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Abstract

The United States has a long and difficult history with immigrants, and it is something that is central to the legal and cultural development of the country. Hawaii, on the other hand, has a markedly different history in terms of immigration, and as a result, has a story that varies from that of the Mainland. Where the differences can be seen most prominently is the treatment of Japanese immigrants and citizens leading up to and throughout World War II. Through primary and secondary research into Japanese immigration to Hawaii and their foundation of a community, it is clear that their experience was different than that of those on the Mainland. These experiences then translated to a difference in treatment after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which can be seen in the drastically different personal accounts of life during the war, as well as newspaper editorials published throughout the war. All together, these events point to the importance of Hawaii's and the Mainland's different histories in respect to racism and immigration, in which Hawaii was found to be more tolerant of differences and less severe in their call for confinement. As a result, it can be argued that while people of Japanese descent still faced some troubles in Hawaii during the War, due to their successful integration into society, they were able to avoid some of the hardships faced by those on the Mainland, where immigrants were constantly shunned, harassed, or banned entirely.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306