

## HEART MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE CENTER EDUCATION – HIGH SCHOOL/ADULT

Recommended reading, viewing and activities for students in grades 9 and up about Heart Mountain Relocation Center and the Japanese American Internment of WWII

### Books

*All of the books and movies below are available through the Heart Mountain Book Store*

**Heart Mountain: Life in Wyoming's Concentration Camp** by Mike Mackey - Tells about the Heart Mountain Internment Camp, the daily lives of the internees, and the different factions from Heart Mountain involved with the draft issue.

**Remembering Heart Mountain** by Mike Mackey - This is a collection of scholarly essays that examines the history of Japanese Internment at Heart Mountain before, during, and after internment.

**Farewell to Manzanar** by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, James D. Houston - The true story of one spirited Japanese American family's attempt to survive the indignities of forced detention and of a native-born American child who discovered what it was like to grow up behind barbed wire in the United States.

**On the Corner of Bitter and Sweet** by Jamie Ford - A story of a Chinese boy who grows into a man during WWII and how he tried to live by his beliefs after befriending a Japanese American girl.

**Snow Falling on Cedars** by David Guterson- In 1954 a fisherman is found drowned near San Pedro Island and a Japanese American named Kubuo Miyamoto is charged with his murder.

**Freedom to Die For their Country** by Eric Muller - In the spring of 1942, the federal government forced West Coast Japanese Americans into detention camps on suspicion of disloyalty. Two years later, the government demanded even more, drafting them into the same military that had been guarding them as subversives. Most of these Americans complied, but *Free to Die for Their Country* is the first book to tell the powerful story of those who refused. Based on years of research and personal interviews, Eric L. Muller re-creates the emotions and events that followed the arrival of those draft notices, revealing a dark and complex chapter of America's history.

**Letters from the 442** by Minori Mesuda, Hana Mesuda and Dianne Bridgman - This is the first collection of letters by a member of the legendary 442nd Combat Team, which served in Italy and France during World War II. Written to his wife by a medic serving with the segregated Japanese American unit, the letters describe a soldier's daily life.

### DVDs

**All We Could Carry** - Students gain insight from the internees' hardships. They will experience what it was like to leave their homes, possessions, and normal daily life behind to be interned at Heart Mountain. They will explore camp life, pass-time activities, and social structure and be able to compare and contrast these experiences to their own life experiences.

**Days of Waiting** - Students will explore what life was like in an internment camp and all the social issues involved in a community governing itself. They will study how the internees lived and communicated under strict conditions.

**Conscience and Constitution** - A look at a group of young Americans during World War II who refused to be drafted into service while their government denied them their rights as citizens.

### **Suggested Activities**

#### **1) Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Tour**

**Objective:** Students visit the Interpretive Center at Heart Mountain to see the memorabilia of the internees, learning the scope of the camp, and follow the internees' footsteps through history. They should have a more personal understanding of the emotional injustices that the internees faced upon leaving.

**Activity 1:** Pre-tour lesson in class before coming to the Center.

a. Have students read brief history leading up to the internment camps, life there, and life after camp. See **History** section on our website

b. Students can read any of the above books prior to their visit to the Center.

**Activity 2:** Center Tour

a. Students will be given a tag similar to the tags given to the Internees before they left home. The tag will have one of two family numbers on it. Students will be asked to find the family number in the exhibit and write down the family name that corresponds with the number. They will need to take these tags back to school with them.

b. Students will watch the video *All We Could Carry*. This film features twelve men and women who were at Heart Mountain, children and young adults at the time, confined behind barbed wire and surrounded by armed guards in watchtowers. They share a moving account of their daily life in the camp and their resilience.

c. While touring the Center, students will be asked to either complete a scavenger hunt or Center Worksheet. These worksheets can be used as part of the post-tour class discussion.

**Activity 3:** Setsuko Saito Higuchi Memorial Walking Tour and Honor Roll

This 1000 feet walking tour guides students through key moments in the Heart Mountain history and references historic objects that are still present on the surrounding landscape. The Honor Roll honors the over 800 men and women who served in the U.S. military from Heart Mountain during WWII, including two Medal of Honor recipients. Students will be asked to write down one name from the honor roll.

**Activity 4:** Post-tour lesson in class after visiting the Center.

Students will reference the tags they were given and find the family name and number on the census sheets. Students will discuss in class where their family came from, how many people were in their family, what their address was, and where they went when the camp was closed.

#### **2) Journalism / Writing Lesson**

**Objective:** Students will explore the internees' lives, and how they communicated within camp and around the United States through their newspapers.

**Activity 1:** Students will write a class newspaper similar to the Heart Mountain Eagle, Echoes, or The Sentinel using archived newspapers on the internet. The class can split up into groups and each take a section of the paper making up their own paper. In conclusion they can discuss why their section of the paper was important to camp life and communication.

**Activity 2:** The students will compare The Cody Enterprise, The Powell Tribune, The Lander Journal or other local newspaper to The Sentinel from Heart Mountain. They can pick a day of publication and compare community attitudes, support, or rejection of the internees.

**Activity 3:** The students will journal for a week about what they would do as an internee of their own age listing daily activities in and out of school.

### 3) Art History Lesson

**Objective:** Students will look at the art work done by the internees in the relocation camps. The art was a source of communication and of recording history. The internees created art to keep busy, share skills, and to have a sense of individuality in an over-crowded environment.

**Activity 1:** The students can watch the video *Days of Waiting* about Estelle Ishigo and discuss her art work as a form of personal communication as well as how she used it to record history.

**Activity 2:** Students will draw scenes of everyday activities in their lives, either at home or at school. They can later describe their drawing and what significance it has in recording an everyday activity for historical purposes, personal interest, and/or something they would send someone in the mail.

**Activity 3:** The students can use photography or painting as a source of communication. They can either take their own pictures, paint, or make a collage of pictures they find. Have them explain their art work afterwards.

### 4) Government /Wyoming and U.S. History Lesson

**Objective:** The students will compare the events of WWII, the different factions and their views. They will also see the consequences of their own actions, and gain a personal understanding of their rights as U.S. citizens.

**Activity 1:** Students research and discuss the term "concentration camp." Compare and contrast opinions regarding the term. Was Heart Mountain a concentration camp or not?

**Activity 2:** The students watch the video *Conscience and the Constitution* and discuss how this effects them today.

**Activity 3:** Students can research the resisters and reveal their opinions of the draft for WWII. Turning of age in the internment camps was a very difficult time and caused a lot of emotional as well as physical turmoil throughout the U.S.

**Activity 4:** The students can research the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), and the Fair Play Committee. Students can then look up individuals like the following or others from on-line sources to learn the stand each took during WWII.

- Bill Hosokawa (newspaper columnist)
- James "Jimmy" Omura (newspaper columnist)
- Kiyoshi Okamoto (Fair Play Committee)

**Activity 5:** How would students answer the following question and why. Would they answer differently if they were in the camp as opposed to free?

Question 27: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?

Question 28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power or organization?

**Activity 6:** Students compare and contrast the events of 9/11 with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. What was the general attitude toward the Islamic people after 9/11? Was it the same as with the Japanese after 1941?

### 5) Speech and Debate Lesson

**Objective:** Students will explore literature written about the draft during WWII and the different groups with varying opinions. They will also learn about everyday life in an internment camp like Heart Mountain.

**Activity 1:** The students split into two groups reading *Freedom to Die For their Country* and *Letters from the 442* and have a debate or discussions presenting the issues and opinion behind these two pieces of literature.

**Activity 2:** Students research the resisters and the draft volunteers comparing/contrasting them with a debate of opinion and consequences afterwards.

### 6) Health/Agriculture/Environmental Science/Biology Lesson

**Objective:** The Students will learn about the agricultural crops raised at Heart Mountain and for what purpose. They will share the experience of gardening and gain personal accomplishment of having a tangible end product that can be used for economical and personal profit. Students explore all the different levels of individual and social aspects that gardening held for the interns from individual space, mental and physical activity, and the sense of survival while being imprisoned.

**Activity 1:** Students will research and grow Heart Mountain vegetable crops with the help of mentors.

- a. Plants can be transplanted to the historic Center container garden to represent the crops and techniques used by the internees.
- b. Plants could also be used by students for fund raising purposes.
- c. Plants or flowers can be used for arrangements for a holiday gift or another occasion.

**Activity 2:** Students research which crops were grown at Heart Mountain, why, and for what economical or personal purpose.

**Activity 3:** The Center historic garden will have a combination of 12 raised beds and planters. Classes can choose to adopt a container for a month or for an entire school year. Students will have to maintain the bed in accordance to Center staff instruction. In the Fall students will put the garden to bed for the winter, which includes clean-up and seed collection. In the spring, students will prepare the beds for plants and transplanting the plants researched and grown in Activity 1 and 2. Class photos can be posted in the adopted beds.

**Activity 4:** The students explore the different recreational activities that were offered and why. Was it for personal productivity, healthier diets, social activity, or government sanctioned?

### 7) English/Literature Lesson

**Objective:** Students will explore different pieces of literature written about the WWII era and the Japanese Americans' struggle before, during, and after internment to fit into American society. They will study prejudice, loss, friendships, and learn about another culture.

**Activity 1:** Students can read a variety of books, splitting into groups or individually. Afterwards, they will discuss the different characters, themes, and outcomes of their books (See book list above)

**Activity 2:** The students will write how they would deal with being interned in the event of a war and what they would do to retain as normal a life as possible.

**Need help? Contact us for other curriculum suggestions.**