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We Chose Colorado: Japanese American Voices

Joyce Lebra

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We Chose Colorado is a compelling collection of oral histories voiced by over 40 persons of Japanese birth or heritage who now reside in Colorado. They include the histories of original immigrants (Issei) who left Japan prior to World War II, doing so for a variety of reasons, including recruitment by US railroad companies as laborers, by mining companies as miners, or to pursue farm work. Those histories are narratives of ambition, struggle, and success. Members of the second generation (Nisei) pursued educations and economic advance-ment for themselves and their families. But the histories also tell of setbacks as American citizens of Japanese descent were incarcerated in concentration camps by the US government during World War II. Following the war, however, Japanese Americans were able to rebuild their lives and to become once again valuable contributors to Colorado through the introduction of more-efficient farming methods, sushi, sake, ikebana, martial arts, karaoke and more.
Dr. Joyce Lebra provides valuable context and analysis of these fascinating accounts through an overview of the history of the Japanese presence in America generally and in Colorado specifically, enabling the reader to understand more readily and to appreciate more deeply the experiences of persons of Japanese birth or descent residing in America.

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