

## Chapter IV

### The Japanese in Agriculture

The importance of agriculture to the Japanese as a means of livelihood has already been pointed out. In 1940 some 22,000, or 45 per cent, of the Japanese workers in California, Washington, and Oregon were employed in agriculture.<sup>1</sup> They operated 6,118 farms and 258,074 acres of farm

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1. U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration. National Defense Migration; Fourth Interim Report (House Report 2124). 77th Congress, Second Session, Findings and Recommendations on Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones, May, 1942. p. 104. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1942.
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land on the coast. The geographical distribution of these farms approximated that of Japanese population. In California there were 5,135 farms <sup>embracing</sup> covering 226,094 acres, while corresponding figures for Washington and Oregon were 706 farms <sup>with</sup> covering 20,326 acres and 277 farms <sup>with</sup> covering 11,654 acres. <sup>respectively.</sup> In relative distribution California farms and acreage comprised 84 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively, of the total number and the acreage of Japanese-operated farms <sup>on the Pacific Coast.</sup> in the three States.



*the Japanese began*  
 The struggle of the Japanese to achieve the present status in agriculture, had begun *more* than fifty years ago. Like many other immigrant groups, they started at the bottom of the "agricultural ladder" as farm laborers.

As early as in the early eighteen nineties Japanese were observed working in the fruit orchards of *the* Sacramento and Santa Clara Valleys, ~~in~~ the vineyards of Fresno, ~~in~~ the sugar beet fields of Salinas Valley, and ~~in~~ the

*Soon after 1900, became*  
 marshy delta region near Stockton. ~~Some years afterward, they were~~ also employed in the citrus orchards and vegetable farms of southern California.

*Once by the pioneers in a district, soon followed.*  
 After farm employment was ~~once~~ secured, other Japanese followed the pioneers into a district. As the number of Japanese in the district increased rapidly, they found employment *in a greater number* on more and more ranches and farms.

*favorably*  
 In these early years the Japanese were regarded with great favor by agriculturalists in the Pacific Coast States, particularly in California, and became a reliable and convenient source of cheap ~~farm~~ labor. The completion of the transcontinental railroads had opened vast markets in the Middle West and the East for western agricultural products. Large profits from the *marketing* sale of specialty crops attracted more and more farmers to the production of these crops. Irrigated acreage had been increasing, and more land had been *converted* ~~turned~~ to intensive farming *from* rather than the production of general crops. The specialization, however, called for large capitalization and an abundant supply of cheap, and highly mobile, labor. The *necessitated* mobility was required by great seasonal fluctuations of *regional* labor demands ~~in a region~~.

*for decades*  
 In many parts of the West *labor* the Chinese had been much in demand and had predominated *agricultural* in farm employment *in many sections of the West,* for decades, but the Chinese exclusion



law of 1882 had stopped <sup>the</sup> flow of new immigrants. The gap ~~in the labor~~ supply created by the disappearance of <sup>the</sup> Chinese <sup>from the labor market</sup> due to ~~natural causes and~~ <sup>(death and old age)</sup> by the rapid expansion of intensive agriculture was filled by the Japanese, who had begun to arrive at Pacific Coast ports in large number or who had been released from railroads and mines <sup>labor.</sup>. These Japanese soon adapted themselves to fit into the Chinese system of labor and living conditions. In some localities, however, the Japanese not only <sup>augmented the labor force,</sup> replaced the gap, but also displaced Chinese and Caucasians laborers.

The majority of these <sup>nevertheless</sup> Japanese had had farming experience before <sup>and were therefore suitable laborers for</sup> emigration from Japan, ~~and the experience was suited to~~ intensive cultivation. <sup>farming</sup> They were <sup>bachelors,</sup> young, active, and neat <sup>bachelors</sup>. They were accommodating, and <sup>the</sup> were willing to work hard and long hours <sup>as such needs</sup> ~~as such needs~~ <sup>were often</sup> during peak seasons. The employers found them satisfactory, because they were willing to accept lower wages, ~~to~~ put up with the crudest form of shelter, and <sup>would</sup> ~~to~~ board themselves. ~~The Recruitment of labor was a~~ <sup>process</sup> simple ~~for the employers, who could get enough workers by contacting~~

All the employer needing "help" had to do was simply to telephone or write to a club or a camp or tell his Jap boss how many men were necessary; he then settled wages to be paid to the men with the labor-supplying agent, <sup>the</sup> to whom money was paid, and he, in turn, paid the men after deducting a commission, except in the case of the Jap boss.<sup>2</sup>



*the pattern that had been inherited from the Chinese,*

*No 9/* ~~speaking English.~~ The development of the system ~~among the Japanese~~ was

described thus: *Japanese farm laborers were unorganized in the beginning, but*

The unorganized Japanese farm laborers soon formed "gangs", directed by bosses. Sometimes these gangs became the nuclei of district clubs, to which members paid annual dues for the privilege of cooking, lodging, and hibernating when unemployed. The secretaries of the clubs maintained relations with local employers and kept themselves informed through Japanese bosses of work opportunities in neighboring districts so as to direct intelligently the migration of the club members.

Another outgrowth of the Japanese gangs were the camps run by Japanese bosses as a kind of headquarters for farm labor, the camp bosses supplying the local farmers with workers and directing the men elsewhere during slack seasons. Some of the larger farmers kept a regular "Jap boss" in their employ in order to round up an adequate supply of laborers for peak seasons.<sup>1</sup>

1. Ibid., p. 67.

*" (This is where ~~factories~~ come,*

~~Japanese bosses and contractors. The "boss" system, the pattern that had~~

~~been used by the Chinese, was also advantageous to the Japanese immigrants,~~

*and willingly paid fees and dues to the boss, for they*  
~~who were yet unfamiliar with conditions and customs and were unable to~~



and willingly paid fees and commissions to the boss, for they ~~to~~ were unfamiliar with conditions and customs of America and were unable to speak English. Moreover, through the boss, they were able to obtain steadier employment without individual effort, and enjoyed the benefits of ~~improved~~ better wage scales due to the skillful use of collective bargaining. ~~Underbidding was~~

These contractors or bosses held a position of considerable power and prestige. They were able to control the disposition of the working forces to ~~Caucasian~~ farm employers, <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ also became the major job dispensers to the Japanese. They could realize enviable profits <sup>not only</sup> from dues and commissions, but also from related services such as <sup>merch</sup> ~~the~~ operation of ~~mess~~ and sales ~~of daily necessities to the laborers~~

Insert  
10 B In the early years

~~was essential~~ until they had gained a foothold in the labor pool that was dominated by white and Chinese laborers, ~~the underbidding of wages was widely practiced.~~ Once the foothold established, ~~the~~ <sup>however,</sup> wage scales <sup>for the Japanese</sup> were ~~boosted~~ energetically boosted.



- 10 B -

A. Iseki described the early experience of his father in the following words:

Case 54

p. 9 lines 6 - 10

An Iseki recalled his early experience as a seasonal laborer thus:

Case 10

p. 10 - p. 11 first line



~~use of collective bargaining by the bosses. Until they had gotten a foothold in agriculture, they were forced to underbid white and Chinese laborers.~~

In one community where the Chinese were paid \$5 per week, the Japanese first worked for 35 or 40 cents per day in the early nineties. In another locality the price for work done by Japanese by contract was first estimated on a basis of 45 cents per day as against \$1 for Chinese, and in the later nineties at day work Japanese were paid 75 to 90 cents per day where Chinese were paid \$1. In a third district they were paid 70 cents per day and for two or three years their wages varied from 60 to 90 cents as against \$1.25 per day for Chinese and \$1 per day, including board, for white men. Before the close of the nineties, however, the wages paid Japanese had begun to rise and the increase in their wages continued even when the influx of the members of this race was greatest.<sup>1</sup>

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, p. 63. <sup>vol. 23,</sup>

By 1909, according to the survey of the Immigration Commission, the wages of Japanese had increased more than 50 per cent over those of fifteen years before. The rise is attributed to "prosperous times and an inadequate labor supply under prevailing conditions, with new opportunities opened for them, and especially with restrictions upon their further immigration." It was claimed that after the restrictive measure went into effect "they . . . ceased to greatly underbid other laborers."<sup>2</sup> It is also reported that

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2. Ibid.



in order to drive successful bargains "strikes and boycotts, particularly at harvest time" were used by Japanese bosses.<sup>14</sup> By this time, Japanese

1. U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, Fourth Interim Report, p. 67.

*in California agriculture*  
~~Japanese in agriculture on the West Coast probably numbered more than 30,000. The bulk of them in California. They~~  
were reported in the production of almost all crops of intensive farming in California.

In the beet industry they number 4,500 of between 6,000 and 7,000 handworkers employed during the thinning season. They predominate and control the handwork in the beet fields of all except three districts in the State --- two in southern California, where they are outnumbered by the Mexicans, and one northern district, where they do not care to work and Hindus were the most numerous race employed in 1909. In the grape picking of the various parts of California they are also the most numerous race, some 7,000 or 8,000 being employed during the busiest season of a few weeks in the fall. They do practically all of the work on the berry *patches* of the State. In the various districts specializing in certain vegetables and on truck farms near the cities they do much of the work. Much of the seasonal work in most of the deciduous-fruit districts is also controlled by Japanese laborers.

Of the 4,000 extra laborers brought in to work in the orchards of the Vaca Valley during the summer of 1908, one-half were Japanese. About 2,000 of the 2,500 or 3,000 persons employed in the Newcastle fruit district at the busiest season in 1909 were Japanese. About 1,000 members of this race remain in the Pajaro Valley all year, while for the intensive work during the summer and autumn some 700 or 800 Japanese and about the same number of Dalmatians come into the district from other places. In the citrus-fruit industry of Tulare County a little less than one-half of the pickers are Japanese, while some 5,000 pickers in southern California constitute more than one-half of the total number of citrus-fruit pickers in that part of the State during the busy spring months. Some 200 Japanese are employed regularly in the handwork on celery ranches in ~~Orange~~ *Orange* County, while at the height of the transplant-



- 13 A -

Others were also encouraged to get  
out of the ranks of common laborers.

Case 10

page 11

1<sup>st</sup> line to

5<sup>th</sup> line from bottom



ing season the number is increased to 600.<sup>1</sup>

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol 23, p. 64.
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*4* The predominance of Japanese labor in the production of many crops is shown by the survey undertaken in 1910 by the California Commissioner of Labor. The following table is based on a sample of 2,369 farms operated by Caucasians in selected regions of intensive farming:<sup>2</sup>

Table  
Japanese Laborers as per cent of Total Laborers in Select Regions  
of Intensive Farming in California

	per cent		
Berries	87.2	Citrus fruit	38.1
Sugar Beets	66.3	Deciduous fruit	36.5
Nursery Products	57.3	Hops	8.7
Grapes	51.7	Hay and grain	6.6
Vegetables	45.7	Miscellaneous	19.6

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2. U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, Fourth Interim Report, p. 68.
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In the decade 1900 - 1910 the Japanese were probably most *aggressive in* ~~vigorous~~ *entering* ~~into~~ in agricultural pursuits and most mobile in improving their status than at any other time Before or since. Many Japanese had begun to climb up the "agricultural ladder" --- from common laborer to contract tenancy, share crop arrangement, cash tenancy, *and finally to* ~~or~~ land ownership. The more successful ~~of~~ club secretaries, camp bosses, and Jap bosses were the first to attain an independent status. *4* ~~Under~~ *the* contract system, the lowest form of tenancy, the laborer is paid for his work per unit of land or product.

For example, in the Watsonville area, the handwork involved in growing

*Insert  
13 A*



patatoes paid so much per sack harvested. In the berry patches <sup>in</sup> of the same area, the system operated as follows:

One or more Japanese, often in partnership, entered into an agreement with the owner of a ranch or ranches to set out plants, at so much per acre, and to water, weed, hoe, pick, pack, load, and to do all of the "handwork," at so much per chest of crops, to be paid by the owner when crop is sold. Contract prices naturally varied with market and labor conditions as well as with the age of plants. For example, the <sup>prices</sup> paid in the Watsonville district for 1908 - 1909 were as follows:<sup>1</sup>

First year, setting plants, per acre	\$20.00
Second year, watering, weeding, hoeing, picking, packing, and loading, per acre	50.00
Third year, the same work per chest	1.50
Fourth and fifth years, per chest	1.75

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1. Ichihashi, op. cit., p. 179.

This form of tenancy was, however, more advantageous to the owner. The rate of compensation was usually agreed upon on an annual basis, in advance of ~~the~~ <sup>depending upon</sup> season, ~~varying with~~ estimates of output, ~~market~~ prices, and labor conditions.

If such compensation <sup>were based on the</sup> ~~be on the basis of~~ unit of land, the owner tended to fix the rate on the lowest possible estimates of yields and prices. If on a production basis, on the other hand, he calculated the rate on the basis of the minimum market price that the crop could command. The owner <sup>on the whole</sup> ~~was in general~~ in a better bargaining position <sup>for he could</sup> ~~utilize~~ the rationale that he must assume the risk of uncertainty of production and prices. The contractor therefore could not share the profits realized from yields or market prices higher than <sup>the</sup> estimates. "In the long run, the contractor's share has proved not materially different from the wages paid to ordinary 'hands' employed in the industry. Because of this fact, the contract system in most



industries began to be abandoned by the Japanese."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp. 179 - 180.

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Share crop tenancy, the next higher <sup>system</sup> ~~form~~, was essentially similar to the contract arrangement, except the tenant's <sup>remuneration</sup> ~~remuneration~~ was determined by the profits <sup>netted</sup> (realized) from the marketing of products. The duration of such an agreement varied; in fruit growing it was usually for one year, and in strawberry growing, for four or five years. The share of <sup>the</sup> tenant also varied from 40 per cent to 60 per cent of <sup>the</sup> annual profits <sup>depending on</sup> ~~according to~~ the type of crops and the degree of participation in the cost of production. Share cropping in various <sup>by the landlord</sup> forms is described as follows:

The landowner provides all necessary equipment, except, perhaps, crates needed for shipping, does the work with teams or hires it done, possibly pays the wages of a part or all of the employees, manages the business in all of its details, sells the products and collects the selling price, and shares this with the tenant after all bills have been paid. Much of the leasing of orchards about Vacaville and elsewhere in California and a considerable part of the leasing of land for the growing of sugar beets and of vegetables on an extensive scale takes this form and differs little in most respects from a contract for the hand labor for the season. . . . In still other cases the landowner furnishes all permanent equipment but very little of the other capital required, and the tenant does all of the work or hires it done, many of the details of management, but few of the details of marketing the product passing into his hands, and the crop is shared between the contracting parties. Much of the leasing of orchards in the Newcastle district, of land for growing sugar beets in several localities, and of some strawberry patches about Watsonville takes this form. In still other cases the share tenant provides some, possibly most, of the equipment.<sup>2</sup>

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2. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, p. 80.

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Cash tenancy in its terms varied: ~~one~~ of the various forms very much resembling <sup>ed</sup> the essentials of share cropping; ~~to~~ another which was independent of owner control. The difference of the former from share cropping was the <sup>cash</sup> payment of <sup>a</sup> specified amount ~~of cash~~ for rentals and the assumption of all the risks involved in farming and marketing. This form was commonly practiced in the leasing of fruit orchards and <sup>was generally of one year's duration</sup> ~~mostly ran for one year~~.

Sometimes the rent ~~was~~ paid in advance, but oftener it was paid "out of the sale of the first crop." In addition, In many instances of this variety,

the owner stipulated in the contract that he be hired to do certain jobs on the farm and be paid regular wages for the work. Frequently the crops were marketed in the owner's name. The owner thus retained a great deal of control <sup>of</sup> ~~over~~ his orchards as overseer. In the ~~cases~~ For strawberry patches and truck gardens, however, leases were free from such <sup>owner</sup> controls by ~~owners~~ and ran usually for a longer term. In the former, for instance, the ~~term~~ of lease covered five or six years.

The foothold of the Japanese in <sup>Calif.</sup> agriculture of California expanded rapidly <sup>during 1900-1913.</sup> in the ~~nineteen~~ <sup>twentieth</sup> ~~hundreds~~. That ~~the~~ Japanese seasonal workers <sup>dominated</sup> predominated the farm labor supply has already been noted. ~~A~~ Corresponding progress was made as regards Japanese farm holdings. The Census for 1900 reported only 39 Japanese-operated farms covering 4,698 acres.<sup>1</sup> They

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1. The Immigration Commission reports that "the acreage of small subdivisions of farm under lease, and not included in these figures, was very small."  
(Reports, vol. 23, p. 79.)

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Japanese, however, made ~~a~~ great strides in a short time <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ expand <sup>ing</sup> their



farm operations. A Japanese source reports the following data on the

acreage of farm holdings under various forms of tenure:<sup>1</sup>

1. Japanese-American Yearbook, cited in Ichihashi, op. cit., pp. 184 and 193.

It is to be noted that the total acreage in the table does not check with the sum of its parts. These figures must be used with great care when compared directly with Census data. Japanese sources tended to exaggerate their farm holdings. The Census, on the other hand, ~~tended~~ *was more prone to* to undercount the holdings. The Census, for example, did not include certain classes of tenants "such as those doing a part of the farm work and sharing the products or receiving a price agreed upon." (Millis, op. cit., pp. 131 - 132.)

TABLE  
DISTRIBUTION BY TENURE OF ACREAGE OF  
JAPANESE OPERATED FARMS IN CALIFORNIA  
1905-1913

	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1913
(1) Acreage under Contract	4,775	22,100	13,359	26,138	42,276½	37,898	
(2) Acreage under Share	19,572½	24,826	48,228½	57,578½	57,001½	50,399½	254,980
(3) Acreage leased	35,258	41,855	56,889	55,971	80,231	89,464	
(4) Acreage owned	2,442	8,671	13,815	15,114	16,449	16,980	26,707
(2)+(3)+(4)	<del>57,272½</del>	<del>75,352</del>	<del>118,932½</del>	<del>129,663½</del>	<del>153,681½</del>	<del>156,843½</del>	
Acreage total	61,858½	97,541	131,292½	155,581½	195,948	194,742	281,687



The data indicate that both the total farm acreage and the total acreage under lease by the Japanese multiplied more than four times during the eight year period 1905 - 1913, while the acreage of Japanese-owned farms increased almost eleven times. <sup>In</sup> As regards ~~the~~ total farm acreage the greatest ~~increment of~~ increase occurred ~~in~~ during 1905 - 1907 and during 1910 - 1913, while the same pattern of expansion applied to ~~the~~ Japanese-owned acreage. <sup>greatest increase of</sup> The <sup>the</sup> acreage under share cropping arrangement <sup>took place</sup> increased most during 1905 - 1907, but that under cash lease during 1908 - 1910. Although separate data under both these types of lease are not available for 1910 - 1913, it is estimated that the increase was proportionately as great as that of the total acreage under all forms of lease tenancy for the period. The acreage under contract agreement, on the other hand, increased almost seven times in the five year period 1905 - 1910, at <sup>an</sup> irregular rate, probably showing <sup>high</sup> sensitive <sup>17</sup> reaction to changes in labor condition and market prices. <sup>too,</sup> From documentary evidence, it is learned that these farmers had, on the whole, graduated from the rank of common laborers, and had passed through various stages of tenancy before <sup>of becoming</sup> reaching the ultimate ownership.

The vigorous activities of the Japanese to establish <sup>a</sup> the more permanent <sup>position</sup> foothold in agriculture, and, once becoming operators, to reach <sup>the</sup> a more stable tenure status <sup>can be</sup> ~~are~~ attributed to many factors. First, the desire to rise from the rank of common laborers was great. The Japanese immigrants, like other immigrants in general, were young and ambitious; they had come to America to "get rich quick" and return home. ~~Like other immigrants in general, they were young and ambitious when they reached American ports.~~ Most of <sup>the immigrants</sup> ~~them~~ were either farmers or from farming families in Japan, and



this experience was easily <sup>adapted</sup> convertible to ~~the~~ intensive farming in California.

In agriculture there were great possibilities, for <sup>prosperity</sup> ~~mobility~~ was easy and

<sup>in addition</sup> rapid; ~~and~~ farm products were commanding profitable prices. Many stories of

successful Japanese pioneers in farming were told, often with legendary exag-

geration, and the more venturesome ~~of the~~ late arrivals <sup>calculated</sup> realized that his ~~they too~~ <sup>he</sup>

<sup>could attain success.</sup> ambition was not out of reach. As a common laborer his income was meager

and limited, but <sup>becoming an</sup> ~~as an~~ entrepreneur <sup>could be a first step toward</sup> his remuneration could be more lucrative

<sup>with some luck and perseverance,</sup> The Independent status was also <sup>gained</sup> a measure

<sup>meant</sup> of prestige, for he <sup>would then be an</sup> ~~was an~~ employer of other Japanese. In contrast, the ~~co-~~

~~omparative~~ mobility in industrial and trade jobs <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ very much restricted

because of racial discrimination. Only under Japanese employers could he

advance above <sup>the</sup> unskilled labor class. <sup>to achieve entrepreneurial independence</sup> ~~For becoming independent in city trades~~

<sup>in city trades or occupations</sup> ~~or occupations~~ <sup>was handicapped by</sup> ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> faced a severe language and training handicap.

The acquisition of farm tenancy also meant <sup>for him</sup> a settled residence and

steady employment throughout the year, <sup>in comparison to</sup> ~~avoiding the constantly moving~~ <sup>being on the move</sup> and periods

of idleness incidental to seasonal labor. The farmer could now lead a more

normal life. He could <sup>be</sup> ~~call for and~~ reunite <sup>he</sup> with his family, or, if a bachelor,

he could get married and establish <sup>a</sup> ~~his~~ home. Frequently, whenever anti-

~~Japanese~~ agitation for exclusion <sup>of Japanese</sup> or for the restriction of farm lease and

<sup>to them of Japanese became</sup> ownership <sup>accelerated their efforts</sup> ~~was~~ louder and more threatening, the ~~Japanese~~ <sup>were</sup> in a great

<sup>in the and obtain</sup> rush to get <sup>under wire for more security</sup> ~~under wire for more~~ security in agricultural pursuits. The large

increments of increase both in the lease acreage and in the ownership acreage

during 1905-1907 are attributable not only to the prosperous <sup>city</sup> ~~year~~ of 1905 but

to fear engendered by such <sup>adverse</sup> ~~events~~ <sup>hostile</sup> and public sentiments that culminated in



the Gentlemen's Agreement. Fear of the possibility of alien land legislation

spurred <sup>the purchase and lease</sup> ~~buying and leasing~~ of farms in 1910 - 1913.

The expansion of ~~farm~~ holdings was greatly facilitated by the willingness of Caucasian owners to sell or lease their farms. There were many inducements for such transactions. ~~The problem of~~ getting sufficient labor according to variable seasonable needs <sup>problem</sup> was always a major difficulty in intensive farming. The Japanese control over <sup>the</sup> seasonal labor supply, however, left the owners in a precarious position. The danger of not getting enough workers was <sup>an everpresent reality.</sup> always acutely real to him. By leasing to the Japanese, however, <sup>they</sup> ~~he~~ could relieve <sup>themselves</sup> ~~himself~~ of the onerous responsibility of labor management. As such leases increased, other non-Japanese operators found themselves in <sup>a</sup> more dangerous <sup>situation.</sup> position.

As a large number of farms have been leased to the Japanese in one locality and the members of that race have done more of the work on these holdings, it has become increasingly difficult for other farmers to obtain desirable laborers of that race, so that a still greater premium is placed upon leasing the land. Thus the system tends to spread and become general, the farms falling under the control of the race which predominates in the labor supply. . . . In a few localities, as about Vacaville, Cal., they have even resorted to coercion in the form of threat to withhold the necessary labor supply, in order to secure the tenure of orchards or farms they desired. Such instances, however, have been limited to a few localities.<sup>1</sup>

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, pp. 81 - 82.

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Financial returns and other advantages were attractive, <sup>too,</sup> ~~too.~~ <sup>to the landlords.</sup> ~~the~~ eagerness of the Japanese <sup>to secure</sup> ~~for~~ farm leases tended to raise the cash rental rate and depress the tenant's take in share cropping. In some instances the Japanese



were willing to reclaim marshy land or to make improvements on lands.

There were other <sup>aspects</sup> factors that were <sup>lucrative especially</sup> especially profitable to the aging pioneers of ~~the~~ western agriculture, who wished to retire partly or <sup>entirely</sup> wholly from active farming. In many cases the Japanese leased "only the orchards, or the 'beet land,' or the 'berry land,' or the 'vegetable land' on a farm" and the owner cultivated the rest of the farm. In these and other cases the owner continued to occupy the farmhouse, while the tenant was housed in a cheap cottage or in the laborer's bunk house.

The growth of shipping industry of ~~fruits and vegetables~~ also contributed to the expansion of the Japanese in agriculture. The shipping corporations <sup>to themselves</sup> wanted ~~assure itself of crops for shipment~~ By leasing an enormous acreage of farm land, which was then subdivided and subleased to the Japanese, <sup>shipping corporations guaranteed themselves of a sufficient volume of business.</sup>



That little or no capital was required to begin tenant farming is *self-*  
*an*  
evident from ~~the~~ examination of the various forms of contract or lease.

As already indicated, many, in fact most of them to begin with, have leased land for a share of the crop, the landlord supplying all or practically all of the equipment. This is especially true in all localities where much seasonal labor is required and the Japanese are the predominant element in the labor supply. In these localities not only have the farmers provided most of the necessary equipment, but have also frequently provided the money necessary to pay current expenses, so that the tenant required no capital at all. Moreover, in the production of sugar beets the beet-sugar companies have ordinarily advanced a part of the necessary capital. At Newcastle and Vacaville, and in other localities devoted to the growing of fruit and vegetables, the commission merchants usually make advances of supplies for shipping the product, and of cash, taking a lien upon the crop in order to secure the loan. In several instances the competition between the shippers for business has led to the making of advances long before the crop matures, and in large amounts. About Newcastle it was found that some of the shippers had leased land and then subleased it to Japanese tenants in order to control the business of shipping the product. . . . And even where the system of making advances has not been extensively adopted the tenants who pay cash rent usually do not need much capital of their own, for it is customary to pay the rent in installments. . . . In some instances, as about Florin, Cal., leasing has been encouraged by arranging for the larger rentals to be paid during the later years covered by the lease.<sup>1</sup>

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, pp. 83 - 84.

The financing of farm operations was *facilitated* ~~made easy~~ in other ways. An extensive credit system was *established* ~~used~~ with business firms, most commonly Japanese. The farm operator bought food and other necessities on credit to provide *for* his family and his workers. The merchants were willing to extend such credit.



because mark ups were tempting and competition among them was keen. Such bills were paid after the harvest. It was also customary for the Japanese laborers <sup>to be paid</sup> ~~to wait for their wages~~ <sup>when</sup> until their work had been completed for the season.

<sup>the over eagerness for and</sup> <sup>about</sup> ~~the comparative ease of undertaking farming brought about many evils,~~ <sup>about many unfortunate results,</sup> <sup>an over expansion of farms,</sup> <sup>of certain crops,</sup> particularly <sup>speculative operations by incompetent Japanese, and overproduction,</sup> and an unstable financial structure <sup>in the</sup> ~~of~~ Japanese communities. There were many cases of failures.

Some of those have been too inexperienced in the kind of farming undertaken. A more common cause of failure, however, has been found in the fact. . . . that they produce almost entirely for the market and specialize greatly, and in some cases have depressed the prices ~~the prices~~ of produce until they would not cover the expenses incidental to the harvest. This is notably true of strawberry growing for the Los Angeles market and of asparagus growing on the lower Sacramento River. . . . A comparatively large number of the tenant farmers in these localities have become bankrupt, and some of them have been led to break their contracts with the landowners from whom they leased. Moreover, the wages paid to laborers of their race have . . . advanced rapidly and it has become difficult to secure laborers in sufficient numbers. This change in the labor market has been a further source of difficulty to the Japanese farmers. It is proving so serious that in some localities they insist upon leases for one or a few years, where a few years ago they desired to secure leases for a period of several years.<sup>1</sup>

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, p. 88.

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<sup>granted</sup> ~~The Credit given the~~ Japanese farmers was ~~a~~ highly risky ~~one~~ <sup>in view</sup> on the face of the high rate of failures. The risk was further increased by fluctuations <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ farmers' annual incomes. In prosperous years it worked to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. In ~~the~~ years when the crop was poor or prices were



low, the income could not cover all the payments for rent, loans, wages, and store bills. The commission merchants and the landlord were always the first to deduct ~~the~~ outstanding loans and ~~the~~ rent before the Japanese farmer could receive ~~the~~ payment for <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ products. Wages for the laborers were paid

~~off~~ in full, as a rule, because a good reputation <sup>could</sup> ~~was~~ always important to assure him of <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ future labor supply. There were many cases, however, where wages remained unpaid for a long time, but <sup>resort to</sup> legal recourse <sup>was infrequent.</sup> ~~was seldom resorted~~

<sup>Debts to</sup> ~~The~~ American firms were usually taken care of, because their credit was <sup>they were not</sup> ~~so~~ hesitant about employing more rigid and ~~legal~~ means ~~was used for collection, if necessary.~~ Thus the

<sup>payment of</sup> ~~bills of~~ Japanese merchants <sup>had</sup> were the lowest ~~on~~ priority. They were at best partly paid, if not at all, and the balances had to be carried along ~~and~~

<sup>year after year and</sup> further credits <sup>granted</sup> ~~had to be~~ extended until a better time. It meant that the

retailer had to use up more <sup>available</sup> ~~of~~ working capital, if at ~~his command,~~ or had

to ask for extension of time and <sup>more</sup> larger credit from the wholesaler. The

Japanese merchants, <sup>not to speak, in effect,</sup> ~~as it were,~~ entered into partnership operation of farms,

at the best although <sup>any no</sup> ~~not taking share in~~ profits ~~not~~ more than the amount of outstanding

bills, and at the worst, losing everything. The <sup>is</sup> ~~mode~~ of loans and credits

<sup>was still</sup> ~~were still~~ widely practiced in 1940 by Japanese farmers, and merchants who

refused such credits were <sup>not patronized</sup> ~~discriminated against~~ in favor of <sup>more lenient</sup> competing mer-

chants. The failure <sup>is</sup> of many business firms in the depression years ~~were~~

largely traceable to the practice. Only in large cities could Japanese

merchants escape from the risky credit system and <sup>operate on a</sup> ~~adopt the~~ cash-and-carry basis.

system ~~had,~~

Insert  
24A



- 24 A -

"In Turlock there were about two Japanese stores. There were always going broke. The owner of one of these stores used to go around and borrow money so that he could stay in business."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Case History No. 54

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Despite the enactment of <sup>the</sup> alien land law in 1913,<sup>1</sup> <sup>the expansion of</sup> ~~the~~ Japanese farm

1. <sup>The</sup> alien land laws will be discussed in detail in Chapter

~~holdings further expanded rapidly~~ <sup>increased further gained impetus</sup> in the boom years after the beginning of the World War I, reaching a peak probably in 1920. Data obtained <sup>from</sup> ~~by the~~ Japanese sources, as given in the following table, indicate that the total acreage

TABLE  
BY TENURE OF ACREAGE OF JAPANESE  
OPERATED FARMS IN CALIFORNIA

1914-1929  
(Japanese Data)

1914	1918	1920	1922	1925	1929
	23,608	383,287	279,511	263,058	104,560*
268,646	336,721				166,762
31,828	30,306	74,769	50,542	41,898	57,028
300,474	390,635	458,056	330,653 0	304,966 5	328,350

\* farm memberships

Source: Ichihashi, Japanese in the United States, 195.  
Japanese Association of America, Zai bei Nippon-jin Shi, pp. 190-192



of Japanese-operated farms, including those under contract agreement, increased from 300,474 acres in 1914 to 458,056 acres in 1920. The increment of increase for the same period was much greater as regards ~~the~~ acreage under Japanese ownership <sup>for the same period showed</sup> an increase of almost 140 per cent from 31,828 acres in 1914 to 74,769 acres in 1920. The figures also <sup>indicate</sup> ~~show~~ that a large portion of <sup>the</sup> new acreage under ownership was acquired after 1918, <sup>an outgrowth of</sup> indicating general optimism <sup>resulting from</sup> ~~from~~ prevailing high prices, threats of more stringent anti-alien land legislation, and the investment of wartime <sup>profits</sup> ~~gains~~ in real property. ~~The~~ Census figures confirm the trend <sup>revealed</sup> ~~shown~~ by the Japanese data. The former, however, reported a much greater change in the total acreage of Japanese farm holdings, an increase from 99,252 acres in 1910 to 361,276 acres in 1920.

Similarly, the total number of Japanese-operated farms <sup>multiplied almost threefold,</sup> increased from 1,816 in 1910 to 5,152 in 1920.<sup>1</sup> <sup>discrepancy about the rate of increase</sup> ~~The~~ examination of these differences between the

- 4  
1816 15152  
7364  
1816 15152  
5448
1. The estimate by the Immigration Commission, based on the data from the Japanese-American Yearbook, is 3,000 - 3,200 farms in 1909. (Reports, vol. 23, p. 76.) The Japanese Association of America reported 6,463 farms in 1918. (Statistics Relative to Japanese Immigration and the Japanese in California, p. 7) An explanation for such discrepancies has been given on p. above.

two sources with respect to the rate of increase gives <sup>many</sup> some credence to the belief that <sup>had been</sup> ~~were able to~~ farmers who had formerly operated subdivisions ~~acquired~~ entire farms and that ~~the~~ greater independence and stability in agriculture <sup>through</sup> as represented in ownership and cash lease were achieved in this period.

In the nineteen twenties, however, Japanese farm holdings decreased in <sup>aspects</sup> all ~~lines~~. The total acreage in 1929, according to the Japanese source, dropped



25B

TABLE  
ACREAGE OF FARMS OPERATED BY JAPANESE BY TENURE, CALIFORNIA, 1910-1940  
(CENSUS DATA)

## ACREAGE

TENURE	1910	1920	1930	1940
TENANTS *		*	74,688	140,253
MANAGERS *		*	90,587	18,798
PART OWNERS *		*	} 26,152	30,273
FULL OWNERS *		*		36,770
TOTAL	99,252	361,276	191,427	226,094

## PERCENTAGE

TENANTS			39.0	62.0
MANAGERS			47.3	8.3
PART OWNERS			} 13.7	13.4
FULL OWNERS				16.3
TOTAL			100.00	100.0

\* - COMPARATIVE DATA NOT AVAILABLE

SOURCES: 16<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS AGRIC. VOL III TABLES 13, 14, 29 p. 157, 158, 223  
14<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS AGRIC. VOL II TABLES 16, 17 p. 311, 313



25A

TABLE

NUMBER OF FARMS OPERATED BY JAPANESE, BY TENURE, CALIFORNIA,  
1910-1940

(CENSUS DATA)

NUMBER FARMS					
TENURE	1910	1920	1930	1940	
TENANTS	1,547	4,533	1,580	3,596	
MANAGERS	36	113	1,816	249	
PART OWNERS	} 233	} 506	70	293	
FULL OWNERS			490	997	
TOTAL	1816	5,152	3,956	5,135	
PERCENTAGE					
TENANTS	85.2	88.0	39.9	70.0	
MANAGERS	2.0	2.2	45.9	4.8	
PART OWNERS	} 12.8	9.8	1.8	5.7	
FULL OWNERS			12.4	19.4	
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	

SOURCES: 16<sup>th</sup> CENSUS AGRIC. VOL III TABLES 13, 14, 29 p. 157, 158, 223  
 14<sup>th</sup> CENSUS AGRIC. VOL II TABLES 16, 17 p. 311, 313



of some 300,000 acres,  
~~of which~~

almost to the pre-war level, while the acreage under ownership declined to

57,028 ~~acres~~ in 1929 from 74,769 ~~acres~~ in 1920, <sup>a drop of</sup> 39.5 per cent. ~~drop~~. Several

factors contributed to this decline: <sup>and speculative operations</sup> (1) overexpansion during and im-

mediately <sup>following</sup> after the booming years and subsequent failures or retrenchment,

(2) <sup>the</sup> decline of prices of farm products in the twenties,<sup>1</sup> and (3) the enactment

and enforcement of <sup>more</sup> severe anti-alien land laws in 1920 and thereafter.

- 
1. For example, annual index numbers of California fruit prices dropped from a high of 221 (average price for July, 1910 to June, 1915 = 100) in 1920 to 111 in 1923, recovered somewhat to 141 in 1925 and 147 in 1927. The index numbers again dropped to 118 in 1928, 104 in 1930, and 62 in 1932. See H. J. Stover, Annual Index Numbers of Farm Prices, California, 1910 - 1933, Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 569, College of Agriculture, University of California, Berkeley, Calif., 1934, p. 26.

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reported  
The Census ~~data~~, in contrast, ~~show~~ a much greater rate of decline both in the aggregate acreage and the number of farms in the period 1920 - 1930. The decrease of the acreage was from 361,276 acres in 1920 to 191,427 acres in 1930, or 88.7 per cent, while that of the number of farms was from 5,152 in 1920 to 3,956 in 1930. The difference between these two sources is revealing <sup>demonstrating</sup> in pointing out the effect of the anti-Japanese legislation. It is believed <sup>that</sup> illegal tenure <sup>through</sup> with circumvention and evasion was common in many localities, but such a fact was obviously concealed from the Census interviewer. In these cases, the Japanese farmer generally reported himself as foreman or hired laborer. The Japanese data were, on the other hand, compiled from <sup>local</sup> reports of various Japanese Associations and Japanese Agricultural Associations, which, ~~in turn~~, were in closer touch with the situation, and in



more cases could give the true status of the farmer. It is significant that with respect to the acreage under Japanese management, which was within the law, there is little discrepancy between the two sources, the Census

reporting 90,587 acres for 1930 and the Japanese reporting 104,560 for

1929. However, as regards the acreage under lease and ownership, which were

denied to alien Japanese, much greater discrepancies are shown, the Census

reporting 26,152 acres under ownership and 74,688 acres under lease for

1930 and the Japanese source reporting 57,028 acres and 166,762 acres, res-

pectively.

In the period 1930 - 1940 the Japanese, too, felt the effects could not escape the im-

port of the national financial and agricultural crises. The prices of fruits

and truck crops reached the lowest level since 1910<sup>1</sup> and had not recovered

1. See p. , footnote .

sufficiently by 1940. Failures and foreclosures of farms were not uncommon.

The Japanese Association, however, claimed that the Japanese farmers fared

more favorably during the depression years than the Caucasian farmers. It

reported the decline of the aggregate Japanese acreage during the ten year

as approximately 96,000 acres and that of acreage under ownership as about

15,000 acres. If this statement is accepted, it would mean that the retrenchment

2. The Japanese Association of America, *Zaibei Nippon-jin Shi*, op. cit., p. 199.

in the late twenties and the coming of age of the Nisei contributed greatly

to the stabilization of Japanese farming in the trying years. The use of family

members on the farms was extensively practiced among the Japanese by 1940,

the Census showing that there were 3,954 unpaid farm family laborers in

However, a much greater discrepancy appears regarding the acreage under lease and ownership.

the Census

claim of

for 1929

difference is noted between

subsequent

farmers

operators.

year

general

as will be seen

stabilization

11

Transfer this to p. 38



to 5,807 farm operators. If thousands of children who assisted on farms after school hours are added to this labor force, the tremendous contribution by the Nisei can easily be visualized. In many cases, as will be seen later, ~~it was not unusual to have more than ten family members working on a farm.~~

Contrary to the Japanese data, the Census reported for the corresponding period <sup>a</sup> net gain of 34,667 acres in the total acreage, 40,891 acres in the ownership acreage, and 1,179 in the number of farms. Significantly, however, <sup>and part-ownership<sup>1</sup></sup>  
1. A part of the land is owned and the rest is rented.

the two sources are approximately in agreement <sup>about the</sup> ~~as regards~~ the total acreage

for 1940, the Japanese source estimating it to be some 230,000 acres and

the Census reporting 226,094 acres. Contradictory, yet more revealing,

are the Census data with respect to net changes during 1930 - 1940 in the

number and the acreage of farms under various tenure. ~~As regards~~ <sup>farms</sup>

operated by Japanese managers, ~~the number~~ decreased from 1,816 to 249, or

a loss of 1,567, and the acreage decreased from 90,587 to 18,798, or a loss

of 71,789 acres. ~~As regards~~ <sup>However,</sup> farms leased by Japanese, ~~the number~~ increased  
<sup>in number</sup> from 1,580 to 3,596, or a gain of 2,016, <sup>and in acreage</sup> ~~and the acreage~~ increased from

74,688 to 140,253, or a gain of 65,565 acres. Such incredible changes <sup>can</sup> ~~could~~

only be explained in terms of the alien land restrictions. It has been noted

that the laws were a major factor for the undercounting <sup>for 1930</sup> ~~by the Census~~ of

<sup>by the 1930 Census.</sup>  
of Japanese farm holdings. In the thirties, however, more and more Nisei, who

were citizens by birth, reached their majority and could operate farms without

<sup>unhampered</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>that their parents had faced.</sup> ~~such legal obstacles that had blocked their parents.~~ Thus by 1940 most

<sup>illegal</sup> ~~circumvented or evaded forms of tenancy~~ <sup>by alien Japanese were</sup> ~~was~~ legalized by the transfer ~~of~~

<sup>to their children</sup>  
~~such farms in the Nisei's name~~, and no longer was the concealment of true

status necessary.



The majority of Japanese farm operators in 1940 <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ still tenants.

In California, of 5,135 Japanese-operated farms 3,596, or 70.0 per cent, were under cash and share leases, covering 140,253 acres, or 62.0 per cent of the total Japanese acreage <sup>under Japanese</sup>. The ~~Japanese~~ ratio is in a sharp contrast to the overall ratio; the percentage of the number of farms under similar leases to the number of all farms in California was only 19.1 per cent in 1940.

That is, three out of four Japanese farms were leased, while only one out of five California farms was leased.

The extent of farm operation under Japanese ownership was still small.

Some 997 farms on 36,770 acres were owned, and 293 farms on 30,273 acres were partly owned. Full ownership represented 19.4 per cent and 16.3 per cent, respectively, of the total number and the total ~~Japanese~~ <sup>under Japanese</sup> acreage in the State, while part-ownership represented 5.7 per cent and 13.4 per cent. Included among the latter were the more successful, large scale operators.

The geographical distribution of these farms within the State again followed the population pattern. There were 1,523 Japanese-operated farms in Los Angeles County, constituting <sup>29.7</sup> ~~24.9~~ per cent of the total, indicating that <sup>almost</sup> ~~one~~ out of <sup>three</sup> ~~four~~ farms in California was located in the County. It <sup>were followed,</sup> ~~was followed by~~ Sacramento and Fresno Counties, the former with 416 farms, or <sup>8.1</sup> ~~6.8~~ per cent, and the latter with 412, or <sup>8.0</sup> ~~6.7~~ per cent. Santa Clara, Orange, and San Joaquin Counties <sup>were next</sup> followed them in the order. In the part of the State south of the Tehachapi <sup>Range</sup>, ~~the~~ Japanese farms numbered 2,200, or <sup>42.8</sup> ~~36~~ per cent of the total. It is important to remember <sup>m</sup> that the distribution coincided with the areas where intensive farming prospered.



TABLE  
NUMBER OF JAPANESE OPERATED FARMS IN CALIFORNIA BY  
COUNTIES, 1940

	NUMBER	%		
STATE	5135	100.0		
FRESNO	412	8.0		
IMPERIAL	212	4.1		
LOS ANGELES	1,523	29.7		
MONTEREY	130	2.5		
ORANGE	245	4.8		
PLACER	157	3.1		
SACRAMENTO	416	8.1		
SAN DIEGO	144	2.8		
SAN JOAQUIN	214	4.2		
SANTA CLARA	390	7.6		
TULARE	139	2.7		
ALL OTHER COUNTIES	1153	22.4	S.C. 42.74	37.7

SOURCE: BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE, CITED IN U.S. CONGRESS, HOUSE, SELECT COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING NATIONAL DEFENSE MIGRATION, THE FOURTH INTERIM REPORT, H.C.I., P. 124, TABLE 30.



-31A-

TABLE  
NUMBER OF JAPANESE-OPERATED FARMS IN CALIFORNIA BY COUNTIES, 1918

STATE	NUMBER	PERCENT
	6230 <sup>v</sup>	100.00 <sup>v</sup>
FRESNO	685	11.00
KERN	18	.29
KINGS	81	1.30
MERCED	37	.59
MONTEREY	300	4.82
PLACER	301	4.83
SACRAMENTO	759	12.18
SAN BENITO	140	2.25
SAN JOAQUIN	327	5.25
SANTA CLARA	395	6.34
SOLANO	197	3.16
STANISLAUS	78	1.25
TULARE	124	1.99
COUNTIES IN SOUTH. CALIF.	2350	37.72
ALL OTHER COUNTIES	438	7.03

SOURCE: THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CITED IN ZAI BEI NIPPON-JIN SHI, pp174-175.



There had been <sup>a</sup> southward shift in the relative distribution of these farms since the early days. Before 1910 most of the Japanese agricultural activities <sup>the</sup> was located in San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, and the acreage of the Japanese-operated farms in the southern part of the State could not have exceeded some 11 per cent of the total acreage. <sup>1</sup> ~~The Japanese~~

- 
1. Japanese Association of America, Zaibei Nippon-jin Shi, op. cit., pp. 170 - 172. It presumably included Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties besides the ~~six~~ Counties usually referred to as southern California.
- 

Farming in the southern part expanded rapidly in subsequent years, and gained a greater importance. In 1918 the number of Japanese-operated farms in the section constituted some 37.7 per cent of the total number of Japanese farms <sup>California</sup> in the State, and those in <sup>the</sup> Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys decreased in number.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteen twenties the growing of vegetables in the south

- 
2. Ibid.
- 

expanded further, and the development of farming in <sup>the</sup> Imperial and Coachella Valleys was particularly noteworthy. In the northern part, however, decrease in the acreage of sugar beets and rice ~~growing~~ was conspicuous. It was estimated that during the period 1923 - 1929 the acreage in the southern part of the State increased by approximately 22,000 acres and <sup>decreased</sup> ~~that~~ in the northern part decreased by approximately 20,000 acres.<sup>3</sup> The Census for 1940 reported

- 
3. Ibid., p. 196.
- 

that 44.5 per cent of Japanese farms <sup>was</sup> were located in southern California in-



cluding Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

Farms operated by the Japanese were always much smaller than non-Japanese farms in California. In 1940 the average <sup>size</sup> of Japanese farms was 44 acres, while the average of all farms was 230 acres, i. e., the former

averaged only one-fifth of the latter. It is, of course, to be understood

that the size of farms <sup>used for</sup> devoted to intensive farming <sup>in which the Japanese were engaged</sup> is smaller than that of general farming, <sup>and varied greatly according to the crops.</sup> ~~and that variety was large according to crops raised.~~

The great majority of the tracts devoted to strawberry growing, for instance,

was from five to twenty acres. <sup>The size of</sup> Truck gardens in Los Angeles Counties varied

~~in size~~ anywhere from ten acres to sixty or seventy acres. The farms devoted

~~to the growing of~~ Potatoes, lettuce, beans, <sup>and</sup> asparagus, <sup>farms</sup> ~~and such crops~~ were

usually larger, running from 50 to 150 acres. ~~The~~ Fruit orchards were also

~~of varying~~ <sup>ied in</sup> size, some of them 100 acres or more. There were, in addition,

regional variations, ~~in size~~. In the irrigated desert region, embracing the

Imperial and Coachella Valleys, the average was reported to be 50.0 acres,

and in the southern coastal region, <sup>not to from</sup> ~~with~~ Santa Maria <sup>to</sup> to the north ~~and~~ San

Diego, <sup>the</sup> ~~to the south~~, it was 28.5 acres. In Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys

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1. U. S. Army, Wartime Civil Control Administration, "Final Report of Farm Security Administration, for Period, March 15, 1942 to May 31, 1942," (Mineographed), Table 4.
- 

~~the~~ Japanese farms averaged 40.0 acres.<sup>1</sup>

Farms owned by the Japanese were likewise small. With a few exceptions, these purchases had been made "in comparatively small tracts by men" who had successfully climbed up the agricultural ladder from the ranks of common



laborers and tenants. They "had come to this country with little or no capital." They had been "assisted in making their purchases by the extension of liberal credit."<sup>1</sup> A survey of 44 farms made by the Immigration Commission in or about 1909 revealed the following valuation. These farms embraced 1,849 acres.

Four were worth \$500 but less than \$1,000, four, \$1,000 but less than \$1,500, eight, \$1,500 but less than \$2,500, fourteen, \$2,500 but less than \$5,000, five, \$5,000 but less than \$10,000, seven, \$10,000 but less than \$25,000, and two more than \$25,000.<sup>2</sup>

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, p. 85.

2. Ibid.

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Few data are available on the average size of these Japanese-owned farms, and the accuracy of those available data are questionable. The County Assessors' reports in 1912, for instance, reported data that would make the average size of those farms included as 38.5 acres.<sup>3</sup> The report by the Japanese Association

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3. Fourteenth Biennial Report of the California Labor Commissioner, p. 633.

Cited in Millis, The Japanese Problem in the United States, op. cit., p. 132.

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of America for 1918 indicates that the average for the year was 57.5 acres,<sup>4</sup>

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4. Japanese Association of America, Zaibei Nippon-jin Shi, op. cit., pp. 174 - 175.

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A comparison of these two averages gives further evidence to the trend of

agricultural expansion, already noted, during and after ~~the~~ World War I.

In 1940, however, the average size of ~~the~~ Japanese-owned farms, according to

the Census, was 36.9 acres, indicating during the intervening years the trend

of retrenchment and the <sup>appearance of</sup> legal obstacles against the expansion of farm property <sup>had taken place</sup> during the intervening years.

The following table based on selected samples from the WRA survey <sup>gives</sup> ~~shows~~

the distribution by size of Japanese-owned farms in California in 1942:

TABLE

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF JAPANESE AGRICULTURAL LAND OWNERSHIPS AND FARM ACREAGE BY SIZE OF OWNERSHIP, WEST COAST EVACUATED AREA, MARCH 1, 1942

SIZE OF OWNERSHIP ACRES	California		Washington		Oregon	
	NO. OF OWNERSHIPS PERCENT	FARM ACREAGE PERCENT	No. of ownerships PERCENT	Farm acreage PERCENT	No. of ownerships PERCENT	Farm ownership PERCENT
0-9	26.3	3.4	55.1	20.4	11.9	2.4
10-29	37.1	20.5	33.7	36.1	51.7	31.4
30-49	22.1	25.6	6.4	15.9	25.4	32.8
50-99	10.8	22.5	3.7	17.5	8.4	20.1
100+OVER	3.7	28.0	1.1	10.1	2.6	13.3
TOTAL	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, CITED IN ADON POLI, JAPANESE FARM HOLDINGS ON THE PACIFIC COAST, (MIMEOGRAPHED), U.S. DEPT. OF AGRIC., BUREAU OF AGRIC. ECONOMICS, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER 1944, P. 25.



It shows that about two out three farms owned by the Japanese were 29 acres or less, and almost all farms were 100 acres or less in size. ~~With respect~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~to the~~ <sup>total</sup> acreage of these farms, those owned <sup>ing</sup> 49 acres or less and those owned <sup>was</sup> 50 acres or more. An examination of these two percentage distributions together conveys a situation where most of the Japanese owned small tracts and a few of them owned very large tracts, probably running into hundreds of acres per property.

The importance of Japanese to California agriculture was founded on their specialization in certain <sup>crops</sup> ~~crops~~ of intensive farming. The position of their farming in the total picture was ~~meager and~~ insignificant. In 1940 the Japanese operated only 3.9 per cent and 0.7 per cent, respectively, of the number and the acreage of all farms in the State. Their ~~specialization,~~ <sup>status</sup> however, ~~made~~ <sup>however,</sup> their position in the production of commercial truck crops <sup>was</sup> significant and indispensable; in some instances virtual monopolies. <sup>because of their specialization</sup> In 1941 they operated 205,989 acres for the growing of commercial truck crops, constituting some 40 per cent of the aggregate State acreage devoted to the same purpose. The value of these Japanese grown crops was estimated to be between \$30,000,000 and \$35,000,000, about one-third of the value of all commercial truck crops produced in the State.<sup>1</sup> Their importance in the

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1. Report of Lloyd H. Fisher. Printed in U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, part 31, p. 11815.

It is stated therein that California produced more than 25 per cent of the Nation's total of truck crops.

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various truck crops in 1941 is shown in the following table:



TABLE  
ACREAGE OF CROPS GROWN BY JAPANESE AS PERCENT OF STATE  
ACREAGE, CALIFORNIA, 1918-1942

	1942* PERCENT	1929** PERCENT	1918***						
ARTICHOKES	50	11	11						
ASPARAGUS	25	46	83						
SNAPBEANS	51	46	13						
CANNING	95								
SNAPBEANS	43								
MARKETING									
GREENLIMA									
BEANS									
CABBAGE	34	11	11						
CANTALOUPE	36	42	64						
CARROTS	31	11	11						
CAULIFLOWER	69	96	11						
CELERY	75	69	89						
CUCUMBERS	50	11	11						
PICKLE									
CUCUMBERS,	50	11	11						
TABLE									
GARLIC	75	11	11						
LETTUCE	30	42	11						
ONIONS	44	45	76						
CANNING, PEAS	8	11	11						
PEAS, TABLE	40	14	11						
PEPPERS, BELL	95	11	11						
PEPPERS,	95	11	11						
CHILI (DRIED)									
PEPPERS, PIMI- ENTO	40	11	11						
SPINACH,	60	11	11						
CANNING									
SPINACH, TABLE	81	11	11						
STRAWBERRIES	95	94	92						
TOMATOES	67	39	66						
WATERMELONS	25	2	11						
GRAPES	11	6	13						
POTATOES	11	37	21						
RICE	11	4	16						
SUGAR BEETS	11	12	50						

1/ COMPARATIVE DATA NOT AVAILABLE

2/ combined with cantaloupes

\* ESTIMATED ACRES IN 1942 AS PERCENT OF STATE ACREAGE IN 1940, REPORT OF  
LLOYD H. FISHER, PRINTED IN U.S. CONGRESS, HOUSE, SELECT COMMITTEE  
INVESTIGATING NATIONAL DEFENSE MIGRATION, PART 31, p. 11823

\*\* JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, ZAIBAI NIPPON-SIN SHI, p. 193

\*\*\* COMPILED JAPANESE AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION, JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF  
AMERICA, STATISTICS RELATIVE TO JAPANESE IMMIGRATION AND THE JADA -  
NESE IN AMERICA, p. 8



Thus in 1942 the Japanese produced almost all <sup>the</sup> of snap beans for marketing, peppers, and strawberries produced in State, and the majority of <sup>the</sup> garlic, spinach, snap beans for canning, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, and tomatoes.

There had been some shifts in <sup>the</sup> concentration of the Japanese in certain products <sup>had shifted over a period of years.</sup> The decrease of Japanese participation in the <sup>production</sup> growing of

rice and sugar beets has already been mentioned. The Japanese <sup>devoted to</sup> acreage for the growing of asparagus, onions, and grapes declined similarly since 1918 in relation to the State acreage of respective crops. The increase of Japanese acreage <sup>in</sup> <sup>to</sup> proportion of the State acreage for the growing of beans and peas, is noteworthy, while strawberries had always been a Japanese grown crop.

~~The composition of farm labor supply had drastically changed in these years. As more Japanese entered entrepreneurial positions in agriculture, the dominance in the supply was lost. As early as 1929 the number of Japanese seasonal workers diminished to approximately 3,000, and that of regular farm hands to approximately 70,000.<sup>1</sup> They were generally employed by Japanese farmers, who by this time found it necessary to supplement the gap in labor supply by the employment of laborers of other races, most commonly Filipinos and Mexicans. By 1940 most of Japanese had disappeared from the pool of migratory laborers and members of families had begun to meet labor needs of farms. The use of non-Japanese laborers had become prevalent; in many California localities the Filipinos or the Mexicans assumed dominance over~~

1. Japanese Association of America, Zaibei Nippon-jin Shi, op. cit., p. 197.

farm labor market, once held by the Japanese. It was common that Japanese



The supply of  
The composition of farm labor ~~supply~~  
had drastically changed <sup>in composition</sup> during these years.  
As more entered entrepreneurial position  
in agriculture, the number of Japanese  
<sup>available</sup> farm laborers diminished. As  
early as 1929 the number of Japanese  
seasonal workers in California decreased  
to some 3,000, and that of regular  
farm employees to some 7,000.<sup>1</sup>

1. Japanese Association of America,  
Zaihei Nippon-jin Shi, op. cit., p. 197

<sup>filled</sup>  
The gap in the labor supply was ~~filled~~  
by the Nisei, who were in or had graduated from the school  
~~elementary~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~growth of~~ family members  
and laborers of other races. The  
reliance upon family members, <sup>as a source of labor</sup>  
became greater in the ~~the~~ <sup>they were relied upon</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>cultivation</sup>  
as they grew older. The sowing and  
harvesting of crops were taken  
care of by the family. Almost every  
able-bodied member of the family  
worked in the field. An exception  
~~to this case~~ <sup>was accepted</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup>  
~~to take~~ <sup>to take</sup> care of the household tasks and  
cooking. Usually it would be the  
mother or a girl. <sup>3</sup> Nisei in school

2. ~~W.R.A., Colorado River~~  
~~Relocation Center, Community Analysis~~  
~~Section, Report No. 33, "The Japanese~~  
~~of El Centro, Imperial Valley, California,~~  
~~1944, (manuscript.)~~



Those in school worked after school hours and on week ends. One person was excepted from farm duties to take care of household tasks and cooking.

Usually it would be the mother or a daughter. For many Nisei the farm duty was a source of frustration.

During the summer vacation I had to go out in the field to crate the melons and help irrigate. Because of my dull life on the farm I often wished that I could get away from it. I would get so bored that I would be very happy when fall came around so that I could start school again.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Case History No. 54.

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"Most of the Nisei from rural community went through high school and then they went to work on their father's farm after graduation. This was the accepted thing to do."<sup>2</sup>

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2. Case History No. 27.

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The Nisei seem to automatically accept the farm life after graduating from high school and they didn't rebel too much against it. But at the time I got out of high school there was a depression and the sons were needed at home to work on the farms. . . . I was fed up with the farm and I wanted to escape it desperately but I didn't know how. . . . Many Nisei in our community, however, took agriculture up very seriously . . . The greatest prestige was attached to those who were considered the hardest workers and the best farmers.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Case History No. 62.

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38 C<sub>1</sub>

It was the general practice for ~~sons and daughters~~ <sup>the children</sup> of farmers <sup>in our area</sup> <sup>(Orange County)</sup> to help <sup>in fields</sup> on the farm as soon as they were old enough and had enough to strength required. to do the large amount of lifting and ~~carrying~~ <sup>alongside</sup> that is ~~necessary~~. I spent summer vacations picking strawberries ~~with~~ <sup>alongside</sup> our Mexican hired hands. When I entered high school, I was expected to forego after-school activities and come right home, immediately change into my overalls and help in whatever work that was then in progress, be it irrigating, bunching vegetables, weeding, thinning, or picking beans, <sup>or driving a truck</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>season</sup> During tomato harvest, especially, since it was our largest single ~~product~~ <sup>crop</sup> during the year, we worked until late at night, sorting, packing, pounding cleats on boxes, until the <sup>trucks</sup> ~~haulmen~~ came to <sup>transport</sup> ~~take~~ that day's <sup>produce</sup> ~~results~~ to the market. From this I took time off to feed the chickens and prepare the evening meal, <sup>1</sup> ~~which usually was~~ ~~compounds~~ usually consist of tomatoes.

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1. Case History No. 151.

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It was not unusual to have more than ten members of a family working on a farm. The Census for 1940 reported 3,954 unpaid 3,954 unpaid family farm laborers among the Japanese in California. If thousands of school going youngsters were added to this force, the contribution of Nisei to their parents' enterprises was tremendous.

During busy seasons, and whenever help was needed, farm hands, usually Mexicans and Fillipinos, sometimes Japanese, were hired. In some instances, one or two hired helpers worked all year around. Frequently preference for Filipinos or Mexicans over Japanese farm hands was expressed.

Case 8  
p. 4 4<sup>th</sup> line from bottom  
to p. 5 end of 1<sup>st</sup> ¶



~~farm was tilled by family members and a group of Filipinos or Mexicans.~~

Japanese agriculture in Washington was a small fraction, both in extensiveness and value, <sup>in comparison to</sup> ~~for~~ that of California, although it ranked next.

It developed from annucleus of laborers employed on farms near Tacoma (Pierce County) and Seattle (King County). The first lease of land is said to have

been made in this area in 1892. Until the turn of <sup>the</sup> century only <sup>a</sup> handful of

Japanese were found in agricultural pursuits. Soon the scarcity of attractive

jobs and the hardships of strenuous physical work on railroads and in lumber

mills <sup>forced</sup> ~~drove~~ the Japanese to seek agricultural jobs in greater numbers. In

1909 some 3,000 were occupied in agriculture, concentrated in the two Counties.

Some 200 Japanese were employed as seasonal workers in the sugar beet fields

in the easter part of the State, and ~~some~~ others in vegetable farms in

Takima Valley.<sup>1</sup>

In Washington the Japanese found the expansion of their foothold in agriculture much more difficult. Unlike California where the Japanese filled

the vacuum in the labor supply created by the expansion of intensive farming

and the <sup>withdrawal</sup> ~~disappearance~~ of Chinese laborers <sup>were</sup> ~~from farms~~, there was no ready made

labor demands <sup>to any</sup> ~~of appreciable~~ <sup>degree</sup> ~~numbers~~. There had also been an insurmountable

legal obstacle to ~~a~~ possible progress inasmuch the State Constitution had

always prohibited aliens from <sup>owning</sup> ~~the ownership of~~ real property. The Census for

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1. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, pp. 69 - 70.

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1910 reported 316 farms with a total acreage of 9,412 acres,<sup>2</sup> almost all being

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2. Census Bulletin 127, p. 44. Cited in Millis, op. cit., p. 89.

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under cash lease.<sup>1</sup> Their farm holdings expanded in the booming years during

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1. Millis, op. cit., p. 89, footnote.

and immediately ~~after the~~ <sup>following</sup> World War I, and increased in 1920, according to the Census, to 699 farms and 25,340 acres. Again almost all of these farms were under lease, and those under Japanese ownership numbered only 27. In the nineteen twenties, due greatly to the enforcement of the more stringent alien land law passed in 1921, their holdings decreased appreciably. In 1930 there were 523 farms ~~with a total acreage of~~ <sup>totalling</sup> 12,632 acres. Farm tenure was, however, more diversified than before; the portion of the farms under tenancy declined to 46.7 per cent, while those under Japanese managership vastly increased to constitute 34.4 per cent of the total number of Japanese-operated farms in the State. Those under ownership also increased to comprise 16.6 per cent of the total. In the thirties, ~~like the pattern found in California, this trend of overweighted~~ <sup>as</sup> a reversal of this trend took place; an increase in leases <sup>and</sup> a decrease in managership. In 1940 <sup>the</sup> Japanese operated 706 farms and 20,326 acres. Of them only 10 farms with 363 acres, or 1.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent of their respective totals, were under managership, while 511 farms with 12,611, or 72.4 per cent and 62.0 per cent, were under tenancy.<sup>2</sup> Japanese-owned farms increased to 123 with a total acreage of 4,937 acres.

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2. In comparison, ~~the percentage of~~ the number of tenant-operated farms of both Japanese and non-Japanese combined <sup>of</sup> the total number of farms in Washington in 1940 was 17.7 per cent. (~~Adon Poli~~ <sup>Adon Poli</sup>, op. cit., p. 13.)

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TABLE  
Number of Farms Operated by Japanese,  
by Tenure, WASHINGTON,  
1910-1940

<u>Number of Farms</u>				
<u>TENURE</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>
TENANTS	312	667	244	511
MANAGERS	3	5	180	10
PARTOWNERS	} 1	} 27	12	62
FULL OWNERS			87	123
TOTAL	316	699	523	706
<u>PERCENTAGE</u>				
TENANTS	98.7	95.4	46.7	72.4
MANAGERS	.9	.7	34.4	1.4
PARTOWNERS	} .3	} 3.9	2.3	8.8
FULL OWNERS			16.6	17.4
TOTAL	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCES: BUREAU OF CENSUS, 16<sup>th</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC VOL II, TABLES 13, 14, 29 p. 157, 158, 223. ; BUREAU OF CENSUS, 14<sup>th</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC. VOL II TABLES 16, 17. P. 311, 313.



# TABLE

Acres of Farms Operated by Japanese,  
by Tenure, Washington,  
1910 - 1940.

## ACREAGE

Tenure	1910	1920	1930	1940
Tenants	11	11	4,999	12,611
Managers	11	11	5,735	363
Part Owners	11	11	1,902	2,415
Full Owners	11	11		4,937
Total	9,412	25,340	12,636	20,326

## Percentage

Tenants	11	11	39.6	62.0
Managers	11	11	45.4	1.8
Part Owners	11	11	15.1	11.9
Full Owners	11	11		24.3
Total	11		100.1	100.0

11 COMPARATIVE DATA NOT AVAILABLE

SOURCES: BUREAU OF CENSUS, 16<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC VOL III, TABLES 13, 14, 29, p 137, 138, 223; BUREAU OF CENSUS, 14<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC. VOL I, TABLES 16, 17, p. 311, 313



Almost all of these farms were located in King, Pierce, Kitsap, and Yakima Counties, the overwhelming majority <sup>being</sup> in White River Valley (King and Pierce Counties.) Their size was very small, averaging only 29 acres compared <sup>to</sup> an average of 186 acres for all farms in Washington. The average size of farms under ownership was 340.1 acres. According to the selected samples obtained by WRA (See Table ) almost 90 per cent of <sup>the</sup> Japanese-owned farms were 29 acres or less in size, representing, however, a little more than ~~a~~ half of the total ownership acreage. <sup>This</sup> ~~It~~ would indicate that a few Japanese possessed land of <sup>appreciable</sup> ~~considerable~~ size.

As in California the number and the acreage of Japanese-held farms were insignificant and meager as compared with those of all farms in Washington; it constituted less than one per cent of the number and a little more than one-tenth of one per cent in the acreage. Due to their specialization in commercial truck crops, their contribution to Washington agriculture was considerable. It was estimated that they <sup>grew</sup> produced over \$4,000,000 worth of produce annually.<sup>1</sup> Their concentration in certain crops is described as follows:

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1. The estimate by the Japanese-American Citizens' League, Seattle. U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, Fourth Interim Report, p. 131.
- 

According to the Agricultural Marketing Service, they operated 56 per cent of the acreage devoted to truck crops in King County and 39 percent of the acreage in Pierce County. In King County they produced ~~cauliflower, onions, and late peas, and over~~ 90 percent of the beets and carrots, 80 percent of the asparagus, cauliflower, onions, and late peas, and over 50 percent of the cabbage, celery, lettuce, spinach, strawberries, snap beans, and cucumbers. In Pierce County



they produced 90 percent of all ~~of~~ <sup>the</sup> early cabbage, carrots, celery, lettuce, green peas, and beans. . . . In the Yakima Valley the Japanese were reported by the Japanese-American Citizens' League to have produced, during 1941, 15,000 to 20,000 tons of tomatoes, 16,000 tons of onions, 90,000 crates of lettuce, 3,000 tons of carrots, 225,000 crates of cantaloups, 60,000 tons of watermelons, and considerable quantities of peas, beans, and rutabagas.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp. 131-132.

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Japanese agriculture in Oregon was very much similar to that in Washington, although much smaller in scale. In the nineteen hundreds a movement from railroad labor to employment on farms was also conspicuous in Oregon. In 1909 the Japanese farm laborers were found on truck and berry farms near Portland (Multnomah County), on berry farms and fruit orchards near Hood River, and on truck gardens and in hopyards near Salem. These workers numbered less than 1,000, and worked mostly for Japanese farmers.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese-held farms, according to the Census for 1910, numbered 83, embracing 4,608 acres. About three out of four of these farms were under lease, and about one out of five

2. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, vol. 23, p. 68.

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was owned by the Japanese. In the next ten years their foothold expanded rapidly, and the total acreage almost doubled. ~~The number of~~ Japanese-owned farms also increased greatly to number 61. During the next few years before 1923, when the Oregon alien land law was passed, there was a great rush to acquire farms. "They were forced to pay the high prices of 1920 and early 1921;" and within several years after the purchase "many of them are reported to be in financial difficulty."<sup>3</sup> The Census data reveal very little change

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3. Mears, op. cit., p. 259.



in the Japanese farm holdings during the period 1920 - 1930. In 1930 there were 264 farms with a total acreage of 8,001 acres. Of these 76, or 28.7 per cent, were owned by the Japanese. Those under lease numbered 163 farms, embracing 4,956 acres. In the nineteen thirties a general expansion of farm land is noted, although there was little increase in the number of farms operated by them. The total acreage in 1940 amounted to 11,645 for 277 farms, and 3,249 acres for 77 farms under ownership.<sup>1</sup> The acreage of the farms under

1. The total acreage of Japanese-owned farms in Oregon for 1930 is not available. However, the combined acreage for both wholly owned and partly owned farms was 2,257 acres.

lease also increased to 7,016, although the number increased by one to 77.

TABLE  
NUMBER OF FARMS OPERATED BY JAPANESE,  
BY TENURE, OREGON  
1910-1940

NUMBER OF FARMS

TENURE	1910	1920	1930	1940
TENANTS	63	161	163	175
MANAGERS	4	2	19	2
PART OWNERS	} 16	} 61	7	23
FULL OWNERS			76	77
TOTAL	83	224	265	277

PERCENTAGE

TENANTS	75.9	71.9	61.5	63.2
MANAGERS	4.8	.9	7.2	.7
PART OWNERS	} 19.3	} 27.2	2.6	8.3
FULL OWNERS			28.7	27.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCES: BUREAU OF CENSUS, 16<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC. VOL. II, TABLES 13, 14, 29 p. 157, 158, 223.  
BUREAU OF CENSUS, 14<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC. VOL. II, TABLES, 16, 17, p. 311, 313.



TABLE  
ACREAGE OF FARMS OPERATED BY JAPANESE,  
BY TENURE, OREGON  
1910-1940

ACREAGE

<u>TENURE</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>
TENANTS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	4,956	7,016
MANAGERS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	788	70
PARTOWNERS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	} 2,257	1,319
FULL OWNERS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>		3,249
TOTAL	4,608	8,080	8,001	11,654

PERCENTAGE

TENANTS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	61.9	60.2
MANAGERS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	9.8	.6
PARTOWNERS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	} 28.2	11.3
FULL OWNERS	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>		27.9
TOTAL	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	99.9	100.0

11 COMPARATIVE DATA NOT AVAILABLE

SOURCES: BUREAU OF CENSUS, 16<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC. VOL II, TABLES 13, 14, 29. p. 157, 158, 223. ; BUREAU OF CENSUS, 14<sup>TH</sup> CENSUS, AGRIC. VOL II, TABLES 16, 17, p. 311, 313.



The great majority of <sup>the</sup> Japanese farms were located in Multnomah County or ~~in~~ its adjoining Counties, the city of Portland at their hub. Their size averaged 42 acres as compared with an average of 291 acres for all farms in the State. The Japanese-owned farms also averaged 42 acres.

Japanese farming was <sup>a</sup> negligible factor in the agriculture of Oregon; it represented less than a half of one per cent of the total number and less than one-tenth of one per cent in the total acreage of all farms, ~~in the State.~~ <sup>as</sup> Like in other Pacific Coast States, their farming was concentrated <sup>in</sup> ~~in the~~ <sup>in</sup> growing of certain crops. It was reported that in 1941 more than <sup>a</sup> majority of ~~the~~ <sup>vegetables</sup> crops for fresh market such as brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, green peas, spinach, and celery were grown by the Japanese. ~~In addition,~~ ~~they grew vegetables for processing and interstate shipment~~ It was also estimated that they raised in 1941 "approximately \$2,711,836 worth of produce of which about 85 percent was shipped out of the State, the remainder sold for local consumption."<sup>1</sup>

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1. U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, Fourth Interim Report, pp.135 - 138.

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It is extremely difficult to determine the net earnings of Japanese farmers in recent years. Often many estimates were made based on data on the value of crops grown by the Japanese. Ichihashi, however, questions the reliability of such estimates.

Much has been written on this subject, accompanied by striking graphs which tend to exaggerate the financial success of Japanese farmers. . . . A statement such as . . . "the Japanese produced . . . \$58,213,000 in 1931, and . . . \$45,000,000 in 1925," has been accepted by readers to mean that the Japanese producers have enjoyed the full/benefit of these startlingly large sums of money, with consequent alarm, envy, jealousy, and what not. . . . By [such] a careless expression, i. e., without proper and necessary qualifications of his figures, [the author] supports the current popular misconception of Japanese farming. It is [is not] suggested that an accurate measure of the shares in these values going to the landlords and the Japanese tenants is possible; in fact, such measurements are exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to obtain, and it is for this reason that the <sup>present</sup> ~~present~~ writer refrains from making any attempt to do so. But if one undertakes to write about these values, it is incumbent on him to make their meaning clear, especially in view of prevailing misconceptions; one may point out facts relating to the nature of Japanese farming, as . . . Then Japanese cultivated 304,966 acres in 1925, and the value of the crops raised on the land thus controlled was \$45,000,000, or \$147.55 per acre on the average. But of the total acreage 189,671 or 62.7 per cent was cultivated under contract and share tenancy; this part of cultivation will absorb something like \$28,215,000 of the \$45,000,000; and if tenancy is calculated on the basis of 50-50, then one-half of the value will accrue to the landlord or something like \$14,107,500. Thus even if we assume cash tenancy and ownership to mean what the terms strictly connote, this sum of \$14,107,500 must be deducted at once from the total sum of \$45,000,000, leaving a balance of \$30,892,500 to the Japanese farmers. On such calculations, the exaggeration suggested by \$45,000,000 is by something like 31.3 per cent. The writer feels confident that if more accurate statistics were available, the situation would be much less favorable to the Japanese.<sup>1</sup>

1. Ichihashi, op. cit., pp. 200 - 201.



*points out frequently*  
Ichihashi ~~further explains~~ that ~~in many cases~~ the expenditures of these  
*greater*  
farmers had been much ~~higher~~ than ordinarily expected, ~~due to the common practices~~  
~~in financing their farming.~~ That the Japanese usually paid higher rents to  
~~the~~ landlords has already been noted. ~~The~~ Commission merchants or shipping  
corporations

who advanced money to the Japanese were without question the better bargainers of the two, simply because of their superior business knowledge, and the Japanese paid to [them] high interest charges both directly and indirectly, often failing to get the current market prices for their crops when such crops were mortgaged. The merchants, be they Japanese or American, who advanced them provisions, did so at prices from 10 to 20 per cent higher than the current market prices. Finally, the tenants had to pay their hired help higher wages because they were not to be paid until the entire work was completed. All these extra charges tended to push down the tenants' profit. <sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 182.

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An early survey of the earnings of the Japanese farmers was made by the Immigration Commission. Of 647 samples,

432 reported that they had made a surplus over living expenses during the preceding year. Of the other 215, 114 were involved in a deficit while 101 reported that they had neither surplus nor deficit. The average amount of surplus realized was \$579.88; of deficit, \$561.02. Some of the gains were very large. Those of 31 of the 432 were less than \$100; of 92, \$100 but less than \$250; of 146, \$250 but less than \$500; of 114, \$500 but less than \$1,000; of 35, \$1,000 but less than \$2,500; of 14, \$2,500 or over. Some of the deficits also were large. Those of 5 of the 114 were less than \$100; of 27, \$100 but less than \$250; of 37, \$250 but less than \$500; of 23, \$500 but less than \$1,000; of 20, \$1,000 but less than \$2,500; of 2, \$2,500 or over. These figures must not be taken too literally, however, for the amount of surplus and deficit, especially in farming, is difficult to estimate. Moreover, and



more important, no allowance is made for investmants in developing strawberry patches and asparagus and other crops which require two seasons before the plants begin to yield a remunerative harvest. The failure of the figures to make allowance for such cases greatly exaggerates the number who sustained deficits and increases the amount of deficits reported.<sup>1</sup>

1. Reports, vol. 23, p. 88.

~~Japanese~~ <sup>in Japanese</sup>  
A recent publication reported an estimate of the earnings and expenditures in California of Japanese farmers for 1917, one of the boom years. The following table ~~is~~ was compiled from presented according to this information:<sup>2</sup>

		per cent
Products by Japanese farmers for 1917	\$55,000,000	\$100.0
Number of Japanese farmers	8,000	8,000
Rentals	\$13,750,000	25.0
Planting and Cultivation	22,000,000	40.0
Harvesting and Packing	11,000,000	20.0
Subsistence	4,125,000	7.5
Net Profit	4,125,000	7.5
Average net profit	\$ 516	

2. Japanese Association of America, Zaibei Nippon-jin Shi, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>Japanese</sup>  
There were a few who realized large profits and accumulated wealth.

The story of the rise of George Shima, perhaps the most successful of all

Japanese farmers, is now well known. The "potato king" began his career

as a common laborer. In 1900 he was working as a potato picker on a ranch

in San Joaquin Valley. Like other Japanese, he had a great ambition for

independent enterprise.



- 50A -

The "potato king" arrived in San Francisco in 1889 and began his career as a common laborer. He ~~soon~~<sup>then</sup> became a labor contractor, ~~and in addition~~ ~~of~~ ~~grew~~ until enough money was saved to embark on his own operation.

Copy Pages p. 85



In 1910 Shima cultivated 8,720 acres, 420 acres of which he owned and the remaining 8,300 acres he rented for cash. Potatoes were grown on <sup>the 8,720 acres,</sup> 5,420 acres of ~~this land~~, hay on 2,800 acres, and onions on 500 acres.<sup>1</sup> By

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1. Ichihashi, op. cit., p. 183.

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1920 his holdings <sup>expanded</sup> ~~extended~~ to 6,000 acres under ownership and 7,000 acres under lease. Several times during his career he lost his entire fortune, but started all over again and rebuilt it. When he died in 1926, he was well to do.

The more typical experience of a Japanese farmer in the Stockton area was described by a Nisei in the following words:



CH-45

My old man went out to the islands in the Sacramento Delta with George Shima to start farming. ~~Shima later became the potato king of this country and he must have made hundreds of thousands of dollars.~~ My father, more or less, helped him to open the Delta islands to the Japanese farmers. They cleared the land there and planted potatoes, celery and truck crops. For a while my old man drove tractors in that area. He was just working for Shima.

11 In 1916 my father returned to Japan in order to find a wife. ~~He was very excited about the possibility of farming in the Stockton Delta area as he had never seen such rich land in Japan. He planned to farm there for a few years so~~ he brought back my mother the next year. . . Dad kept working and saving his money after he returned to America. He bought about 20 acres of land in the Delta area. ~~He~~

The people who owned the land were Caucasian and our family was the only Japanese one who owned any land around there.

~~it put in a friend's name.~~ At that time most of the Japanese farmers were only planning to make a lot of money here and go back to Japan. I suppose my father had these ideas but he became more settled here when my brother was born in 1918 and I came along two years later. When he purchased his little farm, it meant that he would be in this country more or less permanently.

In the years that followed my father grew all sorts of truck crops

CH-45 continued

in the Delta area. He began to branch out and he did some farming on a share basis as he owned a lot of farm equipment. He would lease large tracts of land from Caucasian corporations and they would split the profits 60% for him and 40% for the company. Most of the larger

property was owned by huge corporations like Lyons, Perry and Elkins. A large number of Portuguese owned land around there too and they did their own farming. The corporation couldn't make the land pay until they started to lease to the Japanese farmers. The Japanese did all of the work and they kicked back a percentage of the profit so that it was a fair proposition for both sides. A lot of the Japanese farmers leased lands from the banks. . . .

There were other Japanese farmers in that area who farmed about a hundred acres on a share-crop basis. Most of the farming around there was done in this way. The Japanese farmers all seem to get along as they worked hard. They had to in order to support their large families. (21-24)

my father's Farming was very profitable for him from 1925 on. However, during the depression things slowed down a great deal. It was around 1937 that my father went a little too far in his farming ventures and he went broke. I don't know exactly how this happened but I think he borrowed a lot of money from the bank and he could not pay it off because the farm prices were so low that year. . . This slowed him down for a while and he had to go back to small scale farming on our own property for a couple of years. Just before the war broke out, my father started to farm big again and he had about 300 acres of tomatoes ready to harvest when we were sent out, evacuated.



The development of ~~another~~ Japanese agricultural settlements at Livingston (about 50 miles southeast of Stockton) is "a tale of tremendous struggle against hostile natural conditions, financial disaster, and year after year of disappointment, but a struggle maintained by stout hearts with indomitable perseverance, until it ended . . . in complete victory."<sup>1</sup> It began as a speculative venture.

A Japanese corporation bought some three thousand acres of land that had been used for <sup>extensive</sup> ~~general~~ farming, and sold <sup>it in</sup> subdivisions to Japanese farmers on the installment plan.

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1. E. Manchester Boddy, Japanese in America, (private publication), 1921, p. 99.
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The soil was shifting sand, blown by desert winds that sucked up and whirled away every vestige of moisture, its bare surface scorched by a fierce sun. There was no shade, no water, no sanitation, no school, no church. There was nothing to make life worth living. In fact, life there was believed impossible. . . .

Established in 1906, it faced disaster after disaster and almost starved through five lean and hungry years before a profit came. . . . The wind . . . swept away the soil they had loosened by cultivation and dried up their young plants. Grasshoppers devoured what the wind left. Water for domestic purposes had to be carried for two miles. Then, in 1909, the Japanese-American Bank in San Francisco, which held second mortgages on their lands, closed its doors.

The outlook was then the blackest the colony had faced. The members had no money in their houses. Families were without a nickel on hand. Through the long hard times that followed there were many days when families could not buy bread. They got along only by little borrowings, and there were many instances when five cents carried an entire household for several days.

But they hung on. ~~In the darkest days~~ They refused to think of giving up.<sup>2</sup> ~~The Japanese colony [at Livingston in 1921]~~

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2. ibid., pp. 100-101.



In 1921 Japanese farmers at Livingston numbered forty-two, raising principally grapes and peaches. One farmer reported that in 1920 he realized "\$800 an acre from Malaga grapes, and \$900 an acre from Tokays. And this was on land which, when the Japanese farmer took it, was shifting sand, blowing before the wind."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid.

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All the Japanese who had come to Livingston could not hang on, and some had to give up years of struggle.

My father went to Livingston. He started his career as a farmer in partnership with some other men on 120 acres. After five years of partnership, he decided to buy his own farm and get married. He got married in 1913, and bought 40 acres, ~~on instalment~~. It took quite a bit of money to purchase new lands of uncultivated ground and in order to get plants, equipments, house and barns built, he had to borrow some money from the Loan Association. He mortgaged his farm, ~~and borrowed~~.

He was only on the new farm a very short time and the war broke out. No crop would be expected for another five, six years at least. In the meantime, strawberries, potatoes, etc. were planted to give something to eat and sell. The main crop was to be grapes for almost all of it was vineyard and about 3 acres of apricots. Just about the time, that the crops were ready to yield good sized crops, he passed away, 1922. In the meantime, he

borrowed more money in order to eat in the meantime and he also bought more equipment and horses. So, mother was left with four young boys, . . . and \$10,000 debt and 40 acres of land. For seven years mother struggled with the farm and tried to rear us at the same time. Finally in 1929 . . . she had to give up the farm, ~~and go to San Francisco where we lived ever since until our evacuation to Tanforan in Apr. 1942.~~ She didn't want to lose the farm for dad put so much work and money into it. However, the mortgage company couldn't help us out any more and since we couldn't pay the taxes or the water bills, we had to give it up and have it foreclosed. ( )



There were many times when we had nothing left in the house to eat and I still can remember very distinctly when mother would make broth like liquid out of rice and give it to us. We had nothing but soft rice and water, and yet she would give it to us and when we asked her why she didn't eat, she replied that she wasn't hungry. Now, when I think of it, it brings tears to my eyes for she refused to eat so that we wouldn't starve. Sometimes, our neighbors would bring us some canned foodstuffs or a small bag of rice and then we would keep going for a little more. Once, a mother pig with four young pigs came to our farm and <sup>my brother</sup> took a .22 rifle and shot one. We feasted for about two weeks on the pig which was the only meat we had for three months that year. We used to shoot jack rabbits and robings for food but they would come only during the season and so we didn't have meat during off season. <sup>1</sup> We had

1. Fred Hoshiyama, "Autobiography," (manuscript prepared for this Study.)

The story of a <sup>pioneer</sup> successful farmer in Imperial Valley is told in the

following words:

Copy Case 5  
From last ¶ on p. 2 to  
p. 4, line 4 from bottom

And continue with  
p. 5, line 15 to p. 5, last line.

Although he was generally regarded as one of the <sup>more</sup> successful farmers in Imperial Valley, ~~he, like many others, possessed little property~~ his financial condition was not any better than many others, when the <sup>his</sup> liquidation of ~~farm~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~holdings~~ <sup>were liquidated</sup> was necessary awaiting evacuation.

Copy Case 5  
from p. 6, line 14  
to p. 6, line 4 from bottom



There were some instances where Nisei could transform the destitute condition of their parents' farming into more successful operations.

My father had saved up a little money so he decided to start a farm of his own so that he could raise his family in one place. He moved the family up to Stockton where he leased a small farm but my parents had a very hard time and they couldn't make a living. They decided to go back into farm labor work so that they moved around to different places for a number of years. They had gone from one place to another ever since then.

After some years this Japanese <sup>moved to</sup> ~~tried farming again in~~ Keyes, California, then ~~moved~~ to Livingston

Dad moved the family to Turlock around 1920 and he had used that place as a sort of headquarters. My folks would go out from there and work at different places. After they saved up some more money, dad went out and rented a 25 acre farm and raised melon. He wasn't able to get out of the hole on this farm so that he moved on to another farm to see if the soil was any better. My mother helped dad on the farm and she continued doing that for years. Dad never was able to hit it rich during all the years that he worked even though he tried very hard.

*Continue with Case 57  
from p. 17, line 10  
to p. 18, line 6*

*and from p. 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> line from bottom  
to p. 23, 10<sup>th</sup> line from bottom.*



Moving from one area to another, or one farm to another in an area, was common among the Japanese. The lack of capital, overeagerness for quick success, and legal restrictions prevented them from achieving in a great measure the stable status of farm operations under ownership. Their tenure pattern of short-term leasing resulted in the insecurity of land occupancy and high tenant mobility. As seen in the above document, some Japanese readily relinquished unprofitable farms and sought better ones. In other cases, the landlords substituted tenants for higher rents or other advantages. In some other cases, the tenants "skimmed" the land and moved to newer tracts. In the case cited below, the Japanese farmer achieved a secure status by the purchase of a small tract.

CH-37

My parents arrived here in California ~~in~~ around 1900. They came out to join one of dad's relatives in farming. My dad started farming on his own in Oceana, California, after he got here.

*No H* After a few years <sup>they</sup> my parents moved to Barris, California, which is only a few miles from Arroyo Grande and they lived there right until the time of evacuation. My father started farming there and he was rather successful. He was one of the first Japanese farmers to go in for strawberry growing and that proved quite profitable. Later on he started to raise flower seeds. . .

They made a good living. They had quite a tough time during the period they were working in Hawaii. Being so poor, it was natural for them to be careful of the money they earned so that they were able to save quite a sum in the following years. My father built a nice home near Arroyo Grande around 1922. He also raised vegetables for a couple of years and he had another small farm near Hallayon. They went into truck gardening there and this was quite profitable too. My father bought a 22-acre farm there and it was put into my name. The other farm is in my brother's name. In comparison with other Japanese, my dad was a very successful farmer and he didn't have a hard time at all after he got started. Such things as the depression didn't bother him very much. ~~He was a natural born farmer and all of his hard times had been passed through when they first came to America.~~ My parents were