SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT AND RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY
San Jose, California

October 10, 2006

Appendix A:
Historic Context Statement

CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT
San Jose, California

Introduction
San Jose's Japantown neighborhood displays a mixture of low-rise residential and commercial buildings, with wide streets, mostly small lots, and train tracks running through it that are still in use today. Although it is located near downtown, the neighborhood was considered the edge of town for most of the 19th century. As such, it was home to some of San Jose's most marginalized immigrant populations, including its Chinese and Japanese bachelor communities. By the early 1890s, the physical development of the neighborhood seen today was approximately one-third established, centered mainly between North 3rd and 6th Streets. With the large influx of immigrants that occurred after the turn of the century, however, it took less than two decades for the remaining two-thirds to be divided into parcels and built up. Despite changes to large eastern sections of the neighborhood since that time, its fundamental form and character today remains faithful to its early 20th century manifestation. The area is known as "Japantown" because the cluster of Japanese businesses, and related social and cultural institutions, have sustained the area's Japanese American community. Other immigrant groups also settled in this area, however, and their presence merits recognition within the neighborhood's history.

Phase II of the Japantown Historic Context and Survey project established the Period of Significance for Japantown as c.1890 to 1967. It begins in the early 1890s, with the initial arrival of Japanese immigrants in the Santa Clara Valley. It stretches until 1967, the year that Norman Mineta was first elected to a political office in the City of San Jose. Mineta, a resident of San Jose's Japantown throughout his life, went on to become an influential politician, holding many notable offices including Mayor of San Jose, U.S. Congressman, U.S. Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Secretary of Transportation. For the purposes of this study, his election to public office is seen as a milestone for Japanese-Americans; a point that represents the introduction of that ethnic minority group into mainstream American society. This end date for the period of significance also encompasses such events as the repealing of the alien land laws in the late 1950s, which finally allowed Japanese Americans to own property and increased land ownership and real estate development in Japantown for a time thereafter. This progress is reflected in the prosperity of Japantown based businesses like the Nishiura Construction company, which was involved in a large number of construction and remodeling projects throughout Japantown in the 1950s and 60s.

The areas of significance in the history of Japantown have to do with the events that shaped the area's development and had an impact on the lives of its Japanese American residents. Initially, this was the agricultural boom in the Santa Clara Valley which brought so many Japanese immigrants to the area for employment and caused them to settle and establish a community. As part of this event, the shift from general farming practices to orchard and fruit cultivation can be considered an especially important turn of events, since it was an agricultural practice that was familiar to the Japanese and attracted them even more to the Santa Clara Valley. Other events, which will be discussed in this context statement, have all played roles in shaping the history of Japantown. Laws that were passed influenced the patterns of migration, which in turn influenced the patterns of family life, commerce and culture within Japantown. They also influenced how Japanese Americans were viewed by those of other ethnicities. The presence of other ethnic groups and the culture and industry that they brought to the Japantown neighborhood also represent historic events that shaped life in Japantown. Perhaps the most influential event, however, was the occurrence of World War II, which effectively interrupted life in Japantown and created a gap in its history. However history for the Japanese Americans still continued in the war time internment camps, impacting their histories and further influencing the development of their culture. Once they returned to San Jose's Japantown, the war years would strongly affect its further development, creating a different but stronger community; one of the few left to represent the story of Japanese American settlement and acculturation.

The Japanese American Experience in California

While numerous Japantowns arose in California in the first half of the twentieth century, San Jose's is one of the three most intact remaining communities, the other two being San Francisco and Los Angeles. Japanese immigration to California began as early as 1869, just after a change in the Japanese government resulted in a general improvement in relations with the West.[1] Initially, young Japanese men came to America with educational goals. Western ideas had garnered interest in Japan and they came with the intent of attending American schools and then returning to their home country.[2] However, in the late 1860s, Japan experienced economic and political shifts that fueled immigration with financial need, desire for employment, and escape from governmental and social pressures. The Meiji government was in power at that time and focused on the industrialization and modernization of Japan. Inflation and high taxes were the result, which hit the Japanese peasant class hardest. They immigrated to the United States in hopes of finding economic stability. Other Japanese who immigrated did so to escape a rigid social system in Japan. Many young men wanted the ability to move up in social ranking through hard work rather than family ties, or to make their fortunes when they had no hope of inheriting them at home. Similarly, young women who were some of the first to be educated by the progressive Meiji government reforms often married men who were immigrating in order to live in a country where their education would be more widely accepted and used, and where they would not be subject to the control of their husbands' families, as was traditional for a Japanese bride.[3] Like those who first came for education, many of these immigrants intended to return to Japan once they had earned enough money; however, many ended up establishing businesses that tied them to America and kept them from returning home.

---

[1] City of San Jose Commission on The Internment of Local Japanese Americans, *"…With Liberty and Justice for All.": The Story of San Jose's Japanese Community* (February 1985): 5.
[2] Japantown Task Force, *San Francisco's Japantown,* South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2005.
[3] Densho Digital Archives.

Transit time from Japan to the United States around the turn of the 20th century took approximately two weeks by steam ship, but the entire trip could last up to a month due to delays for obtaining visas and other paperwork. Most immigrants left Japan from Yokohama Harbor near Tokyo and those who arrived in the San Francisco Bay Area came through Angel Island immigration station. There they were examined for communicable diseases, for which they had been inoculated upon departing Japan, and other health problems. Visas and health clearances were granted before immigrants were allowed to travel on to their destinations.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 denied Chinese migration to the United States, but in 1886, the government legalized emigration for Japanese. Filling the voids left by lack of Chinese labor – primarily in lumber mills, railroads and canneries – the Japanese had even more opportunity for employment. The *City of Tokio* brought the first 944 official migrants from Japan to Hawaii in 1885.[4] After this, most early Japanese immigrants went to Hawaii looking for work or as part of organized labor programs. Some stayed there, while others continued on to the mainland. Those that did not come through Hawaii arrived from other countries or directly from Japan by way of West Coast ports like Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and San Pedro. By 1900, the largest populations of Japanese immigrants in this country were in the states of Hawaii (61,000), California (10,000), and Washington (5,600).[5]

San Francisco's Japantown, c.1910
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Almost all of the early Japanese immigrants were unmarried men. Many left their homes intending to make money for a short time and then return, a traditional practice in Japan called *dekasegi rodo* that before 1886 had referred mostly to temporary travel to cities from the countryside.[6] Many of these men came from prefectures where agriculture was the dominant industry. As such, these individuals looked for places to go where they could apply their experience to finding a job quickly. In California, those who disembarked in San Francisco and

[4] Japanese American National Museum. "Chronology of World War II Incarceration" from *Japanese National Museum Quarterly,* vol. 9, no. 3, Oct – Dec 1994.
[5] Harry H. L. Kitano, *Japanese-Americans—The Evolution of a Subculture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: n.p., 1969): 162, cited in *"…With Liberty and Justice for All."*, 6.
[6] David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita, *The Japanese American Experience* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IL: Indiana University Press, 1991): 11.

wanted farm work either headed northeast toward Sacramento or south toward the Santa Clara Valley. Often these men were transient, following the growing seasons for particular crops rather than settling in one place.[7] This led to the development of small communities beginning in the 1890s whose major function was to act as a temporary stop-over and jumping-off point for Japanese men on their way to their next farm job. San Jose originally began as this type of community, becoming larger and stronger than other similar communities over time in part because of the Santa Clara Valley's fertility.

Those Japanese entrepreneurs who established businesses to serve the migrant laborers were the first permanent residents of the Japantowns. Their presence created a foundation on which the communities grew. Often, familial connections would bring yet more immigrants from Japan to a specific geographical area in California. Because of this, certain prefectures, or *ken*, in Japan were more highly represented among the Japanese immigrant population than others. Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kumamoto, and Fukuoka were the most prominent origins of immigrant agricultural laborers.[8] Personal accounts relate that immigrants often settled in a particular area because a relative was already established there and would commonly help the newcomers get their start by sharing farm labor and earnings with them.[9] *Ken* origins also related to businesses and their patrons. For example Phase II research indicates that in San Jose's Japantown, the Nankai-ya boarding house was run consecutively by two families that hailed from the Wakayama prefecture and catered to boarders who were also from Wakayama.[10]

The transitory nature of the population changed after 1924, when a nation-wide law was passed summarily excluding Japanese men from coming to the United States. It was at this time that large numbers of women began to arrive. The "picture bride" system arranged marriages based mostly on the exchange of photographs between a Japanese man in America and a woman back in Japan. Often, these arrangements were orchestrated by the couple's families and once agreed upon, the groom would often return to Japan to fetch his bride or she would be sent to meet him in America after a wedding ceremony was held in Japan, the absentee bridegroom represented in a photograph. The term "picture bride" also came from the couple's use of photographs to identify each other on the arrival dock. It is noted that some Japanese women were disappointed when they finally met their new husbands, finding them to have been misrepresented by woefully out-of-date photographs.[11] Marriage was the catalyst for bringing many Japanese women to California and accelerated the formation of families in Japanese American communities. This, in turn, led to the development of family-oriented institutions as well as those intended to serve the Nisei, or second generation Japanese.

Initially Japanese immigrants did not meet with as much fear and hatred from white Californians as the Chinese had experienced. However, legislation beginning after the turn of the century made it clear that the Japanese were the exclusionists' next target. In 1905, Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War sparked fear of Japanese military power, while locally, the prosperity of Japanese communities in comparison to surrounding communities inspired resentment. A *San*

---

[7] Timothy J. Lukes and Gary Y. Okihiro, *Japanese Legacy: Farming and Community Life in California's Santa Clara Valley* (Cupertino, CA: California History Center, 1985): 21.
[8] Densho Digital Archives.
[9] Densho Digital Archives. Japanese American Museum of San Jose, oral history interviews.
[10] Ishikawa, Dr. Tokio, *San Jose Japantown 1910-1935* (guide map and notes), 1996.
[11] Densho Digital Archives. Japanese American Museum of San Jose, oral history interviews -

Francisco Chronicle headline, "The Japanese Invasion: The Problem of the Hour", began a litany of anti-Japanese journalism that started a widespread trend of discrimination that was further promoted by the founding of the Asiatic Exclusion League, led by prominent Caucasian labor leaders.[12] In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order ending migration of Japanese laborers from Hawaii and Mexico. In that same year, Japan and the United States signed a "Gentlemen's Agreement" in which Japan was to stop allowing emigration to the United States in return for an end to discrimination against Japanese already living here. In 1913, and again in 1920, the state passed Alien Land Laws limiting the right of Japanese immigrants to own property. In many cases, common citizens took it upon themselves to remove Japanese immigrants from their midst, threats and discrimination growing rapidly. In 1922, during the case of *Takao Ozawa v. United States,* the United States Supreme Court decided that Japanese were ineligible for American citizenship because they did not qualify as "free white persons" as defined in 1790.[13] It was a decision that would hold until 1952.

Like the Chinese before them, the Japanese were officially prohibited from immigrating to the United States in 1924 in a bill signed by Calvin Coolidge. Thusly, no further Japanese immigrants arrived in the U.S., however, those that were already settled continued to face discrimination and distrust. As World War II approached, this anti-Japanese sentiment grew to the point that in 1941, Michigan Representative John Dingell proposed incarcerating Japanese Americans in Hawaii, using them as hostages to ensure Japan's cooperation. The distrust resulted in FBI raids in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo and the seizure of membership lists for the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and other Japanese-affiliated organizations. Japanese-Americans insisted on their loyalty to the United States, however.[14]

Sacramento's Japantown, c. 1910
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

[12] Japanese American National Museum.
[13] One of the owners of the *Sacramento Bee* newspaper, V.S. McClatchy, was a major supporter of exclusionist policies and legislation. Editorials with titles such as "Alien Asiatics Should Not Be Admitted To Citizenship" (January 1920) were typical. (Wayne Maeda, review of *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act*, by Izumi Hirobe, *California Historian* [Stockton, CA: Conference of California Historical Societies, 2003]; Dixie Reid, "Boom & bust: People had money to spend, and in Sacramento they bought $6,000 houses in east Sacramento," *Sacramento Bee* [31 December 1999].).
[14] Japanese American National Museum.

The attack on Pearl Harbor came on December 7, 1941 and 1,291 Japanese-American men were immediately arrested and held under no formal charges.[15] Most were not released for the duration of the war. By February 19, 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, making it legal for authorities to remove people from an area without trials or hearings on the basis of "military necessity." The following Order 9102 established the War Relocation Authority and the first groups of Japanese American internees were soon transported to Manzanar relocation camp in March of 1942. The resulting forced internment of Japanese Americans devastated the supportive communities they had worked so hard to develop. Many Japanese Americans were given only days to prepare, hurriedly abandoning their homes and selling their businesses' stock at a loss. Some of these properties stood vacant through the war, while non-Japanese moved into others.

After the war, when Japanese American evacuees were released from internment camps, they often discovered that the communities they had left were no longer available to them. Despite these problems, three *Nihonmachi* (Japantowns) managed to be re-established after the war: San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose. Of these, only San Jose provided a direct link to the agricultural heritage that had been central to Japanese American experience in the prewar period.

According to census figures, by 1950 the number of Japanese Americans living in California had decreased approximately 10% from its pre-war levels. With about 36,000 people both before and after the war, Los Angeles County had by far the largest concentration of Japanese Americans in the state; other counties, such as San Francisco, Alameda, Fresno, Sacramento, and Santa Clara had no more than 6,000 each. However, during the 1950s, the Japanese American population in California doubled. In Los Angeles County, the 1960 census recorded about 77,000 Japanese Americans. About 10,500 Japanese Americans lived in Santa Clara by the end of the decade. A high post-war birth rate among Nisei and the return of more Japanese American evacuees to California are considered the two major factors that caused the population numbers to rise.[16] Recruitment of educated Japanese Americans to work in the emerging high technology industry and the acceptance of Japanese Americans into colleges such as San Jose State University may have also contributed to this increase.

The 1950s also saw several important Japanese American political milestones. In 1952, the Senate and the House overrode President Truman's veto of the McCarran Bill, thus allowing immigration from Japan to resume after being outlawed for nearly thirty years. It also allowed for citizenship through naturalization for the Japanese American Issei. In California, one of the most important events was the repealing of the alien land laws in 1956, which then allowed Japanese Americans to own property. Nationwide, it was in 1959 that the first Japanese American was elected to the United States Congress (Daniel K. Inouye, Hawaii). San Jose's own Japantown resident, Norman Mineta, was also elected into political office in 1967, serving on San Jose's City Council. He later served as San Jose's Mayor, then as a U.S. Congressman. As U.S.

---

[15] Japanese American National Museum.

[16] Isami Arifuku Waugh, Alex Yamato, and Raymond Y. Okamura, "A History of Japanese Americans in California: Patterns of Settlement and Occupational Characteristics," in *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California* (Sacramento, CA: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, 1988): [online].

Secretary of Commerce he was the first Asian American to hold a post in a presidential cabinet. He has also been the longest-serving U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

During the 1960s and 70s, so-called blighted areas in large cities were dramatically altered by urban renewal projects. For the Japanese American cultural landscapes in San Francisco and Los Angeles, this era brought the construction of outdoor shopping plazas featuring modernized Japanese architectural forms that today function as the commercial centers for these communities. In both instances, however, these developments came at a price: the removal of large culturally important sections of older homes and businesses that had played a role in the original formation of the communities. Urban renewal of this sort did not affect San Jose. Rather, the Japanese business district there continued to function in the same general location and with the same general manner as it had in earlier times.

With few exceptions, a striking feature of all three *Nihonmachi* is the almost complete lack of original Japanese forms, construction methods, or architectural details in the communities' buildings. Indeed, visitors to any of these neighborhoods see very little physical manifestation of an otherwise strong cultural identity. Dr. Gail Dubrow, an architectural and urban historian specializing in Japanese American heritage, believes that this phenomenon resulted from the decades of anti-Japanese discrimination that led immigrants to minimize expressions of ethnic differences and mask property ownership in Japanese American communities.[17] Rather than wanting to broadcast their ethnicity, Dubrow contends that as a group they knew it was in their best interest to minimize cultural differences to the extent it was possible, to avoid fueling the exclusionists' perception that Japanese immigrants were inassimilable aliens who should be refused citizenship rights. As a result the commercial architecture blends seamlessly into its surroundings, punctuated only by the stylized Japanese Modern urban renewal projects in San Francisco and Los Angeles and a scattering of traditionally designed Buddhist temples. As such, the value of these places springs not from their architectural distinction but from their function as centers of cultural continuity.

Phase II research discovered that despite the American stylistic aesthetics of Japantown buildings, they were not built by Caucasian contractors, but more commonly by builders from the Japanese American community. Formally trained architects were uncommon in the building of Japantown and contractors apparently both designed and built most structures. One exception is the San Jose Buddhist Church, which was designed by architect George Shimamoto. After the war, Shimamoto became a senior architect with the firm Gruzen & Partners in New York, from 1950 to1970, and designed a house for Nelson Rockefeller as well as a tea house and garden, and Japanese Society Museum for other members of the Rockefeller family. Shimamoto's Buddhist Temple in San Jose's Japantown was constructed by the Nishiura Brothers, who themselves became prominent in the industry.

---

[17] Gail Dubrow, "The Nail That Sticks Up Gets Hit: The Architecture of Japanese American Identity in the Urban Environment, 1884-1942." Invited contribution to *Nikkei (Dis)Appearances: Twentieth Century Japanese American and Japanese Canadian History in the Pacific Northwest*, edited by Louis Fiset and Gail Nomura (Seattle: University of Washington Press, in press).; and Gail Dubrow, "Deru Kugi Wa Utareru or The Nail That Sticks Up Gets Hit: The Architecture of Japanese American Identity, 1885-1942. The Rural Environment." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 19:4 (Winter 2002): 319-333.

Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, 2004
Photo by Carey & Co., Inc.

The Nishiura Brothers and their sons were probably the most prevalent builders in Japantown, with modest residences as well as prominent community structures to their names. The Nishiura brothers, Shinzaburo and Gentaro, were originally from the Mie prefecture in Japan. They were carpenters and builders, responsible for such prestigious projects as the Japanese Pavillion at San Francisco's 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition. They built many Buddhist temples in California before World War II, expressing their Buddhist faith through their carpentry skills. The San Jose Buddhist Temple was constructed by the brothers in 1937. They were also known to have carved an elaborate Buddhist altar, or Butsudan, for use in worship at the Heart Mountain internment camp. In 1910, the brothers resided in a boarding house on N. 6th Street; at that time they were both listed as carpenters. The Nishiura name continues to be associated with construction in Japantown through the late 1950s, as the second generation of the family carried on the business. Both Shinzaburo and Gentaro's sons, Harry and George respectively, are listed as contractors for buildings in the neighborhood, including multiple houses and commercial buildings. For a time, between 1951 and 1966, the Nishiura Construction Company worked out of a shop at 565 N. 6th Street where Soko Hardware is located today. James Sakaguchi and Jimmi Yamaichi are other Japanese American names that can be found on multiple building permits for Japantown properties, mostly during the resettlement era.

In some cases, builders of other ethnic minorities were hired by Japanese American parties as well. The names Vincent J. Sunzeri and Vito Rotondo appear on a few permits and hint at the presence of the Italian-American population that was prevalent in the area in and around Japantown. Similarly, George Veteran, another local builder, was Portuguese. Occasionally, Caucasian contractors or construction companies were hired to build in Japantown, but for the most part, the Japanese American community appeared to favor its own members or members of other ethnic minorities to build its buildings.

This lack of Japanese style buildings means that the residents and business owners of Japantown lived and worked in buildings of American design. In some cases these buildings were purchased from Caucasian owners, and thus have an early history not related to the Japanese American community. Buildings that fall into this category are typically the older homes found in

Japantown; those which were constructed during the early settlement period from around the turn of the 20th Century through the 1920s. The initial influx of Japanese into San Jose was due to the availability of agricultural labor and resulted in a largely migrant populace that lived in boarding houses and other temporary lodgings. Those people who were not involved in agriculture tended to own those boarding houses and other business establishments, which often provided housing on the premises. It was not until the Japanese population became more permanent and less transitory – once picture brides began to arrive in the United States around 1924 and the formerly bachelor community began to establish families – that individual homes became a more prevalent aspect of the Japantown neighborhood.

During World War II, when the Japanese American community was largely incarcerated, many buildings in Japantown were owned or occupied by other ethnic minorities or occasionally Caucasian parties. The area was still seemingly viewed as an ethnic enclave and an undesirable area for Caucasians though. Despite the changes in ownership and occupancy, construction and remodeling did not happen frequently during the war years, probably due to shortages in building supplies and economic issues. Thus, the Japantown environment remained relatively unaltered through the war.

After World War II, however, the streetscapes of San Jose's Japantown experienced another evolution. Building permit records for properties throughout the neighborhood that were found during research for Phase II show a prevalence of new construction and remodeling projects through the late 1940s and into the 1950s and 60s. It is often difficult to identify the contractors responsible for such remodels, though many times contractors who were active before the war returned to business afterwards. The further examination of building permits and consultation with Japantown residents could shed more light on this trend. Due to these remodels, Japantown took on a more modern appearance. Though some old, early settlement buildings still lay beneath extensive cosmetic changes, they and the new buildings were designed in the popular mid-century style of the time. Though often considered modern, they have gained their own aesthetic appeal that conveys their mid-century vintage and alludes to the post-war period of resettlement and the "rebirth" of Japantown.

Fruit Farming in the Santa Clara Valley

While San Francisco and Los Angeles have historically been large and diverse urban centers, San Jose before the mid-20th century was essentially a small town that served one main function– to support farming in nearby areas. Newcomers to California wanting to establish themselves in dense urban centers chose either San Francisco or Los Angeles, while those intending to work in the state's farming industry decided among the various agricultural centers, including the Santa Clara Valley, the Central Valley, and the Vaca Valley/Sacramento delta area east of San Francisco.[18] For Santa Clara Valley, San Jose acted as a "gateway" through which new arrivals found work opportunities as well as food, housing, and support services they needed between jobs. This desire for agricultural work often stemmed from farming occupations that the immigrants had participated in back in Japan. Most were of the peasant class to which farming was an inherent occupation and so they pursued similar work in America. Fruit cultivation was a popular undertaking in Japan and it is common to hear of Japanese American farm laborers

[18] Lukes and Okihiro, 21.

working in orchards, growing crops like peaches, plums, grapes and cherries.[19] Employment in canneries, packing such fruits was also typical.

So connected is the growth of San Jose with the development of the surrounding landscape that they are best considered in relation to one another. This is particularly true when considering the history of Japanese Americans in the area, who came to the Santa Clara County during the fruit farming boom there.

Organized fruit farming in the Santa Clara Valley dates to the middle of the 19th century. Before this time missions and landowning Spanish Californians kept individual farms to provide mainly for their own needs, giving the remainder of their property over to cattle grazing. It was not until the Americans took control that the commercial potential of this "long-neglected or overlooked opportunity" was realized.[20] Described by Clyde Arbuckle as "competitive from the start," Americans brought in new seeds, imported nursery stock, and accumulated land for the purpose of establishing commercial farms.[21] The growth of organized agricultural production in Santa Clara Valley also occurred in large part as a response to the influx of Gold Rush settlers who needed food and were particularly eager for the fruit that grew in and around San Jose. During the 1860s, when gold became less abundant, some miners came to the Santa Clara Valley having heard about farming's profitability and to attempt it themselves. Although a few undertook growing grain and raising cattle, so many orchards were established that by 1868 the market was overwhelmed with apples, peaches, and pears.[22] This, along with J.Q.A. Ballou's success at drying fruit in 1867, the completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, and Dr. James Dawson's canning experiments in 1871 encouraged innovation, diversification, and expansion of the agriculture in Santa Clara Valley.[23] The following industry description, published by Thompson & West in their 1876 *Historical atlas map of Santa Clara County, California*, conveys the overall sense of optimism and enthusiasm of the period:

> The long dry season from April to November is especially favorable to the maturing of crops of all kinds. It causes the death of all insects and vermin, so destructive to fruit and grain in counties where the summer months are interspersed with frequent showers. It affords the farmer ample time to harvest without fear of injury from rain. It is this peculiarity also which, by thoroughly ripening the grain, gives to Californian wheat its world-wide reputation for excellence, and which causes that perfection in California fruit which has excited the admiration of people in less favored States…
>
> Fruit culture was one of the earliest industries engaged in in this County…The quality of the fruit, however, was very inferior; and although large quantities were grown, it was comparatively worthless. But within the last fifteen or twenty years this has been changed. The old and worthless trees have either been cut down or rooted up, orchards of superior quality have taken their place, until now

[19] Densho Digital Archives. Japanese American Museum of San Jose, oral history interviews.
[20] Clyde Arbuckle, *History of San Jose* (San Jose, CA: South & McKay Printing Co., 1986): 153.
[21] Arbuckle, 153.
[22] Arbuckle, 155.
[23] Arbuckle, 155; Lukes and Okihiro, 15.

> this interest is one of the most valuable in the County, yielding an immense revenue…
>
> …Great as is the amount of fruit of various kinds now raised in the County, it seems that this industry is only in its infancy. There are thousands of acres of unoccupied land in the foothills and mountains specially adapted for this purpose, and the value of which for fruit growing has just begun to be realized.[24]

Publications of this sort, in addition to simply reporting on the area's agricultural and financial successes, also likely contributed to the establishment of new farms and the influx of new residents. During the last two decades of the 19th century Santa Clara County experienced an exponential jump in the number of small farms: in 1880 the number was approximately 700, while in 1900 it had grown to over 3,000.[25]

Phase II research found that at the beginning of the 20th century, growth in the number of farms probably had something to do with the establishment of farm clusters by Japanese Americans. Japanese American involvement with agriculture in the Santa Clara Valley had begun as migrant labor, working farms that were owned by Caucasian parties on a seasonal basis and returning to Japantown between jobs. Eventually, however, small Japanese American farming communities began to develop, creating small sub-settlements outside of Japantown. In contrast to the existing bachelor community in town, the farm clusters were often representative of family groupings that had established themselves to farm permanently in a single location. Family farms also meant that women were more readily involved in the agricultural labor. For the most part, these families obtained their land prior to the passing of the first Alien Land Law in 1913, which effectively prohibited non-citizens, particularly those of Japanese affiliation, from owning property. Even before the Land Law, however, most Japanese Americans were not readily able to purchase or own land. Their techniques for obtaining tenancy, however, were also effective ways of holding property when it was not permitted for them to legally do so. Thus, most of these farm clusters were the result of sharecropping arrangements made with Caucasian land owners, often after relationships were established during seasonal employment. In this way, Japanese American farmers could live on and work a farm that was essentially leased from the owner through the sharing of crop production. In addition, sometimes large groups of Japanese American farm workers would come together to form partnerships under company names. With joined financial resources they would then lease land from a Caucasian property owner and establish a farm on it. These partnerships often formed between men who originated from the same prefectures back in Japan and therefore had similar experience with certain types of crops and farming methods.[26] As well as rent, the landowner would often also charge royalties for the use of his name; another sign that the business of a farm under Japanese ownership or name would have been met with discrimination. Japanese American farmers sometimes tried to get around this problem through the use of their children's names; the Nisei often being given more American sounding names.

Many of these farm clusters sprang up in the Santa Clara Valley. The Trimble Road area was an especially popular location, being the earliest and largest settlement, and was in close proximity

---

[24] Thompson & West, *Historical atlas map of Santa Clara County, California* (San Francisco: Thompson & West, 1876): 12.
[25] Lukes and Okihiro, 15.
[26] Lukes and Okihiro, 29-33.

to San Jose's Japantown, yet was still rural enough to provide for agricultural activities. Thirty families farmed in this area. The Sakauye farm was a prominent operation in Trimble Road cluster, consisting of a 20 acre farm purchased by Yuwakichi Sakauye in 1907 with profits he had made in strawberry sharecropping. Also close to Japantown were the Arakai farm on Hostetter Road and the Ando farm on Gish Road. Other farm clusters were farther afield in places like Alviso, Agnew, Berryessa and Milpitas. Much of the time the farmers chose to grow fruit crops, with which they were most familiar in Japan. As a result, crops like strawberries, pears, prunes and apricots were prevalent.[27] It was also common practice for farmers to try to maximize the production of their land by plowing between their orchard rows and planting vegetable crops like peppers, spinach, beans and radishes. This variety guarded against losses due to crop failure and the different harvest times for each crop ensured plenty of work throughout the year. Farmers would sometimes supplement their farm labor with winter employment in the canneries as well. Truck farming became another profitable outlet for many farmers who would pack their produce into crates and have it transported to market or the canneries by independent truckers. Japanese American farmers became so well-established through these practices that around the 1920s they began employing members of other ethnic minorities, particularly Filipino and Mexican, to work their farms.[28]

Agriculture in the "Valley of Heart's Delight," as the area came to be known in the early 20th century, continued to grow until reaching its zenith in the 1920s and early 30s. The number of farms was highest in 1925 (about 7,000), after which it began to decline. With the exception of apples and peaches, which had already lost some of their attractiveness, acreage devoted to most fruits increased until about 1932. By the time World War II began, though, acreages across the board had fallen. Some had been replaced by row crops, but in general agriculture had started to loose its appeal.[29] This doubtless occurred in part as a result of the overall economic distress of Great Depression, but it was also at this time that new high-technology research and development activities started to show profitability. This trend continued after the war, amplified by the establishment of new high-technology corporate campuses and the increasingly open admissions policies at San Jose State University. The high-technology era continues today, with the term "Silicon Valley" having gained currency as the most popular moniker for San Jose and its environs.

Throughout its history, the agriculture industry in Santa Clara Valley benefited from the steady availability of a highly capable and often inexpensive foreign labor force.[30] As the following sections discuss, the Japanese were among a number of immigrant groups that established themselves in San Jose to participate in the area's growing prosperity.

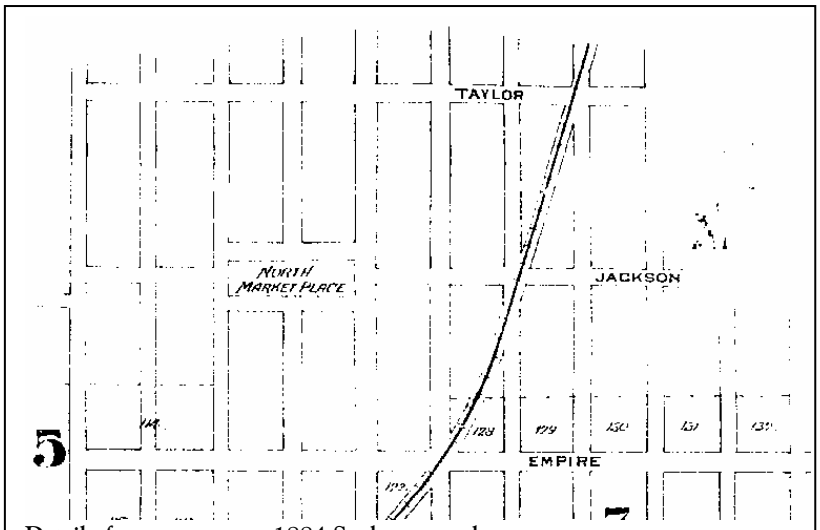
San Jose Japantown area: pre-1890s

During the 19th century, like today, the more San Jose grew the more the settlements at its outer edges came to be integrated into the larger city as fully fledged neighborhoods. Such is the history of pre-1890s Japantown, which began on the margins of the original 1850 City of San Jose boundaries but was engulfed by an expanding development radius by the end of the century. This is reflected in the evolution of Sanborn map coverage of the city before 1900: East Taylor

[27] Japanese American Museum of San Jose. Exhibit materials.
[28] Lukes and Okihiro.
[29] Arbuckle, 163.
[30] Lukes and Okihiro, 9-11 & 15-16.

Street was included as the northernmost edge on an 1884 Sanborn map but the next map, drawn only seven years later in 1891, encompassed all of the survey area. It should be noted that while the 1884 map does not provide a detailed look at development within the survey area, cutting through the blocks between East Empire Street and the top of the map are shown a major set of railroad tracks, an important impetus for San Jose's overall development and the focus of large canning factories in later decades. [31] Although as the following text will show the neighborhood experienced a brief moment in the late 19th century when there were almost no businesses, the early 20th century saw an explosive commercial growth along this same stretch of East Jackson Street.

Before the Japanese arrived in San Jose in the early 1890s, Italians, African Americans, and Chinese constituted the earliest and largest ethnic populations to settle within the boundaries of the Japantown study area. The Italians arrived initially in 1849. Most were from relatively wealthy Northern Italian families, hoping to escape their homeland's political turmoil, related to widespread revolts and the attempted unification of Italy, by establishing themselves permanently in the United States. They came to San Jose because the climate was very similar to their own and soon became heavily involved in the agriculture industry. Those who were not farmers in the valley had businesses in San Jose catering to the farming community's needs. Most early Italians lived near St. James Square, but also settled throughout the west half of the city. These Italian immigrants may have been among the first residents in the survey area. [32]



Detail of survey area on 1884 Sanborn map key

Some of the earliest African American residents of San Jose settled in the area around 1849. They may have come to the area in connection with the Gold Rush, but the details of their

[31] The 1884 Sanborn map also indicates an area called "North Marketplace," encompassing East Jackson Street between North 3rd and North 5th Streets. The Thompson & West map of San Jose included with in their 1876 Santa Clara County atlas leaves the same sections of East Jackson Street open (rather than assigning them lot numbers) but it does not provide information as to why this is the case. Attempts to uncover more data regarding the "North Marketplace" were unsuccessful.

[32] John DeVincenzi, local Italian American historian, personal communication with the authors, 21 May 2004

arrival and slave status is unclear. It may be that they were brought as slaves to work in the gold mines; however, in 1849 California's first state constitution was drafted and established that slavery was illegal. When California was admitted to the Union in September of 1850, it was a state free of slavery. Despite this, African Americans still lacked many civil rights, particularly as they related to the ability to take legal action against whites, namely their former owners. They were widely discriminated against and marginalized. Eight African Americans came to Santa Clara County, five men and three women, and settled northeast of the center of town; a location that was seen as the undesirable outskirts of town. Toward the end of the century, as more African Americans arrived in the area, some moved closer to the Chinese settlement of Heinlenville to rent rooms in the Chinese-run boarding houses or because it was one of the only areas of San Jose where they could purchase property. The largest concentration of African Americans was located between the railroad tracks and the beginning of farmed property, around North 17th Street. This area, today referred to as the Northside neighborhood, overlaps with the east side of the Japantown neighborhood.[33]

Though beginning in the late 1850s, Chinese settlement in Santa Clara County peaked around 1890.[34] They came to the area at first to get away from persecution in mining towns and to work on local railroad construction or land clearing projects. Their ability to do jobs that others did not want and at hourly wages that others would not accept made the Chinese an attractive farm worker pool. This was particularly true when orchards became popular in the 1860s and 70s, since picking fruit was a time- and labor-intensive undertaking. Anti-Chinese policies and activities during the late 19th century discouraged them from settling in the valley permanently and by the early 20th century their numbers had dropped considerably.[35]

Unlike the Italians, who came to the United States as intact families, restrictive immigration policies led to a bachelor society for Chinese immigrants to America, including those who came to Santa Clara County. This, combined with the discrimination the Chinese encountered and the opportunistic attitudes of a few local entrepreneurs, resulted in a settlement pattern in San Jose that differed dramatically from that of the Italian experience. Rather than living throughout the city as an integrated part of the community, several groups of Chinese men were concentrated together in areas that provided the commercial services needed to sustain daily life. Each enclave owed its continued subsistence to wealthy San Jose businessmen, either as their collective landlord and/or primary employer.[36]

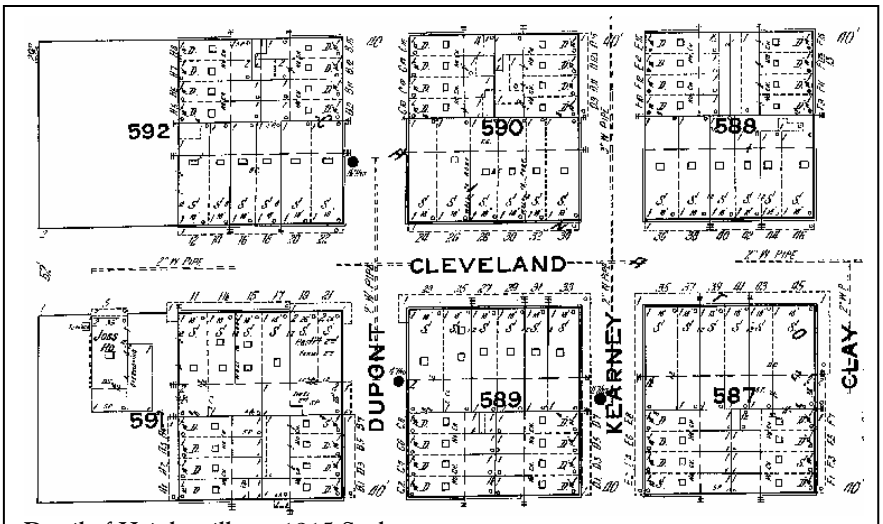
Heinlenville

The most enduring of San Jose's Chinatowns was located within the boundaries of today's Japantown neighborhood, on the north half of the block bordered by North 6th and 7th Streets to the west and east and East Taylor and Jackson Streets to the north and south. This community was constructed in 1887, after an earlier Chinese settlement in downtown San Jose was the

---

[33] Joyce Ellington, African American community leader, interview, 22 July 2004; Dr. Harriet Arnold, local historian, interview, 22 July 2004.
[34] Lukes and Okihiro, 19.
[35] Lukes and Okihiro, 12-15, 19.
[36] Donna M. Garaventa, Sondra A. Jarvis, and Melody E. Tannam, *Cultural Resources Assessment for the Jackson-Taylor Residential Strategy EIR, City of San Jose, Santa Clara County, California* (San Leandro, CA: Basin Research Associates, Inc., 1991): 13.

victim of a suspicious case of arson. The property owner, German immigrant John Heinlen, also served as the developer, earning it the name "Heinlenville."[37]



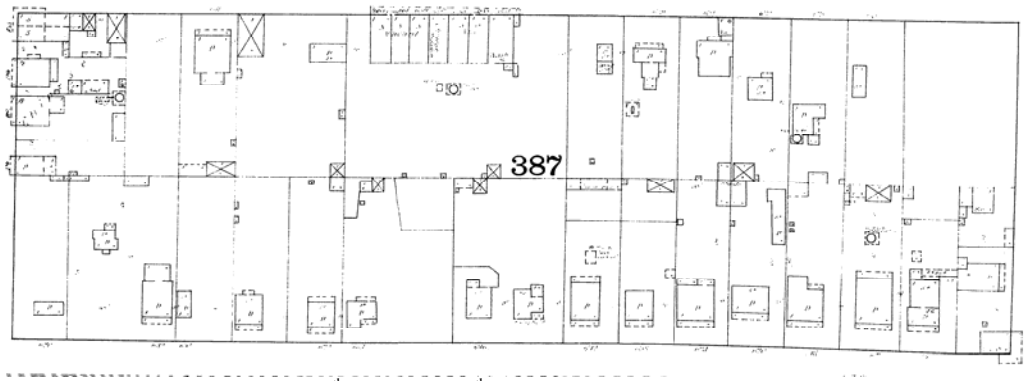
Detail of Heinlenville on 1915 Sanborn map

The entire project was designed by Heinlen's friend Theodore Lenzen (1863-1912), the well-respected German American architect who was at that time also designing San Jose's city hall building. Lenzen's design consisted of a series of narrow streets dividing the half-block area into six segments, each with a large one- or two-story building housing a mixture of residential units and narrow commercial spaces.[38] Connie Young Yu, historian of San Jose's Chinese American past, has described the development as having "fine looking stores with good doors and windows just like other business areas of San Jose" and "solid wooden boardwalks."[39] The construction of this permanent Chinese community caused so much anti-Chinese consternation in San Jose that an eight-foot-high wood fence had to be placed around the community; not to confine the Chinese residents, but to protect them from anti-Chinese violence.[40]

Additional buildings in the vicinity supported the Chinese community, which relied at first on commercial enterprises in lieu of the domestic labor built in to marriage and family life and, later, on the services needed to support a family-oriented community. To the north, near Taylor Street, stood the Ng Shing Gung, a two-story brick temple structure built in 1888. This building housed, among other things, a Chinese school.[41] Just south of the development and across North 7th Street sat one-story bathhouses. Across North 6th Street to the west was a one-story Chinese theater building. [42]

---

[37] Jimi Yamaichi, former general contractor and life-long San Jose resident, personal communication with the author, 20 April 2004.
[38] Sanborn Fire Insurance Company 1891, vol. 1, map # 2.
[39] Connie Young Yu, *Chinatown, San Jose, USA* (San Jose, CA: San Jose Historical Museum, 1991): 40.
[40] Yu, viii & 41; Ralph Schneider, "The San Jose Joss House," in *Chinese Argonauts: An Anthology of the Chinese Contributions to the Historical Development of Santa Clara County*, ed. Gloria Sun Hom (Los Altos, CA: Foothill Community College, 1971): 88.
[41] Yu, viii.
[42] Sanborn Fire Insurance Company 1891, vol. 1, maps # 2 & 3.



Detail of block between North 4th and North 5th Streets between East Taylor and East Jackson Streets on 1915 Sanborn map

The long-lot-with-narrow-frontage development pattern began to appear throughout the area around Heinlenville at this time. These parcels, approximately 25'x100' in dimension, originated in part from the Spanish-American *vara* measurement system and had became the widely accepted standard layout as early as 1860.[43] For California towns like San Jose, which were not urban enough to use every square foot but not rural enough for large acreages, dividing blocks in this way gave each parcel room for one free-standing home, a rear yard, and a few small outbuildings. Each family had some space and autonomy from the surrounding buildings, but there were still a sufficiently high number of structures per block to allow for the possible formation of a cohesive neighborhood in the future. By the early 1890s, the two blocks between North 4th and 5th Streets to the west and east and East Taylor and Empire Streets to the north and south were almost entirely developed along the long-lot-with-narrow-frontage development pattern. Several other blocks, such as those bounded by North 2nd and 4th Streets on the west and east and East Taylor and Jackson Streets to the north and south, were already partially built up as well.

With the exception of the Heinlenville community and its satellite buildings, practically all the buildings located within the survey area in the early 1890s appear to have been residential. East Jackson Street, along which today's business district sits, consisted at this time of mostly empty lots or homes that faced onto the numbered streets running north-south. The same can be said for East Taylor Street, where there can now be found a number of businesses. This said, the genesis of East Jackson Street and East Taylor Street as commercial-oriented zones had occurred by the early 1890s. At the corner of North 6th and East Jackson Streets, a two-story building contained a bathhouse and several dormitory-style units. A seven-storefront structure located mid-way along North 5th Street between East Taylor and East Jackson Streets also featured a bathhouse, as well as an establishment labeled "Chinese Mission" on early maps of the area. Finally, a Chinese-owned compound at the corner of North 5th and East Taylor Streets featured a variety of stores and outbuildings.

[43] Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986): 47; Christopher J. Duerksen and James Van Hemert, *True West: Authentic Development Patterns for Small Towns and Rural Areas* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2003): 22.

San Jose Japantown: Establishment and Growth, 1890s-1941

Much of Japantown's current physical organization had its beginnings in the first decades of the 20th century when a Japanese business district grew up along East Jackson Street around North 6th Street, and the long, narrow residential lots filled with the homes of a multi-ethnic population. However, the pre-1941 area contained two distinct features that are no longer present: the isolated Heinlenville enclave, which survived until 1931; and a series of very large canneries east of the railroad tracks, which were not demolished until around the turn of the 20th century.

A Japanese business district developed in the center of this neighborhood at very rapid rate, paralleling the expansion of agricultural production during this period. Indeed, within two decades of the arrival of the first Japanese in San Jose in the early 1890s, an entire network of boarding houses, bathhouses, restaurants, and stores had materialized. Turn-of-the-century census data for Santa Clara County documents the Japanese community's rapid growth in the county. In 1890, 27 Japanese were recorded living in the county. Ten years later, that number had increased to 284. One decade after that, in 1910, the census data leapt to over 8 times the 1900 figure, reaching 2,299.[44] All of the Japanese who came to Santa Clara County during this dramatic 8500% increase in their population required immediate food, shelter, and employment—and most found it at the corner of North 6th and East Jackson Streets in San Jose.

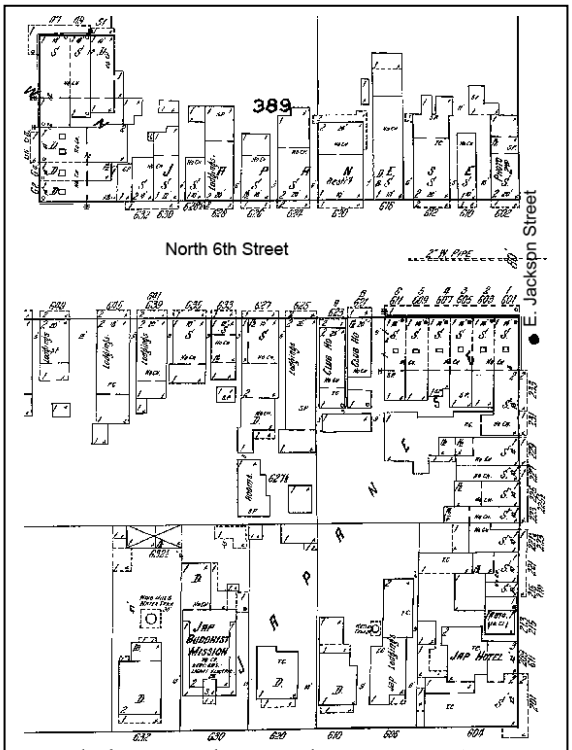
It is no coincidence that the center of the Japanese business district developed near San Jose's largest Chinese settlement. The Heinlenville area offered a number of advantages to arriving Japanese bachelors, not the least of which were the restaurants, bars, and gambling establishments that were run and/or frequented by the Chinese and available to them without much fear of discrimination.

As word spread that the area near Heinlenville in San Jose was the place for newly arrived Japanese immigrants to find the services they needed and wanted, new buildings were constructed and a Japanese business district emerged. By the mid-1910s, the area contained at least 10 boardinghouses and three bathhouses as well as everything from candy stores to bicycle repair shops.[45] Among the specifically Japanese-oriented businesses were Iida Sake Brewery, located on North 5th Street, and Nomitsu Tofu, located on North 6th Street. As the area developed, boarding house managers assumed the role of middlemen in finding work in the valley for the Japanese who stayed there. Men lived on the farms while they worked, and then returned to the boardinghouse in the interim between jobs, with this pattern often following growing seasons. Life at the boardinghouses and on the farms was unpleasant, but some who lived through this time also remember it as an era of energetic fellowship:

> [The boardinghouses] brought us by horse carriage to the place to work, and we each were given one blanket. Our living conditions were miserable at the time. We slept next to a horse stable on our blankets and some straw…Japantown was so lively in 1912. Everyone only had horses and bicycles. Many Japanese lived on Sixth Street between Jackson and Taylor. Most of the men were single, and they played around whenever they had some money. The main entertainment was billiards and *hanafuda* [a Japanese card game]…the first floor of each [boardinghouse] had a billiard parlor. There were many shops…and three large

[44] Lukes and Okihiro, 19.
[45] Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1915, vol. 1, map # 43; Lukes and Okihiro, 22-23.

bars…There were many [Japanese-style restaurants] where people drank and had parties…[46]



Detail of Japanese business district on 1915

While many of the lodging houses, bars, and restaurants were located along North 6th Street between East Jackson and East Taylor Streets, immediately adjacent to Heinlenville, a significant number of shops and boardinghouses also extended west along East Jackson Street to North 4th Street. The north side of this portion of East Jackson Street was particularly dense with the types of businesses that served working men, with the beginnings of a parallel development along the south side of East Jackson Street near the corner with North 5th Street. Although at the time somewhat secondary to the main North 6th Street area, the closure and/or demolition of most of the North 6th Street buildings later in the 20th century caused the focus of the community to shift to East Jackson Street as the commercial core that it is today.

Phase II research explored the fact that in addition to these businesses, some services arose to meet the emerging needs of both working men and families in the Japanese immigrant community. Medical treatment was available at Kuwabara Hospital, built in 1910, where Japantown residents could find doctors that spoke Japanese and understood their cultural background. The hospital was founded by the Kumamoto Kenjinkai Association, which brought Dr. Taisuke Kuwabara from Japan specifically to fill the post of head doctor. The hospital operated under this auspice until 1933, when the presiding doctor at that time, Hisao Matsukuma, returned to Japan. The building continued to house medical services under the

[46] Steven Misawa, ed., "Mr. Masuo Akizuki," in *Beginnings: Japanese Americans in San Jose* (San Jose, CA: Japanese American Community Senior Service, 1981): 12 and 14.

ownership of the San Jose Japanese Association though, with Dr. Tokio Ishikawa presiding over a practice on the first floor and Mrs. Teranishi running a midwifery on the second floor.[47]

Preferences of Issei women tended toward the use of midwives rather than hospitals. In connection with the operation of Kuwabara Hospital, two midwives, Mito Hori (known as Hori-san) and Mrs. Seki, operated a separate midwifery located across 5th Street. Few Neissei children were born in hospitals and so this facility played an important role in the growth of the Japantown population. The midwives were assisted when necessary by the doctors from Kuwabara hospital, but were primarily self-sufficient, living at the midwifery with their families and caring for the four to five women who commonly took up residence at the midwifery in the weeks leading up to their labor. From 1920 to 1940, a dentist office was also located in the front room of the midwifery.[48]

Funeral party in front of Old Japanese Buddhist Temple, c.1930
Courtesy of History San Jose

Religious and spiritual fulfillment was another requirement for the Japantown community. Along North 5th Street stood two religious establishments, a Methodist church south of East Jackson Street and a Buddhist mission north of East Jackson Street, both of which had begun in those locations in the early part of the 20th century. The Methodist church was built in 1913 for a Japanese congregation that had been in existence since 1895 and was lead by Pastor Koichi Matsuoka. The Buddhist church in San Jose was established in 1902 and originally congregated in the Hongwanji temple, later known as the Independent Buddhist Mission. A second Buddhist mission, created in 1911 by a schism in the congregation, was housed in a building on North 6th Street near of East Empire Street. The two congregations were reunited in 1917 under the leadership of Reverend Manjo Ichimura and was then formally called the Buddhist Church of San Jose. The temple on 6th Street became a Japanese language school. The current Buddhist

[47] Japanese American Citizens League. "History of Issei Memorial Building", www.sanjosejacl.org/IMBhistory.html
[48] National Park Service. "Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California."

Temple on 5th Street, built in traditional Japanese style, was designed by architect George Shimamoto and constructed by the Nishura Brothers in 1937. The building was officially dedicated in 1940, after shrines and sacred objects were received from Japan.[49]
For recreation, the Japanese American community enjoyed theater. Originally, a theater existed on North 5th Street, but it burned around 1906 and Okida Hall, located near the southeast corner of the intersection of North 6th and East Jackson Streets, replaced it. Japanese plays called *Shibai* were performed there, as well as dramatic performances of historical tales called *Naniwa-bushi*, poetry recitations, and epic singing, known as *Utai*. Later, Japanese vaudeville acts, acrobats, magicians and other entertainers were more common, and then Japanese films became popular. At first, silent films with live narration were featured and later talking movies came into vogue. Surrounded by American society, this theater was one of the few places where Japantown residents could go to experience Japanese pop-culture.[50]

Also enjoyed, were sports like baseball and sumo wrestling, which were held at a dual-purpose field across North 6th Street. Sumo was a traditional Japanese sport that attracted large crowds in Japantown. Tournaments often featured visiting wrestlers from around California. Japantown's own competitor was Kazu Dobashi, the second son of the Dobashi Market family. At one time, he was the reigning sumo champion of California.

Baseball, typically viewed as an American sport, was readily adopted by Japanese Americans. San Jose's Japantown had its own team, known first as the Asahi (meaning "morning sun") and after World War II as the Zebras. The original team, formed sometime between 1903 and 1915, consisted primarily of young Issei men who had learned to play baseball in Japan. This team eventually dissolved, but was reestablished in 1917, this time consisting mostly of Neisei men. The team played against teams from other Japanese American communities as well as local non-Japanese teams. In the 1920s, the team even traveled to Japan and Korea for exhibition games. A new ball field was established at 7th and Younger Streets in the 1920s, but the team continued to be the pride of Japantown until it was disbanded in 1963.[51]

Simultaneous with the growth of the Japanese business district at the corner of North 6th and East Jackson Streets was the beginning of a commercial zone of a different sort just east of the railroad tracks: food processing warehouses. Most of these industrial buildings were dedicated to fruit drying and canning. The latter practice had been started in San Jose as early as 1871 by Dr. James Dawson, who developed a cookstove process for preserving fruit. Many small canneries were established in the decade following that advancement and Santa Clara Valley turned away from grain production and toward orchard cultivation and the drying and canning industries.[52] The first of the large canneries to be located in the area was the San Jose branch of the Central California Canneries Corporation. Spanning the two blocks between North 7th and 9th Streets on the west and east and East Jackson and East Empire Streets on the north and south, by the mid-1910s the facility included a series of attached warehouses, a power house, and an employee housing area. In addition, two different brandy distilleries constructed factories at the corner of

[49] Kumada, Art and Michael Jones, "History of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin," San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, 2002.
[50] National Park Service. "Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California."
[51] Pearce, Ralph and Steve Fugita, "The San Jose Asahi Baseball Team", http://www.scu.edu/diversity/asahi.html.
[52] Lukes and Okihiro, 15.

North 8th and East Taylor Streets. Sections of spur tracks led into the Central California Canneries area along North 7th Street and between the distilleries along North 8th Street, allowing the companies to make even more efficient use of their locations. A dried fruit warehouse, a pottery company, a winery, and an asphalt plant were also among the businesses that established themselves near the railroad tracks during Japantown's early years. By the 1920s and 30s, the Central California Canneries facility had been taken over by the California Packing Company and the additional warehouses were constructed within the original factory's boundaries as well as across East Jackson Street where one of the distilleries had been. Another cannery, this one owned by Drew Canning Company, had also displaced the other distillery at the corner of North 8th and East Taylor Streets by the late 1920s. The area also included a vinegar factory and other smaller canneries.[53]

San Jose Buddhist Church, 2004
Photo by Carey & Co., Inc.

Phase II research uncovered Census records that indicate that many Japanese Americans were employed by these canneries and factories. Occupation descriptions like "laborer, can factory" were common. Occasionally, women would also be employed by the canneries, as telephone operators or other technicians. In a sense, the canneries maintained a connection with the agriculture industry during the off season and for those members of the Japanese American community that had moved beyond their farm worker roots and settled in the more suburban setting of Japantown proper.

A residential neighborhood continued to grow up around the commercial areas. At first, these homes were not occupied by Japanese, since their community consisted almost entirely of transient farm laborers staying in boardinghouses, business owners living behind their establishments, and farmers making day trips into San Jose. Instead, the homes around the Japanese business district and cannery area belonged to and were occupied by other ethnic

[53] Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1915, vol. 1, maps # 9 and 95; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1921, vol. 1, maps # 2 and 3; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1929, vol. 1, maps # 9 and 95; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1950, vol. 1, maps # 9 and 95.

groups, the most prevalent of which were Italians. A second wave of immigration from Italy after 1900 saw more immigrants coming from the south of Italy. This group consisted mostly of farmers of the peasant class. They were poorer than earlier immigrants from northern Italy, but equally as attracted by Santa Clara Valley's agricultural abundance. They contributed most directly to the growth of canning industry in San Jose, eventually coming to control many of the city's canneries and employing a large segment of the city's Italian community.[54] The Japanese continued to live and work primarily in the farms outside of San Jose while the number of permanent Italian residents living, and presumably working, in the Japantown area increased. Indeed, data suggests that Italians were by far the single largest residential ethnic group, accounting for over one-third of the area's population for decades.[55]

In addition to Italians and Japanese, the neighborhood continued to be the site of Heinlenville until John Heinlen died in 1931. It was at this time, during the difficulties of the Great Depression, that Heinlen's children could not meet the property's tax obligation, the land was sold, and the community disbanded.[56] The area that had once been Heinlenville was taken over by the San Jose Department of Public Works for the expansion of one of its facilities. The Chinese population, so large and important to Santa Clara County's economy in the mid- and late-19th century, had begun to dwindle throughout California as early as the 1880s.[57] The main reasons for this decrease were the strong anti-Chinese legislation enacted in 1882 and acts of discrimination and terrorism undertaken against Chinese immigrants. In Santa Clara County, the Chinese immigrant community peaked at almost 3,000 in 1890, after which their numbers fell substantially in the decades that followed. By the end of the Heinlenville era in the early 1930s, fewer than 1,000 Chinese remained.[58] This exodus occurred in many small communities throughout the western states, leading to a corresponding growth in the size of several urban Chinatowns. Demolition of Heinlenville's buildings began in the early 1930s and continued until 1949, when the Ng Shing Gung temple building was razed. This building, considered an important symbol of San Jose's Chinese American past, was reconstructed in 1991 in Kelley Park.[59]

The number of Japanese people living in Santa Clara County rose modestly in the years immediately following its large 1890-1910 jump. However, soon the community experienced another substantial increase: from 2,981 in 1920 to 4,320 in 1930, a one-decade improvement of 50%.[60] Only some of this consisted of new arrivals from Japan, since legislation enacted in 1924

---

[54] DeVincenzi, 21 May 2004;Yamaichi, 20 April 2004.
[55] *New World-Sun Year Book/Shinsekai Asahi nenkan* (n.p.: New World-Sun, 1939): 155-166; *Polk's San Jose (California) city directory including Santa Clara County* (San Francisco: P.L. Polk & Co., 1940); *Polk's San Jose (California) city directory including Santa Clara County* (San Francisco: P.L. Polk & Co., 1943); *Polk's San Jose (California) city directory including Santa Clara County* (San Francisco: P.L. Polk & Co., 1947); *Polk's San Jose (Santa Clara County, Calif.) city directory including Santa Clara* (Monterey Park, CA: P.L. Polk & Co., 1955);*Polk's San Jose (Santa Clara County, Calif.) city directory including Santa Clara* (Monterey Park, CA: P.L. Polk & Co., 1965).
[56] Yamaichi, 20 April 2004.
[57] Nancy Wey, "Chinese Americans in California," in *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California* (Sacramento, CA: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, 1988): [online].
[58] Lukes and Okihiro, 19.
[59] Yu, 110.
[60] Lukes and Okihiro, 19.

ended the immigration of Japanese men to the United States. A portion of this climb is attributed to an influx of Japanese women, who came as the brides of men already here, as well as to children who resulted from these marriages. More important than the statistical facts, though, are the ramifications that the presence of women and children had on the eventual development of Japanese American community institutions in Santa Clara County. Indeed, it was during this period that what had once consisted of a group of transient laborers transformed into a community of permanent families. People invested in land, through their children or agreements with Caucasian lawyers, and pastimes like baseball either replaced or supplemented less wholesome activities like gambling.[61]

It was also during this period that another ethnic group began to arrive, Filipinos. Although Filipinos started coming in this country in 1898, when the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American war and took possession of the Philippines. Most Filipino immigrants went initially to Seattle or Alaska to work as farm laborers. In Japantown, the Filipino American community established the Full Gospel Mission on North 6th Street near Heinlenville in the 1920s. They later founded a community lodge across the street.[62]

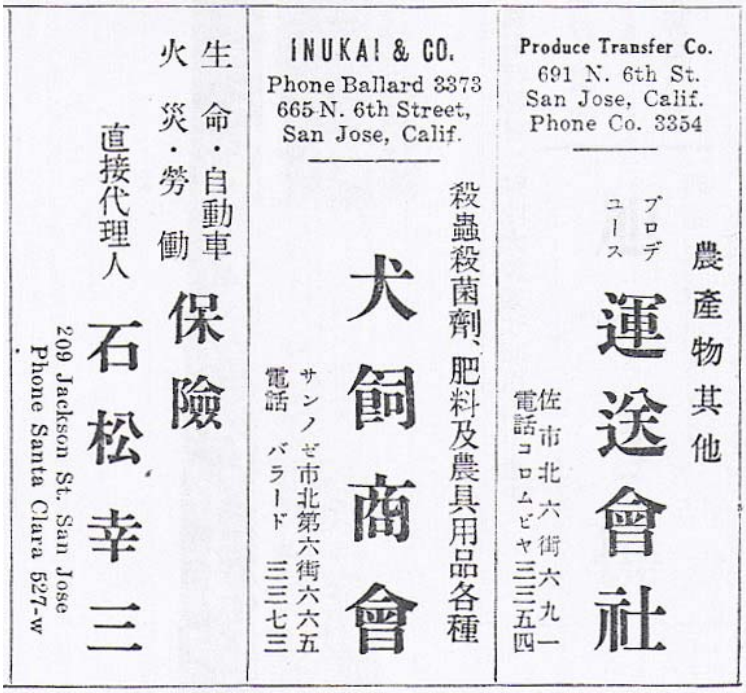
During the Great Depression of the 1930s, a small number of new buildings were constructed in the Japantown neighborhood and the number of vacant properties remained about the same.[63] One of the most impressive buildings in Japantown, then and now, was constructed during this period. The design of the Buddhist Church, completed in 1937, was heavily inspired by Japanese architectural tradition. Through its architecture the building announces its heritage confidently, a notable exception within a community that was architecturally more inclined toward assimilation. It should be noted that the Buddhist Church was constructed by the Nishiura Brothers, whose work in the area also included one of the neighborhood's other most architecturally and historically significant buildings, Kuwabara Hospital.

The San Jose Buddhist Church, which had actually been established in 1902, was a mainstay of the Japantown community. The only other church in the neighborhood was the Methodist Church, founded in 1895 and eventually located on North 5th Street, south of Jackson Street. Together, these religious establishments served the spiritual needs of the Japanese American community; one representing a traditional Japanese faith, while the other represented a religion newly adopted by the Japanese immigrants upon their settlement in America. While the Methodist church had a relatively unremarkable early history, the Buddhist church was fraught by divisions within the congregation and the temporary establishment of a second church. The congregation was reunited in 1917, however; and no doubt both churches played a large part in upholding morale during the Depression and during other challenging times that the Japanese American community experienced.

---

[61] "Akizuki," *Beginnings*, 14; Jimi Yamaichi, former general contractor and life-long San Jose resident, personal communication with the author, 2 May 2004.
[62] Jim Choate, "The Way We Are: Valley's Filipinos," *San Jose Mercury News* (24 September 1973).
[63] *Polk's San Jose (California) city directory including Santa Clara County* (San Francisco: P.L. Polk & Co., 1915); *Polk's San Jose (California) city directory including Santa Clara County* (San Francisco: P.L. Polk & Co., 1925); *Polk's San Jose (California) city directory including Santa Clara County* (San Francisco: P.L. Polk & Co., 1935); *Polk's*, (1940).

The canneries survived the Depression, and the Italian population increased slightly and then stabilized.[64] However, while there was a modest loss in the overall number of Japanese living in Santa Clara County, the number of Japanese residents and businesses in Japantown grew considerably between 1925 and 1940.[65] By the start of World War II, there were approximately 77 Japanese households in Japantown, up from only a handful in earlier years. This represented approximately 72% of all non-rural Japanese in San Jose and approximately 22% of the city's total rural and non-rural Japanese population.[66]



Detail of the *New World-Sun Year Book*, 1939

By 1940 Japantown included approximately 93 businesses and organizations serving the Japanese American community in San Jose and Santa Clara County, an increase of roughly 50% from two decades earlier. This included 19 community organizations, ranging from the Methodist and Buddhist Churches to the San Jose Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). The JACL was founded in 1929 to address issues of discrimination against Japanese Americans and has grown to become the nation's oldest and largest Asian-American civil rights organization. The presence of a JACL chapter in San Jose is testament to the dominance of the Japanese American community there. Other recreational and charitable groups were also prevalent, like the Asahi Baseball Club, the Salvation Army, the Fishing Club, and a number of prefecture-based groups known as *kenjinkai*. *Kenjinkai* were formed by groups of people from particular regions of Japan, establishing local networks from their homeland in the foreign environment of California. Members of particular *kenjinkai* would assist each other in finding

[64] Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1950, vol. 1, maps # 9 and 95; *Polk's*, (1925); *Polk's*, (1935); *Polk's*, (1940).
[65] Lukes and Okihiro, 19; *New World-Sun Year Book*, (1939); *Polk's*, (1925); *Polk's*, (1935); *Polk's*, (1940).
[66] *New World-Sun Year Book*, (1939).

work and trade as well as supporting each other in maintaining their cultural practices and identities. In terms of commerce, Japantown offered at least 15 general and specialty stores, such as Dobashi Company, Ishikawa Dry Goods, Okida Sake Store, Shiba Watch Repair, Tanabe Candy Store, and Tokiwa Fish Market. Many of these businesses bear family names still prominent in Japantown today, because of the continuation of those original businesses or their association with other endeavors in the neighborhood. The area also had doctors, dentists, pharmacists, laundries, insurance agents, hotels, restaurants, florists, barbers and beauty parlors, carpenters, gas stations, a cigar stand, and a host of other businesses, all of which contributed to making Japantown a vibrant, complete community.[67]

San Jose Japantown: War Years and Resettlement, 1941-1947

Oral history maintains that as the Depression came to a close in the late 1930s, the Japanese felt they had positioned themselves for better years ahead. Many Nisei were coming of age at this time and intended to either go to college or apply their youthful energy to the family business. What actually occurred, though, is very different from what San Jose's Japanese American families expected. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, making it legal for authorities to remove people from an area without trials or hearings on the basis of "military necessity." The resulting forced internment of Japanese Americans almost destroyed San Jose's Japantown community. Given only days to prepare, they hurriedly abandoned their homes and sold their businesses' stock at a loss. Many left their property in the care of non-Japanese friends, neighbors, or business associates. Benjamin Peckham, a Caucasian attorney who had been involved in most of Japantown's real estate transactions prior to the war, looked after many of these same properties, as well as the Buddhist temple building and all of the belongings people had stored there on the eve of internment.[68] Similarly, John Crummy, head of the Food Machinery & Chemical Corporation, served as the Caucasian trustee of the Japanese Methodist Church during the war.[69]

Phase II research has established that the majority of Japantown's residents and most Japanese Americans in Santa Clara Valley were sent to the Heart Mountain internment camp. This was a 46,000 acre camp in the high desert of northwestern Wyoming, near the town of Cody. It was occupied from August, 1942 to November, 1945 and housed 10,767 internees, making it the third largest city in Wyoming. They came to the camp after being processed at the Santa Anita assembly center, a horseracing track in Southern California, which was the largest and longest occupied assembly center. It housed up to 19,340 internees for 215 days. Those Japanese-Americans held there were housed in makeshift barracks and horse stalls. The assembly center

[67] *New World-Sun Year Book*, (1939).
[68] Yamaichi, 2 May 2004.
[69] Leslie Masunaga, Japanese Community Congress survey committee member, communication with the authors, 16 June 2004; Although not subjected to the persecution experienced by the Japanese community, it should be noted that the other large ethnic population in Japantown, Italian Americans, experienced some difficulties in San Jose during World War II. In particular, 600,000 lived under "house arrest" during the war while the remainder were not allowed to speak Italian in public. A small number of Italian Americans, roughly 3,000 from California, were also sent to internment camps with the Japanese. In general, however, San Jose's Italian Americans weathered the war with their property investments intact. (Source: DeVincenzi, 21 May 2004.)

was like a camp in itself, with recreation facilities, a hospital, laundry, and a factory for making camouflage nets located in the grandstand structure.[70]

The history of Japanese internment is extensive, incorporating thousands of personal experiences. It was a three year interruption in the lives of countless Japanese Americans and was a period of marked incongruity in the history of Japantown itself. Between the beginning of the war in 1941 and the end of resettlement in 1947, approximately 45% of the Japanese properties in Japantown stood vacant, while about 55% had non-Japanese occupants. At this time, an increase in the prevalence of other minority groups, like Italians, Filipinos, and Mexicans. In the case of the Japanese properties along North 6th Street, only 27% are documented as still vacant by the middle of the war. Similarly, while the overall number of Japanese in the neighborhood appears to have risen immediately after the war, it appears that only one Japanese business owner had returned to the North 6th Street and East Jackson Street area by 1947.[71]

In addition to those properties that remained vacant or were used by others, it is important to note that some were demolished during the 1941-47 period. A large gap between buildings on East Jackson Street near North 5th Street was the result of demolition activity; three adjoining structures were removed, two of which had housed pre-war Japanese businesses. The largest concentration of teardowns appears to have been along North 6th Street north of East Jackson Street, where six structures were razed during this time. Only one of these was the site of a Japanese business before the war; the others were either vacant or associated with people of another ethnic group in 1940.[72]

While countless Japantowns throughout California failed to regain their prewar Japanese American population, large numbers of Japanese Americans resettled in the San Jose area. This is believed to have resulted from three main factors: the continued potential for agricultural success in the Santa Clara Valley, the strength of San Jose's pre-war Japantown community, and willingness of others to protect Japanese American property in San Jose during the war. Doctors and community leaders returned, establishing San Jose's Japantown as a center for evacuee support services. In subsequent years, not only did those Japanese Americans who lived in San Jose before the war come back, but some who had previously belonged to other Japanese communities settled in San Jose because of the continuation of a strong Japanese American community there, which offered the security and culture that was now lacking in their previous communities. Many young Japanese Americans were also drawn to Santa Clara County to work in the high technology industry or take advantage of San Jose State University's open admissions policies.[73]

---

[70] Burton, J., M. Farrell, F. Lord, and R. Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites*. (online book) National Park Service, 2000.
[71] *Polk's*, (1940); *Polk's*, (1943); *Polk's,* (1947).
[72] *New World-Sun Year Book*, (1939); *Polk's*, (1940); *Polk's*, (1943); *Polk's,* (1947); Sanborn, 1915, vol. 1, map # 43; Sanborn, 1929, vol. 1, map # 43; Sanborn, 1950, vol. 1, map # 43.
[73] Yamaichi, 2 May 2004; Kathy Sakamoto, executive director of the Japantown Business Association, communication with the authors, 16 June 2004.

San Jose Japantown "Civic Unity Hostel" evacuee center, 1945
Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Oral history provides conflicting accounts of the relative ease with which returning San Jose Japanese reclaimed their Japantown property and restarted their lives. In one account, for example, the speaker is quoted as saying, those "who owned stores in Japantown just came back to their places and carried on from there."[74] This, presumably, refers to the businesses under Peckham's care and/or those that had remained vacant for the duration of the war. In retelling his story, another person described his family's fear at contemplating a return, saying "We also heard…that it was not safe to come back to San Jose…It just was dangerous because of discrimination, and so forth."[75] Some of this concern is likely to have arisen from apprehension about returning to find their properties occupied by others, many of whom had recently moved to the area to work in wartime industrial or agricultural pursuits. To help allay fears and provide shelter to those whose former homes were not available to them, the community established a hostel next to the Buddhist temple. This hostel operated for some time on a self-sustaining basis.[76] The midwifery and other buildings were also used as lodgings for returning Japanese Americans, who were assisted in reestablishing themselves by various churches, civic groups and sympathetic community members.

The African American population in San Jose did not rise significantly during World War II. This is because most shipyard employment opportunities were located in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, and other San Francisco Bay port cities. Some managed to live in San Jose and commute to war-related jobs on a daily basis but a substantial rise in the number African Americans in San Jose did not occur until the post-war period.[77]

---

[74] "Hatsu (Matsumoto) Kanemoto," in *REgenerations Oral History Project* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 2000): 161.
[75] "Paul S. Sakamoto," in *REgenerations Oral History Project* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 2000): 161.
[76] *"…With Liberty and Justice for All." The Story of San Jose's Japanese Community* (San Jose, CA: The City of San Jose Commission on The Internment of Local Japanese Americans, 1985): 89-94.
[77] Ellington and Arnold, 22 July 2004.

San Jose Japantown: Evolution, 1947 to the present

In addition to the reestablishment of a Japanese commercial district along several blocks of East Jackson Street, the post-war years also saw a new trend among returning evacuees: the integration of a substantial number of Japanese Americans into the residential sections of the neighborhood. As early as the Depression, Japanese Americans had begun living outside of the main business area, scattered here and there among the lots between North 3rd and North 6th Streets. However, after 1947, and particularly beginning around the mid-1960s, almost every block between North 1st Street and the railroad tracks contained at least one property owned and/or occupied by someone of Japanese descent.[78] One potential reason for this shift relates to the neighborhood's residential building stock itself, small older structures considered less desirable than the large new homes constructed on the edge of town during the 1950s and 60s. This disparity may have made the neighborhood more accessible, financially, to Japanese American residents, some of whom struggled for more than a decade to gain economic independence after their forced internment. Another potential reason for the rise in the number of Japanese Americans living in Japantown has to do with the general shift from rural to urban settlement and the opening of non-farming career paths to the Nisei. Unlike earlier eras, when discrimination and alienation led most Japanese into agriculture, during the years after the war an increasing number of young Japanese left the family farm to move into the city, attend college, and take a professional job. San Jose State University became known for its open admissions policies, which encouraged Japanese Americans to come to San Jose for higher education. Similarly, Lockhead was the first company in the area to accept Japanese Americans, a move that enticed Nisei to stay in San Jose permanently.[79]

Thelma Takeda in front of San Jose State University, 1945
Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

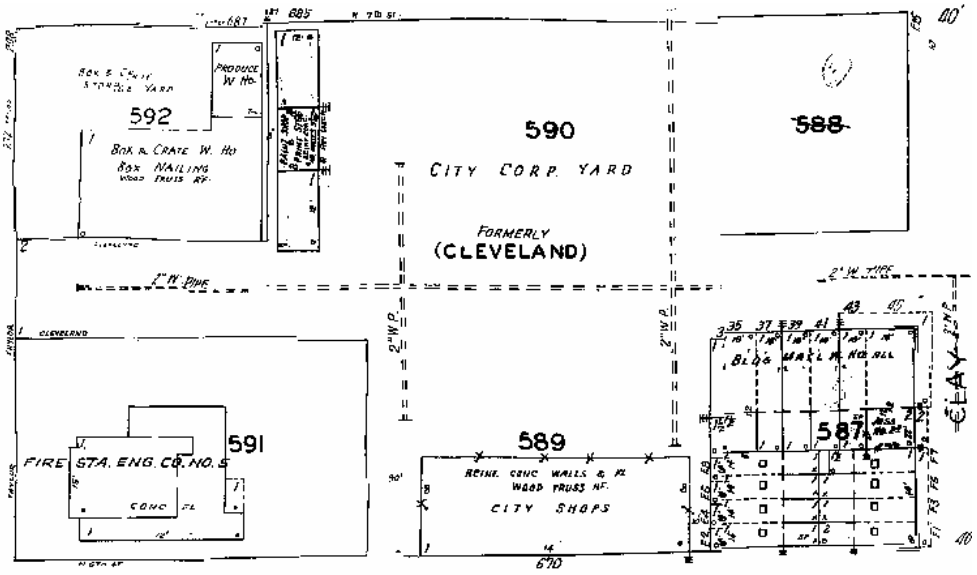
[78] *Polk's*, (1935); *Polk's*, (1940); *Polk's*, (1947); *Polk's*, (1955); *Polk's*, (1965).
[79] Yamaichi, 2 May 2004.

It is clear that by the mid-1950s Japanese Americans had managed to recreate the fabric of their pre-war community. Both of the major religious institutions that had served the Japanese American population there before the war, the Methodist Church and the Buddhist Church, continued to function, and the San Jose Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League was revived. Doctors, such as Tokio Ishikawa and Lee M. Watanabe, and dentists, such as Hisashi Nakahara and George Kawamura, reestablished their practices. Some stores reopened, including Dobashi's Market, Ishikawa's Department Store, and Kogura Appliance Company. Taketa's Restaurant and Ken Ying Low Restaurant were in operation again. A variety of other service enterprises also reemerged, including Onishi Florist, Taketa's Barber Shop, Nishiura Construction Company, Alice's Beauty Salon, and National Printing Company.[80] Adding to these were a range of businesses that, while newly established since the war, provided many of the same services that Japanese Americans had received before internment. These included the San Jose Tofu Company, Shuei-Do Confectionary, and Taketa Billards.[81]

San Jose's Japantown did not undergo the broad brush of well-meaning but destructive urban renewal that transformed both San Francisco's and Los Angeles' Japanese American communities in the 1960s and 70s. However, several blocks of the neighborhood experienced dramatic and long-lasting changes in this period. The first of these was the completion of the City of San Jose's Corporation Yard, eventually encompassing the entire block between East Taylor and East Jackson Streets on the north and south and North 6th and North 7th Streets to the west and east. Construction on the compound appears to have begun in the late 1940s, originally only on the north half of the block where the former Heinlenville development had been. One of the first buildings constructed there was a firehouse, at the corner of North 6th and Taylor Streets, which still exists and is in use today.[82] The corporation yard was contained within this site for approximately 15 years, co-existing with the remaining commercial buildings along both sides of the south half of the block. Around 1960 the compound expanded to include the rest of the block, resulting in the demolition of all the properties on the east side of North 6th Street north of East Jackson Street. Many of the buildings razed at this time were among the oldest commercial structures in Japantown and, by virtue of their location and use during earlier eras, had played a fundamental role in the establishment of the Japanese business district. At one time this block was rich with establishments like the Kani family's grocery store, Ishimaru's barber shop, the Minato bath house, Sashi Shokai general merchandise store, the Ito family's restaurant, and the Yamaguchi-ya boarding house, as well as the Nippon Sake Company on the corner of Jackson and 7th Streets.[83] There also appears to have been some re-configuration and in-fill development along the west side of North 6th Street at about this same period, which, when combined with the loss of half the block's historic buildings, further degraded the North 6th Street area's historic character.[84]

---

[80] *New World-Sun Year Book*, (1939); *Polk's*, (1955).
[81] *Polk's*, (1955).
[82] Jim McClure, Japantown Community Congress survey committee member, communication with the authors, 16 June 2004.
[83] Ishikawa, Tokio. "San Jose Japantown, 1910-1935".
[84] Sanborn, 1950, vol. 1, map # 43; Sanborn, 1957, vol. 1, map # 43; Sanborn, 1962, vol. 1, map # 43; *Polk's*, (1955); *Polk's*, (1965).



Detail of former Heinlenville/emerging City Corporation Yard site on 1950 Sanborn map

Another event from this period that impacted Japantown's development was the decline and eventual loss of the canneries. Although they survived the Depression and World War II, by the late-1960s high production costs, waste disposal problems, and decreased consumer demand caused the entire industry in Santa Clara County to buckle. This pressure was so intense that few of the county's many canneries managed to continue until the end of the century. None of the Japantown canneries remain in operation today, although remnants of these complexes can still be seen.[85] These include a brick building and water tower from the former Mariani cannery, located along Jackson Street between North 7th and 9th Streets, and a brick building that was previously part of the Pickle Factory, located near where the railroad tracks cross Taylor Street. Both of these brick buildings have been incorporated into condominium developments as adaptive re-use projects. Although the residential use is vastly different in function from the light industrial uses of the past, like the canneries these housing developments act as the physical and psychological east edge of the Japantown neighborhood.

It should be noted that Japantown's multi-ethnic tradition continued after the war. As in earlier times, during the immediate post-war era the neighborhood was home to a large group of Italian Americans. Their numbers dropped dramatically in the mid-1960s, possibly as a result of the canning industry's difficulties. Encouraged by the progressive recruitment practices of Lockhead, I.B.M. and other high technology companies, the African American population rose significantly in the east side of the Japantown area (Northside neighborhood).[86] Their presence is most readily represented by the Prayer Garden Church, which was established by the largely

[85] City of San Jose, "Draft Environmental Impact Report: Japantown Redevelopment Project" (San Jose, CA: City of San Jose, September 1993): 150; Donna M.Garaventa, Sondra A. Jarvis, and Melody E. Tannam, *Cultural Resources Assessment for the Jackson-Taylor Residential Strategy EIR, City of San Jose, Santa Clara County, California.* (San Leandro, CA: Basin Research Associates, Inc., 1991): 18; Roseanne Dominguez, *The decline of Santa Clara County's fruit and vegetable canning industry (1967-1987)* (Unpublished Master's thesis, San Jose State University, 1992).
[86] Ellington and Arnold, 22 July 2004.

African American Church of God in Christ. Located on North 6th Street, north of Jackson Street, the church was constructed in 1955 and its presence on the edge of Japantown is probably due to the African American congregation's inability to purchase or lease property elsewhere due to discrimination. While still dominated by a Japanese focus, today's central Japantown commercial area harmoniously incorporates businesses and services representing other ethnic heritages. A Filipino community center and a Cuban restaurant are also located on North Sixth Street, while Korean, Chinese, Mexican, Hawaiian, Vietnamese and American restaurants and businesses can be found dotted throughout the neighborhood though none as prolifically as Japanese businesses.

During the last two decades of the 20th century Japantown's commercial zone was the focus of a series of physical enhancement campaigns, the effects of which are still seen today. The City of San Jose, via the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, was responsible for managing this work. The smaller projects included planting street trees (mostly cherry, in keeping with the community's Japanese traditions), installing banners on light poles, constructing the two large logo columns and four historical marker plaques at the intersection of East Jackson and North 5th Streets, and building information kiosks. Among the larger and more notable efforts was the Miraido Village project, completed in 1999, which provided apartments and ground-story retail on the parcel along East Jackson Street between North 6th and North 7th Streets. The Agency's other major undertaking in Japantown has been the provision of funds and support for the upgrading of commercial facades, a program that continues today. So far 47 facades have received treatments such as new signage and canopies, fresh paint, re-configured landscaping, and some replacement windows and doors.[87] The Phase II Survey project addressed buildings as they appear today and identified a number of character defining features that remain, such as horizontal emphasis, blade signs, modern shop fronts, flat roofs, and so on. These elements are important to express the mid-century stylistic trend that influenced many remodeling projects in Japantown. Though façade improvements have acted to preserve these buildings to a certain extent, it is recommended that future work shift from the concept of remodeling to the retention and rehabilitation of historic elements. The State Historic Building Code should be used to address code issues.

Finally, the recent developments most likely to impact the immediate future of the Japantown's physical and cultural environment have been the signing into law of Senate Bill 307 (SB 307) in 2001 and the creation of the Japantown Community Congress (JCCsj) soon thereafter. The purpose of SB 307 was to insure the preservation of California's last remaining Japantowns in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose. A unique aspect of the law was the provision that city governments work in consultation with a recognized "community organization." For San Jose, this group started as an ad hoc committee and eventually evolving into the JCCsj, whose 17 member Board of Directors include representatives of non-profit organizations, businesses, residents, property owners and other stakeholders in San Jose's Japantown. The JCCsj has since been recognized by the San Jose City Council as the official community organization to be consulted in matters pertaining to the preservation of Japantown. In addition to monthly meetings, the JCCsj holds public gatherings to determine what cultural preservation means to the San Jose Japantown community. The result of these meetings has been a multi-layered approach to highlighting the neighborhood's Japanese American identity, including constructing five culturally-themed rest areas along North 5th Street, designing and building a landmark at the

[87] Julie Amato and Lindsey Fonick, City of San Jose Redevelopment Agency, personal communications with the authors, 16 and 20 September 2004.

intersection of East Jackson and North 5th Streets, creating a series of directional signs and historical markers, and working with the City of San Jose to fund a historic context statement and survey of the Japantown neighborhood.

Logo columns at the corner of East Jackson and North 5th Streets, 2004
Photo by Carey & Co., Inc.

Summary

Dr. Dubrow has identified a group of community institutions that historically constituted the fabric of American Japantowns. These included association buildings, theaters, community halls, language schools, churches and temples, hospitals and midwiferies, bathhouses, commercial establishments, and markets. A community's ability to reestablish key components of this infrastructure after internment meant the difference between a *Nihonmachi* that survived the trauma of World War II and one that did not.[88] In San Jose, the story is one of success: returned evacuees consciously went about recreating the supportive environment their community had developed there before the war. In some cases, the same businesses and institutions were reestablished, such as Dobashi Market or the Methodist and Buddhist congregations. In other instances, new enterprises emerged to offer services that had previously been provided in Japantown by others. Regardless of whether the businesses were old or new, however, the underlying importance of this phenomenon lies in the fact that it even occurred at all, with so many economic and social hurdles to overcome.

The findings of Phase II of the Historic Context and Intensive Survey project shed further light on the subject of Japantown's cultural neighborhood development. It helped to more formally establish the two major periods of history; initial settlement and resettlement; within the period of significance. Additionally, it more specifically identified and discussed the type of community resources that created a complete and self-sufficient community, including businesses, residences,

[88] Gail Dubrow and Nazila Merati, Draft Historic Context on Nihonmachi (or Japantowns): National Study of Japanese American Cultural Resources (Seattle, 1999, unpublished manuscript): n.p.; Gail Dubrow, architectural and urban historian specializing in Japanese American heritage, personal communication with the authors, 21 July 2004.

cultural and civic venues and institutional establishments, and linked these physical elements of Japantown to its more ephemeral history.

Phase II also examined the implications of Japantown's history on present-day perceptions of the community. The concept of a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP); one which is still valued by a modern cultural group and continues to be used for traditional cultural practices; was explored. Through interaction and consultation with Japantown's current residents and community members, Phase II positively identified the existence of such a "property". It is evident that many traditional cultural activities, like festivals and observances, take place within Japantown and many businesses that sell Japanese products also exist. Japanese Americans either live in the neighborhood or regularly return to take part in religious services, social organizations, sports activities and so on. This, coupled with the ties of emotion and memory that many community members have expressed, but which are hard to measure or document, seem to undoubtedly indicate that Japantown is considered important and worthy of preservation in the eye's of the community that lives within it.