

# Japanese Americans of Washington State and Their Allies

Engaging HistoryLink's Biographical Essays

## LESSON OVERVIEW

This series of activities engage students with HistoryLink's biographical essays on Japanese Americans—and their allies—who have lived and contributed to the history of Washington State. HistoryLink.org is an online encyclopedia of Washington state history. Essays are prepared exclusively for HistoryLink.org by staff historians, contract writers, volunteers, and consulting experts.

### Before Reading

In the BEFORE READING activities, students will read a biographical snippet. Becoming an “expert” on their person, students will then introduce their person to others in the room as in a meet and greet<sup>1</sup>. The Meet and Greet activity allows students to preview biographies. The activity will also generate interest and excitement about studying these important figures in Washington State history.

### During Reading

During the DURING READING activity, students will select an essay to read about Washingtonian Japanese Americans or their allies. They will take notes on a graphic organizer on different facets of their selected person's life, actions, and contributions.

### After Reading

Finally, in the AFTER READING section, students will translate their notes on their selected essay onto a concept map, one represented by the human form. Concept maps are used when learners need to make connections and associations across complex ideas and instantiations.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Linda Christensen's lesson in *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Written Word*.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do people contribute to their local communities and societies?
- What factors play a part in individuals' decisions to create social change?

## OBJECTIVES

- ❑ Preview HistoryLink's biographies before students begin reading.
- ❑ Engage with the life stories of Japanese Americans in Washington State and their allies.
- ❑ Understand how individuals contributed to new directions in the arts, politics and culture.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ARTS + SOCIAL STUDIES  
STANDARDS[English Language Arts](#)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

[Social Studies](#)

- C4.9-10.3 Describe the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

## MATERIALS

- [Biography Cards](#)
- [Meet and Greet Notetaker](#)
- Quick Guide to [Biographical Essays](#)
  - Arai, Kichio Allen (1901-1966)
  - Farquharson, Mary (1901-1982)
  - Hirabayashi, Gordon K. (1918-2012)
  - Horiuchi, Paul (1906-1999)
  - Kurose, Aki (1925-1998)
  - Mizukami, Robert Taro (1922-2010)
  - Moriguchi, Sadako Tsutakawa (1907-2002)
  - Mukai, Masahiro (1911-1999)
  - Nishitani, Martha (1920-2014)
  - Sakamoto, James (1903-1955)
  - Schmoe, Floyd W. (1895-2001)

**BEFORE READING  
ACTIVITIES**

- Scott, Howard B. (1919-2012)
- Shu, Dr. Ruby Inouye (1920-2012)
- Suzuki, Pat (1955-1958)
- Tanbara, Kimiko Fujimoto (1924-2017) and George Tanbara, M.D. (1922-2017)
- Tsutakawa, George (1910-1997)
- Warashina, Patti (b. 1940)

- [Our Histories, Our Lives Graphic Organizer](#)
- Pieces of chart paper that are long and wide enough to trace a human form
- Markers and art supplies

Give each student [a biographical card](#), a shortened version of HistoryLink's biographical essays on Japanese Americans and their allies in Washington State. Tell them that they will become an "expert" on this person and should expect to teach about this person to their classmates.

Distribute the [Meet and Greet Notetaker](#).

When they finish reading their cards, students should write down at least one or two facts they know about their assigned person on the notetaker. Then, they should ask at least three questions about their biography.

Ask for one or two student volunteers to share one fact or one question they have so far about their character. Collectively address any question posed so far, especially those clarifying questions related to defining unfamiliar terms or vocabulary.

Now, students will get up and walk around the room, meeting and greeting other "people" in the room. Make sure that students only interact with one student at a time. While they are listening, they should take notes on their notetaker. There are four other people to meet.

After students have met all the "people" in the room and taken notes, direct them to sketch a diagram that imagines a relationship among the people. They can do any kind of diagram they wish. They can draw a tree, concentric circles, or stick figures. If a student finishes early, ask them to prepare a presentation for the class.

## DURING READING ACTIVITIES

After previewing five different biographies, the students will choose a biographical essay to read. Prompt the students to select a biography previewed in the meet and greet activity. Or students can look at [a list of other biographies on HistoryLink.org](#).

Next, students will imagine they are conducting a holistic study of a single person's life. They will use the metaphor of the human body—constituted of a head, heart, hands, legs, and feet—to document the life of their selected Japanese American or ally.

As they read their essay, students will respond to the prompts below by scripting words, sketching images, or giving examples in [a graphic organizer](#):

- HEAD: What kinds of intellectual work did your selected person pursue? What was their education like?
- HEART: What things or people matter most to your person?
- HANDS: What constructive, "hands-on" activities did your person do? What did they make? Or build?
- LEGS: How did your person contribute to social change? What new directions in the arts, politics, and culture changed due to their work?
- FEET: What values grounded your person? What do you think kept them dedicated to their work, despite obstacles?

## AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

After students' [graphic organizer](#) about their person is full of ideas, sketches, and examples, they will now translate it into a life-sized format.

Students will take a large piece of chart paper and lie down on it. A partner will trace their form on the paper. When ready, students will grab markers and construct a visual representation of their biography. On each portion of the life form, they should draw, sketch, and represent their person's life and contributions. Advise students to use their graphic organizer to guide their creation of a life-sized figure.

A gallery walk is an easy way to share these figures with an entire group of learners. In a gallery walk, the biographical figures can be displayed as though in an exhibit, allowing learners to spread out and gather around the different maps.

Each person can do a "curator's talk" about their figure, with all learners listening as they gather around a map. Or, students can wander casually among the

different figures, adding comments and observations on sticky notes. When students return to their figures, they are greeted by comments on sticky notes.

# Meet and Greet | Japanese Americans of Washington State and Their Allies



**SADAKO  
TSUTAKAWA  
MORIGUCHI**



I was born in Seattle on October 16, 1907. At five, I went to Japan for a traditional education, returning to Seattle in my early twenties. My father was an import and export merchant. He arranged my marriage to his business associate, Fujimatsu Moriguchi, who ran Uwajima-ya, a small business delivering tofu and soy sauce to Japanese laborers.

During World War II, my family was incarcerated at Tule Lake in California, where I gave birth to three of our seven children. After the war, despite hardships, Fujimatsu and I returned to Seattle and rebuilt Uwajimaya. We made it into the largest Asian grocery and gift market in the Pacific Northwest!

When Fujimatsu died in 1962, our four sons took over the business. I continued working at the store until I was 85, preparing rice balls and sushi daily, and ensuring our staff was well-fed, honoring the hospitality tradition from my upbringing. You can still visit Uwajimaya in Seattle's International District.



**JAMES  
SAKAMOTO**



I made a name for myself in the Japanese American community, especially during World War II. After graduating from Seattle's Franklin High School, I played semi-pro baseball and became a professional welterweight boxer in New York. Boxing took a rough toll on my body. Blinded by boxing injuries, I returned to Seattle in 1927.

In 1928, I founded the *Japanese American Courier*, the first English-language Japanese American newspaper in the U.S., with my wife Misao by my side. In 1930, I co-founded the Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL).

After the attacks on Pearl Harbor, I was a liaison between Japanese Americans and the U.S. government. I managed a temporary prison camp in Puyallup. People within my community didn't always like how I cooperated with the government. Even though my work was controversial, my legacy as a trailblazer and community leader endures.

# Meet and Greet | Japanese Americans of Washington State and Their Allies



**GORDON  
HIRABAYASHI**



I was born in 1918, the oldest of five kids. My mom and dad ran a vegetable store in Auburn, Washington. My parents were firm believers in standing up for one's convictions.

During my senior year at the University of Washington, on December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. I was so worried about the fate of my parents and their generation, who were now seen as "enemy aliens."

I defied Executive Order 9066, which ordered the evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. I viewed these as unconstitutional violations of our rights. I turned myself in to the FBI and was convicted and imprisoned for 90 days. My case, *Hirabayashi v. United States* challenged the wartime curfew and expulsion. The Supreme Court ruled against me.

In the 1980s, I successfully challenged my wartime convictions.



**PATTI  
WARASHINA**



I'm known as the queen of ceramics in the Pacific Northwest. I started my journey as an artist by poking fun at the macho attitudes in ceramics studios during the 1960s and 1970s. I helped push ceramics beyond its limits. I was always curious (and easily bored!). I started my artistic work by asking: "What happens if...?"

My personal life was a little wild! I was married first to another ceramics artist, Fred Bauer, and later to Robert Sperry, an artist and academic.

In 1984, the Seattle Arts Commission selected me to make a public art project. I made *A Procession*. It demanded every ounce of my skill, creativity, and perseverance. The sculpture shows 72 figures marching and floating under a bridge, each representing a notable figure in Seattle's art community.

I continue to make new artworks, fueled by my relentless curiosity and a commitment to pushing the boundaries.

# Meet and Greet | Japanese Americans of Washington State and Their Allies



**MARY  
FARQUHARSON**



I served two terms in the Washington State Senate from 1934 to 1942. During the Great Depression, I advocated against unemployment and promoted a cooperative government model. Despite accusations of being a "Red," I was staunchly anti-Communist and against war.

After Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans were forcibly relocated to prison camps under Executive Order 9066. I criticized the order in *The Seattle Times*. I also raised funds for incarcerated children's holiday gifts and visited the camps.

I played a crucial role in Gordon Hirabayashi's legal defense, challenging the incarceration of Japanese Americans to the Supreme Court. Despite my decision not to seek reelection due to my pacifist stance during World War II, I continued my activism. I organized against racism, advocating for Japanese Americans' rights. Additionally, I fought racial discrimination and challenged racist advertising practices.





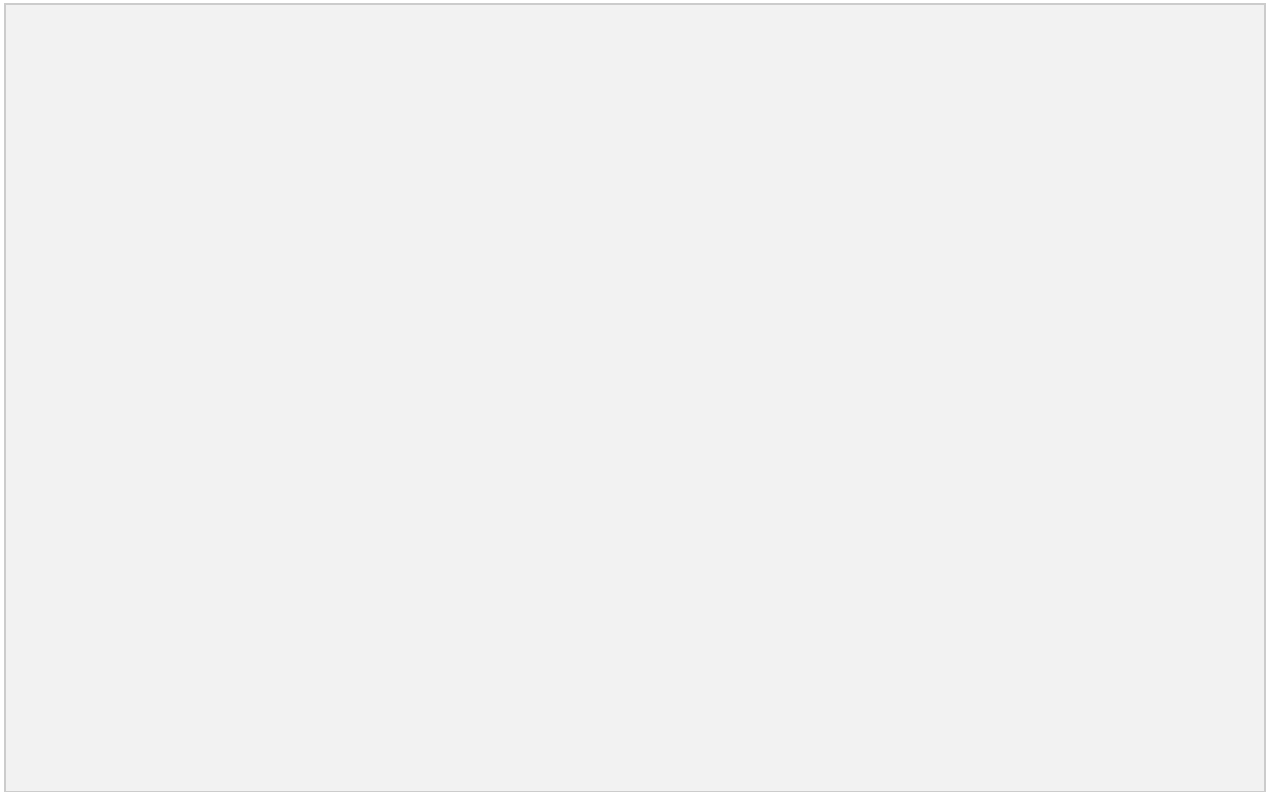
# Meet and Greet | Japanese Americans of Washington State and Their Allies

1. Read your person's biographical card.
2. Write down at least three key points about your person in the space below.
3. Write down at least three questions or thoughts after reading the description of your person.
4. Write down about each of the four people you meet at the tea party. Write notes as the person introduces themselves to you.

Person	Notes
1.	
2.	

3.	
4.	

5. In the space below, draw a diagram, graph, tree, picture, or visual representation that shows the connections between the people. Feel free to add other words to your creation.



6. Write an explanation of your visualization:



## Choosing a Biography | Japanese Americans of Washington State and Their Allies

<a href="#">Arai, Kichio Allen (1901-1966)</a>	<p>Kichio Allen Arai was Seattle's first Asian American architect to design buildings under his own name. His approach integrated Japanese aesthetics with American conventions.</p>
<a href="#">Farquharson, Mary (1901-1982)</a>	<p>Mary Farquharson, a lifelong activist for social justice issues, was a Social Democrat who served two terms in the Washington State Senate from 1934-1942. As part of a small but influential group of people who fought against racial injustice.</p>
<a href="#">Hirabayashi, Gordon K. (1918-2012)</a>	<p>In a remarkable show of personal courage, Seattle native Gordon Hirabayashi was one of handful of Japanese Americans nationwide to defy U.S. government curfew and "evacuation" orders issued in 1942.</p>
<a href="#">Hirahara, George (1905-2000) and Frank C. (1926-2006)</a>	<p>George and Frank Hirahara grew up in the Yakima area, where their family leased a truck farm and managed the Pacific Hotel. The Hirahara family was sent to Heart Mountain Internment Center in Wyoming. George and Frank documented life in the camp, taking more than 2,700 photos.</p>
<a href="#">Horiuchi, Paul (1906-1999)</a>	<p>The Northwest Artist Paul Horiuchi is renowned for the Zen-like spontaneity of his collage paintings, along with an abstract expressionist command of flat space.</p>
<a href="#">Kurose, Aki (1925-1998)</a>	<p>Aki Kurose, Seattle teacher and peace activist, spent her adult life translating the lofty ideals of peace and social justice into practice.</p>
<a href="#">Mizukami, Robert Taro (1922-2010)</a>	<p>Robert "Bob" Taro Mizukami (1922-2010) was a Japanese American World War II veteran, recipient of a Purple Heart, and member of the founding city council (1957) of Fife, owned and operated Gardenville Greenhouses.</p>

<a href="#">Moriguchi, Sadako Tsutakawa (1907-2002)</a>	Sadako Moriguchi co-founded the Asian grocery and gift market, Uwajimaya, in Seattle. She and her husband, Fujimatsu Moriguchi (1898-1962), resumed a small grocery business.
<a href="#">Mukai, Masahiro (1911-1999)</a>	Masahiro (Masa) Mukai was born on Vashon Island in 1911. Along with his father, he pioneered strawberry farming on the Puget Sound island by introducing new methods of freezing berries for sale nationwide and overseas.
<a href="#">Nishitani, Martha (1920-2014)</a>	Martha Nishitani was a Seattle modern dance teacher and choreographer, and one of the leading proponents of modern dance in the Pacific Northwest.
<a href="#">Okubo, James Kazuo (1920-1967)</a>	James "Jim" Kazuo Okubo was a World War Medal of Honor recipient for extraordinary valor who grew up in Bellingham and served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team as an Army medic.
<a href="#">Sakamoto, James (1903-1955)</a>	Born in Seattle, James Y. Sakamoto became one of the leaders of the local and national Japanese American community during the critical era just before and after the start of World War II.
<a href="#">Schmoe, Floyd W. (1895-2001)</a>	Floyd Schmoe's life, which more than spanned the twentieth century, was shaped by his love of nature and by his equally passionate commitment to helping those afflicted by war and injustice.
<a href="#">Scott, Howard B. (1919-2012)</a>	Marysville native Howard B. Scott was an ardent pacifist, dairy farmer, teacher, professor, and child psychologist. As a University of Washington student in 1937, Scott was repulsed by mandatory military training and became a conscientious objector assigned to alternative service before U.S. entry into World War II.
<a href="#">Shu, Dr. Ruby Inouye (1920-2012)</a>	Dr. Ruby Inouye Shu was the first Japanese American woman physician in Seattle and an icon in the local Japanese community. Her general practice was in Seattle's Nihonmachi or Japantown.
<a href="#">Suzuki, Pat (1955-1958)</a>	Pat Suzuki (b. 1930), a vibrant Japanese American singer, wowed the town like few other local stars had during her three-year mid-1950s run headlining The Colony, a downtown Seattle supper club.
<a href="#">Tanbara, Kimiko Fujimoto (1924-2017) and George Tanbara,</a>	Dr. George Tanbara and Kimiko Fujimoto Tanbara of Tacoma were partners in social justice, public health,

<a href="#">M.D. (1922-2017)</a>	community service, and the resettlement of Japanese Americans in the Pierce County city following World War II.
<a href="#">Tokuda, Kip Yoshio (1946-2013)</a>	Kip Yoshio Tokuda was a Sansei (third generation) Japanese American civil rights leader, public servant, Washington State legislator, and advocate for the rights of children, disabled persons, and LGBTQ+ individuals.
<a href="#">Tsutakawa, George (1910-1997)</a>	George Tsutakawa was an internationally recognized artist of Japanese American heritage. A native and longtime resident of Seattle, he was a painter, sculptor, and fountain maker.
<a href="#">Warashina, Patti (b. 1940)</a>	The queen of Northwest ceramics, Patti Warashina is internationally recognized for her technically refined, figurative sculptures that helped expand the boundaries of clay as a medium.

# Our Histories, Our Lives



Name of Person: \_\_\_\_\_

## HANDS

What constructive, "hands-on" activities did your person do? What did they make? Or build?

[Dotted-line response box for HANDS]

## HEAD

What kinds of intellectual work did your selected person pursue? What was their education like?

[Dotted-line response box for HEAD]

## HEART

What things or people matter most to your person?

[Dotted-line response box for HEART]

## LEGS

How did your person contribute to social change? What new directions in the arts, politics, and culture changed due to their work?

[Dotted-line response box for LEGS]

## FEET

What values grounded your person? What kept them dedicated to their work, despite obstacles?

[Dotted-line response box for FEET]

