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Japanese Interracial Families in the United States, 1879–1900: What the Census Manuscript Population Schedules Reveal

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INTRODUCTION

The historical demographer Steven Ruggles in the early 1990s spearheaded the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: IPUMS project by creating, coding, and disseminating US census data. Ruggles and his colleague at University of Minnesota, economic and social historian Russell R. Menard, have stressed the significance of census records as primary historical sources for investigation into the lives of “ordinary people”:

[The] census is our fundamental source of information about American social structure in the past. No other source can compete with respect to population coverage and reliability. . . . Many Americans in earlier generations left no surviving trace of their existence except for their listings in the census. Thus, we must frequently turn to census data for basic historical generalizations about the lives of ordinary people.¹

This is true for Japanese immigrant families to the United States in the late nineteenth century, many of whom were unknown settlers and left no trace other than “listings in the census”—that is, in manuscript population

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schedules.² Through these population schedules we can get individual records that include information not only on names, ages, occupations, and “color” or “race” but also on the neighborhoods in which these families lived. Indeed, population schedules are crucial in reconstructing and narrating the basic profile of early Japanese immigrant families.

Conducting research based on population schedules also has its own limitations. First, the US Census is taken only once every ten years. Therefore, the census is virtually silent for providing stories about “ordinary people” during the in-between years. Second, those who were counted in each census were the de jure population or resident population. People who were not at their residence by chance when the census enumerators visited would be counted based on a declaration by the head of the household. This practice could cause overcounts or other inaccuracies. Another possible problem is undercounts. Undercounts, estimated to be about 10 percent in the late nineteenth century, were seen mainly in racial minority populations.³ Third, names were also often “creatively” spelled out because enumerators wrote them based on oral dictation from respondents.

The theme of this article is family, and it is thus worth noting here how the US Census defined “family.” The 1850 census defined “family” for the first time in its instructions to marshals and their assistants.⁴ That was when the census started to ask for all the names and personal information of every person in the “family.” The instructions said:

By the term family is meant, either one person living separately in a house, or a part of a house, and providing for him or herself, or several persons living together in a house or in a part of a house, upon one common means of support, and separately from others in similar circumstances. A widow living alone and separately providing for herself, or 200 individuals living together and provided for by a common head, should each be numbered as one family.⁵

From 1870 to 1890, with some additions and modifications, “a common table and roof” remained the key factor in forming a family for the purposes of the census. However, as late as 1910, the census acknowledged the discrepancy between ordinary and census usages of “family” as follows:

The word “family,” for census purposes, has a somewhat different application from what it has in popular usage. It means *a group of persons living together in the same dwelling place*. The persons

constituting this group may or may not be related by ties of kinship, but if they live together forming one household they should be considered as one family.⁶

In this article I try to discover some untold stories of early Japanese immigrant families at the turn of the twentieth century, *not* of “*a group of persons living together in the same dwelling place,*” as defined by the census. With a family defined as a household of people “related by ties of kinship” and excluding lodgers, boarders, or servants, I will shed light on the characteristics of early Japanese families, with special emphasis on interracial marriages, by examining their patterns, demographic distribution, and the race categorization of interracial couples and their multiracial children.

Regarding interracial marriage and family, John Kuo Wei Tchen notes that in the cosmopolitan port city of New York, where no antimiscegenation law existed, marriages between Chinese and white women were *not* uncommon.⁷ Nevertheless, as Emma Jinhua Teng points out, “mixed race” individuals have often been made invisible in the master narrative due to “numerical minority, that Eurasians disrupt boundaries of colonizer and colonized, white and nonwhite, rendering them problematic figures in accepted paradigms of nationalist and ethnic histories.”⁸ Early Japanese interracial families and their children have been even more invisible due partly to the timeframe of their migrations and marriages.⁹ The conventional narrative of Japanese immigration depicts 1884 or 1885 as its starting point, when the numbers of Japanese, mostly aspiring and indigent students, started to increase and the contract labor system in Hawaii began.¹⁰ However, the history of Japanese interracial families began long before that, as this article will reveal. Another overlooked factor is that Japanese in New York and the East Coast in general have not been the subject of comprehensive research, in contrast to the Chinese. Even in her pioneer work on Japanese in New York, Mitziko Sawada sees the Japanese community as a rather monoracial bachelor society, arguing that “meeting American women, socializing with them, perhaps even marrying one, remained a dream.”¹¹

“Japanese” as a census category was officially introduced in 1890, twenty years after the introduction of the category “Chinese.” But it is a question whether enumerators in fact followed the official instructions in recording the racial backgrounds of Japanese fathers or mothers. And was “the logic of dependent citizenship extended to racial classification,” as argued by Teng, applicable to interracial couples involving Japanese immigrants and

their children?¹² Also, the official category used for people of “mixed race” was “Mulatto” after 1850, which concerned primarily multiracial children with an African American parent. With no specific instructions or official categories, how did local census takers categorize mixed-heritage Asian American children? Were their racial backgrounds recorded according to their mothers’ backgrounds or their fathers’, or was there some other pattern? Because the manuscripts of the 1890 census were lost in a fire at the US Department of Commerce in 1921, this article explores records from 1870, 1880, and 1900 on the mainland, mostly in California and New York State. The following sections will illuminate the characteristics of Japanese who chose to form international, interracial, and, potentially, not merely bicultural but multicultural families. We begin our investigation by examining the fifty-six Japanese individuals and the first international/interracial couple recorded in the 1870 census.

JAPANESE INTERRACIAL FAMILIES: 1870 AND 1880

A. Cases from the 1870 Census

The 1870 census expanded “color” categories in the census population questionnaires to five groups, by adding “Chinese” and “Indians” to “White,” “Black,” and “Mulatto.”¹³ As Hochschild and Powell have discussed, 1870 was the turning point when Chinese and Japanese populations (and other contemporary “Asian” groups thereafter) began being classified according to birthplace.¹⁴ In other words, it was in 1870 that a new “race” category, which virtually meant nativity or national origin, started to infiltrate the boundary and census nomenclature of “color or race” for the purposes of “discipline and punish,”¹⁵ in other words, to gather information on the Chinese population to use it for the purpose of exclusion.

The examination of “color” categorization, names, family compositions, passport data, and the like strongly indicates that four out of fifty-five individuals found in the official report were actually *not* Japanese.¹⁶ Meanwhile, another five Japanese individuals, though not recorded as such, were found in the population schedules. Therefore, the archival cross-examination and database search on population schedules re-counts fifty-six “genuine” Japanese in the 1870 census.¹⁷ The general profile of these fifty-six Japanese is as follows: They were predominantly male (forty-six, or 82.1%), with only ten females recorded (18.8%). The average age was 23.2 years old. Their occupations were, in decreasing order, “student” (twenty-two), “farm laborer” (fourteen), and “domestic servant” (six).

While Japanese of working age in California were either “laborers” or “domestic servants,” most of those outside of California were “students.”

Among the Japanese in California, twenty-two in Coloma in El Dorado County were settlers of an enterprise known as the Wakamatsu Colony. It includes the earliest international/interracial couple among Japanese immigrants: John H. Schnell and Oyō. According to the population schedule, John H. Schnell was “29 years old, farmer, born in Hena [Hessen] Darmstadt.” His wife “Jou,” or Oyō, was reported to have been born in Japan in 1846, “keeping house,” with her “color” being reported as “Japanese.”¹⁸ Oyō had married John H. Schnell in Japan and had their first baby girl, Frances, there.¹⁹ In Japan, John H. Schell worked part time as a member of the Prussian legation, but he was also a military merchant mostly for the Aizu feudal domain. He came to establish Wakamatsu Colony in order to make a profit in silk farming for Aizu domain, which was defeated in the civil war in Japan and lost most of its land as a result.²⁰ In the census, interestingly, their daughters (“Frances,” two years old, and “Mary,” two months old) were both reported to have been born in California and designated as “W” (white).²¹ In addition, as a leader of the colony, in the column for the “value of real estate owned” in the manuscript, John H. was reported to have owned \$38,000 worth of real estate and \$3,000 as personal estate, representing all of the Colony’s assets.²² In addition to this interracial family, there were at least five other Japanese families in the Colony, including two other little girls. As noted above, there were only ten female Japanese in the entire census records from 1870, and as many as eight of these women lived as family members in the Wakamatsu Colony. Furthermore, all of the five Japanese heads of families at the time concentrated also in the Colony, while all other Japanese throughout the United States were students, lodgers, or boarders who were not considered heads of families themselves. Little is known about what happened to the families of the Wakamatsu Colony following its collapse in 1871, shortly after the 1870 census taking.²³ The Schnell family suddenly returned to Japan to secure money to rebuild the Colony, but supposedly they never came back. Some members of the Colony are said to have returned to Japan, but the census provides little information about the other first Japanese immigrants who subsequently scattered elsewhere in the United States.

B. Cases from the 1880 Census

In 1880, the Japanese population was still small: only 148 nationwide.²⁴ The 1880 census started to inquire about the birthplaces of parents. After

engaging in a cross-checking procedure similar to that I conducted for the 1870 data, the numbers of “genuine” Japanese re-counted to 164. The basic demographic characteristics of these Japanese in 1880 are as follows: 141 men, 16 women, 7 gender not reported. As for their occupations, 45 were listed as “waiter” or “servant” and 40 as “student.” More diverse types of migration began in 1880, when more individual students or skill learners were sent by the Japanese government or companies.

In addition, the 1880 census recorded twenty heads of families from Japan, including the heads of eight interracial families. Below is the description of these eight families, recorded by local enumerators.

1. “J. J. Gall,” recorded as “W,” age 60, a “restaurant keeper,” and born in France. “Barra,” “color” originally recorded as “W,” but crossed out and changed to “J”(Japanese), age 48. Occupation was recorded as “housekeep.” Their California-born children, “Louisa” (13), “Jho” (11), and “Julia” (6) were reported as “W.” Eureka, Humboldt County, California.²⁵
2. “Kuni Manzato,” “color” originally recorded as “C”(Chinese) but crossed out and changed to “Jap,” age 27, “laborer.” His wife “Caroline” is recorded as “B”(Black), age 21, born in California, and their 1-year-old son “Grant” as “Jap.” Gold Hill, El Dorado County, California.²⁶
3. “Louis A. Yeashun,” “color” recorded as “W,” age 29, “pressman.” His wife “Esther D.” was recorded as “W,” age 28, born in Connecticut. New Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut.²⁷
4. “Tsuna A. Kuchiki,” “color” was recorded as “J,” age 30, “clerk in store.” His wife “Emma” was recorded as “W,” age 23, born in Pennsylvania. The “color” of their daughter “Suma” (2) is reported as “W.” Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts.²⁸
5. “Sam Houssabuso,” “color” was recorded as “W,” age 35, “actor,” and “cannot read or write.” His wife “Mary” was recorded “W,” age 19, from Bavaria (as were her parents). Their daughter “Theresa” (5 months old) was recorded as “W.” New York City, New York County, New York.²⁹
6. “Sarbra King,” age 35. His “color” was originally recorded as “W,” but later changed to “J.” His wife, “Annie,” was recorded “W,” age 23, born in New York, with parents from Ireland. Both were recorded to have the occupation as “tight rope performers.” New York City, New York County, New York.³⁰

7. “Thomas Marxedarlia,” age 24. His “color” was recorded as “W” and occupation as “engineer.” His wife “Carrie” was recorded as “W,” age 19, “artist,” born in New York, while her father was born in Scotland, and her mother was born in France. New York City, New York County, New York.³¹
8. “George Faro,” “color” recorded as “J,” age 26, “works in paper mill.” His wife “Sarah” was recorded “W,” age 23, and born in Pennsylvania. The “color” of their daughters “Jane” (6) and “Mary Ann” (4) is reported as “J.” Mount Holly Springs, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.³²

Unlike John H. Schnell and Oyō in 1870, who married before coming to the United States, these people were the earliest interracial couples among Japanese who most certainly got married in the United States. Among them, the life history of “Kuni Manzato,” or Kuninosuke Masumizu, who was one of the Wakamatsu Colony survivors, is relatively well known through the accounts of his descendants. According to John E. Van Sant, Masumizu was married in 1877 to “Caroline,” or Carrie, Wilson, a woman of black and Native American heritage.³³

Among the individuals listed above, only “Tsunā A. Kuchiki” appears in *Umi o koeta Nihonjinmei jiten* (Biographical dictionary of Japanese travelers to the Occident).³⁴ Tsunakane Kuchiki was born in 1855 to the Honjō family, the *fudai daimyō* (hereditary feudal lord) of Miyazu domain, but subsequently he became adopted as the heir of the Fukuchiyama domain. After the Meiji Restoration, he studied briefly under Yukichi Fukuzawa, founder of Keio University, had a Christian baptism in Tokyo, and went to the United States to study.³⁵ Because he was already married in Japan, his marriage to the American-born Emma Tyler was bigamous and eventually caused him serious trouble. He sent his daughter Suma, born in the United States, to his natal Honjō family in an attempt to resolve the problems he caused by his bigamous marriage and by selling off the heirlooms of the Kuchiki family after displaying them at an exhibition.³⁶ Nevertheless, the later whereabouts of Kuchiki himself, after such a tumultuous period in his life, is unknown. His name is not found in the census data in the United States after 1900, and no death certificate or record of his returning to Japan has been found. It can be speculated that he probably died quietly in the United States sometime between 1880 and 1900.

Aside from Kuchiki of Boston, records of three interracial marriages between Japanese men and white women are found in the 1880 census data

from New York. “Sabra King” was married to “Annie,” a second-generation Irish American, whose occupation, like his, is recorded as “tight rope performer.” It was thus probably a marriage of an acrobatic team. The wife of “Sam Houssabuso” is recorded to have been from Bavaria: a first-generation immigrant. The third record is of a man named “Thomas Marxedarlia.” While this is not a Japanese name, it can be surmised that he used an “American-sounding” name for enumerators given that both of his parents are recorded to have been born in Japan. He was an “engineer” and his wife was in a creative profession, as an “artist.” Another record of an interracial family involving a Japanese individual is found in California. The couple, “Barra” and “J. J. Gall,” is the only case in which the wife is from Japan. The Japanese background of the wife seems certain, as she and her parents were all recorded to have been born in Japan. In addition, the census taker took the time to correct the record of her racial category from “W” to “J” for accuracy. The record indicates that she moved to the United States before her first child was born in California in 1867. Who was this “Barra Gall”? Her age, forty-eight in 1880, and the fact that only ten Japanese women were recorded in the 1870 census, suggest two possibilities: she may be one of the survivors of the Wakamatsu Colony who married “J. J.” from France later; or she may be someone who was simply not reported in the 1870 census as “Japanese.”

While “Chinese” as a “racial” category was used by 1870, “Japanese” was not an official category even in 1880. Most probably it had become customary for enumerators not to ask their interviewees the “color or race” question directly to avoid confusion or provocation.³⁷ Enumerators in 1880 recorded the racial backgrounds of Japanese based on their own discretion or by “local knowledge and assessments,” as argued by Martha Hodes.³⁸

In the “color” column, while the records of two Japanese-born individuals in California were corrected from “C” and “W” to “Japanese,” records from the East Coast include three cases of Japanese-born individuals recorded as “white.” At the same time, as we will see later in more detail regarding the Kuchiki case, another two on the East Coast were recorded simply as “J.” In her speculative reconstruction of a census taker’s visit to the interracial family formed in 1890 by Smiley and Eunice Connolly, a Caribbean well-to-do “colored” sea captain and a white woman from Massachusetts, Hodes indicates that Eunice’s race “would have echoed that of her husband, illuminating the ways in which the determination of racial classification flowed through men, from census enumerators to heads of household.”³⁹ However, in the eight cases of interracial families under discussion here, the

racial categories of the spouses did not seem to affect each other.

As for the racial backgrounds of the children born to interracial couples, four were recorded according to their father's racial background: children of "J. J. Gall" in California were recorded as "white"; child of Masumizu in California was recorded as "Japanese"; child of "Sam Houssabusu" in New York was recorded as "white";⁴⁰ children of "George Faro" in Connecticut were recorded as "Japanese."

In comparison, in the case of the Kuchiki family of Boston, I would like to follow Hodes's approach and speculate on the census taker's visit to the Kuchiki family. The father was recorded as "J," while his daughter was recorded as "W." Having been a former hereditary feudal lord in Japan, Kuchiki must not have had the look of a laborer, and probably was more fair skinned than many tanned European immigrants who worked outdoors. The neighborhood he lived in was Beacon Hill, where the majority of the residents were professionals, such as physicians and lawyers, accompanied in some cases by African American servants.⁴¹ The recording of Kuchiki's "color or race" could have been white, if it was influenced by the actual color of his skin, his mannerisms, his class, or the family's residential environment. But these environmental clues apparently did not matter, as he was designated as "Japanese." It seems that his designation as "Japanese" simply reflects the fact that he was from Japan. As for the recording of the race of the daughter "Suma," she was likely recorded as "white," not merely based on her mother's race, but based on her own white appearance (racial passing).

In this section, I have provided details of the census records of one family in 1870 and eight families in 1880 and discussed the ways in which the "color or race" of the family members was recorded. In 1880, three of the eight cases of interracial families were found in New York City. Beginning around this time, New York became home for many Japanese interracial families in the United States. In the next section, I turn to an examination of cases mainly in the cosmopolis of New York, while also paying attention to interracial families in California.

INTERRACIAL FAMILIES IN CALIFORNIA AND NEW YORK IN 1900

Prior to the census in 1900, questions regarding "assimilation," such as "able to speak English. If not, the language or dialect spoken" and a question on "naturalization," had been added to the census questionnaires in 1890, due to a heightened sense of caution because of the rising numbers of new

arrivals from Europe.⁴² The 1900 census contained minor changes on this subject, such as simplifying the questions on language to “can the person speak English?”⁴³ Meanwhile, the “naturalization” question sought more information from the respondents. For the 1900 census, enumerators were instructed to mark “Al” (for alien) in the “naturalization” column if the individual being interviewed “had not taken any step toward naturalization.” A person who had “declared [an] intention to become [an] American citizen and taken out his ‘first’ papers” was recorded as “Pa” (for papers). Those who presented “the second or final papers of naturalization” were to be marked “Na” (for naturalized).⁴⁴

According to the census report of 1900, there were 86,000 Japanese in the United States, of which 61,111 were in Hawaii, 10,151 in California, and 5,617 in Washington State.⁴⁵ The overall numbers had increased remarkably from 148 in 1880, and even from 14,399 in 1890.⁴⁶ Females numbered 14,600, making up 15 percent of the Japanese population. A database search found 11,212 individuals who were born in Japan and were married at the time of the census, and whose parents were both born in Japan. On the mainland, states such as California (365), Washington (146), and New York (61) had such individuals. New York had particularly large numbers of interracial families compared to the rest of the United States, even though the numbers of Japanese immigrants in general were smaller than those in California and Washington. While unmentioned in previous historiographies, there were *some* interracial families even in California, despite the existence of an antimiscegenation law.

A. Interracial Families in California

California, which attracted many immigrants from China and Japan in the late nineteenth century, amended its existing antimiscegenation law, enacted first in 1880 by adding prohibition of marriage between white and “Mongolian” persons.⁴⁷ In spite of this law, I found four interracial families among Japanese immigrants in the 1900 population schedules. However, there was no record of interracial marriage between Japanese and African Americans or persons of other racial backgrounds in the 1900 census, as was seen in the case of Kuninosuke Masumizu in 1880. Listed below is the information on these interracial families.

1. “Frank Nakayama,” “color or race” reported as “Jp,” age 27, arrived in United States in 1894, naturalization column recorded as “Al,” “cook.” “Annie P.,” race recorded as “W,” age 30, born in

- Pennsylvania. Married for one year. San Francisco, San Francisco County, California.⁴⁸
2. “James Nakada,” “color or race” reported as “Jp,” age 28, arrived in United States in 1885, naturalization column recorded as “Al,” “merchant jewelry.” “Sophia,” wife, “W,” age 34, from Sweden, arrived United States in 1894. Married for seven years. “James,” “W,” age 3, and Benjamin, “W,” age 1. San Francisco, San Francisco County, California.⁴⁹
 3. “Suzie Cowen,” head, “color or race” reported as “W,” age 33, from France, arrived in United States in 1885, naturalization column left blank. “Harry,” husband, “color or race” recorded as “Jp,” age 33, born in Japan, arrived in United States in 1884, naturalization column recorded as “Al,” occupation “expressman.” Married for four years. “Harry,” son, “color or race” recorded as “Jp,” age 3. San Francisco, San Francisco County, California.⁵⁰
 4. “Edward Hatta,” “color or race” reported as “JP,” age 30, arrived in United States in 1881, naturalization column recorded as “Al,” “garden laborer.” “Jennie M.,” wife, “W,” age 39, from Norway, arrived in United States in 1886. Married for two years. Oakland Ward 1, Alameda County, California.⁵¹

All Japanese husbands in this list were recorded as “Jp” in the “color or race” column. It should be noted, however, that people who were born in Japan were *all* recorded as “Jp,” regardless of their marital status. While we can interpret this consistent recording pattern to have been simply following the official protocol, it is worth noting that California had the longest history of Chinese immigration, and many census takers, as “street-level bureaucrats,” recorded Japanese and Chinese individuals differently, even in 1870, before “Japanese” became an official category.⁵² In other words, it was local enumerators’ eyes in California that differentiated Japanese and Chinese and made such categorizations official at the census office in Washington, D.C.⁵³ At the beginning of the twentieth century, with anti-Japanese movements already active in California, it is also meaningful that the naturalization columns of Japanese were recorded “Al,” indicating that they were “aliens who *do not intend* to naturalize” [emphasis added]. While the ultimate decision on the eligibility for naturalization was yet to be determined by a Supreme Court ruling in 1922 (*Takao Ozawa v. United States*), the recording of naturalization status in this way seemed to emphasize the immigrants’ position as “aliens” in California.

Meanwhile, the “color or race” columns of the non-Japanese wives of the Japanese immigrants were all recorded as “W.” They were recorded individually, separate from their husbands’ racial classification. Three of them were noted to have been born outside the United States, coming from France, Sweden, and Norway in their teens. The fourth, “Annie P.,” was from Pennsylvania. Thus, none of them was a California native. Two of the couples had children, and the race of the children of one of the families was recorded according to the race of their mother, while the race of the children of the other family followed their father’s. According to the census records, all four couples married in the 1890s after the 1880 revision of the antimiscegenation law in California. As Peggy Pascoe notes in her detailed discussion of the highly sensationalized interracial marriage between Gunjirō Aoki and Helen Emery in 1909, “the enforcement of miscegenation law relied heavily on local officials, including county clerks, who issued marriage licenses; justices of the peace, who performed marriage ceremonies; and district attorneys, who prosecuted sex crimes.”⁵⁴ The four couples above may have gotten married in other states and then moved or returned to California, or they may have been married in California thanks to sympathetic local officials. Three of the four couples lived in San Francisco, where the wives of Japanese immigrants were mostly absent (probably because they remained in Japan). Thus, they may have been rather well known in their communities. It is important to recognize the continued presence of these interracial families *in California* in 1900, and regardless of their small numbers, more detailed individual exploration will force a revision of the existing monoracial narrative to include the stories of interracial families involving Japanese immigrants.

B. Interracial Families in New York

In the 1900 census data from New York State, there were sixty-six individuals who were born in Japan and who were married to non-Japanese at the time of the census. Once again, a cross-checking procedure narrows this number down to sixty-one “genuine” Japanese. We will now explore what census questionnaires reveal in regard to the attributes of these members of interracial families and the ways in which race was recorded in New York.

Profile of Heads of Families

The average age of the sixty-one individuals born in Japan was 33.6. The oldest was “Charles Betisho,” age fifty-four, who arrived in the United

States in 1894.⁵⁵ Among the sixty-one Japanese, all but two were recorded to have been able to speak English. As for the naturalization column, thirty-three were recorded as “Al”, seventeen as “Na”, and eight were not recorded. Whether or not the 1870 amendment to the Naturalization Act, which extended the application criteria of naturalization to “aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent,”⁵⁶ would be applicable to Japanese was left up to courts’ decisions at the time. It can be speculated that many interviewees recorded as “Na” in fact presented their second certificates to the census takers.⁵⁷ As for their occupations, “steward” was the most common occupation (thirteen cases). In general, there was no residential concentration of people in specific occupations, but stewards were exceptions. Five out of the thirteen stewards lived in areas near the naval establishment in Brooklyn, where they probably worked.⁵⁸ The next most common occupation was “cook” (six cases), and two more were noted as “chef.”⁵⁹

In the “color or race” column, reporting as “Japanese” was the most common, with thirty-five cases (58.3%). Thirteen were corrected from “white” to “Japanese” (21.7%), and nine were recorded “white” (15.0%). Two were recorded “Y” (for “Yellow”), and one was corrected from “black” to “Japanese.” As “Japanese” had become an official racial category in 1890, enumerators in 1890 should have marked all sixty-one respondents “Jp” as they were instructed.⁶⁰ However, as noted above, nine were recorded as “white” on the actual population schedules, even without later corrections. When the numbers with later corrections are included, a total of twenty-two cases, or 33 percent of the Japanese concerned, were first recorded as “white.”

Regarding the determining factors for such recording of racial categories in New York, I initially speculated that the respondents’ English skills, occupations, naturalization status, and other signs that indicated their levels of “assimilation” influenced the ways in which their racial categories were marked. However, examining the census questionnaires revealed that, first of all, all but two were recorded to have been able to speak English, as previously noted. Second, the occupations of those who were recorded as “white” varied significantly, from “doctor”⁶¹ to “journalist”⁶² to “chef,”⁶³ indicating that there was no correlation between the respondents’ occupations or class and how their racial categories were recorded. Third, regarding residential concentration, some respondents lived in areas populated predominantly by Italians and Chinese, but a correlation between the recording of racial categories and places of residence was not clear either.

Meanwhile, the ratio of Japanese who were marked “AI” was higher among individuals recorded as “Japanese” (69%) than among those who were recorded as “white” (36%). Japanese who had a “white” wife with children tended to be recorded as “white” themselves slightly more often than their contemporaries with other types of family structure. This evidence suggests that citizenship status and intermarriage were regarded as important signs of “assimilation” and “whiteness” by enumerators.

In addition to these general tendencies, the organization of the questionnaire sheet itself seemed to matter. On the actual questionnaires in 1900, the “color or race” category is the third question following “name” and “relation to the head of family.” It is possible that enumerators corrected the racial categories of interviewees after completing the column on “place of birth” that appeared soon after the “color or race” column. It is not likely, however, that they made corrections to the racial categories of the respondents after a comprehensive review of all the factors, including the answers to the questions on English skills and naturalization status that appeared much later on the questionnaire. Considering that the enumerators at the time were paid only a few cents per questionnaire, which they filled out by visiting one household after another, it is more likely that the racial categories were recorded based simply on the value systems of the enumerators and their visual impressions of respondents. All in all, enumerators’ individual perspectives on race, or “local knowledge and assessments,” seemed to matter most.⁶⁴ One of the enumerators who marked Japanese as “white” was Joseph Kenney in Brooklyn. He recorded three heads of households born in Japan, a “doctor,”⁶⁵ a “steward,”⁶⁶ and a “navy cook,”⁶⁷ as “white.” In fact, he marked *all* respondents born in Japan, whether they were single, had a Japanese spouse, or were in interracial marriages, as “white.” This example indicates that some local enumerators considered Japanese to be within the boundary of “whiteness.” In other words, these local enumerators, as “street-level bureaucrats,” ignored the official categories and instructions, as well as the politics connected to racial boundaries. That the US census records reflected the “local knowledge and assessments” of the enumerators who visited these interracial families reveals the arbitrariness of the official race categorizations and the complexity of the boundary of “whiteness.”

Profile of Wives

Let us now consider some attributes of the spouses (wives) of the Japanese men discussed above. The average age of the wives was twenty-eight. As

for the places of birth of the wives, thirty-one, or 52 percent, were born in the United States. All but one of the wives who were not born in the United States or Japan came from Europe. There were eighteen such wives, making up 30 percent of all the wives concerned. Only eleven, or fewer than 20 percent of all the wives, were born in Japan, indicating that most Japanese in New York married women who they met there.

The most prominent attribute of the US-born wives, not surprisingly, was that they were from New York State. In addition, many Japanese men were married to women who were born in the United States to parents who migrated from Europe, including Germany, Ireland, and England, totaling sixteen cases.⁶⁸ There were twelve wives who were born in the United States to US-born parents, slightly fewer than the number of wives with a second-generation immigrant background. Foreign-born wives were also mostly from Europe, with parents born in the same country as themselves: four from Ireland, two each from England, Scotland, and Canada. Furthermore, the foreign-born wives' ages at the time of their arrival in the United States ranged from 1 to 23, with an average of 13.4 years old. Some of the women may be considered "1.5 generation" immigrants, depending on their age at the time of arrival. Nevertheless, even if they arrived in the United States in their teens, it is hard to imagine that women who came from English-speaking regions of the world had as much linguistic difficulty in the United States as their Japanese-born husbands.

As for the "color or race" column of the wives, twenty-three were recorded as "white," six as "Japanese," and one as "black." Only one of the women was recorded as "Japanese" along with her husband. Except for this case, the "color or race" columns of the wives appear to have been recorded based on their individual backgrounds and *not* on the basis of their husbands' racial categories.⁶⁹ Therefore, Teng's argument that the logic of dependent citizenship extended to racial classification does not apply to white wives of Japanese immigrants. The census enumeration on "color and race" was done on an individual basis.

Children in Interracial Families

As noted above, many Japanese men married interracially with white women, some of whom were US born and others who were foreign born. Among forty-seven such interracial couples, twenty-seven had children. Some of these children were more than twenty years old at the time of the survey, demonstrating the steady development of family histories of Japanese immigrants. In this section, I examine the recording of the "color

or race” columns of these interracial families and consider how the racial categories of parents may have affected those of their children.

Concerning the “mixed race” populations, the 1890 census included “quadroon” and “octoroon” as racial categories. However, this categorization attempt was considered a failure, and these categories disappeared in the 1900 census. In fact, there was no official census category for “mixed races” other than those involving black parents between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, and no instruction was given for recording of such individuals. Given such conditions, the “color or race” columns of interracial families in New York in 1900 were most commonly recorded with the mother and children in the same category (thirteen out of twenty-five). In twelve cases, the mother and children were recorded “white,” while the fathers were marked otherwise. Six such fathers were first recorded “white” or “black” and were later corrected to “Japanese.” These corrections made to the racial categories of the fathers did not trigger changes to the recording of the “color or race” columns of their children. There were also five cases in which the father and children were both recorded as “Japanese.” Among these cases, two fathers had their racial categories corrected from “white” to “Japanese,” and one mother was initially marked “Japanese” and then later re-marked as “white.” In the cases with such corrections, the children’s racial categories appear to have followed their father’s (corrected) “Japanese” categorization and not their mother’s “white” categorization. There were four cases in which all family members, including the Japanese-born fathers, were recorded as “white.”

As seen in the examples above, recording of the racial categories of the children of interracial families tended to follow the mother’s racial category, rather than that of the father who was the head of the family. It can be inferred that the idea that mothers’ racial backgrounds were handed down to their children was reflected in the ways in which the racial categories of Japanese interracial families were recorded. Indeed, racial classification was based on individuals, and if the mother was “white,” most of the children were “white” as well. In New York, where interracial marriages were certainly not uncommon, the enumerators’ act of counting residents was entangled with their worldviews on race, notwithstanding the official instructions on census racial taxonomy. Therefore, when it came to interracial families involving Japanese, their *Federal* categorization as a “colored” population according to the official racial dichotomy of “white and colored” did not seem to matter to local enumerators.⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

In this article I have discussed Japanese who chose to form international, interracial, and sometimes multicultural families in the United States from the late nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century, based mainly on population schedules as historical resources. Each of the families found in the records from 1870 and 1880 were examined in detail. The overall characteristics of spouses were explored within interracial marriages involving Japanese in New York in 1900, when the numbers of such unions had increased considerably. New York had a particularly large number of such interracial families, reflecting its cosmopolitan social landscape, which had already led to numerous marriages among its Chinese and white residents.

According to Hodes, the census's "macro- and micro-level undertakings converged in the act of census taking, when government officials visited communities and stepped inside people's homes."⁷¹ This microlevel undertaking was reflected in population schedules, echoing "local knowledge and assessments." Enumerators' local perspectives influenced how these categories were recorded, often in different ways from what the official instructions called for. Therefore, the reporting on the "color or race" and naturalization columns in California and New York differed significantly, partly as a result of the existence of a large Asian population and strong anti-Asian sentiment in California at the time.

While the census as a public policy was deeply embedded in the public discourse of "family," gender, and "race," local census enumerators recorded residents as they saw them in their homes. The families recorded in the census reflect *de facto* social realities of the era, often quite different from what the dominant public discourse would have imagined or claimed as "normal" or "natural." Indeed, what is reflected in the population schedules are the heretofore-unknown realities of ordinary families. As I have demonstrated, they not only reveal that Japanese interracial families were not exceptions in New York but also that Japanese interracial families existed in California, in spite of that state's antimiscegenation law. In addition, contrary to Teng's argument that "the logic of dependent citizenship extended to racial classification," the racial categories of interracial couples involving Japanese were recorded individually, not according to the race of the male heads of the families. Furthermore, among interracial families in New York, it was the mother's racial category that generally affected how the race of her children was recorded.

Children born between Asian and white parents in the United States during the period discussed in this article are precursors to today's "hapa" persons. However, the history of interracial families extends far into the past. The census records shed light on personal histories as well as on multiracial relations in the communities where Japanese lived in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Population schedules by themselves are nonetheless limited in their effectiveness in narrating personal histories, or in following a small population chronologically. Exploring additional primary sources, such as marriage registrations and birth and death certificates, would further reveal the histories of ordinary families in the United States. Through such methods, more details concerning interracial families can be determined, including those of the previously unexamined unions of Japanese men and white women in California in 1900 that I discovered through the examination of census records. Comprehensive research on the histories of "ordinary people" and families based on population schedules, combined with other types of resources, will offer virtually unlimited possibilities.

NOTES

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¹ Steven Ruggles and Russell R. Menard, "The Minnesota Historical Census Projects," *Historical Methods* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 7.

² Population schedules become open to the public seventy-two years after they are completed (Title 44, US Code). With the exception of population schedules of the 1890 census, which were destroyed in a fire at the Department of Commerce in 1921, today we can access them all the way back from the very first census in 1790 to 1940. Because the research for this article required surveying a vast number of population schedules, I relied largely on a paid search engine—ancestry.com. All the data were accessed July 1, 2014.

³ Interview with Dr. David Pemberton, history staff, US Census Bureau, August 11, 2008.

⁴ From the first census to 1870, population schedules were collected by assistants to marshals who visited each household. From 1880, enumerators working under supervisors who were appointed by the House of Representatives took over the job.

⁵ US Census Bureau, *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to*

2000 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2002), 5.

⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁷ John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 71–86. On Asian Americans and antimiscegenation laws, see, e.g., Leti Volpp, “American Mestizo: Filipinos and Antimiscegenation Laws in California,” *UC Davis Law Review* 33 (2000): 795–835. *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) by Peggy Pascoe is the definitive work as of today on the historical transformations of antimiscegenation laws and racial classifications in the United States that includes discussions on Asian immigrants.

⁸ Emma Jinhua Teng, *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China, and Hong Kong, 1842–1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 8.

⁹ Exceptions are Pascoe’s account of the marriage between Helen Emery and Gunjirō Aoki in 1909. Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, 87–90, and Yi Lui’s mention of Japanese interracial couples who were mistaken by the New York Police Department as Chinese. Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885–1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 3, 7–8. Teruko Kumei, *Gaikokujin o Meguru Shakai-shi: Kindai Amerika to Nihonjin Imin* [Social history of foreign workers: Modern America and Japanese immigrants] (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1995), 55–60. John E. Van Sant narrates Japanese migration history through pioneering figures such as Joseph Hico and Jo Nijima in one of the most comprehensive monographs on the period from 1850 to 1880, *Pacific Pioneers: Japanese Journeys to America and Hawaii, 1850–1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), chaps. 1 and 3.

¹¹ Mitziko Sawada, *Tokyo Life, New York Dreams: Urban Japanese Visions of America, 1890–1924* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 36.

¹² Teng, *Eurasian*, 63–64.

¹³ On the history of the census racial categorization, see, e.g., Claudette Bennett, “Racial Categories Used in the Decennial Censuses: 1790 to the Present,” *Government Information Quarterly* 17, no. 2, (2000): 161–80; Melissa Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in the Modern Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Naomi Mezey, “Erasure and Recognition: The Census, Race, and the National Imagination,” *Northwestern University Law Review* 97 (Summer 2003): 1761–68; Jennifer Hochschild and Brenna Marea Powell, “Racial Reorganization and the United States: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race,” *Studies in American Political Development* 22 (Spring 2008): 59–96; and Kenneth

Prewitt, *What Is Your Race? The Census and Our Flawed Efforts to Classify Americans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

¹⁴ Hochschild and Powell, “Racial Reorganization,” 74.

¹⁵ Mezey, “Erasure and Recognition,” 1722–34.

¹⁶ Francis A. Walker (the superintendent of census), *Ninth Census*, vol. 1, *The Statistics of the Population of the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1872), 8.

¹⁷ Miya Shichinohe-Suga, “55 Japanese: 1870 Nen Popyureishon Sukejūru eno Sekkin” [Identifying 55 “Japanese” in the US census of 1870: A look at manuscript population schedules], *Bulletin of Tokyo Gakugei University, Humanities and Social Sciences* 60 (2009): 137–51.

¹⁸ 1870 US census, population schedule of Coloma, El Dorado County, California, 8/24.

¹⁹ Hiroshi Gomyo, *Maboroshi no Kalifornia Wakamatsuryō: Hatsu Imin Okei no Monogatari* [The dream of Wakamatsu domain: A narrative of the first immigrant Okei] (Tokyo: Seishinsha, 1997), 31–32, 41.

²⁰ Van Sant, *Pacific Pioneers*, 123–25. Gomyo, *Maboroshi no Kalifornia Wakamatsuryō*, 76–94.

²¹ 1870 US census, population schedule of Coloma, El Dorado County, California, 8/24.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Van Sant, *Pacific Pioneers*, 128–29.

²⁴ US Census Office, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census* (June 1, 1890) (Washington, DC: GPO, 1883), 38–39.

²⁵ Enumeration district (hereafter, E.D.) numbers started to appear in this census. 1880 US census, population schedule of E.D. 33, Eureka, Humboldt County, California, 23/25.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, E.D. 52, Gold Hill, El Dorado County, California, 3/3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, E.D. 83, New Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut, 2/44.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, E.D. 642, Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, 33/45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, E.D. 212, New York City, New York County, New York, 21/54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, E.D. 114, New York City, New York County, New York, 2/27.

³¹ *Ibid.*, E.D. 367, New York City, New York County, New York, 4/36.

³² *Ibid.*, E.D. 79, Mount Holly Springs, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 25/26.

³³ Van Sant, *Pacific Pioneers*, 128.

³⁴ Hitoshi Tomita, ed., *Umi o Koeta Nihonjinmei Jiten* [Biographical dictionary of Japanese travelers to the Occident] (Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 2005), 267–68, 860.

³⁵ Kuchikike Shozō Shiryō Kenkyūkai [Research Group on Kuchiki Family Records], ed., *Tangokoku Fukuchiyama Han Kuchikike Mokuroku* [Catalogue of archival records of the Kuchiki Family of Fukuchiyama Han, Tango Province], March 2014, 182–83.

³⁶ *Ibid.* (Kuchiki records). Takao Tokuoka, *Dorothy, Kuchinashi no Nazo: “Shinjuwan”*

o Shitteita Onna [Dorothy, a mystery of Cape Jasmine: A woman who knew “Pearl Harbor”] (Tokyo: Bungeishunjū, 1993), 154–60.

³⁷ Interview with Dr. David Pemberton, history staff, US Census Bureau, August 13, 2013. Interview with Claudette E. Bennett, former branch chief of Racial Statistics Branch, Population Division, US Census Bureau, August 16, 2013.

³⁸ Martha Hodes, “Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890,” in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 257.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁴⁰ In the family of “Sam Houssabuso,” all three family members were recorded as “white.”

⁴¹ 1880 US census, population schedule, E.D. 642, Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, 33/45.

⁴² US Census Bureau, *Measuring America*, 28, 32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁵ US Census Office, *Twelfth Census of the United States—Census Reports*, vol. 1, *Population Part I* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), 487.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ An Act to Amend Sections Sixty-Nine . . . , chap. 41, 1880 Cal. Civ. Code Amend., sec. 1, 3.

⁴⁸ 1900 US census, population schedule, E.D. 247, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California, 13/22.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, E.D. 279, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California, 18/18.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, E.D. 152, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California, 23/24.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, E.D. 339, Oakland Ward 1, Alameda County, California, 2/39.

⁵² Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 48. Lee’s argument that “the public policy is best understood by how it is implemented in the crowded offices and daily encounters of street level workers” is applicable to the census as well. Unlike immigration officials in San Francisco, who “had the power to decide how to implement laws and to establish specific regulations and procedures,” the census enumerators’ authority was temporary and the control over respondents was minimal. Nevertheless, the impact of their local recordings to the Census Office in the District of Columbia was far from negligible.

⁵³ Shichinohe-Suga, “55 Japanese,” 140–13.

⁵⁴ Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, 89.

⁵⁵ 1900 US census, population schedule, E.D.18, Brooklyn Ward 2, Kings County, New York, 1/39.

⁵⁶ An Act to Amend the Naturalization Laws and to Punish Crimes against the same, and for other Purposes (July 14, 1870), *US Statutes at Large* 254 (1870): 254–56.

⁵⁷ Tomomi Iino, “Imin Senkusha Toshite no Sen’in–20 Seiki Tenkanki Nyū Yōku no Nihonjin Rōdōsha” [Seamen as pioneer immigrants: Japanese laborers in New York at the turn of the twentieth century]. Paper presented at Immigration Research Group study meeting, Tsuda Hall, Tokyo, May 24, 2014. According to Iino, interracial marriages were rather taken for granted among Japanese immigrants. She notes that more than half of the 249 Japanese immigrants (90% male) in New York in 1947 had white spouses, citing *New York Benran* [New York Japanese American directory], ed. *Hokubei Shimpō* [North American Daily News(New York: *Hokubei Shimpō*, 1948).

⁵⁸ Iino, “Imin Senkusha.”

⁵⁹ As for residential distribution within New York City, thirty-two of the sixty-one families concerned lived in Manhattan, and twenty-one lived in Brooklyn.

⁶⁰ US Census Bureau, *Measuring America*, 36.

⁶¹ “N. Kunimoto,” 1900 US census, population schedule, E.D. 45, Brooklyn Ward 5, Kings County, New York, 18/32.

⁶² “Sadakichi,” *Ibid.*, E.D. 198, Manhattan, New York, 1/41.

⁶³ “Thomas Yenoski,” *Ibid.*, E.D. 615, Manhattan, New York, 15/30.

⁶⁴ Isaac Bernstein, a census enumerator in charge of E.D. 34 (encompassing Chinatown), was consistent in reporting Chinese and white interracial couples on an individual basis and assigning children’s race through the maternal line, as was seen among Japanese interracial couples. E.D. 34, Manhattan, New York, 56/57, 99.

⁶⁵ “N. Kunimoto,” *Ibid.*, E.D. 45, Brooklyn Ward 5, Kings County, New York, 18/32.

⁶⁶ “Yasu Murakami,” *Ibid.*, 17/32.

⁶⁷ “M Shirahi,” *Ibid.*, 18/32.

⁶⁸ This is similar to the composition among Chinese and non-Chinese couples in 1900. According to Yi Lui, out of eighty-two Chinese men married to non-Chinese women in New York in 1900, forty-three married native-born Americans, twelve women of Irish descent (ancestry), nine of English descent, and nine of German descent. Lui seems to use “native born” as American born for two generations (both women married to Chinese and their parents) and uses “descent” or “ancestry” for European immigrants or the American born wives of European immigrant parents. It can be inferred from this passage: “Most of the wives of either Irish or English ancestry but John Lee’s wife, Mammie, was born in New York of German parents.” (Yi Lui, *Chinatown Trunk Mystery*, 154–56, quote at 154). It is also intriguing to note that there were few Japanese and Chinese married to African Americans, which requires exploration elsewhere.

⁶⁹ My preliminary research on intermarriage involving Japanese in New York suggests 1910 did not change the pattern. An assessment of the relationship between Japanese or Chinese intermarriage and the 1907 Marital Expatriation Act is beyond the scope of this

article. Teng suggests a linkage, but exploring the impact of the law to the field of census enumeration is more complicated and will need vast numbers of census manuscript examples. Teng, *Eurasian*, 63.

⁷⁰ See, e.g., table 10 of the 1890 census report, entitled, “Colored Population Classified as Negroe, Mulattoes, Quadroons, Octoroons, Chinese, Japanese and Civilized Indians, by States and Territories: 1890,” US Census Office, *Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, Part 1* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1895), 397.

⁷¹ Hodes, “Fractions and Fictions,” 257.

