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This collection of biographical essays also includes Paul T. Takagi’s previously unpublished writings. It reviews a 140-year period in which Japanese Americans forged a new trans-Pacific identity. Historians will find a fresh interpretation of the reasons behind the tragic episode of placing West Coast Japanese in concentration camps beginning in 1942. The book revisits President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s culpability for these events, the role of the FBI in provoking divisions and violence in the camps, and the eugenic rationales behind the numerous studies conducted in the late-1920s and 1930s on the intelligence and delinquency rates of second-generation Japanese in America.

This work is also a cautionary tale for civil libertarians and all Americans, who can better recognize how vulnerable minorities become the target of abuse during periods of national emergency. Paul Takagi’s life serves as an inspiration to the many sons and daughters of immigrants now living in the United States, who will see that despite severe obstacles, a California farm boy nonetheless became an influential professor at one of America’s great universities.


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