

Deborah Gesensway and Mindy Roseman. *Beyond Words: Images from America's Concentration Camps*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) 192 pp., \$24.95.

"Shikatanagai! Shikatanagai! It cannot be helped." The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II devastated the Japanese community, ruined businesses, and destroyed families. Memories and recollections of the Japanese American concentration camp experience are collected in this beautifully crafted work illustrating in text and prints the images produced by the incarcerated Japanese Americans. *Beyond Words* captures the personal insights of this experience, the unjust accusations and imprisonment of a people, their treatment as enemy aliens and foreigners, and "those damned barbed wire fences" enclosing them. Many found solace in expressing themselves in art and poetry illustrating their insights into the harshness of their displaced lives.

Formatting is critical in this literary and artistic production as the Japanese American work is traced within an historical context and is illustrative of the emotional trauma the uprooting of a people produced within the confines of barbed wire and war hysteria. The dimensions of racial oppression are clear as their words and depictions of camp life in paintings, poetry, and cartoons focus attention on the physical, emotional, and psychological betrayal America imparted upon the Japanese American people. Personal accounts are illustrative of their victimization and resilience as the Japanese learned to cope with camp life and the austerity of the WRA's pioneer community program.

An earlier work by Allen Eaton, *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire*, published almost a decade after the war in 1952, while illustrating camp art in various forms, fails to address the emotional trauma and historical context of the incarceration experience. The art presented in this earlier works suggests the resilience of the Japanese through their ability to adapt and assimilate in spite of the military necessity which led to their incarceration. In Eaton's work, the voices are those of people living outside the experience and seem to convey a spectacle on display rather than creating an understanding of a people's experience. Art, vis a vis a Euroamerican perception of art, is the focus of Eaton's work. *Beyond Words* uncovers the emotional tensions between the generations promoted by the unhealthy and closed environment of camp life as well as develops the political issues surrounding the War between Japan and the U.S. which further divided the Japanese community and the infrastructure of the Japanese family. And through personal accounts of their experience, Gesensway and Roseman are able to capture the "spirit" and "force" behind the Japanese American persona.

The Japanese American "assimilation" into the American mainstream has always remained incomplete as such a process is fallaciously grounded when such historical circumstances as the unjust incarceration

of 120,000 Japanese Americans whose voices and memories remain buried in library archives and people's attics is not acknowledged. Gesensway and Roseman have attempted to uncover and break the "silence" imposed upon the Japanese people who, as their work suggests, were never really silent at all. Most of the voices are from the Nisei generation as they talk about everyday camp life experiences, the uncertainties, and fears of further oppression. Many of the voices are mediated as the second generation fights to remember their experiences. The paintings juxtaposed with the poetry and text are most illuminating and place the reader inside camp, inside horse stalls and deserts, and inside the lives of the Japanese people themselves.

Recovery for many Japanese Americans has been difficult as many face the psychological trauma close to what Diane Akiyama suggests as being raped. Such a presentation of that experience through the artistic impressions of Henry Sugimoto, Kanga Takamura, Mine Okubo, and Chiura Obata and the poetry of Nyogen Sensaski and Toyo Suyemoto is an act of recovery. Their words and memories, are necessary to help future generations of Japanese Americans understand their history, art, culture, and traditions. More importantly, *Beyond Words* is a useful tool in helping America understand its people—the diversity and multi-cultural society which comprise the U.S.A.

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**Carolyn Gilman and Mary Jane Schneider. *The Way to Independence: Memories of a Hidatsa Indian Family, 1840-1920*. With essays by W. Raymond Wood, Gerard Baker, Jeffery R. Hanson, and Alan R. Woolworth. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987) xii, 371 pp., \$40.00; \$24.95, paper.**

In the early 1800s, when Lewis and Clark visited the Hidatsas, they lived at the mouth of the Knife River with their close allies the Mandans. The estimated 2,000 Hidatsas farmed the fertile valleys and lived in villages overlooking the river. But in 1837, smallpox struck these village dwellers and diminished their numbers by half. The remainder of Hidatsas and Mandans decided to leave their homes and journey north, settling in Like-a-Fishhook village. In 1885, the Hidatsas moved again, this time settling in Independence, North Dakota.

*The Way to Independence* traces the lives of three Hidatsa Indians: Buffalo Bird Woman, her brother Wolf Chief, and son Goodbird, who was recorded by the anthropologist Gilbert Wilson in the early twentieth century. Their life stories allow the reader to get a glimpse of how the