Second-Generation Civic America: Education, Citizenship, and the Children of Immigrants

The onset of recurrent mass immigration forced the United States to deal with a new problem—"the preservation of the ability of people of dissimilar origins to act together under dissimilar conditions." Public institutions and ethnic groups faced the challenge of creating forms of social capital that would facilitate the crossing of boundaries for social and civic participation. Putnam has described the complex of networking, norms, and mutual social trust bringing together different groups in pursuit of common social and civic objectives as "bridging" social capital.¹

Both the public schools and settlement houses of the Progressive era directed creative forces for organizing social and civic networks to overcome group divisions. These institutions were, in part, a reaction to the putative weakness of "bridging" social capital in immigrant communities in an attempt to advance public spiritedness and commitment to the public interest. Progressive-era educators and settlement workers, responding to the perception that the nation had become a society of myriad sub-communities isolated and alienated from each other, identified a "second-generation problem": Deprived of both upbringing in their ancestral homeland and assimilation into their host society, the children of immigrants existed in a transnational...
vacuum. To fill this civic void, schools and settlement houses exposed members of this second generation to an ideology of Americanization and a program of citizenship training. These structures of civic acculturation had the potential to be converted into instruments for increasing their inclusion in politics and other spheres of public life.2

Two institutions—McKinley High School in Honolulu and the West End House in Boston—illustrated the creation of “bridging” social capital at the intersection of Progressive-era education and immigration. These institutions had core memberships—Japanese at McKinley and Russian Jews at the West End House—that derived from highly solidaristic immigrant communities with dense networks of cooperative and coordinated roles anchored in families and communal subgroups. Such factors of social capital intrinsic to organized ethnic life have been frequently associated with the pooling of resources and the mutual assistance necessary for popular investment in educational opportunity.

In the early twentieth century, the rate of investment in advanced schooling rose in many areas where a substantial degree of ethnic and religious homogeneity and communal stability existed. Japanese and Jewish immigrants tended to sponsor prolonged schooling and to seek high returns on the education of their children. A mobility ethic operationalized by intergenerational partnership propelled a voluntary quest for educational opportunity. Attendance at McKinley High School (in an era when most youngsters never moved beyond the eighth grade) and active membership in the West End House reflected a high degree of voluntary initiative.3

Other by-products of immigration—social marginality and the effort to overcome its barriers to opportunity—played a role in fostering the creation of “bridging” social capital. Japanese-Americans evinced a profound discrepancy between the first-generation (Issei) experience of exclusion from naturalized American citizenship and the second-generation (Nisei) experience of

birthright American citizenship. The civic inequality of immigrant parents stimulated the Nisei to organize and mobilize collectively for full participation in American public life and to represent their community in the public realm, in short to achieve civically and politically what had been denied to their parents. Likewise, the social marginalization of “new immigrants” from Europe in an era of restrictionist politics and discriminatory institutional policies stimulated in second-generation American Jews an organized quest for social justice and social opportunity.

MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL: DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT The educational history of the Nisei in early twentieth-century Honolulu is an empirically rich area for investigating the effects of schooling on the shaping of ethnic civic community. In Hawaii, during the 1920s and 1930s, Nisei students were the primary subjects of a progressive education program aimed at cultivating modern democratic citizenship, largely because Japanese-Americans were the islands’ largest immigrant population from an alien culture. The mid-Pacific location of Hawaii, at the crux of American and Japanese geopolitical rivalry, added strategic urgency to the public school’s task of securing Nisei loyalties. To progressive educators in Hawaii, the Japanese-American second generation represented the dangerous possibility of a sub-community isolated and alienated by an ineradicable racial nationalism.

The post–World War I “Americanization” movement that shaped the development of progressive curricula in the public schools of Hawaii was not unlike the mainland cultural crusade

that sought to assimilate the children of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. William McKinley High School, nicknamed “Tokyo High” because of the predominance of Japanese-American students, provided extensive exposure to the ideals of liberal democracy in its history, civics, and English courses. The teaching of American citizenship at McKinley composed the building blocks of national consciousness in the second-generation Nisei.

The development of second-generation civic identity at McKinley can be gauged through an exploration of two sources—the Pinion, the weekly student newspaper, and a set of autobiographical essays written by Nisei students in 1926. The Pinion throws light upon how Nisei students came to see the public experience of participating in an educational program for Americanization. Issues published from 1925 to 1932 played a primary role in interpreting the institutional culture for civic acculturation at McKinley. The students on the newspaper’s staff formed a representative ethnic cross-section of second-generation society in Hawaii, a large proportion each year consisting of Japanese-Americans. As campus journalists, they covered school activities, discussed courses, and offered opinion and editorial pieces, much as in papers at other American high schools. The students’ autobiographical essays reveal how the educated members of the second-generation were building a new civic identity. An analysis of both records allows historians to reconstruct the engagement of the micro-worlds of ethnic subcultural identity and adolescent personality with the public world of official, nationalist identity. As will be shown, this triple interaction produced the bridging social capital possessed by a second-generation civic community.


6 William Carlson Smith, a sociologist trained at the University of Chicago, collected the student essays in 1926 with the cooperation of the Territorial Department of Public Instruction. See the William Carlson Smith Collection, “Life Histories of Students,” Hamilton
The Pinion's editorial policy focused on the vigorous and abundant school activities that promoted the greatness and privilege of American democracy. The Pinion articles described an institutional public culture shaped by civic knowledge and patriotic attitudes and explained to the institutional public how the Nisei students were absorbing American ways. The public high school created a powerful cultural medium to impress the ideas and practices of official Americanism on the children of immigrants. Essay and elocution contests, lectures, student government, and service programs were vehicles for teaching patriotism, citizenship, and democratic values.

The Pinion expressed the official public view of the institutional community on the experience of civic acculturation. By producing and consuming campus journalism, students made the new political language learned in the progressive classroom relevant to their wider institutional life. The editors of the Pinion wove the themes of official Americanism, taught to them in their English, social studies, and history classes, into their editorials and stories. Student writers clarified the civic meaning of school elections, activity programs, and athletics for their student readers.7

To the extent that student journalism expressed the high school's core values, it was the result of student writers and editors working within a stylistic and "values" paradigm set by administrators and teachers. The latter, however, did not manage or orchestrate Pinion journalism in a direct or heavy-handed fashion. The Pinion came to reflect an institutional paradigm; student editors consulted with faculty advisors and were "cued" indirectly by other teachers and administrators. From their classes, for example, Pinion writers learned their teachers' "worldview" and life perspectives, generally with respectful attention. This scholastic experience doubtlessly affected their public tone and judgment as student journalists. Still, a close and cumulative reading of Pinion

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7 Pinion, 21 Feb. 1927, 1; 8 March 1927, 1; 23 Jan. 1929, 3; 15 Nov. 1927, 1, 3; 12 Feb. 1926, 2; 19 Feb. 1926, 1–2; 26 Feb. 1926, 1–2; 19 March 1926, 1–2; 8 Feb. 1927, 1; 21 Feb. 1927, 1; 3 May 1927, 2.
text shows that authors were also free to express the tastes, humor, and life concerns of a generational peer culture.

The *Pinion* editors regularly ran articles on the country’s public icons, especially on their birthdays. Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln stood out as the foremost figures in the *Pinion*’s gallery of heroic leaders, but other statesmen were also accorded tribute, most notably Benjamin Franklin, who was saluted as a leading contributor to American independence, and Theodore Roosevelt, who was hailed as a “statesman, nature lover, explorer [and] soldier.” Editors of the *Pinion* also called attention to other important figures (not necessarily Americans) who had enriched American culture: John Keats, John Philip Sousa (composer of “The Stars and Stripes Forever”), George Eliot, Mark Twain, President William McKinley (the school’s namesake under whose administration Hawaii was annexed to the United States), Robert Burns, President Grover Cleveland, Joseph Pulitzer, Thomas Edison, and Louisa May Alcott. By paying tribute to these luminaries, the *Pinion* editors hoped that they could inspire students to emulate their values and achievements.8

The *Pinion* strenuously advocated linguistic assimilation as a necessary step toward becoming good American citizens, particularly admonishing students who used “pidgin” English—a mixture of English, Hawaiian, and local idioms borrowed from “immigrant” languages. In 1926, with the strong backing of the *Pinion*, the high school held its first “Better English Week,” which began with a campus parade. Instruction in public speaking, informal debate, and the art of conversation was introduced. To heighten the seriousness of the week’s agenda, students served as monitors for speech behavior: “Policeman and sleuths will snoop around then, to ‘nab’ all who abuse any rules of grammar.” A student-body grand jury indicted student offenders, and a pair of civics teachers subjected them to a mock trial. Students were urged to use proper English throughout the entire school year but especially during “Better English Week.”

Many Nisei described their participation in the institutional civic culture in histrionic terms, citing how such pride-inducing

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8 These inspirational tributes to great cultural figures appeared with regularity in the *Pinion* issues of 1930 and 1931.

patriotic activities as Flag Drills, the Fourth of July celebration, and singing the national anthem. The symbols of democracy provided a sense of protection and security. The boys were eager to join the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps to help defend their country. One Nisei declared his love for America in a pledge to “old glory.” It was natural, many students perceived, for those who were born and educated in America, taught American ideals, and spoke the English language, to feel strong loyalty to America. Moreover, by being patriotic, they felt that they followed in the Japanese tradition of loyalty to one’s country.

For Nisei students in prewar Hawaii, education was inseparable from the support system of their families. Nisei students appreciated their parents’ willingness to participate in their education. Some parents were determined that their children advance as far in school as they could and actively advised them about “what subjects to take and what course to follow.” The extent of parental support for education was described in the recollections of two McKinley High School students:

After graduating from the elementary school, I was sent to the city. My father realized that the country school was not well equipped and he thought that his son should learn a little of his native language. I was fortunate to be the son to have this opportunity. This change had done a great deal to me. The change gave me an opportunity to read better books and gave me a chance to hear and to see better things.

My parents were very much interested in our schools. They always consented if it was a school matter. My father is planning to make all of us go to the University. My eldest brother is now in the senior class of the University of Hawaii and my second brother is in the sophomore class of the same school. I am also planning to enter the University of Hawaii.¹⁰

In general, Nisei students saw their parents as going to extraordinary lengths to provide educational opportunity. Since their parents made great economic sacrifices to send them to high school and beyond, they were motivated to work as hard as possible on their studies.

¹⁰ McKinley essay (hereinafter MK)-75, MK-112, MK-213, WCS.
For Nisei at McKinley High School, American national consciousness and identity coexisted with formal institutions of Japanese culture. Many students in their autobiographies referred to the Japanese-language schools that they attended concurrently with their American public schools, many even into their secondary school years. A majority of students—including those who had dropped out of the Japanese-language schools in the elementary grades—thought that learning Japanese was indispensable for the development of communication and understanding between parents and children. In fact, one student believed that conflicts with parents took place because of the language gap. Another held that by improving communication between the generations, the Japanese-language schools helped to turn the Nisei into good citizens.\textsuperscript{11}

Students also cited practical incentives for knowing the “mother” tongue. As one student argued,

I believe we Japanese should go to the Japanese schools because when the big concerns want men to work for them they would rather have a “haole” [Caucasian] who speaks English, rather than a Japanese who isn’t sure of himself. But if this person understands and speaks Japanese well, as well as English, this would help him because the “haole” wouldn’t be able to understand the Japanese customers while the Japanese can understand both the English and Japanese customers and any employer would rather have a man who can do more work for him.

Another student expected that “in the future trade will be carried on with Orientals exclusively and in order to be friendly we must know this [Japanese] language.” Some students felt, however, that knowledge of Japanese would be less valuable in the future when its usage declined in Hawaii.\textsuperscript{12}

Students also described the Japanese-language school as a place to learn the history and values of their ancestral country, veneration for the aged, respect for teachers, love for education, obedience to law, and high standards of moral conduct. Through their texts and courses, they discovered a progressive, beautiful,

\textsuperscript{12} MK-19, MK-1, WCS.
industrious, and culturally rich Japan. They were inspired by heroic sagas about loyal and courageous samurais and relived Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War. The education at the language school cultivated the Nisei’s pride in their ethnic heritage.

Although they were not above criticizing particular groups, the Nisei students decried racial discrimination. The multiracial society of Hawaii helped to broaden their outlook about such matters. As one student discerned, the customs and values of all groups were growing more familiar to everyone. They were proud of racial harmony in Hawaii.

Students found sustenance for their cosmopolitan ideals in the democratic creed of equality and the Christian idea of universal spiritual brotherhood. The Pinion regularly advised students to preserve these traditional American values. During its coverage of Education Week in 1925, the editorial column instructed, “The strength, character, reputation and influence of a nation depend upon the education of the citizens. Education goes hand in hand with religion and piety . . . everything that is done or said in favor of better and still better education is a step toward God, country and humanity.” In 1927, the keynote themes of Education Week were American freedom and the Christian spirit of service. The symbolism of the Fourth of July affirmed “the achievement of our national freedom” and of Christmas, “the life of the world’s greatest religious teacher.”

The Pinion reported many other campus events that advocated the need for moral and religious instruction, often identified as Christian. At the first general student-body assembly of 1928, speakers discussed how to “strive for a better Christian character.” Citing the Christian piety of Washington and President Calvin Coolidge, a student argued that religious character was indispensable to the making of good American citizens. Another speaker addressed the role of morality in American citizenship, reciting Roosevelt’s words, “A man educated in mind, but not in morality, is a menace to society.” A bishop invited to campus to lecture on the spirit of service praised American democracy as the creation of a people who comprehended “a right total view of the universe.” He characterized Lincoln as a man imbued with the cosmic

spirit, pledged to God to abolish slavery for the sake of democracy. Democracy and Christianity were at the center of McKinley’s civic life; they were universalizing creeds with the power to bring people together, a key concern of young people growing up in a multiracial society.\textsuperscript{14}

Many students felt that they had to become actively involved in improving race relations. One girl admonished Niseis to be more outgoing and diplomatic:

The Hawaiian-born Japanese should try to be friends with the haoles instead of criticizing each other. If they act friendly, the haoles would have no reason to go against them and the friendship would grow. Every race has some whose pride is above everything and who don’t care to associate with those of different races and these are the ones who cause the unfriendliness between the races.

Many Nisei students supported programs and social activities to ease racial antipathy and to facilitate racial mingling, endorsing such organizations as the YMCA, Boy Scouts, and Girls Reserves.\textsuperscript{15}

The \textit{Pinion} guided its readers to link American democracy with Hawaii’s unique role as a pluralistic society. The editors portrayed campus life at McKinley as building a multiracial egalitarianism that would serve as the foundation of democratic life. They used graphic and text devices to weave together the themes of patriotism and the civic unity of the world’s races. The annual George Washington’s Birthday issue of 1926 coupled an illustration of Washington drawn by a Nisei senior classman with an article entitled “All are Equal at McKinley; Spirit not Color, Counts.” The point was that the harmonious interracialism at McKinley was based on American citizenship.\textsuperscript{16}

The \textit{Pinion} regularly referred to the racial diversity of the student body in its articles and editorials, adducing that more than ten races were represented among the students enrolled at McKinley High School. Articles encouraged students to feel that they were part of a historic project to realize American democracy as Hawaiian racial democracy. A feature entitled “All Races Meet and Play Together Here without Prejudice” declared, “McKinley

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. 17 Jan. 1928, 3; 8 March 1927, 1.
\textsuperscript{15} MK-19, WGS.
\textsuperscript{16} Pinion, 19 Feb. 1926, 1.
High School is unique in that it is perhaps the only high school in the whole world where so many students of different races meet on equal ground . . . . Is there any place on earth that has so many different nationalities so Americanized?” Another article, “All Are Equal at McKinley,” boasted, “With approximately two thousand three hundred students in McKinley high school, ninety percent are of races other that Caucasian, and yet there is no racial problem in the school. . . . [The reason] would be that they are mostly American citizens.” In an opinion column, one editor cited students’ responsibility to spread racial harmony not just in school or in America, but throughout the world.\textsuperscript{17}

Despite the \textit{Pinion}'s, strong emphasis on Americanism, various articles mentioned that the high school provided its students numerous opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding of Japan and Japanese culture. The \textit{Pinion} often highlighted campus events that dealt with inter-Pacific relations between the Territory of Hawaii and the United States, on one hand, and Japan, on the other.\textsuperscript{18}

McKinley High School afforded opportunities for the Nisei students to deal publicly with issues of ethnic interest. The columns and reports in the \textit{Pinion} suggested that even though the institutional culture was clearly American, it also permitted public explorations of Japanese-American identity. The features of Japanese culture were introduced to students often in a positive form. McKinley supported Japanese language instruction, a Nisei student organization, lectures on subjects related to Japan, and exchange programs with Japanese students. The ideological teaching of Americanism had the power to incorporate the second generation as American citizens, but this civic acculturation rested on an accommodation to ethnic pluralism. By recognizing the Niseis’ interest in Japanese culture and international relations, McKinley allowed American citizenship to be compatible with the ethnic identity of Japanese-Americans.

This dual set of institutional opportunities probably helped to strengthen the identification of Japanese-Americans with an integrative American civic culture. According to an op-ed writer for the \textit{Pinion},

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 2; 16 Jan. 1930, 2; 15 Dec. 1926, 16.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 1 Feb. 1927, 1; 16 Nov. 1928, 1; 15 Dec. 1926, 15; 2 Oct. 1925, 1.
All citizens have equal rights. The phrase is upheld by every student in high school. . . . With the students of different races, the class works and studies just as well as any class in any high school on the mainland. . . . No teacher has the impression that because of a student’s color or race he should get a certain amount of attention. The teacher too thinks that every student has equal rights to learn. . . . [The students] are as friendly as if they were of the same race. . . . Not a thing about racial friendship prevails among the students and there is no antagonistic feeling there will be no racial problem to solve in McKinley high school.19

In their autobiographies, the Nisei tended to counter prejudice by accentuating their identity as American citizens. In the wider society as well as in the classroom, Nisei students endeavored to lay claim to their equal rights: “I am an American citizen so I think I should have equal rights as others.” As loyal citizens, they were determined to make every effort to serve the United States: “We are true Americans and we must prove that we are true Americans.” Their patriotism was an assertion that they belonged to America. The students deeply felt the need to show their citizenship because they worried that “white people do not consider American-born Japanese as Americans . . . they confuse largely . . . their native tongue [and] nationality.” A student described the challenge of “doing away with racial clashes” to make Hawaii “one of the most successful laboratories of racial associations.” 20

The Nisei felt that their background as Japanese-Americans equipped them to overcome racial divisions and contribute to the democratic melting pot. One student expressed a fervor for promoting the common good of both their adopted and ancestral country, “to create a harmonious relationship.” Another made a pledge for all Nisei, who had “the responsibility and duty to distinguish ourselves as ideal American citizens, and at the same time, to pay obedience and respect due to our Japanese parents,” to establish “the foundation of the realization of World Wide Brotherhood.” Yet another saw the desire to harmonize the relations of Japan and the United States as not only a personal cause but an international mission for which Hawaii was uniquely

19 Ibid., 16 Jan. 1930, 2.
20 MK-173, MK-101, MK-204, MK-43, WCS.
positioned to serve. This task would be of the highest interest to the entire world. As Japanese-Americans with knowledge about both America and Japan, these students were in a good position to help improve relationships between the two countries.\textsuperscript{21}

The emerging second-generation of Japanese-Americans fashioned an ideal of consensual democratic pluralism and undertook to install it in their public relations with the wider society. Despite a coercive campaign of Americanization in the 1920s that intended to homogenize the Japanese into Anglo-conformity, the second generation, with the aid of first-generation leaders, established a public image that combined American citizenship with Japanese-American ethnicity. The achievements of the Japanese of Hawaii disproved the idea that Asians were culturally unassimilable. Most important, the Nisei students at McKinley believed that their successful adoption of American democratic ideals was compatible with Japanese heritage. Students whose parents came from Asia were eminently prepared for full citizenship in a modern democracy.\textsuperscript{22}

The Nisei of McKinley participated in a collective reenactment of the American founding. They re-invented their public persona to achieve what Sollors described as “the universal regeneration position,” the renewal of the spiritual experience of democracy by every group. As Dewey expressed it in 1916,

\begin{quote}
No matter how loudly anyone proclaims his Americanism if he assumes that any one social strain, any one component culture, no matter how early settled it was in our territory, or how effective it has proven in its own land, is to furnish a pattern to which all other strains and cultures are to conform, he is a traitor to American nationalism.\textsuperscript{23}
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\textbf{WEST END HOUSE: THE MUTUALISM AND VOLUNTARISM OF CIVIC PATRIOTISM} In 1906, a boys’ club was founded in one of Boston’s immigrant districts of the West End. The West End House was endowed by James J. Storrow, Jr., a patrician who was active in municipal affairs and politics, but its staff and membership

\textsuperscript{21} MK-44, MK-45, MK-23, WCS.  
\textsuperscript{23} Werner Sollors, \textit{Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture} (New York, 1986), 87–88.
came from the neighborhood—newcomers from Russia, Italy, Poland, Ireland, and Greece. Second-generation American Jews constituted a large share of the membership, as well as the staff. Through sports and cultural programs, House members learned how to work as part of an organized group and to set their sights on self-improvement.24

Mitchell Freiman, the first director of the West End House, established its institutional ethos—namely, to prepare members for useful and productive citizenship. The coupling of self-help and teamwork was a reflection of the social ethic in a neighborhood of striving immigrant families. The competitive atmosphere of such structured group activities as athletics and debating created peer pressure to achieve personal and collective excellence. These shaping experiences had residual effects: An extremely active alumni association persevered to live up to the vision and expectation of the House founders.25

The West End House created an institutional matrix of mutual assistance. For example, from its inception it functioned as an informal employment agency. Newsboys—the first members of the club—helped each other to find employment by swapping routes and sharing knowledge. Alumni, who returned to visit the club, hired members as apprentices, office boys, and clerks. House members gained a network of personal contacts for obtaining jobs and occupational counselling. They also benefitted from interaction with older successful members and alumni who were willing to help with homework and give advice about colleges or professional schools.26

A 1980 survey of club alumni born before World War II showed high levels of education and occupational mobility. Of those sons born before 1920 whose fathers held blue-collar occupations, 98 percent went to high school, 31 percent entered college, and 24 percent attended professional or postgraduate schools. The sons from working-class families who were born between 1921 and 1940 attained comparable levels of education. Approximately 90 percent of the sons from working-class families

26 Ibid., 125–126.
in both birth cohorts attained employment in white-collar jobs. A sizable cluster of House alumni had careers in the professions of law, medicine, and dentistry; others found their calling in business, journalism, academics, sports, and the entertainment field.\textsuperscript{27}

The West End House encouraged a life-long dedication to neighborhood citizenship. Founded for the “mental” and “moral” advancement of its members, it provided forums, debates, speeches, and essay contests that taught the arts of civic advocacy. Discussions centered on municipal reform, immigration policy, pacifism, and socialism. Jacob Kahn, an immigrant son, published an essay in the House Bulletin called “My Heroes,” which exposed the false heroism of the powerful and wealthy and described the true heroism of working people in the spirit of socialist struggle and the American dream of upward mobility through self-reliance and education. Kahn “worshipped people who honestly desire that children, instead of being sent to factories, be sent to schools and playgrounds, while their fathers will be given a good wage, in order that they may bring up healthy members of society.” His “heroes were parents, who offer the best there is in them in order that their children may grow up to be useful, and honest citizens,” and he expressed thanks to “people who do their utmost to end racial prejudice, and teach us that we are children of one common Father.”\textsuperscript{28}

The staff worked hard to foster the spirit of equality in the neighborhood and in the words of the founder, James J. Storrow, to keep the West End House “a club for all boys.” The membership showed great ethnic diversity, and it kept changing as the West End changed. Team sports provided a context for interethnic understanding. Boys learned to rely upon teammates of different nationalities, to benefit from their unselfish play, and to sacrifice willingly for others. Competing together created ties of interdependence and mutual trust.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} Some of the House alumni who entered the legal profession became important figures in public service: Joel Cohen, the chief counsel for the Social Security Administration; Harold Kowal, counsel of the National Labor Relations Board; Irving Roginson, a federal judge; Charles Atwater, a United States diplomat in Thailand; John Higgins and Frank Tomasello, judges in the Massachusetts Superior Courts; and Samuel Peitchell, Joseph Schneider, and Benjamin Trustman, outstanding leaders in the legal profession. See Ueda, \textit{West End House}, 126–136.

\textsuperscript{28} Burnes, \textit{West End House}, 84–86.

The urban renewal of the West End in the late 1950s brought the end of the old neighborhood and the West End House. Instead of closing their doors forever, the Alumni Association began to explore new sites for the clubhouse in 1961. Throughout the 1960s, its leaders negotiated with officials and launched a massive drive to raise funds for the new House. They decided to locate in Allston, because the majority of Alumni Association members lived there or nearby. As the House Survey and Planning Committee explained, “The Alumni are an integral and vital part of the West End House and if this group becomes disinterested and stagnates, the organization will no longer be able to function as it has for the past sixty years.”

According to State Representative Norman Weinberg, the new location in Allston had a “melting pot atmosphere,” more than half of its population being immigrants and their children. Because of its social diversity and its accessibility, the area received a flow of upwardly mobile people from the city. It seemed fitting for the West End House, by then led by second- and third-generation immigrants, to follow their natural constituency.

The civic bonds forged early in life became a valuable resource during the project of relocation. The majority of the Alumni Association felt that reestablishing the facility was the responsibility of those who had benefitted from the generosity of Storrow. An article in the Boston Globe described the alumni’s commitment to the project as based on the sense of history and civic obligation that they had learned in their youth. In the words of George Kane, the director, “Don’t we have an obligation to [our founders], and to their memories?” The colorful brochures sent out to alumni to solicit donations appealed to this attitude. One brochure, entitled “Rededicated to Service,” displayed an artist’s conception of the “New West End House” and announced that “the spirit will never die.”

Since this capital fund program was a unique event, rather than an annual campaign for operating costs, it required generous

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gifts and numerous contributors. When the new clubhouse was dedicated in 1971, 1,283 contributors, large and small, had pledged $650,000 to the Building Fund.32

The grassroots mobilization of alumni donors to build a new West End House fulfilled Storrow’s philanthropic agenda—his desire to help boys attain successful positions from which they could help others, in turn. The alumni who were aided by Storrow’s philanthropy saw themselves as paying a debt. They returned the yield of their life achievements to the West End House so that a new generation could restart the cycle of civic patriotism.

DEMOCRATIC CIVIC COMMUNITIES OF THE SECOND GENERATION

Social capital accumulated early in the generational cycle at McKinley High School and the West End House, building into a resource for organizing collective endeavors in adulthood. The creation of this fund of social capital also facilitated the movement from particularistic ethnic identity to broader forms of collective identity.33

In Honolulu, the Nisei elite emerged from McKinley with a vision of universal citizenship, equal opportunity, religious ecumenicalism, intergroup tolerance, and ethnic pride. As second-generation Japanese who were ethnic outsiders, they were acutely aware of the obstacles and challenges. Nevertheless, through civic acculturation, they endeavored to transform their lives and change American society in Hawaii to establish a democratic pluralism that rose above the bounds of race.

The institutional culture portrayed in the Pinion shaped the bonds of civic community in the second generation. McKinley created a peer network in which students helped each other see citizenship as a transracial status that would bring them into the American mainstream. It also introduced ideological motifs with the potential to be appropriated for political mobilization.34

McKinley High School shaped the political worldview of many future leaders in the Japanese-American community. It

taught the Nisei a new language of political democracy as applied and cultivated in student government, student journalism, and social studies. The vocabulary of equal rights would later shape the political language of racial democracy that former students there would use to express their quest for power in Hawaii. The McKinley experience created civic connections among new Americans of Japanese ancestry. During their rise in the Democratic party and their push to win statehood for Hawaii, the Nisei leaders mobilized politically through the networks established in the civic community of the public high school.

The commemorative volume assembled by graduates, “A Hundred Years: McKinley High School, 1865–1965,” pointed out the conjunction between the civic lessons learned at McKinley and the attainment of statehood for Hawaii. Excerpts from the “centennial day” speech of John A. Burns, Hawaii’s Democratic governor, described McKinley’s key role in teaching Hawaii’s postwar generation that they were part of a democratic civic community and recognized “the many courageous superintendents and principals and teachers” who “steadfastly fought” for the right of Hawaii’s children to learn about the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. For example, Miles E. Cary, McKinley’s principal before World War II, constructed the high school’s curriculum to motivate students “to change [their] environment,” and after the war, Burns recalled, many did just that, as proved by Hawaii’s achievement of statehood in 1959.

Burns further pointed out that “the distinguished McKinley alumni” had a central role in the changes that made Hawaii an “integral and essential part” of the United States. They helped to bring about not “merely the realization of Statehood,” but also “the full appreciation of . . . American rights” that they had learned in McKinley’s classrooms.

The McKinley High School experience occurred at the geographical and social margins of American life, but it probably had

parallels with the experiences of the educated second generation in the Polish, Jewish, Italian, Greek, and Armenian enclaves of the United States. Peer-group institutions in immigrant communities were designed to produce a common experience of acculturation. Observing the education of Japanese-Americans in Hawaii, one commentator noted, “The theory that the Oriental mind is essentially different from the Occidental mind no one who teaches in Hawaii would consider for a moment.”

Boston’s West End House harnessed the immigrant ethic of self-help and teamwork to serve the wider community and to strengthen its democratic pluralistic foundations. Many of its former members fondly remembered the egalitarian fraternalism of club life: Lee Romanow, a prominent attorney, praised “the example set by the Director, Jack Burnes, whose dignity, manner, and sensitivity” applied to all the boys. Alan Skivsky felt that the House helped him to “grow emotionally, physically, and intellectually in a multi-ethnic, racial environment.” Alfred Ferrara expressed gratitude to the club “where he learned to respect and trust other people who were not of the same faith.” David Knopping spoke for many alumni when he stated that “caring for the welfare of boys of all religions and color” was an enduring legacy of the House.

Gerstle has pointed out that civic education often helped European immigrant youths gain political self-consciousness and to pursue the goal of inclusive society. For example, Vito Marcontonio was a citizenship teacher in an Italian-American community center in East Harlem before he became a Congressman. Another example is Walter Reuther, who, as a German-American high-school student in his early twenties, joined a 4C club (standing for cooperation, confidence, comradeship, and citizenship), sponsored by the chamber of commerce, where he learned the civic values that laid the foundation for his later role as a national labor leader.

The educational experiences of second-generation immigrant Americans helped to enlarge the possibilities for communication and social coexistence. Both at McKinley High School and the

39 Gerstle, “Politics of Patriotism.”
West End House, the intensification of democratic social and civic networks within ethnic subgroups led to the extension of civic engagement beyond original group boundaries. McKinley High School students and West End House members established networks that fostered the interethnic and cosmopolitan dimensions of social trust, public activism, and voluntarism. These experiences set an agenda for joint and collaborative activity in public life that weakened parochial divisions and made group relations more open and permeable.

The educated members of the second generation were able to convert such structures of “socialization” as citizenship and ethical training into new forms of social capital for including themselves in public life and the social mainstream. They participated in the creation of the “bridging” social capital that underlay the rise of a public philosophy of democratic pluralism in the United States.

Second-generation leaders, who came into their prime years after World War II, sought to strengthen a public agenda that brought different groups together on an egalitarian basis. For example, National Brotherhood Week, sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews since 1933, gained new prominence when, immediately after the war, President Harry S. Truman became its honorary chair and former Governor Harold E. Stassen of Minnesota presided over its events. The President of the National Conference saw far-reaching popular support for “the movement of spiritual motivation” represented by Brotherhood Week, the theme of which was “In Peace As in War—Teamwork.” A Jewish religious leader hoped that the spirit of this event would engender a higher consciousness of how “the problems of the postwar world can be solved only through united cooperation.” The editorial page of the New York Times summed up the continuing need for such public efforts as Brotherhood Week to help overcome divisions.40

In postwar American education, teachers, parents, and students grew receptive to improving intergroup relations and mutual understanding. Ginn and Company, the publisher, inaugurated the Tiegs–Adams Social Studies Series, which included such titles as Your People and Mine and Your Country and Mine: Our American

Neighbors. These textbooks demonstrated how different ethnic groups and different nations learned to work together for a more harmonious world.⁴¹

Organized public and institutional efforts to spread an American creed of unifying democratic pluralism were facilitated by the bridging social capital accumulated through the second generation’s collective education in the values of cosmopolitan democracy. Confidence in the mutually beneficial qualities of American diversity drew on direct experiences in neighborhood educational institutions, where different nationalities learned to work together in new civic communities. In the postwar decades, this popular attitude supported public policies to break down ethnic and racial barriers to the mainstream, resulting in a more sensitive relationship between the national whole and the ethnic part.

⁴¹ For example, see Josephine McKenzie, with Ernest W. Tiegs and Fay Adams, Your People and Mine (Boston, 1949), 6–7.