leased by them. By 1924, 85 percent of adult Japanese males in Hood River County were actively engaged in agriculture, with about 60 of that total owning or leasing their own land. Additionally, there were 92 adult females, all but 2 were married, and there were 233 children under the age of sixteen.³⁰⁸

As Hubka demonstrates in his evaluation of the connected farm house in New England, one of the most effective ways to approach this problem of cultural and architectural development, in this case the furo in the Nikkei communities in Hood River County, is to identify the plurality of ideas that surround the remaking of any cultural

³⁰⁸ *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspector of Factories and Workshops of the State of Oregon*, 1921, Salem, OR, 1920, 10-11; *Tenth Biennial Report and Industrial Directory of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspector of Factories and Workshops of the State of Oregon*, 1923, Salem, OR 1922, 60-61.

object in a given context – What choices did they have? As a way of enlarging upon the more easily documented architectural question, What choices did they make? In Hood River Country, as with elsewhere, the Japanese-American families had limited financial resources, time and access to materials. Yet within that context, the creation and need of a furo clearly outweighed the common practice of bathing in a washbasin in the kitchen with hot water from the stove. It was essentially non-negotiable, where other traditions, including certain foods, clothing, even religious orientation, were subject to change due to dominant culture, availability and limited resources.

The effort to continue this furo tradition should not be romanticized or mistaken for antiquarianism. The furo served a legitimate function as a purpose for cleansing and restoring the daily-worn body, and while a white farmer of that era might have considered such routine bathing overkill, reports from the field would indicate that not only were the Japanese cleaner, but well presented, professional and by and large, were among the most peaceful and law-abiding immigrants.³⁰⁹ It would seem the furo was part of a general attitude: clean body, spirit and mind.

The advent of the furo can also be seen in a light that might have had not relation to its previous incarnation in Japan, unintentional though this result may be. The furo operated, especially for families in Hood River County, as a private experience, apart from the chaos, distraction and noise of life. That noise came in the form of racial and financial pressures, societal pressures to return to Japan with money and success, but most of all it was an isolated place where the mind could relax, wander, and be at peace.

³⁰⁹ State Board of Control, *California and the Oriental*, (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 59.

While “family” in spirit, and often taken by the youngest with a parent, it was truly a “personal” soak, in that the accommodation and sequence included one family member at time.

Much in the same way the mid-century juke joints of the Mississippi River Delta were seen as an escape, do as you please, without the threat of being stifled or stopped, the furo was wholly traditional, and with closed eyes, you could be whisked back to a nostalgic memory of home.³¹⁰ While not extraordinary in construction, they hold a key story in the evolution of the Japanese American history and landscape.

Architecturally speaking, the furo is best understood through **Illustration 1** on the next page from an upcoming work by historian Dr. Kingston Wm. Heath, entitled “Dynamics that Shape Vernacular Form.” In this structural model, shown on the next page, Heath illustrates how forms evolve in an iterative basis. In our case, the furo is largely a folk form, which is transferred to as a set of conventions that many of the Issei knew from personal experience. When it was reincarnated in the United States, it entered the regional filter based on climate, materials available, etc. After the filtering, the furo of Hood River County became a cultural syncretic response: a product of a place, of a people, by a people.³¹¹ While similar and nearly transplanted from the Japanese version, the American furo became less refined architecturally, though nearly identical experientially.

³¹⁰ Jennifer Nardone, “Roomful of Blues: Jukejoints and the cultural landscape of the Mississippi Delta,” (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1997), 169.

³¹¹ Heath (need to procure reference from Kingston)

DYNAMICS THAT SHAPE VERNACULAR FORM (A STRUCTURAL MODEL)

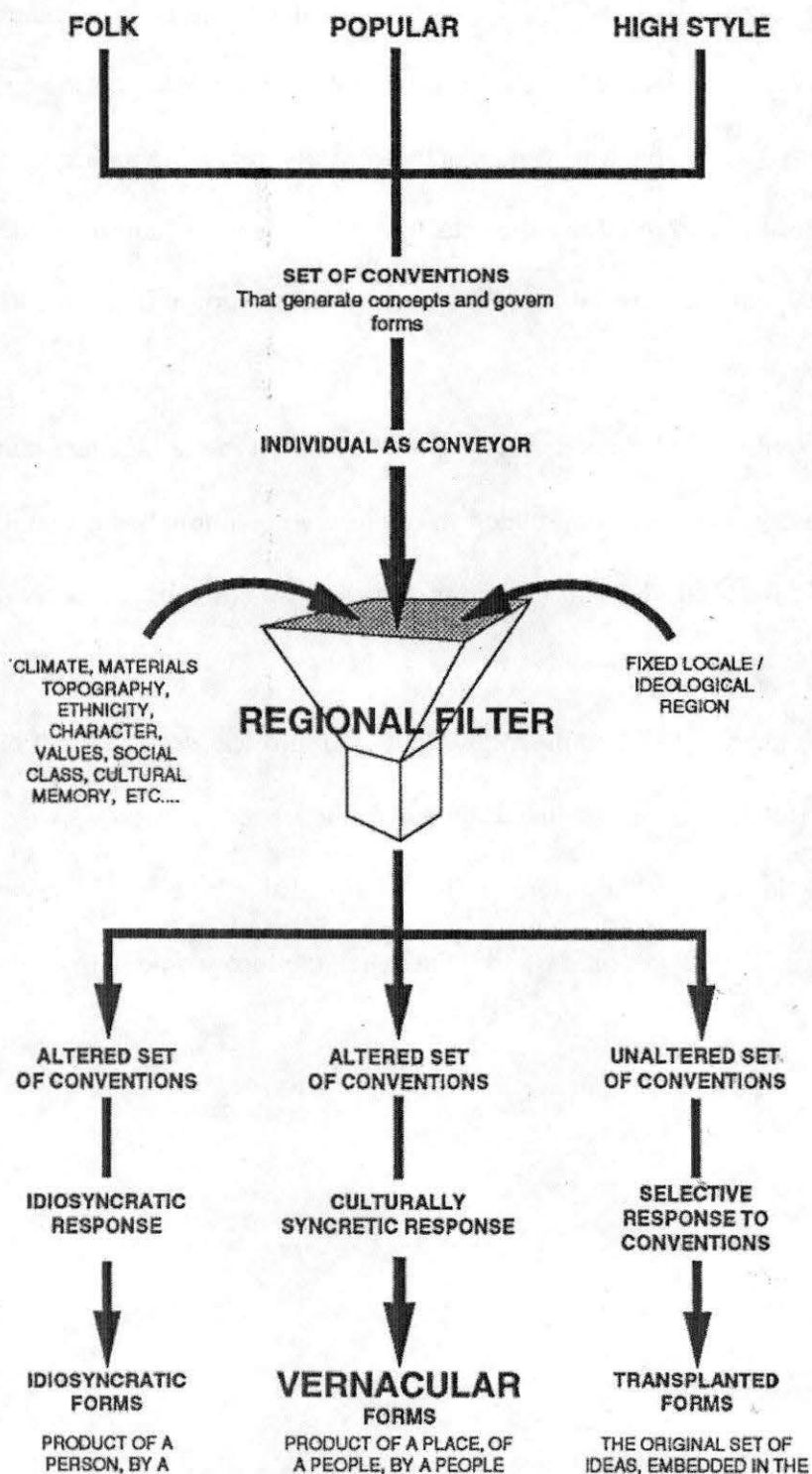


Illustration 1. Heath's Dynamics that Shape Vernacular Form

Much of this continuation of an Edo-period tradition is drawn from a cultural behavior scholars ascribe to the Japanese. In general terms, traditions in rural areas continued throughout the Meiji period despite the changes occurring in more urban areas. For example, the family hearth, a central feature in the Edo period began to play a lesser role with the introduction of glass and electricity, replacing its use for light, and use of coal, creating multiple lesser hearths for heat.³¹² Yet the “family gathering around the fireplace remained until recent times one of the most prominent features of country life.”³¹³

With respect to construction, the furos built in the Japanese countryside were very much according to custom, which were preserved without basic alteration through even the Taishō and Shōwa eras to the present time.³¹⁴ The villages rarely reflected the social upheaval of the Meiji era.³¹⁵

Contrary to what one might think, the furo was seen as relief even on a summery day in Hood River, as recounted by one of the Issei, “on hot days when the soles of my feet would feel as if they were on fire, I worked side by side with my husband, not resting...”³¹⁶ “It was on days like that when the furo would help cool you down, make

³¹² Kunio, 51.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Kunio, 56.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Iwatsuki, “The Making of an American,” 521.

you sweat a lot, then when you came out into the heat, you felt so cool.”³¹⁷ Throughout the year, the furo abetted both body heating and cooling.

The furo is a cultural space. A space which involves shared expectations. Accounting for behavior and cultural norms is intrinsic to understanding the importance and understanding of the furo in its American context. To best realize these cultural norms, we will again turn to the rural Japanese culture from whence the Issei came, and of cooperatism, namely *buraku*, and its impact on Japanese behavior:

In Japan's agricultural and semi-agricultural mountain and forest regions there are to be found clusters of houses, ranging in number from four or five to fifteen or sixteen, with an average of about ten in each group...In the *mura* (village)...each *buraku* (barrio) has jointly-owned farms and/or forests, as well as its own tutelary shrine, known as *Ubasuna-sama*. An *oyakata* (overseer) or *sewayaku* (headman) takes the leadership and control of the entire *buraku*. A *mura* is composed of a number of these *buraku*.³¹⁸

Not all of these *burakus* have jointly-owned farms or forests. Each is clearly identifiable geographically, which becomes evident when *buraku* people decide to repair a road, to build an irrigation channel, or to undertake some other work to improve the *buraku* people's living and welfare:

What may be called the basic structure of any society is constituted by personal relations as they are determined by neighborhood, kinship or family ties, and sex and age. The most important unit in the social structure of rural Japan seems everywhere to be a limited neighborhood group...*buraku*...which we might translate 'hamlet'.³¹⁹

In these *burakus*, farm families occupying a *buraku* can be traced back to remote ancestors and they live on the same land transmitted from generation to generation. In

³¹⁷ Grace Fukui, interview by Chris Bell, digital recording, 16 May 2005, Dee, Oregon.

³¹⁸ Minoru Kida, *Japanese Buraku*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1968), 323.

³¹⁹ Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Taboo*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1939), xv-xi.

the study of *buraku* in the 1930's, John Embree described the forms of co-operation in this kind of community.³²⁰ Examples of the co-operative responsibilities are:

-
1. Rotating responsibility by groups on festivals, celebrations, parties, etc.
 2. Works for *buraku* benefits – road-repairing duties, bridge-building, etc.
 3. Helping in house-building, emergencies, funerals, etc.
 4. Exchange of labor in planting rice, harvesting, etc.
 5. Co-operation credit clubs for pilgrimages, trips, purchasing of big machines, etc.

Noted rural sociologist Tadashi Fukutake notes that a community such as the *buraku* “controls not only the annual events of village life as a whole, but also the patterns of marriage, ceremonies, funerals, and festivals in the individual families.”³²¹ These individual ways of life are molded into that of the ‘village community.’ There the customary way of life “holds sway over the villagers’ individual behavior.”³²²

In Hood River Valley and elsewhere in the United States, the *furo* provided its users with the power of cultural connectivity in communities that had yet to offer many of them that feeling of cultural acceptance.³²³ There were numerous examples of such behavior in Japanese communities throughout the West. On a grand scale, in Fraser Valley in British Columbia, the Japanese formed a *Nokai*, literally, an agricultural society comprised of a complex social and economic network. It assumed two distinct duties for

³²⁰ Embree, 112-157.

³²¹ Tadashi Fukutake, *Man and Society in Japan*, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1962), 81.

³²² *Ibid*, 81.

³²³ Alanen and Melnick, 10.

this farming community. The first set of duties was to serve as a grower's cooperative to help regularize produce prices, offer a depot for produce, achieve economies of scale in purchasing supplies for farmers as well as rentals, offer a meeting place for farmers, and serve as a financial lending institution for its members. The second role it played was as a benevolent society, supporting causes across the spectrum, yet typically within the cultural purview of Japanese traditions.³²⁴

On the level of the furo, there was transference of information that clearly operated under the radar of the larger, white community. In Hood River, relative to the furo, this bathing tradition was largely unidentified by the white community. Dave Burkhart, who has participated extending agricultural research from Oregon State's research station in Hood River to the farms in the Valley, was surprised by the existence of such a bath:

I've been on most of those farms, in fact, I think I have been on practically every farm in the country...and I knew a lot of the Japanese, guys like Kay Kiyokawa, you said he had one [he has two], oh, he has two! I guess there is no reason for him to mention it, really. But we did talk about him playing football during the war years for one of the Ivy League schools and things like that, they called him little Tojo...³²⁵

First of all, Dave reminds us of inherent racism. Hideki Tojo was an extreme right-wing supporter of Nazi Germany, and was appointed in July of 1941 as the minister of war, later to become prime minister on October 16th of that same year and ultimately ordered the attack on Pearl Harbor. While Kay did not speak to this nickname nor did we

³²⁴ Anne Doré, "Transnational Communities: Japanese Canadians of the Fraser Valley, 1904-1942," *BC Studies* 38, 48-49.

³²⁵ Dave Burkhart, informal meeting with Chris Bell, Hood River Museum, 17 May 2005.

even discuss whether he played football at the University of Connecticut where he attended school during and after the internment period, it is doubtful this nickname post-Pearl Harbor was welcome.

Furthermore, Dave illustrated in conversation about his role and how he was frequently inside or around every building on the farms, the bath clearly existed out of view both literally, as we will see in design, but also mentally, as it has continued to be a surprise to those with whom I have spoken who are outside the Japanese community, including numerous long-time Hood River residents, and building scholars.³²⁶ As it was put by a Nisei, Kara Kondo in Wapato, in central Washington, where the Japanese community was once nearly 1,000 strong including a Buddhist temple, “the Japanese community was a subculture within a culture.”³²⁷

As was the case with nearly every Nisei, English was spoken at school, Japanese at home. Kondo also recalls the stark contrast of her family’s “traditional bath house” to others, in particular, the sauna of a Finnish friend.³²⁸ But as bathing goes, there is little discussion of it outside the context of family, and the “subculture” community. Tied back to the notion of *buraku*, and local design elements, we will see how while the framework for the bathhouse varied depending on the house and context, frequently a

³²⁶ Too many to name, although not to be suggested in a negative fashion but illustrative of the point, my professor, Sally Donovan, who is ultimately responsible for my study of the baths, is wired into the community’s history and historic preservation efforts, and until now, she was equally unaware of their existence.

³²⁷ Sara Murphy, “Japanese Worked to Build Early Wapato Community,” *Yakima Herald-Republic*, 28 March 2004, 14 (J).

³²⁸ Ibid.

form emerged that was similar, and innovations, like the addition of galvanized tin inside the bath, once innovated, became widespread across the community.

THE FIVE FURO

In order to fully examine the five furo, it is necessary to introduce them, walk through the photographic and documentary records, and provide a reference point for a fuller discussion of the variations and consistencies among them. In **Illustrations 2** and **3** below is the overall context for the farms, furo and families, in relation to their homeland, wherein both cases snow-covered mountains reign in the distance.



Illustration 2. View of Mt. Hood from Dee Flat. With a pear orchard in the foreground, this is an unchanged view since the land was cleared in the 1920s and 1930s.



Illustration 3. View of Mt. Fuji. Many Japanese settlers opted for Hood River due to its striking similarity to their home, namely, the omnipotent Mt. Fuji.

KAGEYAMA FURO. C. 1915



Illustration 4. Kageyama Homeplace in Dee, Oregon built c. 1915

Yasuto Kageyama came to the United States on July 1st, 1906 at the age of 21 from the Okayama Prefecture of Japan. After ten years in the United States he married Ichino, who just turned 20, from the Okayama Prefecture, in 1916. Together they raised a family in Dee, Oregon, in the house in **Illustration 3** above. Their four children included: Mikie (10/19/17), Molly Mariko (11/23/19), Lena “Charlee” (5/12/22) and Robert Bob Eichi (5/18/24).³²⁹ One of the last remaining Kageyama’s, Charlee, gave a short interview to provide insight into the furo at their family homeplace, likely the oldest standing furo in the Valley, though it currently is threatened for demolition. Foremost,

³²⁹ Roy Higashi, *Japanese-Americans of the Mid-Columbia area and their relatives*, Hood River, Oregon, 54.

this furo, as you will see with all the furo design, is invisible from the front of their homeplace. In fact, it is even difficult to discover once you are in the back, as it is attached to the barn. The farm is arranged with the house in the front, as shown in the site plan, **Figure 1**. In the southeast corner, jutting into the fields, is the furo. Charlee remembers it well: “There was a wood furo right as you walked in, and a chimney that went right up into the ceiling.”³³⁰

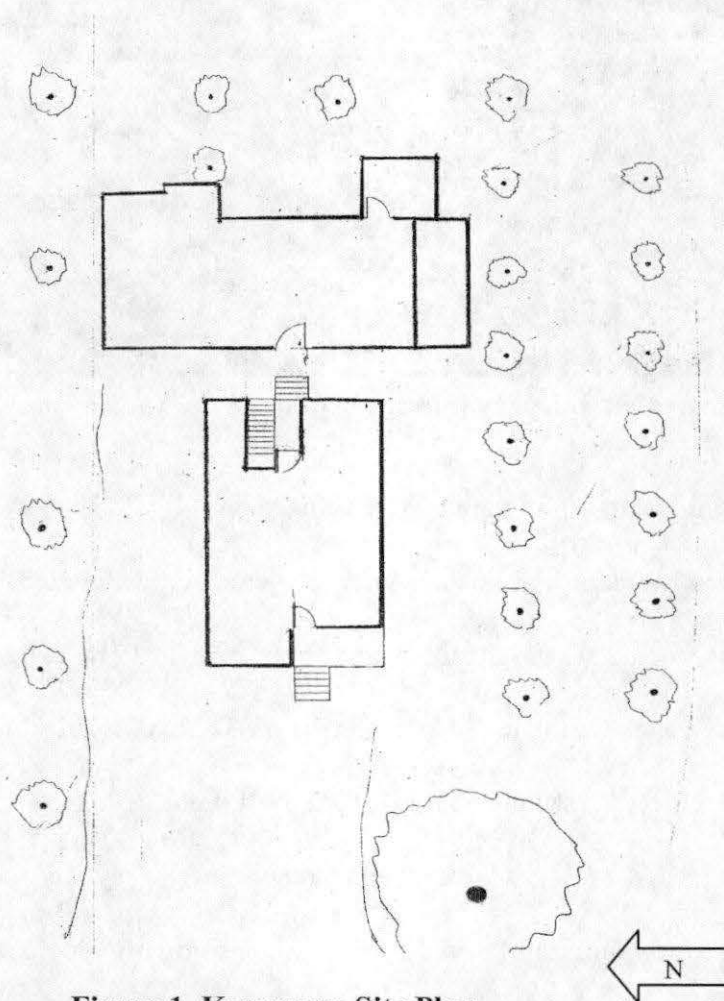


Figure 1. Kagevama Site Plan

³³⁰ Charlee Omori (Kagevama), interview by Chris Bell, audio recording, 12 July 2004, Hood River, Oregon.+

As is evident in **Figure 2** below, the furo was an add on to the barn. While difficult to discern, the drop-lap siding that is evident on the barn above to the right, continues inside the furo, and it is plainly seen that the furo was added sometime after the barn construction. See **Illustration 6** on the next page. Unfortunately these events took place well ahead of Charlee's memory, and she had no firm dates as to when it occurred.

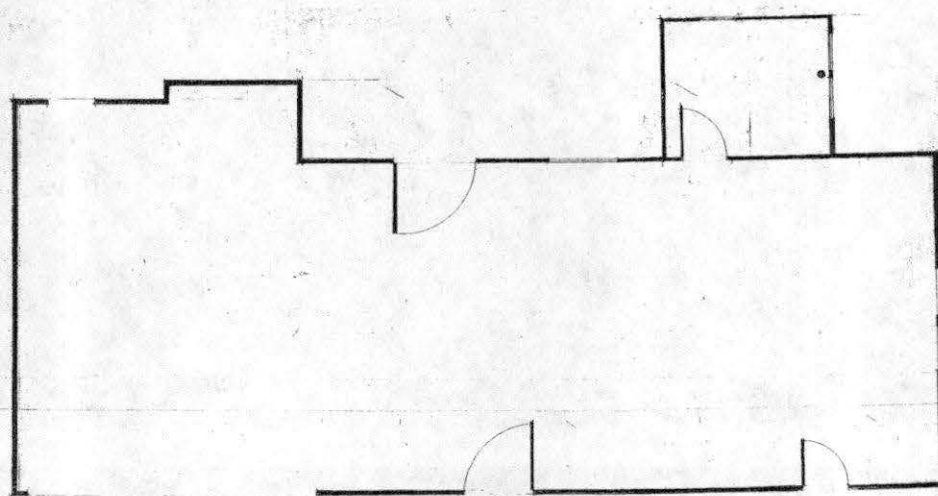


Figure 2. Kageyama Building Plan

Similarly, there was no positive yields with the County documentation. The barn is a multiuse space, through which one would negotiate whatever equipment and orchardist equipment that might have lined the pathway to the furo. As will be seen in the plan, the entrance to the barn did not immediately lead you to the furo. Yet the use of a hand-carved door-knob (see **Illustration 5** on the next page) is consistent from the exterior barn door closest to the furo, the same as that of inside of the door to the furo.

The outside furo door had a rope handle used to enter the furo, as see below, in

Illustration 7.



In recreating the evening cadence, it is evident that lighting must have been part of the experience given the large and dark nature of the barn. Charlee noted correctly that once you entered the

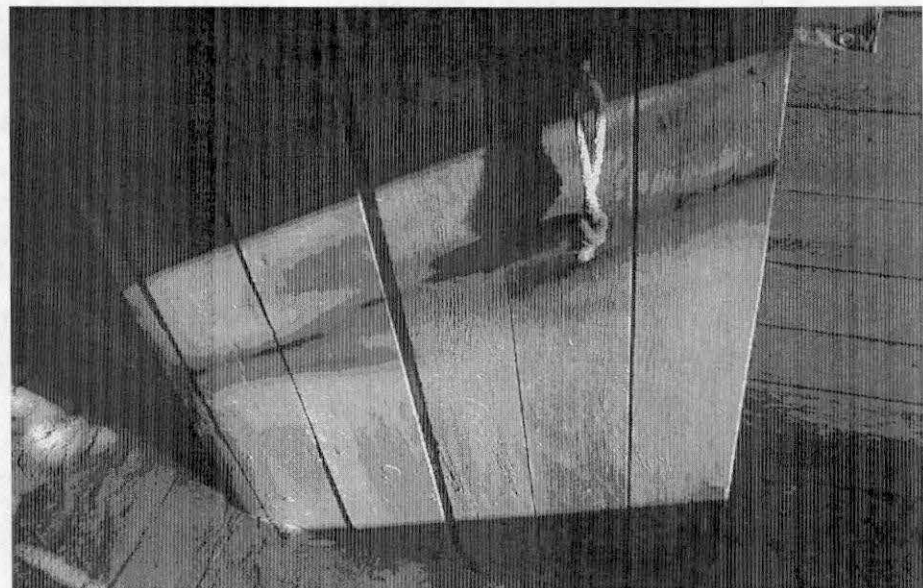


Illustration 5 (above left). Kageyama Furo Door.

Illustration 6 (top). Furo Add-on.

Illustration 7 (above). Rope Door Handle.

barn there was an electric light to show you the way, especially during the winter months.

Today, there is a dangling wire for a light bulb, as shown below in **Illustration 8**, as

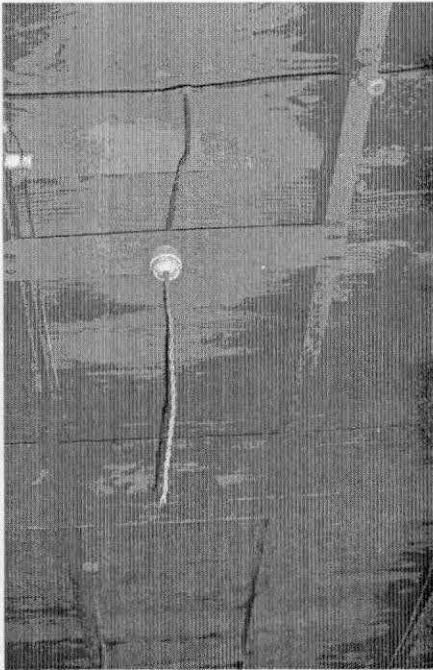


Figure 8. Evidence of Lighting

evidence. While various accounts are offered as to when electricity reached Dee, from 1927 to the early 1930s, what is known, however, is when provided, it made it both into the house as well as the furo – every furo studied here has had either lighting, electrical outlets, or both. Less is known, still, about the type of uses these outlets served. In the Kageyama plan, the entrance is in the center of the west elevation, **Figure 4** below. The pathway to the furo jogged to the right, across a dirt barn floor, to arrive at the subtle entrance

to the furo.

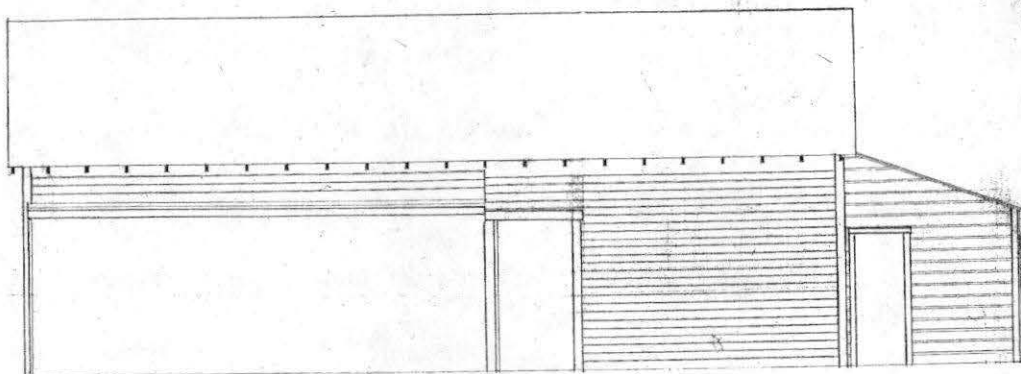


Figure 4. Kageyama West Elevation.

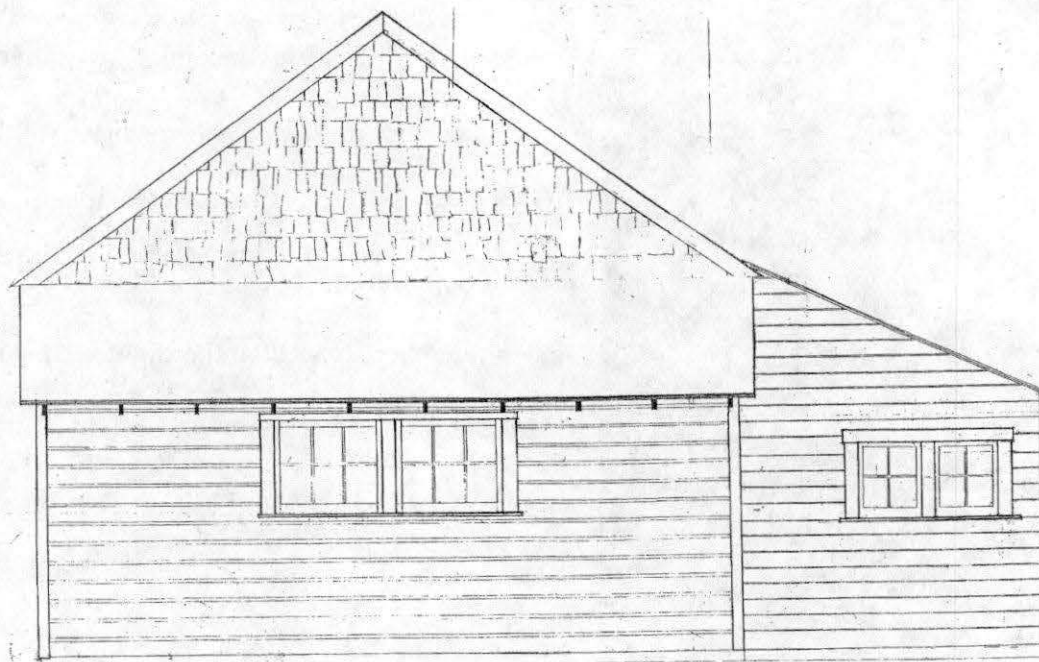


Figure 5. Kageyama South Elevation

Within the furo, there is a concrete floor, a variety of wooden paneling along the walls, galvanized sheet metal along the eastern wall, and nail hooks, water hook-ups, and all the remains of a working furo. Yet the bath and all the material remains have been removed. In addition to a non-functioning light source, there are two sets of twin windows, one on the southern elevation, seen above in **Figure 5**, which Charlee recalls were original, and a second set along the eastern wall, which appear to have been added later.³³¹

In the southern elevation (**Figure 5**), the east-west running lean-to extended to the south operated as a workshop, arguably added at the same point as the furo based on the consistency in cladding and while the southern facing windows of the furo and the

³³¹ Charlee Omori (Kageyama), interview.

workshop are different sizes, they are similar in type. Along the eastern wall, shown below in **Figure 6**, are a series of galvanized sheet metal sheets which run just below the window along the entire wall, serving as the typical American furo buffer between the wood wall and the washing area. While unlikely part of the original design, these sheets provide an excellent indicator as where the most recent furo would have been situated.

Based on conversations and discussions about the innovations that developed over time, the advent of the galvanized tub insert likely led to the similar application of

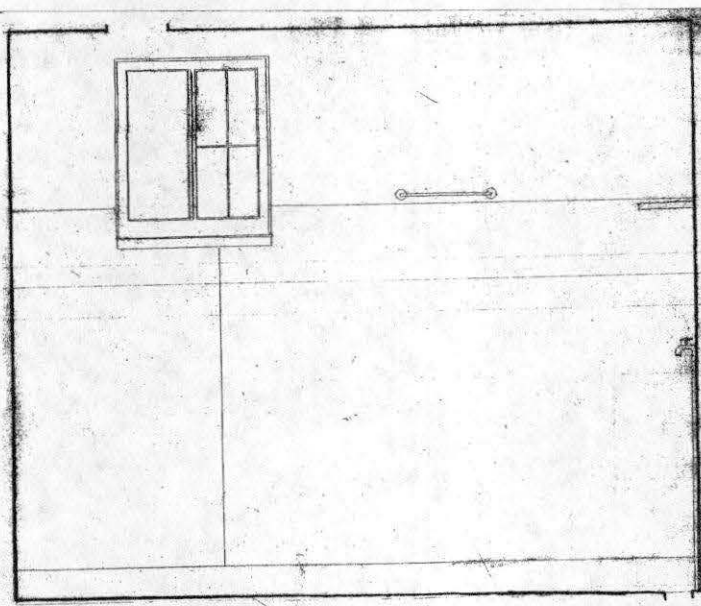


Figure 6. Kageyama Section, Facing East

sheet metal as a wall buffer, post war, 1940s. In interviews, the question was asked whether or not they remembered the whitesmith who might have worked on these galvanized elements, both the tub insert and the wall coating. In every case, there was no recollection of the individual or source for these, just a nod to the realization that perhaps such a request might be out of the norm.

The hole in the Kageyama furo ceiling is a chimney hole, which can be seen in the **Illustration 9** on the next page. Using evidence on the site, combined with Charlee's memory, it would appear this furo had a chimney that sat directly beneath this hole in the

ceiling, and the furo itself was somehow situated in the middle, permitting a bench against the galvanized wall, and room enough to enter the room and feed the firebox.

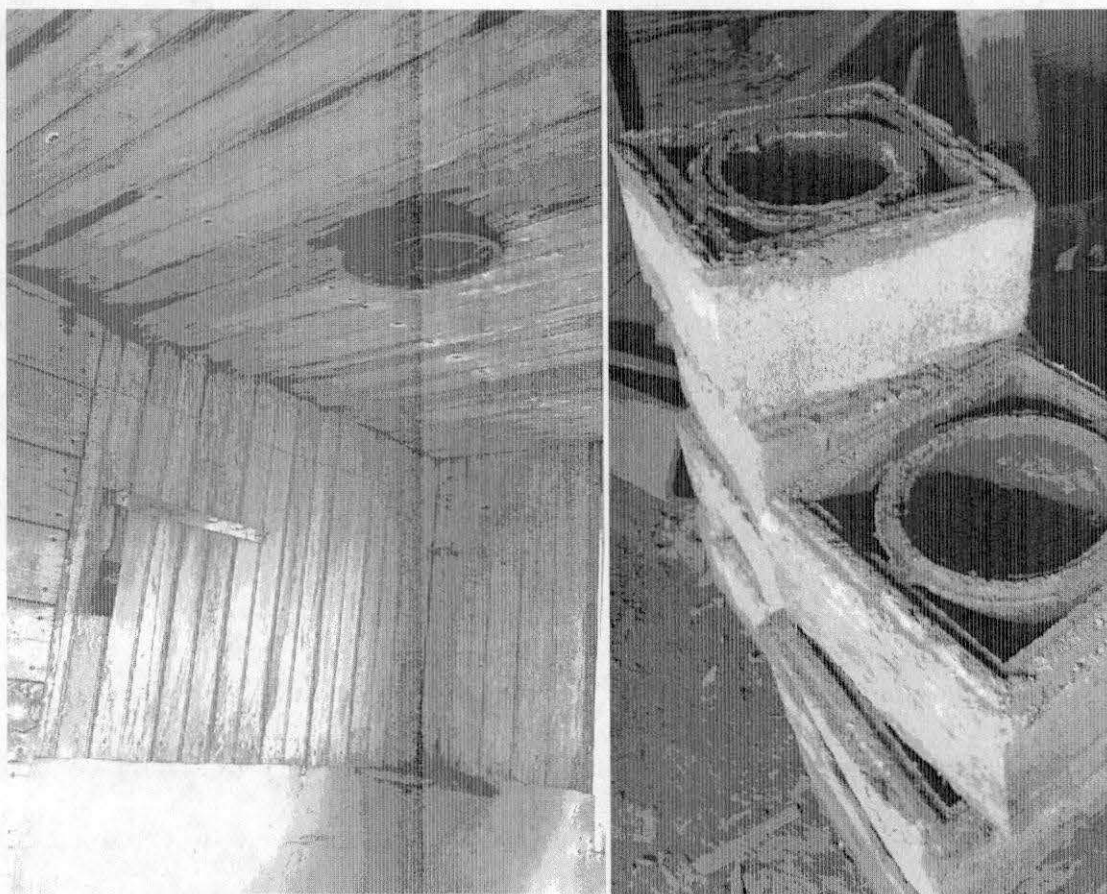


Illustration 9 Chimney Flue (left), Illustration 10 Concrete Chimney Blocks (right).

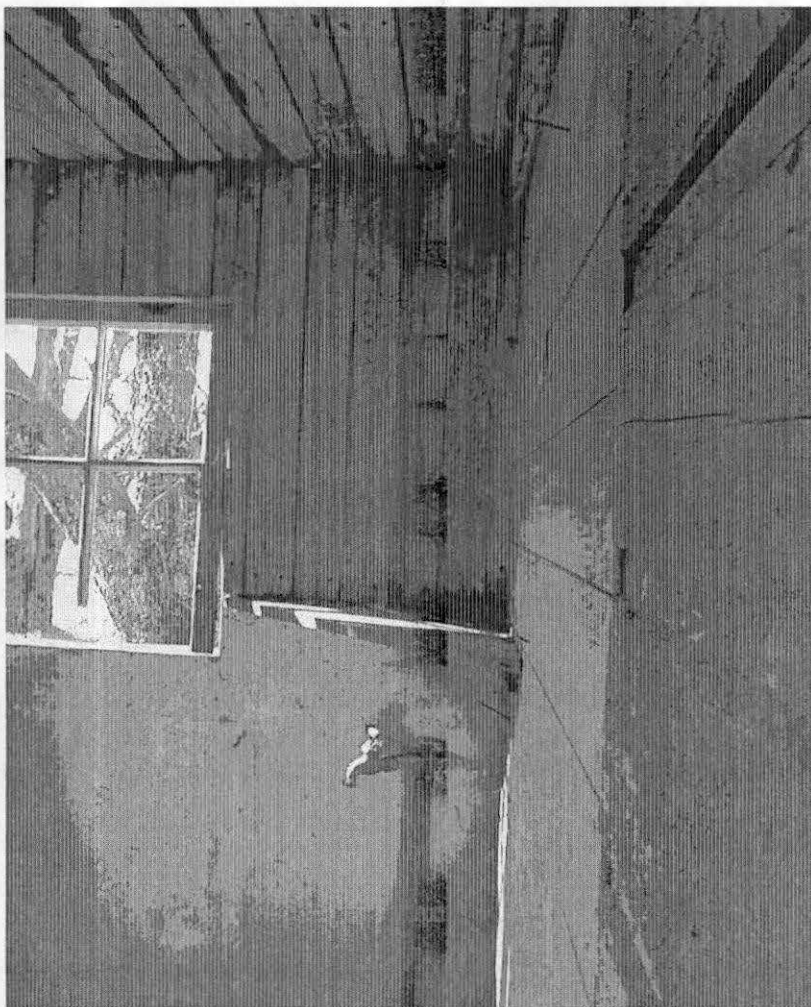


Illustration 11. Wall Detail. Drop siding to the immediate right served as the outside wall prior to the furo construction.

Just outside the furo room is a blocks (see **Illustration 10** above) which appear to have functioned as the interior stack for the firebox. A similar style of chimney was used in Kay Kiyokawa's 1935 furo, which will be discussed next. Peering up through this hole, is the evidence of the hole that was cut in the roof

to accommodate the

stack. The hodge-podge of wall treatments is typical across all the furo, so while often useful, the proximity to a lumber mill and the cobbled-together nature of the barn construction makes it difficult to discern a chronology. What is clear in the drop-siding which is just visible on the right hand side of **Illustration 11** above, showing how the exterior wall continued into the interior. The shelf is one of three in each corner, and the faucet is either hot or cot, as both were eventually piped into the furo. In the following photograph, it is clear that from its early iteration as a furo of the traditional type with



Illustration 12. “Hot” and “Cold” Detail. Barely perceptible at first, penciled on the wall, reverse of the standard American arrangement of hot on left, cold on right..

the water heated from below providing the requisite water for cleaning oneself outside the bath, evidence on the wall (see **Illustration 12** left) and by a modest track of nails and hose hangers on the wall, that

the furo evolved into potentially a glorified bathtub, which may have just had hot water, yet for those prior to bathing, they could shower on the wall as implicated by the writing on the wall. On the left hand side is the cold, and the right, the hot. Immediately to the right and below is the shelf, to the right (**Illustration 13**). As Charlee recounted, “it was used for soap and other things like that.”³³²

Previous to the whitewashing, there appears to a green paint. Reused wood, or a previous color? Unclear from interviews and evidence, but many of the furo were whitewashed on the inside for what might

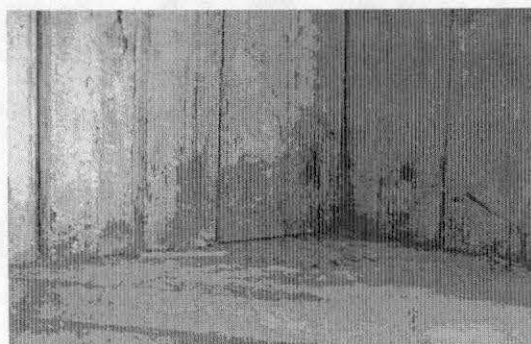


Illustration 13. Soap Shelf.

have been a combination of protecting the wood, sanitation, and illumination. To illumination, there is a light bulb outlet in the center of the room on the ceiling, and an

³³² Charlee Omori, interview.

electrical outlet on the west wall. Charlee remembers, "laundry was done in the furo, I remember the old Maytag was in there for a while."³³³ This furo appears to have run the gamut.

³³³ Ibid.

KIYOKAWA FURO. C. 1935

Riichi Kiyokawa (the family name is scripted in Japanese on the drive in **Illustration 14** below) came to the United States at the age of 18 from the Hiroshima Prefecture of Japan to escape the likely draft into the current war with China. He had actually left a year earlier and spent it on a Hawaiian pineapple plantation until 1906.³³⁴ According to his son, Kay, he worked in Billings, Montana with the Northern Pacific.

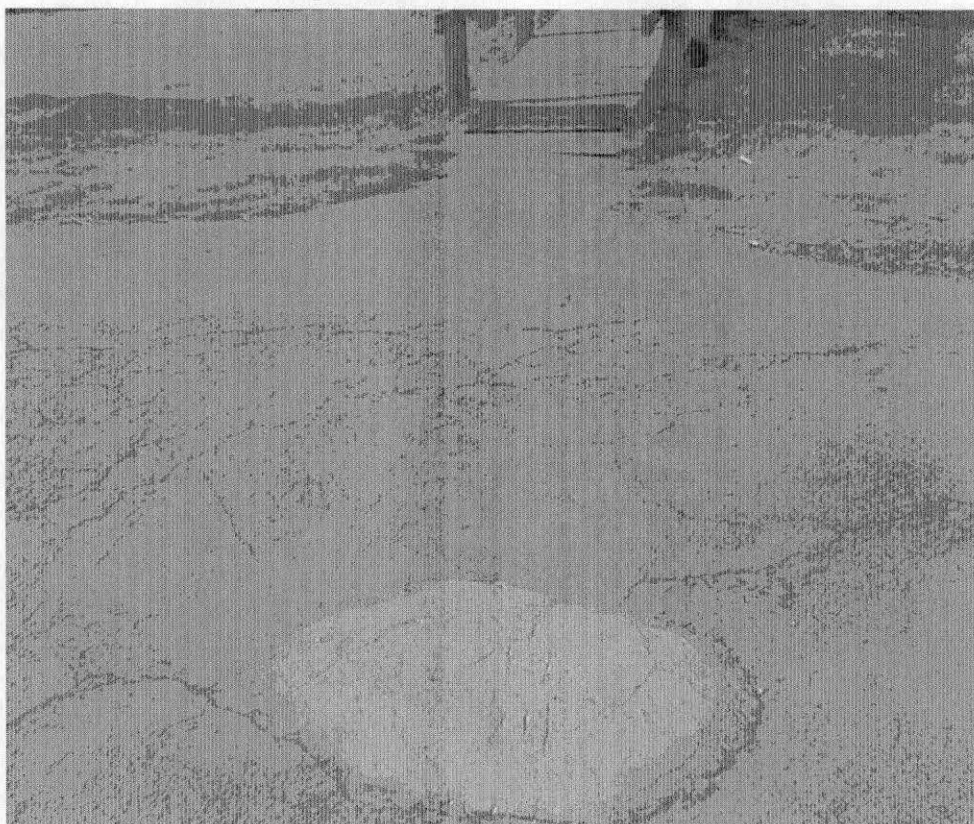


Illustration 14. Kiyokawa Family Name Etched on Driveway

Eventually,
by way of
Masuo
Yasui, he
came to
Dee to
work for
the Oregon
Lumber
Company
in 1911.³³⁵

As was the case, he saved and eventually purchased a small plot of land in 1917 with his brother-in-law, shortly after he had married Rei (Kuga) Kiyokawa, from the Saga Prefecture. She

³³⁴ Higashi, 69.

³³⁵ Kiyokawa, interview.

was then 22 years old and by 1921 had provided them with three children. In time, the 10 acre plot was not enough for the two families, so Riichi purchased land in the place where the Kiyokawa homeplace current resides in 1921. In time, Riichi and Rei would have eight children, ranging from Sigeo in 1918 to Yoshio “Yosh” in 1930.³³⁶

The Kiyokawa furo is one of two that existed on their property. The first was built at the same time the house in front was built: 1935. This construction came in part out of a County-

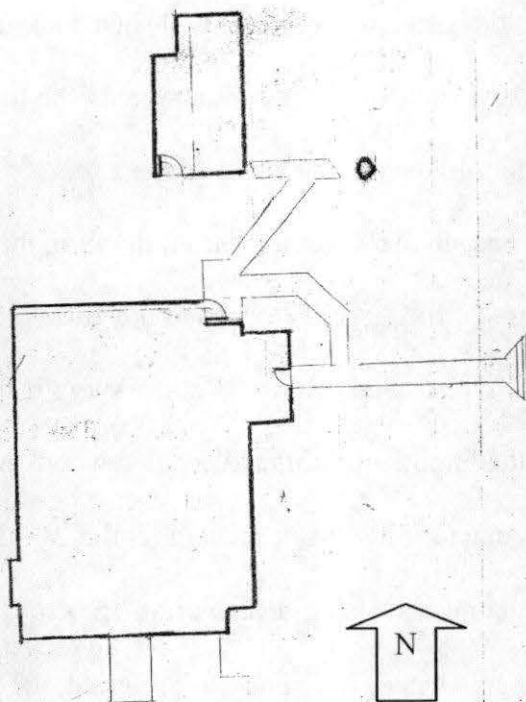


Figure 7. Kiyokawa Site Plan

mandated request to build a road through their property, requiring that their houses be. It essentially goes from a bathhouse, to a wood shed, to a tool-shed and outhouse, as you moved and much of their orchard become a road easement. As compensation, the County paid for part of the house.¹ The furo is actually tied into a wood shed, tool shed and outhouse conglomeration (in **Figure 7** above, it sits behind the house). It essentially goes from a bathhouse, to a wood shed, to a tool-shed and outhouse, as you

³³⁶ Higashi, 69.

move away from the house (see **Figure 8**, below right). While the divisions are not shown in **Figure 8**, the door to the rear, also north, leads to a one-holer. The opposing side is an opening to the tool shed, and just south of that is one of two doors to the wood shed. The other leads directly into the furo, for obvious reasons. As you can see through that latter door from the furo, the wood shed is still stocked to the gills with what is called “chunk” wood. Doug Fir from the lumber mill, often discarded wood, and cut and split into 12” lengths about 2-3” in diameter. Also in **Illustration 15** below is apple wood, which as was preferred, the “chunk” wood is mostly a starter wood,

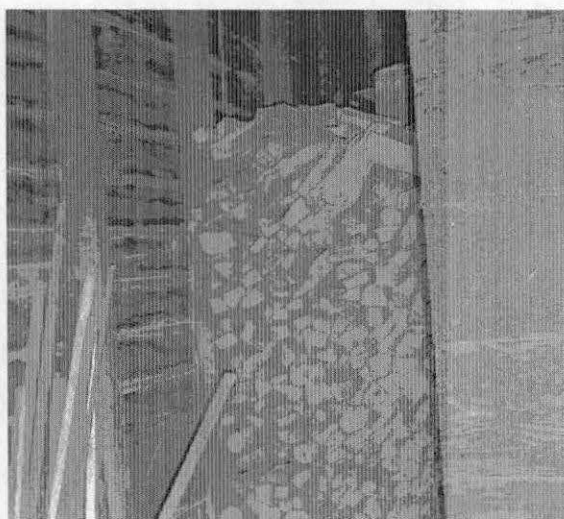
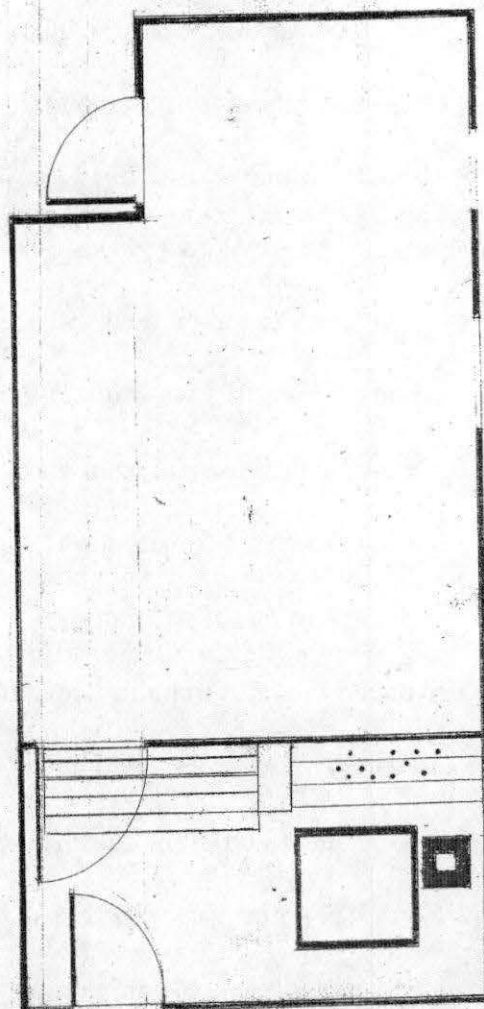


Illustration 15. Chunk wood Stockpile

Figure 8 (below). Building Plan



while the apple burns hotter and longer, and therefore, according to Kay, was used, when available, for the balance of the fire.

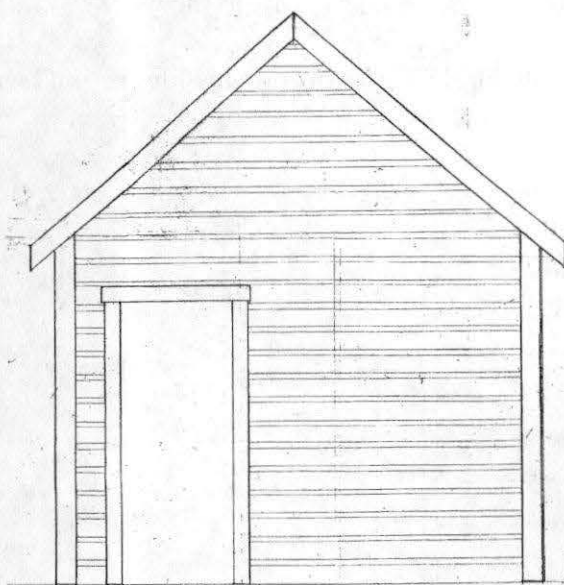


Figure 9. South Elevation

main house in front, with access out the back to the furo to the right of the furo is the outdoor cook stove, pictured in a blackened circle. This is where rice was cooked on occasion, though on every occasion for the *mochitsuki* New Year's event. Also it was used for canning. The network of concrete paths lead from the basement/root cellar to the kitchen to the furo to the barn: the pathways of a farming family. In **Figure 10**, we have a building section facing east. In this we see the fire below, in the fire door, above it

Clearly, as a daily ritual, having lots of wood stored up for the winter was no small affair, or a matter to be left for later. The wood shed is not only large, but still has an incredible stock-hold of wood. Unlike every other furo, this furo has no windows cut into it. The modest and simple south elevation in **Figure 9** on the left. Returning to **Figure 7**, we see the

would be a single sheet of thick galvanized steel, fastened by nails to the wooden-walled 2 X 12s and 2 X 6s which form the outer walls of the furo. Inside, this furo is lined with galvanized sheet metal,

which was inserted in this case inside the older, wooden furo to save the hassle of filling the cracks with cotton. To the left is a raised platform upon which one washed prior to getting into the bath. As was seen on the plan, holes were drilled into this platform to allow water to better filter out down the drain. In the

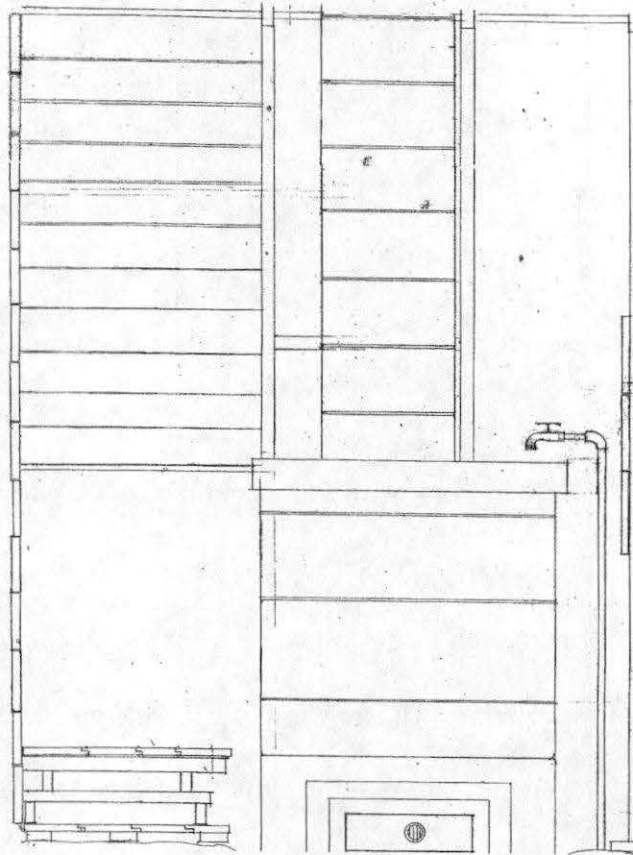


Figure 10. Section facing East

rear of that section is a chimney, 16" freestanding concrete blocks. To insulate the furo while it is heating, there was always a cover, as in **Illustration 16**, to the right.

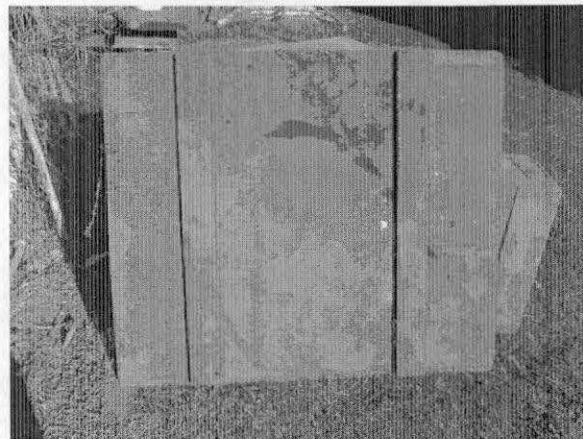
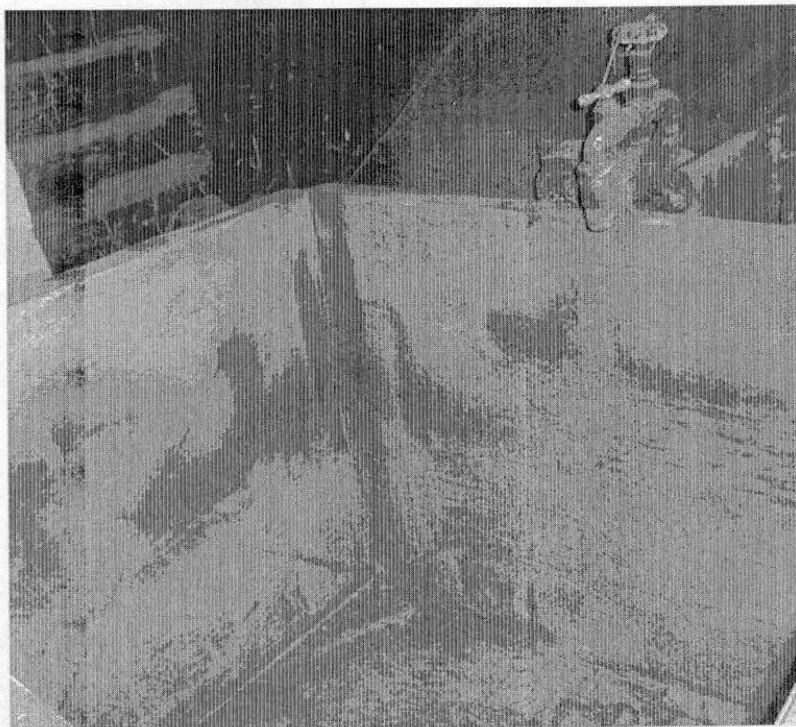


Illustration 16. Furo Cover

The **Illustration 17** below is the furo itself, tined on the inside with a single spout providing strictly cold water to be heated below. The fire was stoked by wood put inside the firebox, shown in **Illustration 18** below, often referred to by the Issei as the *kudo*. The kudo was inside here, making the time and effort spent in retrieving the wood and fueling the fire minimal. In each case, the doors were clearly purchased and



added onto the otherwise homemade furo. The other cost



would be the galvanized interior, and the raw materials – wood, cement, nails, concrete blocks, etc. Overall,

however, these were basically homegrown. Finally, there are a few other features to the Kiyokawa furo that make it

unusual. First of all, it contained an intact *sana*, or footboard that protected the feet from the hot sheet of metal at the base of the bath.

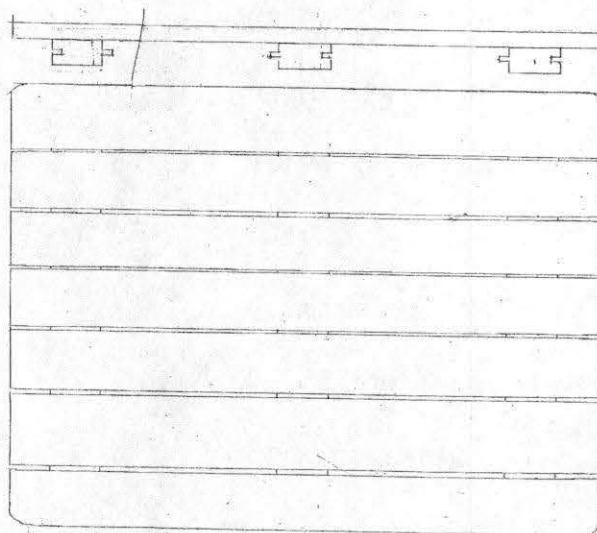
Illustration 19 (below, with Kay just out of the frame), and show in section and from above in **Figure 11** to the right, this board was simply

made with tongue and groove and rounded corners and sand-papers corners, so not to catch splinters on tender feet

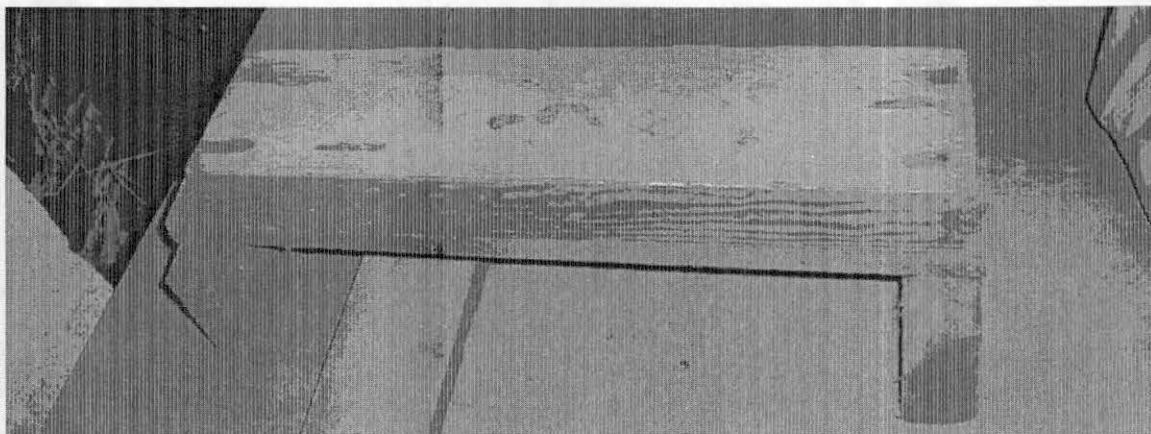
and bums. This *sana* is surprisingly tightly grooved.

The only other *sana* found was at the Takasumi furo, and it has much wider slots between boards to permit the board to sink better. Two

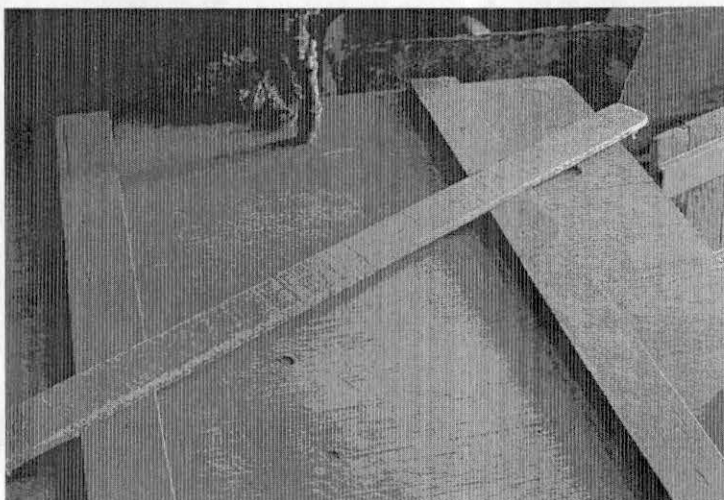
other objects of note include a small stool which again is a rarity. At the walls were relatively high, and the Japanese were by and large small, a stepping stool was not without use at the edge of a nearly 3' deep tub. While it is unclear if one washer while



sitting on this step, often in modern Japan there are little similar looking stools provided at the furo for just that purpose: to sit and wash yourself. Kay did not recall and given the general occurrence of solo baths, he might not have witnessed his parents using such a stool, shown below in **Illustration 20**.



Finally, in addition to the stool, there was a water-stained board with smooth edges and given its location, appeared to serve a purpose with respect the furo. While Kay was uncertain of its exact purpose, he described a board (**Illustration 21**) being used for the next morning, when the cleaning occurred. It was necessary to “stir up the water in the bath, so to mix up whatever dirt may be clinging to the walls, you know, and then let the water out. Makes it less work to scrub.”³³⁷



³³⁷ Kiyokawa, interview.

TAKASUMI FURO. C. 1947

Tokuzo Takasumi was born on February 15th, 1880 in the Fukushima Prefecture, and like the two previous Issei, arrived in the United States in 1906. According to his son, Ned, he first worked in either lumber or railroad, he was never sure, before arriving in Hood River in 1911 where he eventually became an orchardist like his family had been in Japan. His wife, Chiyo (Kano) Takasumi was also from the Fukushima Prefecture, and arrived in 1910, and yet was married to Tokuzo in Japan. In fact they had lost one

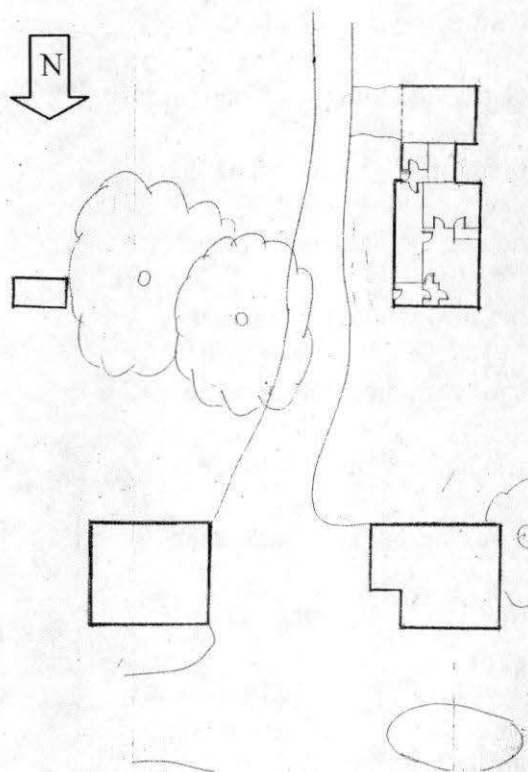


son prior to coming to the States.³³⁸ Mitsuo “Mits” Takasumi was their first son, thereby, born on June 6, 1911, and 7 followed, for another family of eight. The current Takasumi

³³⁸ Ned Takasumi, interview.

homeplace is where the family was reared, although the landscape has changed dramatically. Eventually Mits married Misako Shigehara of Seattle, and together they took over the farm from their parents and would, in 1949-50, build a substantial home for both Mits' parents, and his family to live. The old furo at this point had been neglected during the war years, and was torn down, and up on the hill was built the current furo (**Illustration 22**), sometime between 1947 and 1949.

On the right is a site plan (**Figure 12**). In the upper right is a house built for Mits' parents while they tore down the old house. It was lived in by the parents only during the time when the house was under construction, after which point a Finnish family lived in it until recently. The smallest building is

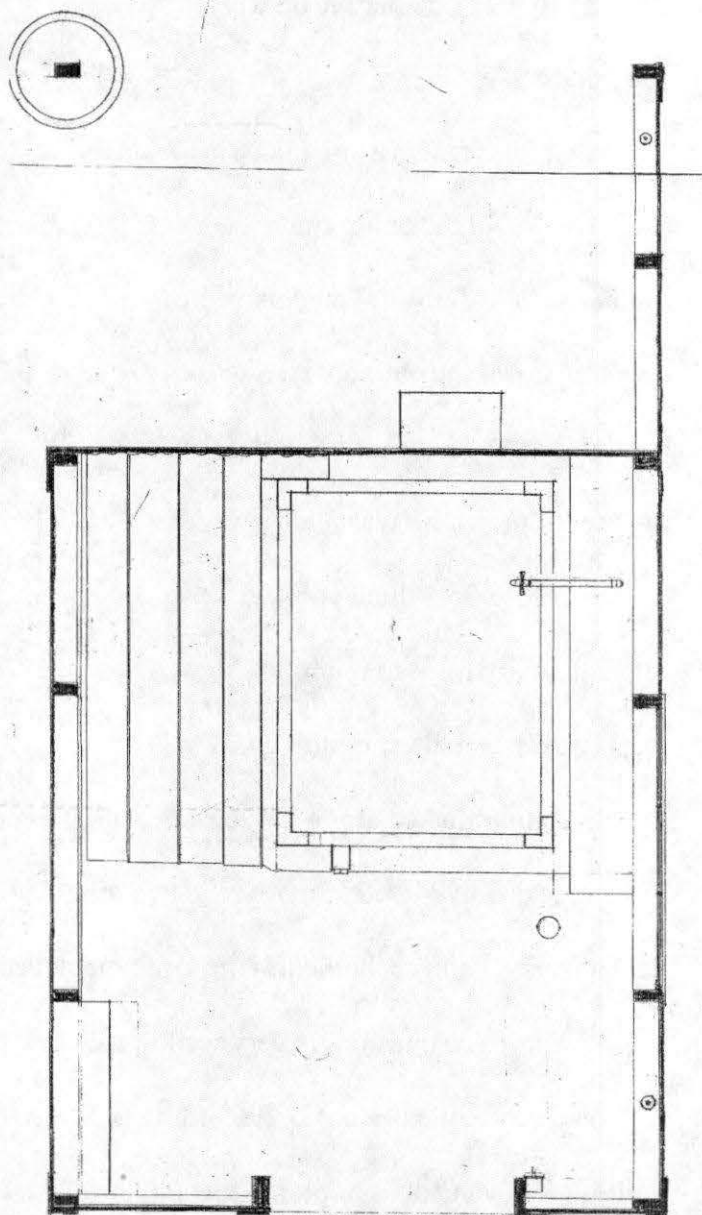


the furo. It is situated along a water line, and was built convenient to the house where Tokuzo and Chiyo lived. Finally, the two other buildings at the bottom of the plan are the barns and garages, home to farm equipment, cars, even itinerant pickers.

The Takasumi furo is very well in tact and in good order, in part because it was apparently infrequently used. According to Misako and Ned, once the new house was built, the conveniences of plumbing, and the distance you had to go to fire up the furo

made it more of a chore and less of a ritual. In design, it is among the more inventive furo in the Valley, and according to descriptions of the previous furo, it takes its layout and form from the previous bathhouse, which was a combination woodshed and furo.

In the plan below to the right (**Figure 13**), the Takasumi furo has a relatively confined entry area for changing clothes and hanging them on the various nail hooks, then a bench beside the furo where upon a bather can wash themselves using a wash pan, often described as a “worn out pan”, and enter the furo to the right. The area for feeding the firebox is around the back, covered over by the extended shed roof. This layout is exactly the same as the previous layout with two exceptions. The bath in the old furo was, according to Misako, “one



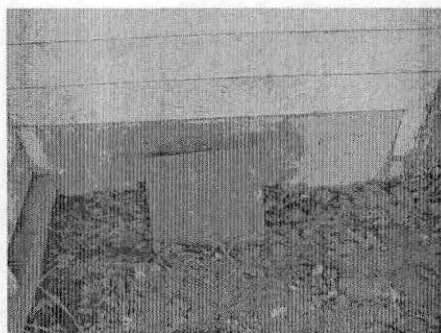
and a half times larger.”³³⁹ It also was a wider bathhouse, as it accommodated a washing area. Yet the same bench beside furo position was the same, and the covered outside area for fueling the fire remained. The old bathhouse, too, had a window, as this one does, on the south-facing wall.

While out of use for “at least twenty years,” the furo still has a stock hold of wood, namely old fruit boxes, for tinder. Some of these boxes date to the 1950s



(**Illustration 23**). The firebox as seen to the lower left (**Illustration 24**), had a metal plate above, to provide a header over the firebox, as well as some intermediate protection to

the galvanized steel bottom of the furo. There was also a light above (**Illustration 25**), as this furo was built after electricity had come to the Takasumi farm, and with the furo

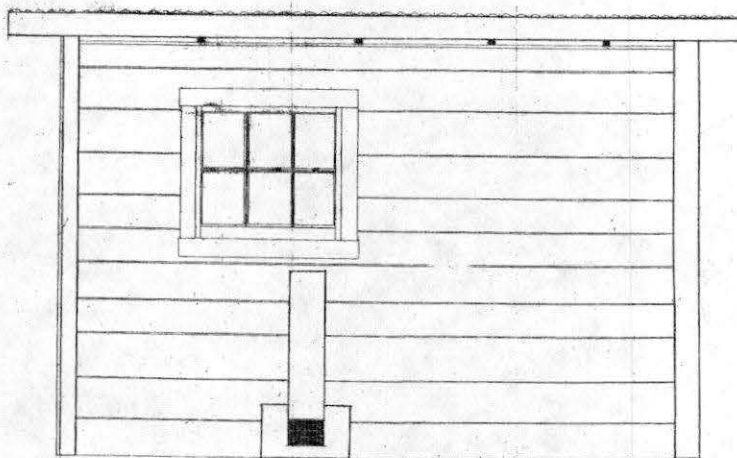


being a nighttime activity, especially as it no longer served as a place for laundry,

³³⁹ Misako Takasumi, interview.

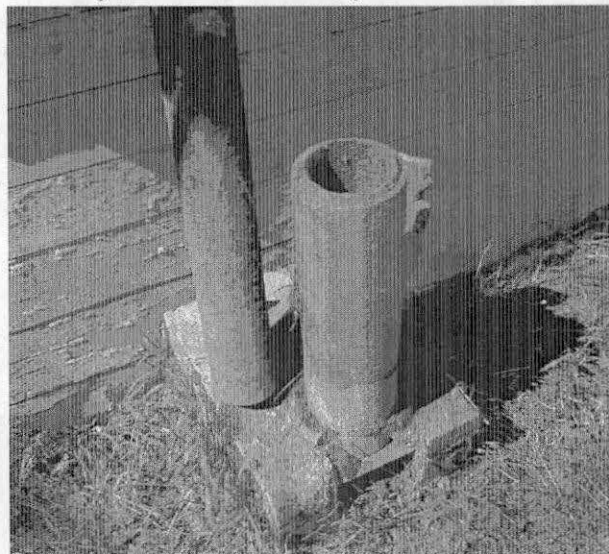
lighting for those stoking the fire was requisite. With the cover over the entrance to the firebox, or *kudo*, the smoke and heat would travel under the furo and out the chimney, which was positioned on the south wall, just outside the window.

Shown in **Figure 14** and **Illustration 26**, as will be seen in the case of the Namba furo, there is a concrete stack that attached to a square exhaust chimney. From this point, a metal flue carried the smoke past the level of the roof. Evidence of such can be seen in the roof still.

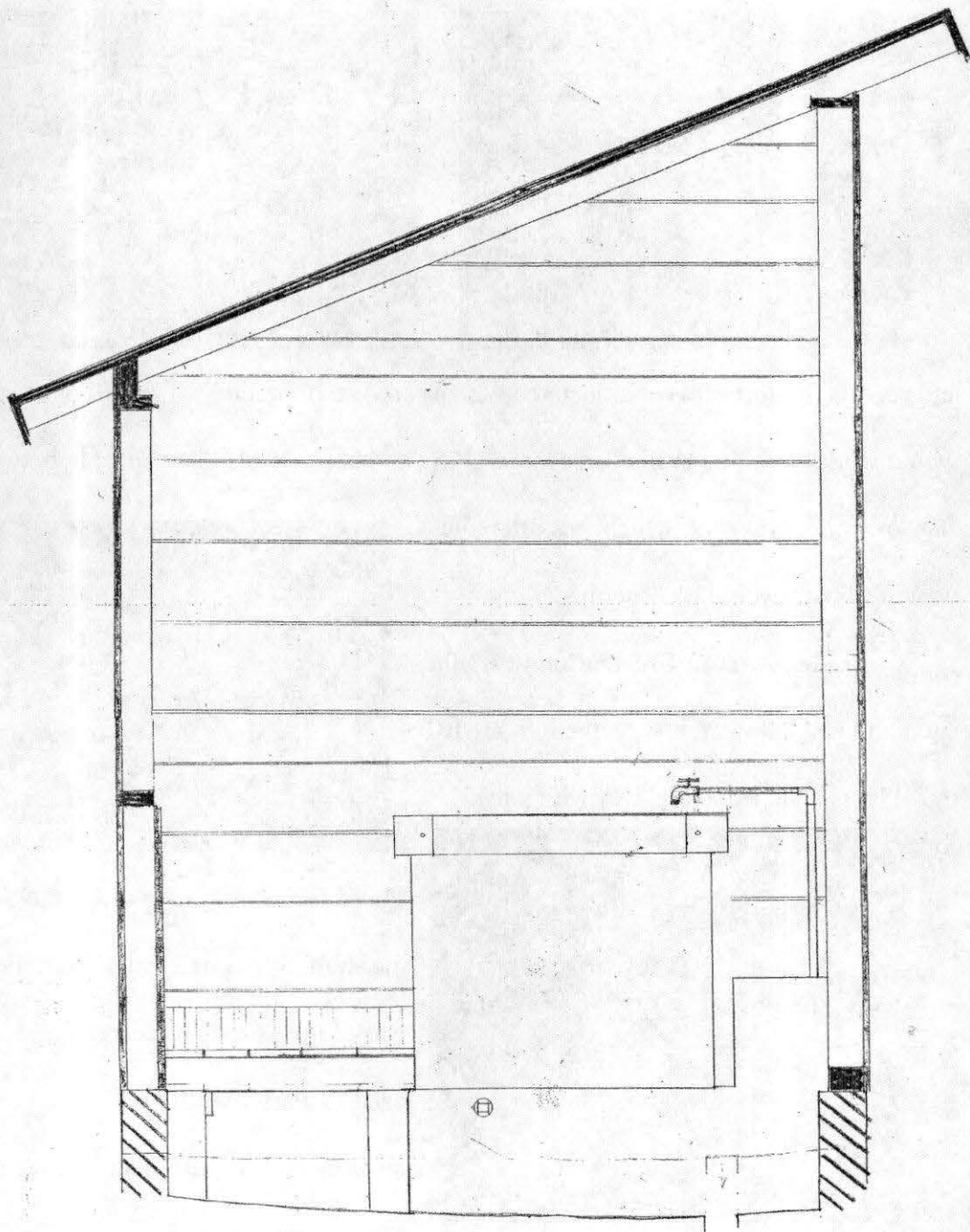


What is unclear is how the opening between the stack function. Whether it served as a second exhaust, or was a way of cleaning out the ash build-up. What is clear is these concrete cylinders were readily used and available for this purpose.

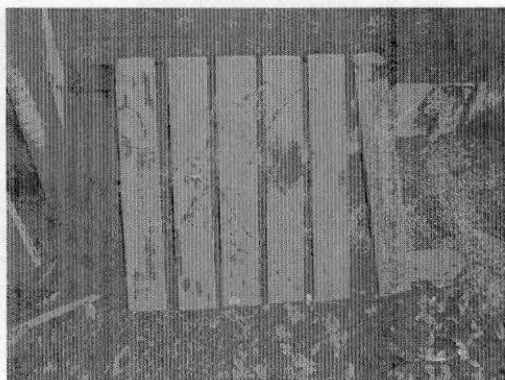
The following **Illustrations** and **Figures** provide a sense of the Takasumi interior. In the section (**Figure 15**), we see the relation of the bath to the bench, with the single water source over the tub, the drain



in the floor and the plug in the tub. Just over the furo is a window facing south, toward the orchards. Concrete is distinguished by cross-hatching, providing a deep basin for the water to collect when the plug is opened (**Illustration 27**). The floor is slopped to reflect



the drain being the low point on the floor. The below left **Illustration (28)** is the sana, found at the house across the road where the Takasumi grandparents lived the short while when the “new” house (1950) was being completed. The sana has rounded edges



and reveals the sort of wear associated with a sana, i.e. frequency of renailing as nails would work loose due to the constant swelling and heat. It has more spacing between the slats of wood, however, which was often the way this board would be described.

Just below is an **Illustration (29)** of a shelf and just below it, and on the left, are two metal lines attached at the 2X4 with a nail.



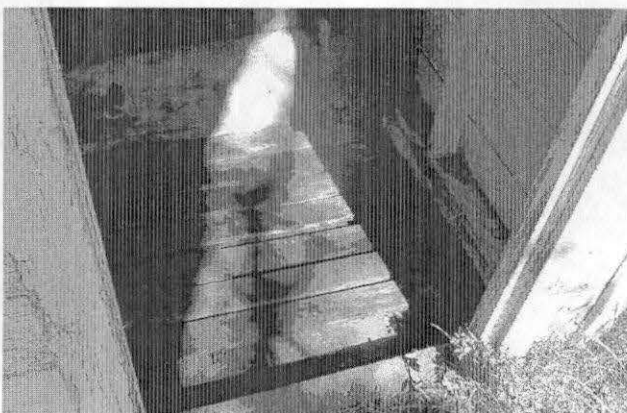
These served for crude towel racks, while the shelf, as has been suggested, held the wash bins, soap and cleaning materials used to wash the bath out. Above right is an **Illustration (30)** of an interior light, offering a single bulb worth of light for

the reclining bather. In each and every furo, single bulb seems to be provided to the bather, implicating that the hour that bathing would take place often required artificial light, and with the case of the two Kiyokawa furos, there were no windows in the furo by design. It would appear that the furo was not a well lit place, but quiet, dark, and, ideally, contemplative.



In the **Illustration (31)** to the left, we see a flashing detail which appears at the end of the bench upon which one would clean themselves. As continues to be the case, the level of detail attended to on these basic buildings reflects that while resources

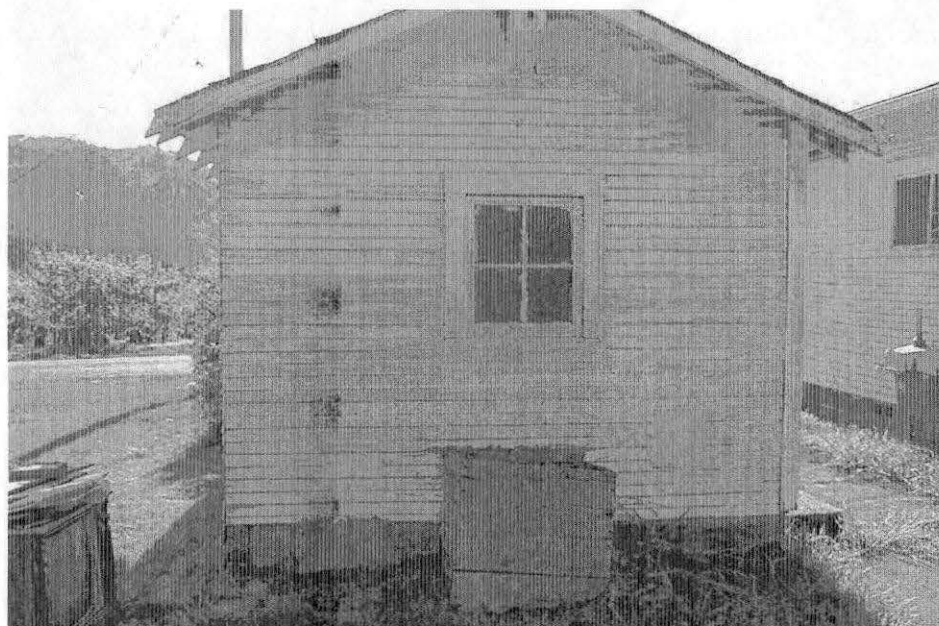
may have been scarce, and overall the furo functioned first, it also reflected a degree of care and thoughtful ingenuity which transcends its otherwise humble, outward appearance.



A final detail at the Takasumi furo worthy of note are two sets of floor boards that were found near the furo, pictured left (**Illustration 32**). One three boards wide, the other four boards, it is clear these were intended

to be a barrier for the feet between the cold, rough and likely relatively unclear concrete

floor and the feet. They are widely slatted, and fit inside the space perfectly. As would be the case, the 2X4s on the bottom are highly rotted, and this is no longer suitable for walking on. Still, again the degree to which the experience is sanitary, considered despite being compact, demonstrates the level of concern given over to an otherwise modest bathing house.

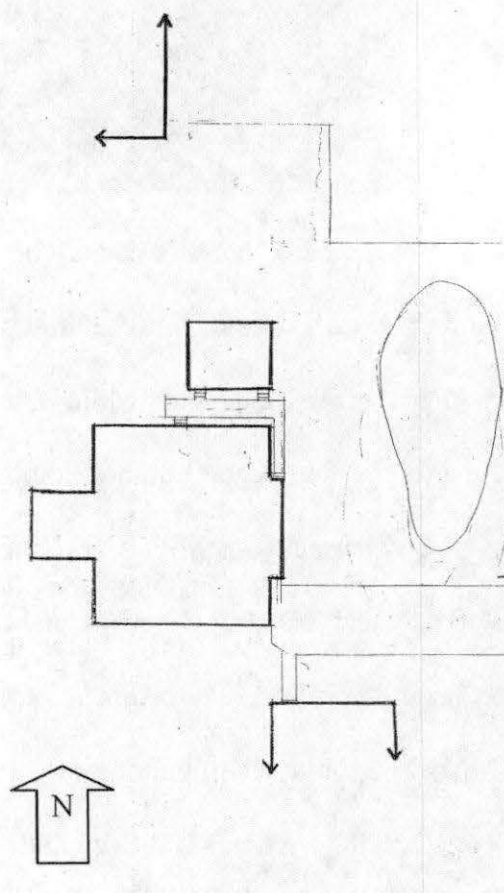
THE NAMBA FURO C. 1948

Seizaburo Namba was born on August 25th, 1894. In 1911, he and his father and mother all came to the United States to work in a logging mill in Wyeth. Seizaburo's mother was the camp cook, while he and his father worked at the mill. Like many of the Japanese at the Oregon Lumber Company in Dee, the Namba family lived in the company barracks, sacrificing accommodation for savings. At some point, they moved to Parkdale and raised strawberries, and by 1918, the parents had enough savings to return to Japan. Seizaburo also returned, but with the intent of marriage. It is there he met Miyoshi Askhida, born February 15, 1901, and they married and returned in May 1919. Together, the Namba's had five children all together, starting in 1919 and ending in 1927.

Seizaburo returned to Parkdale for a while after to pick strawberries, and then

would eventually move into less seasonal work with the Oregon Lumber Company in Dee, and bought a small piece of land in Dee Flat, the location of the current Namba furo. Mark Namba describes this period, and evolution of the Namba property (**Figure 17**), “oh, the house was maybe built in the 1920s, maybe before, 1916 or so, it took a long time to build it. We were broke, flat broke. We didn’t have any money. Dad worked at the mill, and on weekends and evenings he would be blasting the stumps. We had about 18-20 acres at that time.”³⁴⁰

Namba continues, “I still remember the people who my dad borrowed money from. Said he was paying back 500 dollars a year. People were real good people. Name was Walker, from Portland. White family. Didn’t have to make payments during the war time. Took them until 1950 to pay it off in full.”³⁴¹ Mark’s father died in 1937, and his mother remarried to Shigeji Noyori. Mark, who was born on February 13th, 1924, remembers the first furo, which was not replaced until after the war, with the current



³⁴⁰ Mark Namba, interview.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

bathroom/woodshed combination (**Illustration 33**), “it was in front of the house, where the garden is [the oval shaped area to the east of the house...with a small window on one side, it was maybe 10’ X 12’. Unpainted, pitched roof, with a ceiling inside, about half the floor was concrete. The pump was inside the bath house, and we also washed clothing in there. It was a modest little building.”³⁴²

Presently, a small Japanese-style garden is situated in the front yard (part of the fish pond is shown below in **Illustration 34**). In both instances, it is clear the Namba family felt little desire to mask any Japanese heritage with both the bathhouse situated in the front yard as well a Japanese garden with a now-unkempt, sprawling Japanese maple. As will be further elaborated shortly, Dee had a significant Japanese population, arguably the densest among the communities in the Valley.

It was not until 1948, or so, that Mark recalls the second bathhouse being built and the first being torn down. As was the case with the Takasumi furo, the bath was in “bad shape after the war, so they decided to rebuild the bathhouse and position it closer to the kitchen.”³⁴³ The proximity to the kitchen is a recurring theme among the bathhouses.

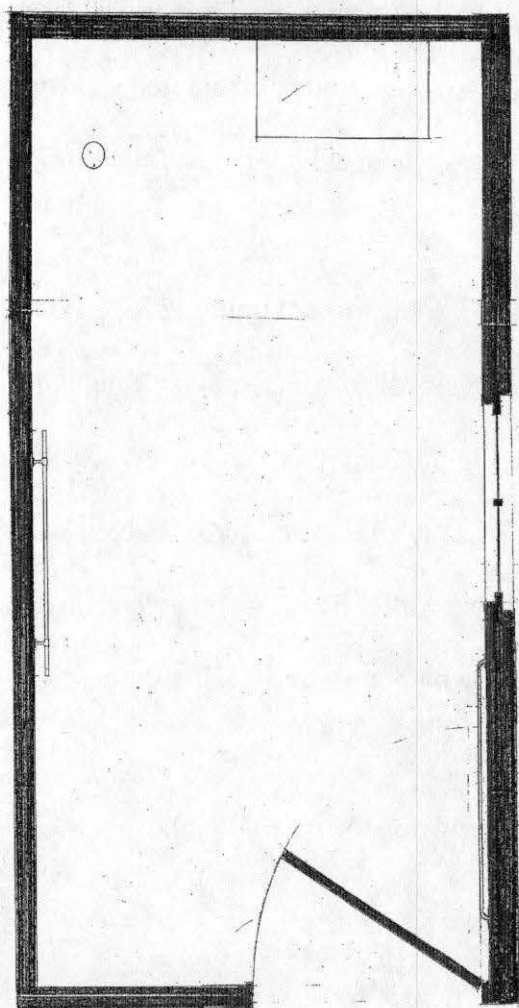
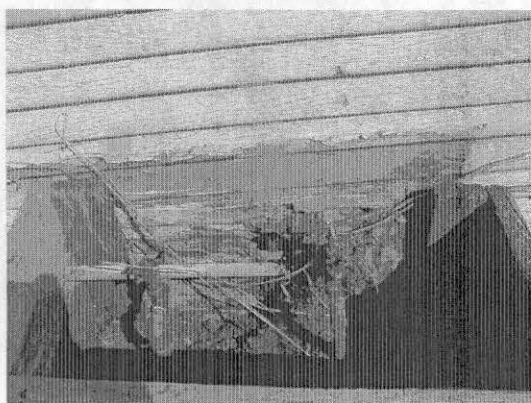


³⁴² Namba, interview.

³⁴³ Ibid.

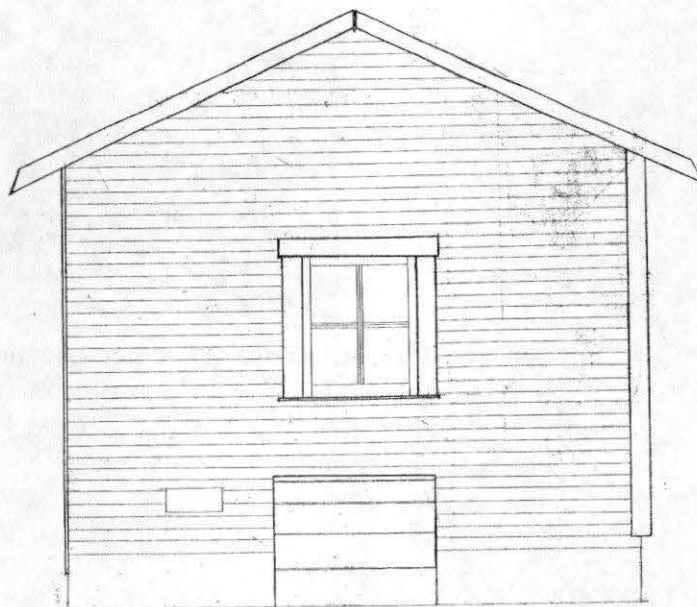
Literally each and every one was a direct shot off the kitchen door. Sometimes this could be tied to a connection between the water sources, but more than likely, as both were tended by mother, it made her trips back and forth easy. And for cycle of bathing after dinner, it was a similarly direct pathway from the kitchen table.

The plan for the Namba furo is straightforward. Like the Kageyama bath, however, it evolved into a non-fire-style bath, and while evidence will be shown of the location for the kudo, in its present form it has no such design. Inside the furo is now vacant, though there are some telltale signs of what once was. The drain hole shown on the plan to the right (**Figure 18**), and two towel racks, as will be seen in a photograph on the next page. In addition, hot and cold water were eventually piped into the furo when it became a washing room, see in **Illustration 35** below.

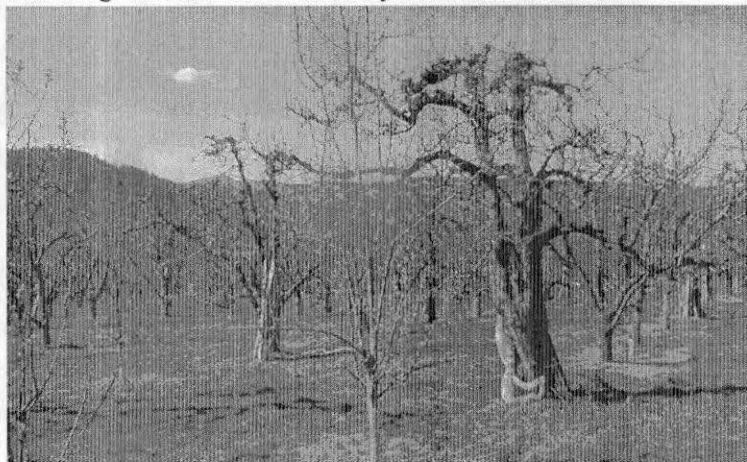


The west elevation, as shown here in **Figure 19**, seems to take advantage of a logical window place. Given the timing of the furo, at night, use of the setting sun's light for bathing would be a logical arrangement, let alone the situation of the firebox outside the window, again making us of what available

light would be afforded by the window, reducing the need for any secondary lighting. The wood would have been taken from the adjacent room, connected by a concrete pathway. Wood enough would be readied for that evening's furo, therefore hopefully one trip

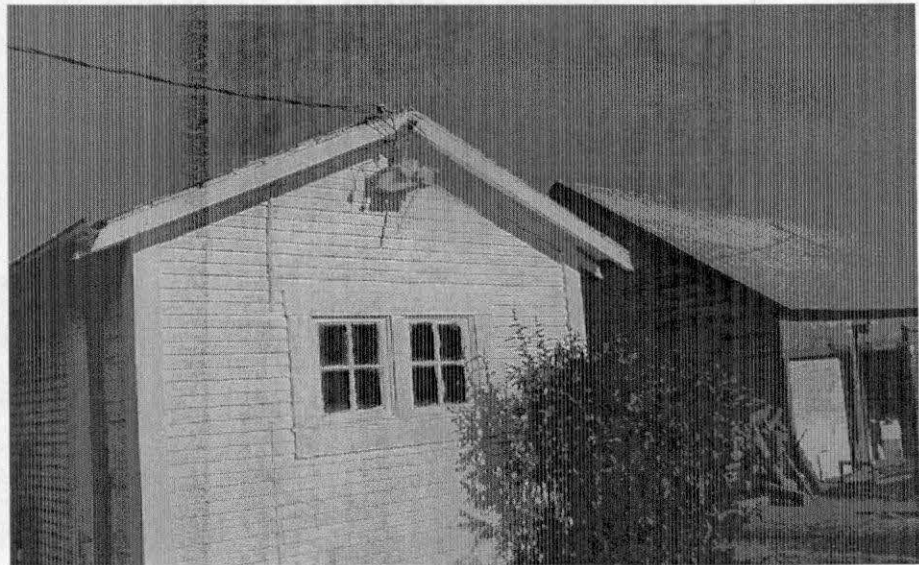


would be enough. Outside the window (**Illustration 36**), as is nearly impossible to avoid are your rows of pear trees, seemingly continuing ad infinitum. Conversely, if you were working in this row of trees, your visual home would be that of the furo. In each of these

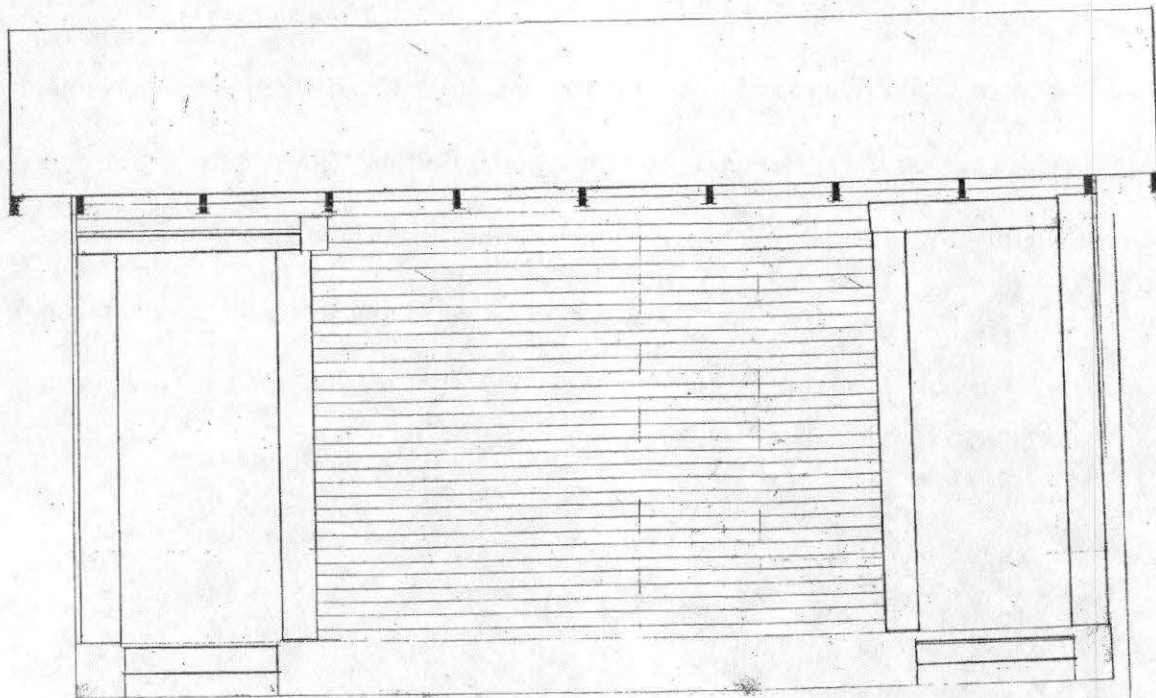


four cases, it is incredible to see how close the orchard comes to the farm house. No acreage was underused.

On the flip side
of the building,
to the east, there
are two
windows
providing light
into the
woodshed

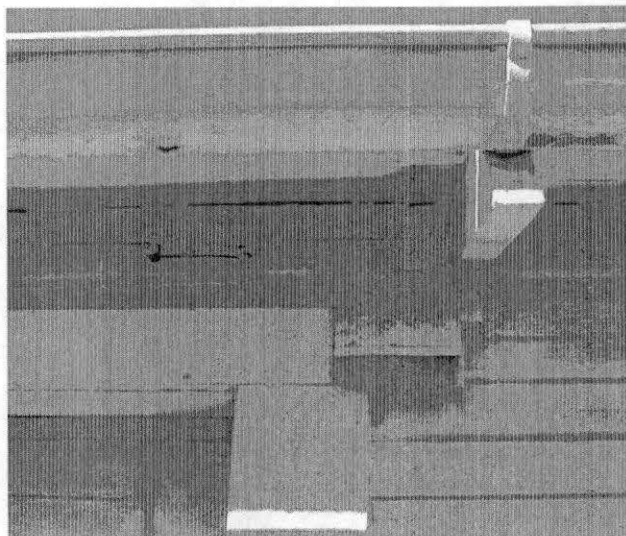


(shown in **Illustration 37**), and otherwise the building is identical. On the south elevation (**Figure 20**), lower left, the two doors lead into the furo on the left, and the



woodshed on the right. Directly across from the furo door, as previously noted, is the kitchen door.

To the right (**Illustration 38**) we have a close up of the exhaust vent, shown in the previous elevation, which was for the dryer which sat just inside the door to the right, according to Mark Namba. Below to the right (**Illustration 39**) is what was



found tucked under the building's northwest corner.

It is the same diameter and type of concrete cylinder.

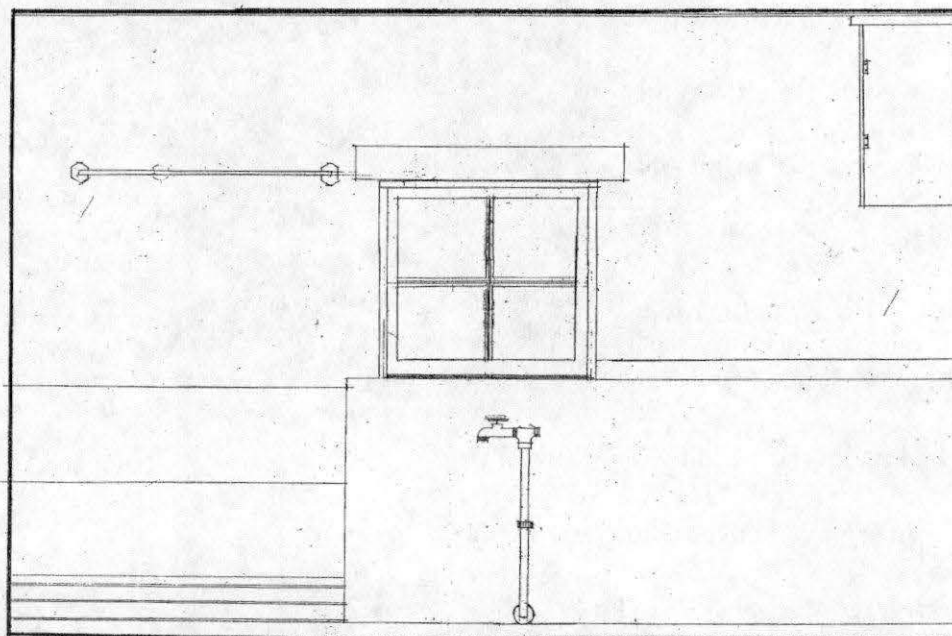
Below it is a large steel plate used to insulate the fire from the initial concrete span of the firebox. The firebox, as will be seen more clearly in the last furo, essentially kept most of the fire towards the front of the furo, where the steel plate sat, and the



hot air/smoke would then travel under the furo toward the chimney, thus heating up the water. While the fire certainly came in direct contact with the bottom metal sheet of the

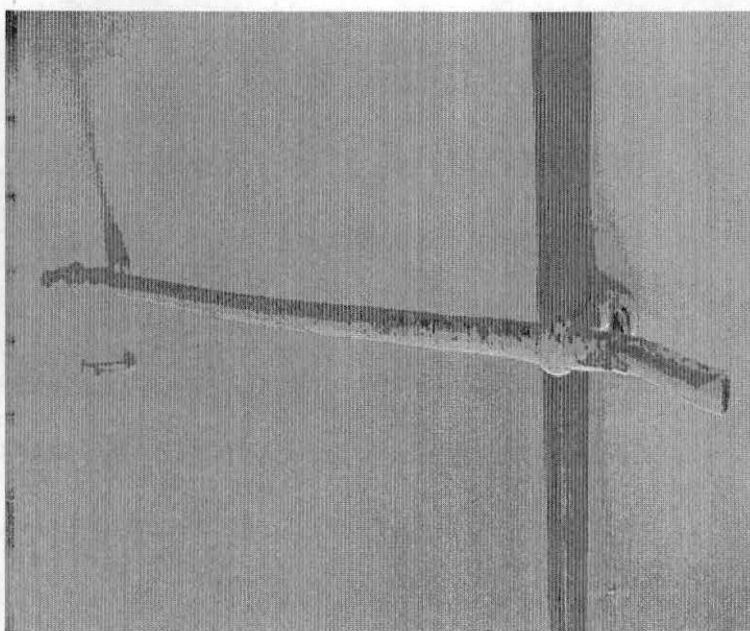
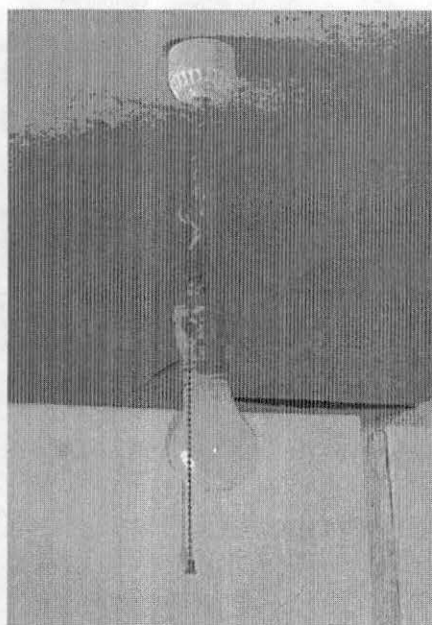
bath, it was minimized somewhat by this steel plate shown above, also evident at the Takasumi and Kiyokawa furos.

Inside the furo room, there are still a few vestiges of the furo's brief period of use. Mark believes that while the furo was built in 1948, it was shortly thereafter that they

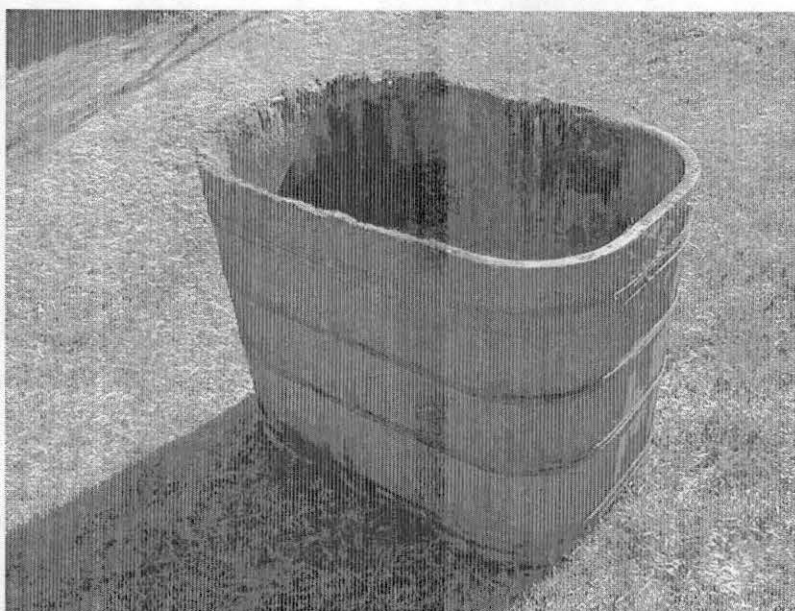


took it out, and used it strictly for laundry. Of course, some of these features could have

served both needs, it is clear that the presence of towel racks (**Illustration 40**, next page), particularly the height of the one over the window, would imply there was a raised platform and a bathing tub below it. Finally, the room is lit by a single bulb still in the center (**Illustration 41**, next page). In the above **Figure 21**, these elements are more clearly seen in a west facing elevation. Also there is a plywood backing for the galvanized sheet. The shelving unit to the upper right appears to have served the more recent usage of washer and dryer, serving as a storage for cleaning materials.



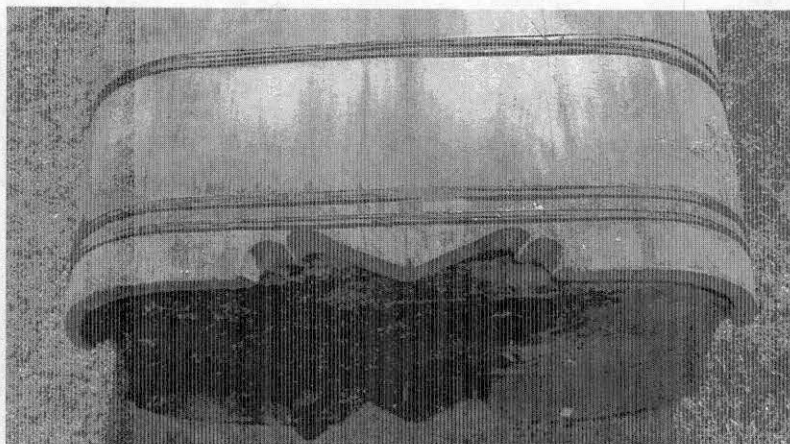
An oddity that was found on the Namba property was this bathing tub right and below (**Illustrations 42 and 43** respectively), a c. 1960 bathing tub brought back from



Japan by Mark for his first wife, Kikuku "Kiku" (Shibui) Namba. Born in Tokyo in 1929, Kikuku was particular about having a furo in the house in Dee. So Mark purchased this traditional style wood bath with a

copper box that would be inserted in the side and have a fire inside it, thus heating the entire. Elegantly detailed, as shown in the photograph above (**42**), at the bottom of was a

stainless steel plug,
which would let the
water out and it
would escape through
the carved bottom
openings. Ultimately,



Mark's wife grew impatient as he attempted to cut an appropriate hole for the copper box,
and "she smashed it," leading to the end of this bathing tub for anything but an
ornamental feature to the yard.³⁴⁴

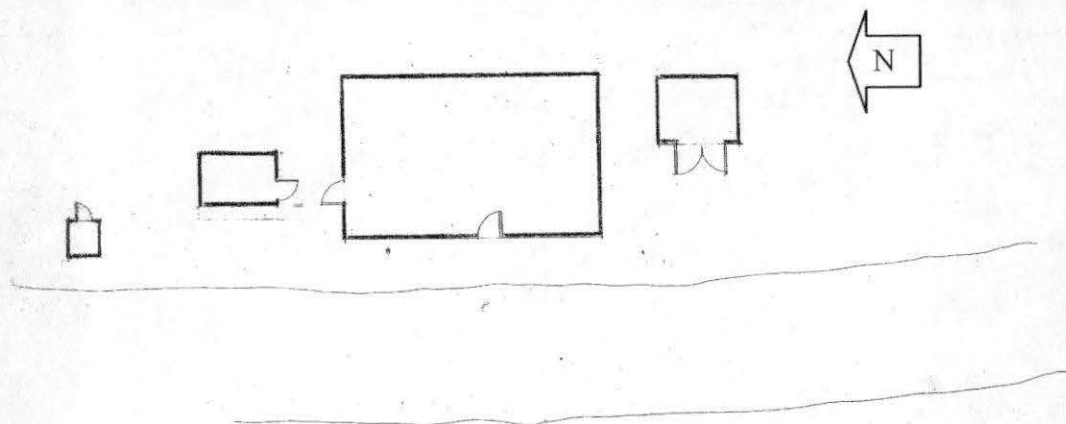
³⁴⁴ Mark Namba, interview.

THE KIYOKAWA FURO II C. 1950

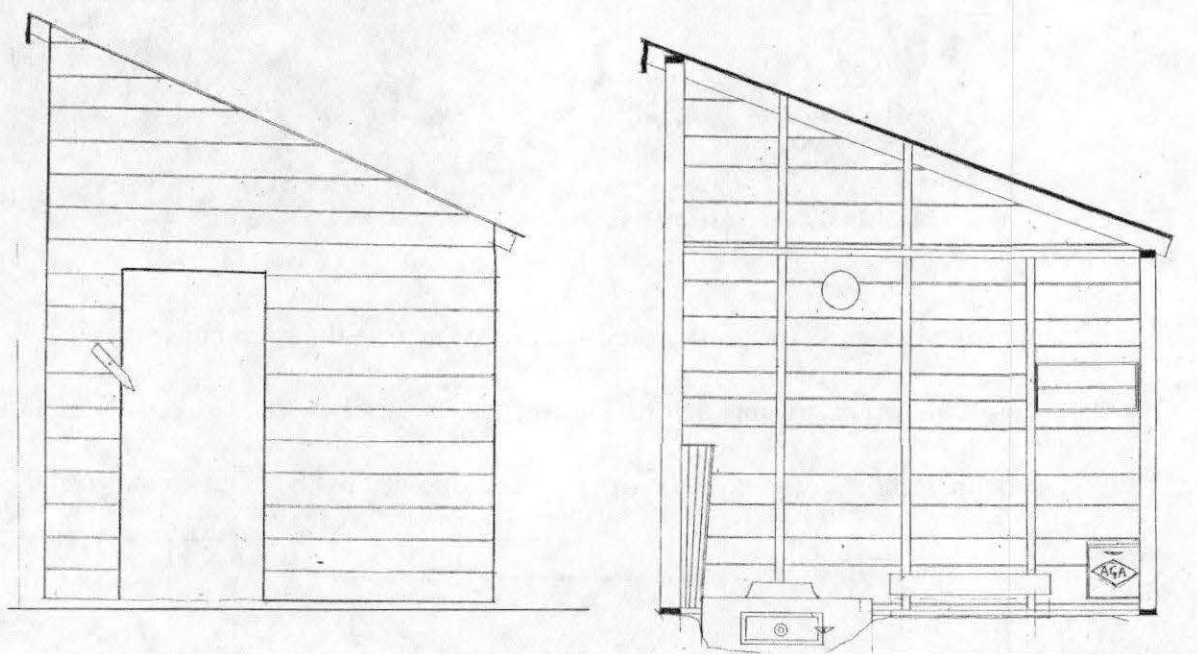


The Kiyokawa family, long after they had moved up into the 1935 house on the hill, kept the house, shown in the plan below (**Figure 22**), for families who worked on the farm.

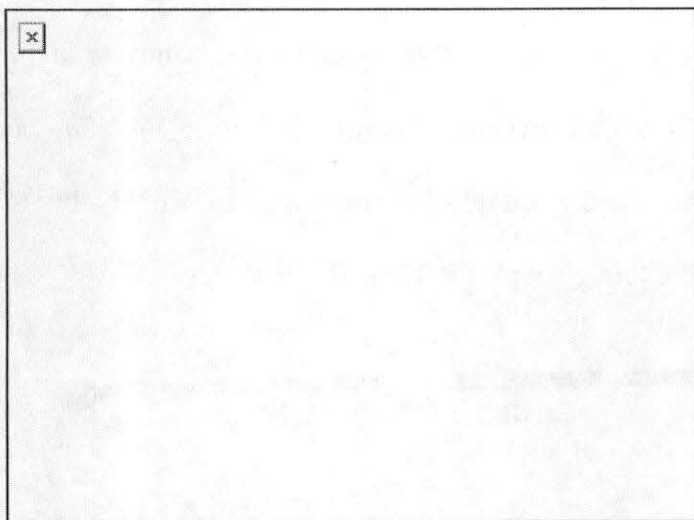
The southern-most building was a woodhouse, followed by the main house, then the furo,



then a “PWA outhouse,” according to Kay.³⁴⁵ Prior to this furo (**Illustration 44**), there was the original family furo which had served the family before the 1935 furo was built. It was on the same location, serving both this house, and house just to the north, where the road is now built. This furo remained until 1950, used by the Filipino workers, according to Kay, until fire struck, and nearly burned the house down with the furo. The Kiyokawa’s rebuilt the furo, and this is what remains today, though presently used as a chicken coop.



³⁴⁵ Kay Kiyokawa, interview.



Unpainted, crude, and yet functional, the wood shed was simply a furo, no washing, no windows, save those cut out of the wall (**Figure 23**), and a hole in the wall for the exhaust. The entrance

(**Figure 24**, on the left) to the kitchen was directly across for the entrance to the furo.

Inside (**Figure 25** on the previous page), we see shelves created out of old fruit boxes.

To the left is a channel of wood which is still unexplained in origin or purpose. Below

(**Illustration 45**) is the concrete firebox, which without the furo, permits a better understanding of how these functioned.

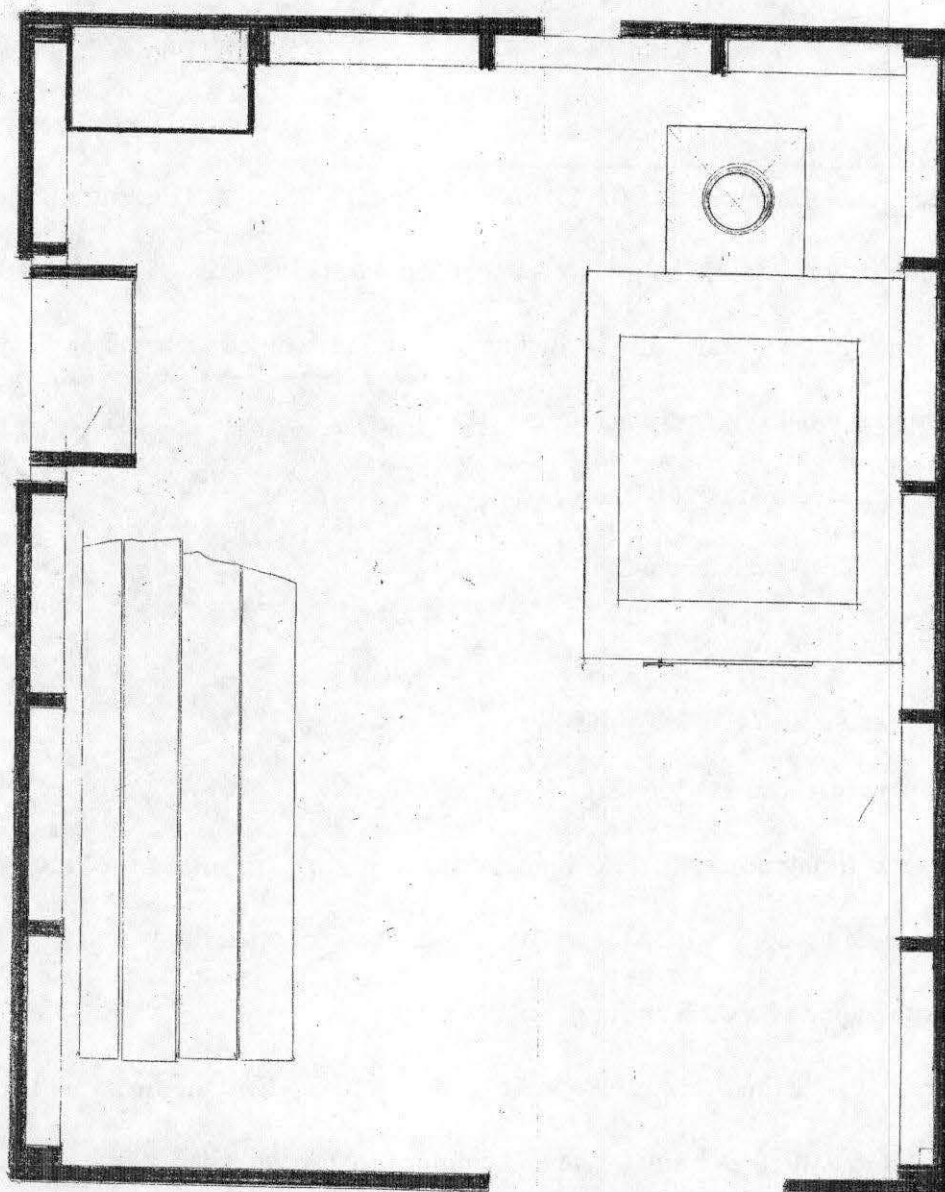
The fire box is best seen in the plan on the next page (**Figure**



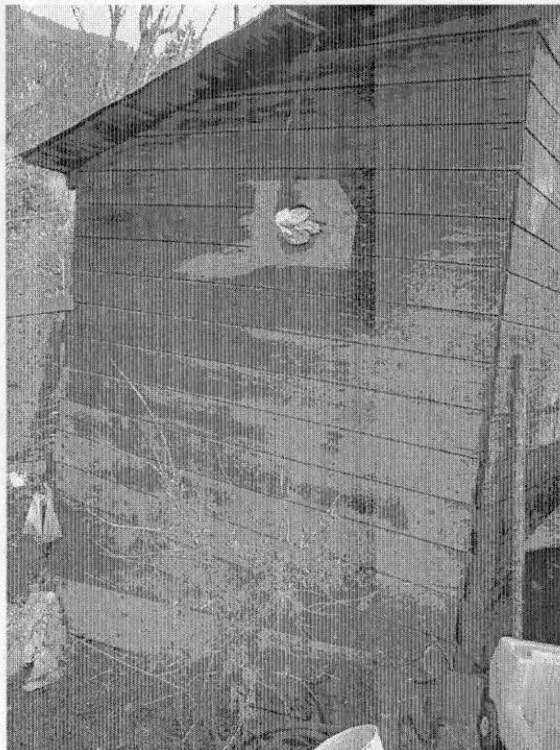
26) and **Illustration 45**. In conjunction with **Figure 25**, you can see the fire was feed near the furo door, where the oven door serviced the open fire which is, in the photograph, where a handful of gourds reside.

Inside the firebox, below the bathing tub, is where the fire would take place. At the far end, there is a small flue and chimney that would channel the smoke up and out

through the hole in the wall. This is the essence of the American style furo as recreated in the United States. Fire on one side, ventilation elsewhere, tub upon concrete firebox, and the sheet metal bottom as insulation between the fire and the water. Variations can be seen in the all metal versus metal and wood tubs, and the sizes vary slightly, but this is the predominant form found in the furo examples in Hood River Valley.



On the perimeter, to the east, in the elevation shown earlier (**Figure 23**), three holes were cut into the façade, the upper two likely out of desire for light, located roughly in the location of the furo, on the opposing wall. The entire building is on a sliding slope, so two sets of railroad ties are stacked to keep it in place. In the photograph below (**Illustration 46**, the crude chimney appeared to be essentially a tinned hole in the wall.



Apparently this may not have solved ventilation problems, as on the east elevation, there is a series of shiplap panels nailed to keep the building insulated, and yet as shown below (**Illustration 47**) the ladder, one such panel was nailed below to permit airflow out of the upper region of the furo room.

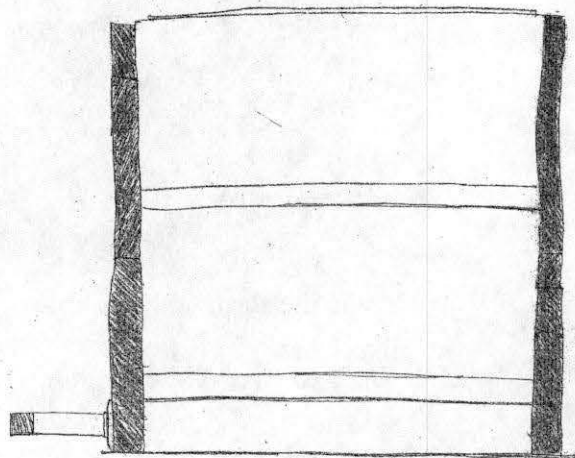
Inside the furo, with the absence of much light, the lower photograph is evidence to the wiring of a light inside the furo, to provide a way for the user to see what he or she is doing, particularly given the shady location of the furo under the trees.



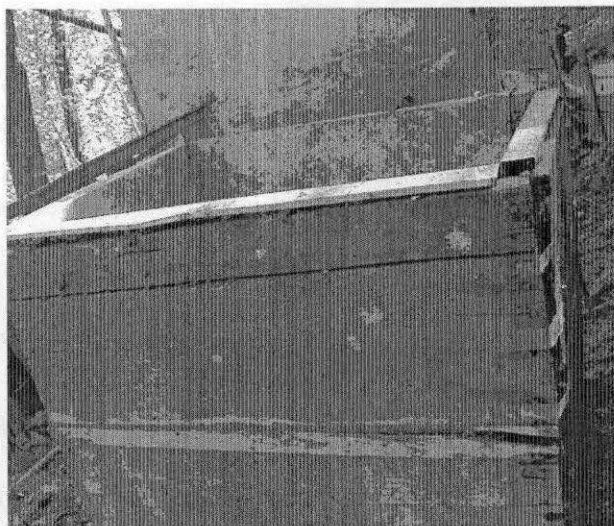
In the photograph to the right (**Illustration 48**) there is some remaining evidence of what was once a wood floor, providing some degree of elevation for the feet above the ground, since there is no concrete floor in this case. All that remains are there four planks.



Outside, and down the hill, the original furo (tub) was found. Then being used as a prop for a hose, it has since been lost to reuse, a sad instance of having fortunately recorded the furo before its loss, but the hindsight of realizing it could have been easily saved in lieu of plenty of other wood that could have been used for the chicken wall, or whatever future use it served.



In the **Illustration (49)** to the right, we see the furo as it existed outside the building. In previous section (**Figure 27**), it is shown as simply a wooden box with a sheet metal tub inside. Crudely constructed, yet inside it contained a printed name of origin, “Japan,” as shown to the right. This bath is the most basic of the set, probably due to replacement of a “courtesy” furo for the itinerant farmers who lived there. Yet the features and dimensions remain consistent.



The open drain would have likely drained directly out into the ground, considering this furo included not floor or drain, per se.

As with all the furos examined, the themes are not hard to miss. Modest, proximate to the kitchen and firewood, lighting source given the evening use, tub dimensions are consistently within inches of each other, and the formula of the firebox, furo and chimney, unchanged. In light of the close connectedness to their homeland, the Issei were also closely connected in how they exacted their furo experience.

LOCAL DESIGN

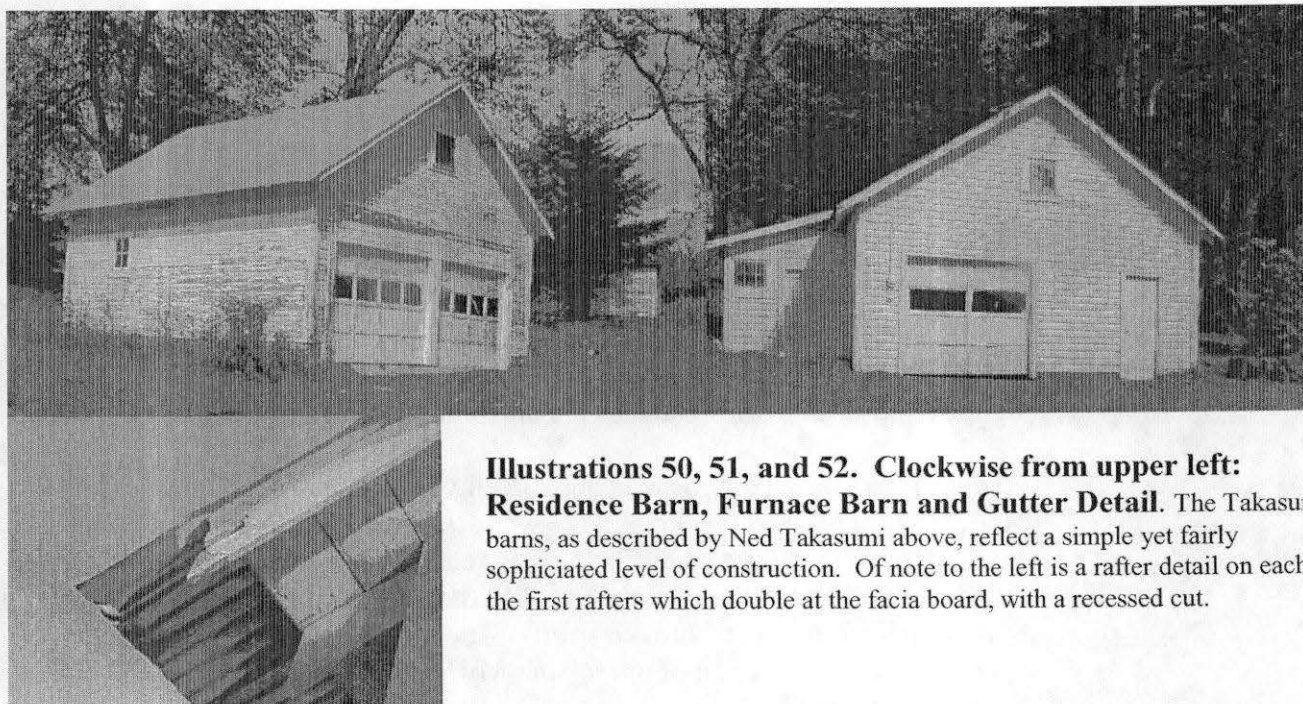
In order to understand the local design and diversity within it, one must understand the spirit of tinkering, experimentation, and inventiveness that characterized the rural farm and his relationship with his existence. With respect to building, instead of picturing these furo as first generation constructs, we must envision alteration as the normal, acceptable mode for what was happened to a structure in 20th century rural Oregon. As money and invention permitted, the furo would evolve, including the building which housed it, from a rustic tub holding water in an unpainted wooden shack, to a relatively sophisticated bathing tub inside a larger multipurpose building frequently with enclosed wood storage. There was hot and cold water on demand, both for showering and bathing, in a shape and fashion that likely never even occurred in Japan.

In Japan previous to their arrival, most rural Japanese communities would rely on carpenters in nearby towns, or traveling carpenters who might visit a village. In Hood River County, the Issei built houses, furo, etc. by themselves, or with the aid of the community members.³⁴⁶ As Kats Sato of Dee put it in an interview, “most Issei, the older generation, they were pretty good carpenters...they were pretty handy. They all built their own home. Built everything. Real pioneers...learned out of necessity.”³⁴⁷ This sentiment is confirmed throughout the interview with the Hood River Nisei, reflecting on how even fairly significant buildings were constructed by the family: “then they made the

³⁴⁶ Kunio, 56.

³⁴⁷ Kats Sato, interview by Chris Bell, digital recording, Sato residence, Dee Oregon. File: SatoK3, 34:15-35:10, author holds only copy.

garage, two [two-story] garages [did your family build those?]. Oh yeah, I can remember when we were building them.”



Illustrations 50, 51, and 52. Clockwise from upper left: Residence Barn, Furnace Barn and Gutter Detail. The Takasumi barns, as described by Ned Takasumi above, reflect a simple yet fairly sophisticated level of construction. Of note to the left is a rafter detail on each of the first rafters which double at the fascia board, with a recessed cut.

Further evidence of their carpentry skill can be seen with something as simple yet traditional as the *mochitsuki* making, a traditional New Year's celebration and custom for Japanese families in the Valley. The making of *mochi* (sweet rice cakes) could be comparable in being a fundamental feature to the Japanese character as the *furo*. In the case of Kay Kiyokawa, the outdoor oven used for this tradition is still in situ (**Illustration 53**). Besides



being another example of Japanese culture tucked into an otherwise mundane farm landscape, the craftsmanship given to the boxes, the *kine* (hammer), the hollowed wooden log into which the rice was pounded (*usu*) and even the lid, pictured here, all reflect a simple yet beautiful form, emanating from an intrinsic talent in many of these pioneer Issei.

Peach farmer and Sansei, David Masumoto, in his work *Harvest Son*, provides a unique insight into both the Goemonburo that his grandparents knew and the experience he had with them taking baths in California. In describing the farmhouse in Kumamoto his grandparents grew up in, he describes the *ofuro*/bathing experience during his visit:

Nightly I enjoyed a bath in an ancient metal vessel that resembled an inverted bell...As I transferred my weight, the wooden board sank and protected my feet from burning on the hot metal bottom. By curling myself into a fetal position, I avoided touching the hot metal tub around me...Following a day in the fields, an *ofuro* tempered worn and broken spirits. The soothing water fostered a benevolence and a feeling of optimism. My best thinking was done during and right after an *ofuro*.³⁴⁸

Masumoto eloquently captures the subtleties the *furo* offers to the weary body and soul. Yet he carries further to compare and contrast his contemporary memory with that of his childhood, in the California, with this consistent story across the West of the thrift, dimension and experience:

Many older Japanese-American houses had their own *ofuro*, before rural electrification and running hot water [and many did after]. They made their tubs from galvanized sheet metal folded into a rectangle two and a half by three feet and about thirty inches deep. The edges were rolled into a curl to prevent cuts, creating a smooth surface. No different in Japan, each had a wooden raft that sank under the bather's weight...Over the years, the nails...worked loose from constant swelling with moisture. Usually more were tapped in, holding the raft together for another year or two...Eventually the metal bottom deteriorated from

³⁴⁸ Masumoto, *Harvest Son*, 93.

the daily fires, I remember, while I was growing up, dozens of these discarded baths resting in farm junk piles next to discarded disk blades...and bent pipes...One ingenious farmer...made it into a huge, portable barbeque...³⁴⁹

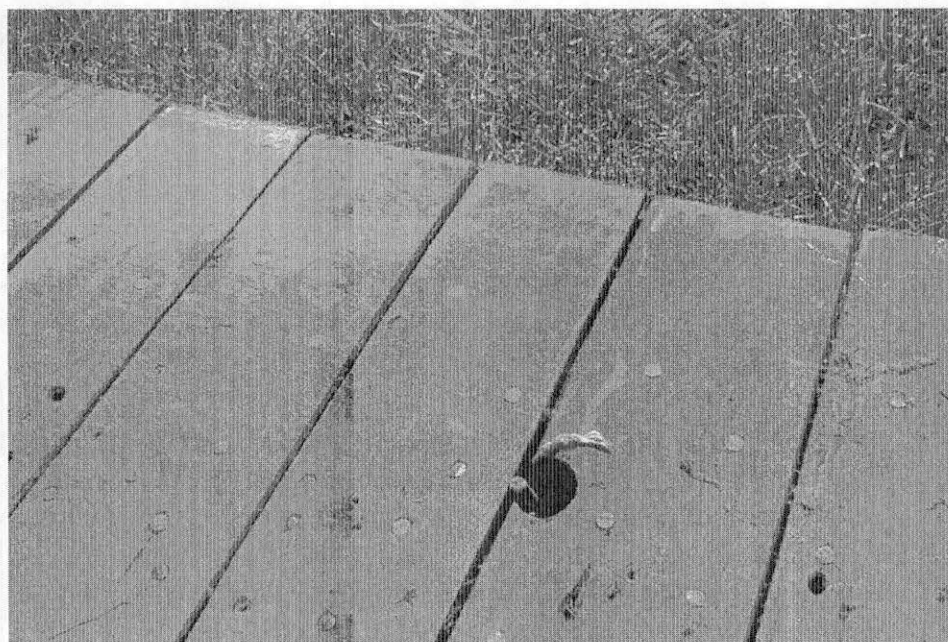
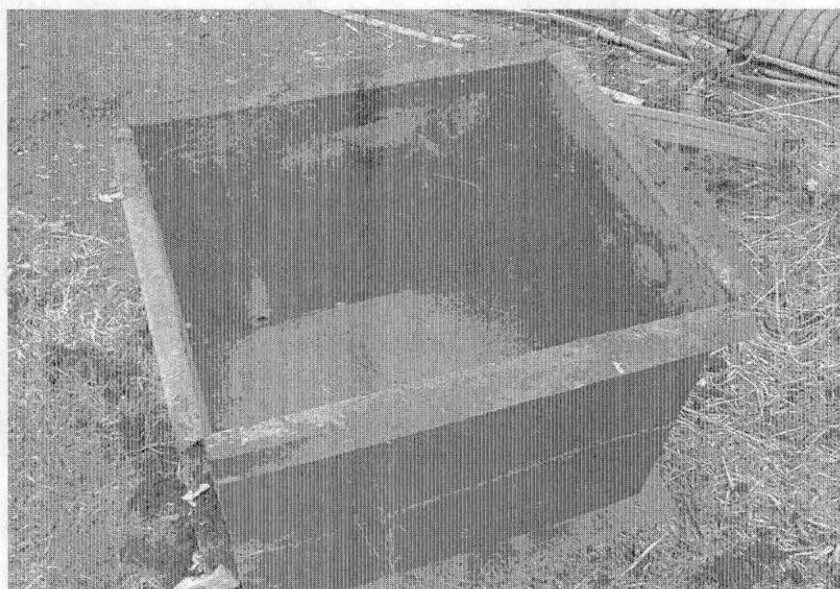


Illustration 54. Kiyokawa Sana The *sana* in the Kiyokawa I furo exemplifies Masumoto's point perfectly.

At the Kiyokawa farm, there is a discarded tub presently turned upside down



(shown here,

Illustration 55

turned right side

up), over a metal

wheel, simply

left there as

many objects

³⁴⁹ Masumoto, *Harvest Son*, 94-96.

tend to be, strewn about a tired barn building worn out from use, improvements in technology, or both. It fits the Masumoto description well, made of once galvanized sheet metal, with almost the *exact* the dimensions offered (Masumoto memory: 36" X 30" X <30" deep vs. Kiyokawa measured: 36" X 29" X 27" deep). As was the case here, the edges were rolled over to prevent cuts, and the holes that opened up in the bottom due to the heat no doubt lead to its ultimate demise. Masumoto delves deeper beyond the tactile:

The *ofuro* seemed like the one luxury the Issei allowed themselves. Life in the fields was harsh, and many dreams quickly melted in the San Joaquin Valley's hundred-degree days of summer harvest or froze during the tedious pruning on cold, damp foggy mornings. The blazing fire, the hot water, the soothing steam – the *ofuro* connected Issei to a Japan they left behind and the hope, excitement, and fears they had carried across an ocean.

I can remember visiting neighbors and watching their grandfathers and grandmothers head out for an evening bath. The *ofuro* was often located in an outbuilding with a worn path from the main house. In the cool evening air, seventy-year-old legs shuffled...with a slight slouch...in a gentle, almost graceful bend. In their arms they carried a small towel and clean night clothes. Later I heard the sighs of comfort as they talked to themselves, whispering in Japanese. Sometimes I could hear them humming a Japanese folk song, like "Akatombo," "Red Dragonfly." "Yuu-yake, A-ka tom-bo..."

In my childhood, I enjoyed taking an *ofuro* with my brother and sister, all of us literally swimming in the tepid water. The three siblings were required to bathe together in order to create enough weight to sink the raft and avoid the hot metal bottom...Baachan [grandmother] stoked the fire for us, and in between giggles and laughing we'd scream about her making the fire too hot. But she'd answer us in Japanese and toss another grapevine stump on the red embers, waiting for our clamoring response of joy and protest.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Masumoto, *Harvest Son*, 94-96.

What Masumoto has captured here is the essence of this thesis' core belief: the furo offered more than respite for tired and aching muscles, bones, but served the spirit as well. It connected them with the homeland, yet was distinctly part of the American context in design and form. It unified families, families whose children were often in protest of the customs their parents held to so dearly. Ned Takasumi, who grew up in Odell, Oregon and Kats Sato, who still lives near the homeplace in Dee, can attest to this. Ned, here, describes why he resisted becoming an interpreter after the war:

I was anti-Japanese language from when I was a kid. I had to go to Japanese school and I didn't want to go to Japanese school...yeah, I was telling my dad, 'it is not for me to learn Japanese, it is for you to learn English.' Because, I figured, well hell, I am an American. The army didn't think so...³⁵¹

Kats version of the same story:

We never talk to each other in Japanese...we had to, no, they sent us to Japanese school when we were kids...so we could be bilingual, I guess. After graduation, my Japanese went out the door. After all, I am American, not Japanese.³⁵²

The furo, while no child has ever truly embraced taking a bath, was enjoyed as Masumoto described with multiple siblings often "swimming" in the furo. Misako Takasumi, of Odell, remembers the first furo prior to Camp, having married Mits in 1940 and lived on the Takasumi property for nearly two years, she had a chance to see Mits younger siblings (Mits was the eldest of 8) in action:

The [ofuro] over here [located adjacent to the 1950 house, torn down once the 1950 house was built], they use that with a washing machine so it was a lot

³⁵¹ Ned Takasumi, interview by Chris Bell, digital recording, 19 May 2005, Ned Takasumi residence, Happy Valley (Portland), Oregon. File: TakasumiN, 5:00-5:30.

³⁵² Kats Sato, interview by Chris Bell, digital recording, 17 May 2005, Sato residence, Dee, Oregon. File: SatoK 3, 23:00-23:30.

bigger. So a mother, and two children, or three kids could go and take a bath. And the tub was much bigger. It is double the size of the one up there [the 1947 furo, which was 40" X 27" X 27" deep]. The kids would say 'we would like to swim in there.' Or maybe it was one and a half [the 1947 furo]. Little wider. So the kids like to swim around in there. They thought it was a party going in the tub.³⁵³

Design-wise, the bathhouses in Hood River Country were one of two major types: integrated and isolated. The integrated type came in various forms, but in the main it was part of a larger structure. The Isolated type was a stand-alone building which served the sole purposes of being used as a bathhouse. Within these two types there are numerous sub-sets.

Of those studied, Kageyama, Kiyokawa I and Namba were all integrated. Namba and Kiyokawa were integrated from the start, meaning the design of the outbuilding included the furo within it from the very beginning, or at least the physical evidence is suggests this has been the case where oral history is difficult to pinpoint. In the Namba example, the building is adjacent to the main house, and is a combination wood shed – furo, a logical combination given the snow and rain, and the high demand which a wood-fired furo would require, let alone the wood stove. The furo was situated in the back, away from the street, though the furo entrance was directly across from the kitchen door. It has a window facing the orchard. While there was no door between the two spaces, it appears the furo was fed from the outside of the building, so there was no particular gain in connecting the rooms, especially since the door and the window already constrain the amount of wall space for stacking wood.

³⁵³ Misako Takasumi, interview by Chris Bell, digital recording, 20 May 2005, Misako Takasumi residence, Odell, Oregon. File: TakasumiM, 3:20-4:10.

At Kiyokawa I, the furo is integrated into a wood shed, tool shed, and outhouse building. The furo and the outhouse were at opposite ends of the building, likely by design. Between them were the wood shed, and facing the fields were the easily accessed outdoor “closets” for tools and the like. The entire building is directly behind the house, out of view from the road, but with the furo entrance closest to the back door from the kitchen.

In the example of the Kageyama furo, the furo is a later addition to a large barn. It is not clear where the furo was previously, considering the house was built by the Kageyama family and the version that currently exists is a later iteration that the early “Goemonburo” type furos, instead taking hot and cold water from hoses to fill the furo.³⁵⁴ In this case, the furo is set in the very back of the barn, clearly an addition, and yet had relatively direct access from the back kitchen door through a series of well-considered doors to the furo. It included windows on two sides facing the orchards around it.

The furo was rarely, at least in the early iterations, a building of wholly new construction. Parts of old buildings or discarded scrap wood from the Dee Mill in the case of Dee, was probably used for new construction of the furo. It would not seem to imply any less significance to the space itself, but logically an economizing of material, cost, and convenience.

The siting of the furo also reflects an efficiency which stems from the two biggest contributors to its purpose: wood and water. As was often the case, stoking the kudo would be done not only in preparing the furo, but during the bathing itself should the

³⁵⁴ Charlie Kageyama, interview July 17 2004.

water begin to get tepid. Therefore having proximity to wood, ideally covered, would realize a practical end for the would-be stoker, especially if it is mid-bath. The designs of the furo therefore clearly keeps this consideration in mind, as will be discussed.

The second important factor is the water source. Early furo required filling through the carrying of water buckets, a laborious and lengthy process, and one which would be facilitated by keeping the distance short. In nearly every case the furo was proximate to the kitchen, where water either originated or similarly would be brought. It was not lost on the Issei that the furo typically followed dinner, so to the extent their proximity is connected in this way is debatable, but nonetheless relevant. In the case of the Kageyama furo, Charlie Kageyama reported that their family had a sluice that ran from the kitchen to the furo, eliminating the need for transportation.³⁵⁵

Earlier versions of the furo at the Takasumi residence, the Sato's first furo, and the first Namba furo responded to this same issue: water. Kats Sato describes the first furo they had while growing up:

It was to the side of the house...it just strictly a bath house, with a pump on one end. Until electricity came, everyone used the old pump. [My father] did have a flume for the bathhouse originally, after he tore that old bathhouse down, he built another one, and the pump was right in the bathhouse itself. So you didn't have to carry the water very far to fill it.³⁵⁶

Mark Namba remembers a similar situation:

³⁵⁵ Charlie Kageyama, interview by Chris Bell, tape recording, 24 April 2004, Kageyama Residence, Hood River, Oregon.

³⁵⁶ Kats Sato, interview, 17:00-17:30.

[Who started the furo?] I was doing it, I was about 9 years old, what I had to do was pump the water from the well, like a trough, or a flume, and after you had it about half full, got that fire going.³⁵⁷

In fact, the Namba's first furo was the only furo that actually was ever in plain view of the road, in the present location of the pond and Japanese garden. When asked why this was positioned in a relatively obvious location, Mark offered this thought:

[It was right in front of the house?] The well was in front, that is why. That's where we pump the water, and run it right inside the bathhouse. Remember doing that.

Finally in talking with Ned about the seemingly awkward placement of the Takasumi 1947 furo, he came to the conclusion that it was predicated on the location of the main water line:

[Did you use that 1947 bathhouse often?] The one up on the little hill? [Yes] Periodically when I came home. But not that often. You know it's a long walk up there. [Why do you think it was placed there?...] Mits, well, the first house was built with the wrong plan, in the wrong...place. Well, Mits did the best he could. You really have to be an architect to put a house the way it was supposed to be put. You got to orient the house. And get the house designed where it is functional...nobody goes in that front door. [So the bathhouse?]. Well, it is right next to the water main...that would stand to reason.³⁵⁸

It is also true of that area that Dee Flat was one of the highest concentration of Issei families in the Valley, per capita. In fact, a few long-time locals with whom I spoke about the Japanese, when I told them of the great number of bath houses I found in that area, said that area had often been referred to as "Jap Flat," implicating its high ratio of Japanese settlers to others. Dee had emerged largely due to people willing to buy cheap

³⁵⁷ Mark Namba, interview, 14:30-15:00.

³⁵⁸ Ned Takasumi, interview, 27:00-29:00.

land in exchange for the hard labor of blasting and clearing land full of giant stumps.

Both Mark Namba and Kay Kiyokawa vividly described their parents working on weekends and nights blasting stumps, trying to eke out a plot of land to grow strawberries, asparagus, and plant an orchard which would be 8-10 years out prior to turning a profit. Therefore it comes as little surprise that the majority of settlers in this area would have been Issei pioneers.

Many of the other residents of Dee lived in the village adjoining the sawmill, the Oregon Lumber Company, which included a number of Japanese workers, who apparently lived outside the center of town:

[CSB: Where they in the boarding houses?] None of them stayed at the boarding houses. On this side of the river, there used to be six houses. Real good houses. And then, beyond there, there used to be some other houses. The Japanese who work for them had these houses there and they had their own furo, well, I didn't ask them, but they probably built one.³⁵⁹

So-called "camptown", in a clearing along the river's east fork and close to the mill, the surrounding community included the Dee Hotel, a boardinghouse, a post office, store, tavern and a box factory.³⁶⁰ Along the west bank of the river were "two long buildings, each divided into four housing units, and approximately twelve small homes. Connected by boardwalk, they were constructed simply with shiplap siding and shingle roofs. Each unit was spare, composed of a tiny living room, kitchen, and bedroom and heated by a

³⁵⁹ Kay Kiyokawa, interview, 49:00-50:15.

³⁶⁰ Tamura, 73.

black wrought iron [suspect he meant “cast iron” – wrought iron was not used for stove manufacture] kitchen stove.”³⁶¹

Among the Caucasian laborers in the camp resided the Japanese workers and their families, including Miyozo Yumibe, who gave an account of his situation there, which seemingly validates Kay Kiyokawa’s memory:

American single men working at the sawmill lived in a Dee boardinghouse and hotel. All the Japanese men wanted to save money to return to Japan, so we lived in the sawmill camp. We spent money only for food and clothes – nothing frivolous. Life in the camp was pretty good, because there were many young people. I lived alone in a twelve- by twelve- foot room with just a bed and a small tin stove inside. My room was free, but the house was not well constructed. It was very cold in the winter so I had to use the stove. We had a mess hall and an outside privy close by. A cook prepared our meals, and I paid a fee each month.³⁶²

Masaji Kusachi, an Issei interview by Linda Tamura, indicated the Oregon Lumber Company was progressive, clearly in its willingness to sell so much land to the Japanese, but even in hiring them. As many shifted from transient work of the railroads to sawmill labor. It has many of the features of railroad work, including a high probability of accidents, and racial hostility, often being refused as employees by a strong Caucasian union. Toledo, Oregon being the most notable case in Oregon. Yet at the Oregon Lumber Company, started in 1906 adjacent to a vast virgin Doug Fir forest, Miyozo Yumibe, another Issei, found the work difficult, but enjoyable, “Oh yes, I liked my job! At that time [c. 1918] the inside jobs were held by about twenty Japanese.”³⁶³

³⁶¹ Tom Inukai, interview by Linda Tamura, 3 August 1986, Odell, Oregon.

³⁶² Miyozo Yumibe, interview by Linda Tamura, 73.

³⁶³ Miyozo Yumibe, interview by Linda Tamura, 71.

During the depression, Masaji Kusachi found work on the famed “green chain” to keep his family fed:

I earned thirty-five centers an hour [during those depression years, according to Miyozo Yumibe, farm worked were earning only twelve cents an hour]...the Oregon Lumber Company was largely supported by Mormon church people, so we were treated very well. In this mill there were mostly Japanese workers and a few Chinese and Italians.³⁶⁴

In fact Dee was one of two places where a Japanese erected a community hall in the 1920s. One in Hood River, and one in upper Dee, namely Dee Flat. According to historian Linda Tamura, during the mid-1920s, about thirty-five Japanese families were residents of Dee. Kats Sato's father donated the land, constructed by the Issei, and was 50' by 100' of simple clapboard construction. It hosted “Caucasian orchestras, kendo and judo lessons, and community meetings. Outside the north end of the hall, chicken wire extended ten feet high to surround modest dirt courts for local tennis tournaments.”³⁶⁵ Masaji Kusachi, a Dee resident, recounted some of the events that took place there:

I remember we used to have New Year's parties and weddings. In Japan the New Year was celebrated for three days. We brought this custom with us to the United States, but our party last just one day. Our gatherings of fifty to sixty was *nigiyaka* [lively] with lots of children. We all dressed in our suits and fancy clothes and ate Japanese food potluck. School children taught by Tsujisan, the Japanese schoolteacher, put on plays in Japanese.

³⁶⁴ Masaji Kusachi, interview by Linda Tamura, 72. Linda notes that the Oregon Lumber Company, who also constructed the Mt. Hood Railroad in addition to the mill, was backed by David Eccles family, Mormons from Ogden, Utah. He apparently had a significant stake in Oregon lumber businesses, a fuller recapitulation of his life can be found in Leonard J. Arrington, *David Eccles: Pioneer Western Industrialist* (1975).

³⁶⁵ Tamura, 125.

We also showed films from Japan – as many as four or five showings a year – and they always drew a big crowd. In those days people toured the country showing Japanese films in Japanese communities.³⁶⁶

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The location and typology of the furo as it occurred in Hood River Valley bears little resemblance to its cultural ancestor on an outward level. Communities in Japan had long been accustomed to integration of furo into the lifestyles of the peasant farmer, and the modes in even these micro communities of providing for the furo, its location, and construction were fairly strictly ordered. By comparison, in a new setting, without the community of craftsman or the prototypical architecture or arrangement, but rather the more spacious and less refined by comparison outbuildings and farm buildings, the placement and development of the furo reflects a distinctly American outward appearance and function, while maintaining an inward and culturally significant connection to the progenitor.

The furo was consistently positioned behind the house, adjacent to the kitchen, considering it was predominantly a post-dinner experience and one that was relatively private and a cultural-specific practice, thus its location was intended to not set a family apart. Especially one that was already racially distinct:

[CSB: Did people ever ask about the furo?] No, we never talked about it, they probably thought we were taking showers, anyway [laughter – CSB: Do you know Dave Burkhart?] Yes. [He never knew about the furo –] He didn't? Well, he was from Milton-Freewater. Near Pendleton. [He said he has been on every farm in Hood River –

³⁶⁶ Masaji Kusachi, interview by Linda Tamura, 125.

laughter]. Well, it was always in the back someplace. Hidden, like a wood shed, or something.³⁶⁷

Every family in the family had furo, [and yet nobody knows about it – laughter].

The connectivity of the buildings, often of the barn to the wood shed, to the workshop to the furo, closely aligned with the house, did not appear to be a function of a necessarily Japanese determinant, but likely harks back to Tobias Walker, and Thomas Hubka's extensive evaluation of the evolution of the American barnscape in New England seeking more efficiency, which eventually funneled out West.³⁶⁸

Yet dovetailed into the mix was furo, a unique to the Japanese farmer (as the sauna was to the Finnish farmer, and a number existed in Hood River Valley), and created a different kind of outbuilding that what would be previously seen. However this ultimate version of the furo came after, or between in some cases, a short but evolutionary-like process of development, from the first furo types, to the predominant second types, to the third, or final true furo era, confined to at most a 70 year period in the United States. Each period had hallmarks, which were undoubtedly present in later and earlier periods, but in view of the furos seen, these three periods can be safely discussed, though likely revised in the future.

Before launching into the three frameworks, there is a point to be made with respect to the term *unselfconscious* to describe the vernacular design and building

³⁶⁷ Kay Kiyokawa, interview, 47:00-48:30.

³⁶⁸ Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England*, Hanover, N.H.: University of New England Press, 1984, 203.

practice, as Christopher Alexander, in his *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, has outlined. As Thomas Hubka made clear, vernacular is viewed as unselfconscious only to the degree that the design system “is not articulated in drawings or written words, and is not continuously analyzed by its practitioners.”³⁶⁹ Conscious, through all three periods, were the builders of the splinters, as there was never a corner that was not intentionally sanded down. Conscious were the placement of the towel holders, crude and rudimentary they may have been in the earlier iterations. Conscious were they of the heat loss, stuffing hay or eventually carved 2X4s into openings. Simply because it was unselfconscious in design, as Alexander made plain, it was minutely conscious in function.

One other strong point of information related to Hubka’s article on the misnomers of vernacular design, is the role of owner and designer. Not unlike the common Indo-European model society, the Japanese society similarly had a fairly established tradition and range of skilled craftsman capable of assisting with projects such as building a furo, though undoubtedly farmers or a tradesperson of some other ilk (unlikely furo construction was a full-time occupation in any Japanese farming communities). Still, without a consistent and necessarily established network, and made evident by oral interviews, the owners, the Issei, were generally the builders of the furo. Dramatically less complex than a house, which might have required some degree of outside professional or semiprofessional assistance, the furo was both a cultural construction and a simple one, thus in each case it was an owner-built one.

³⁶⁹ Thomas Hubka, “Just Folks Designing: Vernacular Designers and the Generation of Form,” edited by Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986, 428.

The purpose and method of the furo design is fairly circumscribed by habit and tradition. The innovation of the furo in the United States is a contextual change, yet the essence of the furo remained unchanged, grounded first in tradition and yet accommodating change as the situation permitted. As Hubka points out, this change is “not less creative than contemporary designers; they just create differently.”³⁷⁰ In fact the simplicity of the furo is misleading, every part of its creation came out of that evolving context of folk tradition in a changing context.

Carrying this hybrid generation one step further, we have the generative process of the vernacular design, generalized but applicable conceptually to our Japanese furo builders. These builders share a common interest in creating a furo for their families, although each often arrives at a slightly different result. As Hubka has shown, there is a continuous process of composition and decomposition within the balance of tradition and context framework. Furo builders operated in a narrow, culturally defined range of possibilities with respect to the furo itself. However, furo builders would then generate ideas for the reincarnation of the furo through integrating, thus decomposing the traditional furo as it existed in Japan, and composing a new form out of the abstracted function of the furo into the context of the modern, American farm. As Hubka’s analogy indicates with the comparison between Bricoleur (handyman) design versus Scientist (modern) design, the pre-constraint of tradition and function, with the additional constraint of limited resources and desire to integrate seamlessly (outwardly) with the dominant culture lead to a fairly predictable, but wholly different internally, outbuilding.

³⁷⁰ Hubka (1986), 428.

The structure of the furo design method allowed for a significant degree of individual interpretation and variety. There was the primary function of the furo, which across those studied, changed very little, even over the three major periods of furo design. However, the secondary and independent features took on a individuality based on the location, the users, the wealth of the family, the existing structures or lack thereof, and potentially, though hard to distill with certainty, the specific family history, namely the prefecture and their own cultural memory. To this end, it appears that the furo was so generally common among the rural communities in Japan that it is no surprising that while some minor variations may have occurred, imperceptible except to a well-versed cultural eye, the principal features of the tradition were the ones that were grossly carried over and replicated, though detailed, the level of detail would be universally recognized, it would seem, across the Issei at the time.

As immigrants, one fascinating observation on the structural level is to witness the physical structure of the stand-alone furo. With a few notable exceptions, they underlying framework is distinctly American. The spread of the studs is 24" as would be expected, for instance, likely a learned patterning as opposed to something culturally transferred. In general, the grid system for accommodating the furo was standard fare for the farm outbuilding of the early 20th century in Hood River Valley. While inner function varied from the norm, close study of the structure showed that the building itself did not. Shrewd furo builders likely focused on repetition from earlier buildings, assigning the part of the structure to proven methods while allowing the task of reinterpreting the furo

to their own creativity and thrift. Although these features represent the acceptance of some parts of a foreign building model, they do not signal a shift in the functions within.

SITING

While racialized by its distinctiveness, the landscape of the Japanese American would not necessarily be considered as a covert landscape, that is, one which attempted to mask its differences. In the instance of the Namba house in Dee, the Japanese Garden sat prominently in front of the house without any attempt to privatize that expression, and similarly a larger garden in Oak Grove, similarly overgrown and defunct, also sat prominently on the road. Arguably, the furo, a private bathing experience, was situated less due to the unusual or seemingly different nature of the practice and more out of the function, that of being close to the kitchen, which was frequently in the back, as well as the wood supply, also often towards the rear of a house. In this manifold cultural landscape, the Japanese American community were clearly aware of their differences, but for the most part, did not go to great lengths to purposefully conceal them.

As historian Dell Upton has written, much of the significance of the siting of a landscape requires an unraveling of both the seen and unseen pieces of evidence to reassemble a complex and complete analysis of space.³⁷¹ Furthermore, just to approach the multiple readings of the landscape, in his work on the racially segregated landscapes

³⁷¹ Dell Upton, "Seen, Unseen, and the Scene," *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Growth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 176.

of the 18th century Virginia, Upton recognizes our perception is conditioned by who we are, where we have been, what we have seen and where we are headed.³⁷² And not only as historians do we have to keep aware of this conditioned lens, but of the people involved in the landscape, both on the inside (Japanese) and the outside (Caucasians).

LOCAL PRACTICES

Taking a bath is believed to not only [be the] washing and cleaning of one's body, but also to be a symbolic act of marking that one's day's work is over and that one is ready to enjoy the family life. It also symbolizes ones being free of evils.³⁷³

In Hood River County, every Nisei interviewed would respond to the inquiry regarding any "spiritual" or "metaphysical" cleansing as far-fetched. Yet for every Nisei, the furo was "more than just a bath, it was a way of life."³⁷⁴ Not unlike the Japanese experience of rural Japan during the first half of the twentieth century, the physical evidence and oral history provide evidence that while basic, the furos in Hood River County offered the same experience.

Bathers, as it was explained multiple times with multiple interviews, sat on the platform on the side of the tub and scooped pans of hot water from the tub with which they would wash and rinse. Soap was often, but not always, used. The soap, however, was never to enter the tub. Once the bather was clean, which in some cases was subject

³⁷² Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Common places : readings in American vernacular architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 357.

³⁷³ Yamamoto, 71.

³⁷⁴ Kiyokawa, interview..

to debate, they would remove the wooden cover over the tub (which kept the heat in and set onto a floating platform that protected feet, young and old, from the hot metal bottom!³⁷⁵

The furo was instrumental to the Nikkei way of life. It was both a functional and an emotional one which uniformly impacted the family's daily routine. The furo served not only a literal place but likened to ones home, "a place of deep contentment in the innermost temple of the soul."³⁷⁶ Despite the variation and particularly configuration, the essential elements of the furo were strongly connected to the immigrant, individually or collectively, and deeply enmeshed in their lives.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Clare Cooper Marcus cited in Howard Davis, *Culture of Building*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 154.

CHAPTER 8: PRESERVATION PLAN

Japanese architecture in the United States has been unsung, both rarely celebrated or investigated, to the extent other ethnic communities have, particularly those on the East coast. This may be due on part to their relatively recent arrival, or their seemingly limited impact on the landscape. Yet for those who survey the Japanese-American landscape, we find that not only is there opportunities for understanding, but an equally timely and important opportunity for preservation.

Awareness of the past is essential to the maintenance of purpose in life. Without it we would lack all sense of continuity, all apprehension of causality, all knowledge of our own identity.³⁷⁷

The environs of historic sites and artifacts pose difficulties. Should they be shaped to give relics an appropriate ambience, or make them more viewable? Should surroundings be restored as they originally were? Or should they serve other purposes, such as interpretation, recreation or car parking? The difficulty with preserving the environs, natural or cultural, is that they are always in flux.

OVERVIEW

Asian Americans have left us with remarkably few obvious cultural imprints on the built environment and landscape.³⁷⁸ How can the protection of even a relatively few

³⁷⁷ David Lowenthal, *Age and Artifact, Dilemmas of Appreciation in Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*.

furo provide something meaningful for society that largely has little or no connection to this obscure now extinct traditional cultural practice? Certainly within the Japanese-American community there are historical, cultural and educational reasons for protecting this resource, but the opportunity exists for understanding, appreciating and valuing the broad range of cultural practices that are frequently drowned out by or invisible to our dominant culture. Preservation coupled with interpretation allow our cultural purview to be widened in unexpected ways.

The furo, as it appeared in the United States, became a hybrid of a Japanese tradition with the influence of an evolving community and cultures the majority of the Issei came to Hood River County during the Meiji Restoration, a restoration which had not necessarily entirely impacted the rural community from which they came, the Japanese in Hood River County initially maintained a language, traditions and customs that are no longer followed in Japan today.

PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

One consistent challenge to any and all preservation strategies is the question of context. While the setting these furo existed in is largely unchanged, it is unlikely that this will continue to be the case. Furthermore, these furo exist behind private homes, in many cases still the homes of the Issei families. While on the one hand the context is a near perfect opportunity for original interpretation, the reality of bringing outsiders to view a cultural feature long since out of use, currently in a state of disrepair and

³⁷⁸ Alanen and Melnick, 12.

predominantly used for other purposes, would lead to simultaneous disappointment and an invasion of privacy.

It is therefore necessary to offer a range of solutions, some which will essentially not make the furo known publicly but provide an opportunity and possibly financial resources to restore and maintain the furo as long as the family remains on the farm. At the other end of the spectrum, there is the opportunity to document and potentially remove a free-standing furo from its context, versus being demolished, and become representative of the traditional cultural practice at a local, regional or national museum. As is evident by the variety of building types and ownership scenarios, there are no two solutions which are alike. However, given the overall scarcity of known furos, it is necessary to advance the information, probe the opportunity, and make every effort to preserve a cultural remnant which will likely be vacant from the landscape in the near future without an organized plan and action.

INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

“Public interpretation – creating a context for the viewer to understand what is being preserved and why – is the key...”

– Dolores Hayden³⁷⁹

Interpretation cannot be underestimated. As landscape historian Catherine Howett noted, a preservation project’s importance is not determined by the integrity of the site, it is determined by quality of the interpretation.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹ Alanen and Melnick, viii.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, 13.

If we are to celebrate both the cultural and the architectural qualities of the furo, the object itself will be principal in permitting the fullest understanding of the practice. While those that are available for interpretation do not show all the layering effects of “cultural weathering” in response to the social, economic and technological forces.³⁸¹ Kingston Heath, in his work on Three Decker Houses in New Bedford, Massachusetts, draws out the elemental features of what interpretation of vernacular architecture can mean to a visitor, and the importance and challenge therein:

Recognizing these patterns of change...requires insights into the internalized cultural language of the original and subsequent users...[s]uch investigations, however, not only require immersion in the cultural milieu out of which the buildings came, but also demand...viewing building forms and spaces as integral conditions of the site and its people.³⁸²

Interpretation, therefore, will be acknowledging the complex spectrum of dynamics, and viewing the evolution of the furo with as much *relevant* cultural information as can be assembled. Much of it, in the way of first-hand accounts of the builders, the Issei, is lost. But with some physical evidence, which may increase with time, a portrayal of the furo can be offered in an accurate fashion.

In interpreting the furos of Hood River, each will have a story unto itself. Each will have a history that is unique, in its design and in its particular relevance to the family and place in which it is set. However generally, the story of the furos of Hood River yields a collective tale of Japanese settlement, farming, early 20th century life both in

³⁸¹ Heath, 185.

³⁸² Heath, 185.

Hood River and as a minority in a predominantly white community. These stories will be tied to the furo, though it will be contextualizing the furo from a broader perspective.

NEXT STEPS

As J.B. Jackson describes, the landscape and culture of the Japanese-Americans was not unlike that of every culture and community looking to find their place, "the image of our common humanity: hard work, stubborn hope, and mutual forbearance striving to be love."³⁸³ The furo is a bitter epitaph to the Issei parents and Nisei children who toiled to make a life beyond survival. To establish a firm foundation for the future of the furo, this thesis is proposing the formation of a collective community of local and regional Japanese-American leaders who are strongly interested in their ancestral history, those owners of the furo willing and able to participate in the process, humanities and museum professionals who are willing to consult with the project, and area business and civic leaders interested in seeing ethnic history preserved as a learning tool for future generations both within and without the minority culture.

The goal for this group, tied together by this thesis author, is to resolve the appropriate courses of action for the story and tangible history of the furo, starting with that of Hood River Country, but hopefully expanding to include the story of the furo throughout Issei and Nisei history, to honor the cross-cultural development of this unique translation, and instill pride in the important and restorative place the recreation of this traditional practice had in the lives of these shapers of the western landscape.

³⁸³ Jackson, 1984, 8.

On a performance level, the goals are both preservative and restorative. It is imperative that the recordation and documentation of these few surviving furo get coordinated with the voices, stories, people and context before it is completely washed out by the onward march of development in the County, not to mention in other locations where the furo may still live. It is hoped that the result of a preservation and interpretation program through the creation of a living history exhibition would both educate and entertain, bringing both family members who remember the furo as well as those who never knew it, face to face with the physical and multicultural past among us, though nearly invisible.

While the next steps should necessarily be a result of the integration of the collective, a plan of work and timeline will be proposed so to suggest a course of action from which a discussion can emerge. With the most integrated knowledge on the subject, it is easy to assemble a hypothetical restoration and interpretation guideline from which others can comment and build on to finalize a cooperative action.

TIMELINE

Starting in September 2005, the Hood River Furo Restoration Cooperative will begin. The invited membership will include the furo owners of Hood River County, Maija Yasui, Homer Yasui, Hood River Museum Director Connie Nice, Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center director June Arima Schumann, Japanese-American history leader George Katagiri, museum consultant Alice Parman, thesis author Chris Bell and the members of his committee, Howard Davis, Kingston Heath and Stephen Kohl, as well as suggested additional members by the committee. Chris Bell will serve as the "project director," organizing a simple website and listserv for ease of communication and information, posting his thesis and the project goals on the website. Then he will engage the members of the committee with his proposed course of action.

SEPT - DEC 2005

COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION

- CONNECT WITH OWNERS OF THE FURO FOR OPENNESS TO IDEA
- CONTACT INVITED MEMBERS FOR PARTICIPATION/INVOLVEMENT
- SET UP LISTSERV
- POST PROJECT AND THESIS ON WEBSITE
- INITIATE OUTREACH TO OTHER JAPANESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES AND CENTERS OF JA HISTORY
- INITIATE DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE ACTION WITH MEMBERS
- SET UP APPROPRIATE AVENUES FOR RESTORATION, AND ACTION
- BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE "SENTO" HISTORY IN PORTLAND
- INITIATE TEXT AND STORY FOR TOUR CATALOG
- DETERMINE LOCATION(S) FOR EXHIBIT AND A PERMANENT HOME
- OUTLINE COSTS FOR EXHIBIT AND POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR FUNDING

JAN. - JUNE 2006

COOPERATIVE ACTION TOWARD FURO RESTORATION

- GRANT-WRITING AS NECESSARY FOR FURO RESTORATION/MOVE
- START OF PLANNING FOR EXHIBIT, INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION
- UTILIZE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP EXCITEMENT AND INTEREST IN RESTORATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH LOCAL/ETHNIC HISTORY AT SCHOOL PROGRAMS
- DEVELOP POTENTIAL CONNECTIVE STORY WITH SENTO IN PORTLAND
- CONTINUE WORK ON TEXT AND STORY FOR TOUR CATALOG
- COORDINATE WITH HOST MUSEUM(S) TOUR TIMING AND SPACE

JUNE - AUGUST 2006 FURO RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

- SELECTION OF ARTIFACTS AND FURO FOR MOVEMENT
- RESTORATION (AS NEEDED) AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FURO
- COLLECTIVE PIECING OF INTERPRETATION OF FURO FOR EXHIBITION
- EXHIBITION SCRIPT WRITING AND PREPARATION FOR DISPLAY
- DETERMINE POSSIBLE TOURS/INFORMATION OF SENTO REMAINS IN PORTLAND
- TOUR CATALOG NEAR COMPLETION, SOLICIT COMMENTS AND EDITS
- FINALIZE PLANS AND BUDGET FOR EXHIBIT COSTS, TRAVEL TIME, ETC.

AUG.- DEC 2006 PREPARATION OF EXHIBIT AND HISTORY

- SETTING UP OF EXHIBIT
- PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER FURO, CULLED FROM ELSEWHERE
- INFORMATION ABOUT "SENTO" IN CITY BROUGHT TOGETHER FOR ANALOGOUS DISCUSSION
- PRINT EXHIBIT CATALOG FOR HISTORIANS AND TOURISTS ALIKE
- PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL LECTURES AND TOURS, AS REQUESTED.

As vernacular is the architecture of ordinary people, it commonly manifests their sense of collective identity. In a nation of immigrants like the United States, identity is shown by a strong allegiance to a particular group. However distinctiveness, particularly when considered "foreign" to the dominant culture, created strong acculturative pressures. Despite the significant changes these communities made to integrate, often a cultural group would retain some of their ancestral traditions. In the case of the Nikkei, few of these traditions are tangible today. Architecturally, they have nearly all passed from the landscape through the successive generations, not unlike the language. Yet a few furo, one of the few built traditions and one that was universally sacrosanct, still remain. Assimilation, and technological changes, permitted the furo to assimilate aesthetically and functionally, within the American bathroom type, a very American concept completely at odds with the Japanese belief of keeping the toilet and the bath apart.

The abandonment of the traditional furo and a roughly concurrent replacement of the Japanese language are conspicuous indicators of a breakdown of the separate identity of the Japanese culture in Hood River County, Oregon. But as Edward Chappell made clear in his evaluation of the Rhenish Houses of the Massnuttten Settlement in the Shenandoah Valley in the 18th and 19th century, this alone was not a signaling of the demise of all ethnic distinctions, rather, simply the most visible distinctions, which are frequently the first to fall to the pressure of the dominant society.³⁸⁴

As this thesis has hopefully revealed, the ease with which a culture can assimilate over time has been a mark of success for a unified culture, yet it also marks a process of forgetting. The main challenge before us as preservationists of ethnic history, is to begin the critical process of remembering, recording, and documenting our distinct cultural past before the wash of time and dominant culture leave us with no trace of our once distinctly different pasts.

³⁸⁴ Edward Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanuttten Settlement, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, (February, 1980): 42.

APPENDIX: OBSERVATIONS ON COLLECTING INFORMATION

Many of the exemplary works in the oral history literature include some initial section that formally outlines the process the interviewer conducted to help others see the successes and occasional pitfalls the author encountered. While not an exact replication of that idea, some observations included here will hopefully point out some of my successes, and failures, in much the same fashion.

Over the course of my study, I often had the occasion to visit with Nisei in the airport, at weddings, and other places more or less by chance.³⁸⁵ When I described to them my focus, it would stir up a stream of memories, preceded by the usual first inquisitive, then positive reaction to my purpose of study. A few of these stories are cited as anecdotal evidence and included in this work, however many have acted simply as backing to this patchwork quilt of the story of the furo. For future inquiries of this nature, however, this experience indicated to me that the open-minded approach can have a huge multiplier on your research.

³⁸⁵ Such as it is, an elderly Japanese person in the United States, at this nascent period of Japanese presence in the United States, one can almost assume they might be a Nisei. One major occasion occurred at a best friend's wedding, with his in-laws who were peach farmers in California (3 Nisei daughters provided a night full of furo talk). Another time a well-respected Nisei in Ontario, Oregon who would lead me to White River Valley, and his family homeplace where his sister, Mae, would show me Kent and Auburn, Washington, both similarly small agriculturally communities with a Japanese/Caucasian mix not unlike those in Hood River County.

With those Nisei that I interviewed intentionally, I used and would advocate a flexible interview technique.³⁸⁶ The questions usually would lead us down unexpected avenues, some useful, some less so, but I always gave ample leash. I was sure, however, to cover their family background and up bringing, and working chronologically helped us both keep our heads about us.³⁸⁷ Over the course of 45 minutes, roughly half was devoted to their family or personal history, and the other half was to their memory and experiences with the furo. I had prepared a long list of questions, and through the process of editing them over and over for the Office of Human Subject Compliance, I became intimate with these questions. The best interviews were ones where I never had to look at my question sheet, and each topical discussion almost seamlessly led to the next.

Even with a tight, topical and logical series of questions, I frequently needed to return to the interviewee for follow-up questions. Sometimes it was a matter of not getting to a question, or clarification upon review of the recordings about a particular tradition. In an earlier example when I learned about the frequent use of homemade *geta* [wooden sandals to the bath], I had to return to those whom I had interviewed to see if

³⁸⁶ There are a few great works I consulted on oral interviews, which have more technical way of describing this approach which I chose to leave out for sake of simplicity and ease of reading. For would-be pursuers of Japanese-American history, there are some guides directly aimed toward those interviewing Japanese-Americans. I have included a complete list of my references in the bibliography.

³⁸⁷ Kazuo Ito's work on the *Issei* is remarkable in how every person he inquired provided a very consistent, regular introduction, for example: "the first son of Yazo Hamanishi, a fisherman at Mio, Mihama-cho, Hidaka-gun, Wakayama Prefecture, I was born in September, 1880," pg. 29. This gives great context for the following oral history. Given the great diversity we have in class and geography, even with a city, let alone a state or nation, knowing where Ito's interviewees came from and their personal upbringing makes a huge difference in evaluating their comments.

this practice occurred in their family. With each interview my conduct and level of inquiry improved.³⁸⁸

Unlike the experience of many ethnographers who may be studying sensitive subjects or whose informants have a difficult time understanding the academic goals of the researcher, I encountered no real obstacles eliciting information. As I mentioned before, a number of people confessed later in the interviews that their first reaction to the subject was to think, “why is this *hakujin* [Caucasian] studying something as everyday as the furo?” Every subject was at a minimum surprised by my interest, but upon understanding the nature of my inquiries, became generous with their time and memories. Indeed, often the problem was terminating the interviews rather than starting them. The highest reward was at the interviews conclusion when many would voice, with an epiphanic mood, their feeling of the importance of preserving the furo and its place in the history and legacy of the Issei.

One of the built-in controls with interviewing Nisei about the furo is there was no need to be concerned about those who did *not* bathe in a furo. Every Nisei I interviewed experienced the furo growing up. To insure some diversity within the group, I interviewed both men and women, widely ranged in age and birth order, from different parts of Hood River Valley. Still, it is amazing to see how intrinsic this cultural tradition

³⁸⁸ A side comment for future oral interviewers. Many of you may be of the school of tape thought, the conventional and most consistent form of audio recording. My first set of recordings were done in this fashion. However, when I reviewed them, the quality was consistently weak. Ultimately, I had to redo many of these, a time-consuming yet ultimately worthwhile event. This time, I purchased an Olympus V-240 PC, for \$67 at Best Buy. This permitted me to record with incredible sound quality, download the files (.WAV) on my computer, and then review them with great ease, inserting flags along the recording for various comments worth noting. As with time, technology continues to change and this could be archaic technology to someone reading this in just a few years from now. However, as long as you keep the medium in a form that can be played back, you are staying with the curve, regardless of how you record it.

was to the Japanese-American community. Yet this assumptive nature can imply how ingrained a tradition can be.

Noted historian and vernacular architecture scholar Thomas Hubka use the “scarcity of discussion” surrounding the early planning decisions 19th century Maine farmer Tobias Walker made to unify his barn buildings, “[the motives] are infrequently written or talked about and are often assumed in a consensus fashion by people who share a set of similar cultural values.”³⁸⁹ Whether recognized or not, the furo was a cultural necessity. It was a way of life, and with respect to inclusion on the farm, a given.

I will close my observations and prologue by repeating the purpose in this study: this is not a study of the complete range of Japanese bathing behavior and traditions in the United States.³⁹⁰ This is just the tip of the iceberg of research on the subject. It is a study of some of the experiences, and particularly the tangible remains of the few left in Hood River County, of the family furo. The aim is to make valid and substantiated characterizations of the furo, its place, and purpose, physically, and spiritually. This study recognizes in greater detail a deeply ingrained tradition that offered a momentary release from the challenges confronting the Nikkei. And with patterned behavior, it can assist with understanding and tracking this practice throughout the United States where Issei settled, and set in motion a permanent record of this custom before the last of the remaining furo, and those who knew them first-hand, have vanished.

³⁸⁹ Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England*, Hanover, N.H.: University of New England Press, 1984, 174.

³⁹⁰ In particular the *Sento*, a public, more urban bathhouse frequently found in bigger Nikkei communities like Seattle or San Francisco, or even in small and provincial ones, such as The Dalles, in north central Oregon. Its history, however, deserves an inquiry of its own.

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