

Sephardi migration in the early twentieth-century complicated this “insider” status. In one particularly enlightening essay, Devin E. Naar examines the case of Ottoman Jewish immigrants in Seattle. Operating in a relational web of Ashkenazi Jews and non-Jewish Greeks, Armenians, Ottomans, and Whites, Naar argues that Ottoman Jews renegotiated their identities as “Spanish” or “Sephardic” Jews against the backdrop of souring U.S.-Turkish relations. Similarly, in a demographic study of Jews of Color in the twenty-first-century West, Bruce Phillips seeks to complicate normative assumptions about universal Jewish whiteness in America. Throughout the book, Eisenberg builds throughlines in introductions to each essay, a welcome feature for a volume with a clear historiographic aim.

Although this volume stakes its claim most definitively in the field of American Jewish history, it offers key insights to readers interested in questions of race and ethnicity more generally. Eisenberg calls on scholars to resurrect the “vanishing Jew” from cultural studies discourses by considering Jews as a distinct group from Whites. Although Jews can—and often are—included as White “insiders,” this book posits that scholars must denaturalize assumed notions of universal Jewish whiteness and consider local relationships between Jews and other groups. This approach may be hard to endorse for many scholars of Ethnic Studies, who commonly recognize Jews as imbued with the same whiteness as non-Jewish Whites. Yet Eisenberg and this volume’s essayists handle the issue with care, offering a fresh reconsideration of Jewish identity by utilizing a model that still foregrounds the privilege, power, and “insider” status (or potential “insider” status) afforded to Jewish westerners.

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## Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain

Networks, Power,  
and Everyday Life

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*Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain: Networks, Power, and Everyday Life.* By Saara Kekki. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2022. 246 pages. Maps, figures, tables, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover \$39.95

Whose stories do we remember?” Saara Kekki adopted dynamic network analysis as a methodology to help (re)discover “people who have hitherto been lost to history.” In *Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain: Networks, Power, and Everyday Life* she takes readers “beyond what official history or even private diaries can offer.” The three years of Japanese Americans’ internment at Wyoming’s Heart Mountain from 1942 to 1945 have been widely documented. She notes, however, that oral history accounts and sources such as the camp newspaper, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, and other journals, while valuable, are not impartial. For example, the *Sentinel* was staffed by assimilationists and controlled by the government.

Kekki used network modeling and unpacks

this database approach to recreate the structure, various types of networks, and their changes in the incarcerated community. Historical “big data,” such as the War Relocation Authority’s Form 26, administered to all camp residents, enabled her to delve more deeply into inmates’ lives. She also accessed the “final roster,” the record of inmates’ movement from the camps and the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, too. Datasets from the National Archives and Records Administration yielded information about all Japanese Americans as they entered the camps, including education, occupation, and residence in Japan. Her network model of the camps’ 14,011 inmates revealed familial connections and the makeup of political, employment, and geospatial networks, leading to a multiplicity of networks, “containing 20,000 [actors] and 90,000 [connections], and an individual-to-individual network with more than 3,000,000 [connections].” Kekki’s “Methodological Appendix” outlines her research technique.

What do we learn from this approach to historical research? Foremost it provides multiple points of view. The incarceration experience was more varied and nuanced than previously acknowledged. Men and women brought their skills, talent, and work experience to camp life, enriching an existence bound by barbed wire. According to Kekki, “most individuals took charge of their own destinies.”

Networks among the inmates began with the first three hundred volunteers who helped complete the camp’s infrastructure. They participated in men’s sports clubs and some of the work places demanding physical labor. As the camp’s population reached capacity, the number of networks increased. One hundred and eighty-one institutions were established. These ranged from community-based councils, advisory boards, and education programs to employment at the camp and sports, religious, and social groups.

Power in a network, according to Kekki,

takes different forms. For instance, membership in a number of organizations does not reflect how influential an inmate may be. Power families’ connections within the political network were “limited and specialized,” she says; “few families had exceptional power.”

While women often participated in informal networks, the most connected women engaged in social activities besides their network presence working in classrooms, the hospital, and the mess hall.

Along with connectivity and administrative and political issues pertaining to all, dissension within the community is addressed. There was conflict between the Issei, first generation Japanese Americans, who were arrested after Pearl Harbor, and the Nesei, second generation Japanese Americans. Inmates bridled at the WRA’s power. Kekki cites its loyalty questionnaire as the “single most divisive action by [that authority] during incarceration.” Would young men serve in the military? Would they forswear any allegiance to Japan?

The Fair Play Committee had a large membership and appeared as its own community with no alliance with the WRA. It was considered “controversial” and “disloyal.” It is now viewed as heroic for defending the constitutional rights of the Japanese Americans incarcerated.

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