



# EXACTLY OPPOSITE

... the Golden Gate

The Newsletter of the Berkeley Historical Society & Museum

Volume 43 Number 1

Winter 2025

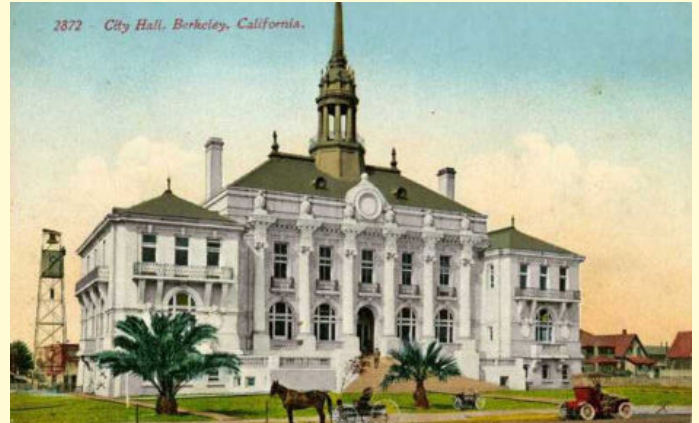
## The Evolution of Berkeley City Government

By Judy Ziajka

Berkeley recently elected a Japanese American woman as mayor, an outcome that would have been unthinkable through a large part of Berkeley's history. That this part of the new mayor's biography is barely remarkable today, however, is not the result of any preordained philosophy that underpins the city but instead is an outcome of ongoing evolution and choices by the city and its citizens.

Although incorporated in 1878, Berkeley didn't have a mayor until 1909. For its first thirty-one years, it was governed by a board of trustees headed by a president selected by the board from among its members. In the town's first election, voters chose a slate of candidates fielded by the Workingmen's Party of California, which, according to *Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years* (WPA Northern California Workers of the Writers' Program, 1941, page 47), "appealed to the workmen who were knocking together the new town... Significantly enough, many of the professors belonged to [this] party." Abel Whitton became the first board president, serving from 1878 to 1881. But although the "Workingmen's Party" label might appear to imply a progressive destiny for the city, the slogan of this San Francisco-based party was "The Chinese must go!" and a key goal was to protect (white) workers by eliminating cheap Chinese immigrant labor. This sentiment, widespread, led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and eventually left many property deeds scarred by discriminatory covenants that applied to all people of Asian descent as well as to Black citizens. It took Berkeley nearly 100 years to earn its present reputation as one of the most liberal cities in the country.

Berkeley's early leaders were largely businessmen, who often worked together and shared close contacts. Two board presidents were father and son: Reuben Ricard (1891-



Postcard of Berkeley City Hall shortly after construction in 1909. BHSM #1978.008.301.

1893) and his son Thomas (1903-1909). Samuel Heywood, board president from 1889 to 1890, whose father, Zimri, was one of Berkeley's earliest residents and helped establish the town's first lumber yard and wharf, was later followed in city leadership by his son Charles, who served as mayor from 1913 to 1915 after Berkeley switched to a mayoral system.

Seventeen years after its founding, Berkeley took its first significant step toward more representative city government. Originally all trustees were elected at large, but in 1895 Berkeley was divided into wards, with each electing a trustee, to give greater voice to all sections of the community.

(continued on page 3)

### Join us on Sunday, January 26:

Kimi Hill will give an illustrated talk on the life and art of her grandfather, Chiura Obata. Museum opens 1 pm; program at 2 pm. Please sign up at [obata-berkeley.eventbrite.com](http://obata-berkeley.eventbrite.com).

### In This Issue:

The Evolution of Berkeley's City Government .....	1
President's Message .....	2
Inside the Free Speech Movement .....	4
Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years .....	5
"The Sunday Before" .....	8
"In Topaz" .....	9
Membership/Donations/Volunteer Form .....	11
Thanks to Our Benefactors .....	12

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# President's Message

Happy 2025!

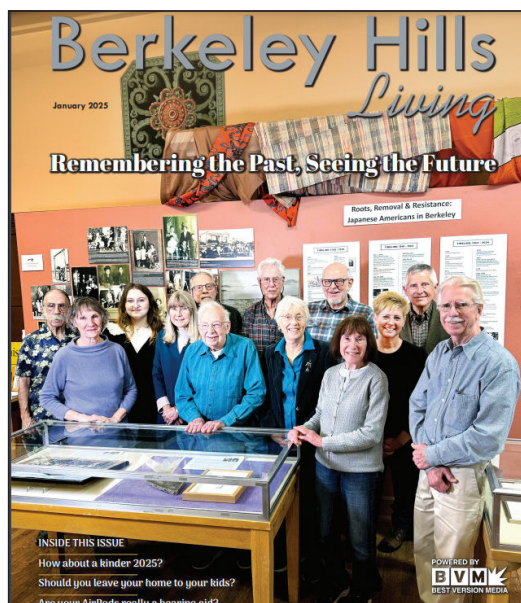
We are thrilled that more and more people are taking notice of the Berkeley Historical Society & Museum. Our current exhibit, *Roots, Removal and Resistance: Japanese Americans in Berkeley*, has been greeted with great enthusiasm and appreciation. Family members have shared with younger generations photos of their grandparents, business, sports and religious leaders, as well as childhood friends. Others have seen their family's pre-incarceration home on our digital map, and read the names and incarceration details of the around 1,200 Japanese Americans removed from Berkeley in 1942. The timeliness of this reminder of America's incarceration of its people cannot be denied. This timeliness is reflected in attendance at our exhibit and related events, as well as media interest.

Thanks to a grant from California Humanities and the work of Elina Juvonen, an online version of the exhibit will be available on our website in the next couple of months. It will join the digital version of our previous exhibit, *Touching Ground, Putting Down Roots: Chinese in Berkeley*. Preservation online of other past exhibits, including *African Americans in Berkeley*, is also in the works.

Future plans include an exhibit on Latinos in Berkeley, from the early colonizers to the present, with curators from the local Hispanic community. If you are interested in being involved, please send an email to info@berkhistory.org or contact Harvey Smith.

If you are not yet receiving our email announcements, we encourage you to sign up for them at [berkhistory.org/sign-up-for-email/](http://berkhistory.org/sign-up-for-email/).

Ann Harlow



This magazine gave us a nice writeup in its January issue. Left to right: Ed Herny, Candice Schott, Kate Pixley, Jeanine Castello-Lin, George Petty, John Aronovici, Michael Several, Ann Harlow, Mitch Fleischer, Judy Ziajka, Karen Chapman, Patrick O'Leary, Tom Edwards.

(Evolution – continued from page 1)

Another milestone was the acquisition of land for a true civic center in downtown Berkeley, which occurred under board president Captain William H. Marston (1899–1903). After the original building placed on the site burned in 1904, the city commissioned a grand new building, now known as the Maudelle Shirek Building (or “Old City Hall”), which opened in 1909. This building was the seat of Berkeley government until 1977. Now an historic landmark, it is currently awaiting a seismic retrofit and other improvements, as well as funding to achieve them.

Especially after 1906, when the San Francisco earthquake and fire brought many new residents across the Bay, Berkeley grew rapidly. In a speech in 1907, as reported in *Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years* (pages 108–109), the dean of UC Berkeley’s School of Jurisprudence, Professor William Carey Jones, issued a warning. Formerly, he said, “the community was too small to offer much temptation to the professional politician. There was nothing to be boss of. But as the city has increased in population the party managers have been keen to see their opportunity and have begun to exploit it for purposes foreign to its own interests.” Although Jones did not find “much, if any, actual graft” in the city, he feared it, and in 1906, he led a committee to draw up a new city charter. This plan called for an elected mayor instead of an appointed board president. It provided for the recall of city officers and for a citywide vote on large expenditures and other important matters. It also called for a city council, elected at large as in Berkeley’s original system, but with nonpartisan nomination of candidates rather than patronage appointments. On January 30, 1909, Berkeley’s electorate approved the new charter.

Berkeley’s first mayor under the new system was also the first Democrat to head the city. The *San Francisco Call*, on March 28, 1909, reported the candidacy of Beverly L. Hodghead, who called the new plan “the people’s charter,” which “gives the people the right to elect their own officials... The charter abolishes the patronage system. It induces good men to run for public office instead of deterring them. They are not bound and shackled by outside political interests as of old.” Hodghead served as mayor from 1909 to 1911.

But the Democratic Party was not yet poised to be the dominant force it became later, though the city’s social conscience was arising. Hodghead was defeated for reelection by J. Stitt Wilson, a Socialist, who became Berkeley’s second mayor, from 1911 to 1913. According to biographer Stephen Barton in *Jacobin* (April 9, 2023), Wilson, a former Methodist minister, believed that socialism was “applied Christianity,” and that Christian socialism offered a way to address poverty and improve the lives of workers. As mayor, he “promoted local tax measures that allowed the city to improve its sewer system, pave its streets, build parks, and begin to take public ownership of utilities.” He also campaigned throughout the

Bay Area for a state constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote—a measure that passed in 1911, allowing California women to vote nine years before the Nineteenth Amendment granted this right nationally.

In 1923, with the support of Mayor Frank D. Stringham (1923–1927), Berkeley tuned its government further, adopting a city manager system, which shifted the actual operations of the city to a professional administrator appointed by the city council, leaving the mayor and council to set city policies and the city manager to implement them.

In 1947, the resignation of a city manager triggered the installation of the first woman to serve as mayor, Carrie L. Hoyt, who held the office from January to May of that year. Hoyt, who had been the vice mayor, was appointed to serve out the term of Mayor Fitch Robertson after the council appointed him to replace the departing city manager. After finishing Robertson’s term, Hoyt did not run for mayor on her own.

The last in Berkeley’s long line of Republican mayors was Wallace Johnson, who presided over the city from 1963 to 1971, during the period that the Free Speech Movement and anti-Vietnam War demonstrations erupted on the UC Berkeley campus and People’s Park became disputed ground. A moderate engineer and businessman, his most enduring achievement was helping convince 83 percent of Berkeley voters to increase their city taxes to put the tracks for the part of the new BART system that ran through Berkeley underground.

Of Berkeley’s fifteen mayors up to this point, all except four were Republicans. Although the stances of both main political parties shifted considerably over time, and even though Berkeley supported a bohemia of artists and liberal-thinking intellectuals, core city politics were pro-business and were progressive mainly in the adoption of modern civic institutions. Even during all four of Franklin Roosevelt’s terms, Berkeley continued to choose Republican mayors. Only in 1936, while Berkeley was benefiting from New Deal funding for projects such as the Rose Garden and Aquatic Park and improvements in the city’s parks and schools, did the city for the first time vote for a Democratic presidential candidate, supporting Roosevelt’s reelection.



Beverly L. Hodghead, Berkeley’s first mayor and first Democrat to head the city, from 1909 to 1911. From *Pacific Municipalities*, October 1910.

(continued on page 10)

# *Inside the Free Speech Movement*

By Linda Rosen



Mario Savio speaking. Howard Harawitz, photographer.

The Berkeley Historical Society and Museum has just produced its first documentary. *Inside the Free Speech Movement*, directed by Linda Rosen and video-edited by Jai Jai Noire and Tonya Staros with Melanie Mentzel, has been released for the 60th anniversary of the movement. This newly edited video, based on oral history interviews conducted a decade earlier in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the FSM, is augmented with historic photographs and original sound recordings. We are indebted to the Free Speech Movement Archives and to the photographers and reporters who captured the times. The videos can be found on the Berkeley Historical Society YouTube channel at <https://berkhistory.org/videos/>. Part Three (Supplemental Material) will be posted in a few months. The documentary features Bettina Aptheker, David Lance Goines, Patti Iiyama, Anita Medal, Kathleen Piper, Jack Radey, Seth Rosenfeld, Peter Dale Scott, Leon Wofsy, and many others. Watch and learn how they did it.

The idea for the documentary came as we were preparing the BHSM exhibit for the 50th anniversary of the Free Speech Movement. My neighbor, Barbara Epstein, arranged an interview with FSM leader Bettina Aptheker, a focused and accomplished historian living in Santa Cruz. We bonded immediately because I had participated in many of the events as a student at Cal in 1964. I also experienced the feeling of alienation at the time of being an undergraduate in a big institution. The FSM gave us a cause.

I suggested that the committee should continue these oral histories after the exhibit was up. I recorded several more, and Jeanine Castello-Lin and Tonya Staros interviewed nearby professors Leon Wofsy and Peter Dale Scott, who added insight and perspective. Anita Medal, who lives in West Berkeley, provided a thoughtful and compassionate interview that propels the story. Patti Iiyama, who went on to help unionize the Richmond refineries, described the irony of the UC administration's being so out of touch with the students.

David Lance Goines wanted to be interviewed at his St. Hieronymus Press, which was a challenge amid the noise of printing. Many participants, such as Goines and Wofsy, have since died, so it is invaluable to have these recordings.

Gradually, the documentary came together with careful line and video editing and the addition of photographs, music, and sound recorded by KPFA in Berkeley. We joined together to create an historical record that is relevant for the current times. Defense of constitutional rights against efforts to repress them is uncannily pertinent again today.

The original cause of the Free Speech Movement was frustration of student civil rights work by certain UC administrators. An important presidential election was approaching, and Proposition 14, a referendum on Byron Rumford's Fair Housing Act, was on the ballot. Then Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs Alex Sherriffs, backed by Chancellor Ed Strong, arbitrarily shut down the free speech area at Bancroft and Telegraph. This was done in accordance with long-standing UC policy prohibiting political advocacy, as asserted by UC President Clark Kerr. However students had been using the area to promote various causes for years. This section of sidewalk had been given to the city, but the deed had not yet been transferred.

Students from across the political spectrum formed the United Front to protect their free speech, but the university rebuffed them. Soon known as the Free Speech Movement, the FSM launched the national student rights campaigns of the mid-sixties and seventies, using civil disobedience in support of mass activism. This movement also inspired the Paris Uprising and Prague Spring demonstrations in 1968 that challenged the governments of France and Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia).



Bancroft and Telegraph tables, September 1964. Howard Harawitz, photographer.

We are seeing the same themes today: racism, sexism, attacks on free speech and constitutional and civil rights—attempts to

go back to the past. Students and everyone else deserve a voice under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. But free speech has never been unfettered speech. Speakers must respect “time, place and manner” restrictions on protected speech and avoid hate speech and encouragement of violence or destruction of property. The original leaders of the FSM largely understood this.

The final segment of the film features Seth Rosenfeld, author of *Subversives: The FBI’s War on Student Radicals, and Reagan’s Rise to Power*. The FBI under J. Edgar Hoover was involved on campus before, during, and after the Free Speech Movement. The Tenney Committee, McCarthyism, and the Loyalty Oath created a climate of fear, fueled by anti-Communism and racism and leading to protective caution, to “keep your head down.”

*Inside the Free Speech Movement* consists of four parts:

Part One: Inside the Free Speech Movement

Part Two: Conclusion

Part Three: Supplemental Material (This will be uploaded in a few months.)

Part Four: The FBI Spies on UC Berkeley



March on the Regents meeting. Ronald L. Enfield, photographer.

## Stopping the Gears

*Mario Savio (1942–1996) spent only a few years in Berkeley, but few individuals are more closely allied with the character of the city in the eye of the world, and few images are more instantly identifiable as belonging to Berkeley than this young man standing sock-footed atop a police car and calling to fellow students to speak out for their rights and the rights of others. Tagged by some as “radical” or even “un-American,” the movement Mario Savio helped inspire in fact arose from the foundations of our government—the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights and other amendments—and the aspirational principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence. The particular instance that launched the Free Speech Movement was not an infringement on any single group, but on all groups, and the goal was not to silence anyone, but to ensure an open forum. Here is Mario Savio in his own words.*

—Judy Ziajka

“There comes a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part, you can’t even passively take part; and you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop, And you’ve got to indicate to the people who run it, the people who own it, that unless you’re free the machine will be prevented from working at all.” (Delivered at UC Berkeley, December 2, 1964.)

“We are asking that there be no, no restrictions on the content of speech save those provided by the courts. And that’s an enormous amount of freedom. And people can say things in that area of freedom which are not responsible. Now... we’ve finally gotten into a position where we have to consider being responsible, because we now have the freedom within which to be responsible. ... I’m confident that the students and the faculty of the University of California will exercise their freedom with the same responsibility they’ve shown in winning their freedom.” (Delivered at FSM victory rally, December 9, 1964.)

“... [F]or me the deepest free speech quote is what was attributed to Diogenes. And he said, ‘The most beautiful thing in the world is the freedom of speech.’ And those words are in me, they’re sort of burned into my soul, because for me free speech was not a tactic, not something to win for political [advantage]. . . . To me, freedom of speech is something that represents the very dignity of what a human being is. . . . That’s what marks us off from the stones and the stars.... It is the thing that marks us as just below the angels.” (Interview with Doug Gilles, 30th anniversary of FSM, December 1994, Free Speech Movement Archives.)

# *Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years*

## Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in Northern California

By Fred Etzel

In 1935, the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration (WPA), renamed in 1939 the Work Projects Administration. Perhaps the most famous of Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the WPA constructed infrastructure facilities familiar to many Berkeleyans. (Photographs and descriptions of these facilities are found in *Berkeley and the New Deal* by BHSM member Harvey L. Smith, published by Arcadia Press in 2014.)

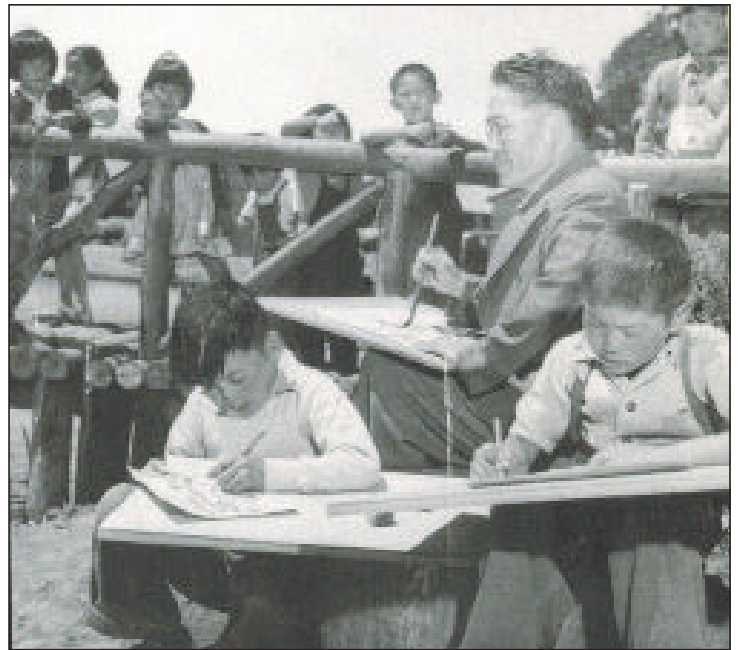
In addition to providing employment for the Berkeley workers who constructed these projects, the WPA employed Berkeley writers, researchers, artists, editors, photographers, and historians. In 1941, three Berkeleyans, Walter McElroy, Howard B. Hoffman, and Chiura Obata, employees of the WPA's Writers' Program of Northern California, helped produce and publish *Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years* (hereinafter referred to as *Berkeley*). As stated in its preface:

*In many ways this history of Berkeley is an example of the value of the WPA Writers' Program. It was conceived, planned, compiled, written and printed in a little over four months. To work within so tight a schedule was not easy: it demanded all the project's resources. For a single author—for even a group of authors beginning at scratch—to plan and execute such an undertaking at such short notice might have been impossible. It was possible for the Northern California Writers' Project only because the project, in the course of other work, had accumulated a great deal of information about Berkeley.*

According to Jerre Mangione, in *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935–1943* (page 131), in his discussion of the California Writers' Project, "... thanks to a small nucleus of diligent young writers led by Walter McElroy and Leon Dorais ... the California project managed to produce a larger number of major publications than any others writers' project, among them the encyclopedic California state guidebook (713 pages)."

Walter McElroy was the state supervisor of the Northern California Writers' Project, and Berkeley Writers' Program employees worked under his editorial direction and supervision. He also wrote the two-page preface to *Berkeley*. After his service on the California Writers' Project, McElroy joined Hastings House Publishers in New York City and then briefly served as the national director of the Writers' Project in its waning days.

Howard B. Hoffman was responsible for many of *Berkeley's* black-and-white photographs. Twenty-four of the photographs



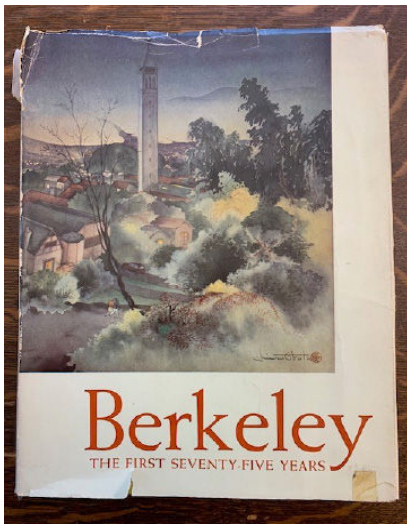
Chiura Obata teaching art while detained at Tanforan. *Nature Art with Chiura Obata*, Michael Elsohn Ross, 2000. Photo courtesy of Obata family.

are specifically credited: "Project Photo, Howard Hoffman." According to his World War II draft registration card, Hoffman was employed by Bethlehem Steel Company in Alameda around the time he worked for the WPA project. The 1940 U.S. census lists his age as 38 and reports him as living at 6666 Heather Ridge Way in Oakland with his wife Lillian and their two sons and two daughters. Based on the size of his family and his house, Hoffman was likely an executive with the Bethlehem Steel Company.

The contribution to *Berkeley* by Chiura Obata (1885–1975), an influential American artist who was born and educated in Japan, is particularly noteworthy. Obata designed the dust jacket for the book, which shows a leafy city clustered around the Campanile. His name and the symbol of a globe appear in the lower-right corner of the dust jacket.

Obata immigrated to the United States in 1903 and eventually moved to Berkeley, where he became an instructor and later a professor in the art department at the University of California at Berkeley. From 1939 to 1941, he worked in a Spanish Revival-style studio at 2525 Telegraph Avenue. The Obata family lived three blocks away, at 2609 Ellsworth Street, since demolished and now an apartment building.

In February 1942, after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and brought the U.S. into World War II, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which resulted in the internment (imprisonment) of people of Japanese descent then residing on the West Coast.



Dust jacket for *Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years* with illustration by Chiura Obata.

Back-cover praise for *Berkeley: The First Seventy-five Years*.



On April 30, 1942, within months of *Berkeley's* publication, Obata and his family were forced from their home. They first were moved to the Tanforan Assembly Center, located at a racetrack south of San Francisco. They later were moved again, to the Topaz Relocation Center in Utah. At both Tanforan and Topaz, Obata devoted his energies to his art and his teaching and to finding ways to use his skills to help his fellow internees. He organized art schools and was made director by camp authorities.

In October 1945, the Obatas returned to Berkeley, where Chiura resumed his life as a teacher and artist. Professor Emeritus Chiura Obata died in Berkeley on October 6, 1975. In 2020, the California legislature designated a section of California State Route 120 in Mono County as the Chiura Obata Great Nature Memorial Highway.

*Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years* was published in 1941 by Gillick Press in Berkeley. Five hundred copies of the first edition were each numbered by hand. The book consists of approximately 160 pages covering the history and development of Berkeley. Used copies of *Berkeley* with an intact dust jacket are rare and priced appropriately.

On the reverse side of *Berkeley's* dust jacket are comments by civic leaders, including New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and some of California's leading book reviewers. UC Berkeley history professor John James Van Nostrand, while generally praising the book in a review for the *Pacifica Historical Review* in March 1942, also noted a lack: that the cosmopolitan character of the city is only "hinted at in the exquisite cover illustration by Obata" and by subsequent photographs of International House and others showing industrial Berkeley's role in world trade and its architecture that references Mediterranean and European designs. But in Berkeley, he said, "Diversity is a fact which should be noted. For on that fact is based pride that the spirit of toleration has welded these different elements into a compact and loyal community."

*Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years* may be read at <https://archive.org/details/berkeleyfirstsev00writrich/>. Copies are also available at the Berkeley Public Library.

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WPA construction sign, BHSM collection.

# “The Sunday Before”

By Mary Ann Wight

In July 1945, almost a month before the first Berkeley families began to return from years of incarceration in remote and segregated stockades, the American Friends Service Committee of Pasadena published a booklet, *The Sunday Before*. It contained sermons from new and seasoned pastors of seven 1942 Japanese Christian congregations in Fresno, Wintersburg, Pasadena, and Los Angeles. The sermons conveyed pathos and love in one last message to their flocks as they prepared to leave their emptied homes and churches for an unknown future. In a foreword to the edition, co-editor Gurney Binford explained that the intended publication at a more timely date was delayed by “conditions [that] prevented their publication at that time.” A prepublication version of the booklet is preserved at the Graduate Theological Union library in Berkeley, at <https://cdm16061.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15008coll2/id/74>.

In 2017, seventy-five years after President Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 that authorized the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast to internment camps, a reconceptualized *The Sunday Before* became a visual signifier to a new generation. The (Round) Robins, a group of six book artists, have been writing and assembling one-of-a-kind artist books since 1998. For each new book project, each artist specifies a theme, medium (paper, canvas, etc.), and format. To create *The Sunday Before*, inspiring passages were distributed with the project materials. Among the sermon excerpts were these:

*Try to make things beautiful where there is ugliness, love where there is hate, goodness where there is evil.*

—Rev. Lester E. Suzuki, 1942

*This is the last Sunday of our lives outside the barbed wire fences.*  
—Rev. Hideo Hashimoto, May 10, 1942

*Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, says your God.  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.*  
—Rev. Hideo Hashimoto, May 10, 1942

*The minute we realize our relation with the Eternal, we are free.  
The army rules, bayonets, and barbed wire fences cannot hold us.*  
—Rev. Hideo Hashimoto, May 10, 1942

<i>If only there are stars, I have my friends. But in the dark I think upon my fate, And all My spirit sickens And the hard tears fall.</i>	<i>My body cannot crawl Between those grim iron rods, Still can I Laugh as my spirit flies Into the purple skies! Northward and northward, Up and up,</i>
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*Up to the world of light*

*I go bounding;*

*Farewell, O Earth, farewell...*

—Rev. Toyohiko Kagawa, *Songs from the Slums*

*...we shall be like Abraham, the mighty migration leader; filled,  
not with hatred or bitterness, but with faith, hope and love, we  
shall go wherever God wants us to go, and as we go...we shall  
bless the people everywhere.*

—Rev. Sohei Kowata (Issei), 1942

*...When all things are taken from us, we shall have yet people  
who we can love. When we can do nothing, we shall have occa-  
sions and opportunities to exercise love...*

—Rev. Kenzon Tajima (Issei), 1942



Some of the illuminated lanterns on display in the current BHSM exhibit, *Roots, Removal and Resistance: Japanese Americans in Berkeley*. Photo by Mary Ann Wight.

Over the years, the “books” created by the Robins have taken the form of banners, puppet theaters, sewing boxes, and other unconventional collections of pages. Because of the subject matter, the pages of *The Sunday Before*, designed on varied lengths of paper, were painted, stenciled, even perforated, before being waxed and then curled into a nested set of concentric lanterns. Separately illuminated, the lanterns represent six of seven camps, overseen by the Jerome, Arkansas, guard tower and graphite sketches of other distinguishing features: Heart Mountain, Wyoming; the Manzanar, California, chapel; the checkered Amache, Colorado, water tower; and Poston, Arizona, palms.

Through the ability to rent a farm outside of the Oregon exclusion zone and multiple trips to relocate nine family members and their farm equipment, my father’s family was able to avoid incarceration. On the title panel, I pay tribute to my aunts and uncles who had no such option: Gish Amano, Tule Lake, California; Mary Sato Wakasugi, Minidoka, Idaho; and Maye Yasuda Wakasugi Umemoto, Heart Mountain, Wyoming.



The Sunday Before title page with illustrations of traveling evacuees. Photo by Scott Wakasugi.



Lines from the poem "If Only There Are Stars" written out by three artists on three lantern pages. Photo by Scott Wakasugi.

## “In Topaz”

### Reflections by Patrick Hayashi

*Pat Hayashi was born in the Topaz, Utah, concentration camp. Perhaps because of the injustice of the Japanese American concentration camps, he spent much of his career working on social justice issues. He was one of the first directors of Asian American studies at UC Berkeley. In 1988, when he was appointed associate vice chancellor, he became the highest-ranking Asian American in the UC system. In that role, he initiated the practice of assessing applicants, not just the sum of the grades and test scores, by, in a holistic way, asking applicants how they had responded to obstacles they had faced and opportunities they were given. Later, as associate president of the UC system, Pat was the chief architect of UC's initiative to end the use of the SAT on the grounds that it was a deeply flawed and fundamentally unfair test that discriminated unjustifiably against poor students and underrepresented minorities. After Pat retired twenty years ago, he took up art and singing. His art work can be found at [PatrickHayashi.com](http://PatrickHayashi.com).*

Twenty-five summers ago, the founder of the Topaz Museum, Jane Beckwith, and I gave a workshop to Utah teachers about the Topaz, Utah, concentration camp. I began my talk by reading excerpts from “Sheep in Fog,” a poem written by Sylvia Plath.

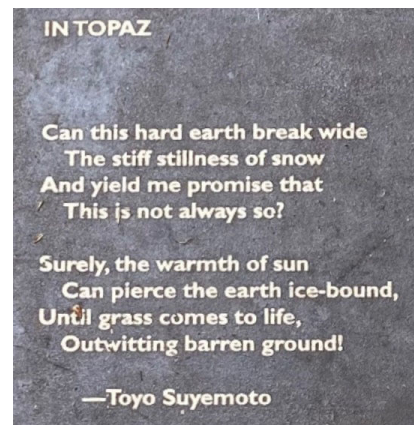
*The hills step off into whiteness.  
People or stars  
Regard me sadly, I disappoint them.*

...  
*All morning the  
Morning has been blackening,*

*A flower left out.  
My bones hold a stillness, the far  
Fields melt my heart.*

I explained that these lines described how I imagined my father felt when he stood late at night looking at the bleak desert that surrounded him and his family. He must have felt helpless and sorrowful that his aged parents who were in their late seventies, his wife who was suffering from congestive heart failure, and his three very young sons were imprisoned, along with ten thousand other Japanese Americans, in a concentration camp with no idea if or when they would be freed.

When I taught freshman reading and composition in Asian American Studies at UC Berkeley, I asked my students to read Toyo Suyemoto's poetry. I thought that her poetry conveyed the isolation and desolation my father felt while imprisoned and expressed his yearning to move on to a better life.



Sidewalk plaque in front of 2081 Addison Street, Berkeley Arts District Poetry Walk.

(continued on page 10)

(Evolution – continued from page 3)



Carrie L. Hoyt, first woman to serve as mayor and first Democrat to lead the city. Appointed in 1947, she served from January to May of that year. She was first elected to the city council in 1923 and was eighty years old when she became mayor.

In 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution changed the legal voting age to eighteen across the country, fostering a voter shift particularly in university communities like Berkeley, where younger voters focused on new issues and sought a broader spectrum of officials. During this time,

Berkeley's political landscape began evolving into its current form, completing its shift in 1986, when Berkeley again voted to divide the city into districts, with each electing its own council member, helping ensure that all parts of the city were represented. From that time to the present, with one exception, all mayors have been women or people of color or a member of the gay community, and although the office is nonpartisan, all mayors except one, a Socialist, have been Democrats (though several ran as members of local parties—Berkeley Citizens Action and Berkeley Democratic Club—to distinguish their particular shades of liberal politics).

In a modern variation on earlier father-son leadership pairings, Berkeley's first elected female mayor, Loni Hancock, was later followed in that position by her husband, Tom Bates, the sole traditional white male to hold the office in the past fifty years. And in 2024 Berkeley chose a mayor who would have been ineligible to vote or even own property in Berkeley when the city was founded less than 150 years ago.

The Berkeley Historical Society and Museum has captured some of the rich and sometimes contentious politics of Berkeley's city government through interviews with several of its mayors; see Videos, under Oral Histories, at the BHSM website, [berkhistory.org](http://berkhistory.org).

To learn more about Berkeley's Japanese American community, of which Mayor Adena Ishii is a part, visit BHSM's current exhibit, *Roots, Removal and Resistance: Japanese Americans in Berkeley*.

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(“In Topaz” – continued from page 9)

This is why I am moved by the poetry plaque at 2081 Addison Street.

My father was not a poet, but he liked to read, and he also was a nurseryman who enjoyed growing azaleas, poinsettias, Easter lilies, and camellias. He would have enjoyed stopping and reading “In Topaz.” He would have appreciated how, like Sylvia Plath, Toyo Suyemoto is able to express the bleakness of life. But she does more than Plath. She conveys hope that life can change.

I'm now in my eighties so I cannot travel as far and wide as I once did. But I can make pilgrimages to Toyo's lovely poem. For that, I am grateful.



My older brother, Norman, and me playing outside our barrack in Topaz.

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