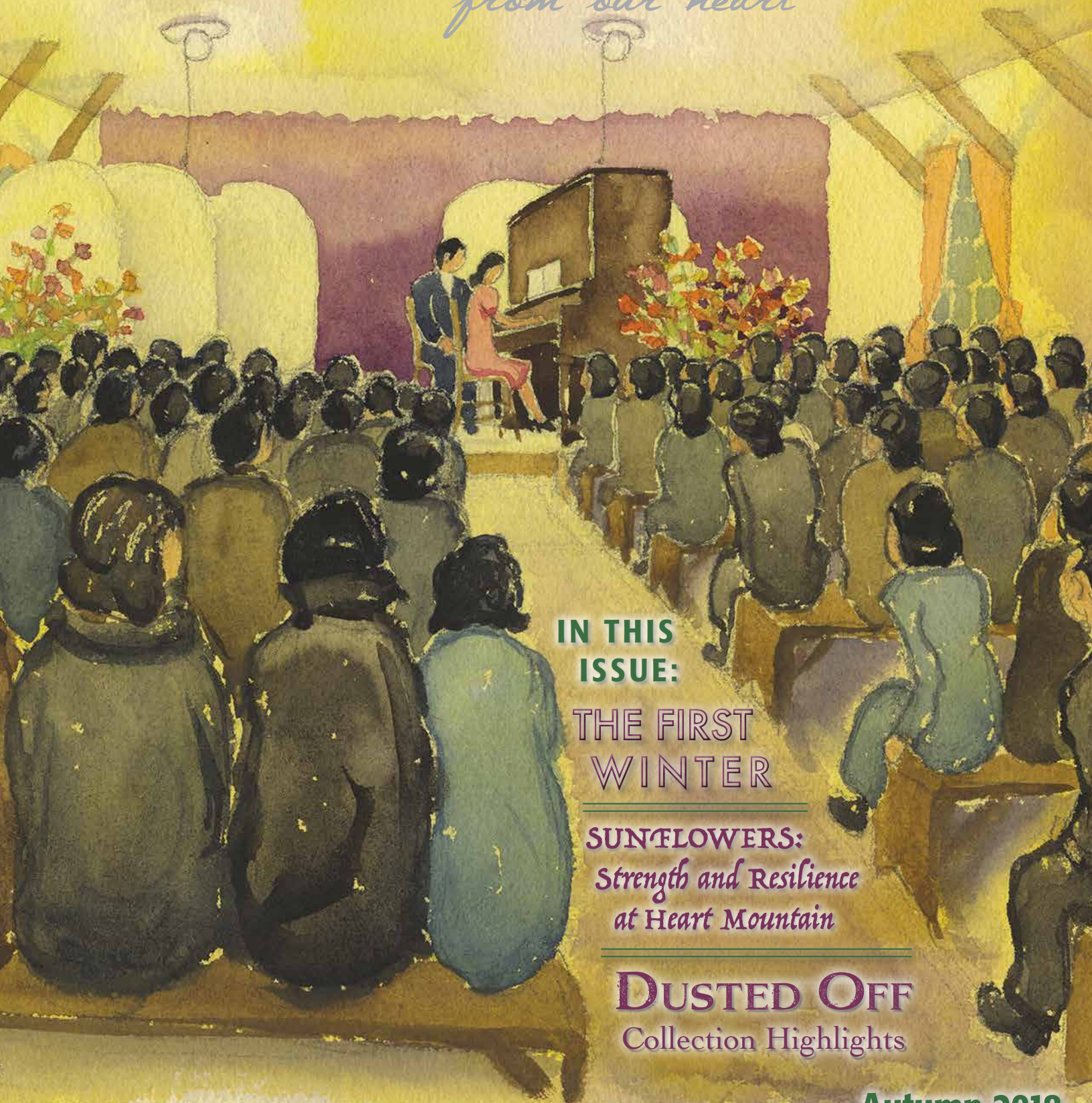




KOKORO KARA

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

"from our heart"



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ISSUE:

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WINTER

SUNFLOWERS:
*Strength and Resilience
at Heart Mountain*

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Autumn 2018

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

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*Former U.S. Secretary of
Commerce and Transportation*
Alan K. Simpson
U.S. Senator (ret.)

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Cover image:

"Recital of Piano Students, Heart Mtn." Watercolor by
Estelle Ishigo, featured in our current special exhibit
"The Mountain Was Our Secret: Works by Estelle Ishigo"
(Allen Eaton Collection, Japanese American National Museum)

THE POWER OF PLACE: HOW FAR WE'VE COME

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Following our successful Los Angeles board meeting hosted by the Japanese American National Museum last October, I quickly left Washington for New York to meet with a longtime friend of Heart Mountain—the legendary author, journalist and newscaster Tom Brokaw. Tom, who spoke at our 2011 grand opening, assured me that he was there to support us and agreed to contribute to a book project on Heart Mountain that is in the final stages.

While in New York, I visited the 9/11 Museum and memorial for the first time. From the moment I set foot on the very place where almost 3,000 people died on Sept. 11, 2001, my throat tightened, my chest felt compressed and my stomach ached as tears welled in my eyes.

I realized that the feeling I was experiencing was very similar to what visitors have told me about Heart Mountain. Being overcome by emotion at the very site where tragedy has struck and relationships were formed. The docent on a tour left the visitors with one final thought: That the families of the victims of 9/11 wanted people to know that important friendships and relationships had grown out of this tragedy, and this sacred place was where people could rally and support each other.

There will come a time when the memories of 9/11 are less vivid than they are now, when they are held not by the people who experienced that day but by their children and grandchildren, much as the memories of the incarceration are kept by a shrinking population of *Nisei* who experienced it. Our

challenge, brought home by this trip to New York, is keeping the memory and lessons of the incarceration fresh and relevant now and in the future.

Our board meeting in Los Angeles made me more optimistic that we can accomplish that goal.



We have come a long way.

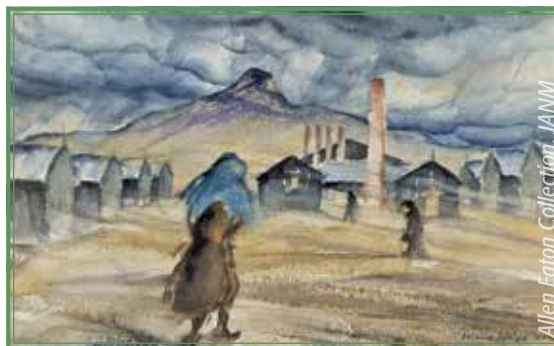
Over those four days between October 18 and 21, we reviewed the foundation's eventful year and plans for the future. We consolidated a vision for the Japanese American Confinement Site Consortium and managed to make some friends through the help of David Ono, the ABC 7 anchorman in Los Angeles and another longtime friend of Heart Mountain.



Stakeholders discuss the future of the National Japanese American Memorial. (L-R) Shirley Ann Higuchi; Larry Oda, Chair of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation; & David Inoue, Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League.

These pivotal accomplishments include:

- The May opening of the exhibit at our interpretive center of some of the art of Estelle Ishigo, the Caucasian woman who entered camp because of her love for her Japanese American husband, Arthur, when she had the chance to remain free. Her paintings and drawings represent the soul of the Heart Mountain experience, and it was the foundation's legal battle in 2015 that kept them from being sold at auction and dispersed around the world. The Japanese American National Museum (JANM)



Watercolor by Estelle Ishigo, on display in special exhibit "The Mountain Was Our Secret: Works by Estelle Ishigo."



Photo courtesy of Brian Kunitomi

Members of the Japanese American Confinement Site Consortium meet at the Japanese American National Museum.

lent their collection to us for the exhibition, yet another example of the strengthening ties between our groups.

- Also in May, the foundation began the restoration of the root cellar dug during World War II, which housed the thousands of pounds of produce raised by incarcerated farmers. The more-than-300-foot-long root cellar will be a huge addition to the site when its renovation is completed.



The root cellar currently under restoration at Heart Mountain.

- The annual pilgrimage at the end of July was our best ever. Our Operations Manager, Danielle Constein, reported that it was sold out again and the feedback collected by Sam Mihara was overwhelmingly positive.

- In October, we formally made Dakota Russell our Executive Director. Not only does Dakota have the skills to run a world-class museum, but he has

the ability to help the foundation grow and prosper (see page 5 to hear from and about Dakota).

- Sam Mihara's outreach activities have gotten more involved, as he continues to travel across the country to speak at Harvard Law School, Stanford Law School and a Catholic high school in New Iberia, Louisiana. He has investigated the child detention centers for those seeking asylum in the United States and concluded that they "are worse than the incarceration camp that my family experienced." This year, Sam received the Paul A. Gagnon Prize from the National Council for History Education (see page 15 for more about Sam and his work in 2018).

We want to build on these accomplishments in the future, which made some of our discussions at the October meeting even more important. In my other job at the American Psychological Association, I have learned about the "Blue Ocean" strategy, which posits that successful organizations need to seek the "blue



Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

Former incarcerated Shig Yabu shares his experiences living in the barracks during the war with Pilgrimage participants.

ocean” of new opportunities. Heart Mountain needs to find that blue ocean and develop news markets and opportunities. Dakota and board member Marc Sugiyama helped us brainstorm ideas for what such growth might look like.

As I learned about the blue ocean strategy, I happened to be finishing a very big project. Many of you have already known that I have been working on a book about Heart Mountain for many years. It has been a long, thoughtful, therapeutic and self-revealing process enabled by your contributions and interviews. I submitted the manuscript at the end of September to my publisher, the University of Wisconsin Press. Ray Locker, an author, journalist and friend of Heart Mountain, has been a great help in conducting interviews, researching, and organizing and shaping the manuscript.

This book can help lead us into the blue ocean, as it gives us more media content to spread the word about Heart Mountain. In Los Angeles and New York, my meetings with Tom Brokaw and assorted members of the entertainment community may provide us the entrée we need to make a television series, documentary or film.

As we brainstormed in Los Angeles, we discussed the creation of an “institute” connected to but distinct from the foundation that could foster writers, filmmakers and artists to study and explore the incarceration. The book may well be one of the first projects of this institute. We have also discussed film festivals, art exhibitions and other publications that could help lead the foundation into a new blue ocean.

The development of the Japanese American Confinement Site Consortium was another part of that meeting to find new opportunities. With the help of Brian Liesinger, our former executive director, we have been the leader of this emerging network that now has about 20 groups actively participating. The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation has also provided guidance to groups tied to the other camps, such as the Friends of Minidoka, whom we welcomed to our pilgrimage and assisted with a small donation. HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson also recently went to Idaho to speak at the Minidoka’s “friendraiser” and participate in their strategic planning process.

Minidoka’s success will be our success.

Beginning next year, JANM will chair the Consortium and the Japanese American Citizens League will take over as fiscal agent. Heart Mountain will stay involved and committed. Doug put it best: “People are listening to each other and learning from each other; we are responding to developments that threaten our sites and jointly advocating for the funding we need to advance our shared missions.” We are in this together.

David Ono capped off our Los Angeles meetings with a reception in his beautiful home in the city’s Toluca Lake area. He brought together members of the foundation leadership as well as representatives of the entertainment community with an interest in the incarceration, including actors Aaron Takahashi and Tamlyn Tomita and screenwriter Iris Yamashita, who wrote *Letters from Iwo Jima*, the film directed by Clint Eastwood.

I don’t know where the events of the upcoming year will take us, but I do know that we have come farther than many of us thought we would go and that we’re in this together. The next year will be our best yet, and I am eternally grateful to the members of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation for helping us get there. 🍷

Shirley Ann Higuchi



Photo by Julie Abo



Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

Top: Shirley Ann Higuchi reads an excerpt from her forthcoming book at a reception at David Ono's home.

Right: Guests interact at the reception at David Ono's Los Angeles home.

STRONGER (AND WARMER) TOGETHER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAKOTA RUSSELL



Around this time last year, I was standing inside the barrack, feeling the wind outside pound the walls and rattle the windows. The group of people accompanying me was bundled in heavy coats and shivering slightly, but unmistakably having the time of their lives, enjoying a concert by No-No Boy and Kishi Bashi.

Fall in Wyoming, I've learned, is not a promise. It can end suddenly, without notice. So maybe an autumn concert in the barrack wasn't my most brilliant idea. But the audience was still smiling, even through their chattering teeth. With two songs left in his set, Kishi Bashi—a master at reading a room—urged everyone to get up and huddle close around him in a circle. Just like that, the warmth was back, and so was the energy. Kishi Bashi roared his way to a big finale, and for a moment we all forgot the cold world outside that huddle.

Stephen Smith, producer of American Public

Media's Order 9066 podcast, was in the audience that day. In our interview with Stephen and his partner Kate Ellis (page 11), he marks it as one of his most powerful memories from the project. I also thought back to that moment while researching "The First Winter" (page 25). The Heart Mountain incarcerated understood, better than most, that it's easier to withstand hardship and injustice when we all pull together.

Encountering these surprise moments of beauty and kinship is one of life's great rewards, as Christine Sunada-Turnidge describes in her story "Sunflowers" (page 18), about attending a Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. My past two years at Heart Mountain have been full of such meaningful encounters. The passion and dedication of this community inspires me daily. I'm honored to be taking on a new role as Executive Director. Thanks for welcoming me into your huddle. 🐾

INTRODUCING...

In October, the Heart Mountain board appointed Dakota Russell as the Foundation's new Executive Director. Dakota joined the HMWF staff in 2016, serving first as the Interpretive Specialist and later as the Museum Manager. Prior to moving to Wyoming, Dakota had a long and successful career with Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites. He has worked at Civil War battlefields, Native American village sites, and frontier homesteads. Dakota believes that good history depends on a diversity of voices, and has always sought to ensure that under-represented people and groups are visible on the historic landscape. He lives in Cody with his two children and his wife, Greta, who is the Senior Registrar at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

CURRENT

EVENTS

THE NEXT FEW PAGES FEATURE EXCITING NEW PROJECTS, EVENTS WE HAVE ATTENDED, AND PEOPLE WHOSE WORK HAS CONTRIBUTED TO OUR MISSION



Constitutional Accountability Center
10th Anniversary Event



Documentary Film Premiere



Interview with "Order 9066"
Podcast Creators



A Year in the life of
Sam Mihara

CONSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY CENTER

"Good people remain on both sides of the political system," said Heart Mountain Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, speaking at a gathering of the Constitutional Accountability Center (CAC) in September. "It's our responsibility to find them." Higuchi was honored as part of the CAC's 10th anniversary, alongside former Attorney General Loretta Lynch and civil rights activist Brittany Packnett.

The three honorees were called "inspiring leaders who represent the text, history, and values of the Constitution," and each spoke passionately about how the legal system can help all Americans. Lynch recalled her work in 2016 fighting the state of North Carolina's HB2, which targeted the rights of

transgender Americans. Packnett said she started her nonprofit group, Campaign Zero, the day her neighbor in St. Louis was shot by a police officer. Packnett's advocacy against police violence gained momentum during the 2014 riots following the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

Higuchi shared the hard lessons learned from her parents' experience being confined at Heart Mountain during World War II, and told panel moderator Praveen Fernandes that she remains optimistic. "My parents were ripped from their homes, placed in a concentration camp," Higuchi said, "and I'm sitting here today. So, there is a possibility to grow and make it, even though your life gets ripped apart."

Higuchi spoke of how her work with the Heart

"My parents were ripped from their homes, placed in a concentration camp, and I'm sitting here today. So, there is a possibility to grow and make it, even though your life gets ripped apart."

—Shirley Ann Higuchi



Shirley discusses why she is optimistic even in today's political climate. (L-R): Brittany Packnett, Co-Founder of Campaign Zero; Shirley Ann Higuchi; the Honorable Loretta E. Lynch, 83rd Attorney General of the United States

Honors

Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi

Mountain Wyoming Foundation taught her to work for bipartisan solutions, embracing opposition to empower everyone and build success. “We have a world-class museum in the middle of Wyoming,” Higuchi said, “and we have the support of the local community, former Republican Senator Al Simpson and the entire congressional delegation—they really support us—as well as Democrat Norman Mineta. When we start labeling people, that’s when we’ve lost the war.” 🏔️



The Constitutional Accountability Center (CAC) is a think tank, law firm, and action center dedicated to fulfilling the progressive promise of our Constitution’s text and history. They work in the courts, through the government, and with legal scholars to preserve the rights and freedoms of all Americans and to protect the judiciary from politics and special interests.

To learn more about the Constitutional Accountability Center and to see a film segment of the panel discussion, visit the “In the News” section of the Heart Mountain website (www.heartmountain.org/inthenews).



Top: Shirley Ann Higuchi;
Hon. Loretta E. Lynch;
Elizabeth B. Wydra, President
of the CAC; Brittany Packnett,
Co-Founder of Campaign Zero

Right: “A Decade of Progress,
A Charge for the Future”
reception celebrating the 10th
anniversary of the CAC.

WASHINGTON, D.C. FILM PREMIERE:

“An American Story:

Norman Mineta, the former Secretary of Commerce and Transportation, had long resisted the attempts of filmmakers to make a documentary about his life, but said he changed his mind in order to fight the “incivility in Congress that has been growing since 1994.” Mineta, who was imprisoned as a child at Heart Mountain, told Debra Nakatomi that he agreed work with her and Dianne Fukami to help stop the worsening political divide in the country.

first for Democratic President Bill Clinton and then his Republican successor, George W. Bush.

Both presidents appear in the film, praising Mineta’s ability to work with politicians from all bands of the ideological spectrum. Also highlighted was the remarkable, 75-year friendship between Mineta and Alan Simpson that began when they were boy scouts at Heart Mountain. Simpson went on to serve three terms in the U.S. Senate as a Republican from Wyoming.

Mineta’s ability to transcend partisan politics was evident at the reception before the screening. Anthony Principi and Rodney Slater, Cabinet secretaries for Bush and Clinton respectively, were there, along with Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif. Daphne Kwok, vice president of multicultural markets and engagement for AARP, also spoke in appreciation of Mineta’s accomplishments. AARP was one of the documentary’s main sponsors.

Mineta spoke with the filmmakers during a question-and-answer session after the screening. He surprised Fukami when he said he still wears an American flag pin in his lapel to this day. “Sometimes I still feel like a foreigner in my own country,” he said. “I never take my citizenship for granted.”

The film premiered in Japan in November as part of the U.S.-Japan Council Annual Conference, and Heart Mountain will screen the

(L-R) Former Secretary of Transportation under President Bill Clinton, Rodney Slater; President of U.S.-Japan Council Irene Hirano Inouye; Secretary Norman Mineta; Shirley Ann Higuruchi



Honorable Judy Chu, PhD, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and U.S. Representative of the 27th District of California, thanks Norman Mineta

He spoke at the Washington premiere of Nakatomi and Fukami’s film, “An American Story: Norman Mineta and His Legacy” at the Newseum, just a few blocks down Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House and Capitol. The film documents Mineta’s extraordinary career, from his childhood as the son of Japanese immigrants to a long tenure in the House of Representatives and then as a Cabinet secretary,



Norman Mineta and His Legacy”

*“SOMETIMES I
STILL FEEL LIKE
A FOREIGNER IN
MY OWN COUNTRY...
I NEVER TAKE MY
CITIZENSHIP FOR
GRANTED.”*

—NORMAN MINETA

hour-long documentary at the 2019 Pilgrimage with the producers in attendance. The film will also be broadcast nationally on PBS.

Fukami and Nakatomi’s film is part of the larger Mineta Legacy Project, which also includes a free online educational outreach program, developed by the Stanford University Program on International Cross-Cultural Education. 🍷🍷



Photo by Julie Abo

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
MINETA LEGACY PROJECT, GO TO
WWW.MINETALEGACYPROJECT.COM



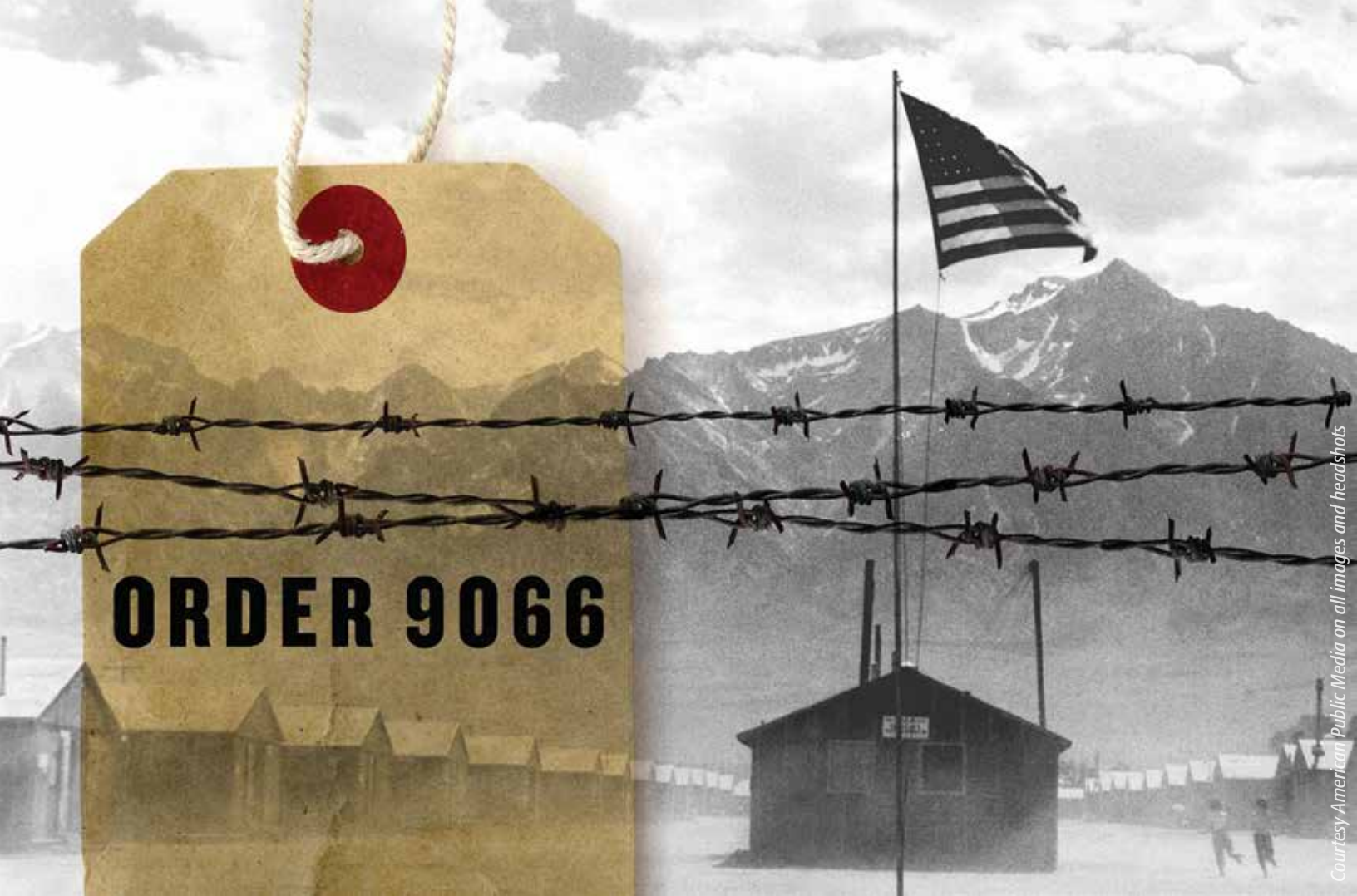
Photo by Julie Abo



Photo by Julie Abo

Above: (L-R) Dianne Fukami, director and producer of the film; Secretary Norman Mineta; Danealia Mineta; Shirley Ann Higuchi; Debra Nakatomi, producer of the film

Left: Dianne Fukami, Debra Nakatomi, and Norman Mineta share a laugh before the discussion.



Kate Ellis and Stephen Smith are the producers of “Order 9066,” a podcast from American Public Media and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. The podcast tells the story of Japanese American incarceration through oral histories with former incarcerated, as well as efforts to memorialize and interpret incarceration sites in the present day.

We sat down with Ellis and Smith to discuss their work.



Kate Ellis



Stephen Smith



KK: * How did this project come about?



Stephen: The topic was actually proposed by a colleague at American Public Media, but we had already been thinking about a collaboration with the Smithsonian. As it happened, a curator there, Noriko Sanefuji, was developing the “Righting a Wrong” exhibit for the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066. The combination of the anniversary and what was going on in the country at the time made this a natural subject to pursue.



Kate: On a previous podcast, we had been experimenting with a public outreach device—a way to encourage people to share their stories with a nationwide audience. Through our partnership with the Smithsonian, we were able to do the same with this podcast, reaching out to people who were incarcerated to speak about their memories.



KK: What did you know about this history before starting this project?



Kate: My knowledge was very scant. I mostly knew what my mother remembered from growing up in Glendale, California during World War II. She remembered all the Japanese American students in her school disappearing, and she remembered how her mother—my grandmother—had hired two Japanese Americans as gardeners after they were allowed to return to the West Coast. The neighbors, apparently, were very concerned about this, but my grandmother felt it was important to support them.



Stephen: We had both worked on some projects related to Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. I actually edited an anthology of Eleanor Roosevelt’s radio broadcasts. Not many people realize that, during her time as first lady, she was also a professional broadcaster, paid top dollar to host this radio talk show. She even did an episode encouraging people to exercise tolerance toward Japanese Americans, and telling Japanese American farmers not to expend wasted energy in trying to plant their fields before being sent away.

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KK: Tell us about the hosts of the podcast.



Kate: It was important to us to find hosts with direct connections to this story. Noriko at the Smithsonian connected us with Pat Suzuki and Sab Shimono, both of whom were incarcerated when they were young. I interviewed Sab about his memories for the podcast, but Pat prefers not to speak about her childhood. She doesn't want this experience to define her.



KK: Where did you travel to as part of recording this series?



Stephen: We visited Heart Mountain to be part of a barracks concert with No-No Boy and Kishi Bashi, and we made a tour from San Francisco to Los Angeles to interview former incarcerated in their homes. We also visited Manzanar during their Pilgrimage.



KK: What moments from those travels stand out to you?



Kate: For me, it was the opportunity to interview Jane Oka, who lives in San Francisco and is featured several times in the podcast. She was a young girl living in Salinas when her family was rounded up. She hadn't spoken about her experience much at all. I think we were only the second group of people to interview her, so many of her memories were still very painful and raw. She recalled vivid moments, like being driven away from her home in a pickup truck, and how the family dog ran behind the truck until it was tired and couldn't follow them anymore. It gave us a sense of the deep pain and loss that the Japanese Americans suffered. One small vignette like that can tell a much bigger story.



Stephen: A high point for me was the October barracks concert at Heart Mountain. Being in that building on a cold, windy Wyoming day really brought to life what it must have been like for those incarcerated there.



Kate: Heart Mountain was the first incarceration site I ever visited, so it was very powerful for me in that way. The center is incredible, and the staff took us out to the barrack and the root cellar. I even climbed Heart Mountain! I also really enjoyed speaking with [HMWF Board Secretary] Aura Newlin and hearing about her family's history at Heart Mountain, and her connection to this place.





Stephen: We should also give a shout-out to Hana Maruyama, who is a Ph.D. student at the University of Minnesota, and whose family has deep ties to Heart Mountain. Aura introduced us to her, and she went on to become part of our production team!



KK: At both the Heart Mountain concert and the Manzanar Pilgrimage, you encountered young Japanese Americans who are starting to reclaim this history for themselves. Why do you think that's happening now?



Stephen: I think they see a connection between the past and today. They see how the lessons learned from these events can inform them about some of the political challenges they face today. We don't explicitly, or even implicitly, draw a line between Japanese American incarceration and the detention of immigrants on our Southern border today. But a lot of our listeners do.



Kate: They also draw parallels between what happened during World War II to some of the proposals that have been made to register religious or ethnic groups today. I've noticed that the Japanese American community, particularly the Japanese Americans Citizens League, is always quick to call out blatant racism. I think it's partially a response to being stereotyped as the "model minority." Young people want to show that they will challenge authority, and will make noise.



KK: Where can people listen to the podcast?




Stephen: They can find us on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, or anywhere else they listen to podcasts.



Kate: They can also listen on the website: www.apmreports.org/order-9066



Stephen: We also condensed the podcast to three hour-long broadcasts, which have been airing on public radio stations nationwide. 



NEVER

...and Ensures History Will Not be Repeated

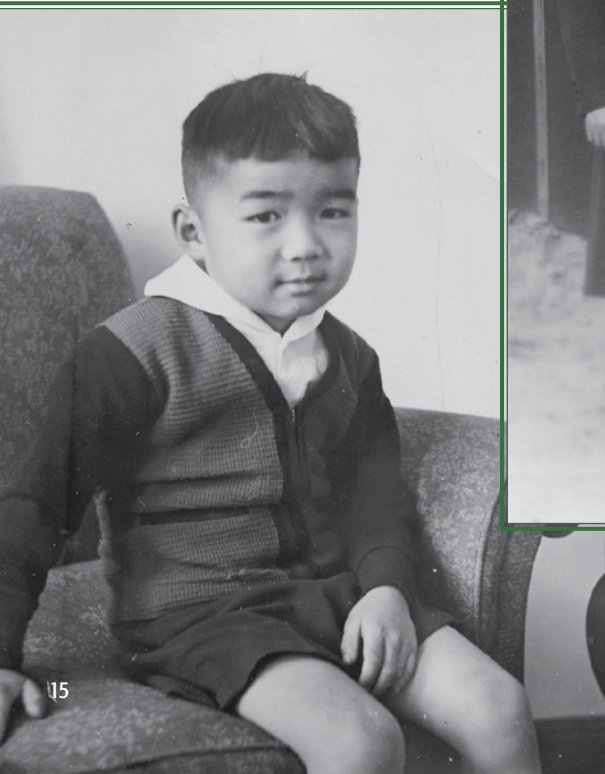
Sam Mihara Presents his Story...

AGAIN

by Kate Wilson

Sam Mihara was just nine years old when his family was forced from their California home and sent to Heart Mountain. The Miharas faced many hardships at the confinement site, including several family medical problems. Sam, like many incarcerated, was keen to forget this incredibly difficult experience and move on. "I wanted nothing to do with remembering the injustice and pain caused by the government and others," he recalls about his feelings in the years after the war. Sam's Japanese immigrant parents had always instilled in their children the importance of education, and continued to do so throughout the traumatic years they spent incarcerated in Wyoming. It's no surprise then that Sam earned multiple degrees in engineering and became a rocket scientist, working for the Boeing Company for over 40 years.

Sam was contacted by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation in 2011, a few years after his retirement. He characterizes this moment: "I received a call that changed my entire outlook on life and pursued a new endeavor." The HMWF had received a request from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to have a former resident of the prison camp give a talk at a conference. Sam agreed to do the talk, preparing to examine a chapter in his own history that he had left unexplored for decades: "That was my first attempt to recall the memorable events about what happened to me and my family." Quickly putting together a story with both family photos and professional images (taken by Dorothea Lange and others), a presentation



Top: Sam with his family in front of barrack 14-22-C at Heart Mountain. (L-R): Sam's mother Suyeko, his aunt Nobu, young Sam himself, his aunt Kimi, his aunt Hanae, his brother Nobuo, & his uncle Toshi

Left: Sam, aged approximately 3 years old, in California.

was born. After the success of this event, he was referred to many other DOJ offices. After that, the referrals snowballed, reaching other groups including schools, universities, and government offices. Meanwhile, Sam kept improving on the presentation, adding references and analyses of an array of events such as Executive Order 9066, the Korematsu and Endo court cases, and video recordings of other incarcerated testimonies.

Since then, Sam's speaking engagements have multiplied and spread in scope and location. To date, he has spoken to over 50,000 students, teachers, lawyers, and people of many professions, most of whom had known very little about the history of this massive injustice against a single race. Sam has expanded and refined his talk, first focusing on his own experience, then addressing larger issues and questions such as why people of Japanese descent were only imprisoned from the west coast and not other parts of the country, and why other races and nationalities were not imprisoned. He is now a visiting speaker at University of California, Harvard Law School, and many high schools and colleges throughout the country.

Sam's talks, he says, are an exploration into the larger question: could this happen again to others? His lectures center around the reality of racial profiling based on fear. He discusses the experiences

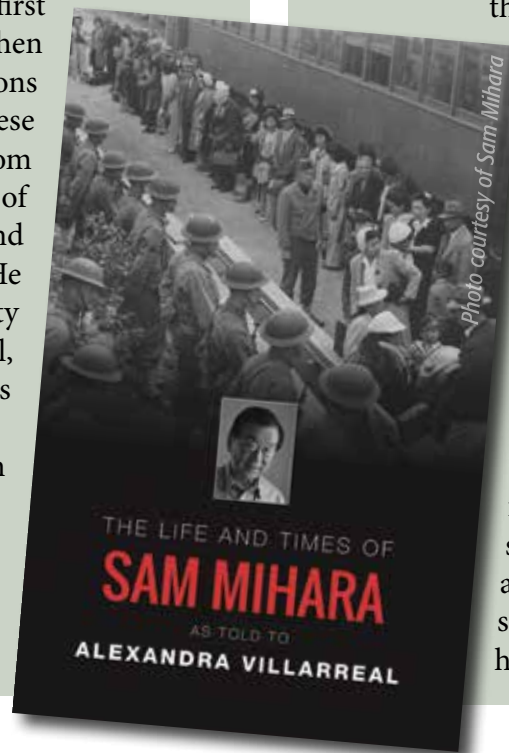


Sam speaking during one of his recent presentations.

of the Japanese Americans who were imprisoned and how the lessons learned from this bleak period in our country's history apply to help solve today's issues, such as the treatment of Muslim Americans and Central American immigrants. To better understand

the story of incarceration in America, Sam has made visits to federal prisons and immigrant detention centers along the southern border. The authenticity and timeliness of his presentation has made him a much sought after speaker. Sam has already booked engagements through 2019 and beyond, with not only national talks, but international presentations as well.

Along with his busy lecture circuit, Sam works tirelessly with the foundation as a board member, and sometimes hosts groups or leads tours at our National Historic Landmark site in northwest Wyoming. In 2017, he started hosting a conference



of educators from Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, sponsored by the University of Wyoming, at the interpretive center. The conference has since become an annual event. Sam also guides participants around the remaining original hospital complex at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. In this highly personal tour, he relays stories about his grandfather who passed away at the hospital, and about his father who contracted glaucoma and ultimately went blind in Wyoming due to lack of available treatment.

Working with journalist Alexandra Villarreal, Sam also published his memoirs this year. *The Life and Times of Sam Mihara* features his experiences, motivations, and current work and research. The book presents highlights of Sam's experience within the context of the larger narrative of the war, including government decisions that led to the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast.



Dr. Yohuru Williams presents the 2018 Paul A. Gagnon Prize to Sam at the ceremony in San Antonio, Texas. Williams is the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.



All of this hard work was recognized in April this year, when the National Council for History Education (NCHE) awarded Sam with the Paul A. Gagnon Prize. The annual award is given to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to history education. Upon

receiving the award at a ceremony, which took place in April in San Antonio at 2018 NCHE conference, Sam stated "I feel truly honored and humbled to receive the prestigious Paul

A. Gagnon award. The importance of history education cannot be overstated.

Through education about the Japanese American imprisonment, we can help to ensure that such civil rights violations never happen again. The students of today have the opportunity to learn historical precedents that serve as guidelines for better solutions in the future." He is the first Japanese American to receive the award.

While many incarcerated had experiences similar to Sam's while in the camps, not all have the ability to tell their story. Sam speaks for those who cannot, ensuring that this chapter in history is never forgotten and continually pointing out its relevance in the present day. Sam cares deeply about the stories of those who are marginalized, oppressed, and discriminated against. The nine year-old boy at Heart Mountain, powerless to stop the government's abuse of his family, has found a way to fight back. 🏯



Sam's website (www.sammihara.com) is the source for arranging talks and purchasing books. All of Sam's speaker fees and sales proceeds go to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

Sam at the 2018 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, explaining the layout of the hospital complex to a group of participants.

Sunflowers

Strength and Resilience at Heart Mountain



Photo by Kate Wilson

by Christine Sunada-Turnidge

In July 2017, my family and I made the special trip up to Cody, Wyoming to the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. It was an especially significant year as it marked 75 years since the signing of the Executive Order 9066 that brought on the incarcerations.

My grandparents were both of Japanese descent. My grandmother was not incarcerated but her parents and the rest of her family were. My grandfather's family was not affected in this way, but he lost his job because of his heritage and emotionally, the family was just as affected. They were considered, at that time, the enemy in the eyes of our nation.

For my little family, this was our first time coming, and I had not visited since I was 12 (in 1996). I knew this wasn't going to be the most productive trip because of my three small children, but we were going to make our own little tour and mainly be there to support, and show our love to, my cousin Aura (Matsumura Newlin, secretary of the HMWF board), who helped put it together.

We were on our way to the museum, and everything looked new and different. It was a beautiful day. As we started to get closer to the turn off for the museum, I was in awe of all the fields of beautiful sunflowers in

the area. It was such a stunning sight to see fields of such happy, bright flowers.

At the turn off, the big Heart Mountain sign was also as visible as ever with sunflowers shining behind it. It was such a welcoming sight.

Upon arrival, we first drove up the hill to stroll around the walking trail and to get a sense of the sites where people used to be hustling and bustling. Standing in that place, seeing the names of my family on the honor roll, I suddenly felt overwhelmed. I thought of them along with so many others who were forced to be in that place, and how their experiences shaped who I am today. We then proceeded back down the hill to explore the museum.

This museum is unlike any other. Despite holding such a dark part of American history, the museum was welcoming and uplifting, and the energy that surrounds it was invigorating.

Walking up to the doors I found the bricks that my sweet aunt Sheila Newlin had donated. As we prepared to enter the interpretive center, I found another moment of connection with this place, feeling the love of the people who had passed on, proud that light has been shed on this difficult chapter in history, allowing us to learn from it.

I could have spent hours there, looking at all the

stories, photos, and artifacts. The staff were so warmly passionate about their work, and I felt gratified that so much effort has been put into making this a fully realized place where people can learn about the Japanese American incarceration. The restlessness of our children told us it was time to make a move, so we jumped into the car and headed to the hospital complex—with its now iconic smoke stack—for one final excursion at the site.

We parked by the chain linked fence and got out by the first barrack. Walking amongst those original buildings and heading toward the chimney, it was chilling and yet quite peaceful, imagining the people taking the same steps on which we were walking.

As we stopped and tried to look through the windows of the first barrack building, I noticed one of my Grandma Susan Matsumura Sunada's favorite plants, the milkweed. It was in blossom and lined the whole outside of the barrack.

My grandmother was as smart as they come and she loved all of the beautiful plants of the earth. This one was special to her, because it attracted monarch butterflies. Before they transition to butterflies their caterpillars only eat milkweed and then the butterflies lay their eggs on the plants. I did not find this a coincidence. I had just stopped at her grave the day before, and also seeing it for the first time since her passing in 2014, I knew this was a symbol of hope, life, and new beginnings. After taking this in we started walking over to the smoke stack.

This towering structure is very prominent and acts as another symbol to me of



Photo by Christine Sunada-Turnidge

strength, endurance, and even hope, calling to mind the old phrase “reach for the stars,” even in a confinement site like Heart Mountain. As I share an interest in photography with my grandmother, I was keen to document this place, attempting to capture what I was feeling. Near the chimney, I noticed a solitary, small, and less than robust sunflower peering up at me. It was all alone but still standing proudly. It seemed a fitting subject paired with the chimney for my images, representing both the isolation of the wartime Japanese Americans

and their strength and perseverance in the face of prejudice and unjust incarceration.

For more incarcerated, this was a very harsh and foreign landscape. As we prepared to leave, I tried one more time to imagine being forced to come here, and the strength it would have taken to accept this new situation and to make a home here for years. Looking across the lands that used to feature crowded, flimsy barracks which housed thousands of Japanese Americans, I was met with a peaceful sight: hundreds of beautiful sunflowers standing tall, peering toward the sky.



Photo by Christine Sunada-Turnidge

After returning home, a few months passed before I got to meet up with my cousin Aura. I told her about my experience visiting the museum and how much I enjoyed it. She told me of the special purpose of those beautiful sunflowers: their seeds are not ground into oil, but instead are used to grow new flowers, to perpetuate new life. The sunflowers of Heart Mountain continue their journey through their seeds, sharing their story, and illuminating the world as we all must do to keep this history alive. 🌻




DUSTED OFF

Highlights from the HMWF Collection

This summer, the HMWF began an inventory of the permanent collection in the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Archives. This inventory is part of an ongoing project to collect and digitize data about our collection to make it accessible to our visitors and researchers. The HMWF holds over 2,000 items in the collection related to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center!

Over 100 pencil drawings and a collection of personal items and photographs belonging to Estelle

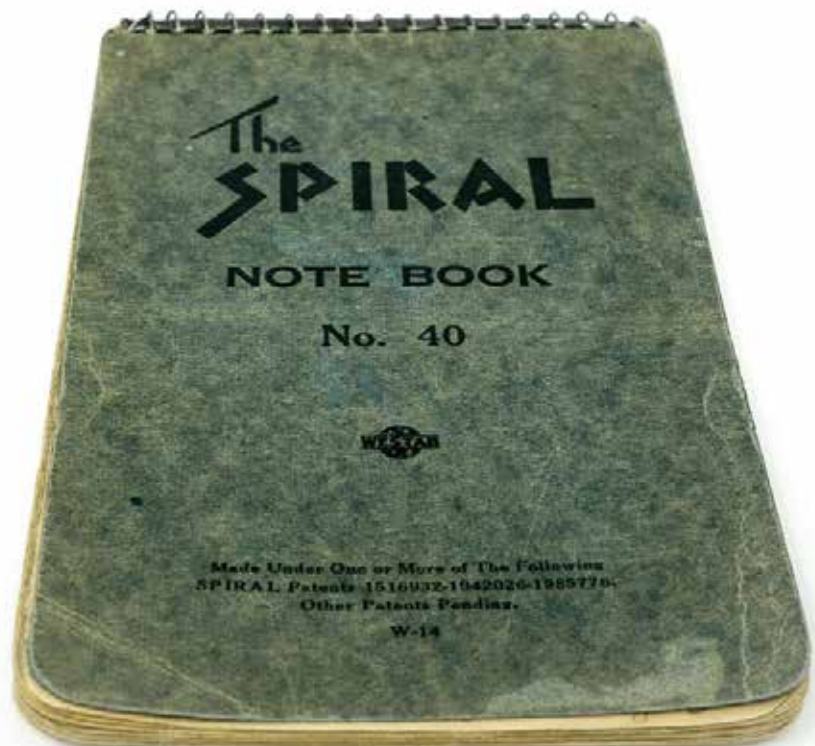
Ishigo were added to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Collection earlier this year. These items, dating back to the early 1900s, give us a look into the personal lives of Arthur and Estelle from before their time at Heart Mountain and in the years following the war.

The Estelle Ishigo drawings and collection were a gift of Bacon Sakatani in memory of Arthur and Estelle Ishigo. 

If you have items relating to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center that you would like to donate, please contact the Registrar at archives@heartmountain.org.

In her diary, Estelle chronicled her trip from the Pomona Assembly Center to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in August 1942.

Photo courtesy of Sandy Sugawara and Catiana Garcia-Kilroy from the "By Military Necessity Project"

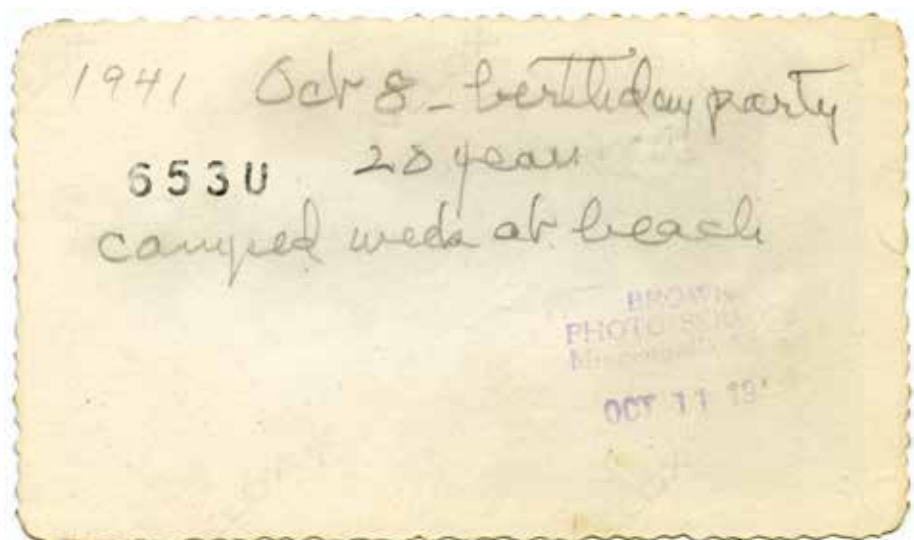


Estelle Ishigo's diary
early 1940s
HMWF 2018.037



Estelle was a bit notorious for lying about her age. She was actually celebrating her 42nd birthday in this photo (below you can see she has indicated on the back of the photo that she is 28 years old at her birthday party in 1941).

Photo of Estelle with dog
1941
HMWF 2018.037





Breakfast line-Pomona Calif. May 20-42, Estelle Ishigo
1942
HMWF 2018.036

Along with writing down her experiences, Estelle documented everyday life at Pomona and Heart Mountain through her pencil and charcoal sketches and watercolors.

Included in the collection are many photographs, documents, and drawings of Estelle's time after leaving Heart Mountain, up until her death in 1990. This photo of Arthur and Estelle was taken in 1948.



Photo of Arthur and Estelle
August 9, 1948
HMWF 2018.037





Summer 2018 Collections Intern,
Kasie Rawlins, inventorying items in the
Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Archives.

Courtesy of HMWF

DUSTED OFF

Highlights from the HMWF Collection



Courtesy of HMWF

“During my time at Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, I completed a 100% inventory of collections storage. The inventory process included me going through the database to locate artifacts and archives, confirming items were properly cataloged, adding their locations to the database, and rehousing at-risk items for preservation. I was able to do this thanks in part to a grant the center received from the Japanese American Confinement Sites program. As part of the inventory, I identified and digitized items relating to the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee and the draft resisters. These historic documents and artifacts are being digitized so that they can be easily accessed by researchers and visitors who are interested in the topic.”

—Kasie Rawlins, Summer 2018 Collections Intern

THE FIRST WIN



WINTER

BY DAKOTA RUSSELL



In Wyoming, winter makes its presence known. The wind stings your cheeks and the snow drifts up against the buildings. In the mornings, Heart Mountain disappears behind a bank of heavy clouds, only to resurface in the afternoon, crowned in white. Thoughts almost inevitably drift to what it must have been like for the nearly 11,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast trapped here in the winter of 1942, not knowing what to anticipate, only knowing they were not prepared. That first winter tested the strength of the Heart Mountain incarcerated, but ultimately, it also pulled them together.

PREPARATIONS



Most incarcerated, coming from California, had never faced a severe winter. Only the small contingent from Washington's Yakima Valley had an inkling of what was coming. The great bulk of people didn't even own winter coats or heavy blankets suitable for Wyoming, let alone pack them into their limited suitcase space.

Although the first incarcerated stepped off the trains at Heart Mountain in August 1942, most didn't arrive until mid-to-late September, when the air had already begun to turn cold. They found the residential barracks poorly suited for winter. Hastily built over a period of two months, these structures were far from weather-tight. The builders, after exhausting the region's supply of cured lumber, had switched to using

green lumber, which shrank as they dried in the sun. New Heart Mountain residents discovered significant gaps between the boards that made up their exterior walls. Only a thin sheet of tarpaper stood between them and the elements, and the autumn winds had already begun to shred some of that barrier.

The camp's maintenance crews were impossibly backlogged, so incarcerated often had to fix the problems themselves, using borrowed tools and scrap lumber. In September, the government sent the first shipment of Celotex wallboard to Heart Mountain. Incarcerated installed the Celotex in their barracks rooms, providing a thin layer of insulation for the walls. They also nailed Celotex to the open rafters above their rooms, creating ceilings that helped to keep heat confined to the living spaces below.

Each of the six units that made up a barrack was outfitted with a coal-burning stove, but incarcerated were not allowed to light their stove until the asbestos board had been installed behind it. The asbestos arrived about the same time as the Celotex. Once permission to heat the rooms was given, the people from Washington canvassed the camp, offering basic instructions on using the coal stoves to the Californians.

Heating the camp for just one day could require up to four train cars full of coal. Coal was delivered each morning by truck, and dumped in a big pile in the center of each block. The frenzy of activity that





Kizo Kometani, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation

Far left: Incarcerees gather coal in the midst of a blizzard in this Estelle Ishigo painting.
Above: Reproduction of *The Coal Rush* by Kizo Kometani.



American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Block 14 boilerman Arthur Ishigo shovels coal to keep hot water in the latrines building.

followed the morning coal delivery came to be known as “The Coal Rush.” Photographer Yoshio Okumoto estimated that the largest chunks of coal were all snatched up within five minutes of delivery. Latecomers had to gather what tiny pieces they could.

The boilermen at the latrine buildings received their own special supply of coal, to keep hot water pumping into the latrines throughout the day. As one of the warmest spots in the entire camp, latrine boiler rooms became a popular gathering spot for older *Issei* men and women, a makeout spot for teenagers, and even a clandestine meeting spot for members of the Fair Play Committee, the camp’s draft resistance group.

Enterprises Stores, cooperatives run by the incarcerated out of recreation halls in the camp, also stocked up on winter gear.

With people buried under ill-fitting coats, hats, gloves, and scarves, the streets of Heart Mountain were soon filled with formless blobs. One columnist for the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* advised gentlemen to “tip their hats to anything not chewing tobacco,” on the off chance that it might be a lady. And yet, a certain number of young *Nisei* women—which the *Sentinel* dubbed the “glamour girls”—refused to sacrifice style for warmth. Fred Yamamoto, a young man clearly in the depths of a very long winter, composed a bit of doggerel in their honor:

Glamorous, beauteous, heavenly legs

Skinny, fat and hairy legs

Slender, shapely, rugged legs

Short, stubby, bow-ed legs

Nylon, silk or penciled legs....

But, oh for the life of knobby knees!!

Answer me quick this question please!!!

In this cold and frigid air

How do you manage without long underwear?

As the winter months wore on, the snow and the wind combined to create whiteout conditions. Just getting from one point to another around the camp became a dangerous feat. Two boys, Shig Yabu and Mas Yamoto, set out for church in these conditions one Sunday morning. Their journey was made less out of religious devotion and more to escape the confines of their barracks rooms, and maybe to meet some girls. The boys made it only half a block before Mas told Shig he was tired, and begged to lay down in the snow. Shig, sensing something wrong, forced his friend to stay on his feet. They turned back, and Shig shoved Mas into the warmth of a Block 14 boiler room, until he was recovered enough to return home. There, Mrs. Yamoto began applying boiled sweet potato—an old Japanese home remedy for frostbite—to Mas’s nose and extremities.

Top left: Estelle Ishigo depicts a Heart Mountain family bundled up against cold winter weather.

Top middle: Some winter clothing offerings from the camp’s co-op stores.

Top right: Skating became a popular winter pastime at Heart Mountain.

Left: Two Heart Mountain firemen inspect the aftermath of a fire in one of the buildings that housed administration staff.



ENTERTAINMENT

When the dangers of these blizzards subsided, Heart Mountain was not without winter entertainments. In early December, recreation department crews began work on a set of 250-foot snow slides north of block 30 and an ice-skating rink by the high school football field. Work was slow, and the ice rink was wiped out at least once by a warm Chinook wind. The rink was finally completed in late January 1943, though by that time several other areas around camp had been flooded and turned into “unofficial” rinks.

Ice skating was a novelty to the West Coast natives and an exciting new pastime to break up the monotony of days in camp. Hundreds of pairs of ice skates were ordered through the mail. Unsurprisingly, no one was very good at skating at first. Taking a spill in the rink was a rite of passage, but also no more likely than slipping on ice walking down the street. “The more times you can fall without getting hurt,” noted *Sentinel* society columnist Mo Oano, “the more you are to be admired. To vary your conversation and make it sparkle, you should fall all sorts of ways.”

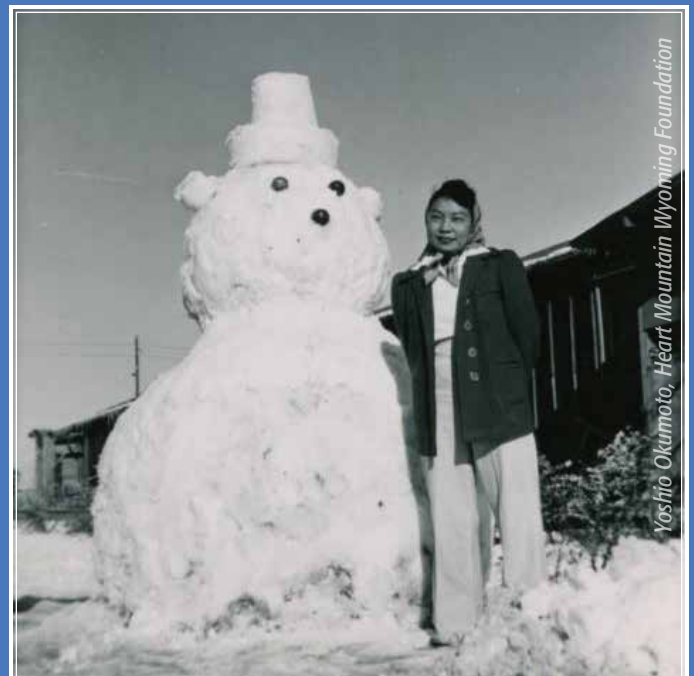


Snowmen became a common sight around the camp. The fire department even built a snow Hitler, dangling from a noose. Snowball fights were also common, to the point where the internal security department had to warn youths against pelting passing truck drivers with snowballs. Sleds were ordered or assembled from scrap. The residential area, however, had been graded flat prior to the camp's construction, and provided poor sledding grounds. Children gazed longingly at the hills outside the barbed wire fence.

In October 1942, before the fence was fully complete, 32 children decided to chance leaving the residential area to go sledding on a nearby slope. They were soon interrupted by the armed military guards, who confiscated their sleds, took them into custody, and held them until their parents arrived to pick them up. News of the event spread quickly throughout the camp. The arrest of children for playing proved to some in the camp that their rights as citizens had been stolen away from them. Frank Inouye would later cite the sledding incident as a catalyst for the resistance movement at Heart Mountain.



Hitler wouldn't have a ghost of a chance at Heart Mountain as one can see from the above picture. Joan Ishiyama is shown trying to hang the snow man Fuehrer which was made by several members of the Fire department.



Top left: "A crew of firemen and volunteer helpers man the fire house in flooding an ice skating rink at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center"

Middle right: "Hitler wouldn't have a ghost of a chance at Heart Mountain as one can see from the above picture. Joan Ishiyama is shown trying to hang the snow man Fuehrer which was made by several members of the Fire department."

Top right: "Christmas Exercise 22-25 Rec Hall, Dec 22-1943,"

Right: Woman with snowman, labeled "Nov-22 1944"

Far right: "Whoa, Blitzen, we can't forget the folks in this place!" by John Watanabe



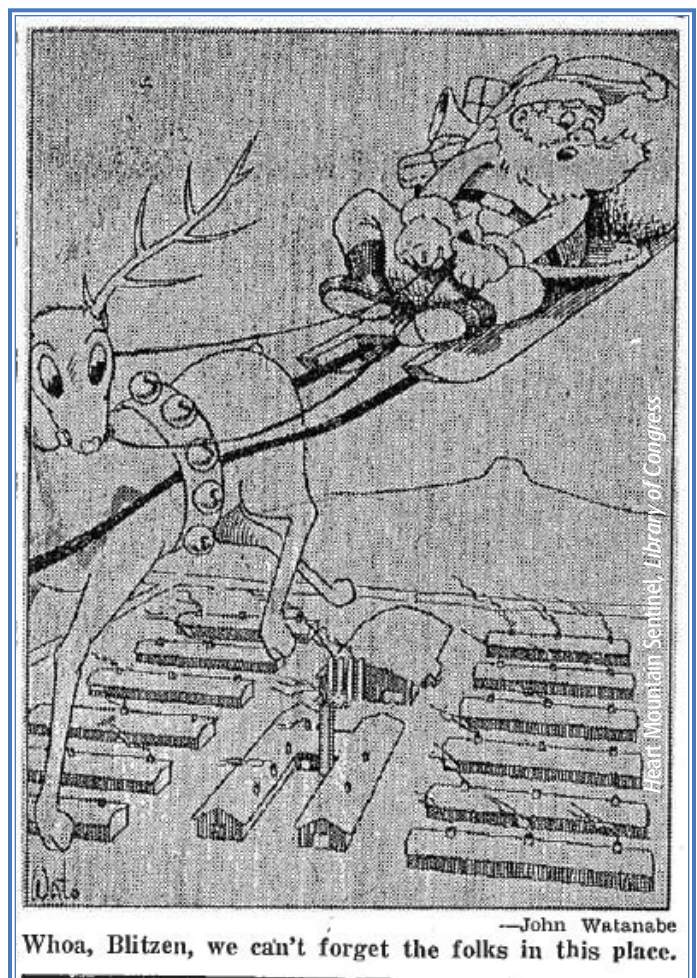
Even with the cold, the lack of warm clothing, and the rough living conditions, the biggest winter concern for many Heart Mountain parents was Christmas. Most families had lost everything when they were forced from their homes. What meager financial resources they did have had been slowly depleted buying necessities to survive in the temporary “assembly centers” on the West Coast and later at Heart Mountain. Jobs were available in the camp, but with a maximum pay rate of \$19 per month, few families had earned enough by December to put together a proper Christmas.

Despite the bleak prospect of spending the holidays in a concentration camp, Heart Mountain residents determined to make the best of things. Social, church, and school groups organized caroling expeditions, Christmas programs, and holiday parties throughout the camp. The Army Quartermaster Corps— which rationed out all the food sent into the camps— announced that they would lift their austere food cost restrictions for the holiday, and send 7,500 pounds of turkey and accompanying trimmings to provide incarcerated with a Christmas dinner. Santa Claus costumes—complete with somewhat unsettling Caucasian Santa masks— were issued, so that the jolly fat man could appear in the mess halls on Christmas. Long-whiskered Arthur Ishigo was pressed into service as a rare unmasked Nisei Santa.

Then, the gifts started to arrive. The Japanese American Citizens League had been begging churches around the country to help save Christmas

for those trapped inside of the camps. The Quakers, who had always been outspoken opponents of the incarceration, stepped up first. Soon, other churches around the country followed suit. A small, but vocal, minority expressed disgust that those of Japanese descent should enjoy any kind of holiday, but on the whole the response was overwhelmingly positive.

At an impoverished mission in New Mexico, the congregation heard about the situation in Wyoming, and instructed their priest to trade their livestock and vegetables for gifts to send to the Heart Mountain children. In all, some 10,546 presents were received at the camp, along with monetary donations to purchase more. A recreation hall was set aside for volunteer crews to sort the gifts by age group, so they could be distributed on Christmas Day. For the Japanese Americans of Heart Mountain, stuck behind barbed wire in the middle of nowhere, these gifts sent





George Hiraoka, Washington State University

and their fellow Americans had not forgotten them.

By New Year's Day 1943, the mood in camp was lighter. The subzero temperatures persisted, but there was a sense among the Heart Mountain incarcerated that they had already survived the worst winter had to offer. Mess hall cooks had been saving back rice and sugar rations for weeks, to make the traditional New Year's rice cakes known as mochi. Men pounded the rice with wooden mallets into a paste, from which the cakes were formed. Some cakes were placed into *ozōni*, a traditional holiday soup. Others were sweetened and served as desserts.

In these early months of the camp, the food was monotonous and often flavorless. Any traditional Japanese food was a rarity, and a cause for celebration in and of itself. Everyone savored the mochi, and—for just a moment—were transported beyond the barbed wire and back home. For the New Year's poetry



George Hiraoka, Washington State University

contest in the *Sentinel*, an *Issei* by the pen name of Kusamura entered this *tanka*:

Though life is humble in camp,
Sometimes I find contentment,
Even finding sweetness in daily life.

There would be many more winters in Heart Mountain, but the winter of 1942-43 is the one that would linger long in memory. It was when the incarcerated suffered most, but also when they pulled together to become more than just prisoners. They became a community that—as they had proven—could endure and survive just about anything. 🏔️



Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA

Top left: Mike Hide and Etsuo Hiraishi pound mochi for New Year's Day.

Top right: Santa Claus passes out gifts at Christmas party in a Block 15 mess hall.

Right: "Home, Heart Mt. Wyo. Dec. 42," by Estelle Ishigo.

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DONATIONS help us fulfill our long-term mission of: memorializing the place and events that have come to symbolize the fragility of democracy; educating the public about the history surrounding the tragic and illegal imprisonment of Japanese Americans; and supporting inquiry and research so that future generations understand the still relevant lessons of the Japanese American incarceration experience.

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More info @ barrack.shopheartmountain.org
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More info @ heartmountain.org/support

Collections Care Fund

Supporting the Collections Care Fund helps us with collections care and management, and the costs associated with processing, preserving, storing, protecting and growing the collections. Do you have artifacts to donate? We are actively seeking artifacts, objects, works, and materials related to Heart Mountain and to Japanese American incarceration.

More info @ heartmountain.org/archives.html#donations



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