

American Survivors

American Survivors is a fresh and moving historical account of US survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, breaking new ground not only in the study of World War II but also in the public understanding of nuclear weaponry. A truly trans-Pacific history, *American Survivors* challenges the dualistic distinction between Americans-as-victors and Japanese-as-victims often assumed by scholars of the nuclear war. Using more than 130 oral histories of Japanese American and Korean American survivors, their family members, community activists, and physicians – most of which appear here for the first time – Naoko Wake reveals a cross-national history of war, illness, immigration, gender, family, and community from intimately personal perspectives. *American Survivors* brings to light the history of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that connects, as much as separates, people across time and national boundaries.

Naoko Wake is Associate Professor of History at Michigan State University. A historian of gender, sexuality, and illness in the Pacific region, she has authored *Private Practices: Harry Stack Sullivan, the Science of Homosexuality, and American Liberalism* and coauthored with Shinpei Takeda *Hiroshima/Nagasaki Beyond the Ocean*. She was born and raised in Japan.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83527-5 — American Survivors
Naoko Wake
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83527-5 — American Survivors
Naoko Wake
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



NAOKO WAKE
HIROSHIMA & NAGASAKI
Trans-Pacific Memories of
**AMERICAN
SURVIVORS**

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83527-5 — American Survivors
Naoko Wake
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108835275
DOI: 10.1017/9781108892094

© Naoko Wake 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-83527-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83527-5 — American Survivors
Naoko Wake
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

**To all survivors with whom I spoke,
to all others with whom I did not.**

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83527-5 — American Survivors
Naoko Wake
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	page viii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	x
<i>Notes on the Text</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiv

Introduction	i
--------------	---

1	Cities of Immigrants	24
2	Remembering the Nuclear Holocaust	72
3	Reconnecting Families	119
4	War and Work across the Pacific	163
5	Finding Survivorhood	213
6	Endlessness of Radiation Illness	263

Epilogue	313
----------	-----

<i>Notes</i>	329
<i>Glossary</i>	365
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	366
<i>Index</i>	381

FIGURES

0.1	US survivors during a medical checkup conducted by Japanese physicians, June 18, 1989.	<i>page</i> 14
1.1	Yuriko Furubayashi’s family on board the <i>M. Sasama-maru</i> , circa 1938.	29
1.2	Jack Motoo Dairiki in a school photo taken in Hiroshima, 1942.	61
2.1	Kazue Suyeishi in Hawai‘i, 1949.	96
4.1	The <i>President Wilson</i> , one of the ships on which US survivors returned to the United States, March 12, 1949.	179
4.2	Sumiko Yoshida in front of Genbaku Dōmu (A-Bomb Dome) in Hiroshima, circa 1953.	194
4.3	Jack Motoo Dairiki’s drawing of the mushroom cloud, 1951.	199
4.4	A page from the album Kiyoshi Mike Nakagawa created during his deployment in Korea, 1953.	202
4.5	A keypunching certificate issued to Takeko Okano by Heald College in San Francisco, September 7, 1960.	209
5.1	A newspaper article featuring Alfred Kaneo Dote, <i>Nichi Bei Times</i> , August 6, 1974.	240

ix / List of Figures

5.2	Kuniko Jenkins with her oxygen tank, featured in <i>Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States of America Newsletter</i> , July 5, 1977.	256
6.1	A document explaining the medical services that may be available to US survivors at the Resthaven Psychiatric Hospital and Community Mental Health Center in Los Angeles, January 31, 1975.	286

ABBREVIATIONS

In the text

AAP	Asian Americans for Peace
ABCC	Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
ALC	Asian Law Caucus
CABS	Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States of America
FOH	Friends of Hibakusha
HPMA	Hiroshima-ken Ishikai (Hiroshima Prefectural Medical Association)
JACL	Japanese American Citizens League
JPHA	Nihon Kōshūeisei Kyōkai (Japan Public Health Association)
JUST	Japanese United in Search of Truth
MHW	Kōseishō (Ministry of Health and Welfare)
NAABSA	North American A-Bomb Survivors' Association
NCWA	National Church Women's Association
Oak Ridge	Oak Ridge National Laboratory
RERF	Radiation Effects Research Foundation
Shimin no Kai	Kankoku no Genbaku Higaisha o Kyūensuru Shimin no Kai (Citizens' Group to Assist Korean Survivors)

In the notes

AS	<i>Asahi shinbun</i>
Bill files	Series 1 Bill Files 1970–2004, Senate Health and Human Services Committee Records 1973–1974, LBI18: 1–14, California State Archives, Sacramento
CABSN	<i>Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States of America Newsletters</i> , Tokio Akihara Papers, Alameda, California
Chuman papers	Frank F. Chuman Papers, Japanese American Research Project Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles
CS	<i>Chūgoku shinbun</i>
Dymally papers	Mervyn Dymally Papers, Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles
FOHC	Friends of Hibakusha Collection of Oral Histories of US Survivors, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
GT	<i>Getting Together</i>
HE	<i>Hayaku engo o!</i> (Support, Now!)
“Health hearing”	“Hearing on: Health Problems of Atomic Bomb Survivors, May 4, 1974,” Bill files
HM	<i>Hokubei Mainichi</i>
Ichioka papers	Yuji Ichioka Papers, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles
JACLH collection	Japanese American Citizens League History Collection, Japanese American National Library, San Francisco, California
KM	<i>Kashu Mainichi</i>
Louie collection	Steve Louie Asian American Movement Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles
MS	<i>Mainichi shinbun</i>
NBT	<i>Nichi Bei Times</i>
NE	<i>National Enquirer</i>

xii / List of Abbreviations

NWC	Naoko Wake Collection of Oral Histories of US Survivors, Families, and Supporters, in possession of the author, East Lansing, Michigan
NYT	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>Payments hearing</i>	<i>Payments to Individuals Suffering from Effects of Atomic Bomb Explosions: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations of the Committee on the Judiciary</i> , House of Representatives, 95th Congress, Second Session on HR 8440, Serial No. 43, Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1978
PC	<i>Pacific Citizen</i>
PCr	<i>The Paper Crane</i> , Jennifer Miller Papers, Berkeley, California
RAR	Resthaven Auxiliary Records, University of Southern California Special Collections, Los Angeles
Roybal papers	Edward R. Roybal Papers, Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles
RS	<i>Rafu Shimpō</i>
STC	Shinpei Takeda Collection of Oral Histories of North and South American Survivors, G. Robert Vincent Voice Library, Michigan State University, East Lansing
Yoneda papers	Karl G. Yoneda Papers, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles
ZBZAH	Zai Burajiru, Zai Amerika Hibakusha Saiban o Shiensuru Kai, <i>Zai Burajiru, zai Amerika hibakusha saiban shien nyūsu</i> [News in support of court cases regarding <i>hibakusha</i> in Brazil and America], Hiroshima

NOTES ON THE TEXT

East Asian names, terms, and oral history edits

Throughout this book, I follow the East Asian practice of listing the family name first followed by the given name when I cite names of people of East Asian ancestry currently living in East Asia. For people of East Asian background currently living in North America, I list the given name first followed by the family name. I romanize Japanese and Korean terms following the Japanese Romanization System or the McCune–Reischauer Romanization System, respectively, unless individuals expressed an explicit wish to have their names spelled in ways that do not match either system. In quotations from historical sources, I use the romanization used by the original authors. All translations between English and Japanese are mine unless otherwise noted.

I quote from the oral histories with minimum edits and deletions. I omit “uh,” “um,” and “you know” etc., and I indicate any other omission by an ellipsis. I do not change the original utterances to make them grammatically flawless because I wish to convey their force and creativity. In a limited number of cases where I judge the original utterances compromise our comprehension – for instance, when an interviewee said that people “laugh at me from the back” and her likely intended meaning was that people “laugh at me behind my back” – I amend the quote to reflect their likely intended meanings. I do not indicate these edits by *sic* for ease of reading.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am moved by the countless hours that US survivors have lent me. They could have easily said no, but they did not. I am grateful for how they have come into my life. No page of this book would have been written without their desire to tell and be heard. I think of this desire as an awesome force of history.

I am thankful to those who not only talked to me, but also made sure that I had someone else to talk to. They were my informants, but they also brought much more to this book. I am deeply indebted to the kindness of Jack Motoo Dairiki, Jun Dairiki, Geri Handa, Izumi Hirano, Toshiko Hishinuma (pseudonym), Fumiko Imai, Kazue Kawasaki, Masako Kawasaki, Toshiro Kubota (pseudonym), Sachiko Matsumoto, Jennifer Miller (pseudonym), Ōba Yasushi, Kyohei Sakata (pseudonym), Junji Sarashina, Toyonaga Keizaburō, and Kathy Yamaguchi (pseudonym). I cherish times and places I spent with each and every *hibakusha*, their families, their supporters. And the food we shared.

I am fortunate to be in the Department of History at Michigan State University. Two chairs who have supported my research and writing – Walter Hawthorne and Lisa Fine – are as good as any historian could hope for. I thank my friends Rich Bellon, Liam Brockey, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Kirsten Fermaglich, Sean Forner, Karrin Hanshew, Charles Keith, Leslie Moch, Ed Murphy, Ethan Segal, Lewis Siegelbaum, Mickey Stamm, Ronen Steinberg, Helen Zoe Veit, and Mark Waddell. You are all incredible persons, and it feels great to record your names here. I am indebted to key support

xv / Acknowledgments

given by Nwando Achebe, Pero G. Dagbovie, Emine Evered, Laura Fair, Susan Sleeper-Smith, Tom Summerhill, and John Waller. I am grateful, too, to my colleagues in Lyman Briggs College, where the History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science program is housed. Special thanks to Bob Bell, Robyn Bluhm, Marisa Brandt, Kendra Cheruvelil, Kevin Elliott, Michele H. Jackson, Aaron McCright, Daniel Menchik, Elizabeth H. Simmons, Jerry Urquhart, Sean Valles, and Ak Zeleke for their collegiality.

I cannot thank enough my friends at the Asian Pacific American Studies Program at Michigan State for their guidance, support, and care. Andrea Louie, Terese Guinsatao Monberg, Anna Pegler-Gordon, and Sitara Thobani, you probably do not know how much you mean to me. You do. My friends who call themselves APIDA/A Women Warriors – Maggie Chen-Hernandez, Jonglim Han, Sharon Chia Claros – you distracted me from writing this book, then helped me write it, too. The same appreciation goes to Kate Firestone, Ian Gallardo, Brian Hercliff-Proffer, Jeffrey Tsang, as well as my “teammates” in the Coalition of Racial and Ethnic Minorities – Eunice Foster, Kevin Leonard, Emily Sorroche, Stratton Lee III, Danielle Flores Lopez, and Melissa Martinez. It is incredible that we meet as much as we do while we have this other job that is our actual job.

Beyond Michigan State, I am grateful to Judy Tzu-Chun Wu and Lisa Yoneyama for their thoughtful reading of this book for Cambridge. Though in different ways, they each deeply engaged with my work, and very generously. Joonhong Ahn, Eiichiro Azuma, Janet Brodie, Kate Brown, Elyssa Faison, Peter Galison, Andrea Geiger, Laura Hein, Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, Jane Hong, Tom Ikeda, Robert A. Jacobs, Michael Jin, Mire Koikari, James Kyung-Jin Lee, M. Susan Lindee, Richard Minear, Brian Niiya, Gary Y. Okihiro, Leslie J. Reagan, Greg Robinson, Andrew Rotter, Takahashi Hiroko, Shinpei Takeda, Akiko Takenaka, Tsuchiya Yuka, Tsujimoto Masashi, Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, Ji-Yeon Yuh, and Ran Zwigenberg read or heard parts of this book at different stages, and taught me things I had not thought about before. I also thank Ellen Wu for helping me find a way into this project early on. Two editors at Cambridge who shepherded this book – Debbie Gershenowitz and Cecelia Cancellaro – were delightful to work with: Debbie stood firmly by the project that became this book; Cecelia read the manuscript closely and perceptively, while challenging me to think of the book broadly. The generous support from the Association of Asian Studies, the Huntington

xvi / Acknowledgments

Library, and the Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for Atomic Bomb Victims was essential for my research, as were funds from the Center for Gender in Global Context, the Asian Studies Center, the International Studies and Programs, and the Office of Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, all at Michigan State.

My father Wake Hirotsugu passed away before he had a chance to hold this book in his hands. He would have been delighted to do so. My mother Wake Shigemi and my sister Taniguchi Yumiko have continued to support me with love, something that I have come to appreciate more keenly than before. I am grateful to my brother-in-law Taniguchi Hiroshi, and my nephews, Kenta and Tetsu, for their joyful presence. No one can measure how much Steve Stowe has given to this book. I asked, and he always said, “Okay.” At every turn, we wondered together. I know how fortunate I am to be with you.