



**University of Guelph
Department of History**

MA Thesis Defence

Student: Jocelyn Greenwood	Date: Wed., Dec. 18, 2013
Time: 1:00 pm	Place: Room 020, MacKinnon

**“There is absolutely no room for optimism:” The Dehumanization,
Destruction and Degradation of Japanese in North American World War II
Editorial Cartoons**

abstract

Between 1941 and 1945, following Pearl Harbor and America’s entrance into World War II, Japanese began to feature prominently in editorial cartoons across North America. The depiction of the Japanese in these cartoons was neither accurate nor dignified. Popular themes of editorial cartoons depicting the Japanese during this time were: the dehumanization of the Japanese enemy, the destruction of Japan, and the degradation of both Japanese people and their culture. By depicting the Japanese as primitive and less than human, editorial cartoonists during the war worked to gather support for the war effort, while also demonstrating to Americans their interpretation of what the enemy was like. The information on which the cartoonists based their information was provided by both the American government and Western scholars who had little knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Japanese people. Editorial cartoons are a powerful form of propaganda and commentary on situations of the day. The public, however, has to be cautious in viewing the information in the cartoons as a true reflection of both the people and the situation being represented.

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