

**Thomas James.** *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans 1942-1945.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

It is an understatement to suggest that the almost simultaneous decisions of the governments of the United States and Canada to remove all persons of Japanese racial origin from the Pacific coast and to relocate them inland caused a major disruption in the lives of the evacuees. Yet on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel some normal activities continued, albeit in a significantly altered form. One of these was the education of the young. The War Relocation Authority (WRA), the American civilian agency established to care for the evacuees, and its Canadian counterpart, the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC), however, had very different ideas about their obligations to education and to the opportunities that these duties offered.

In *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans, 1942-1945*, Thomas James clearly shows how the WRA followed the advice of professional educators with progressive ideals and designed a curriculum to mesh school and community life in order to Americanize the Japanese-Americans. To underscore his argument that "the proposed educational strategy held the danger of making the coercive environment of the camps the 'community' that would socialize the children" (p. 42), James quotes a teacher's confusion at having "to teach the fundamental freedoms upon which

our democracy is based in a classroom from whose windows the guard towers are plainly visible" (p. 53). The paradox was less shocking to the *Nisei*, the second generation of Japanese, who had learned about democracy and the value of American citizenship in school before the war but whose occupational opportunities had been sharply curtailed simply because they were Japanese. The teaching profession, for example, was virtually closed to them. Nevertheless, with the traditional strong concern of the Japanese for education, the evacuees set up schools even while housed in such temporary assembly centres as the Santa Anita race track.

Although the WRA promoted progressive education, many teachers, most parents, and some high school students preferred an academic approach rather than "community centred 'learning by doing'" (p. 56). Thus, individual teachers often reverted to a more traditional curriculum.

The teachers, a diverse lot, included "rural traditionalists and urban Californians, Indian school veterans and retired schoolmarms from western towns, suspicious patriots and activist conscientious objectors" (p. 49). In the first school year, 1942-43, slightly over half the classroom teachers were caucasian; Japanese-Americans acted as assistants and trainees. Turnover was high; by war's end, *Nisei* apparently formed the majority of the teaching staff.

James notes how the WRA's educational planners believed they could use social control "for a good

purpose" (p. 39) and make "a positive change...in the lives of Japanese-Americans as a result of the misfortune that had befallen them" (p. 42). The WRA tried to "Americanize" families by offering their children courses in American customs, including table manners and interior decorating. The schools also collected information that, as well as serving educational purposes, helped determine the eligibility of families for resettlement. When the resettlement process slowed in 1943 and 1944 teachers were instructed "to establish *positive* attitudes toward relocation" (p. 132).

What went on in the classrooms often reflected events in the camps. Family life remained strong but was severely strained in 1943 by the need to answer somewhat ambiguous questions about loyalty to the United States, by the subsequent segregation of the "loyal" and the "disloyal," and by the departure of many adult *Nisei* to join the army or to resettle elsewhere. Many *Issei* (first generation) parents tried to "reassert traditional controls over the children" and to resist cultural assimilation. Yet, at the same time, they "strongly supported school learning" (p. 104). Given the conflicting pressures facing the students and the rapid turnover in teaching staff, a breakdown in discipline—including vandalism and walkouts to protest what students perceived to be unjust treatment in classrooms—is not surprising, especially at Tule Lake, the camp to which the "disloyal" Japanese and their families were sent presumably to await expatriation to Japan.

In a brief paragraph, James suggests that Canadian-Japanese children "were lucky to receive any education at all during the war" (p. 167). He is not far off the mark at least for residents of the interior housing settlements, all of which were in British Columbia. There, the BCSC reluctantly found itself responsible for setting up an educational system when the provincial government refused to have anything to do with the education of evacuees apart from selling correspondence course papers and text books at cost. While it seems to have had the best educational interests of the children at heart and wanted "to make good Canadians of the Canadian born Japanese," the BCSC, unlike the WRA, never really thought out how it might do this. In any case, it decided not to make the schools too good lest it discourage families and teachers from leaving the settlements. It deliberately confined its efforts to elementary education and left high school students to fend for themselves until some Christian churches volunteered to provide high school instruction. The limited vocational education offered, such as dressmaking and woodworking, was undertaken by the Japanese community itself. While the BCSC was interested in promoting good citizenship, it made no special efforts to do so. Unlike the WRA, it had no grandiose plans of social engineering. It simply wanted to take sufficiently good care of the evacuees to avoid complaints about ill treatment lest Japan retaliate against the several thousand Canadian prisoners of war

and civilian internees under her control.

The BCSC initially hoped that *Nisei* volunteers, who had set up a rudimentary school system at Hastings Park, would run the schools in the settlements. *Nisei* university students and graduates, however, refused to work without pay. Nevertheless, the school system was essentially operated by *Nisei* for *Nisei* with a minimum of government support and direction. The BCSC appointed Miss Hideko Hyodo, the only *Nisei* with Canadian teacher training and with experience teaching in the British Columbia public schools, as schools supervisor. In each settlement, schools were set up (usually in makeshift quarters) and *Nisei* principals and teachers were paid a minimum wage and supplied with space to use as classrooms, a minimum of school furniture, equipment, and text books, and copies of correspondence lessons to use as lesson guides. These lessons, already prepared by the British Columbia Department of Education for children unable to attend regular schools, made no special provision for the unique circumstances of the Japanese pupils.

Because the school administrators were themselves evacuees, the BCSC could not really use them as information gatherers. Yet in the spring of 1945 when the settlements went through the equivalent of the American loyalty crisis as residents were required to sign up for repatriation to Japan or prepare to move to eastern Canada, the BCSC asked the principals for comments on community feelings. All politely

declined, explaining that it would be improper to ask people about their innermost thoughts, and in some cases, adding that they lacked the Japanese language skills to know what the *Issei* were saying.

The high school teachers were caucasian but, apart from some missionaries who had returned from Japan, few were experienced or qualified teachers. They had relatively little to do with the BCSC though in some places it did provide classroom space. Most, both volunteer church workers and conscientious objectors, were university graduates, but they too used B.C. correspondence lessons as teaching guides since they often had to teach subjects in which they had little background. The fact that the high school teachers were volunteers favourably impressed many students. Indeed, their good will and example may have done more to create good citizens than any formal curriculum could possibly have done.

James' book is richly textured. Not only did he have access to routine government correspondence similar to that found in the files of the BCSC but he was able to exploit a wide range of material collected at the time by social scientists whom the WRA hired to help it manage the camps. Though the Canadian records include, for example, a few samples of student writing found in school newspapers and year books, the BCSC did not employ any sociologists or anthropologists. Its goal was simply to take reasonable temporary care of its charges, not to undertake a major experiment in social engineering.

In writing *Exile Within*, Thomas James set out, among other things, to use an illustration from the history of education to raise "questions about the uses of public authority in a democratic system of government" (p. 171). He has succeeded admirably. Moreover, although the education of the evacuated Japanese was a unique experience, it invites discussion across the border about differences in beliefs in the purposes of education, the possibilities of social engineering, ideas of democracy and citizenship, and concepts of Americanism and Canadianism. Though it was not his goal, James has also offered students of Canadian educational history a stimulating challenge.

Patricia E. Roy  
University of Victoria

**J. Keith Johnson.** *Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada, 1791-1841. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989. Pp. 277, maps. \$29.95.*

In this work, Professor J. Keith Johnson of Carleton University's History Department applies his wide knowledge of Upper Canada to an analysis of the members of the House of Assembly in the colony's thirteen parliaments. From the sixteen members in Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe's first legislature in 1792 to the sixty members of the last parliament elected under Sir Francis Bond Head in 1836, a total of 283 members were elected. Their period

was one of vast changes, politically, socially, and economically. Upper Canada in 1792 was a frontier wilderness with few roads, four scattered hamlets, and a population of some ten thousand. Socially, it was divided unevenly between a handful of appointed administrators and a large number of frequently subsistence farmers. Toronto was not founded for another year. The same province in 1841 had a population of 487,053, a fully fledged urban pattern that survives today, with Toronto as the "metropolis" and capital, and a diversified economy. Socially there was a vastly changed elite, with a flourishing middle class and a growing number of urban poor. Reasonably good roads and water transportation, too, had evolved for the era, and the first provincial railway, a harbinger of the network that was soon to arise, had made its appearance in 1839.

Like everything else in the province, the political picture had changed dramatically with some spectacular quarrels taking place along the way, and increasingly contentious issues coming to the fore in the 1820s. As a result, instead of remaining basically Tory, as had been the case from 1792 to 1828, the later parliaments alternated between Reform and Tory. Any formal pattern of parties had yet to develop—a factor that naturally has made Johnson's analysis far from easy.

For the historian of education, Upper Canada presents something of a morass. Almost all agreed that there should be a religious focus to education, but each denomination wanted to instil the tenets of its own