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John Okada

The Life and Rediscovered Work of the Author of No-No Boy

EDITED BY FRANK ABE, GREG ROBINSON,
AND FLOYD CHEUNG

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES; BIOGRAPHY, AUTOBIOGRAPHY, AND MEMOIR; PACIFIC NORTHWEST / HISTORY

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FRANK ABE is a journalist and producer of the PBS documentary *Conscience and the Constitution*. **GREG ROBINSON** is professor of history at Université du Québec a Montréal whose most recent book is *The Great Unknown: Japanese American Sketches*. **FLOYD CHEUNG** is professor of English language and literature and American studies at Smith College and editor of early Asian American literary works by H. T. Tsiang, Sadakichi Hartmann, and others.

No-No Boy, John Okada's only published novel, centers on a Japanese American who refuses to fight for the country that incarcerated him and his people in World War II and, upon release from federal prison after the war, is cast out by his divided community. In 1957, the novel faced a similar rejection until it was rediscovered and reissued in 1976 to become a celebrated classic of American literature. As a result of Okada's untimely death at age forty-seven, the author's life and other works have remained obscure.

This compelling collection offers the first full-length examination of Okada's development as an artist, placing recently discovered writing by Okada alongside essays that reassess his lasting legacy. Meticulously researched biographical details, insight from friends and relatives, and a trove of intimate photographs illuminate Okada's early life in Seattle, military service, and careers as a public librarian and a technical writer in the aerospace industry. This volume is an essential companion to *No-No Boy*.

The contributors are Lawson Fusao Inada, Martha Nakagawa, Stephen H. Sumida, Shawn Wong, and Jeffrey T. Yamashita.

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"This volume reminds us of the key place of Okada's novel in the development of Asian American literary history. It makes us consider literary history more cogently, locating *No-No Boy* as both a literary artifact and as political and social intervention. By proposing new ways of reading and understanding elements—even controversial ones—in the text, this collection of essays highlights how novels that engage history continue to be relevant for new generations."

—Rocio G. Davis, author of *Relative Histories: Mediating History in Asian American Families*

