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The Japanese American Resettlement Program of Dayton, Ohio: As Administered by the Church Federation of Dayton and Montgomery County, 1943-1946

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THE JAPANESE AMERICAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM OF DAYTON, OHIO:
AS ADMINISTERED BY THE CHURCH FEDERATION OF DAYTON AND
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, 1943-1946

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

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ABSTRACT


In September 1942, the Church Federation of Dayton and Montgomery County (Church Federation) was established. It created a Commission on War Services that coordinated social services to the thousands of military personnel and migrant war workers who flooded into wartime Dayton. Strategically, Dayton supported the nation’s defense through the presence of two Army airfields and many vital industrial facilities.

Beginning on October 1, 1942, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) permitted those of Japanese descent to leave the internment camps on indefinite leave, and resettle outside of the West Coast exclusion zones. The WRA supported this program by opening field offices across the nation including the Cincinnati office which opened in March 1943. The Cincinnati office served a multistate district that included Dayton, Ohio. In the spring of 1943, the first Japanese resettlers arrived in Dayton. Initially, the Church Federation drew upon the resources of the Commission on War Services to assist the resettlers. By May 1944, the steady flow of resettlers led the Church Federation to create a Committee on Resettlement.
This study explores the Church Federation's role as it assisted over 150 Japanese resettlers to Dayton, and in doing so, it will assess the relationship between the Church Federation and the WRA's Cincinnati field office.
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Chapter One

Introduction

August 14, 1945, a Tuesday, was warm and muggy in Dayton, Ohio, but few noticed the discomfort. On this day the Empire of Japan capitulated. An emotional wave swept across the nation to include Dayton. Lily Yamasaki remembered this day for a different reason. She and others went to Dayton's South Park Methodist Church, and prayed for the safe return of all U.S. military personnel serving overseas.¹

Ironically, Lily was far from her own West Coast roots. On April 5, 1942, she married Masaru Yamasaki in a simple ceremony in Florin, California.² They quickly set a date in order to beat an impending evacuation order.³ The newlyweds found themselves in a bureaucratic torrent without any immediate prospect of escape. Their involuntary odyssey took them through the Marysville Assembly Center near Yuba City, California, and then to a desolate internment camp, Tule Lake War Relocation Center, in northern California. Tule Lake, like other camps, consisted of barbed wire, guard towers, and poised machine guns. They remained at Tule Lake until March 17, 1943. Only after the Yamasakis agreed to accept employment outside of the West Coast exclusion zones

² Lily Y. Yamasaki, telephone interview by author, Houston, TX, February 12, 2012.
³ According to Masaru Yamasaki, rumors were rampant that those of Japanese descent would be deported to Japan or to deserted islands and this only added to their anxiety. Valerie Sweeten, "Internment Camp Detainee Remembers, Yamasaki Talks to Youth Groups About Experience," Houston Chronicle, September 30, 2004.
did they become eligible for the indefinite leave program. This form of release became known as "resettlement." In their case, they agreed to work as a gardener and cook at an estate on the outskirts of Dayton, Ohio. As domestics they received room, board, and a combined wage of $125 a month. Their pioneering spirit made them the first Japanese American couple to resettle in Dayton, Ohio.

Between 1943 and 1946, over 150 Japanese Americans resettled in Dayton, Ohio. Unlike some larger cities, Dayton did not have a large pre-war Japanese population. Instead, resettlers came to Dayton due to the determined efforts of the Church Federation of Dayton and Montgomery County (Church Federation). This organization functioned, in effect, as a semiautonomous extension of the War Relocation Authority (WRA) in the important role of facilitating community integration. Cincinnati hosted the nearest WRA field office some fifty miles south of Dayton, Ohio.

Dayton's resettlement program operated largely through the day-to-day presence of the Church Federation, and only secondarily through the more distant WRA office in Cincinnati. As a local organization, the Church Federation was ideally situated to marshal community resources for and public acceptance of the federal government's resettlement program.

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4 The term "resettlement" will be used throughout this paper to refer to the voluntary decision of Japanese Americans to leave the war relocation centers on indefinite leave. In contrast, "relocation" refers to the involuntary evacuation of Japanese Americans into war relocation centers.

5 Lily Y. Yamasaki, telephone interview by author, Houston, TX, February 12, 2012.

6 Harry E. Titus, "Dayton Community Participation (annotated 'Final Report')," n.d., Box 11, WRA.
Chapter Two

Background

The attack on Pearl Harbor drew the United States into World War II. On the home front it led to the evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. This proclamation established the overarching framework for the U.S. Army to remove persons of Japanese ancestry from West Coast areas designated as military areas. "Military necessity" was the justification for these exclusion zones. In March 1942, another executive order created the War Relocation Authority. In just a matter of months, war relocation centers--more popularly known as "internment camps"--sprang up in remote areas of California, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and Arkansas. These camps eventually held over 120,000 Japanese Americans. Most of the internees spent the greater portion of the war years in these camps; however, nearly 36,000 opted to resettle outside of the exclusion zones. To this end, Ohio attracted over 4,400

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7 Exec. Order No. 9066, 3 C.F.R. 1092-93 (February 19, 1942).
resettlers. Families first started to depart the internment camps in the early months of 1943.

In March 1943, the WRA opened its Cincinnati field office. It serviced a vast geographic region: Cincinnati and areas as far east as Wheeling, West Virginia, all of Kentucky to the south, as far west as southern Indiana, and as far north as Dayton, Ohio. Rev. G. Raymond Booth and his wife, Gracia, served as the first Cincinnati-based relocation officers. Field offices, such as the one in Cincinnati, had two essential missions: 1) to obtain employment offers, and 2) to aid resettlers in adjusting to their community.

Prior to the advent of World War II, Rev. G. Raymond Booth actively championed the cause of displaced and persecuted people. In the late 1930s, he and his wife assisted European refugees who sought sanctuary in Canada. Then in 1940, Rev. Booth became the Executive Secretary of the Pacific Coast branch of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Pasadena, California. The AFSC was and remains a vital Quaker outreach organization. In this capacity Rev. Booth and Gracia Booth forged a close pre-war bond with the Japanese American community.

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11 Of the total of 4,422, Ohio received 2,854 resettlers prior to January 1, 1945 and 1,568 thereafter. War Relocation Authority, *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation*, Table 6.
12 “Description of Cincinnati District and Relocation Activities in Communities Outside Cincinnati,” n.d., Box 11, WRA.
15 Ibid., 8.
1942, Rev. Booth testified before the Tolan Committee where he advocated that “evacuation ought to be converted into resettlement.”\textsuperscript{16} A short time later he and his wife ministered to thousands of Japanese Americans detained at assembly centers like the converted Santa Anita racetrack.\textsuperscript{17} Throughout the summer of 1942, Rev. Booth played a pivotal role in advising AFSC leaders in Philadelphia on the structuring of the Quaker response to the internment camps.\textsuperscript{18}

In early 1943, the WRA recruited Rev. Booth as a relocation officer, and tasked him to get the Cincinnati field office up and running.\textsuperscript{19} Together with Gracia, who served as an Associate Relocation Officer, and a secretary, the energetic Booth pioneered the early resettlement strategies. Rev. Booth wasted no time in contacting the Church Federation and requesting their assistance in the resettlement effort.\textsuperscript{20}

In the early 1940s, Dayton hosted over 140 churches. The Church Federation was established in September 1942, and it represented a merger of various interdenominational organizations.\textsuperscript{21} This newly created organization sought to promote

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[17] Gracia D. Booth, "Good Friday at Santa Anita," \textit{The Friend} 115, no. 23 (Fifth Month 14, 1942): 413.
\item[18] G. Raymond Booth, letters to Homer L. Morris, July 6 & 14, 1942, Homer and Edna Morris Collection, Box 29, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.
\item[19] Homer L. Morris, letter to C. Reed Cary, David E. Henley, Clarence Pickett, and Bernard G. Waring, February 24, 1943, AFSC.
\item[21] "The Pastor's Report, May 7, 1943," Records of the First Regular Baptist Church, Box 5, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
"common Protestant interests in the community." Rev. Kemper G. McComb became the First Executive Secretary. He served until 1946. By the war's end, the Church Federation boasted 129 participating churches that spanned 26 denominations. The final year of the war saw participating churches pledging over $52,000 to the operation of the Church Federation. Dayton, like other cities, was forced to confront the local impact of World War II. The Church Federation played a critical role in channeling support to a wide range of needs. It created a Commission on War Services which oversaw committees that assisted with social services, housing, the needs of service men and women, and most significantly for this paper, resettlement issues.

Dayton is located in southwest Ohio, and is situated in the Miami Valley with Cincinnati anchoring the southern end of the valley. Throughout the twentieth century, the Miami Valley served as an industrial hub. As a result, it attracted southern workers from nearby Kentucky and Tennessee. In 1940 Dayton had a population of just over 210,000 with only two reported Japanese residents (one native born, one foreign born).

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22 Ibid. In 1970 the Church Federation expanded its membership from strictly Protestant churches to Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches as well. This organization also changed its name to the Metropolitan Churches United. "Report of the Church Federation Study Committee, June 22, 1970," C. Philip Skardon Papers, Box 1, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.
Its racial makeup consisted of whites who accounted for nearly 190,000 residents, and African Americans who comprised most of the remaining 20,000.27

From the earliest days of World War II, Dayton officials recognized the vital role their city played in supporting the national defense effort. This conclusion derived from Dayton's proximity to railroads and airports which conferred strategic advantages for supporting the nation's defense production. In April 1942, the Dayton Chamber of Commerce published a survey that examined how the "war emergency" would impact the city from the standpoint of employment, housing, and transportation.28 The Chamber drew upon the business projections of 145 companies that spanned industrial, retail, and service operations. This survey concluded, among other things, that the city's industrial peak would occur in late 1943 to early 1944, Dayton would attract nearly 20,000 workers from outside of its normal six county metropolitan area, and Dayton would fall short by over 6,000 dwelling units when peak employment was achieved.29

Dayton's industrial base included such well-known industrial giants as the Aeroproducts Division of General Motors Corporation, two divisions of Delco, McCall Corporation, National Cash Register, Standard Register Company, and numerous plants producing lubricants, batteries, bearings, rubber, castings, tools, and so forth.30 Many of

29 Ibid., Telegraphic Highlights of Survey.
30 Ibid., The 145 Companies Contacted.
these companies had to retool from peacetime production to wartime imperatives. For example, in peacetime Frigidaire manufactured refrigerators and air conditioners. Then in 1942, Frigidaire converted to producing propeller parts and assemblies, 50 caliber aircraft machine guns, aircraft control valves, bomb casings, and the like. This rapid conversion occurred in the context of losing seasoned employees to the military draft, while hiring new employees, including women, who were new to these types of industrial jobs.

In 1943, Dayton was "frantic" with an influx of people in search of jobs and in support of the two Army airfields. The latter included both U.S. military personnel and forces from allied nations. Wright and Patterson Fields totaled 3,700 personnel in 1939, and skyrocketed to 46,500 by 1942. Wright Field alone mushroomed from 40 buildings in 1941 to 300 buildings by the spring of 1944. This massive scale of construction required a monumental workforce that added to city's congestion.

Dayton, Ohio, in 1943, was unlike anything in its past. The city was awash with thousands of new faces, crowded conditions, wartime shortages, and round-the-clock production. Hometown names were now part of America's fighting force. Daily newspapers carried stories of distant battlefields and hometown casualties. Mail was the

31 Frigidaire at War (Dayton, OH: 1944), Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 670 G326G.
32 Titus,"Dayton Community Participation (annotated 'Final Report')," WRA.
critical link between home and beyond. There was nothing normal about wartime Dayton. It was, in many ways, an industrial war machine. The cadence of production synchronized the pulse of the city. Any yet, Dayton was also a beacon to more than 150 Japanese Americans.
Chapter Three

Getting Started: 1943

In March 1942, the WRA was created and made responsible for implementing the evacuation program. Initially it oversaw the construction and operation of the internment camps. As early as the spring of 1942, WRA officials recognized the necessity of different forms of leave. In May the WRA established a student leave program so Japanese American students could pursue their college education. Agricultural necessity prompted a short-term seasonal leave program that began that summer. On October 1, 1942, the indefinite leave program commenced. It allowed internees to resettle outside the military exclusion zones to places like Dayton. Applicants had to demonstrate an actual job offer or means of support, pose no threat to the nation’s security, and provide evidence of their acceptability to the receiving community. By June 1943, the WRA opened 42 field offices to support the resettlement effort. The Cincinnati field office opened in March 1943, and Rev. Booth took charge of this office.

On February 19, 1943, Rev. Booth started work with the WRA. He first met with senior WRA officials in Washington, D.C. and Cleveland, Ohio, before he assumed his

35 Tule Lake War Relocation Center, California, was the first to open in May 1942, and Jerome War Relocation Center, Arkansas, was the last to open in October 1942. Roger Daniels, “Chronology of Japanese American History,” in Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress, ed. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and H.L. Kitano (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), xxi.
37 “Description of Cincinnati District,” WRA.
duties in Cincinnati.\(^{38}\) AFSC records indicate that seven months earlier Rev. Booth, in his capacity as the executive secretary of the Pacific Coast Branch of the AFSC, corresponded with Dayton's Christian community. He contacted the United Brethren of Dayton to recruit a former missionary to aid the AFSC's outreach to internees.\(^{39}\) This same correspondence hinted that Rev. Booth desired to canvas the Midwest in search of possible resettlement opportunities, but the record is silent on whether or not he ever undertook such a trip before he started working with the WRA.

In the spring of 1943, Rev. Booth first contacted the Church Federation in his role as a relocation officer. He requested their assistance with obtaining housing and employment for Japanese resettlers.\(^{40}\) Rev. Booth met Rev. Harry E. Titus, the then-Director of the Church Federation's Commission on War Services.\(^{41}\) Rev. Titus claimed he "never faced a more difficult task" than finding homes for Dayton's first Japanese resettlers.\(^{42}\) Wartime propaganda and media reports of Japanese atrocities accounted for the community's icy reception.\(^{43}\)

\(^{38}\) Morris, letter to Cary, February 24, 1943, AFSC. The WRA's Great Lakes Area was headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio.

\(^{39}\) G. Raymond Booth, letter to Homer L. Morris, July 14, 1942, Homer and Edna Morris Collection, Box 29, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.

\(^{40}\) "Dayton's Church Women Help Japanese Americans," n.d., Box 15, WRA.

\(^{41}\) Rev. Titus technically served as the Church Federation's Director of War Services though his position was more popular known as the Director of Community Services. Williams' Dayton City Directory 1944, (Cincinnati: Williams Directory, 1944), 242. In June 1944, Rev. Booth transferred to a WRA position in Chicago, and Rev. Titus replaced Booth as the Cincinnati Relocation Officer.

\(^{42}\) "Dayton's Church Women," WRA.

\(^{43}\) Ibid.
Dayton, like most Americans cities of the day, was fully immersed in the frenzy of the war. Newspapers provided a vital source of war information to readers. Headlines trumpeted the latest battles, victories, and defeats. The national news pages covered little else. Hometown news articles brought home the war through unending casualty lists, scrap metal drives, community war chest appeals, wartime weddings, and stories of valor that often included the loss of a limb, an eye or even a life. On virtually a daily basis U.S. newspapers included articles and cartoons which distorted, debased, and dehumanized America's foes. Dayton's newspapers were no different. Adversaries were cast as diabolical, devilish, and even fanatical. As an example, the above depiction appeared in a May 1945, edition of the *Dayton Daily News.* \(^{44}\) Note how the very first line of this cartoon referred to "All Japanese." It even implicated Japanese children at play. The indictment suggested not

only a cultural reason for a military fixation, but implied a genetic one as well. Moreover, the source of this message had a seemingly convincing Miami Valley connection: the Cincinnati Ordnance District. It is small wonder that many good people were confused when those of Japanese descent suddenly appeared on Dayton streets and in Dayton's workplaces, stores, churches, and schools. As a result, the Church Federation remained vigilant to ameliorating the adverse impact of this type of wartime propaganda.

As already noted, a survey projected a severe housing shortage as more workers, military personnel, and families converged on Dayton. The timing of the Japanese resettlers coincided with some of the most austere housing times predicted: late 1943 to early 1944. Unlike some locales, Dayton was an industrial town where very few jobs included living accommodations. Moreover, Church Federation staffers recognized certain quarters of Dayton as undesirable for the best interests of the program and these vulnerable newcomers. While Rev. Booth was not versed in all these Dayton subtleties, he was experienced enough and savvy enough to entrust those who knew Dayton.

In the spring of 1943, Rev. Titus referred Booth's housing request to the Women's Division of the Church Federation. This division selected a capable cadre that crafted short-term solutions. Their first appeal was to the Church Federation staff. The

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45 *Survey of Dayton*, Dayton Metro Library.
46 Living accommodations were typically only available for domestic positions and some agricultural jobs. The Monarch Battery Company was one of the very few industrial employers that provided temporary housing. Frank Suzukida, letter to G. Raymond Booth, May 18, 1944, Box 17, WRA.
47 Harry E. Titus, letter to Robert M. Cullum, March 29, 1945, Box 14, WRA.
48 The Church Federation’s Resettlement Committee was not established until May 1944.
Executive Secretary, Rev. Kemper McComb, made his home available to resettlers as did the President of the Women's Division. The second appeal requested former missionaries and like-minded Christians to open their homes to individual resettlers as well as entire families. The campaign included telephone appeals and speaking engagements with resettlers participating in the latter. These informational appeals consisted of two themes: needs of the resettlers and Christian duty to assist. Church Federation leaders applauded the success of these initial efforts, but recognized the need for systemic solutions.

The Church Federation subsequently capitalized on the availability of a co-operative boarding house. Lynton A. Appleberry and his wife, Valeska, were graduates of Antioch College in nearby Yellow Springs, Ohio. In 1921, the President of Antioch College, Dr. Arthur Morgan, transformed the curriculum of this college into a nationally renowned co-operative work study program. Mr. Appleberry was an avid supporter of the co-operative movement. For a time he even served as an adjunct faculty member to the sociology department, and taught a course on this movement. In the late 1930s, the Appleberrys rented and furnished a large home in Dayton, and converted it into a co-operative boarding house. According to Montgomery County records, this 18-room

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49 “Dayton's Church Women," WRA.
50 Ibid.
53 Obituary of Valeska Appleberry, Yellow Springs News.
house was built in 1875 and included multiple bedrooms.\textsuperscript{54} Co-operative or "co-op" housing, as it was known, was a popular alternative to renting during this era. It offered affordable housing premised upon shared responsibilities.\textsuperscript{55}

In 1943, Mr. Appleberry made his co-op available to Dayton's Japanese Americans. It was located in "one of the better neighborhoods of the city and immediately won favorable reactions."\textsuperscript{56} Mrs. Ozawa Shimoda, a widow, served as the housemother and cook. For her services she received $60.00 per month. This fixed charge was divided equally among the residents, and was in addition to the weekly rent of $4.50 per person. Typically, twelve to fifteen single men resided in this home. Four residents were assigned to a room and slept in bunk beds. Their rent entitled them to a shared bedroom, heating, and the weekly laundering of their sheets and pillowcases. The residents shared in the upkeep—both inside and out.\textsuperscript{57} Mrs. Shimoda did the grocery shopping and was known for her routine of wheeling home groceries in a baby buggy.\textsuperscript{58} This boarding house featured a telephone listed in the name of Rev. Harry E. Titus.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} A total of forty-four Japanese American men lived in this boarding house of which ten joined the Army. As was the custom, service stars were prominently posted in the window. The patriotism of these men "caused favorable comment throughout the neighborhood." Titus,"Dayton Community Participation (annotated 'Final Report')," WRA.
\textsuperscript{57} G. Raymond Booth, letter to Rev. Arthur M. Romig, February 26, 1944, Box 14, WRA.
\textsuperscript{58} Lily Y. Yamasaki, telephone interview by author, Houston, TX, February 12, 2012.
The Women's Division did much more than just locate housing for these newcomers. Its members took an active role in befriending these Japanese Americans and integrating them into the community. Volunteers showed them around town, took them shopping, helped them establish credit at local stores, and held parties to welcome them. One such welcoming party was held at the co-op in October 1943, and received favorable publicity in the *Dayton Herald*. In a companion article, Rev Kemper McComb characterized these earliest resettlers as "just homesick young people, trying to adjust to a difficult situation. Most of them are graduates of American colleges, several having Ph.D. degrees." Collectively the Church Federation and the first resettlers brokered the initial acceptance of Japanese Americans into the Dayton community.

Unlike Dayton, Cincinnati had the benefit of an AFSC hostel. It opened in May 1943, which was two months after the Booths arrived. By July 1943, over thirty Japanese residents were living in this house. Initially Gracia Booth served as the hostel's director, but in a matter of weeks a permanent director was found.

In August 1943, the United Press Association directed an inquiry to the WRA's Area office in Cleveland, and asked about the success of resettlement in Ohio. Mr. Harold S. Fistere, Relocation Supervisor, responded that more than 700 people of

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60 “Dayton's Church Women," WRA.
61 “35 American-Born Japanese Feted," *Dayton Herald*, October 3, 1943. This same article noted that about fifty Japanese Americans were resettled in Dayton.
Japanese ancestry had resettled in Ohio. He cited numerous examples of jobs held and stressed overall employer satisfaction.\footnote{Harold S. Fistere, letter to Alex Kaye, August 28, 1943, Box 10, WRA.}

Rev. Booth advised that WRA policy frowned upon war plant employment because these jobs would disappear after the war ended. As a result, several major Dayton employers were eliminated from consideration: Frigidaire, National Cash Register, and the two Army airfields.\footnote{Ti\textsc{tus}, "Dayton Community Participation (annotated Final Report)," WRA.} Nonetheless, Dayton's had much to offer in terms of good jobs and good wages.

Rev. Booth cultivated early employment opportunities with Red-Bar Battery Company, McCall Corporation, and Standard Register Company. The success at Red-Bar Battery, like the others, traced to the enthusiastic support of senior management. Red-Bar Battery's President, Mr. S. T. Starbuck, personally dealt with Rev. Booth.\footnote{G. Raymond Booth, letter to Jack Doherty, July 1, 1943, Box 17, WRA.}

While Red-Bar Battery had a compelling need for laborers, Mr. Starbuck consistently demonstrated a keen interest in the welfare of resettlers. For example, when the first Japanese resettler arrived unexpectedly with his family, Mr. Starbuck took a personal interest in locating appropriate housing for this family.\footnote{S. T. Starbuck, letter to G. Raymond Booth, July 7, 1943, Box 17, WRA.} Due to the wartime housing shortage, Red-Bar Battery converted former office space into temporary living quarters. When Rev. Booth explained the cultural significance of cleanliness to Japanese
Americans, Mr. Starbuck directed that "shower bath[s]" be added. Work inexperience did not preclude Red-Bar Battery from hiring Japanese employees. This company offered a starting wage of 70 cents per hour. The hourly rate increased by five cents per week until it reached 90 cents. Time and half was paid for all work in excess of 40 hours per week, and ample overtime was available for those interested. Rev. Booth received assurances that wages would not be offset if temporary living accommodations had to be provided.

As an industrial city, Dayton had less in the way of agricultural employment, but opportunities still existed. Here again, success was linked to the visibility of those in leadership positions. Mr. Fred Stroop, as pictured to the left, was such an example. He was the president of the Stroop Agricultural Company, and head of City Farmers' Group. He set the tone for others to follow. Fred Stroop lived in Japan for several years, and was "very friendly" to employing and promoting the interests of Japanese resettlers. Mr. Stroop employed several resettlers and stressed "[t]hey have proven highly efficient and very acceptable--really, God sent!"

Large nurseries also reached out to Rev. Booth.

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68 Jack Doherty, letter to G. Raymond Booth, July 8, 1943, Box 17, WRA.
69 G. Raymond Booth, letter to Red-Bar Battery Company, July 10, 1943, Box 17, WRA.
70 Booth, letter to Doherty, July 1, 1943, WRA.
72 Titus, "Dayton Community Participation (annotated Final Report)," WRA.
Mr. S. D. Zehrung, the owner of San-Rae Gardens, offered to hire two men to perform general nursery labor at a rate of 60 cents per hour for nine to ten hours a day.\(^\text{74}\)

In 1943, Rev. Booth was the focal point for most employment opportunities in Dayton. No job offer was too small. For example, in August 1943, he cultivated job offers from a bowling alley that wanted to hire pinsetters. Booth viewed these jobs as ideal for either high school or college students. Pinsetters earned seven cents a line, and if they could work adjoining lines, they might make $40 to $60 a week with tips included.\(^\text{75}\)

In November 1943, Gracia Booth visited the camps of Rohwer and Jerome in Arkansas. Her goal was to promote resettlement. She met with diverse groups of internees: mothers, young people, Buddhist leaders, Girl Scouts, teachers, Young Christians, older Japanese who spoke only through translators, YMCA Councils, and the like. Her trip report highlighted that many single Japanese Americans had already left the camps. In contrast, families desperately clung to the security of the camps. For the latter, they had lost much and the promise of a salary was not enough. This group longed for the freedom they had known as independent farmers, grocers, nurserymen, fishermen, and so forth. Her report could not emphasize enough the loss of face the evacuation wrought. Gracia Booth's report captured one poignant moment where an elderly farmer asked that no more plans should be "handed down from above." Instead, he pleaded that

\(^{74}\) S. D. Zehrung, letter to Rev. G. Raymond Booth, August 7, 1943, Box 17, WRA.

\(^{75}\) G. Raymond Booth, letter to McCook Bowling Alleys, August 12, 1943, Box 17, WRA.
"I long to make me a man again by planning my own future!" The trip report noted that all those present nodded in quiet agreement.76

As 1943 came to a close, the Columbus WRA field office sparked a national controversy. That office sent a bulletin to the various internment camps soliciting internees to come to the Midwest and teach Ohio and Michigan farmers about the benefits of bathing. The WRA Director, Dillon S. Meyer, described the author of the bulletin as "over enthusiastic" and ordered all copies destroyed. One Ohio congressman charged "a single county in my district has probably more bathtubs than the whole Japanese Empire."77 Despite headlines and political machinations, there is no indication this unfortunate episode had any impact on the positive momentum of Dayton’s resettlement program.

In 1943, the WRA geared up for resettlement, but unlike evacuation, internees had a choice. In a sense, they held the upper hand. The concept of resettlement was new, new to the WRA, internees, and America’s communities alike. Resettlement was not the opposite of evacuation since the military exclusion zones remained. The harm of 1942 could not be reversed. The loss of face remained. Resettlement involved risks and unknowns. This was true at the national level as well as in Dayton, Ohio. Rev. Booth,

76 Gracia D. Booth, trip report to Harold S. Fistere, November 24, 1943, Box 9, WRA.
the Church Federation, Mr. Appleberry, Mr. Starbuck, fifty Japanese Americans, and a community defined the meaning of resettlement. Leaders emerged yet occasional missteps occurred.

The first year revealed the Church Federation was well-poised to ferret out scarce housing. On the other hand, Rev. Booth handily garnered job offers. Perhaps the supply and demand of the market place provided the best explanation: housing was scarce, jobs were plentiful. The former required a benefactor whereas the latter did not. Regardless, it was the Church Federation that facilitated Dayton's initial acceptance of these newcomers. Looked at another way, it was an approach not handed down from above.
Chapter Four

Changing Course, Picking Up Speed: 1944

The WRA’s third year, 1944, involved fundamental changes to its organizational alignment within the federal government and to the geographic focus of its resettlement activities. Like defining bookends, these changes made the intervening months unlike what existed before and what followed thereafter. By the end of 1944, the pendulum of internment had reached the limits of its swing, and hung there, suspended ever so briefly, waiting to return on its path back to its origin.

In March 1942, an executive order established the WRA within the Office for Emergency Management. Then in February 1944, President Roosevelt transferred the WRA to the Department of the Interior. 78 While WRA Director Dillon S. Meyer opposed this move, the President believed the WRA would benefit under this particular Cabinet level department. 79

In March 1944, Director Myer requested Interior Secretary Harold Ickes’s support for a two-pronged proposal: 1) revocation of the exclusion orders—except for the internees at Tule Lake—as of July 1, 1944, and 2) liquidation of the WRA by July 1, 1945, with Tule Lake transferred to the Department of Justice. Years later Myer

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78 Exec. Order No. 9423, 302-03 (February 16, 1944).
79 Director Myer advocated for realignment under the Department of Justice, but Attorney General Francis Biddle disagreed. Myer, Uprooted People, 87. The Department of the Interior offered greater public relations advantages following the autumn 1943 unrest at the segregated camp of Tule Lake War Relocation Center. War Relocation Authority, WRA: A Story of Human Conservation, 121.
contended this proposal garnered the support of the Department of Justice, the War Department, and the Interior Department, but lost out to election year politics. About six weeks after President Roosevelt's unprecedented fourth re-election, the exclusion orders were rescinded, effective January 2, 1945. As a result, the WRA concluded the year with two goals that did not exist twelve months earlier: planning for resettlement into the former exclusion zones and planning for its own bureaucratic demise.

In 1943, Dayton's resettlement program began, and it came of age in 1944. Much of the latter traced to the vision and actions of Rev. Booth. In the first five months of the year he empowered the Church Federation to do more, and to do it better than was possible through the WRA alone. In June 1944, Rev. Booth transferred to the WRA's Chicago office, and the Church Federation embarked on a new era of outreach to Japanese Americans.

On January 29, 1944, a small article appeared in the Heart Mountain War Relocation Center newspaper. It thanked Rev. Booth for spending a "full month" at this remote Wyoming internment camp. The ever-gregarious Booth was recognized for his "sincere personal interest in the relocation program." Over the course of his stay, Rev.

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80 Myer, Uprooted People, 177-183.
81 Ibid, 184.
82 Ibid, 189.
Booth addressed various audiences and interviewed many internees about the possibility of resettling to the greater Cincinnati area.  

Rev. Booth’s month-long trip illustrated two salient aspects of the WRA’s resettlement program. One, it was a time-intensive endeavor. Many internees, especially the elderly, struggled with the life-changing trauma of being uprooted from their West Coast homes. A twisted consequence unfortunately forced many to cling to the security of the camps. Resettlement required internees to make a leap of faith, and to trust in a system that had already debased their dignity and shattered their lives. Consequently, relocation officers faced daunting challenges to include, first and foremost, gaining the trust and confidence of internees. Two, the limited number of relocation officers exacted costly tradeoffs whenever they took lengthy, but necessary, trips such as the one to Heart Mountain. Stated differently, the needs of Dayton’s resettlers did not go away when Rev. Booth had to be out of town. It was this type of void the Church Federation was poised to fill.  

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84 Heart Mountain War Relocation Center, "Booth Returns to Cincinnati," Heart Mountain Sentinel, January 29, 1944. When Rev. Booth returned to Cincinnati he likely found a heartfelt letter from Homer L. Morris who congratulated him on his twenty-fifth anniversary as a Quaker minister. Morris also wrote about several missionaries who had returned from Japan and Occupied China. According to Morris, these missionaries were well-taken care of thanks to individuals like Booth who were promoting international relations through assisting those of Japanese descent. Homer L. Morris, letter to Raymond and Gracia Booth, December 22, 1943, AFSC.  

85 While Gracia Booth, the assistant relocation officer, remained in Cincinnati during this time, she nonetheless was fifty miles from Dayton and responsible for a vast resettlement area to include Cincinnati.
In April 1944, the Cleveland area office requested the Booths to compile a quick list of the types of resettlement challenges they confronted. Their unique backgrounds made them well-qualified for the task. Together they hurriedly, but methodically, identified a wide array of practical problems with many implicating bureaucratic red tape. Of note, their list of challenges included one notable bright spot i.e., Dayton’s resettlement program. They pointed out that without any WRA office in Dayton, the Church Federation was still “geared to action.” The Booths, in a handwritten outline, replied that "[s]ome offices would probably function better with no R.O. [relocation officer] but with a girl and office available to (sic) local committee with a R.O. [relocation officer] making frequent visits. Fewer officers - with more frequent visits to camps." In effect, this scheme became a preview of the Dayton program to come.

In the spring of 1944, the Church Federation institutionalized its resettlement program by formally creating a resettlement committee. The Committee on Resettlement aligned under the Church Federation’s existing Commission on War Services (see below). This organizational structure allowed the Resettlement Committee to efficiently draw upon the expertise that resided in existing committees on housing and social services. In the spring of 1944, Rev. Titus served as the Director of the

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86 The Booths also noted psychological impediments that made it "[h]arder to get (sic) camp out of evacuees than evacuees out of camps.” G. Raymond Booth and Gracia Booth, letter to Robert Cullum, April 14, 1944, Box 9, WRA.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 Titus, "Dayton Community Participation (annotated Final Report)," WRA.
Commission on War Services and Rev. Gordon Torgersen served as the Chairman of the Committee on Resettlement.\textsuperscript{90} As the WRA's relocation officer, Booth, was made a member of this committee. Membership was neither restricted to nor guided by ecclesiastical considerations. It was a skills-driven committee. Members came from the Church Federation, city government, social service organizations, local industry, and so on. Female participation was significant, as high as sixty per cent, and likely reflected home front conditions. The Resettlement Committee first convened in May 1944, and generally met on a monthly basis. Organizationally this committee's alignment revealed a highly synergistic model that optimized scarce resources.\textsuperscript{91}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}

\node (root) {Commission on War Services
Director, Rev. Harry E. Titus}
\node (social) [below of=root, xshift=-2cm] {Committee on Social Services
Chairman, Rev. Gordon M. Torgersen};
\node (service) [right of=root, xshift=2cm] {Committee on Service Men and Women};
\node (housing) [below of=service, xshift=-2cm] {Committee on Housing Centers};
\node (resettlement) [below of=service, xshift=2cm] {Committee on Resettlement
Chairman, Rev. Gordon M. Torgersen};

\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}


\textsuperscript{91} This organizational diagram is a modified version of a more comprehensive depiction that was produced by the Church Federation in 1945. Church Federation of Dayton and Montgomery County, "Program for First Annual Planning Conference, September 24, 1945," Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
Rev. Booth's trip to Heart Mountain led to the eventual recruitment of Robert Y. Kodama as the Director of the Committee on Resettlement. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mr. Kodama and his wife, Ann, lived in Los Angeles. He worked as a manager at a wholesale produce company, and his wife worked as a steno-receptionist for the State of California. In early 1942, everything changed for Robert and Ann Kodama. They were evacuated to the Santa Anita Assembly Center, and then to Heart Mountain War Relocation Center in Wyoming. As an internee, Robert Kodama held a series of jobs at Heart Mountain. In January 1944, he served as the camp's Executive Secretary of the Relocation Planning Commission. This experience made him a natural choice for Rev. Booth's resettlement vision. They met that January and then again in April 1944; Rev. Booth sent Robert Kodama a teleype with an offer to come to Ohio, and "possibly develop a resettlement program in Dayton." Mr. Kodama accepted the offer and in May 1944, he, his wife, and their one-year old son arrived in Cincinnati, Ohio. For a brief time the Kodama family resided in the AFSC hostel in Cincinnati.92

In May 1944, Rev. Booth introduced Mr. Kodama to the Church Federation's Committee on Resettlement. His qualifications impressed the committee and this led to a discussion about a job offer. The job entailed public relations work on behalf of the resettlement program, and support to resettlers transitioning into the community. The Church Federation's Commission on War Services approved an initial $200 to get Mr. Kodama started. In addition, the Church Federation sought additional funding from the War Chest of Dayton as well as from the New York City-based Committee on

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Resettlement of Japanese Americans.\textsuperscript{94} George E. Rundquist, Executive Secretary of the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, endorsed the local initiative in lieu of establishing a WRA office in Dayton. Dillon Myers recalled years later that Rundquist had rendered invaluable services to the country as he stimulated local resettlement committees across the nation.\textsuperscript{95}

On June 1, 1944, Rev. Booth left Dayton for a WRA position in Chicago. A few days later the Church Federation hired Robert Kodama to conduct a survey of Dayton to determine its suitability as a resettlement venue. The Church Federation also offered him a job as the Director of the Committee on Resettlement subject to the outcome of his survey and the availability of follow-on funding.\textsuperscript{96}

The first six months of 1944, represented a torrent of changes that culminated in something very different from what had existed at the beginning of the year. Dayton's resettlement program had formalized and become less dependent upon the WRA. Furthermore, it had linkages to a national program endowed with a national network of outreach. Rev. Titus replaced Rev. Booth as the relocation officer, and Rev. C. Willard Fetter replaced Rev. Titus as the Director of the Commission on War Services.

\textsuperscript{94}Chapter Six will examine this organization and the May 1944, visit by Mr. George E. Rundquist in considerable detail.

\textsuperscript{95}Myer, \textit{Uprooted People}, 136.

\textsuperscript{96}Mr. Rundquist was unable to secure the follow-on funding for Mr. Kodama’s position with the Church Federation. Nonetheless, Mr. Robert Kodama volunteered his time as the Director of the Committee on Resettlement. He spent more than four hours a day at the Church Federation (9 AM to 1:30 PM), worked fulltime for McCall Corporation (2:00 PM until 10:30 PM), and then rode a late night bus to his home some four miles out of town. Harry E. Titus, letter to Gordon K. Chapman, August 12, 1944, Box 15, WRA; Harry E. Titus, letter to Louise M. Noble, November 22, 1944, Box 11, WRA.
Moreover, Mr. Robert Kodama became the first Director of the Committee on Resettlement. He, unlike his committee members, possessed a perspective born of a lifetime of being a Japanese American. He understood the needs and circumstances of resettlers because he was one of them.

Rev. Titus's background with the Church Federation made him a seemingly good choice to replace Rev. Booth as the district relocation officer. In August of 1944, Rev. Titus expressed his candid perspectives on his role as a WRA relocation officer. He regarded resettlement as "primarily a church job." In fact, Rev. Titus wrote "I am sure all of you . . . know that I am in this job primarily to cooperate with the church and bring the church point of view in this picture." That said, he nonetheless voiced his desire to be an "efficient [g]overnment official." 97

In his first days as a relocation officer, Rev. Titus noted that Booth had done much to generate jobs for resettlers in Dayton. At the same time, Robert Kodama began his association with the Church Federation. On the other hand, housing continued to be in short supply and especially for families. During this same time Rev. Titus seemed somewhat frazzled as he tried to wrap up his affairs in Dayton while he dove into his new duties as a relocation officer. For example, he was called upon to deal with some

97 Harry E. Titus, letter to Rev. Gordon K. Chapman, August 12, 1944, Box 15, WRA.
"fearsome individuals" who were impeding resettlement efforts in Louisville, Kentucky. 98

From June 12, 1944 to July 11, 1944, Robert Kodama conducted a resettlement survey on the suitability of Dayton, Ohio, to serve as a viable resettlement community. His report revealed a methodical, practical, and insightful mind. His writing style was clear, concise, and unequivocal. In spite of being a newcomer himself, his report resonated with a certainty of conviction and a persuasiveness of logic that would rival those of native stock. At the start of the survey, Robert Kodama recorded that Dayton hosted 59 resettlers which included nine families. In 1944, he characterized Dayton as "a small city with a large city's bigness . . . ." His survey delineated and interpreted the pertinent demographics from the perspective of credible resettlement. For example, he advocated a “gradual and steady method of resettlement” in order to avoid overburdening a community already saturated with thousands of migrant war workers. Mr. Kodama concluded that family resettlement represented the best long term approach, and Dayton constituted “an unusually good spot for a permanent resettlement program for Japanese Americans." 99

Mr. Kodama was an astute businessman who understood the importance of obtaining the cooperation of the local labor unions. He reasoned that union jobs

98 Harry E. Titus, letter to Robert M. Cullum, June 5, 1944, Box 9, WRA; Harry E. Titus, letter to Robert M. Cullum, June 8, 1944, Box 9, WRA.
promoted workplace equality and post-war job security. With this in mind, Robert Kodama engaged the senior management of McCall Corporation who, in turn, solicited their nine unions on the prospect of opening up jobs to Japanese Americans. The result was a unanimous endorsement by the rank and file of all the labor unions at McCall Corporation. The ever-gracious Mr. Kodama credited Mr. William Fort, President of the International Pressmen and Assistants Union of North America, Local 54, and Charles Schill, President of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, Local 199, for their support to Japanese Americans.\footnote{Ibid.}

In July 1944, Mr. Kodama enlisted the support of Mr. C.D. Putnam, Director of the Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority. A short time later, Robert Kodama personally appeared before the Dayton Housing Board, and made the case, on behalf of newly arrived Japanese American families, for access to this wartime housing. Generally speaking, public war housing was intended for war workers in Dayton’s industries and airfields.\footnote{Dayton’s wartime population swelled due to the influx of workers at the city’s many industrial plants and two airfields. The federal government joined with private developers to construct temporary housing to meet the wartime demand. However, it was always anticipated that excess housing would be demolished after the war so as to avoid any detrimental impact on property values. In the interest of efficiency, the Federal Housing Authority constructed the wartime housing, but leased these units to Dayton’s Metropolitan Housing Authority. This approach streamlined the management of these housing projects by avoiding a duplicity of government housing offices. Charlton D. Putnam, “Public War Housing,” \textit{City of Dayton Annual Report of 1943}, \url{http://www.daytonhistorybooks.com/publicwarhousing.html} (accessed March 26, 2012).} Mr. Kodama’s advocacy secured four family units in the Moraine City
Housing Project with the prospect of additional units in other area projects. Mr. Kodama credited this major victory to the support of Dayton’s community leaders. He also worked closely with the Y.M.C.A and the Y.W.C.A. for continued access to short term lodging. The second half of 1944, posed one of the darkest hours in Dayton's wartime housing market. An October news article described the situation as "critical." Only 1.7% of the city's total family units were unoccupied, and .5% were either uninhabitable or for sale or rent. These statistics framed the overall housing challenge Robert Kodama confronted, and attested to his resourcefulness and diplomacy in securing enduring solutions.

In August 1944, a series of events at Red-Bar Battery Company merited a report from Rev. Titus. As previously noted, this enterprise had been an early and enthusiastic employer of Japanese resettlers. However, circumstances deteriorated shortly before Mr. S.T. Starbuck left the company. A breakdown in communication fueled an atmosphere of distrust and recrimination between management and its Japanese employees. The breaking point occurred when one Japanese worker openly defied his supervisor and refused to work faster in response to greater production demands. Rev. Titus tried his best to resolve this worsening situation, however, there was little he could do from Cincinnati besides making telephone calls. Consequently Rev. Titus called upon Robert

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102 Access to war housing included the caveat that the district relocation officer could, following a hearing, remove any Japanese residents found to be creating a disturbance. Harry E. Titus, letter to Mr. Charles D. Putnam, July 5, 1944, Box 14, WRA.
104 "Housing Critical," Dayton Journal, October 18, 1944.
Kodama to make a personal appearance at Red-Bar Battery. Mr. Kodama's management background conferred instant credibility to his comments. Mr. Kodama made a number of insightful suggestions to the plant's management. For example, he urged management to stop "coddling" those Japanese workers who were shirking their duties because this practice only fueled resentment against all Japanese workers. Rev. Titus's report said, in part, "I cannot speak with too much praise of Mr. Kodama's tact and good common sense in handling this situation." 105

Both Robert Kodama and the resettlement committee actively championed a public relations program on behalf of resettlement. Mr. Kodama addressed numerous Dayton audiences to include church groups, businessmen, women's groups, and others on matters of housing, employment, social relations, and the like. 106 Mrs. Lily Yamasaki was another frequent speaker who addressed church audiences. 107 A somewhat unusual but highly public event honored the first Japanese workers inducted into local labor unions. 108 Then in August 1944, the Sunday Dayton Journal Herald featured an in-depth story on Dayton's resettlement program. The reporter, Ruth Payne, praised community employers for being "open-minded and . . . willing to tap this new source of skilled manpower." Payne personalized her story through reciting the triumphs and sacrifices of

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105 Harry E. Titus, Report on the Situation at Red-Bar Battery Company, Dayton, Ohio," August 16, 1944, Box 12, WRA.
107 By this time she worked as the secretary to the Director of the Commission on War Services of the Church Federation. Titus, "Dayton Community Participation (annotated 'Final Report')," WRA; Titus, letter to Cullum, June 8, 1944, WRA.
108 Titus,"Dayton Community Participation (annotated 'Final Report')," WRA.
some of the 93 resettlers who called Dayton home. Her article included the names of former Dayton resettlers who left to serve in the U.S. armed forces. She underscored her article by emphasizing that these newest members of the community had been "well accepted." That autumn George Rundquist’s *Resettlement Bulletin* carried an article written by Robert Kodama on employment and housing opportunities in Dayton. This publication was disseminated by Rundquist's New York-based Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans to all the internment camps, and was designed to provide internees and placement officers with timely and meaningful resettlement information on Dayton, Ohio. That November the Resettlement Committee created a speaker's bureau to further amplify the program's message of outreach to loyal Americans and Japanese aliens.

The Committee on Resettlement generally met on a monthly basis. The minutes of the October 20, 1944, meeting illustrated a fairly typical agenda. Robert Kodama presented a statistical update on resettlers. He advised that the number of families had more than doubled over a four month period: from nine in June to twenty in October. By October 1944, Dayton hosted approximately 150 resettlers. McCall Corporation was the leading employer with 20 Japanese employees. Nine labor unions had accepted

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111 "Excerpts from Minutes of the Dayton Resettlement Committee," n.d., Box 15, WRA.  
112 In conjunction with its annual meeting of stockholders in New York City on April 18, 1944, McCall Corporation announced its most profitable year: $19 million in net sales. As a result, the Dayton plant was projected to expand. "McCall's Reveal Expansion Plans," *Dayton Journal*, April 19, 1944.
Japanese laborers. Mr. Kodama also presented a discussion on the Church Federation's resettlement policies. These policies promoted economic security, equality and fairness in the workplace, individual choice in employment, and a means for community integration. Mrs. Edna Craven, a member of the committee, suggested that membership should be extended to a member of the Dayton Community War Chest. That suggestion was seconded by Mr. Kodama and carried. The group then turned its attention to the desirability of creating a resettlement news bulletin for resettlers and church members. Following a discussion, Mr. Kodama made a motion in support of the news bulletin. This motion was seconded by Rev. John Yamazaki. This motion carried as well.\footnote{Minutes of the Resettlement Committee, October 20, 1944, Box 15, WRA.}

In November 1944, the Church Federation reported to Rev. Titus that nearly twenty-five Dayton employers had hired resettlers. Some notable employers included American Aircraft Company, Red-Bar Battery Company, McCall Corporation, Reynolds and Reynolds, Standard Register, Goodyear Rubber Company, Goodwill Industries, Borden's Dairy, Y.M.C.A. and National Carloading Company.\footnote{C. Willard Fetter, letter to Harry E. Titus, November 16, 1944, Box 11, WRA.}

Beginning in late 1944, Rev. Titus came to Dayton one day a week, and used the offices of the Church Federation as his office.\footnote{Harry E. Titus, letter to Mr. Marcus J. Kintz, January 22, 1945, Box 12, WRA. Wartime shortages restricted travel. Rev. Titus wrote his supervisor, Robert Cullum, that he was forced to buy two new tires after one was so worn it "gave out" and a local garage "condemned" the other. Harry E. Titus, letter to Robert M. Cullum, December 2, 1944, Box 9, WRA.} WRA records indicated that much of his Dayton time related to interfacing with other federal officials. For example, he
acquainted a visiting Granada War Relocation Center placement officer with the area farms. The placement officer came to the Miami Valley to gather firsthand information on agricultural job opportunities, housing, and community acceptance. Rev. Titus introduced the placement officer to various agricultural leaders in Cincinnati and Dayton as well as former internees from Granada.  

On occasion, Rev. Titus was called upon by the resettlement committee to resolve turf wars with other federal agencies. As the resettlement committee secured more and better jobs, its success resulted in some unintended heading-butting with the local United States Employment Service (USES). The War Manpower Commission worked through the USES, and had responsibility for managing war-related manpower. Basically, the system required manpower to be allocated, on a priority basis, to positions of the highest war-related need. The rub came when more and more resettlers competed for these high-demand positions. Rev. Titus and his supervisory chain resolved this interagency issue, but only after months of meetings and much back and forth correspondence that concluded in a compromise. Namely, resettlers would receive favorable consideration for all employment opportunities other than the placement of highly qualified non-  

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116 Trips of this sort were invaluable to the success of the WRA’s national resettlement program. Unlike the West Coast, southwest Ohio did not offer the type of vegetable farming many internees were familiar with from their pre-war days. Harry E. Titus, Report on the Visit of Mr. Vechhio, August 10, 1944, Box 9, WRA.
Japanese American candidates for jobs in industries with the highest wartime labor needs.\textsuperscript{117}

Rev. Titus, like Rev. Booth before him, was required as a relocation officer to periodically visit the internment camps. One such trip occurred in December 1944. Rev. Titus traveled to the high prairie region of southeastern Colorado where he spent two weeks at Granada War Relocation Center. There he met with internees and sought to answer their questions and tried to alleviate their fears about resettling.\textsuperscript{118} Nonetheless, he expressed frustration during this trip. Rev. Titus told the internees he could assure them of good living conditions and a promising postwar future, yet the response was "negligible" from his audiences. As proof for his claim, Rev. Titus maintained that not a single resettler from Granada had returned to Granada.\textsuperscript{119}

The Granada trip revealed a subtle but important distinction between the focus of Rev. Titus as a relocation officer, and the focus of the Church Federation as Dayton’s resettlement committee. Resettlement was nothing more than an aspiration unless, and until, internees could be coaxed out of the camps. Relocation officers were essentially recruiters.\textsuperscript{120} In contrast, the Church Federation’s resettlement committee operated as a

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{117} Harry E. Titus, letter to Marcus J. Kintz, October 14, 1944, Box 12, WRA; Robert M. Cullum, letter to Rev. Harry E. Titus, December 26, 1944, Box 12, WRA; Titus, letter to Kintz, January 22, 1945, WRA.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Granada War Relocation Center, "Harry E. Titus Laments Poor Response to Jobs," \textit{Granada Pioneer}, December 13, 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{120} The area relocation supervisor prevailed upon Rev. Titus to flood the camps with resettlement information because "unless we keep a barrage of material going to the centers there is little hope for
\end{footnotes}
community facilitator. While to some extent each complimented the other, the two were effectively very different functions that formed the process of resettlement. Consequently, overall resettlement was optimized through maximizing the emphasis on each stage, and that was what the Dayton program did best.

Dayton's resettlement program coalesced in 1944. Its reactive and improvised past yielded to a more mature and programmatic methodology. Community leaders fostered a spirit that molded Dayton’s acceptance of and support for resettlement. The success or failure of the program was not tethered to any one individual. Instead it constituted a mosaic of local community participation. Community in this sense embraced a network of churches and churchgoers, federal and local officials, employers and union leaders, Dayton natives and West Coast resettlers. Dayton’s resettlement program did not escape the dynamics of change at the national level. However, the insularity of Dayton’s program made it less a function of national forces and more a reflection of local circumstances. By the close of 1944, the Church Federation had created a program in the image of Dayton itself.

The Church Federation's ability to render services at the community level was less related to WRA resources, and more a function of the goodwill it generated within the community. Perhaps Robert Kodama said more than he realized when he wrote in the summer of 1944 that "Dayton can be presented as sufficient proof and an object lesson catching the imagination of center residents and getting them on the move.” Robert M. Cullum, letter to Harry E. Titus, January 24, 1945, Box 9, WRA.
that church leaders in local communities can carry through to a successful conclusion . . . the resettlement work that has been initiated by [the] War Relocation Authority."\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{121} Kodama, "Report on Resettlement of Japanese Americans," Dayton Metro Library.
Chapter Five

The Beginning of the End: 1945

On January 2, 1945, the West Coast exclusion zones came to an end, and nearly 80,000 individuals of Japanese descent still remained in the camps. The WRA announced that it intended to close the relocation centers within twelve months. As a result, it faced the enormous challenge of resettling, in twelve months, more than twice as many internees as it had resettled in more than two years.122 The national resettlement focus pivoted, and decidedly so, from the Atlantic Coast and Midwest to the three states of California, Oregon, and Washington. Area offices were established in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle with over 25 field offices opened in various West Coast communities.123 The WRA initially announced the remaining field offices would close within two months of the closure of the last relocation center, but this timeline eventually slipped.124

Back in Dayton, housing remained the number one challenge. However, the complexion of the issue had changed. By 1945, more housing existed through new construction, and the market showed signs of easing--though slowly at first--as the tide of

122 Even with the opening up of the West Coast to resettlers, the Great Lakes Area Relocation Supervisor, Mr. Robert M. Cullum, urged Rev. Titus to make resettlement an office priority. Robert M. Cullum, letter to Harry E. Titus, January 24, 1945, Box 9, WRA.
123 War Relocation Authority, WRA: A Story of Human Conservation, 143-144.
124 Ibid., 152.
migrant workers receded. The focus then turned to the location of the housing. WRA officials rejected a former government trailer park as unsuitable due to its proximity to "one of the worst sections of Dayton." As of April 1945, nine Japanese families, comprising 28 individuals, lived in the Moraine City Housing Project (see below); and according to the manager their reception was "not only agreeable but cordial." While additional openings were projected by Rev. Titus, he opposed concentrating too many resettlers into anyone area.

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125 Some new housing was reserved for Wright Field requirements, and the rental rate on other housing was regarded as too expensive. Harry E. Titus, letter to Robert M. Cullum, March 29, 1945, Box 14, WRA; Harry E. Titus, "The Housing Situation," April 23, 1945, Box 14, WRA.
126 Titus, letter to Cullum, March 29, 1945; Robert M. Cullum, letter to Harry E. Titus, April 4, 1945, Box 14, WRA.
127 Harry E. Titus, letter to Robert M. Cullum, May 17, 1945, Box 14, WRA. Seven of these families moved in between July 1944 and October 1944. The remaining two families took up residence in January and May 1945.
128 Titus, "Housing Situation," April 23, 1945, WRA.
Like the housing issue, employment challenges changed over time. One nursery owner voiced his complaint directly to Mr. Robert M. Cullum, Great Lakes Area Relocation Supervisor, while on a visit to Dayton. This employer felt "exploited" after a family he employed and housed departed Dayton. His sense of betrayal related to the fact that he had invested in their future by remodeling their living quarters. He claimed other employers would likely experience similar frustrations as other resettlers returned to the West Coast. However, there is no indication this ever became a problem.¹³⁰

The Church Federation's Committee on Resettlement continued to meet in 1945. Of note, Mr. William Gutwein, Director of Personnel at McCall Corporation, assumed the chairmanship of this committee.¹³¹ His appointment revealed how functionality determined the committee's membership. The new year also brought a change of names to about a half dozen other positions on this committee.¹³²

The first six months of 1945, mirrored the challenges of the preceding twelve months. In the area of housing, the resettlement committee chartered a subcommittee to examine the city's changing housing picture. Housing remained a continuing priority because Rev. Titus saw more internees as Dayton-bound.¹³³ The committee also

¹³⁰ Robert M. Cullum, "Report on Three Day Visit to Cincinnati," April 2, 1945, Box 9, WRA.
continued to publicize the resettlement program. It arranged a local radio interview of a prominent spokesman from the Japanese American Citizens League who discussed resettlement challenges. The committee publicized that as of May 1945, a dozen resettlers to Dayton had subsequently entered the military. The committee spearheaded efforts to integrate Japanese children into the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and various church activities. In June 1945, Mr. Carl Spicer replaced Rev. Titus as the district relocation officer, and Mr. Kodama concluded his final month of committee service before he entered the military.

In early June 1945, Rev. Fetter, Mr. Gutwein, and Mr. Kodama attended a two-day Regional Conference of Resettlement Workers in Cleveland, Ohio. Fifty attendees representing federal agencies, especially the WRA, and local communities gathered to discuss common problems, lessons learned, and strategies for the future. They shared

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134 Dr. Thomas Y. Yatabe was interned at Rohwer War Relocation Center, Arkansas, resettled in 1943, to Chicago where he led the then-newly created JACL's Midwest Regional Office, toured the country on behalf of the cause of resettlement, and became the first elected JACL national president. Japanese American Citizens League, Midwest District Council, "The Early Years," http://www.jaclmc.org/chapterschicagohistory.html accessed April 20, 2012; "Minutes of the Resettlement Committee, May 23, 1945," Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 1. Dr. Yatabe's interview aired on radio station WING during the Church Federation's weekly Thursday afternoon block at 4:15 PM. Complete Radio Programs, Dayton Daily News, May 24, 1945.

135 "Minutes of the Resettlement Committee," May 23, 1945, Dayton Metro Library.

136 Ibid.

Experiences from such diverse communities as Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo, Cleveland, and Detroit. Based on the 1940 census, Detroit, at just over 1.9 million, was the most populated city of the group while Dayton was the least populated at 210,000.\textsuperscript{138} Nonetheless, Dayton's program featured a couple of notable initiatives: 1) resettlers shared in the give and take of the local program by providing temporary housing to newcomers, and 2) Dayton's resettlement committee prepared and distributed an informative pamphlet that listed the community's many resources. Dayton's resettlement committee also compared favorably with discussions on community integration, economic security, public relations and public education, and assistance of community services to the WRA.\textsuperscript{139}

Mr. Kodama was one of only five attendees who served on the conference's resolution committee. This committee prepared a comprehensive list of recommendations dealing with best practices in the areas of community adjustment, housing, employment, community services, and so forth.\textsuperscript{140} It would seem Robert Kodama either personally championed or strongly identified with those recommendations that called upon church groups and social agencies to be driving force behind community resettlement programs, that public relations should be emphasized, that resettlement

\textsuperscript{138} In the 1940 census of the top 100 largest urban places, the rankings were as follows for the referenced cities: Detroit #4, Cleveland #6, Cincinnati #17, Toledo #34, and Dayton #40. U.S. Bureau of Census, "Population of the 100 Largest Places: 1940," http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab17.txt (accessed April 1, 2012).

\textsuperscript{139} Beatrice Burr, "Summary of Regional Conference of Resettlement Workers, June 1-2, 1945" Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 1.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
programs should be geared toward families, that authorities should be lobbied to open housing projects to resettlers, and that labor and management should be included on resettlement committees.\textsuperscript{141}

At the July 1945, Resettlement Committee meeting, Carl Spicer announced the relocation centers would start to close on October 15, 1945, with the last closing by December 15, 1945. WRA projections estimated between 60 to 70\% of the resettlers would return to the West Coast and Intermountain states.\textsuperscript{142} In September 1945, the Dayton resettlement committee discussed its own timeline to termination. The initial discussion suggested a need to keep the committee going for another year as some issues, such as the availability of suitable housing, would likely continue for some time. Even with the coming and going of resettlers, the committee estimated 120 Japanese Americans remained in Dayton as of September 1945.

With the advent of autumn the committee believed the time had come to obtain greater Japanese participation on the committee.\textsuperscript{143} In November the committee welcomed Mrs. E. Ambo and Miss Katherine Sasaki who voiced the needs and perspectives of Dayton's Japanese American community.\textsuperscript{144} Some of the final committee business of the year concerned planning for a January 1946 resettlement dinner. The

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} "Minutes of the Resettlement Committee, September 24, 1945," Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
\textsuperscript{144} "Minutes of the Resettlement Committee, November 28, 1945," Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
invitation list included all Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, mayor, social agencies, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Knights of Columbus, League of Women Voters, school board, and many others.145

While the Church Federation's resettlement committee met through the remainder of 1945, it was never quite the same after Mr. Robert Kodama and Rev. Harry Titus departed. In fact, the minutes are especially revealing for what did not occur. After May 1945, Mr. William Gutwein never chaired another committee meeting. Between July and December, five monthly meetings were held—the committee did not convene in August—and four different individuals substituted for the chairman with one member leading both the November and December meetings. In May 1945, Mr. Kodama recommended a theological student should be hired by the resettlement committee to replace him, and to work with the resettlers on behalf of the committee.146 Yet, there is no indication this ever occurred. Once Mr. Kodama departed for the military, only one statistical update was provided to the committee, and that was by the new relocation officer, Mr. Carl Spicer, in September 1945. At that time Mr. Spicer reported Dayton still hosted about 120. On the other hand, Mr. Spicer was a frequenter presenter of information on the WRA's timeline to liquidation. Local matters of housing and employment virtually disappeared from discussion with the exception of the October and November meetings where both were discussed in the limited context of rural areas outside of Dayton. Any

146 "Minutes of the Resettlement Committee, May 23, 1945," Dayton Metro Library
discussion of industrial jobs was conspicuously absent. In 1944, the committee minutes hummed with energy and passion as members charged at challenges with creativity and conviction. By late 1945, the resettlement committee spoke less of resettlement and more of a planned social for January 1946.

On December 5, 1945, Mr. Cullum, advised the district field offices that all relocation centers had closed with the exception of Tule Lake which was scheduled to close on February 1, 1946. Tule Lake was different. Beginning in 1943, Tule Lake became a segregation center and it remained the only such camp in the system. As a segregation camp, Tule Lake detained those Japanese deemed disloyal, those awaiting repatriation back to Japan, those denied leave clearance, and family members who desired to remain with segregants. Mr. Cullum also announced the WRA's final schedule for field office closings to include the Cincinnati office which had a date of February 1, 1946. This date was just days short of the four year anniversary of Executive Order 9066 which triggered the mass evacuation of all West Coast persons of Japanese descent.

It was no surprise that the Church Federation's resettlement committee began to decelerate its activities during the second half of 1945. The Midwest mission had come to its inevitable end. Perhaps the genie of weariness could no longer be contained after

147 Myer, *Uprooted People*, 76.
148 Robert M. Cullum, letter to Dear Friend (field offices), December 5, 1945, Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
years of unrelenting production, thousands of migrant war workers, overcrowding, rationing, price controls, and the human toll that accompanied the immensity and duration of the war. Much had occurred with Dayton's resettlement program, but a bit more remained.
Chapter Six

The Final Year: 1946

By July 1, 1946, the WRA was no longer in existence. Tule Lake closed in March and the last of the field offices shut their doors on May 15, 1946.\(^\text{149}\) The WRA's brief existence spanned a mere 1,566 days, and yet, its impact still reverberates across the nation. In places like Dayton, Ohio, the echoes are more muffled and the footprints are more aged, but in the right light its shadow can still be discerned.

Like the visible leader of a marching band, Robert Cullum, in 1946, communicated the pace and direction for the final phase of the WRA's Great Lakes Area. Along the way he singled out Dayton for special recognition. Mr. Cullum lauded the public's "most favorable" support and highlighted "a new type of government community cooperation." To this end, he eloquently credited the resettlement program for fostering a relationship where the government took note "that making new neighbors is a community matter, and in part--by far the most important--on the acceptance by community leaders of responsibility in this human enterprise." Mr. Cullum took note that after the WRA formally ceased operations, the Church Federation still agreed to assist Dayton's resettlers.\(^\text{150}\) Robert Cullum issued his final letter to the field on May 15, 1946. With this letter he announced the closure of the last office in his area, and highlighted that the


\(^{150}\) Robert M. Cullum, letter to Dear Friend (Dayton's Resettlement Committee), January 24, 1946, Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
WRA’s original mission of "separateness" had been eclipsed by "the overwhelming need everywhere . . . for unity."\(^{151}\)

In February 1946, the Resettlement Committee resumed its meetings. That month the discussion focused on what, if anything, should be done to benefit Dayton’s resettlers as a group. The resettlement committee opted to create a subcommittee to study this question.\(^{152}\) The subcommittee conducted its study and also requested Mrs. Wallace Nunotani to poll the Dayton resettlers on their views.\(^{153}\) With this background, Mrs. Nunotani, appeared before the March session of the resettlement committee and reported that Dayton’s Japanese Americans wanted the resettlement committee to remain on-call. She also reported the resettlers were in the early phases of discussing the creation of a local social club.\(^{154}\) Mrs. Nunotani’s request was approved, the Committee on Resettlement adjourned, and it was never called back into session.\(^{155}\)

\(^{152}\) "Minutes of the Resettlement Committee, February 27, 1946," Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
\(^{153}\) The subcommittee considered three options. One, for the resettlement committee to continue as it had in the past. Two, for the resettlement committee to disband at its next meeting. Three, for the resettlement committee to go inactive, but remain in an on-call status. The subcommittee favored the final alternative but sought the opinion of the resettlers. "Joint Group Work Subcommittee of the Resettlement Committee, Minutes of Meeting, March 15, 1946," Dayton Metro Library, Local History Collection, Call No. 973.04956 C561R 1944, Vol. 2.
\(^{154}\) The resettlers established the Miami Valley Nisei Club which held its meetings at the former Co-Op House, and in time this club became the Dayton Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Dayton’s Stories Project, “Japanese American Citizens League, September 30, 1996,” author’s notes of a recorded oral history, February 24, 2012, Dayton Archive.
The resettlement committee withdrew from the stage in a quiet elegance that underscored all that preceded that final meeting on March 27, 1946. The quest to create a Japanese American social club revealed how much had been accomplished in just three short years. The term “resettlers” no longer seemed to fit, instead they were, in the spirit of unity, nothing less than Daytonians.
Chapter Seven

Through the Years: 1942-1946

On October 7, 1942, the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans (Committee) came into existence. Less than a week earlier the WRA first authorized the indefinite leave program which enabled internees to resettle outside the West Coast exclusion zones. The Committee was headquartered in New York City, but its mission spanned the breadth of the 48 states. This national organization represented the concerted outreach of the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. It sought to support local communities in assisting those of the Japanese descent. Its Executive Secretary, George E. Rundquist, was a Quaker, and so too were many on his staff. Mr. Rundquist led a successful career in the publishing business before he turned his focus to humanitarian causes. The pulse of this New York-based organization was very much synchronized to the heartbeat of the WRA. In the spring of 1946, the Committee, like the WRA, ceased operations. 156 Despite its short existence, it left a rich legacy that touched many communities including Dayton, Ohio.

In 1942, the Committee distributed a four-page pamphlet entitled, *Resettlement Hand-Book*. The opening paragraph described this publication as a “*concise guide for individuals and groups interested in the resettlement of Japanese Americans.*” This easy-to-read pamphlet consisted of pertinent excerpts from the WRA’s regulations along with interpretative comments by the Committee. The *Resettlement Hand-Book* included a convenient checklist for communities interested in participating in a resettlement program. The checklist asked, among other things, whether job offers constituted the “prevailing wage?”

In a complementary fashion the Committee acquired job offers from participating communities and distributed this information to the relocation centers. The centers, in turn, publicized these jobs in their newspapers and elsewhere. As early as April 1943, the Committee advertised a pamphlet entitled, *Community Preparation for*

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Resettlement of Japanese Americans. This publication amounted to another attempt to spur the creation of resettlement programs at a grassroots level.

In the spring of 1943, George Rundquist traveled to the internment camps. He told his audiences his committee had a five-part mission: 1) to find them outside work at the prevailing wage, 2) to find them proper housing, 3) to ensure their acceptance into the resettled community, 4) to ensure their acceptance by the local labor unions, and 5) to ensure their resettlement did not conflict with other racial minorities. During this timeframe he informed internees that Ohio and Michigan offered the best resettlement opportunities.

Mr. Rundquist told internees the Committee functioned to help the government and internees by “supporting the plan for dispersal resettlement.” With the backing of the powerful Federal Council of Churches, Rundquist moved with confidence and resolve as he engaged community leaders to support his program. Mr. Rundquist assured his audiences that he aimed to resettle them into communities where they could live normal lives.

161 Ibid.
Mr. Rundquist challenged his internment camp audiences with the logic of resettlement. He claimed many in the Midwest and East were unfamiliar with the plight of Japanese Americans because the war overshadowed the West Coast evacuation. To underscore this point, Rundquist asserted that the evacuation did not make the front page of any Eastern newspapers. He urged internees to make their circumstances known by leaving the camps, and sharing their experiences with their newfound communities. Nonetheless, he reasoned that real acceptance and understanding hinged upon their willingness and courage to venture out of the camps.163 Mr. Rundquist urged them to be missionaries: "One nisei [sic] who makes a good impression in a community will pave the way for many others."164

Through the support of the Federal Council of Churches, George Rundquist's committee also funded a number of initiatives such as the establishment of hostels. In July 1943, the New York Times reported the Committee made a $2,000 contribution for a resettlement hostel "somewhere in the Northwest."165

In early 1943, the Committee produced a publication entitled the Resettlement Bulletin. The first three editions issued on a bi-monthly basis, and thereafter became monthly. As a relevant publication of the time, it memorialized not only the types of

164 "Rundquist Outlines Policy of Committee," March 24, 1943.
165 "Lutherans Report Pastor Shortage," New York Times, July 17, 1943. Note, the title of this article is only descriptive of the first of two reported matters therein.
information deemed important to people like George Rundquist, but, moreover, how the Committee viewed local efforts across the nation.

The *Resettlement Bulletin* carried articles, announcements, and editorials about matters pertaining to the resettlement of those of Japanese descent. George Rundquist and Rev. Toru Matsumoto served as editors. Contributors were as diverse as the contours of wartime resettlement: WRA Director Dillon S. Meyer and other WRA officials, representatives of the Japanese American Citizens League, church organizations, internees, resettlers, community resettlement representatives, and others. This publication functioned, in effect, as an information clearinghouse that served the entire resettlement spectrum.

The *Resettlement Bulletin* packed a powerful punch through first-person accounts. In an early edition, July 1943, an Idaho resettler poignantly described how he and his family felt as they departed Tule Lake War Relocation Center. Ken Maekawa wrote "[f]reedom at last is like having fresh air pumped into a drowning man. One will never forget the feeling of leaving camp for the rest of his life." ¹⁶⁶ In this same edition, a Cincinnati resettler marveled at his acceptance into the community, and how Cincinnati was devoid of the prewar prejudice that proliferated on the West Coast. His article even included an attempt to dispel a prevalent rumor of the time. He assured internees that the

government did not impose a 20% resettlement tax on the wages of resettlers. Mr. Rundquist amplified these messages through personal editorials that reflected his extensive travels in pursuit of resettlement. For example, in June 1943, he sounded the alarm that resettlement was the "only salvation from a prolonged reservation existence." 

The June 1943, *Resettlement Bulletin* called attention to thirteen cities--Dayton, Ohio, being one—the War Manpower Commission identified with "acute" manpower shortages. That month's *Bulletin* highlighted the attractiveness of the Midwest: better pay and access to a broader range of jobs to include work Japanese Americans were educated to perform. This was the first time Dayton was singled out in the *Resettlement Bulletin*, and it may have contributed to the decision of some of the first fifty resettlers who arrived in Dayton by October 1943.

In October 1943, the *Resettlement Bulletin* identified Rev. U.P. Hovermale of Dayton as a member of the Committee. Rev. Hovermale represented the United Brethren Church. This seventeen-person Protestant committee consisted mostly of members from New York City, nine members, and Philadelphia, three members. This edition also

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170 According to Rev. McComb the resettlers were "alleviating Dayton's manpower shortage at vital jobs." "35 American-Born Japanese Feted," *Dayton Herald*, October 3, 1943.
included an excerpt from the *Dayton Daily News* about an October welcoming party for 35 Japanese Americans. Of special note, Rev. Hovermale's wife chaired the Church Federation's committee on housing and served as the planner of the reported event.\textsuperscript{171}

Mark A. Dawber, Executive Secretary of the Home Missions Council of North America, authored the lead-off article for the January 1944, edition. While this article did not reference Dayton, it did reveal a missionary's theme. Mr. Dawber titled his article "Towards a New Height in Christian Achievement." To this end, he implored internees to, among other things, "be willing to try out at least that larger social integration in Caucasian society . . . [because] such sacrifice is Christian."\textsuperscript{172}

In a companion article, "What Resettlement is and is Not," George Rundquist delineated a checklist of thoughts. Rundquist couched resettlement as a government effort that had the backing of the Protestant and Catholic Churches. He cautioned against the use of the term "Japanese" because it was a term of ethnicity and race that obscured the more compelling fact -- nationality. Mr. Rundquist urged resettlers and others to switch to terms like "Americans" or "American citizens" or "'American citizens’ . . . of Japanese ancestry" or "Japanese Americans."\textsuperscript{173}


Mr. Dawber's call to Christian duty was an obvious attempt to motivate a very traumatized and immobilized minority. On the other hand, Mr. Rundquist's resettlement message contained a more subtle meaning. Namely, the terms of the evacuation resulted from the impersonal machinery of a wartime government, whereas the involvement of Christian organizations ensured Christian values shaped the terms of the resettlement phase. As a result, resettlers could take comfort in knowing that organizations such as the Church Federation genuinely had their best interests at heart.

As noted earlier, the October 1944, edition carried a two-page article by Robert Kodama on employment and housing opportunities in Dayton. He recognized that suitable housing was essential for successful resettlement, and as such, Mr. Kodama assured internees that Dayton would provide them with "personal attention." 174 The November 1944, Resettlement Bulletin contained a listing of 26 committees engaged in resettlement. The Dayton Church Federation was one of the very few listed committees to not be co-located in a city with a WRA field office.175

In March 1945, the Resettlement Bulletin announced several changes including that month's retirement of George Rundquist. The leadership torch then passed to Dr.

Mark A. Dawber who oversaw a partially reorganized Committee that remained dedicated to the principles espoused in 1942.¹⁷⁶

The May 1945, edition of the Resettlement Bulletin opened with an article that blamed incidents of West Coast terrorism for the lack of westward resettlement. The article maintained "[t]he midwest and east have received relocatees in the ratio of 2 to 1 against the Pacific states."¹⁷⁷ Not surprisingly, the remainder of this edition focused on services available in such cities as New York, Brooklyn, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Boston, Rochester, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, and so on. The Church Federation advertised it would meet resettlers at the Dayton train station, assist them in finding a job and suitable short term and long term housing, guide them around Dayton, assist them in contacting local schools, introduce them to local churches, arrange for legal and social services, if necessary, and introduce them to others. The Church Federation promised "to assist relocatees to find their place in the social, religious, and recreational life of the city."¹⁷⁸

The April 1946, edition represented the last issue of the Resettlement Bulletin. It consisted of a nostalgic look back mixed with hope and concern for the future. This edition also included an article by Dillon S. Myer. His thoughtful piece observed

¹⁷⁶ "Announcement," Resettlement Bulletin, March 1945,
¹⁷⁷ Introduction, Resettlement Bulletin, May 1945,
¹⁷⁸ "Dayton, Ohio," Resettlement Bulletin, May 1945,
that"[c]hurch people have generally been the resettlers' first new friends, and in many ways have helped them reestablish themselves."\textsuperscript{179} In a reciprocal fashion, Mr. Dawber hailed Director Myer and his agency as "gentlemen to the churches."\textsuperscript{180}

Rev. Booth and George Rundquist shared many similarities. Each was a Quaker. Each championed the cause of Japanese Americans. Each understood the exponential value of networking. And each touched Dayton, Ohio.

Rev. G. Raymond Booth and his wife had substantial prewar experience in aiding West Coast Japanese Americans. In March 1942, Booth testified before the Tolan Committee, and urged "genuine resettlement" in lieu of evacuation. Rev. Booth also submitted a written statement to the committee which offered the assistance of the AFSC to the government. His statement noted the AFSC's "experience in dealing with uprooted humanity in France, Poland, Russia, China, Mexico, and the United States."\textsuperscript{181}

In November 1943, Gracia Booth authored a WRA trip report that detailed her experiences and impressions while visiting the two Arkansas camps. She recounted how many Japanese Americans remembered her from her West Coast days with the AFSC. Apparently this background "proved to . . . open Sesame even, or, perhaps, especially with the older Buddhists" who had fond memories of AFSC assistance. This trip led her

to proffer a number of insightful suggestions to the WRA’s Cleveland area office: more information needed to be written in Japanese to assist older internees, each field office needed a person who could speak and write Japanese for the same reason, there was a "great and unlimited need for counseling in regard to relocation," and to this end, more women counselors were needed to better serve young women interested in domestic jobs.\textsuperscript{182}

Just as the Booths brought a wealth of experience and credibility to bear, so, too, did George Rundquist as he led the Committee. In 1942, Mr. Rundquist served as an associate secretary of the American Friends Service Committee.\textsuperscript{183} His association with the AFSC placed him in the catbird seat to observe the various AFSC initiatives under consideration. For example, on August 5, 1942, Homer Morris, Secretary of the Social-Industrial Section, drafted a memorandum that detailed one possible program of assistance to internees. The Morris plan reflected the unique signature of Quaker experience in such matters. According to Homer Morris, a viable resettlement scheme required a cognizance that "the placement of the Japanese involves the sponsoring of an unpopular cause in the midst of war hysteria, [and] . . . can probably be approached more easily through the regular accepted denominational channels rather through individuals who are not known to the various denominations." Morris believed church leaders

\textsuperscript{182} Gracia D. Booth, trip report, November 24, 1943, WRA.
played a pivotal role in gaining community acceptance.\textsuperscript{184} Indefinite leaves for resettlement did not become effective until October 1, 1942, and grew out of a mid-August planning session within the WRA. Surely George Rundquist had to be aware of, if not involved in, the planning and preparing of that Quaker summer. Like the Booths, his AFSC credentials along with those of the Committee's sponsors--especially the Federal Council of Churches--ensured an expertise and credibility that resonated with Japanese Americans and government officials alike.

Rev. Booth and his wife understood the value of publicizing their cause. Of the two, Gracia Booth was an especially prolific and eloquent writer who possessed a talent for describing the human experience. Her words, like those of a missionary, invoked Christian emotion and Christian duty. For example, her Good Friday article about circumstances at the Santa Anita Assembly Center asked "will there, perchance, out of their crying need, arise one from among their own number, a 'Moses,' who will guide them safely into a 'Promised Land' when their wanderings shall be ended?"\textsuperscript{185} Between 1942 and 1946, she authored a stream of articles that appeared in Quaker publications as well as the \textit{Resettlement Bulletin}.

As a former executive in the publishing world, George Rundquist understood the power of printed words. The \textit{Resettlement Bulletin} served as a soap box for a diverse

\begin{flushright}\textsuperscript{184} Homer L. Morris, Memorandum: A Preliminary Report on the Type of Program Which the American Friends Service Committee Should Undertake in Dealing With the Problem of Evacuation of Japanese Americans, August 5, 1942, Homer and Edna Morris Collection, Box 29, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}\textsuperscript{185} Booth, "Good Friday," \textit{The Friend}, 413.\end{flushright}
array of writers with articles that reached out to different audiences. There was something for everyone, and everyone found something in resettlement. This newsletter informed, prodded, and editorialized the contours of resettlement. The Committee also generated a number of "how to" guides that demystified government jargon, and made resettlement programs understandable and appealing to local communities and their church leaders.

Between 1940 and 1946, Rev Booth moved about the country as he sought to redress what he perceived as the wrongs wrought upon Japanese Americans. He indeed traveled full circle from Pasadena to Cincinnati to Chicago and finally to Los Angeles. He directed the AFSC’s Pacific Branch and then joined the WRA’s newly-created resettlement mission. Rev. Booth brought a missionary’s zeal to all he did. Despite the immensity of the WRA’s Cincinnati district, he tirelessly traversed his territory, met with community leaders, sought out potential employers, spoke before community gatherings, frequented relocation centers, and more. Furthermore, Rev. Booth motivated and empowered others to do more of the same. He recruited Robert Kodama who, in turn, became the networking engine behind the Church Federation’s resettlement program. The multiplier effect of the Booth-Kodama liaison was incalculable, but intuitively it had to be substantial.

George Rundquist’s Committee served as a vital link between its sponsoring organizations and a plethora of communities, churches, governmental bodies, relocation
centers, WRA offices, internees, and others. As Mr. Rundquist criss-crossed the country and campaigned on behalf of dispersal resettlement, he and his Committee empowered the national resettlement program. The Committee's networking promoted program awareness, enhanced program efficiency, and facilitated a greater acceptance of resettlers.

In the spring of 1944, Rev. Booth recruited Robert Kodama to come to Ohio, to develop a possible resettlement program. For a brief time, Kodama and his family resided at the AFSC hostel in Cincinnati. On May 5, 1944, Rev. Booth and Kodama traveled from Cincinnati to Dayton where they met with George Rundquist. Mr. Rundquist came to Dayton to discuss its resettlement program. The Dayton Y.M.C.A. hosted a luncheon for George Rundquist to meet with Rev. Booth, Rev. Titus, the then-Director of the Church Federation's Commission on War Services, Robert Kodama, and members of the Church Federation's resettlement committee. The next day the Dayton Daily News reported "Rev. Titus . . . pointed out that Dayton industrial leaders and citizens are able to take care of the relocation of Japanese Americans who have been asked to accept jobs, rather than have government agencies do so." According to the news article, the local committee sought the assistance of Rundquist and Rev. Booth.186

Kodama became the Church Federation's Director of the Committee on Resettlement. Kodama’s position with the resettlement committee grew out of the Rundquist visit.

In hindsight, the events of May 5, 1944, take on a sharper image. Between the spring of 1943—as marked by the arrival of the first resettlers, Masaru and Lily Yamasaki—and May 1944, nearly sixty Japanese Americans had arrived in Dayton. Dayton had proved to be a viable resettlement community. Jobs were abundant and the community was accepting of these first newcomers. Adequate housing remained scarce, but not impossible to secure. Mr. Kodama believed that with “direct and active assistance” the Church Federation could secure suitable housing for resettlers. The impending moves by Rev. Booth and Rev. Titus posed the potential to reverse the gains of the previous 12-months. The Church Federation's newly-created resettlement committee was in search of a director. Enter Robert Kodama. Kodama’s prewar background and Heart Mountain experience made him an ideal candidate to direct this fledgling committee. He possessed the business savvy, program awareness, and hard knocks of one who personally understood and could readily represent other resettlers.

The buy-in of the Rundquist-led committee amounted to the next logical step. This national organization possessed the credibility and capability to effectively amplify the Church Federation’s program. Moreover, these attributes negated the need for a government relocation office in Dayton. It was reported “George E. Rundquist . . . met

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with the local committee and also approved the plan of relocation through a voluntary committee rather than through the establishment of a WRA office . . . . " Rundquist had the ear and the respect of Dillon S. Myer, and as a result, the reported plan--a local committee in lieu of a WRA office--had the hallmarks of validity.

As a result of the May meeting, the Church Federation hired Robert Kodama to conduct a survey of Dayton so as to better tailor the local resettlement program. George Rundquist represented that his organization might be able to secure additional funding for the continued employment of Kodama. Unfortunately, the follow-on funding never materialized. Over the course of that summer, Rev. Titus and Rev. Gordon K. Chapman of the Board of National Missions exchanged letters on the subject. The Board of National Missions aligned with the Home Missions Council which, in turn, served as one of the three Committee sponsors. Rev. Chapman, a former missionary to Japan, informed Rev. Titus that funds would not be forthcoming. Apparently, a "controversy [existed] between the denominational heads" that precluded funding for a person of Baptist faith--Robert Kodama. Nonetheless, the highly committed Robert Kodama volunteered his

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189 Myer, Uprooted Americans, 136.
190 Kodama, "Report on Resettlement of Japanese Americans," Dayton Metro Library. The Church Federation desired to employ Mr. Kodama on a full time basis and pay him a salary of $250 per month with another $150 for clerical, travel, telephone, and other expenses. Harry E. Titus, letter to Gordon K. Chapman, July 6, 1944, Box 15, WRA.

191 Rev. Titus described Mr. Kodama as "Baptist nominally." Titus, letter to Chapman, August 12, 1944, WRA. The author corresponded with Dr. Stephanie Bangarth, assistant professor of history at King's University College at the University of Western Ontario, on this matter. Dr. Bangarth has written extensively on the Japanese diaspora in North America as well the role of churches in aiding those of
time as Director of the Church Federation’s resettlement committee and only received reimbursement of his expenses.\textsuperscript{192}

In 1944, the Church Federation's resettlement program came to a critical crossroad. Together Rev. Booth and Rev. Titus formed a highly successful resettlement duo. Rev Booth and his wife contributed experience, expertise, and energy. Their circles of influence included the WRA, AFSC, the larger Christian community as well as the communities of internees and resettlers. Rev. Titus possessed a keen understanding of Dayton's dynamics. Furthermore, he had the respect and support of Dayton's religious and political leaders. Together Booth and Titus complemented each other, and collectively their leadership well-served Dayton's resettlement program. Their simultaneous departure left a formidable void to fill.\textsuperscript{193} Just as Rev. Booth recruited Robert Kodama, it appeared Rev. Booth and Rev. Titus recruited George Rundquist and his committee. Kodama and the Committee had much in common. Each had a passion for the cause, each volunteered his efforts, and each had an appreciation for life in the camps. Both understood the importance of public relations, and perhaps this, more than anything else, distinguished the course of their collaborative efforts in the remaining years of Dayton's program.

\textsuperscript{192} Harry E. Titus, letter to Louise M. Noble, November 22, 1944.

\textsuperscript{193} Once Rev. Titus became the Cincinnati-based relocation officer, he could no longer dedicate all his time and efforts to the Church Federation's resettlement program.
Dayton’s resettlement program benefited immeasurably from its association with the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans. Mr. George Rundquist and his committee never strayed from Dayton's side. In fact, they remained with the Church Federation through the years and through its various stages of its existence.

On April 3, 1942, Robert Kodama and his wife waited, like thousands of others, at the Santa Anita Assembly Center. This largest of all assembly centers held a maximum of nearly 19,000 evacuees who awaited transfer to one of ten camps under construction. In time Robert and Ann Kodama transferred to Heart Mountain War Relocation Center, but on that fateful Good Friday they may have crossed paths with Gracia Booth. Was Robert Kodama the prayed for Moses who would "perchance . . . arise . . . from among their own number . . . [and] guide them safely into a 'Promised Land' . . . ?" Was George Rundquist and his Committee the allegorical staff that empowered Moses to part the sea and place his people beyond the grasp of bondage? Such images likely came to mind for many Japanese Americans who journeyed the long and painful road from the West Coast to Dayton's freedom. Similarly, such images did immense justice to the contributions that George Rundquist and his committee made to resettlers and the Dayton program.

195 Booth, "Good Friday," The Friend, 413.
Chapter Eight

Conclusion

In the dawning days of 1942, Dayton, Ohio, surged into action as it prepared for its inevitable role in World War II. The President's declaration of war catapulted Dayton into a vital defense center. Industry moved with focused dispatch. Factories expanded and retooled from peacetime production to wartime's around-the-clock schedule. Each of the city's two Army airfields functioned as epicenters for production, construction, logistics, and more. In the process, thousands of military and civilian personnel along with substantial numbers of contractors supported each installation. The speed and immensity of these events was without precedent. City fathers and industrial leaders joined in planning for the forces that would tax and strain the levies of daily life. Planning became an absolute necessity as the hard lessons of supply and demand created new "haves" and "have nots." Housing was one of the first casualties on the home front as waves of war workers and others descended upon wartime Dayton.

At the same time, a very different scenario unfolded up and down the West Coast of the United States. Japanese communities--"Japantowns" or "Nihonmachis"--in California, Oregon, and Washington remained anxious and worried in the days following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Decades of West Coast prejudice left those of Japanese descent in fear for what would happen next. The answer arrived on February 19, 1942. On this day, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which led to the
systemic uprooting of all West Coast Japanese Americans and Japanese aliens for no crime other than their "racial visibility." In short order, "military necessity" became the crowbar to authorize the evacuation and detention of 120,000 Japanese. Evacuated Japanese proved easy prey for jackals and scoundrels who fleeced them of their businesses, homes, cars, and other cherished possessions. In those early months of 1942, Japanese Americans suffered grievously: jobs lost, businesses abandoned, schooling interrupted, families split up, privacy forsaken, and traditions trampled. Nothing in the West Coast history of Japanese Americans compared to the forlorn days of early 1942.

Dayton, Ohio, and West Coast America could not have been more different from each other. The 1940 census revealed plenty. Two Japanese residents lived in Dayton while most of the nation's 127,000 Japanese lived along the West Coast. In the spring of 1942, migrant war workers streamed into Dayton, in contrast, Japanese residents on the West Coast streamed out of their communities and into hastily arranged assembly centers. Dayton's industries mobilized for war, while the Army's Western Defense Command mobilized against all West Coast Japanese. By year's end, 120,000 West Coast Japanese were scattered across seven states and held in foreboding compounds encircled with barbed wire and overseen by armed sentries.

The early wartime trajectory of Dayton, Ohio, was far removed from the trajectory of West Coast Japanese Americans. And yet, the immensity of World War II imposed itself and altered the trajectories of the past. In the spring of 1943, Masaru and Lily Yamasaki, the first resettlers to Dayton, arrived at the MacMillian estate. The Yamasakis learned of these jobs through the assistance of caring Quakers--likely AFSC members--while at Tule Lake War Relocation Center in California.\(^{198}\)

At the same time, Dayton's religious community extended its assistance to the arriving waves of service members, military families, and migrant war workers. In September 1942, a merger of several interdenominational organizations led to the establishment of the Church Federation of Dayton and Montgomery County. The resulting Protestant organization functioned as, among other things, the coordinating hub for outreach programs to Dayton’s wartime community. Masaru and Lily Yamasaki were unlike the other newcomers to Dayton -- they had just arrived from a war relocation center. Moreover, their release on indefinite leave hinged upon their passing an FBI background check.\(^{199}\) Of course, none of the thousands of new arrivals that poured into Dayton required FBI scrutiny. Instead, they merely followed the path of opportunity to Dayton’s factories, airfields, and the like.

\(^{198}\) Lily Y. Yamasaki, telephone interview by author, Houston, TX, February 12, 2012.  
\(^{199}\) Director Meyer claimed the FBI checks were made necessary due to the stigma of the evacuation. Myer, *Uprooted Americans*, 133, 140.
In March 1943, Rev. Booth and his wife became relocation officers in the newly established WRA field office in Cincinnati. Before long they contacted the Church Federation seeking assistance in obtaining housing and employment for Dayton-bound resettlers. The Booths likely turned to the Church Federation because of its visible role in assisting the flood of newcomers to Dayton. Mr. and Mrs. Yamasaki needed no such assistance when they arrived because 1) they secured their jobs before departing Tule Lake, and 2) most domestic positions included housing as was the case with their jobs at the MacMillian estate. After about five months as domestics, the Yamasakis looked for other employment. Mr. Yamasaki secured a job with Borden’s Dairy and Lily Yamasaki became a secretary for the Church Federation. This sequence of events provided the Church Federation with its earliest exposure to and experiences in the resettlement realm.

Prewar Dayton lacked any significant Japanese population, and it had no ties to West Coast communities that did. The same could be said about most Midwest cities of the day. According to the 1940 census, Dayton’s Caucasian population accounted for about ninety percent of Dayton's total population while African Americans made up virtually all of the remaining ten percent. Despite the lack of diversity, Dayton never exhibited anything more adverse than an initial chilliness to the first Japanese resettlers.

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200 In a somewhat related context, Dayton currently has five sister cities. In 1956, President Eisenhower established Sister Cities International, and in 1964, Dayton, Ohio, created its committee and selected Oiso, Japan (near Yokohoma and Tokyo) as its first sister city. This selection grew out of NCR's relationship with Oiso. Dayton Sister City Committee, “Oiso, Japan,” http://daytonsistercities.org/oiso-japan/ (accessed May 1, 2012).

201 U.S. Census, Characteristics of the Population, Table F-36: 1940.
In fact, a WRA report commented that "[i]n May, 1943, Dayton was so absorbed in its war effort that the coming of a few Japanese-Americans was hardly noticed by the public."202 Nothing in that WRA report suggested anything different for the subsequent war years. Consequently, Dayton's acceptance of Japanese Americans may have been more a function of an open-minded community, and less of a distracted one. That said, meaningful resettlement could not have occurred with anything less, and yet, community acceptance was not a universal attribute of the day. For example, the Cincinnati WRA field office found Louisville, Kentucky "was cold to all efforts to win acceptance."203 In fact, a report concluded "discrimination was rife" and even the Louisville "Council of Churches was prejudiced."204

Dayton's community acceptance likely grew out of a combination of factors. One, the community, as noted above, was "absorbed in its war effort."205 Two, community leaders sent a positive message through their personal actions and personal commitment. Examples included Fred Stroop, head of the City's Farmer Group, commenting favorably about employing Japanese resettlers on farms and in nurseries. The major industries of the day--McCall Corporation and Red-Bar Battery to name just two--promptly hired some of the earliest resettlers. In fact, Starbuck even constructed temporary living accommodations at the Red-Bar Battery plant. The willingness of local

202 "Dayton Community Participation," n.d., Box 12, WRA.
203 Titus, "Description of Cincinnati District," Box 11, WRA.
204 Ibid.
205 "Dayton Community Participation," WRA.
union officials, William Fort and Charles Schill, to back Japanese Americans in their bid for union membership spoke volumes. Likewise, the city newspapers stood tall and extended favorable coverage to the achievements and contributions of these newest of newcomers. Of course, the leadership of the Church Federation went so far as to open up their own homes and provided short term accommodations to resettlers.

Dayton’s Japanese Americans did much to foster community acceptance through their individual and collective hard work, good citizenship, and quiet demeanor. Between 1943 and 1946, more than 150 resettlers came to Dayton. Their numbers included singles, families, seniors, children, US citizens, aliens, and so forth. Some only spent less than a year in the camps, whereas others had remained for two to three years before coming to Dayton. They were not perfect as the incident of insubordination at Red-Bar Battery revealed. However, Robert Kodama’s rebuke against "coddling" revealed a great deal about the importance of personal responsibility. Robert Kodama also shared a humorous, but insightful vignette with his wife. Not long after he was hired at McCall Corporation, "one of his co-workers said that there was a rumor going [around] that a Jap has been hired to work [t]here. Kodama replied, 'You might be surprised but I am the Jap who was hired here.' His co-worker was very embarrassed and said, 'Oh, I did not mean you.'" Working relationships such as Kodama’s helped to discredit stereotypes. Dayton’s resettlers demonstrated their loyalty as Americans by serving in

206 Titus, "Report on the Situation at Red-Bar Battery Company," Box 12, WRA.
207 Ann Kodama Cullum, e-mail to author, August 18, 2011.
the armed forces. News of their military service became known through word-of-mouth, service stars in windows, and articles in the city newspapers. The successive waves of resettlers not only paved the way for others, but they demonstrated how much they had in common with Daytonians in terms of family matters, employment concerns, religious beliefs, social needs, and so forth.

Some elements of Dayton’s resettlement program predated the first resettlers and sprang from good fortune. Examples included community members who had previously lived in Japan such as Mr. Stroop and several missionaries, the availability of the cooperative boarding house, and the existence of Church Federation resources to address Dayton’s wartime circumstances. Those with a background in Japan offered two distinct advantages to the resettlement program: 1) they could identify with Japanese aliens, and 2) they could appreciate and explain Japanese customs and traditions to Daytonians. The cooperative boarding house provided an economical housing alternative to newcomers many of whom lacked financial options.

The serendipity of the Church Federation's Commission on War Services benefited the latter arrival of Japanese Americans to Dayton. The Church Federation established this commission to serve the anticipated influx of large numbers of military and civilian personnel, military families, and migrant war workers in search of work. As it turned out, the Japanese resettlers had much in common with these groups, and especially with the migrant war workers who needed housing and assorted social
services. These basic needs as well as their solutions transcended differences in race, ethnicity, and nationality. As a result, the Church Federation had unknowingly, but fortuitously, achieved a substantial head start on the road to implementing a robust resettlement program. In particular, the Commission on War Services acquired significant experience and expertise in identifying the pertinent issues and challenges, in networking solution-oriented alliances, and strategizing different courses of action.

Probably no one person made a bigger contribution to shaping Dayton's resettlement program than Rev. Booth. From a strategic perspective, he created a program that complemented the WRA mission, but did not unduly interfere with the autonomy of the local community. Rev. Booth, like Rev. Titus, was not a government bureaucrat, and possessed no apparent illusions of empire building. Instead, Booth was a tireless campaigner for resettlement. He focused on recruiting internees out of the camps and into communities where they would be readily accepted. As a relocation officer he deferred, whenever possible, to the Church Federation to facilitate the process of assimilation. That said, he remained poised to intervene when, and if, "knotty problems" required his personal involvement.208

Booth's recruitment of Robert Kodama not only aligned with his “hands-off” paradigm, but it greatly enhanced it. Kodama invested the Church Federation with impressive skills, experience, and expertise. As a former businessman he possessed the

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208 Booth and Booth, letter to Robert Cullum, April 14, 1944, WRA.
self confidence and ability to build teams, to network, and to forge practical solutions. As a Japanese American, he proved to be a polished ambassador for resettlement. As a former internee and recent resettler, his thoughts and words were cloaked in credibility.

Rev. Booth and Kodama shared many laudable traits: each thought strategically, each fostered coalitions, and each drove results. One was a Caucasian minister, the other a Japanese American businessman, but each shared the bond of selflessly championing human dignity on America's home front.

George Rundquist’s Committee on the Resettlement of Japanese Americans benefited Dayton in many ways to include bridging the transition between Rev. Booth and Rev. Titus as relocation officers. His committee ensured the news from Dayton continued to reach the camps, and moreover, it leveraged the important public relation initiatives Kodama undertook.

Rev. Titus was the quiet force behind Dayton’s resettlement program. As the Director of the Church Federation’s Commission on War Services, he oversaw the committees that constituted the heart of Dayton’s front line response to home front social challenges. The resident talent on these committees provided the early assistance to Dayton’s resettlers. By the spring of 1944, the flow of Dayton-bound resettlers had grown significant enough to merit a separate resettlement committee. Rev. Titus oversaw this important milestone. It was his leadership that integrated the Committee on Resettlement into the fold of the Commission on War Services. In June 1944, Rev. Titus
replaced Rev. Booth as the Cincinnati-based relocation officer, and in doing so, he helped to sustain the paradigm Booth created. Knowing the capability the Church Federation possessed, Rev. Titus trusted in the Church Federation’s handling of the local resettlement program.

A few examples illustrate that numbers alone are not particularly probative on whether or not Dayton administered a successful resettlement program. Ann Kodama left Dayton about three months after Robert Kodama was drafted into the military. She returned to the West Coast to be near family during the time of her husband’s service, and not because of any unhappiness with the circumstances of her stay.209 Masaru and Lily Yamasaki remained in Dayton because Yamasaki enjoyed his job, and was advancing in his career at Borden’s Dairy. For them, Dayton held greater promise for their future than the West Coast.210 Edward Koda returned to his family’s rice farm in the San Joaquin Valley “at the first possible opportunity.”211 According to the Koda family, they had to entrust their farm to “strangers” during their evacuation because of the government’s need for food and fiber.212 Mr. Koda promptly left Dayton, when he could, out of profound worry over the state of his family’s farm. Sadly his concerns proved well-founded. Upon his return, he and his family discovered they had lost approximately 9,000 acres of farm land, milling facilities, and valuable equipment and

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209 Kodama Cullum, e-mail to author, August 18, 2011.
210 Lily Y. Yamasaki, telephone interview by author, Houston, TX, February 12, 2012.
211 Robin Koda, e-mail to author about her late father Edward Koda, February 24, 2012.
Mrs. Yamasaki believed Dayton’s winters prompted some resettlers to return the West Coast. However, she believed the choice really came down to whether or not Dayton’s resettlers had anything—businesses, homes, family—pulling them back to the West Coast. The Yamasakis did not.

Dayton’s resettlement program constituted a resounding success in terms of community acceptance, access to meaningful employment, and suitable housing. The Church Federation assumed responsibility for the city's program. This approach made eminent sense since the Church Federation possessed the leaders, organization, and resources to meet a wide range of Dayton’s community needs. Church-based resettlement committees were not uncommon. However, the Dayton program operated under terms of far more autonomy than most. The WRA and Church Federation began their collaborative relationship in the spring of 1943; however, even from their earliest days the WRA’s Cincinnati field office showed considerable deference to the Church Federation’s expertise. As the Church Federation assumed a greater role in assisting resettlers with their assimilation, it freed the Cincinnati field office to focus more time on recruiting internees and/or assisting other communities.

In January 1946, Area Relocation Supervisor, Robert M. Cullum, recognized the success of the Church Federation's resettlement committee. Cullum extolled the "new

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213 Koda, e-mail to author, February 24, 2012.
type of government community cooperation" that emerged along the way. Seemingly no other city in Cullum's geographic area accomplished as much without the presence of a co-located WRA field office. The Church Federation enjoyed substantial day-to-day autonomy in administering its program of community integration. Dayton's resettlement program revealed much about community acceptance. It cannot be imposed or ordered by a government contrary to the wishes of a community. Genuine community acceptance had to grow out of the grassroots of a community. The Dayton model of resettlement emerged out of a program intended for migrant war workers and their families. The WRA's deference not only permitted Dayton to fashion its own prescription of integration, but the resulting program revealed how much Japanese Americans shared with, for example, Southern workers, in search of opportunity. The Dayton lesson is not so much about the challenges of resettlement and integration, but on possibilities that come from improved government-community cooperation.

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214 Cullum, letter to Dayton's Resettlement Committee, January 24, 1946, Dayton Metro Library.
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Oral History


Published and Unpublished Works


