The “Hood River Incident”

Gaining Understanding Through Analyzing Primary Source Documents

Lesson Plan & Student Materials
Grade Levels: 7-8
# Table of Contents

Lesson Plan .......................................................... 3  
Timeline Cards .......................................................... 8  
Introduction Handout ................................................... 20  
Primary Source Document Analysis Graphic Organizer ............. 23  
List of Primary Source Documents in Chronological Order ............ 24  
Primary Source Documents ............................................. 25  
Closing Handout ......................................................... 47  
ODE Social Science & Ethnic Studies Standards ......................... 51
The “Hood River Incident” - Gaining Understanding Through Analyzing Primary Source Documents

Grade Levels: 7-8

Length of Lesson: Three 55-minute class periods

Educator Background Information:
This lesson pivots around a single moment - In November of 1944, American Legion Post 22 in Hood River, Oregon voted to remove the names of 16 Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) soldiers from the public Honor Roll billboard listing all the service members from Hood River County. This decision came after decades of escalating anti-Japanese racism and legislation in Hood River (and nationwide) and was followed by further organized attempts to exclude and limit the rights of Japanese Americans upon returning home. You can read more about the Hood River Incident here.

NOTE: This lesson should not be students' first exposure to Japanese American history. Before teaching this lesson, ensure students have at least a broad understanding of the major events in the history of the Japanese American community. Here are some resources that may be helpful:
   a. Densho: Introduction to WWII Incarceration
   b. Facing History & Ourselves: Bearing Witness to Japanese American Incarceration
   c. Betrayed Film Educational Resources
   d. National Veterans Network Educational Resources
   e. BrainPop: Japanese American Incarceration

Lesson Objectives:
   ● Students will analyze primary source documents including newspaper articles, letters, editorials, advertisements, and notices.
   ● Students will analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information to construct an account of historical events connected to the Japanese American experience in Hood River, Oregon pre- and post WWII.
   ● Students will make inferences about the short and long term effects of these events and evaluate the outcomes.
Materials:
- Introduction Handout
- Closing Handout
- Timeline Cards
- Primary Source Documents
- Primary Source Documents Analysis Sheets
- Tape
- Markers/Pens/Pencils
- Chart Paper or Poster Paper
- Computer & Projector (for watching video)

Relevant Vocabulary:
- Nikkei (nee-kay) - People of Japanese descent who live outside of Japan.
- Issei (ee-say) - First generation. The generation of Japanese who emigrated to the United States.
- Alien - A foreigner, especially one who is not a naturalized citizen of the country where they live.
- 100th Infantry Battalion - A segregated Japanese American unit formed in Hawaii prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.
- 442nd Regimental Combat Team - A segregated unit of Japanese American soldiers in WWII who served predominantly in Europe. They remain the most highly decorated unit for its size in all of US military history.
- Military Intelligence Service - A US military unit in WWII responsible for translating and interpreting documents, interrogating prisoners, and communicating with civilians. Nisei who could speak Japanese were stationed in the Pacific during WWII.
- American Legion - an organization of US wartime veterans. It was started in 1919 to support WWI veterans and has posts all across the country. They became (and remain) a politically influential non-profit organization, lobbying on behalf of service members and veterans.
Preparation Beforehand:
1. Print copies of the Introduction Handout, one per student.
2. Print copies of the Closing Handout, one per student.
3. Plan effective groupings - partners/triads for your class.
4. Print primary sources, ensuring sufficient copies for the number of groups in your class, PLUS extras to be marked up during the silent conversation. **Note:** Some pages are intentionally left blank in the PDF - This is so you can print them double-sided.
   a. **Trigger Warning:** Students will encounter the racial slur “Japs” in some of the primary sources. Educators should review the history of this term and how it was widely used in the media to spread anti-Japanese sentiment.
5. Familiarize yourself with each of the primary sources so that you will be able to support students in engaging with them deeply and meaningfully.
6. Print sufficient copies of the Primary Source Analysis graphic organizer - one per group.
7. Attach primary sources to chart paper or poster paper for silent conversation activity.
8. Print timeline and cut apart, including blank cards.
9. Tape up the timeline along a wall for students to reference.

(Optional) Setting the Stage Directions:
1. Let students know they will be reviewing some events from Japanese American history on a timeline.
2. In the first round, have them read through all of the events in the whole timeline.
3. In the second round, have students indicate (with a sticker or mark of some kind) which 4 events they think are the most important.
4. Take a moment to discuss the trends you notice in the events students chose.
   a. Which events did many people choose? Why?
   b. Which events were chosen less often? Why?

Main Lesson Directions:
1. Pass out and have students read the Introduction Handout. These pages will introduce some content and vocabulary that will be important for the lesson.
2. Let students know that they will be working to analyze some primary source documents from moments in Japanese American history. They won’t have much context about it beforehand, so they will need to look closely at the details to understand it as much as possible.

3. Give students a heads up about the content of the lesson - “From the learning you’ve done in class and even just by looking at the timeline, you can tell that there was escalating anti-Japanese racism in the years leading up to WWII, which continued during the war, and after the war ended. Some of the documents we will analyze today contain words and ideas that you may find upsetting. The inclusion of these documents is to give insight into the realities of the Japanese American experience at the time. Take care of yourselves as needed.”

4. Give students time to have a silent conversation with all of the documents. Place the poster papers around the room and have students rotate through and examine each one, writing their thoughts or questions and responding to others as they go.

5. After this introductory examination of all the documents, introduce the graphic organizer and how to use it. Let students know they will work to more deeply analyze one of the documents. Students will need to read their assigned document carefully and record their observations and interpretations.

6. Group students into pairs or triads, hand out one primary source document and one graphic organizer to each team, and start the work time. Note: You can give multiple groups the same document to analyze.

7. Once the work time is up, have each group create a timeline marker for their event that tells the date, their one sentence summary, and why they think it was written. Note: If you gave multiple groups the same document, allow them to come together and create one timeline marker synthesizing their thinking.

8. Facilitate a whole group share out of each primary source document. Have each group place their event on the timeline as they share.

9. Facilitate a class discussion about the documents. Questions you might pose to your students include:
   ○ How are all of these documents connected to each other?
   ○ What story do these documents tell?
○ What might the short & long term effects of these events have been?
○ How do these documents add to your understanding of this time period?
○ How are the concepts of recognition and justice connected?

10. Pass out and have students read the Closing Handout which will reveal the full story and the effects upon the community.

11. Assessment - Give students time to reflect on their learning with a written response:

○ Based upon what we have covered over the course of this lesson, please share your insights about the following prompts, giving evidence to support your claims:

  i. How do laws affect a community? How do the actions of individuals or organizations affect a community?

  ii. How can people take action to challenge discriminatory laws or decisions?

  iii. How are the concepts of recognition and justice connected?

  iv. What is our duty to address past and present wrongs?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 26, 1790</td>
<td>The Naturalization Act of 1790 states, “any alien, being a free white person who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for a term of two years, may be admitted to become a citizen thereof.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>First Japanese immigrants (Issei) settle in Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6, 1882</td>
<td>The Chinese Exclusion Act is signed into law, ending Chinese immigration for the next 60 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 27, 1894</td>
<td>A U.S. district court rules that Japanese immigrants cannot become citizens because they are not &quot;a free white person&quot; as the Naturalization Act of 1790 requires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 1905</td>
<td>The Asiatic Exclusion League was formed in San Francisco. In attendance are labor leaders and European immigrants, marking the first organized effort of the anti-Japanese movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 15, 1907</td>
<td>The Gentleman’s Agreement is signed, ending the migration of Japanese laborers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Oregon passes its first Alien Land Law, prohibiting non-citizens from owning or leasing land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Congress passes the Immigration Act of 1924, essentially ending all immigration from Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 7, 1941</td>
<td>Japan bombs U.S. ships and planes at the Pearl Harbor military base in Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 8, 1941</td>
<td>The U.S. declares war on the Empire of Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 5, 1942</td>
<td>All Japanese American selective service registrants are reclassified as 4-C Enemy Aliens and prohibited from serving in the US military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19, 1942</td>
<td>President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, authorizing forced removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 1942</td>
<td>16 “Assembly Centers” are opened to detain Japanese Americans until the more permanent incarceration camps are completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1942</td>
<td>The first of 108 Civilian Exclusion Orders go into effect, giving Japanese Americans one week to prepare for removal. A curfew order goes into effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28, 1942</td>
<td>Minoru Yasui surrenders himself for arrest in Portland to test the constitutionality of the curfew order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1942</td>
<td>Japanese Americans begin to be transferred to permanent WRA incarceration facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 16, 1942</td>
<td>University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi turns himself in to the authorities refusing to submit to the imprisonment on Constitutional grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1943</td>
<td>The government issues a “Loyalty Questionnaire” to all adult incarcerees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1943</td>
<td>The War Department announces the formation of a segregated unit of Japanese American soldiers, and calls for volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 1943</td>
<td>10,000 Japanese American men volunteer for the armed services from Hawaii. 1,200 volunteer out of the camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1944</td>
<td>The War Department imposes the draft on Japanese American men, including those incarcerated in the camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7, 1945</td>
<td>Germany surrenders, ending the war in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6, 1945</td>
<td>The U.S. drops the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Three days later, a second bomb is dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrenders on August 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1945</td>
<td>The incarceration camps begin to close. Japanese Americans are given $25 and a train ticket to the city of their choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1, 1952</td>
<td>McCarran-Walter Act becomes law Among other effects, this bill allows Japanese immigrants to become naturalized U.S. citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1980</td>
<td>The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians is established calling to investigate the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1983</td>
<td>After hearing over 750 testimonies, the CWRIC issues a report stating that the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans had been the result of “wartime hysteria, racial prejudice, and a failure of political leadership”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1988</td>
<td>The wartime convictions of Gordon Hirabayashi, Minoru Yasui, and Fred Korematsu (the three men who protested the curfew and/or incarceration orders) are vacated on the basis of newly discovered evidence that the U.S. military lied to the Supreme Court in the original proceedings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 10, 1988</td>
<td>President Ronald Reagan signs HR 442 into law. It acknowledges that the incarceration of more than 110,000 individuals of Japanese descent was unjust, and offers an apology and reparation payments of $20,000 to each person incarcerated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As early as 1900, the Hood River valley had earned a reputation for its high quality apples, including winning awards that year at the World’s Fair in Chicago. New landowners, eager to convert their forested property into usable farmland, employed Japanese immigrant (Issei) laborers to do the strenuous work. Some landowners paid Issei by offering five-acre plots of stumpland in exchange for clearing fifteen acres of woods. As a result, Issei in Hood River gradually came to own their own property. By 1920, three-fourths of Hood River’s more than 350 Issei were farmers, and they held more than half the acreage owned by Nikkei in Oregon. They also grew 75 percent of the valley strawberries, as a quick cash crop between the rows of their apple seedlings.

Success of the Issei farmers in Hood River brought anti-Japanese racism that gained statewide attention. In 1917, Hood River state senator George Wilbur introduced Oregon’s first alien land bill to prevent Issei from buying property (it passed in 1923). Two years later, locals formed the Anti-Alien Association, vowing to neither sell nor lease land to Japanese and
to prevent further immigration of Asians. In 1920, legislator Frank Davey, conducting a study for the governor, concluded, "'The Japanese Question' is more acute in Hood River than in any other place in Oregon."

With intensive, cooperative farm practices and involvement of their entire families, Nikkei were successful farmers. By 1940, when Hood River led the state in the value of its fruit harvest at $2.2 million, Nikkei farms contributed 25% of the valley's production, even though they comprised less than 0.5% of the population.

Text adapted from Linda Tamura's article "Hood River incident," Densho Encyclopedia
https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Hood%20River%20incident

Hood Farm in Montavilla owned by Sadaji Shiogi, c. 1920s, Courtesy of Lury Shiogi Sato, Japanese American Museum of Oregon
Relevant Vocabulary:

- **Nikkei** (nee-kay) - People of Japanese descent who live outside of Japan.
- **Issei** (ee-say) - First generation. The generation of Japanese who emigrated to the United States.
- **Alien** - A foreigner, especially one who is not a naturalized citizen of the country where they live.
- **100th Infantry Battalion** - A segregated Japanese American unit formed in Hawaii prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.
- **442nd Regimental Combat Team** - A segregated unit of Japanese American soldiers in WWII who served predominantly in Europe. They remain the most highly decorated unit for its size in all of US military history.
- **Military Intelligence Service** - A US military unit in WWII responsible for translating and interpreting documents, interrogating prisoners, and communicating with civilians. Nisei who could speak Japanese were stationed in the Pacific during WWII.
- **American Legion** - an organization of US wartime veterans. It was started in 1919 to support WWI veterans and has posts all across the country. They became (and remain) a politically influential non-profit organization, lobbying on behalf of service members and veterans.
### Primary Source Documents Analysis Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title/Caption:</strong></td>
<td>Write a two-sentence summary of the document:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location/Date:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who is the author?</strong></td>
<td>Why did the author write this document?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Select three significant words or phrases from the document:</strong></td>
<td>Why did the author write this document?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What biases or stereotypes do you see in the document?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Primary Source Documents in Chronological Order

1. Reverend Isaac Inouye, Issei Pledge, Jan. 8, 1942, Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society
5. 1st Sgt. Johnny Wakamatsu letter, Jan. 6, 1945

Note: Some pages are intentionally left blank in the PDF - This is so you can print them double-sided.
January 8, 1942

The Honorable Charles A. Sprague
Governor, State of Oregon
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

Dear Sir:

Please accept our sincere appreciation for the tolerance shown us during these difficult days with the following resolution drawn by Japanese resident nationals in Hood River county, Oregon.

Very truly yours,

Rev. Isaac Inouye

P.S. Just I have learned that two more boys selectees off for U.S. Army these few days to be inducted into the U.S. armed forces, so there are 16 boys in army!

Isaac Inouye
OUR PLEDGE

WE, the permanent Japanese resident nationals in this county of Hood River, do express to you and through you to the federal, state and local officials, and to the American people at large, our heartfelt and sincere gratitude for the generous treatment accorded us by our courteous American friends. We are grateful for the many kindnesses and sympathies expressed to us.

Most of the alien Japanese residents are devoted to this great Democratic America though we are not eligible for citizenship. We love this country so much that we wish to live here permanently, obeying American laws, policies, and administration always and especially during the present situation; and to cooperate whole heartedly, endeavoring to prove our destinies common with that of the American public.

The local Japanese natives have signed with the local civilian defense committee to volunteer for whatever purposes called upon. Fourteen of our American born boys of Japanese ancestry have answered the call to duty with the United States army. We hope there will be further opportunities to prove our mettle as good, law abiding nationals, maintaining the good will of our American neighbors.

May we pledge our loyalty to the Stars and Stripes just as do our children who are patriotic American citizens, with our prayer for a more peaceful kingdom on earth, which is the divine bequest of the American people for
future generations.

Very respectfully yours,

This pledge is signed under oath, the violation of which shall result in breach of friendly relations in the community.

Signed this 3rd of January, 1942.

[Signature]

[Signature]
Mr. Yamada
Mr. Tanaka
Mr. K. Kitata
Mrs. Haku Abe
Mrs. Edna E. Abe
Mr. Shibakawa
Joe Soga
S. O. Ukiyama
Mrs. S. Ukiyama
K. Kakei
Mrs. K. Kakei
Mrs. a. Kawashi
Mrs. K. Hasegawa
Mrs. A. Ukiyama
E. Tamijansu
H. S. McRae
Mrs. K. McRae
Mr. McRae
S. V. McRae
C. Sakamato
Mrs. E. Sakamato
Mr. S. Sakamato
Med. Shokichi
Mrs. Med. Shokichi
I. Shikasho
Mrs. K. Shikasho
K. Morita
Masano Morita
Mrs. K. Morita
M. Okido
Mrs. H. Okido
J. Taneece
Mrs. H. Okido
Mr. Tumemo
Shinichi Ushio
Mr. S. Ushio
S. Takasawa
Mrs. C. Takasawa
C. Tomita
Mrs. C. Tomita
K. Kuribara
Mrs. K. Kuribara
Henry H. Nakamura
Henry H. Nakamura
Mr. M. Nakamura
Mrs. M. Nakamura
O. Hatanaka, Mrs. R. Hatanaka, S. Endow
Nobui Keisawara, H. Nakagawa, T. i. Endow
F. Tamura, Mrs. M. Tamura, Z. Tanimoto
Mrs. T. Tanimoto, K. Shitara, Mrs. Shitara
Y. Yamakei, Mrs. Hori, Mrs. Y. Yamakei
R. Fujimoto, Mrs. R. Fujimoto
Censuring Hood River Post

HAMMOND, Dec. 7.—To the Editor—
The Hood River post of the American Legion recently voted to expunge from its honor roll the names of 18 Americans of Japanese ancestry from the Hood River area who are now fighting for their and our country with the Allied armies in Italy. This action is a satire upon the principles and ideals the Legion is supposed to stand for. Why not expunge also all Americans of German or Italian ancestry?

If the Legion, as we service men have heard, wants the veterans of this war to join its organization, let it be careful how it discriminates against any racial minority, particularly with such an outrageous action as this of the Hood River post. Nominations should now be in order for a motion to expunge from the American Legion the members of Hood River post for their demonstration of total lack of comprehension of what constitutes tolerance and fair play. If the Legion through its national organization does not do something about this Hood River outfit, it can expect little support from returning veterans of this war.

W. H. Johnson, Clarence F. Buchholz,
Members of U. S. Coast Guard.
Statement to Returning JAPANESE

Under the War Department's recent ruling you will soon be permitted to return to this county.

FOR YOUR OWN BEST INTERESTS, WE URGE YOU NOT TO RETURN.

Certain incidents have already occurred that indicate the temper of the citizens of this county.

Public records show that there are about 25 or 30 families, out of some 600 Japanese, who have not already sold their property in Hood River County. We strongly urge these to dispose of their holdings.

If you desire assistance from this Post in disposing of your land, we pledge ourselves to see that you get a square deal.

If you do return, we also pledge that, to the best of our ability, we will uphold law and order, and will countenance no violence.

In this program we ask the support of the citizens of this County.

HOOD RIVER POST NO. 22.
American Legion,
Department of Oregon.
Not So American

The Chicago Sun

At last reports, the American Legion post of Hood River, Ore., still was standing pat, despite nationwide protests, on removing the names of 36 Japanese-American soldiers from the post's roll of honor. Of course, the hostility of Hirohito's forces on the other side of the Pacific arouses the anger of civilized men, but the loyalty and courage of the great majority of Japanese-Americans in this war has been amply demonstrated, both in and out of our armed forces, and

Chicago Sun in Hood River News, Jan. 5, 1945
France
6 Jan 45

American Legion Post
5th Ave., Omaha, Nebr.

Sir,

Yes, I believe my name as well as my brother’s and friends have been removed from the so-called roll of honor.

Remember, we did not volunteer; unless we thought that as Americans it was our duty. Many have died believing in liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. Many more are entangled in various hospitals here in France, England.
and back then in the states. Your actions and policies are not American, they do not give me the treatment of legal American soldiers. Really it is too bad that the Hard Rock Legion Post must follow such UnAmerican ideals. I reject that I was raised to educated to such an unwise community with such narrow-minded as called American.

Respectfully yours,
1st Sgt. Johnny Jackson
2320 Hope Court C
American Legion Post
Hood River, Oregon

Sirs:

Yes, I believe my name as well as my brothers & friends have been removed from the so-called roll of honor.

Remember, we did not volunteer unless we thought that as Americans it was our duty. Many have died believing in Liberty, equality & the pursuit of Happiness. Many more are crippled in various hospitals here in France, England, and back there in the states.

Your actions and policies are not American, they do not give us the treatment of loyal American Soldiers.

Really it is too bad that the Hood River Legion Post must follow such UnAmerican ideals. I regret that I was raised and educated in such an unjust community with such narrow-minded so-called Americans.

Disgustedly yours,
1st Sgt Johnny Y Wakamatsu
2320 Eng. Combat Co.
Open Home To
Nisei Soldiers

Joe and June Eaton Haviland this week announced that their country home, one and one-half miles west of Hood River on the Columbia river highway, will, from now on, be open to any Japanese-American soldier, home on furlough.

In making the announcement, Mr. and Mrs. Haviland state that friendship, good food, a warm bed and peaceful atmosphere will be made available to any of these Nisei soldiers home on furlough, as a return for their loyalty to our country in serving in the army. They want these boys to realize that they have friends who appreciate their service to their and our country.

The home will be open at any time and it will be unnecessary to telephone before coming, they state.

Hood River News, Jan. 12, 1945
Veteran and Barber

To the Editor: While getting a haircut recently in a Hood River main street barber shop I witnessed an incident involving a veteran. An army staff sergeant entered and sat down to await his turn in the chair. The soldier wore nine decorations on his battle jacket—among them the bronze star and the silver star.

Less than a minute passed when the manager or owner of the shop stepped to the sergeant and said, "Are you a Jap?" The soldier replied, "What do you mean, a Jap? I'm an American." Whereupon the barber ordered him to leave. Quickly the sergeant complied. The owner or manager remarked as to how quickly he had acted in getting the boy out, then added, "I should have cut the—'s throat." Other talk followed. It took a great deal of effort to control my anger.

Must I return to my own community for a visit after four years in the army and witness such unjustified prejudices and insults to a small group of some of the nation's best fighting men—men whose courage, devotion to duty, and battle performance has won the respect and thanks of millions of service people?

Does encountering this sort of discrimination and intolerance upon returning home cause the sergeant to pause with a thought as to why he fought in the world's most terrible war?

Fortunately, here and throughout the land only very small groups of "patriotic citizens" have failed to learn a lesson from the greatest of military and economic struggles. They have not yet grown up—perhaps millions of returning veterans will help them.

SHELDON E. LAURENCE,
Capt. A. C., Parkdale, Or.

Demand—"Made in U. S. A."

To the Editor: The undersigned and thousands of other storekeepers recently received a 151-word, $2.88, night letter telegram from Mr. S. Ralph Lazrus, 200 Hudson street, New York city. This gentleman signs himself, "President American Watch Assemblers' association." As this outfit assembles Swiss watches, only the use of the word American should be a criminal offense. Mr. Lazrus requested me "to petition Oregon's congressional delegation, and the state secretary Byrnes, to prevent the United States government reducing the number of Swiss watches now being imported."

In thoroughbred Chaucerian lingo I refused. Reasons for refusal follow: T. Albert Potter, president Elgin National Watch company, Elgin, Ill., wrote me: "For 3½ years the American watch industry has been the only source of supply for the highly critical time pieces, and timing mechanisms without which we and our allies could not have won the war." And Walter W. Cenerazzo, president

Oregonian, Dec. 23, 1945
RESOLUTION NO: 001-2022

TITLE: Repeal November 1944 Post 22 Resolutions and all past Discriminatory Actions of Post 22 towards the Hood River Nisei Veterans of World War II and their Families in the Hood River Valley

WHEREAS, the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion in part states: to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism, to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars, and to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to the ideals of “freedom, equality and justice” and dismantling injustices in our past; and

WHEREAS, fifty-seven Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) from the Mid-Columbia (Columbia River region north of Mt. Hood) and a total of 120 from the state of Oregon served in our country’s Armed Forces during World War II and in the post-war Occupation of Japan, even as their family members were incarcerated on American soil due to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s signing of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942; and

WHEREAS, Hood River Post 22 on November 4, 1944 passed a resolution to prevent the sale or lease of property to those of Japanese origin and to appraise and purchase all land they currently owned; and

WHEREAS, Hood River Post 22 also in November 1944 passed a resolution to black out the names of sixteen local Nikkei soldiers from an honor roll of 1,600 local Armed Forces members on the Hood River County Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, Hood River Post 22 on November 29, 1944, did black out these sixteen names from the Hood River County Honor Roll; George Akiyama, Masaaki Asai, Taro Asai, Noboru Hamada, Kenjiro Ilayakawa, Shige Shigenobu Imai, Fred Mitsuo Kinoshita, George Kinoshita, Sagie Nishioka, Mamoru Noji, Henry K. Norimatsu, Katsumi Sato, Harry Osamu Takagi, Eichi Wakamatsu, Johnny Y. Wakamatsu, and Bill Shyuichi Yamaki; and

WHEREAS, Hood River Post 22’s actions brought national notoriety to the valley; and due to national backlash, the names were restored thirteen weeks later on April 9, 1945; and

WHEREAS, during the war, Hood River Post 22 led the way for local citizens to discourage Nisei veterans and their families from returning to their homes and farms; and
WHEREAS, in 2011 our nation’s Nisei soldiers were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal and in 2015 the French Legion d’Honneur award, the highest award the French Government could bestow on members of the American Armed Forces; and in June 2021 the United States Postal Service released a Forever Stamp to pay tribute to Nisei soldiers; and

WHEREAS, Hood River Post 22 and Hood River citizens have since recognized Nisei World War II veterans in an “acknowledgement of wrongs” by dedicating local landmarks: a memorial brick “in honor of all Nisei veterans” at Overlook Memorial Park on Veterans’ Day 2001 and a marble monument inscribed with names of all Japanese American veterans at Idlewilde Cemetery on Memorial Day 2011; and

WHEREAS, designating S.R. 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway at long last pays tribute to Nisei veterans not only in the Columbia Gorge area but all 120 Nisei who served from the State of Oregon; and

WHEREAS, “to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations” is a tenet of the American Legion Preamble to the Constitution; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, Hood River Post 22 recognizes the time leading up to and surrounding WWII was a dark era, and troubling times for our community and nation, however Hood River Post 22 acknowledges that actions of Hood River Post 22 during this time were wrong, discriminatory, and even racist towards our Nisei Veterans and our Japanese neighbors; and be it further

RESOLVED, Hood River Post 22, of District 5, The American Legion, Department of Oregon in its regular meeting assembled in Hood River, Oregon, on October 5, 2022, hereby rescinds all previous resolutions that discriminated against or suggested such discrimination to our Nisei Veterans, their families, and other people of Japanese descent; and be it further

RESOLVED, Hood River Post 22 publicly apologizes to our remaining Nisei Veterans, their families and descendants; and, be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, that this Resolution and the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway will be permanent reminders that discrimination of our brothers and sisters of Japanese descent was and is not tolerable, and that Hood River Post 22 will strive to lead our community to honor and respect all our Nation’s people, regardless of race or color.

Signed: Carl L. Casey, Commander Post 22
          Dennis Leonard, Vice Commander Post 22

Prepared by Carl Casey 10-5-22

46
During World War II, the rural community of Hood River, Oregon, held a national reputation for its strong support of the war effort. The 11,500 residents repeatedly raised a surprising amount of money through buying war bonds and hundreds attended rallies in front of the county courthouse.

The local American Legion post installed an honor roll memorial in downtown; large billboards with the names of more than 1,600 residents from Hood River County who were serving their country. On the evening of November 29, 1944, Legion Post No. 22 removed the names of sixteen Japanese American soldiers from the billboards. The American Legion stated that it was because these young men were dual citizens of Japan and the United States, which they were not. They were solely US citizens. The veterans’ group also protested Nisei serving in the armed forces and proposed an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would deny citizenship to all Americans of Japanese descent (Nikkei).

As part of its campaign to deter Japanese Americans from returning after the war, Legionnaire Kent Shoemaker wrote a series of paid, full-page public notices that appeared in local newspapers from January through March 1945. With titles such as, "So Sorry Please, Japs are Not Wanted in Hood River," these ads included lists of Japanese landowners and how much land they owned, with the goal that white people would purchase their properties. Five of the six ads...
included the names of more than a combined 1,800 locals, under a statement that they were "one hundred percent" behind "efforts to keep the Japs from returning to this county."

Responses
Newspapers, organizations, and citizens from across the country, along with people serving in the military abroad responded quickly to Hood River's honor roll incident. The vast majority of the responses were opposed to the Legion's actions. Headlines denounced the decision and letter writers questioned whether names of GIs with German and Italian names had been removed, and even threatened not to eat Hood River apples again. Of the more than 300 servicemen who wrote letters to the Hood River News, all but one criticized the action. Three local servicemen even independently requested that their names be removed from the honor roll unless the Nisei names were replaced.

Others favored the Legion's action. Some newspapers spread fear about Japanese Americans buying up all the land on the West Coast and plotting to out-populate white people. Anti-Japanese organizations offered support. An Oregon state senator encouraged citizens to, "Get your heart in America and the Japs out!" Letter writers sent messages of encouragement to the Legion, often filled with hateful stereotypes and slurs. Of the almost 400 letters that Post 22 received, only one-third favored their action. But eight other Legion posts decided to remove Nisei names from their honor rolls too.
Seven weeks later, on April 9, 1945, the names of fifteen of the sixteen Nisei were repainted on the billboards. (One of the Nisei had been dishonorably discharged, which would not be voided until 1983) Still, The American Legion stated that even though the names were replaced, their opinion remained the same.

Aftermath
Hood River mayor Joe Meyer discouraged Nikkei from returning home after the war, claiming, "Ninety percent are against the Japs." The community attracted national attention as a "plague spot" where prejudice ran high. Rumors spread that locals would deter returning Nikkei at the train depot, and some predicted violence. Fears increased as Nikkei saw names of neighbors and friends in newspaper notices discouraging their return.

Once home, veterans and their families could not buy food, furniture, gasoline, or farm equipment at most local stores and were often forced to drive twenty miles away to make purchases. A downtown barber denied a haircut to decorated war veteran George Akiyama, threatening to cut his throat. An army adjutant general took action by pressuring merchants to sell goods to Nikkei or face martial law as a consequence. A small group of about fifty citizens, forming the League for Liberty and Justice, offered to shop and drive produce trucks for returning Nikkei families. In all, only forty percent of prewar Nikkei residents returned to Hood River, compared to almost seventy percent in the state at large.

Legacy
With Hood River’s increased cultural and ethnic diversity, the involvement of Japanese Americans as
active community participants and leaders, and the passage of time, efforts to memorialize the past and pay tribute to Nisei veterans have finally taken place. In 2001, two Nisei veterans served as grand marshals of the annual Fourth of July parade. That fall on Veterans Day, Post 22 dedicated a brick at the downtown Overlook Memorial Park "in honor of all Nisei veterans." In 2007, more than five hundred attended a Day of Remembrance to "break the silence" of the past. On Memorial Day in 2011, the community unveiled a marble monument with engraved names of the sixteen Nisei veterans as well as all Nikkei who had served in the armed forces. In August of 2022, a 41-mile scenic highway from the Columbia River to Mt. Hood was dedicated as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway. And on November 11, 2022, More than 75 years after the "Hood River Incident", the American Legion Post 22 held a ceremony in which they repealed the 1944 resolution that led to the removal of 16 Nisei names from the county’s honor roll board and apologized to the Nisei veterans and their families.

Text adapted from Linda Tamura’s article “Hood River incident,” Densho Encyclopedia
https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Hood%20River%20incident
Oregon Department of Education Social Science & Ethnic Studies Standards

7.27 Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information.

7.29 Assess individual and collective capacities to take informed action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

8.30 Use and interpret relevant primary and secondary sources pertaining to U.S. History from multiple perspectives.

8.31 Synthesize information and data to construct an account of historical events that includes multiple sources and varied perspectives.

8.32 * Identify and analyze methods of subversion, resistance, challenge, and perseverance, within and among the intersecting identities of ethnic and social groups traditionally excluded from historical narratives.

8.33 Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, bias, propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information in order to question the dominant narratives in history.