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Japanese Farm Holdings on the Pacific Coast

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

JAPANESE FARM HOLDINGS ON

THE PACIFIC COAST

By

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Berkeley, California  
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## SUMMARY

Persons of Japanese ancestry residing within the continental United States in 1940 numbered 126,947, less than one-tenth of one percent of the total United States population, according to the U. S. Census. Of this number, 112,353 persons were concentrated in the Pacific Coast States, distributed as follows: 93,717 in California, 14,565 in Washington, and 4,071 in Oregon. Almost two-thirds were native-born citizens of the United States.

War Department reports indicate that because of military necessity, 114,222 persons of Japanese ancestry moved from their established residences in all of California and the western portions of Washington and Oregon during the period from March 2 to October 31, 1942.

In 1940, prior to evacuation, 45 percent of the Japanese workers in California, Washington, and Oregon were employed in agriculture. Their agricultural activities included the operation, as farm owners, tenants, and managers, of 6,118 farms, consisting of 258,074 acres of farm land, valued at \$72,600,000. These farms represented 2.2 percent of the number and value of all farms in the three States, 0.4 percent of all land in farms, and 1.5 percent of all cropland harvested. Most of these farms, about 84 percent, were in California.



The size of Japanese-operated farms was considerably smaller than that of all farms in California, Washington, and Oregon. In 1940, Japanese-operated farms in the three States averaged 42 acres of land, whereas all farms averaged 231 acres. Japanese-operated farms in Washington were about one-third smaller than those in California and Oregon. In general, Japanese operators farmed their land more intensively than other farmers.

In 1940, 70 percent of the Japanese farmers in the three States were tenants, as compared with only 19 percent of all farmers. The large proportion of tenancy among Japanese farmers probably has been due in part to the unfavorable attitude in many areas toward land ownership by Japanese, and in part to the fact that most Japanese farmers started as farm laborers and were able to advance to tenancy but not to ownership, while comparatively few inherited farms as have a large proportion of non-Japanese farm owners.

According to a survey of recorded farm property ownerships by the War Relocation Authority, persons of Japanese ancestry, on March 1, 1942, owned approximately 71,000 acres of farm land within the West Coast evacuated area. This acreage was less than two-tenths of one percent of all land in all farms in the evacuated area. Individual Japanese ownership units were mostly small, averaging only 31 acres. Almost nine-tenths of the ownership units were of less than 50 acres, and about two-thirds were of less than 30 acres. Ownership units were largest in California and smallest in Washington.

War Department reports show that during the military evacuation period, from March 2 to October 31, 1942, nonevacuee operators were placed on 7,212 evacuated farms, involving 253,392 acres of farm land. This represented slightly more than 99 percent of all the farms and of all the farm acreage registered as subject to relinquishment.

During the evacuation period and the year following, approximately 9,100 acres were transferred from Japanese to non-Japanese ownership, and 1,300 acres were acquired by Japanese from non-Japanese giving a net decrease of 10 percent in the number and 11 percent in the acreage of Japanese ownerships. Present indications are that farm sales by Japanese are continuing, but that there are few acquisitions.

Because of the present relocation program of the War Relocation Authority and high land prices, it is likely that land will continue to be transferred from Japanese to non-Japanese ownership. Assuming that the post-war period will begin sometime near the end of 1945, post-war land holdings of Japanese probably will not exceed 22 or 23 percent of the total pre-war land holdings, including leaseholds, or roughly 55,000 to 60,000 acres of farm land, about 0.14 percent of all the land in farms within the West Coast evacuated area.



## THE JAPANESE ON THE PACIFIC COAST

### Japanese Immigration

Although there was considerable migration of persons of Asiatic origin to the Pacific Coast during the last half of the 19th Century, few Japanese<sup>1/</sup> arrived until after 1885 when the Japanese Imperial government sanctioned the emigration of its people principally as contract workers for Hawaiian sugar plantations. Because of emigration restrictions imposed by the Japanese government before 1885, early Japanese entrants consisted largely of shipwrecked sailors, occasional stowaways on foreign vessels, and casual sojourners who came and went. In 1870 and 1880, the total United States Japanese population amounted to only 55 and 148 respectively.<sup>2/</sup> The subsequent legalization of labor emigration by the Japanese government, the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 restricting Chinese immigration to the United States, the local demand for low-cost labor, and activities of emigration agencies stimulated Japanese immigration. Even throughout the economic depression of the 1890's, the United States Japanese population increased to 24,326 persons in 1900. Of this number, 18,269 were then in California, Washington, and Oregon (table 1).

In the following decade, economic conditions in this country became much more favorable to increased immigration. Consequently, by 1910, the number of Japanese in continental United States rose to 72,157, with 57,703 in California, Washington, and Oregon. In spite of restrictive measures enacted to discourage immigration to this country, the United States Japanese population continued to increase steadily, until it reached a maximum of 138,834 persons in 1930. In 1940, however, it dropped to 126,947 with 112,353 in California, Washington, and Oregon.

Most of the early Japanese immigrants came directly from their home country. Later, when the Japanese government discouraged emigration directly to continental United States many Japanese re-emigrated from Hawaii, their "stepping stone" to the mainland.

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1/ The term "Japanese" as used in this report refers to all persons of Japanese ancestry including both alien Japanese and American citizens of Japanese ancestry.

2/ U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration. National Defense Migration; Fourth Interim Report (H. Rpt. 2124). 77th Cong., 2d Sess., Pursuant to H. Res. 113, A Resolution to Inquire Further into the Interstate Migration of Citizens... Findings and Recommendations on Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones, May 1942. pp. 59-61. Washington, D. C. U. S. Govt. Printing Off. 1942.



Table 1.- Distribution of Japanese population in the United States, by decades, 1890-1940.

Area	1890		1900		1910	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	1,147	56.3	10,151	41.7	41,356	57.3
Washington	360	17.6	5,617	23.1	12,929	17.9
Oregon	25	1.2	2,501	10.3	3,418	4.7
Three-State totals	1,532	75.1	18,269	75.1	57,703	79.9
All other States	507	24.9	6,057	24.9	14,454	20.1
U. S. totals	2,039	100.0	24,326	100.0	72,157	100.0
American-born	-	-	269	1.1	4,502	6.2
Foreign-born	2,039	100.0	24,057	98.9	67,655	93.8

Area	1920		1930		1940	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	71,952	64.8	97,456	70.2	93,717	73.8
Washington	17,387	15.7	17,837	12.8	14,565	11.5
Oregon	4,151	3.7	4,958	3.6	4,071	3.2
Three-State totals	93,490	84.2	120,251	86.6	112,353	88.5
All other States	17,520	15.8	18,583	13.4	14,594	11.5
U. S. totals	111,010	100.0	138,834	100.0	126,947	100.0
American-born	29,672	26.7	68,357	49.2	79,642	62.7
Foreign-born	81,338	73.3	70,477	50.8	47,305	37.3

Source: Bureau of the Census.



FIGURE 1

# JAPANESE POPULATION

CALIFORNIA WASHINGTON AND OREGON

1940

LOCATED BY MINOR CIVIL DIVISIONS  
INCLUDES BOTH AMERICAN- AND FOREIGN-BORN PERSONS

EACH DOT REPRESENTS 10 PERSONS

POPULATION IN CONCENTRATED AREAS INDICATED BY NUMBER  
LARGER FIGURES INDICATE NUMBER OF PERSONS WITHIN EACH COUNTY  
PORTION WEST OF DASHED LINE REPRESENTS EVACUATED AREA

STATE	AMERICAN-BORN	FOREIGN-BORN	TOTALS
CALIFORNIA	60,148	33,569	93,717
WASHINGTON	8,882	5,683	14,565
OREGON	2,454	1,617	4,071
TOTALS	71,484	40,869	112,353

Scale in Miles  
0 20 40 60

SOURCE: BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



### Restrictive Measures

The accelerated Japanese migration to this country during the period from 1900 to 1908 created considerable anti-Japanese agitation, which was expressed in organized campaigns sponsoring measures designed to limit this migration. Restrictive measures enacted and employed are described in the following excerpt:

"When the arrival of Japanese immigrants began to stir up reaction in the cities of California, the Japanese government was responsive to the feeling and attempted to discourage emigration of their subjects to the continental United States. They were, however, permitted to emigrate to the Islands, to Canada, and to Mexico, and after their arrival at these places, the Japanese government no longer had control over them. Thereupon they remigrated to the United States. It was not until February, 1907 that the immigration laws of the United States were amended so as to permit control over this class of immigrant. This amendment gave the President of the United States the right to refuse entry to aliens bearing passports to other countries or insular possessions of this country if he were satisfied that the bearers of these passports were attempting to enter continental territory to the detriment of labor conditions. On March 14, 1907, President Roosevelt took action under this law and refused admission to skilled and unskilled Japanese and Korean laborers attempting to enter United States after having received passports to Mexico, Canada, and Hawaii. After the promulgation of this order, the Japanese government agreed not to issue passports to their laborer subjects for emigration to either continental United States or Hawaii. This agreement remained in effect until superseded by the immigration law of 1924, which absolutely excludes Orientals."<sup>3/</sup>

### Population Distribution

According to the U. S. Census, 126,947 persons of Japanese ancestry, less than one-tenth of one percent of the total United States population, resided within continental United States in 1940. Of this number, 112,353 persons were in the Pacific Coast States and distributed as follows: 93,717 in California, 14,565 in Washington, and 4,071 in Oregon (table 1). Almost two-thirds of these persons were native-born citizens of the United States. Within these three States, this population was largely concentrated in or near the edge of large urban centers of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco Bay Region, Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle; in the Yakima and Hood River farming areas of the Pacific Northwest; and in the coastal and central valleys of California (fig. 1).

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<sup>3/</sup> Fuller, V. The Supply of Agricultural Labor as a Factor in the Evolution of Farm Organization in California. In U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor. Hearings...76 Cong. 3d Sess., Pt. 54, Agricultural Labor in California, p. 19829. Washington, D. C. 1940.



# Military Evacuation

Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Japan on December , 1941, authorities charged with the military security of the Pacific Coast became concerned about the large number of persons of Japanese ancestry residing along and near the western coast. Consequently, in order to permit efficient and unhampered military operations in this region, the Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, acting under Executive Order of the President, issued a public proclamation on March 2, 1942, excluding all persons of Japanese ancestry from designated military areas.

As a result of this and subsequent proclamations and exclusion orders, 114,222 persons of Japanese ancestry moved from their established residences in all of California and the western portions of Washington and Oregon during the period from March 2 to October 31, 1942 (table 2 and fig. 1). Of this number, 109,391 persons were evacuated directly by the military authorities and placed in 10 relocation centers, and 4,831 migrated voluntarily from the West Coast into the interior States.<sup>4/</sup>

Table 2.- Japanese evacuated or migrated from the West Coast, March 2 to October 31, 1942.

State of origin	Evacuees	Migrants <sup>1/</sup>	Totals
	Number	Number	Number
California	92,785	4,203	96,988
Washington	12,892	499	13,391
Oregon	3,714	129	3,843
Totals	109,391	4,831	114,222

<sup>1/</sup> Net total number of persons migrating voluntarily from evacuated areas before evacuation and who did not return to a center before October 31, 1942.

Source: War Department. Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942. pp. 362-8. Washington, D. C. U. S. Govt. Print. Off. 1943.

During their relatively long period of residence within the western evacuated area, these persons had acquired considerable interests in many types of property, including agricultural land.

<sup>4/</sup> War Department. Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942. pp. 353-380. Washington, D. C. U. S. Govt. Print. Off. 1943.

Although the Army's evacuation program included the southern part of Arizona, this area is not included in this study because of the relatively few Japanese-operated farms involved.



## THE JAPANESE IN AGRICULTURE

Farm Acquisition

The initial tenure status of the Japanese immigrant farmer was that of farm laborer. He usually worked under the direction of Japanese "bosses," individuals "who more or less controlled the disposition of the working forces under their leadership."<sup>5/</sup> These Japanese "bosses" organized labor groups and bargained with farmers in supplying laborers on a wage or contract basis. Owing to the convenience of recruiting workers on a group basis, and to the adaptability and reliability of the Japanese as farm workers, these leaders of Japanese labor groups readily became recognized by farmer employers as a dependable source of farm labor. As the Japanese farm laborers, however, gained proficiency in farming operations, they soon aspired to the more desirable status of farm operator, which offered greater economic and social stability and independence. "The contractor system which prevailed in the farming regions of the west coast created circumstances favorable to the transition from wage earner to farm owner or tenant. Enterprising Japanese bosses, with a ready supply of manpower at their disposal and an intimate knowledge of the operating problems in any given region, were in a position to induce the farmers with whom they negotiated to lease holdings to them under different forms of tenure."<sup>6/</sup> Landowners, particularly those who leased to eligible Japanese on a share basis, found renting to Japanese profitable. This was due to the Japanese tenants' skill and diligence in farming operations which resulted in higher yields, with consequent greater financial return to the landlords. Leasing also simplified the labor problem, because the Japanese tenants' previous experience as "bosses" gave them an advantage in obtaining the large working forces needed during peak labor seasons. "A consequence of this arrangement was that as a number of farms in a locality were leased to Japanese, these tenants secured a monopoly of the most efficient Japanese laborers, and other farmers experienced difficulty in getting good Japanese farm hands for themselves. They too, then, were eager to lease to the Japanese."<sup>7/</sup>

Another feature which encouraged this transition from farm laborer to farm operator was the need for little or no capital of their own by reliable Japanese operating under certain forms of tenancy. In some instance the landlord furnished all of the farming equipment. In other cases, processing companies and commission merchants advanced part or all of the operating capital, taking for security a lien on the crops. In years when competition among shippers was unusually keen, the shippers would lease land themselves in order that they might sublease to desirable Japanese operators with whom they could negotiate marketing agreements. Another common practice which simplified financial problems of Japanese operators was the forming of partnerships among themselves. In this way, through hard work, industry, and shrewd bargaining, many Japanese farmers proceeded upward along the "agricultural ladder" from farm laborer to sharecropper and tenant, and some to ultimate farm ownership.

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<sup>5/</sup> U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>6/</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>7/</sup> Ibid., p. 69.



Although, in 1940, 45 percent of the Japanese workers in the three States were employed in agriculture, farm operation by persons of Japanese ancestry has always been limited to relatively small proportions of the total number of farms and of the total farm acreage in California, Washington, and Oregon. In 1910, Japanese operated 2,215 farms and 113,274 acres of farm land, which represented 1.2 percent of all of the farms and 0.2 percent of all of the land in farms in these three States (tables 3 and 4). During the following decade, Japanese increased their farm operation to 6,075 farms and an all-time high of 394,696 acres of farm land. This represented 2.6 percent of all of the farms and 0.7 percent of all of the land in farms for 1920. These proportions were the highest for any recorded year for the three States combined. Both the number of farms and the farm acreage operated by Japanese dropped considerably in 1930, then increased again to 6,118 farms and 258,074 acres of farm land in 1940. These farms were valued at \$72,600,000 in 1940 and represented approximately 2 percent of the total farming interests of the three States (tables 8 and 9).

In the Pacific Coast States, most of the Japanese farming activities have always been in California, and the least in Oregon. In 1940, 84 percent of the farms and 88 percent of the land operated by Japanese were in California. The highest proportions of the total number of farms and of all the land in all farms operated by Japanese, 3.9 and 0.7 percent respectively, were also in California (tables 4 and 10). Most of the Japanese farming activities were concentrated in the intensive farming areas of southern California, the great Central Valley, and the central coastal region of California; the Seattle, Tacoma, and Yakima areas of Washington; and the Portland and Hood River regions of Oregon (fig. 2).

The size of Japanese-operated farms in California, Washington, and Oregon has always been considerably smaller than that of all farms. In 1910, the average size of Japanese-operated farms in the three States amounted to 51 acres of land, whereas that of all farms was 270 acres (table 11). In 1940, the average size of Japanese-operated farms decreased to 42 acres of land; that of all farms to 231 acres. In Washington, Japanese-operated farms averaged 29 acres; in California and Oregon they were about one-third larger, averaging 44 and 42 acres respectively.

Principal farming enterprises favored by the Japanese were truck, fruit, berries, grapes, nursery stock, and some poultry, in various combinations. Japanese farm operators were most prominent in the growing of the intensively cultivated crops of vegetables and berries. The production of these crops by Japanese farmers has been estimated at about one-third of the total acreage grown. The proportional production by Japanese farmers of some of the individual crops like strawberries, celery, snap beans, peppers, cauliflower, and spinach ranged from 50 to 95 percent of the total. The vegetable, berry, and nursery enterprises were usually quite small and located in and near the outskirts of large urban centers. These small farms were operated almost entirely by use of farm-family labor.



FIGURE 2

# JAPANESE-OPERATED FARMS

CALIFORNIA WASHINGTON AND OREGON  
1940

LOCATED BY MINOR CIVIL DIVISIONS  
INCLUDES FARMS OPERATED BY BOTH  
AMERICAN- AND FOREIGN-BORN PERSONS

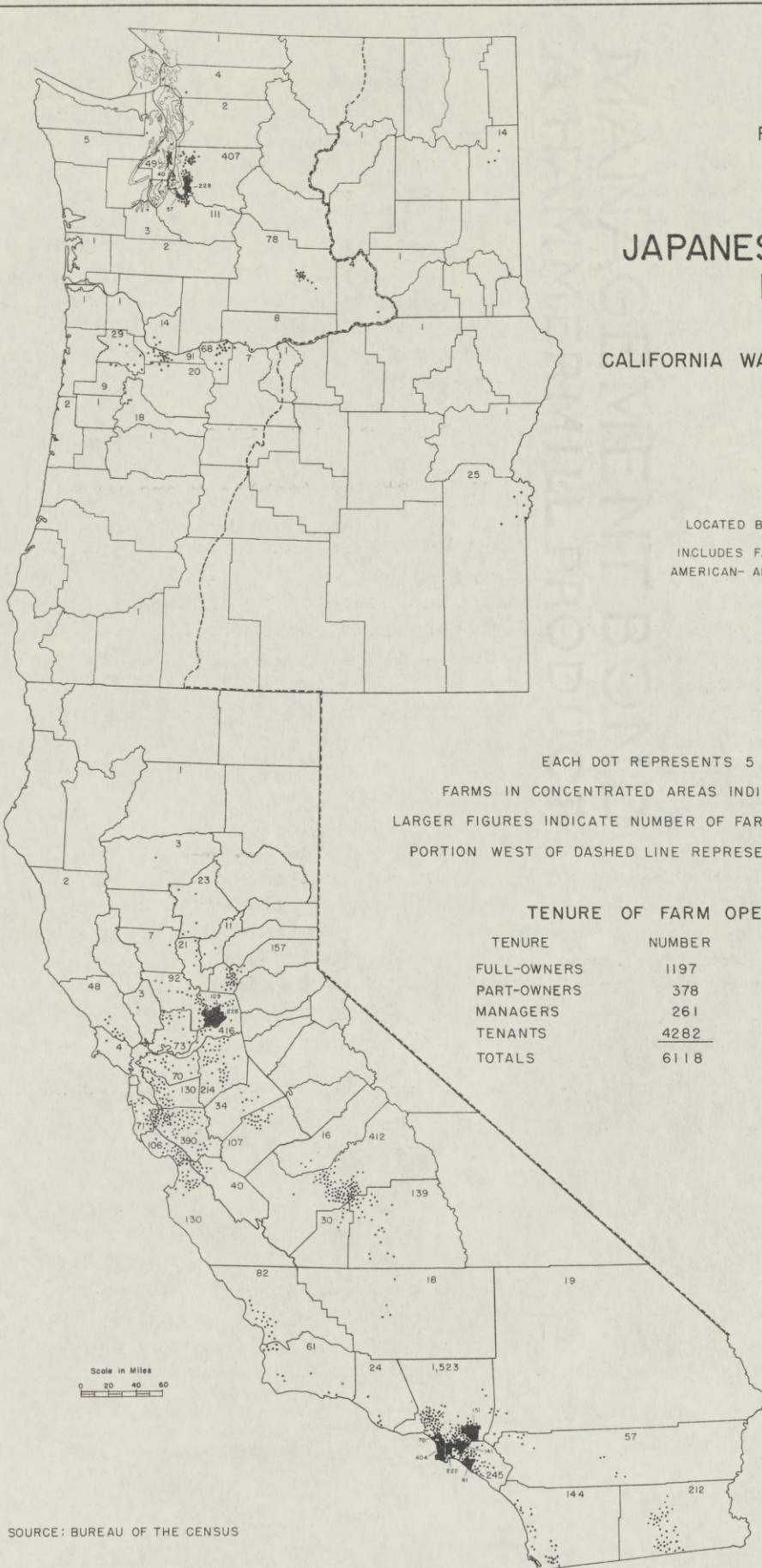
EACH DOT REPRESENTS 5 FARMS

FARMS IN CONCENTRATED AREAS INDICATED BY NUMBER  
LARGER FIGURES INDICATE NUMBER OF FARMS WITHIN EACH COUNTY  
PORTION WEST OF DASHED LINE REPRESENTS EVACUATED AREA

## TENURE OF FARM OPERATORS

TENURE	NUMBER	PERCENT
FULL-OWNERS	1197	19.6
PART-OWNERS	378	6.1
MANAGERS	261	4.3
TENANTS	4282	70.0
TOTALS	6118	100.0

(FOR COUNTY NAMES, NUMBER OF  
OWNER- AND TENANT-OPERATED FARMS,  
AND PERCENTAGE TENANCY, BY  
COUNTIES, SEE FIGURES 3, 4, AND 5)



Scale in Miles  
0 20 40 60

SOURCE: BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



Table 3.- Japanese-operated farms and farm acreage in California, Washington, and Oregon, by decades, 1910-1940.

State	1910		1920		1930		1940	
	Farms	Land	Farms	Land	Farms	Land	Farms	Land
	Number	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	Acres
California	1,816	99,254	5,152	361,276	3,956	191,427	5,135	226,094
Washington	316	9,412	699	25,340	523	12,636	706	20,326
Oregon	87	4,608	224	8,080	265	8,001	277	11,654
Three-State total	2,215	113,274	6,075	394,696	4,744	212,064	6,118	258,071

Source: Bureau of the Census.

Table 4.- Proportion of all farms and all land in farms operated by Japanese in California, Washington, and Oregon, by decades, 1910-1940.

State	1910		1920		1930		1940	
	All farms	All land in farms	All farms	All land in farms	All farms	All land in farms	All farms	All land in farms
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
California	2.06	0.35	4.38	1.23	2.92	0.63	3.87	0.74
Washington	0.56	0.08	1.05	0.19	0.74	0.09	0.86	0.13
Oregon	0.18	0.04	0.45	0.06	0.48	0.05	0.45	0.06
All three States	1.16	0.22	2.59	0.7	1.81	0.35	2.22	0.41

Source: Bureau of the Census.



In general, Japanese operators farmed their land more intensively than other farm operators. This is indicated, in part, by the much higher proportion, 76 percent, of the gross farm acreage classified as cropland harvested on Japanese-operated farms, than the 20 percent for all farms (table 9).

#### The Alien Land Laws

As long as the Japanese remained in the wage labor class, agitation against them arose largely from nonfarm groups. This movement developed primarily from fear of competition from so-called "cheap labor" and from inherent local prejudices against any "foreign element." Farmer-employers, on the other hand, welcomed, for economic reasons, activities or conditions which provided them with a source of cheap labor readily available for irregular periods and requiring little or no responsibility on their part. For this reason, unrestrained Japanese immigration was, for a while, considered desirable by this latter group.

The gradual transition of the tenure status of the Japanese from laborer to farm operator, however, tended to change the farmers' attitude. The Japanese farm labor groups hired through their Japanese "bosses" had originally been a convenient source of dependable and cheap farm labor. As the Japanese became farm operators, however, the farm labor pool was reduced accordingly. Furthermore, since these new operators utilized most of the remaining available Japanese labor force on their own farms, a labor shortage resulted for non-Japanese farmers. Thus, the Japanese gradually changed from a convenient source of manpower to active competitors for farm labor, farm land, and agricultural markets.

For these and other reasons, sufficient pressure was eventually created to secure the enactment in the various Western States of legislation limiting Japanese rights to certain economic benefits derived from the use of land. California enacted the first alien land law in 1913. Essentially, this first law provided that "the Japanese might lease and occupy houses and shops, or lease land for residential and commercial purposes; that, in addition, they might lease agricultural lands for a maximum of 3 years. Lands already owned or acquired in the future in satisfaction of existing liens, might be retained, but could not be bequeathed to heirs under a citizenship disability, though proceeds from sale of the lands would be turned over to such heirs." Corporations, a majority of whose members were aliens ineligible to citizenship or a majority of whose issued capital stock was owned by such aliens, likewise came within the provisions of the law."<sup>8/</sup>

This law was amended in 1920 and several times thereafter to restrict further the rights of those aliens who were ineligible to citizenship to benefits derived from the use of agricultural land, including the abolishment of the farm leasing provision. In 1921 and 1923, the States of Washington and Oregon enacted alien land laws, the general provisions of which were very similar to those of the amended California law. In general, the alien

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<sup>8/</sup> Ibid., pp. 77, 78.



land laws of the three States up to the time of military evacuation, with reference to ownership of agricultural land, may be briefly summarized as follows:

- (1) In all three States ineligible aliens cannot own any interest in agricultural land by purchase.
- (2) In all three States, they can take by inheritance. In California and Oregon, they can inherit proceeds from sale of land but not the land itself; in Washington, the land itself for a period of not more than 16 years.
- (3) In each State, they can foreclose mortgages in good faith and collect debts bona fide. In California and Oregon they must dispose of the land, so taken, within 2 years; in Washington, within 3 years.
- (4) In all three States, the Asiatic alien's title to land is defeasible only by the State and is good against all individuals.
- (5) In Washington and Oregon, ownership of land or an interest therein by the Asiatic alien indirectly through a corporation is restricted. In California, it is prohibited.
- (6) In all three States, the American-born Asiatic child has the right to own land. But in California and in Washington, if the alien parent pays for the land, the burden is on him to prove that the transaction was in good faith.
- (7) In all three States, the laws are not retroactive, and titles acquired and vested prior to adoption of a particular prohibition, are not affected.<sup>9/</sup>

#### Farm Tenure

In terms of proportion of number of all farms, Japanese farm ownership in the Pacific Coast States was not very significant in 1940. The 1,575 farms classified by the U. S. Census as owned by persons of Japanese ancestry in California, Washington, and Oregon represented slightly more than one-half of one percent of the total number of farms in the three States (table 5).

The proportion of farms owned by Japanese operators in all three States combined amounted to 26 percent of all Japanese-operated farms. The proportion of Japanese owner-operated farms in each of the three States was the highest in Oregon with 36 percent, as compared with 25 and 26 percent for California and Washington, respectively.

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<sup>9/</sup> Mears, E. C. Resident Orientals on the American Pacific Coast: Their Legal and Economic Status, pp. 157-187. Chicago, Ill. University Chicago Press. 1928.

United States Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority, Office of the Solicitor. Opinions Numbers 80, 81, and 82. [Analyses of Alien Land Laws of California, Washington, and Oregon, as They Affect Persons of Japanese Ancestry.] 17, 10, and 6 pp., mimeo. Washington, D. C. 1944.



Table 5.- Japanese ownership of farms in California, Washington, and Oregon, 1910 and 1940.

	California		Washington		Oregon		All three States	
	1910	1940	1910	1940	1910	1940	1910	1940
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Full-owned farms	207	997	1	123	15	77	223	1,197
Part-owned farms	26	293	-	62	1	23	27	378
Totals	233	1,290	1	185	16	100	250	1,575
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Proportion of all Japanese-owned farms in each State	95.2	81.9	0.4	11.8	6.4	6.3	100.0	100.0
Proportion of all Japanese-operated farms owner-operated in each State	12.8	25.1	0.3	26.2	19.3	36.1	11.2	25.7
Proportion of all farms in each State Japanese-owned	0.26	0.97	-	0.23	0.04	0.16	0.13	0.57

Source: Bureau of the Census.



Ownership of farms, including part-owned farms,<sup>10/</sup> by persons of Japanese ancestry in California, Washington, and Oregon increased from 250 farms in 1910 to 1,575 farms in 1940. In 1910, farm ownership by persons of Japanese ancestry represented 11 percent of all Japanese-operated farms and 0.13 percent of all farms in the three States. In 1940, it increased to 26 percent of all Japanese-operated farms and 0.57 percent of all farms (table 5).

During the period from 1910 to 1940, California's proportion of the three-State total number of farms owned by persons of Japanese ancestry dropped from 93 to 82 percent; that for Washington increased from almost 0 to 12 percent; that for Oregon remained almost constant at about 6 percent.

Fresno and Sacramento counties in California had more farms owned by persons of Japanese ancestry than any other county (fig. 3).

The majority of Japanese farmers in the three States have always been tenants. In 1940, 70 percent were tenants, as compared with only 19 percent of all farmers (table 6). The highest proportion of Japanese tenant-operated farms was in Washington and the lowest in Oregon, 72 and 63 percent respectively. There was considerable variation between counties in the proportion of tenancy of Japanese-operated farms, ranging from none to 100 percent (figs. 4 and 5). In counties with very small numbers of Japanese-operated farms, however, the extremely high and low figures are not very significant.

Table 6.- Percentage of Japanese farms and of all farms that were operated by tenants, California, Oregon, and Washington, 1940.

State	Percentage tenancy	
	Japanese operated farms	All farms
California	70.0	19.1
Washington	72.4	17.7
Oregon	63.2	18.2
All three States	70.0	18.5

Source: Bureau of the Census.

<sup>10/</sup> Part-owned farms are those in which the operators own a part and rent from others the rest of the land they operate.



From 1910 to 1940, the proportion of Japanese farmers in the three States who were tenants decreased almost 17 percent. The largest proportionate decrease occurred in Washington where all but 4 of 316 were tenants in 1910 (tables 12 and 13).

In these three States there is normally a relationship between amount of tenancy and general type of farming in the various areas. For example, there is less tenancy in fruit farming areas like Hood River County, Oreg., than in truck- and field-crop-producing areas such as Imperial Valley, Calif. There is evidence that this relationship was also true of Japanese farmers. In general, there was less tenancy in counties where they produced considerable fruit, grapes, and other perennial crops, than where they produced mostly vegetables and other annual crops.

As indicated previously, Japanese farmers usually started at the bottom of the so-called "agricultural ladder" as farm laborers, worked their way upward to farm tenancy, and then advanced, perhaps, to farm ownership. Even under ideal conditions, this method of attaining farm ownership status requires quite a long period of time, for the reason that a person must work many years as a farm laborer and tenant in order to earn and accumulate sufficient capital with which to buy and equip a farm. The high proportion of farm tenancy of Japanese-operated farms may be indicative, therefore, of a period of residence of Japanese farmers sufficiently long to permit considerable tenancy, but yet too short to enable much farm ownership by farmers of Japanese ancestry.

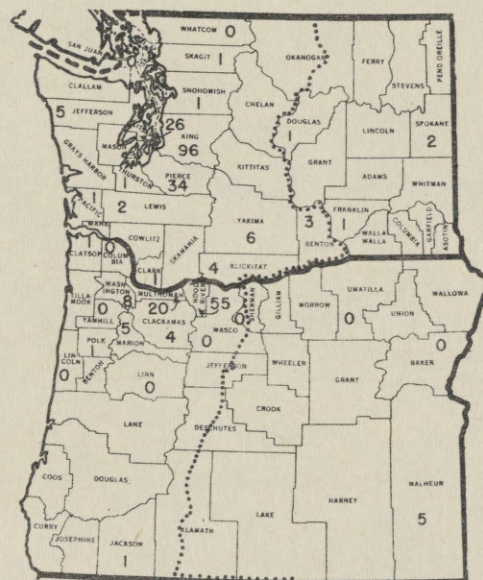
Although doubt has been expressed concerning the real effectiveness of the alien land laws, the forces which effectuated these measures may have served to make eligible persons of Japanese ancestry hesitant about acquiring too permanent a tenure status, particularly ownership of farm land, in areas where local attitudes were not very favorable. Because of this uneasiness, these persons may have preferred a land tenure which would permit them to move on short notice if necessary. For somewhat the same reason, most of them purposely may have become proficient in a type of agriculture that requires a minimum of capital investment for permanent farm structures and perennial crops. Although the restrictive measures may have directly or indirectly achieved the primary objectives of their sponsors in preventing extensive farm ownership by persons of Japanese ancestry, they may have also served to establish in its stead an unstable tenure pattern associated with some of the undesirable features inherent in short-term leasing, insecurity of land occupancy, and high tenant mobility.



FIGURE 3

**JAPANESE-OWNED FARMS**  
(Includes Part-owned Farms)

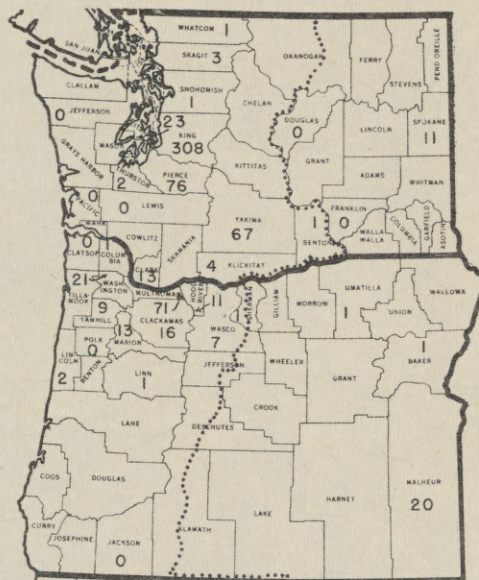
CALIFORNIA WASHINGTON AND OREGON  
1940



Figures indicate number of farms within each county. County areas without numbers are those within which no Japanese-operated farms were reported. Portion west of the dotted line represents the evacuated area.

FIGURE 4

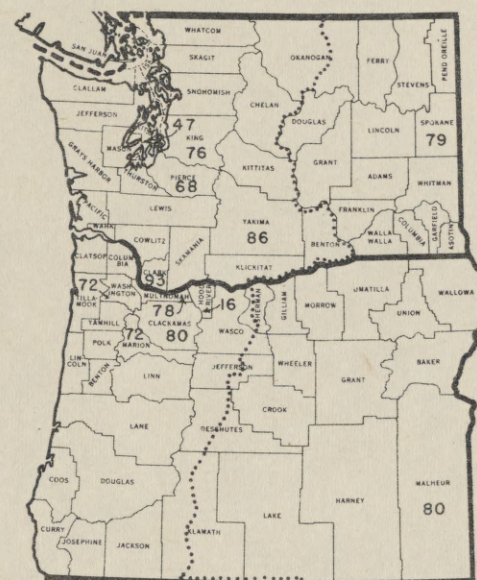
TENANT  
JAPANESE-OPERATED FARMS  
CALIFORNIA WASHINGTON AND OREGON  
1940



Figures indicate number of farms within each county. County areas without numbers are those within which no Japanese-operated farms were reported. Portion west of the dotted line represents the evacuated area.

FIGURE 5

PERCENTAGE TENANCY  
OF JAPANESE-OPERATED FARMS  
CALIFORNIA WASHINGTON AND OREGON  
1940



Figures indicate percentage tenancy of Japanese-operated farms within each county. County areas without numbers are those within which less than 10 Japanese-operated farms were reported. Portion west of dotted line represents the evacuated area.



## DISPOSITION OF JAPANESE FARMING INTERESTS

### Arrangements During Evacuation

The military evacuation of Japanese farmers from the West Coast evacuated area, which consisted of all of California and the western portions of Washington and Oregon (figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), raised a serious problem because of the possibility of disrupting the agricultural economy of that region by an abrupt removal of several thousand established farm operators. In order to insure uninterrupted performance of farming operations on Japanese-operated farms and to provide maximum protection to growing crops, then considered vital in the successful prosecution of the war, Japanese farming interests were analyzed with a view of accomplishing the intended evacuation with maximum expediency and a minimum of crop loss.

"At the request of the Commanding General transmitted to the Department of Agriculture by the Assistant Secretary of War, the Farm Security Administration was named as the designee of the Department of Agriculture in its evacuation operations participation.

"Accordingly, on March 15th, the Farm Security Administration, through its Coast Regional Director, was authorized and directed to institute and administer an appropriate program. The program outlined was one designed to secure the continued operation of Japanese agricultural lands and assure a fair and equitable disposition of Japanese farming interests."<sup>11/</sup>

A field organization was established, consisting of agents stationed at service centers located throughout the evacuated area. Their duties were to register and obtain information about farms of Japanese subject to evacuation, and to find suitable nonevacuee farm operators to take them over. Considerable publicity was given the evacuation program in order to inform the evacuees and the general public concerning the agricultural aspects of evacuation and to induce substitute farm operators to take over the farms as they were relinquished by the evacuees.

To further encourage the taking over of evacuee-farms by nonevacuee operators, special short-term agricultural production credit for general operating expenses was provided to otherwise eligible substitute farm operators. In addition, a special negotiations unit was established to handle transactions involving the consolidation of small specialized evacuee farms into larger farm enterprises. In some instances, corporations were organized and sponsored by local leaders, agricultural cooperative groups, associations, and real estate companies to acquire and manage these consolidated farm holdings. Financial assistance was provided for this purpose also when necessary.

By the end of the evacuation period, substitute operators had been obtained for 7,212 farms, involving 253,392 acres of farm land and representing slightly more than 99 percent of the 7,280 farms and 255,303 acres registered as subject to relinquishment (table 14).<sup>12/</sup>

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<sup>11/</sup> War Department. Op. cit., pp. 137, 138.

<sup>12/</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-144.



Following the completion, during the military evacuation, of this phase of the farm protection plan by the Farm Security Administration, further responsibility for problems connected with farm property was delegated to the Evacuee Property Division of the War Relocation Authority, the agency now authorized to assist evacuees in the management and disposal of their properties.

#### Ownership Transfers During and After Evacuation

The transfer of operation and management of evacuee farming interests in most cases involved negotiation, reassignment, or cancellation of leases, rather than actual transfer of ownership title from evacuees to nonevacuees. But the evacuation program also stimulated transfers of ownership of farm properties from evacuees to nonevacuees, largely because of future uncertainties facing the evacuees.

A survey of farm property ownerships recorded by persons of Japanese ancestry in 18 principal Japanese populated counties within the evacuated areas of California, Washington, and Oregon has recently been made by the Evacuee Property Division, War Relocation Authority. These counties include about 80 percent of all of the Japanese farm ownership interests in the West Coast evacuated area. This survey reveals that on March 1, 1942 there were, within the West Coast evacuated area, approximately 2,300 Japanese farm ownerships<sup>13/</sup> comprising about 71,000 acres of agricultural land valued at \$21,000,000. Most of this property, between 85 and 90 percent, was in California. In terms of all land in farms, Japanese ownership within the evacuated area then represented about 0.16 percent. By States, it represented about two-tenths of one percent of all land in farms in California, and less than one-tenth of one percent of that in each of the Washington and Oregon evacuated areas.

As individuals, Japanese generally did not control large acreages of agricultural land. As previously stated, the size of Japanese-operated farms in 1940 averaged only 42 acres. Individual ownership units (the total amount of land owned by a Japanese individual, group of individuals, or organization on March 1, 1942) were even smaller, as they averaged only 31 acres per unit for the entire West Coast evacuated area. Almost nine-tenths of these ownership units were smaller than 50 acres, and about two-thirds contained less than 30 acres. Ownership units were slightly larger in California than in either the Washington or Oregon

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<sup>13/</sup> All agricultural land of one acre or more recorded in the name of a Japanese individual, group of individuals, or organization, whether in contiguous or noncontiguous parcels located outside or inside of incorporated urban centers, is considered an ownership. Because this section deals with recorded agricultural ownerships, the definition and characteristics of which are not comparable to those of "farms" as defined by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, the figures presented herein will obviously differ somewhat from those based on data from the Bureau of the Census.



evacuated areas. The smallest units were in Washington, where they averaged about 15 acres, and almost nine-tenths were smaller than 30 acres (table 15).

During the period of military evacuation, which extended from March 2 to October 31, 1942, about 11 percent of the ownerships involving 8 percent of the acreage, were transferred from Japanese to non-Japanese (table 7). At the same time, about 3 percent of the Japanese ownerships and 2 percent of the acreage, were transferred from non-Japanese to Japanese. The net result was a decrease of about 8 percent in the number of Japanese ownerships and 6 percent in the acreage. Thus, by October 31, 1942, Japanese agricultural land ownership interests in the West Coast evacuated area dropped to about 2,100 ownerships comprising about 66,000 acres of agricultural land.

In California and in Oregon, transfers of agricultural land ownerships from Japanese to non-Japanese exceeded considerably those from non-Japanese to Japanese. In Washington, the reverse was true, by a slight margin.

During the year following evacuation, transfers from Japanese to non-Japanese were equivalent to slightly more than 2 percent of the March 1, 1942 ownerships and to almost 5 percent of the agricultural land (table 7). Transfers from non-Japanese to Japanese during this yearly period were negligible. The net decrease of Japanese ownership interest in agricultural property for the entire period of 22 months was about 11 percent.

In all three States, most of the transfers were recorded during the first several months of the evacuation period. There were periods of little or no activity immediately before and after the final date of evacuation, followed by a resumption of transfers in 1943. The uncertainty of future developments in nations at war and the desire to liquidate property into ready cash for emergency use were undoubtedly strong motives for disposal of property at the beginning when evacuation measures were being formulated and publicized. Acquisition of property by Japanese as indicated by recorded instruments, particularly during the early part of the evacuation period, may have been stimulated by settlement of business affairs before leaving, such as the payment and termination of land purchase contracts and other liens and outstanding obligations. The periods of inactivity immediately prior to and after the final evacuation date may have been due to difficulty of evacuees in negotiating business transactions while moving first, into Army Assembly Centers, and later, into WRA Relocation Centers. The slight increase in activity during 1943 may be due in part to the efforts of the Evacuee Property Division of the War Relocation Authority, which was by that time well established to assist in handling of evacuee property transactions, and also to the fact that most evacuees by that time had become settled in the Relocation Centers, and were again able to divert some attention to their property.



Table 7.- Transfers of farm land between Japanese and non-Japanese in the West Coast evacuated area during the evacuation period and during the following year.

Transfer period	Ownerships	Acreage	Value
	Number	Acres	Dollars
Japanese-owned farm property, March 1, 1942	2,300	71,000	21,000,000
Evacuation period: March 2, 1942 to October 31, 1942	Percent	Percent	Percent
Transfers from Japanese to non-Japanese	11.0	7.9	9.1
Transfers from non-Japanese to Japanese	3.1	1.8	1.4
Net transfer of farm property from Japanese to non-Japanese during evacuation period	7.9	6.1	7.7
Japanese-owned farm property, November 1, 1942	92.1	93.9	92.3
November 1, 1942 to October 31, 1943			
Transfers from Japanese to non-Japanese	2.7	5.0	2.9
Transfers from non-Japanese to Japanese	0.3	0.1	0.1
Net transfer of farm property from Japanese to non-Japanese	2.4	4.9	2.8
Japanese-owned farm property November 1, 1943	89.7	89.0	89.5

Source: Computed from results of a survey by the Property Survey Section, Evacuee Property Division, War Relocation Authority, of recorded ownerships in 18 principal Japanese populated counties in California, Washington, and Oregon, representing approximately 80 percent of all Japanese agricultural land ownership interests in these States.



The survey of Japanese-owned recorded property is being continued by the Evacuee Property Division of the War Relocation Authority. Recent figures for transfers recorded during the latter part of 1943 and most of 1944 in four of the original 18 counties surveyed and in several additional counties indicate that farm property transfers from Japanese to non-Japanese are continuing. Probable reasons for this continued activity are the influence of the present relocation program of the War Relocation Authority and current high land prices. As evacuees become permanently relocated in the interior States, they may be inclined to dispose of their pre-war property holdings on the West Coast.

#### PROBABLE POST-WAR FARM HOLDINGS

It has been pointed out that although Japanese pre-war agricultural land holdings in the West Coast evacuated area amounted to about a quarter of a million acres, their holdings were very minor relative to total agriculture in the area, except for certain specialized crops. Furthermore, about 70 percent of their holdings were leases. Another 3 or 4 percent were Japanese manager-operated farms of non-Japanese owners. During the military evacuation, practically all leaseholds were transferred to non-Japanese. Because most leases were short-term and many of the longer-term leases were canceled or reassigned during evacuation, it is likely that little, if any, of the leasehold interests of former Japanese tenants will be carried over into the post-war period.

The principal remaining interest of the Japanese in agricultural land within the West Coast evacuated area, therefore, will be that retained through their ownerships, which amounted to about 27 percent of their total pre-war holdings. About 11 percent of their pre-war ownerships were transferred to non-Japanese ownership during the evacuation and the year immediately following, and such transfer is continuing. The present relocation program of the War Relocation Authority and the current high land prices are likely to encourage continued transfer of farm property for the duration of the war because as evacuees become permanently relocated in communities within the interior States, they will be inclined to take advantage of present land prices to dispose of their holdings. Taking these factors into consideration, and assuming that the post-war period will begin sometime near the end of 1945, it is unlikely that the probable post-war land holdings of Japanese in the West Coast evacuated area will exceed 80 or 85 percent of the pre-war ownership interests or about 22 or 23 percent of the total pre-war land holdings, including leaseholds. This will amount to roughly 55,000 or 60,000 acres of farm land, or about 0.14 percent of all of the land in all farms.



## DETAILED TABLES

Table 8.- Comparison by decades of Japanese-operated farms with all farms in California, Washington, and Oregon, 1920-1940.

Item	1920	1930	1940
Number of farms	234,164	261,733	276,173
Japanese-operated	6,075	4,744	6,118
Percent	<u>2.6</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>2.2</u>
All land in farms (acres)	56,153,000	60,526,000	63,694,000
Japanese-operated	394,696	212,064	258,074
Percent	<u>0.7</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.4</u>
Cropland harvested (acres)			12,929,000
Japanese-operated	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	195,306
Percent	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	<u>1.5</u>
Value of farms (land and buildings) (dollars)	4,669,000,000	4,824,000,000	3,236,000,000
Japanese-operated	148,400,000	93,000,000	72,600,000
Percent	<u>3.2</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>2.2</u>
Value of buildings (dollars)	<u>1/</u>	737,486,000	649,474,000
Japanese-operated	<u>1/</u>	7,016,000	9,086,000
Percent	<u>1/</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Value of farm implements and machinery (dollars)	<u>1/</u>	228,839,000	233,046,000
Japanese-operated	<u>1/</u>	4,121,000	6,829,000
Percent	<u>1/</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>2.9</u>
Average size of all farms (acres)	239.8	231.3	230.6
Japanese-operated	<u>65.0</u>	<u>44.7</u>	<u>42.2</u>
Cropland harvested (average acreage per farm)	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	46.8
Japanese-operated	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	<u>31.9</u>
Average value of all farms (dollars)	19,939	18,431	11,717
Japanese-operated	<u>24,428</u>	<u>19,604</u>	<u>11,867</u>

1/ Comparable data not available.

Source: Bureau of the Census. Also War Department. Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942. p. 408.  
 Washington, D. C. U. S. Govt. Print. Off. 1943.



Table 9.- Comparison by States of Japanese-operated farms with all farms in California, Washington, and Oregon, 1940.

Item	California	Washington	Oregon	All three States
Farms (number)	132,658:	81,686:	61,829:	276,173
Japanese-operated	5,135:	706:	277:	6,118
Percent	3.9:	0.9:	0.4:	2.2
All land in farms (acres)	30,524,324:	15,181,815:	17,988,307:	63,694,446
Japanese-operated	226,094:	20,326:	11,654:	258,074
Percent	0.7:	0.1:	0.1:	0.1
Cropland harvested (acres)	6,534,562:	3,569,803:	2,824,316:	12,928,681
Japanese-operated	174,942:	12,046:	8,318:	195,306
Percent	2.7:	0.3:	0.3:	1.5
Value of farms (land and buildings) (dollars)	2,166,452,648:	593,366,445:	476,817,354:	3,236,636,447
Japanese-operated	65,780,572:	4,313,757:	2,547,605:	72,641,934
Percent	3.0:	0.7:	0.5:	2.2
Value of buildings (dollars)	379,708,056:	154,520,136:	115,245,583:	649,473,775
Japanese-operated	7,568,459:	1,099,505:	418,395:	9,086,359
Percent	2.0:	0.7:	0.4:	1.4
Value of farm implements and machinery (dollars)	132,337,109:	56,101,147:	44,607,932:	233,046,188
Japanese-operated	5,910,441:	561,588:	356,571:	6,828,600
Percent	4.5:	1.0:	0.8:	2.9
Average size of all farms (acres)	230.1:	185.9:	290.9:	230.6
Japanese-operated	44.0:	28.8:	42.1:	42.2
Cropland harvested (average acreage per farm)	49.3:	43.7:	45.7:	46.8
Japanese-operated	34.1:	17.1:	30.0:	31.9
Average value of all farms (dollars)	16,331:	7,264:	7,712:	11,720
Japanese-operated	12,810:	6,110:	9,197:	11,8

Source: Bureau of the Census.



Table 10.- Proportion of all Japanese-operated farms and farm acreage in California, Washington, and Oregon by decades, 1910-1940.

State	1910		1920		1930		1940	
	Farms	Land	Farms	Land	Farms	Land	Farms	Land
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
California	82.0	87.6	84.8	91.5	83.4	90.3	83.9	87.6
Washington	14.3	8.3	11.5	6.4	11.0	5.9	11.6	7.9
Oregon	3.7	4.1	3.7	2.1	5.6	3.8	4.5	4.5
All three States	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Bureau of the Census.

Table 11.- Comparison of average size of Japanese-operated farms with that of all farms in California, Washington, and Oregon, by decades, 1910-1940.

State	Average size of farm					
	1910		1920		1940	
	All farms	Japanese farms	All farms	Japanese farms	All farms	Japanese farms
	Acre	Acre	Acre	Acre	Acre	Acre
California	317	55	250	70	230	44
Washington	208	30	200	36	186	29
Oregon	257	56	270	36	291	42
All three States	270	51	240	65	231	42

Source: Bureau of the Census.



Table 12.- Tenure of Japanese-operated farms in California, Washington, and Oregon, 1910 and 1940.

Tenure	California		Washington		Oregon		All three States	
	1910	1940	1910	1940	1910	1940	1910	1940
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Owners	207	997	1	123	15	77	223	1,197
Part-owners	26	293	-	62	1	23	27	378
Managers	36	249	3	10	4	2	43	261
Tenants	1,547	3,596	312	511	63	175	1,922	4,282
Totals	1,816	5,135	316	706	83	277	2,215	6,118

Source: Bureau of the Census.

Table 13.- Percentage distribution of Japanese-operated farms in California, Washington, and Oregon by operating tenure, 1910 and 1940.

Tenure	California		Washington		Oregon		All three States	
	1910	1940	1910	1940	1910	1940	1910	1940
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Owners	11.4	19.4	0.3	17.4	18.1	27.8	10.0	19.0
Part-owners	1.4	5.7	-	8.8	1.2	8.3	1.2	6.1
Managers	2.0	4.9	1.0	1.4	4.8	0.7	2.0	4.3
Tenants	85.2	70.0	98.7	72.4	75.9	63.2	86.8	70.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent in each State	82.0	83.9	14.3	11.6	3.7	4.5	100.0	100.0

Source: Bureau of the Census.



Table 14.- Farms and farm acreage transferred from evacuee to nonevacuee farm operators during military evacuation in the West Coast evacuated area, 1942.

State	Registered:			Registered:			
	farms	Transferred		acreage	Transferred		
	Number	Number	Percent	Acres	Acres	Percent	
California	6,084	6,062	99.6	223,257	221,744	99.3	
Washington	830	784	94.5	18,072	17,674	97.8	
Oregon	366	366	100.0	13,974	13,974	100.0	
All three States	7,280	7,212	99.1	255,303	253,392	99.3	

Source: War Department. Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942, p. 174. Washington, D. C. U. S. Govt. Print. Off. 1943.



Table 15.- Percentage distribution of Japanese agricultural land ownerships and farm acreage by size of ownership, West Coast evacuated area, March 1, 1942.

Size of ownership	California		Washington		Oregon		All three States	
	Number of:	Farm	Number of:	Farm	Number of:	Farm	Number of:	Farm
	ownerships:	acreage	ownerships:	acreage	ownerships:	acreage	ownerships:	acreage
Acres	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
0 - 9	26.3	3.4	55.1	20.4	11.9	2.4	23.3	4.2
10 - 29	37.1	20.5	33.7	36.1	51.7	31.4	37.7	22.0
30 - 49	22.1	25.6	6.4	15.9	25.4	32.8	21.7	25.6
50 - 99	10.8	22.5	3.7	17.5	8.4	20.1	9.9	22.1
100 and over	3.7	28.0	1.1	10.1	2.6	13.3	3.4	26.1
All sizes	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Computed from results of a survey by the Property Survey Section, Evacuee Property Division, War Relocation Authority, of recorded Japanese ownerships in 18 principal Japanese populated counties in California, Washington, and Oregon, representing approximately 80 percent of all Japanese agricultural land ownership interests in these States.