



KOKORO KARA

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

*"from our heart"*

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*In Memoriam*

**BUILDINGS  
SPECIAL**

**2018 PILGRIMAGE**

the Heart Mountain  
**Miracle**

**Summer 2018**



**Cover image:**

Original root cellar, photographed during operational years of the Heart Mountain site.

*Photo by Hikaru Iwasaki, NARA*



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# THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Thanks to all of you who made the seventh annual Heart Mountain Pilgrimage a resounding success! The general feeling that this had been the “best Pilgrimage ever” was validated when advisory council member, *Mr. Heart Mountain*, Bacon Sakatani told us that we had done “a good job.”

As I reflect upon what made this an outstanding weekend, I know our success is attributed to the collective work of the Heart Mountain families and the greater Cody/Powell community. This success stems from the work of our board members and Pilgrimage co-chairs Kathy Saito Yuille, who was born at Heart Mountain, and Claudia Wade, Director of the Park County Travel Council. Their “go-getter” attitude represents two key segments of our community: Japanese American incarcerated and the Wyoming community and beyond. This representation is cemented by the strong relationships with Secretary Norman Mineta and Senator Alan Simpson. Role models like them help develop a community that unites diverse viewpoints and personalities, making this organization the best that it can be.

Events like the Pilgrimage and the overall success of the Foundation are supported by a dedicated board that plays a variety of different roles that range from facilitators, and photographers to fundraisers and development experts. They include Aura (Matsumura) Newlin, Marc Sugiyama,



Bacon Sakatani at this year's Pilgrimage.



Heart Mountain Pilgrimage Committee Co-Chairs, Kathy Saito Yuille & Claudia Wade.



Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono holding their awards.



Dana Ono, Darrell Kunitomi, Hanako Wakatsuki, and Allyson Nakamoto. Heart Mountain incarcerated who keep us motivated include Sam Mihara, Takashi Hoshizaki, Shig Yabu, and our newest board member, Prentiss Uchida. All our *Nisei* board members provide their energy and personal stories to create special experiences for those who participate in tours of the original structures on our site.

As many of you know, the majority of our board members are former incarcerated and descendants. This fosters a feeling of authenticity and a commitment to continue to find meaning in what happened to Japanese Americans during World War II.

Our distinguished board is further enhanced by Doug Nelson, CEO Emeritus of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Pete Simpson, former Vice President, University of Wyoming, and another newly-elected board member Eric Sandeen, Professor Emeritus, University of Wyoming. These exceedingly engaged leaders working alongside an equally committed and highly competent staff are clearly driving this organization forward. One of this organization's strongest advocates has been LaDonna Zall, local northwest Wyomingite, board member, and acting curator of the

Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. As you may be aware, we established a “Compassionate Witness Award” in her honor. We were pleased to present this year’s award to David Ono and Jeff MacIntyre whose selfless contributions come in the form of meaningful and touching films and news segments on the Japanese American community.

One eye-popping improvement was unveiled at the Center, a new sign inspired by original camp



Shirley Ann Higuchi bids farewell to Kim Barhaug with colleague Dakota Russell.

architecture. The sign was designed by our very own *Sansei* board member, Kris Horiuchi, Facilities Committee Chair. We are also thankful to the rest of the

committee and to Kim Barhaug, Historic Site Manager, who worked with Production Machine Company of Powell, Wyoming to get the job done (read more about this on page 25).

Another incredible feat is the on-going work of the restoration of the root cellar led by Kim and Solomon Martin, owner of Zoula, LLC, a construction firm out of Missoula, MT that specializes in historic preservation and restoration. Sol was instrumental in the restoration of the iconic boiler house chimney (read about the history of the original chimney build on page 23). Amidst the trials and travails of the work on the cellar, the pressures of tight grant deadlines, setbacks due to delayed supply orders, and flood-like rains to name a few, the crew worked long hours to get the root cellar stabilized. As many of you know, Kim has moved to Alaska for a work opportunity for her

family. Without Kim’s dedication, we would not be where we are today in terms of the maintenance and preservation of our beloved site (read more about the root cellar and Kim on page 21).

This year, art and artifacts reflected the history, pain and resilience of the incarceration experience that enabled attendees

to make connections on many levels: physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. Many thanks to the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) for ensuring we could create the exhibition of Estelle Ishigo’s watercolors, “The Mountain Was Our Secret.” Thanks to Bacon who also provided Ishigo’s beautiful drawings for the exhibit. JANM also exhibited artifacts from the Eaton Collection in a special display which was enriched by a lively panel discussion including Dakota Russell, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Interim Executive Director, Clement Hanami, JANM curator, Nancy Ukai of *50 Objects, 50 Artifacts*, and Noriko Sanefuji, Smithsonian National Museum of American History Museum Specialist.

Also, we were excited to host Sharon Yamato’s film, “Moving Walls” which originally accompanied the striking photographs by Stan Honda in an exhibit of the same name at the interpretive center last autumn. The film creates an environment of shared community through interviews and archival footage



Filmmaker Sharon Yamato.

about the intriguing story of what happened to the original Heart Mountain barracks after World War II.

I was struck and impressed by the musical talents of the No-No Boy Music Project performers Julian Saporiti and Erin Aoyama (the latter is a Heart Mountain descendant) and “Omoiyari” musician/



Keynote speaker David Inoue with Shirley Ann Higuchi and Doug Nelson.



filmmaker Kishi Bashi who shared their stunning musical/visual interpretations of the incarceration history. Further, the poignant short films based on family incarceration artifacts created in the Digital Storytelling Workshop also helped us make the impactful connections between the past and the present.

Many thanks to keynote speaker David Inoue, Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), who reminded us how the Japanese American incarceration experience is germane to the Asian American issues that we confront today. Brian Liesinger, head of the Japanese American Confinement Site Consortium (JACSC), also remarked on the importance of the Consortium's collaborative work. Heart Mountain received a National Park Service grant to fund this collaboration. I must emphasize the importance of the leadership of the five major stakeholders: HMWF, JANM, Friends of Minidoka, JACL, and the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation. We were delighted to receive greetings from the Consulate-General of Japan, based in Denver, which were delivered by Deputy Consul General Kazumasa Kondo.



Friends of Minidoka welcoming reception.

Finally, it was such a pleasure to welcome the leadership of one of the Consortium stakeholders, Friends of Minidoka, who not only participated in the Pilgrimage activities but also sponsored two participants in the Digital Storytelling Workshop skillfully directed by Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono, with assistance from Brian Liesinger and Vanessa Yuille (read more about this year's Pilgrimage on pages 11–16).

Most importantly, I hope that all of you who were able to attend were enlightened and influenced by remembering this important part of our history. I look forward to seeing you at the next Pilgrimage on Friday, July 26 and Saturday, July 27, 2019. Thanks for your support and your commitment to make Heart Mountain the best that it can be. 🙏

*Shirley Ann Higuchi*



(L-R) Hanako Wakatsuki (HMWF), David Inoue (JACL), Linda Nelson, Doug Nelson (HMWF), Shirley Ann Higuchi (HMWF), Ray Locker, Vanessa Yuille, Julie Abo (HMWF), & Prentiss Uchida (HMWF); Seated (L-R): Deni Mineta, Secretary Norman Mineta, Kathy Saito Yuille (HMWF), Senator Alan Simpson, & Ann Simpson at this year's Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.



# In Memoriam

**Toshi Ito** (1924–2018)



*Photo courtesy of Sam Mihara*

Toshi “Toshi” Nagamori Ito, born and raised in Los Angeles, was finishing her senior year of high school when the government forced the Nagamori family to leave their home and confined them at the “assembly center”

at Santa Anita Racetrack. School officials arranged for Ito to graduate early, and her principal delivered her diploma to the assembly center. The Nagamori family was transferred to Heart Mountain a few months later.

Ito remained with her family at Heart Mountain until the authorities began allowing graduating students to apply to colleges in the Midwest. Not all colleges opened their doors to Japanese Americans, but Ito found a place at National College in Kansas City, Missouri. The young man in charge of processing her leave application, James Ito, walked her through the many pages of necessary paperwork.

Toshi remembered vividly the day she left the Heart Mountain camp for school. “I dressed in a beige dress and a polo coat,” she wrote in her memoirs, “and I even wore my one and only precious, scarce, pair of nylon hose...Jim was smitten!” The next summer, during her break from school, Toshi returned to Heart

Mountain. James had been promoted to the head of the Agriculture Department\* in her absence, but still took an active interest in Toshi. Over the course of that summer, the pair attended movies, picnics, and dances inside the camp. It was the beginning of a lifelong romance.

Toshi returned to National College that fall. After leaving camp for a job outside, James decided to volunteer for the Military Intelligence Service. While on furlough from his post in Minnesota, James visited Toshi in Kansas City, and proposed. They were married in June 1945, after Ito had left college to rejoin her family in Los Angeles.



*Toshi & James Ito on their wedding day.*

Ito spent much of the rest of her life as an elementary school teacher, a profession she had never considered as a young woman. “Prior to World War II,” she wrote, “they did not hire Asians to teach in public elementary, junior high, or high schools.” Nonetheless, she found her calling, and taught at Elysian Heights Elementary in Los Angeles for over 25 years.

Toshi and James Ito were also early and active supporters of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and helped with the development of the interpretive center. Toshi’s red leather “security boots,” a gift from her father that comforted her when she set out for college alone, occupy a prominent place in the center’s permanent exhibit. Ito’s contributions in raising awareness about the story of Japanese American incarceration will long be remembered. She is survived by her son, Judge Lance Ito, daughter, Chrislyn Kodama, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

*\*To read more about James Ito and his contributions to the agriculture program, read “The Heart Mountain Miracle” on page 27*



Some of the many people who gathered to celebrate Toshi’s life in August.  
(L-R, standing): Sam Mihara, Takashi Hoshizaki, Willie Ito, David Ono, Jeff MacIntyre, Prentiss Uchida, Shig Yabu, & Darrell Kunitomi.  
(L-R, seated): Toshi’s daughter Chrislyn Kodama & son Judge Lance Ito.



## Jimi Yamaichi (1922–2018)



Photo by Dorey Nomiyama Photography


Jimi Yamaichi, born in 1922 in San Jose, knew from a young age that he wanted to be a carpenter. At 19 years old, Yamaichi was sent with his family to the Pomona Assembly Center. There,

he became known as a skilled maker of geta, and even taught a class in making them for the center's children. After he was transferred to Heart Mountain, Yamaichi joined the work crew that completed the Heart Mountain Canal. The canal irrigated the fields and made agriculture at the camp possible. It is still used by farmers today.

Yamaichi's life took a dramatic turn when his father answered "No-No" on the government's loyalty questionnaire, and the whole family was sent to Tule Lake. Yamaichi became head of that camp's

construction crew, and was tasked with building a jail to hold his fellow incarcerated. Despite his disgust with the assignment, Yamaichi and his crew complied. The jail building still stands, and the National Park Service is currently planning its restoration.

In 1944, the Army drafted Yamaichi, but he chose to resist. He was arrested, and stood trial alongside 25 other Tule Lake draft resisters. Judge Louis E. Goodman dismissed the case against them, stating that "it is shocking to the conscience that an American citizen be confined on the ground of disloyalty and then, while under duress and restraint, be compelled to serve in the Armed Forces..."

After he regained his freedom, Yamaichi spent the rest of his life in his chosen vocation as a carpenter. He also became actively involved with the Tule Lake Pilgrimage Committee and was a co-founder of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose. Yamaichi is survived by his wife, Eiko, four children, and many grandchildren. 

## Yosh Kuromiya (1923–2018)


Yoshito "Yosh" Kuromiya grew up in Monrovia, California, where his family ran a produce stand. During World War II, Kuromiya and his family were removed from their home and first incarcerated at the Pomona Assembly Center, then later at Heart Mountain. Kuromiya worked in the sign shop at Pomona and the poster shop at Heart Mountain. These jobs sparked in him a lifelong passion for art.

Kuromiya spent much of his time at Heart Mountain engaged in artistic pursuits, under the tutelage of famed artist Benji Okubo. Another leading influence for Kuromiya was Kiyoshi Okamoto, who founded the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee and gave mess hall lectures about how the government had violated Japanese Americans' civil rights. The Fair Play Committee took a strong stance against the Army drafting young men from the camps. Kuromiya resolved that, if he were drafted, he would resist.

Years later, Kuromiya remembered the day he received his draft notice. "I thought, 'NO!'" he wrote. "This is MY country. This is MY Constitution! This

is MY Bill of Rights! I am here to finally defend them. I regret I... surrendered my freedom. I will not continue to surrender my dignity nor the dignity of the U.S. Constitution!"

The authorities arrested Kuromiya, and he was tried with 62 other draft resisters from Heart Mountain. It remains the largest mass trial in Wyoming history. Kuromiya and his fellow resisters were all found guilty, and sentenced to three years in federal prison. Kuromiya served his time at McNeil Island Penitentiary in Washington state.

After his release from prison, Kuromiya became a landscape architect, and continued making art. He also became one of the most prominent voices in seeking recognition for the Heart Mountain draft resisters. Kuromiya is survived by his wife, Irene, and many family members. 

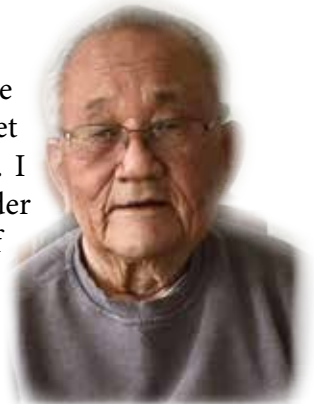


Photo courtesy of Irene Kuromiya



# the DANGER of IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS

by Aura (Matsumura) Newlin

HMWF Board Secretary & Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, Northwest College

In June, HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi moderated a panel at the annual conference of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts (NCREFC), discussing the parallels and distinctions between Japanese American Incarceration and current immigration detention. As the opening session, the panel set the tone for the remainder of the conference which took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was attended by judges, attorneys, and court administrators from around the country. Panelists were Julia Harumi Mass, senior staff attorney at the ACLU of Northern California; Aura (Matsumura) Newlin, HMWF Board Secretary and Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming; and Ray Locker, Washington enterprise editor for *USA Today*. Higuchi, Mass, and Newlin are all descendants of Heart Mountain incarcerated.

Higuchi opened by discussing the current political climate surrounding immigrants. Immigration detention in the U.S. has been on the rise since the

1990s, but executive actions taken by the Trump administration have caused the numbers to swell dramatically. To accommodate these rising numbers, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is proposing to build at least four new detention facilities, managed by for-profit prison companies. One of the proposed sites is in southwest Wyoming. The others are in the vicinities of Detroit, Chicago, and St. Paul.

Mass, whose work focuses on immigrants' rights and national security, pointed out some key differences between the government's actions against "Persons of Japanese Ancestry" in the 1940s and the federal detention of Latin American immigrants today. Of paramount importance is the difference in prisoners' legal status. Unlike the immigrant *Issei* and their American-born *Nisei* children, individuals who are now subject to detention include: those who entered the U.S. without permission; asylum-seekers who are fleeing persecution in their home countries; those whose visas have expired; and those who are

here legally but have been convicted of an offense—even if the offense is as minor as writing a bad check or transporting a small amount of marijuana. Detention can span months or even years while the prisoner awaits deportation, appeals his or her case, or awaits approval of asylum.

Framing the issue broadly, however, Mass went on to discuss a number of troubling



(L-R): Judge Susan F. Maven, Julia Harumi Mass, Judge Tanya M. Bransford, Aura (Matsumura) Newlin, Shirley Ann Higuchi, & Ray Locker.






Photo by Aimee Alonzo

Shirley Ann Higuchi moderates with panelists Julia Harumi Mass (left), Aura (Matsumura) Newlin, & Ray Locker.

similarities. As in the 1940s, current immigration detention is a form of civil detention that in many cases is not linked to any threat posed by the individual. Many detainees do not have the right to a hearing. They are held in overcrowded barracks, jails, and prisons characterized by a lack of privacy. They are under constant surveillance by armed guards, and they are surrounded by barbed wire. In some cases parents and children are detained together, while in others they are forcibly separated; either way, the family structure is deeply harmed.

A crucial parallel with Japanese American incarceration is that current immigration detention is fundamentally rooted in prejudice. Drawing on perspectives from the social sciences, Newlin provided examples of the anti-immigrant undercurrents that shaped rhetoric and action both then and now. Locker wrapped up the discussion by offering commentary from his vantage point as an editor, author, and reporter specializing in White House, Pentagon, and national security news. He pointed to Japanese American incarceration history

as a harbinger for misuse of census data, and for executive orders that may not explicitly identify racial groups but are, in effect, discriminatory along lines of ethnicity.

In 2014, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation hosted NCREFC's annual conference here on the site of Wyoming's first "relocation center" for immigrants and their children. Professor David Thronson, a law professor at Michigan State University and a national expert on the impact of immigration law on children, was a speaker at both the 2014 and 2018 conferences. In his remarks immediately following the 2018 Heart Mountain panel in Minneapolis, he reflected back on his visit to Heart Mountain, affirming that "*these parallels are real.*" At a minimum, one message from the Heart Mountain panelists to the public is as follows: if you are struggling to decide whether current versions of immigration detention are appropriate, please come visit our museum and learn about our history. We hope that you will see the parallels as we do, and determine that current policies and practices for immigration detention are unjustifiably harsh. 

*Save the Date!*

Members-only  
early registration opens  
March 1, 2019

2019 Heart Mountain  
**PILGRIMAGE**  
Powell & Cody • July 25–27, 2019

Watch your mailboxes and inboxes for more information later this year!  
[www.heartmountain.org/pilgrimage](http://www.heartmountain.org/pilgrimage)



# Exhibit Opening

This May, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center opened a major new special exhibit, "The Mountain Was Our Secret: Works by Estelle Ishigo." The exhibit, which will run through the end of 2018, features ten watercolor paintings and nine pencil sketches Ishigo made while incarcerated at Heart Mountain. Most of these pieces have never before been publicly exhibited.

Estelle Ishigo was one the few white women held at Heart Mountain. When Estelle's Japanese American husband, Arthur, was ordered from their Los Angeles home in the spring of 1942, Estelle could not bear to leave his side. She wrote the government and asked if she could go with him to Wyoming. The government consented, but warned her she would be treated just as any other incarcerated. At Heart Mountain, Estelle spent much of her time capturing scenes of everyday life in the camp through her art.



The watercolors featured in this exhibit traveled a particularly long path back to Heart Mountain. Estelle left them in the care of Allen Eaton, who was working on a book about art inside the camps. Eaton died without returning them, and the paintings passed into the hands of his descendants and, later, family friends. The watercolors resurfaced, alongside many other artifacts Eaton had collected, as part of an art auction in 2015.

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation protested the auction, joining forces with the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles and the activist group Japanese American History: Not For Sale. Facing a legal injunction from Heart Mountain, the sellers called the sale off and arranged for the Eaton



(Far left): Visitors explore the new exhibit

(Left): Interim Executive Director Dakota Russell introduces the life and work of Estelle Ishigo

Watercolors and drawings by Estelle Ishigo, featured in our special exhibit *Watercolors from the Japanese American National Museum, Allen Eaton Collection; Drawings from the HMWF Collection*



# WORKS BY ESTELLE ISHIGO

*the mountain was our secret*

Collection to be acquired by JANM instead. JANM had the watercolors conserved, and then loaned them to Heart Mountain.

The loan inspired HMWF Advisory Council member Bacon Sakatani to make a gift of his own. Sakatani had been a close friend of Estelle's late in her life, and she passed on to him 137 original pencil sketches she made in camp. With a new exhibit in the works, Sakatani decided the time was right to donate these important pieces to Heart Mountain.

The exhibit's opening event featured a presentation


by Sakatani about Estelle's life and work. Additionally, HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi presented on the history of the Eaton Auction and Heart Mountain's role in stopping it. Attendees then had an opportunity to mingle and view Estelle's work. For the *Nisei* in attendance, her vivid paintings brought back memories of freezing marches to the mess halls or summer days spent beside the camp's swimming hole. Listening to their stories, the crowd was struck by what a rare window into the past Estelle's art offered, and how very close we came to losing these priceless glimpses forever. 



Photo by Harriet Bloom-Wilson



Photo by Harriet Bloom-Wilson



Photo by Dakota Russell

(Far left): Shirley Ann Higuchi discusses the Eaton Collection

(Above): Bacon Sakatani presents about Estelle's life

(Left): HMWF Advisory Council member Bacon Sakatani with HMWF board member LaDonna Zall



# 2018 Heart Mountain PILGRIMAGE



Heart Mountain Mess Hall by Estelle Ishigo, Allen Eaton Collection, Japanese American National Museum

**H**undreds of people from around the country, including former incarcerated and their descendants, made the trip this July to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center's 7th Annual Pilgrimage. Our theme this year explored art as a means of survival. For thousands of Japanese Americans trapped in concentration camps like Heart Mountain, making art became a way to keep hands and minds busy. It gave form to emotions for which there were no words. Art was everywhere inside Heart Mountain, from the contemplative compositions of *Issei* poets to the boisterous and joyful noise of the young people's swing bands. When incarcerated painted, performed, sang, danced, or composed, they were—if only for a moment—free again. For this year's Pilgrimage, we looked to art to help us better understand those who came before, and to help us better understand each other. We hope this selection of photos (some taken by Pilgrimage participants) from the event encapsulates this spirit of this incredible weekend.



Photo by Emily Sweeney Hoshida

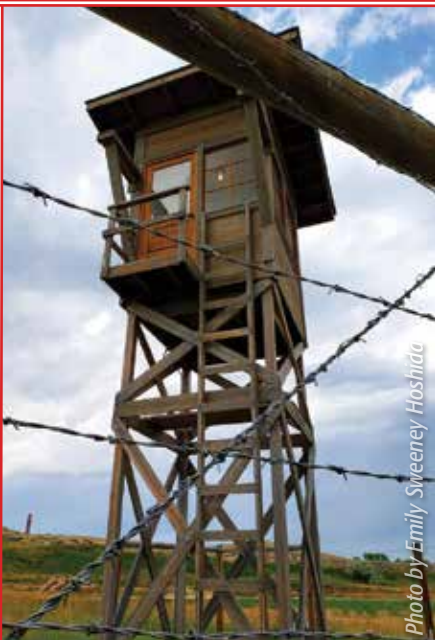


Photo by Emily Sweeney Hoshida



Photo by Karen Kiyo Lowhurst

(L-R): Results of the youth activities on the event tent with Heart Mountain in the background; Guard Tower at the Heart Mountain National Historic Site; Out by the guard tower, Cole Huster in background.



# INCARCERATION

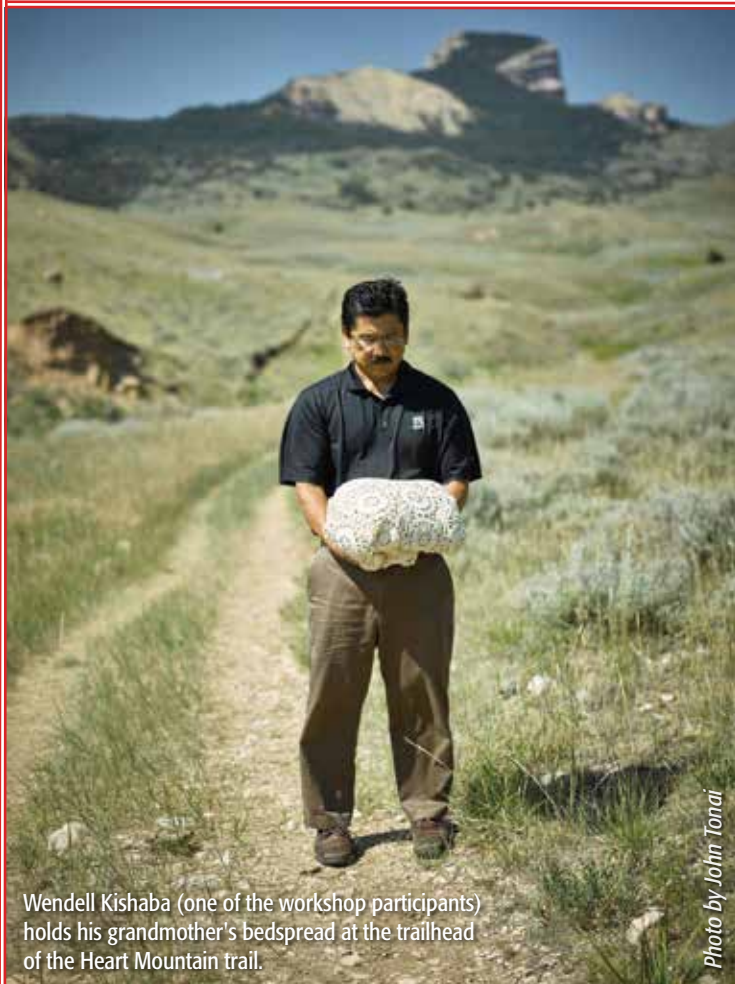
## DIGITAL STORYTELLING WORKSHOP

The Digital Storytelling Workshop, led by award-winning filmmakers Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono, produced six captivating short films focused on artifacts of incarceration. Participants included a former Minidoka incarcerated and five descendants with ties to Heart Mountain and Minidoka. These pieces illuminated the stories of the six artifacts by exploring their histories and the personal connections the participants share with them. The films were created and screened at this year's opening ceremony.



Above: Jeff MacIntyre with workshop participants (L-R): Roy Yamamoto, Wendell Kishaba, Paulette Moreno, Shirley Ann Higuchi, Paiton Gleason, & Julianne Abe.

Left: David Ono and Jeff MacIntyre accept their awards with Shirley Ann Higuchi, Norm Mineta, & LaDonna Zall.



Wendell Kishaba (one of the workshop participants) holds his grandmother's bedspread at the trailhead of the Heart Mountain trail.

## COMPASSIONATE WITNESS AWARD

Along with leading the workshop, MacIntyre and Ono were chosen as the 2018 recipients of the LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness Award. The pair have repeatedly shown their commitment to telling the incarceration story through interviews, presentations, and films that champion the cause. Their work includes the award-winning documentary "The Legacy of Heart Mountain." This award honors those who have helped the Japanese American community even though they are not directly impacted by oppression. Created in 2017, the award first honored LaDonna Zall herself, who continues to be an acting curator, volunteer, and supporter of the HMWF, aiding in its establishment and growth over the past two decades. Zall was also instrumental in the development of the former confinement site into a National Historic Landmark and the creation of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center.



## EXHIBITS

### Artifacts, Paintings, & Drawings

JANM Art Director Clement Hanami shared the crowd-sourced traveling exhibit, "Contested Histories" which features artifacts from the Eaton collection, and draws data about the artifacts from across the country.

"The Mountain Was Our Secret: Works by Estelle Ishigo" which included watercolors from the Eaton Collection, was featured at the Interpretive Center (read more about this exhibit on page 9).

Hanami, Noriko Sanefuji of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, and Nancy Ukai of *50 Objects, 50 Artifacts*, all participated in "Artifacts of Incarceration", a panel discussion about using art and artifacts from the camps to educate the public about incarceration history. 🍣🍱



Drawing by Estelle Ishigo.



Moderator Dakota Russell with panelists Nancy Ukai and Noriko Sanefuji.

Clement Hanami, Art Director at the Japanese American National Museum, discusses the museum's ongoing efforts to research and preserve the Allen Eaton Collection during the panel discussion "Artifacts of Incarceration".



# PIECES OF OUR PUZZLE

## MULTIGENERATIONAL DISCUSSIONS

by **Sheila Matsumura Newlin**

Discussion Facilitator and Heart Mountain Descendant

"I got to hear everyone else's story," one participant told me at the end of a pilgrimage four years ago. "When do I get to tell my story?"

Realizing that everyone connected with the incarceration experience has a story to tell, the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage began conducting multigenerational small group discussions three years ago. These have now become an important element of every pilgrimage.

According to HMWF board member Hanako Wakatsuki, we give participants "a chance to reflect on the Japanese American confinement experience, and to express our thoughts in a safe, supportive, small group environment."

Interested registrants were assigned to groups of 8–12 which had at least one incarcerated, and others of varying ages and generations. Friends, spouses, grandchildren, and others are valuable group members because they too can participate by asking questions and offering their perspectives of what it is like to "be related to" the camp experiences, whether through relatives, professions, friendships, or historical interests.

Some groups at this year's pilgrimage had people who were born at Heart Mountain or other camps. Others had members who were children or young adults at that time. Some families preferred to stay together within one group, while other families or couples requested to be separated into different groups.

In the group I facilitated, we introduced ourselves, our connections to any of the camps, and our personal goals for the pilgrimage. "Why am I here?" One said her goal was to meet new people and renew acquaintances with old friends. She enriched our group by sharing her experiences as a 12-year-old at Heart Mountain. Several reflected, "I came to find out what my parents would not tell me." One described her goal as "to find the missing pieces of my family's puzzle." *Sansei* and *Yonsei* traveled long distances to come to the pilgrimage, reaching out for



Sheila attended this year's Pilgrimage with an extended family group.  
(Back Row:) Grant Sunada, Doug Newlin, Mitchell Matsumura, Aura Matsumura Newlin, Zack and Ezra Turnidge; (Middle Row:) Rachel Sunada, Sheila Matsumura Newlin, Zella Turnidge, Gail Matsumura, Mika Matsumura, Christine Sunada Turnidge.  
(Front Row:) Toshiko, Adelaide, and Gordon Sunada, Enzo Turnidge.

anything that could help them understand the situations of their families.

The struggle for identity continues. Look at your birth certificate. What does it say on the "color or race" line? When was the last time you filled out a form with an ethnicity category? For some, their pencils automatically check "Caucasian." But others feel a sense of discomfort. Do we check Asian-Pacific Islander? White? Other? Do we leave it blank? Think about how such forms renew that sense of separation and alienation, every time.

We had several *Hapa* (part Japanese or multi-ethnic descent) in our group. They were surprised to find others they could identify with and say, "Me, too—that happens to me, too." At the end of our session, after our group photo, they requested, "We want a *Hapa* picture!" These groups provide a vehicle to find a long-needed identity, especially for those who grew up in a community where they felt "alone."

We continued to explore topics of discrimination, shame versus acceptance, generational differences, family separations, and easing the pain. One person wondered, "Why would my mother want to climb Heart Mountain?" An insightful group member offered, "Because it represented freedom to her."

We did not have time to explore the important questions of "Where do we go from here? What have we learned?" Did some of the other groups discuss these concepts? How do we challenge ourselves to continue these questions?


I encourage you to sign up for these groups at every pilgrimage. There will be laughter, there will be tears. This is a rare opportunity to listen, learn, share, and to put together the pieces of your puzzle. 



Photo by Harriet Bloom-Wilson



Photo by Darrell Kunito



Photo by Kate Wilson

(Top): Kishi Bashi shows a segment of his film; (middle): Erin Aoyama & Julian Saporiti are joined by Kishi Bashi in a performance at the Saturday evening banquet; (bottom): Rachel & Grant Sunada swing to some Glenn Miller! (above): Image from "Moving Walls" project.



Photo by Stan Honda

At the Interpretive Center, Kishi Bashi, of Athens, Georgia and indie rock fame screened part of his engaging documentary film/musical composition "Omoiari: a Songfilm by Kishi Bashi," which is a visual strings-based musical collage. "Omoiari," (a Japanese word that means to have sympathy and compassion) shows footage of visits to several camps, including Heart Mountain, and explores what it means to be Japanese, American, and Japanese American with the backdrop of the incarceration experience to draw diverse groups of people together, a particularly compelling message in today's political arena.

The No-No Boy Music Project featuring Brown University PhD candidates Julian Saporiti and Erin Aoyama, combined their studies in American history with their musical talents that resulted in a multimedia performance that engendered laughter, tears and reflective moments. Saporiti's and Aoyama's mesmerizing voices, paired with the backdrop of difficult images of the war gave voice to those who didn't live to tell their stories and for those whose voices were ignored for so long. Their original songs and renditions of songs performed in camp, dealt with incarcerated suicide and depression, paid tribute to incarcerated performers, and lent fresh life to those whose art was performed in fleeting moments, then lost to time.

Filmmaker Sharon Yamato and photographer Stan Honda spoke at a screening of their poignant short documentary, "Moving Walls", that followed the journey of the Heart Mountain buildings from prison barracks to homes for local families. The narratives of homesteaders and former incarcerated, interspersed with quotes from local historians and politicians, provided insight into the work left for differing groups of Americans to come to terms with Japanese American World War II incarceration and racial prejudice.

We were also lucky enough to enjoy the charming and high-energy swing dancing of Grant & Rachel Sunada, who held a dance workshop while also performing during the cocktail hour. Grant paid special tribute to his grandfather George Sunada who was a member of the 442nd, and whose uniform we have on display in the interpretive center.

## PERFORMANCE ARTS

### Music, Film, & Dancing



# PRESENTATIONS

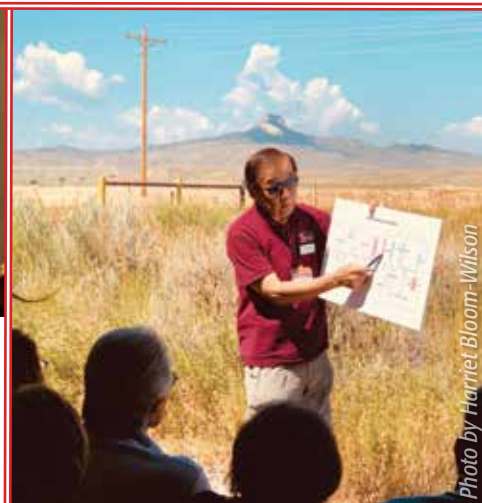
Following a somber flag ceremony by local Boy Scouts, and a moving rendition of the “Star Spangled Banner” by local singers and educators Larry and Alice Munari, Senator Al Simpson (ret.) reflected on the importance of his close friendship with Secretary Norman Mineta. He said that the legacy of Heart Mountain belongs to everyone at the pilgrimage, in the local community, and across the country. Secretary Mineta called for vigilance in a democratic society where being a “citizen” should not be taken for granted. Dianne Fukami and Debra Nakatomi’s film, “An American Story: Norman Mineta and His Legacy,” a section of which premiered at the pilgrimage, tells Secretary Mineta’s life story.

Saturday morning, attendees could visit stations around the historic site where former Heart Mountain incarcerated shared their memories of Heart Mountain: the original Heart Mountain barrack, the hospital grounds, and the war memorial and walking path.

Sam Mihara discussed his own memories of Heart Mountain, where he was incarcerated as a child, in a formal presentation while also leading tours at the site of the hospital. Mihara has traveled the country, speaking at schools, colleges, public libraries, and to many other audiences about his experiences at Heart Mountain and wider Japanese American World War II history. This year, Mihara was honored with the Paul A. Gagnon Prize in history education.

Deputy Consul General Kazumasa Kondo delivered a message on behalf of the Consul General of Japan in Denver, Hiroto Hirakoba, of support and hope of continued collaborative work moving forward which was echoed by HMWF Chair Shirley Higuchi, who appreciated the Consul General’s support of her father and other *Nisei* members in the past.

Keynote speaker David Inoue gave a moving speech about how the Japanese American incarceration experience is part of the Asian American experience, whether or not



(Above): Karen Korematsu;  
(right): Sam Mihara speaks  
at the hospital site;  
(below): Shig Yabu discusses  
life at Heart Mountain in  
the original barrack

Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

Photo by Harriet Bloom-Wilson



Photo by Dakota Russell

one is personally connected to the incarceration. He drew from his own personal viewpoint as the child of post-World War II Chinese and Japanese immigrants. Inoue emphasized how moving forward must involve reaching out and collaborating with other advocacy groups.

During the closing social banquet, Karen Korematsu, of the Korematsu Institute, spoke about her father Fred Korematsu’s case that the Supreme Court recently struck down. Korematsu, with tears in her eyes, said that her father would have been deeply troubled by the court’s upholding of the travel ban even as they struck down his case, but that her father would say to engage and be active political participants in society. 🍷🍷



Photo by Bacon Sakatani

(Left): Childhood friends  
Norm Mineta & Al Simpson  
on stage waiting to speak.

(Right):  
Joyce Parks & Karen Kiyo  
Lowhurst embrace  
near one of the  
hospital buildings.  
Karen added this caption:  
“My mom and me, stand-  
ing where she was born,  
clutching each other and  
weeping. Good times!”



Photo by Cole Huster





## HEART MOUNTAIN

# BUILD

**In this special section, we focus on the structures—old and new—that aid us in**

Over the past few years, the historic site at Heart Mountain has been growing. The Foundation has

Thanks to the generous assistance of Heart Mountain's partners, members, and donors,

We will also explore a little known story about the iconic hospital chimney as well





# INGS

## SPECIAL

**in telling the story of Heart Mountain and Japanese American incarceration.**

as been working hard to save two original structures from the camp and open them to the public.  
ors, work on both the root cellar and the barrack is progressing at an incredible rate.  
well as introducing the newest addition to the site, our brand new highway sign!



# original Barrack



In 2015, the Foundation learned of an original barrack located outside of Shell, Wyoming, at the Iowa State University Geology Field Camp. Long ago, the camp moved in three barracks to serve as cabins for students during summer field schools. Only one of these barracks remained, and the University was planning to retire it. Rather than tear it down, the University donated the building to Heart Mountain.

The newly donated barrack had to be moved over 70 miles back to the Heart Mountain site. Faced with such a challenging task, the HMWF turned to its friends. The Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming answered the call, providing much of the needed funding to transport the barrack and prepare the site. The Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund also contributed, as did many individuals who saw the potential of this project.

Once the barrack was safely in place, the Foundation began efforts to stabilize the structure. The greatest

concern was the roof, which had been damaged over time and was leaking in a number of places. A grant from the Park County Historical Commission allowed Heart Mountain to hire contractors to strengthen the existing roof structure and replace parts of the roof that could not be saved.

Alongside the roof work, a team of student volunteers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln helped to remove modern changes to the interior of the barrack. Working with Heart Mountain staff, they tore out drop ceilings and wood-paneled walls that covered up the original building's structure. Once the weather warmed this spring, all twenty of the barrack's original windows were removed and restored. Contractors replaced broken windowpanes and old window glazing,







Photo by Morgan Tyree

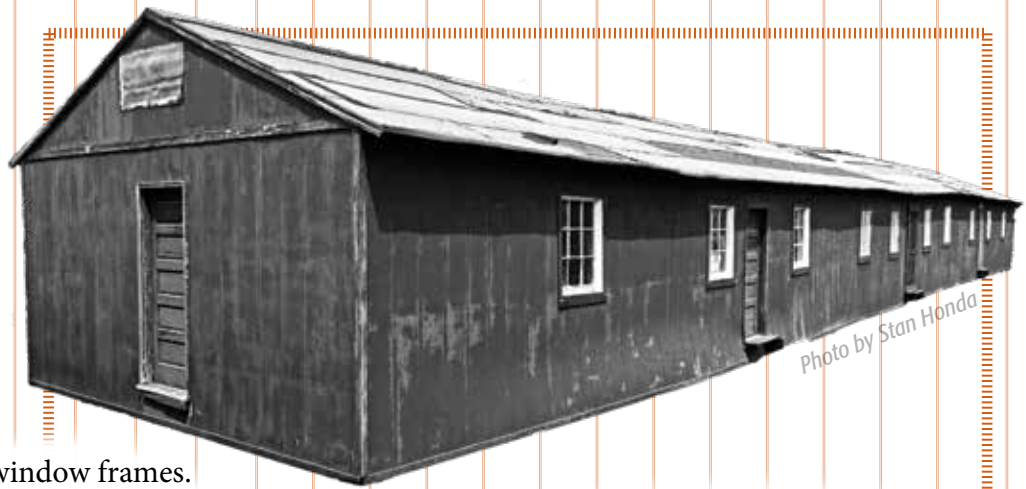


Photo by Stan Honda

and stripped and sealed the wooden window frames.

Much of this work has been possible thanks to another massive fundraising campaign that began at the July 2017 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage and continued through the fall as a mail campaign. In all,

316 donors donated over \$85,000 toward the future development of the barrack. These funds have made our steady progress possible.

At present, the Heart

Mountain board and staff are looking more closely at the interior of the barrack, to determine what changes to it may have occurred over time, and to decide how best to incorporate them into the building's rehabilitation. Representatives from the National Park Service will be visiting the site this fall to help study the situation further. In the meantime, work on the exterior will continue, including restoring the building's vents, building steps up to the entrances, and designing a handicap ramp for one entrance. 🏡



Courtesy of HMWF

**Go online to  
[barrack.shopheartmountain.org](http://barrack.shopheartmountain.org)  
to learn more and to support  
this restoration project!**



Photo by Kate Wilson

# Root Cellar

Through a generous donation by the Jolovich family in 2013, the Foundation came into possession of the last remaining original Heart Mountain root cellar. The Heart Mountain Engineering Department designed and built two massive root cellars in the summer of 1943, to hold that year's successful vegetable harvest. Each of the cellars was over 300 feet long, and designed for trucks to drive through and unload produce. Heart Mountain incarcerated Japanese Americans harvested and milled all the lumber for the cellars. Only one of the cellars remains today, and is likely the only surviving camp structure built by incarcerated Japanese Americans.

In 2015, the Foundation applied for and received a Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant from the National Park Service to assess how best to temporarily stabilize the cellar. A team of architects and engineers examined the structure in minute detail. They found that—with the exception of a few problem areas—the cellar had aged remarkably well. Rather than moving ahead with a costly temporary stabilization, they suggested Heart Mountain begin restoration work right away.

In 2015, the Foundation received a second JACS grant, allowing work to begin. Plans for the first phase of restoration, which would restore approximately 32 feet of the cellar's length, were drafted. Bids were sent to contractors in the spring of 2018. Zoula, LLC, of Missoula, Montana, won the contract. For Zoula owner Solomon Martin, this project was a return to Heart Mountain. Martin had helped to lead the team that restored the iconic hospital chimney in 2013.

Martin and his team began work in May, removing the cellar's earthen roof and exposing its skeleton. They removed rotted decking boards, taking care to save as much original material as possible. With the weight of the roof off, the Zoula crew carefully began to guide the frame of the cellar back into place.

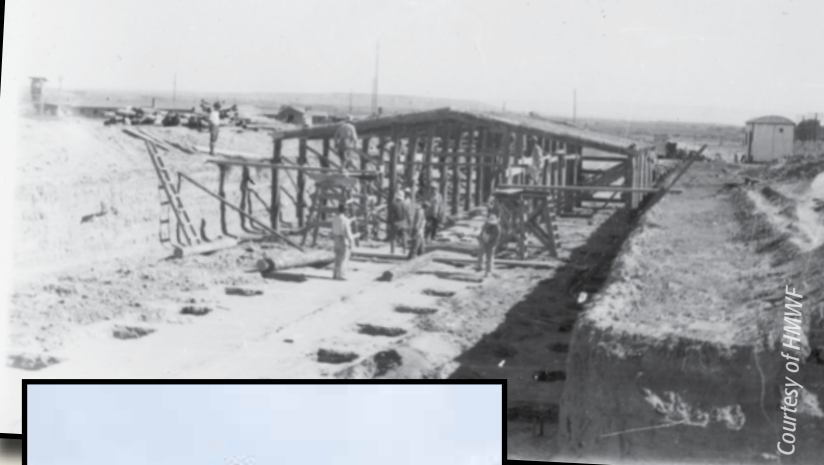
The cellar's support columns had been pushed deeper into the ground over the years. This caused the roof beams to slip and push against the exterior walls. Restoration involved not only jacking the cellar back up to its original height, but pulling the walls back in. The Zoula crew slowly brought each element of the cellar back into place, and used hidden reinforcements to strengthen the structure so it would not fail again.

After completing the underground work, Martin's team replaced the wooden roof decking, added layers of waterproofing, and then covered the roof back over with soil. Finally, they installed the cellar's unique house-shaped vents, which they had extensively restored.

Amazing as it was, this project completed only 10% of the work necessary to fully restore the cellar. This kind of careful work requires both time and money. Though federal grant funds paid for much of this first phase, the Foundation must still pay a required grant match and cover additional construction expenses. To this end, a new fundraising campaign was announced at the 2018 Pilgrimage, with a goal of raising \$65,000. The campaign is still ongoing, and any money raised beyond the initial goal will be used for future phases of restoration. We hope to raise enough to seek new grants and complete another section of the cellar next summer.

Go online to  
[rootcellar.shopheartmountain.org](http://rootcellar.shopheartmountain.org)  
to learn more and to support this restoration project!





(Far left):  
The Zoula crew work to  
restore and stabilize  
the root cellar.  
*Photos courtesy of Solomon  
Martin, Zoula Services*

(Top): Original root cellar in  
early phases of construction.  
(Left): Root cellar entrance  
before restoration work.

*Background image of  
original plans for root  
cellar courtesy of HMWF*

# a Farewell

This August, Heart Mountain said a second goodbye to longtime staff member Kim Barhaug, who is relocating to Alaska. No accounting of these important projects would be complete without mentioning Kim's many contributions to the site. The staff and board will miss her dedication and her tireless efforts to make Heart Mountain the best it could be.

Kim began her career at the interpretive center in 2011. During her first four-year tenure with Heart Mountain, she wore a number of hats. Beginning as the Volunteer Coordinator, she at various times assumed the titles of Lead Educator, Gift Shop Manager, Front Desk Manager, and Facilities Manager. Kim helped to spearhead the creation of the James O. Ito Victory Garden at the center, and was part of the team that coordinated moving the barrack building from Shell back to the site.

After a brief departure in 2015, Kim rejoined the Heart Mountain team in 2017 as the Historic Site Manager. In that capacity, she led the root cellar restoration project, oversaw continued work on the Heart Mountain barrack, and helped the Foundation to increase its outreach into the local community.

This spring, the US Forest Service assigned Kim's husband to a new station outside Seward, Alaska. Kim stayed on through the summer to manage the first phase of root cellar restoration, before leaving to join her family in their new home. We wish Kim and the Barhaug family the best in their new adventures!





# A MYSTERY HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

BY BEN & JIM MURPHY

The hospital chimney stands today as it has since August of 1942. The lonely, iconic structure at the top of the hill is a reminder of the human drama that took place at this confinement site. Standing sphinx-like, the chimney has kept a secret for over seventy years, a mystery hidden in plain sight.

The hospital complex, completed in 1942, relied on the boiler house to provide steam heat during cold Wyoming weather. An essential feature of the boiler house, the smokestack stood as the most prominent structure at the center, as it does now. Of the ten Japanese American "Relocation Centers" constructed in the U.S. during World War II, Heart Mountain retains the most intact hospital complex, of which the smokestack is the most distinguishing feature. This status was maintained when restoration and stabilization work was completed in 2013.

In researching the camp's infrastructure, the authors examined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers blueprint from which the chimney was constructed. They were puzzled by what they found. While the title block for the drawing (Figure 1) states clearly "90 Ft. Chimney for Hospital Boiler House," the plan itself just as clearly shows a structure that is seventy-five feet high. Things seemed to be

clearer upon reading the note for Revision C: "Height Reduced to 75'-0"" However, the date of the drawing is July 4, 1942, while the date for Revision C is July 31, 1942; in other words, the chimney's height was reduced by 15 feet about three weeks later. The speed of construction was so great to get the Camp built that in that three-week span, much of the chimney may have already been constructed. In essence, the height of the chimney may have been reduced from 90' to 75' at the last possible minute. Why did the finished product not reach the heights that were originally intended?

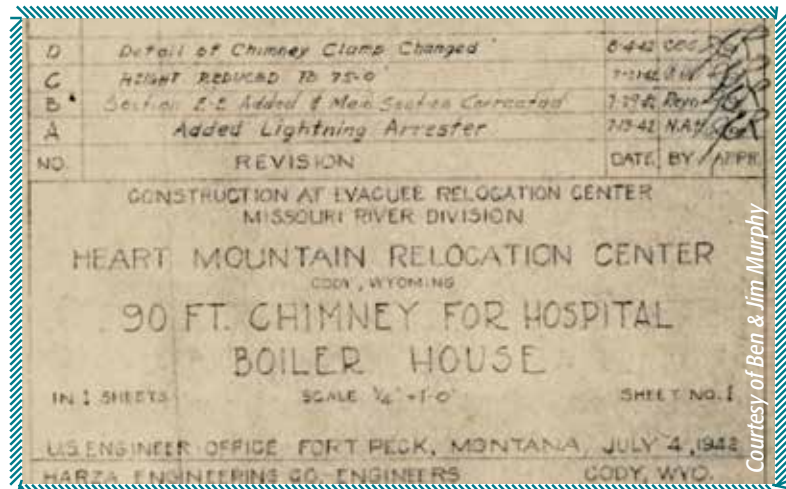


Figure 1: Title Block of the chimney blueprint

Figure 2 shows a portion of the chimney's original engineering blueprint. While the interior opening of the chimney is consistent throughout its height, the exterior has three distinct cross-sections, highlighted by two step-back shelves. The drawing shows the top two tiers of the chimney, measuring twenty-five feet and ten feet in height respectively, making the overall chimney height at seventy-five feet. The lower portion measures forty feet. Revision C reduced the topmost portion of the chimney by fifteen feet, from twenty-five feet to ten feet.



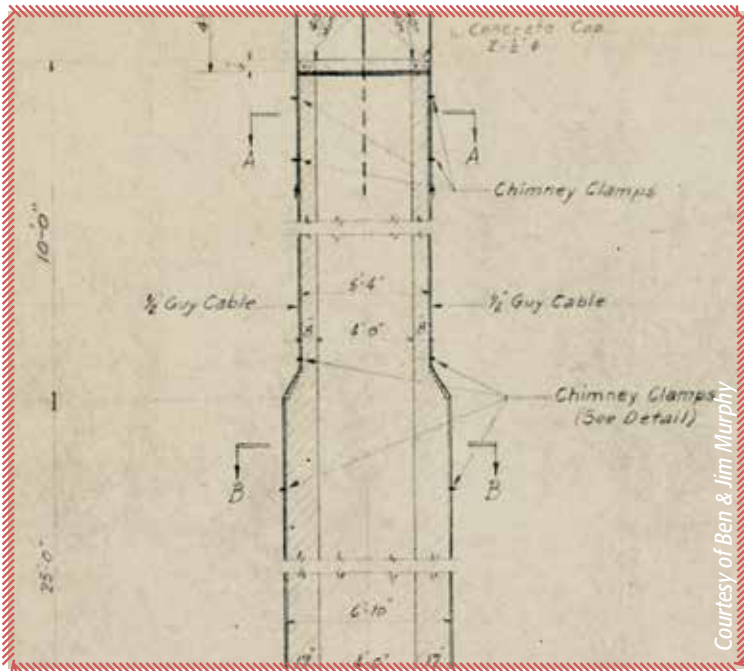


Figure 2: Second and third tiers of the chimney. The third tier should measure twenty-five feet for a ninety-foot chimney, but was reduced to ten feet for a seventy-five-foot chimney.

masonry structure would not stand up to Wyoming's frequent blizzards. Indeed, should the chimney have been built to its original design height of 90 feet, the top portion, or the whole structure, may have succumbed to the region's harsh winters long ago.

Viewed critically, the chimney looks incomplete, suggesting something is amiss about its design or construction. Knowing the original design intentions adds to the story of this structure and indeed to the story of Heart Mountain. Who knew that this "ugly duckling" was designed to be a "graceful swan?"

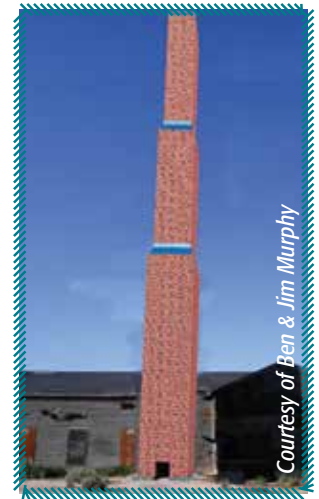


Figure 4: Rendering of the chimney "as designed" as it might appear today.<sup>1</sup>

In the post-war years, the authors lived on the land of the former confinement site. During these three years, they saw the chimney just about every day, accepting its height as what was intended by the original designers. Looking at what could have been, it is apparent that a structure fifteen feet higher would have made the chimney a more imposing, and aesthetically pleasing, structure.

Figure 3 shows a rendering of the chimney 'as built' and 'as designed'. The 'as designed' structure results in an attractive, 90-foot, proportioned structure, while the 75-foot chimney that was built looks "chopped off" by comparison.

Figure 4 shows another rendering of how the boiler house and a 90-foot chimney might look today.

No documentary evidence has been found by the authors to explain the last minute change in design. One possible theory is that with the extreme pressure to complete Heart Mountain in 60 days, a labor, materials, or time shortage could have shortened the height.

However, it is more likely that it may have been the architect's concern that a 90-foot unreinforced



Figure 3: Rendering showing chimney "As Built" (left) and "As Designed" (right)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rendering by: TY Engineering, Renovations/Remodels/Tenant Improvements/Space planning/Management/Interior Design/Architecture/CAD Management, Tarzana, CA, [www.ty-eng.com](http://www.ty-eng.com)



Photo by Dakota Russell

# A Sign of things to come

by Kris Horiuchi, HMWF board member and Principal at Horiuchi Solien Landscape Architects

“Look for the tall brick chimney off Highway 14, and when you see the two large trees, slow down and cross over the railroad tracks.”

For years, these were the directions to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, but with the speed limit at 70 mph, people would often pass right by the site. Tucked within agricultural fields set far back from the highway, the interpretive center is a series of low profile structures in the landscape. “Driving down the highway it’s difficult to see all the buildings or know what they are,” observes Claudia Wade, HMWF board member and executive director of the Park County Travel Council. “Visible signage is critical.”

The Foundation prioritized a new sign that would increase roadside visibility while reinforcing the identity of the interpretive center. “Signage directs people already coming here, and also attracts those who didn’t plan to visit us,” comments Dakota Russell, Interim Executive Director, “but it also serves as our welcome mat. For travelers that might not know

anything about our history or locals who have passed by a thousand times, the sign is an invitation.”

Kris Horiuchi, board member and principal of Horiuchi Solien Landscape Architects, describes the design process as “part optics, part story-telling.” There was the basic technical requirement of sizing letters large enough for people to read while traveling from a distance at high speeds. “It also needed to be more than just a billboard,” Horiuchi notes, “and we devoted considerable thought to creating a meaningful design element.” Each of the components—letters, form, color, materials—is simple, yet purposefully detailed, and when combined, creates a powerful overall narrative.

A historic photo inspired the design concept of white letters on a black background. Based on the original block letters from the camp sign, a custom typeface by graphic designer, Julian Kelly, is juxtaposed with the Futura font from the 1942 “Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry” poster. The sign’s black background is a long rectangle





Typeface inspiration from an original sign at the Heart Mountain site and the notices announcing the forced removal from the "Exclusion Zone" on the west coast beginning in 1942.

# HEART MOUNTAIN

WWII NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY  
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION  
Presidio of San Francisco, California  
April 1, 1942

**INSTRUCTIONS  
TO ALL PERSONS OF  
JAPANESE  
ANCESTRY**

Diagram courtesy of Kris Horiuchi

that recalls the tar-paper barracks, while the vertical posts reference the fencing that once enclosed the camp. A symbol for the entire experience of incarceration, relocation, and homesteading, the black signface extends past the vertical posts toward the highway as if in motion – a tribute to both the incarcerated as they were released from the camp at the end of the war and to the homesteaders that moved barracks to new locations. Distinctly contemporary in character, the sign expresses the Foundation's relevance today as a leader in racial justice issues. "The sign is very evocative of the museum and site as a whole," notes Russell. "It clarifies who we are, and you get a sense of what you're going to experience here just by looking at it."

Built of industrial aluminum and galvanized steel I-beams by Production Machine Inc., the sign is engineered to withstand the area's high wind forces. To owner Tate McCoy and his brother, Brett, who earlier completed the Honor Roll flagpole and sun shade structure on the interpretive trail, their work at the museum has been personal. "The sign is so much more than just a location and a name. What took place at Heart Mountain is important to me. It's

a big part of Powell's history. Many people and places throughout my life in Powell have been influenced by the camp, and it's been an honor to be involved in this project."

Fabricated in six months, the sign was installed just in time for this year's pilgrimage. Measuring 8 feet tall by 30 feet long, it is positioned in the agricultural field perpendicular to the highway, visible to travelers from both Cody and Powell. Asked whether the sign has improved visitation to the museum, Kim Barhaug, HMWF Historic Site Manager, notes, "probably the best endorsement of the sign is the tire marks on the highway where people have braked and turned around!"

With Heart Mountain rising above in the background, Darrell Kunitomi contemplates, "Now we have a sign so strong it cannot be ignored. It's a statement and a marker on the land that says, "Passersby, here is our piece of American history. Here, we have built a center to remember. We have a story for you." 🙏🏻



Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

# the Heart Mountain MIRACLE

THE STORY OF THE CAMP'S AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM





Whenever legends are told about Heart Mountain, the agriculture program is bound to be mentioned. The tale, in which incarcerated farmers turn high desert into lush farmland in under a year, is almost too much to believe. This legend, however, is all true. Led by a team of clever men, and made real through the efforts of the entire Heart Mountain community, the agriculture program overcame incredible odds and earned its place in Wyoming history.



Heart Mountain incarcerated suffered from issues of both food quantity and quality from the time of their first arrival in August 1942. For much of their first year, the people of Heart Mountain relied on food shipments to come by train from Denver and Kansas City. The timing and contents of these shipments, arranged by the US Army Quartermaster Corps, was always unpredictable.

Incarcerates generously described the fresh produce shipped from Denver as “post mature,” and fresh meat was nearly unheard of. Fruit and vegetables came mostly in cans. Protein came in the form of hot dogs or an unpleasant and bony fish known about camp as “Mississippi Mud Skipper.” To make matters worse, the Quartermaster Corps had no understanding of a typical Japanese American diet. Bread and potatoes showed up on mess hall tables at nearly every meal, but rice was conspicuously absent.

The government’s failure to produce satisfactory ingredients was enough by itself to convince Heart Mountain incarcerated they needed to begin an agriculture program. In early 1943, though, the situation grew even more urgent. Fear-mongering politicians and newspaper editors around the nation began to spread rumors that Japanese Americans in the camps were not subject to wartime rationing. Accusations began to fly that the government was “coddling” its prisoners.

Heart Mountain came under particular fire because of a so-called exposé from the *Denver Post*. A disgruntled white mess hall steward, Earl Best, contacted the *Post* after his firing from Heart Mountain. He claimed he saw evidence of food hoarding at the camp, including fine hams and other prime victuals hidden inside mess hall attics.

In an attempt to disprove Best’s story, camp director Guy Robertson arranged for a *Post* reporter to visit the camp. Robertson later sarcastically reported that the journalist made “a complete and exhaustive survey of our project, mostly from the Irma Hotel.” The *Post* continued to publish its inflammatory and baseless articles.

U.S. Representative Martin Dies of Texas, who chaired the House Committee Investigating Un-American Activities, made targeting Japanese Americans a pet project. Armed with the *Denver Post* articles as supposed evidence of fraud, Dies led a call to stop food shipments to the camps. The *Heart Mountain Sentinel* summarized his position in a single headline—“Produce or Face Food Shortage.” It became clear to Heart Mountain incarcerated that some on the outside were content to let them starve in the camps. Building a working farm would be necessary for survival.



Food at Heart Mountain was served in communal mess halls.  
Photo by Tom Parker.

## A Team Comes Together

**L**ike most of the other camps, Heart Mountain sat in the middle of a desert. To grow anything but sagebrush and prickly pear cactus, the land needed water. In the early 1940s, the Civilian Conservation Corps began the long process of cutting an irrigation canal from the Shoshone River toward the Heart Mountain district. The war had interrupted that effort, and the canal remained unfinished.

Even if the incarcerated could solve their water problem, they still had to combat the cold. Heart Mountain, as the furthest north of the camps, had the shortest growing season— usually only 90 to 100 days. Plants put out too early in the spring would be decimated by frost or even snow, and any plants left in the fields past September would be lost entirely to the cold.

Solving these problems fell to the leaders of the newly created Heart Mountain Agriculture Department. As with all other departments in the

camp, the top managers were white. The camp administrators recruited Glenn Hartman and Alden Ingraham from the experimental farms at the University of Wyoming. Both men were seasoned Wyoming farmers.

Hartman confessed that, upon taking the job, he had never met a Japanese American before. He was open-minded, but unsure of what to expect. Hartman quickly learned that many of the Heart Mountain incarcerated were his equals when it came to agricultural experience, and several of them possessed knowledge superior to his own. Fortunately, Hartman was a humble man and early on made it his policy to step back and listen to the incarcerated farmers, rather than dictate how the department would be run.

Hartman soon made the acquaintance of two men who would become the backbone of the agriculture program. James Ito came to the camp from Los Angeles, with a recently earned degree in soil science and a lifetime of hands-on experience in his family's nursery and produce markets. Though technically only an assistant farm superintendent, Ito would become the mastermind behind the program.

Eiichi Sakauye, Ito's second in command, hailed from a pear orchard outside San Jose. In addition to being an amateur photographer and filmmaker, Sakauye was blessed with a gift for numbers. He became the program's chief statistician, responsible for all the calculations required to determine how much food they needed to feed the camp's nearly 11,000 residents. There was little margin for error. Any mistake could mean thousands going hungry.

Ito, Sakauye, Hartman, and Ingraham sat down in the early fall of 1942 to lay out their plans for the coming growing season. They picked Ingraham to find the required farm equipment. In addition to buying up implements locally, he contracted for 100 Ford tractors to be sent to the camp.

Hartman gave Ito permission to survey all 20,000 acres of the Heart Mountain Project and find the most fertile land. Ito hiked the land for days, collecting soil samples and



The first irrigation water flows toward the Heart Mountain fields.  
Photo by Charles E. Mace.





determining which crops would grow best where. He was the first incarcerated to be allowed outside the barbed wire fence surrounding the camp.

Sakauye was tasked with finding a supply of vegetable seeds to plant. His inquiries led him to Kumezo Hatchimonji, former proprietor of the Valley Seed Company in El Monte, California. Hatchimonji still had a stockpile of seeds in storage on the West Coast. Some remember that the camp administrators arranged for Hatchimonji to return to California, under military guard, and retrieve his seeds.

Another seed source came from closer to the camp. The Kawano family of Powell had settled in Wyoming well before the war began. Although they were Japanese American, they lived outside of the West Coast "evacuation zone" and were allowed to stay on their farm. Sympathetic to the plight of those incarcerated at Heart Mountain, the Kawanos donated a portion of their seed stock to the camp.

While the other leaders went about their missions, Hartman focused on the most urgent job. With bulldozers, shovels, and a hearty crew of Japanese American laborers, he resumed work on the irrigation canal abandoned by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Nearly a mile of canal still needed to be cut to reach the Heart Mountain project, and lateral ditches needed to be cut from the canal to the fields.

Furthermore, the entire 28-mile length of the canal would have to be waterproofed with bentonite. Beginning work in September of 1942, Hartman and his crew continued until Christmas Eve, when the ground became too hard to dig anymore. With much still to do, the farmers of Heart Mountain had no choice but to hunker down and wait for winter to pass.



The canal crew resumed digging in the early spring of 1943. As water grew closer, Ito and Sakauye put their team to work on tractors, breaking the sod and tilling the virgin fields. The bureaucratic nature of camp life often slowed the job down. At one point, a feud between the farmers and motor pool workers broke out. The motor pool refused to allow the tractor drivers access to fuel storage to gas up their own equipment. Since the first shift of farmers started work at five in the morning, hours before the motor pool began their day, this was a problem. Things came to a head after a number of tractors ran out of gas in the middle of the fields and their operators were forced to walk back to camp. The camp director had to step in to mediate the issue.

Just as the busy season ramped up, the agriculture department faced a labor shortage. The government began allowing incarcerated to leave the camp for work. The able-bodied men of the camp, tired of the paltry wages paid inside Heart Mountain, eagerly sought jobs on the outside. Shorthanded farmers in the region were willing to pay for the extra help. Before long, the camp's tractor driving corps mostly consisted of women and high school students.

By April, Sakauye had determined that the Ford tractors Ingraham had ordered were not powerful enough to break the hardened ground. In desperation, he borrowed the bulldozers from the canal project, but they were ill-fitted for farm work. The frustrated farmers begged the administration for





Thousands of "hotcaps" protect young plants in the field from frost. Photo by Bud Aoyama.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

better equipment. Their pleas were ignored.

Finally, the farmers went on strike. Ito and Sakauye stood by their workers, but, in a rare moment of disharmony, Hartman and Ingraham decided to bring in strikebreakers. Unfortunately, the only strikebreakers they could find were more high school boys. According to Sakauye, it only took a day of watching the unsupervised teenagers tootle around the fields to convince Hartman and Ingraham they had made a grave error. They conceded to the workers' demands and bought new equipment.

With the canal and fields underway, other workers began preparations for planting. Though Heart Mountain's residents included many farmers, most of them were from California, and accustomed to a leisurely growing season. They found themselves unprepared to wrestle with the challenges of the Wyoming weather. However, due to overcrowding at the Minidoka camp in Idaho, about 1,000 Japanese Americans from Washington's Yakima Valley farming community were redirected to Heart Mountain. These farmers knew all too well the damage a hard winter could have on a crop, and had developed tools to deal with it.

Primary among these tools were hotbeds, wooden boxes full of soil and manure, with hinged glass tops. Installed on the southern slope of the hill leading up to the administration area, these boxes allowed young

plants to receive sun while still being protected from the cold. Once the weather warmed and the plants grew heartier, they were transferred out to the fields. Even in the fields, the Washington farmers outfitted young plants with hotcaps—waxed paper covers—to protect them from the elements.

By Sakauye's count, the Heart Mountain agriculture program grew some fifty-two different types of vegetables. In most cases, they experimented with multiple varieties of each type. Among the seeds collected from the West Coast, James Ito found a number of Japanese vegetables: daikon, nappa cabbage, and gobo, to name only a few. He donated some of his first crop of Japanese vegetables to a cooking club within the camp. In an interview nearly 70 years later, he still bristled about it. "They never invited me to any of their meals..." he remembered. "It still bothers me."

Workers began planting in early June, although the irrigation ditches running from the canal to the fields were still not complete. A freak summer snowstorm threatened to derail everything and damage the young crops, but the hotcaps performed admirably. Hartman insisted the storm was a blessing in disguise, as the melted snow watered the fields until the ditches were complete. Just weeks later, the first irrigation water flowed in.

52 types of vegetables, including many used in traditional Japanese cooking, were grown at Heart Mountain. Photo by Henry Ushioka.

Courtesy of UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library





## A Community at Work

Parallel to all of this, Satoru Saijo and Morizo Nakagawa were concentrated on providing the camp with fresh meat and eggs. Saijo, a chicken farmer from Baldwin Park, California, was put in charge of the poultry project. Nakagawa raised hogs for the camp.

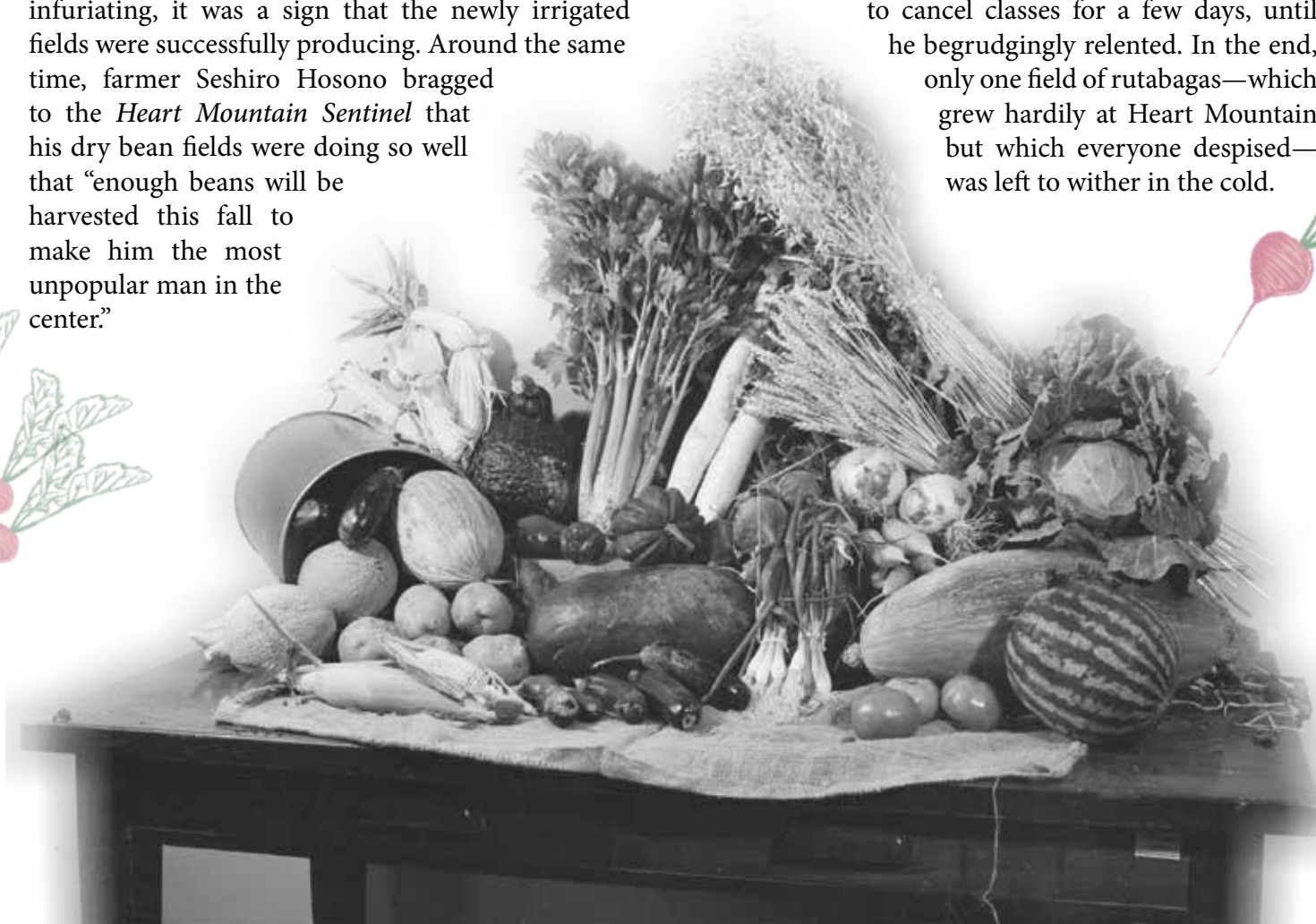
Saijo made his project a family affair, bringing aboard his wife and eldest son to assist. He had good reason to be suspicious of other volunteer workers. Early on, his chickens were plagued by a mysterious malady the incarcerated winkingly called “barrack sickness.” Treatment apparently involved smuggling the bird back to one’s barrack for “additional care.” The afflicted chickens were never heard from again.

Back in the fields, Eiichi Sakauye was dealing with a similar problem. His first batch of melons, which matured in the early summer, vanished from the field overnight, as soon as they were ripe. Although infuriating, it was a sign that the newly irrigated fields were successfully producing. Around the same time, farmer Seshiro Hosono bragged to the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* that his dry bean fields were doing so well that “enough beans will be harvested this fall to make him the most unpopular man in the center.”

Planting hadn’t even finished before the first of the vegetables were ready to harvest. The agriculture program increased its recruiting efforts, pleading in nearly every issue of the *Sentinel* for volunteers to assist with the work. Volunteers, many of them high schoolers on summer break, worked from dawn to dusk weeding fields, picking and hauling vegetables, and pickling daikon.

In one way or another, almost all of the camp had become involved in the farming effort. By the end of the summer, Ito and Sakauye figured they had put over 1,400 acres under plow and produced 2,069,735 pounds of produce. The camp’s engineering department designed and built two massive root cellars, each stretching over 300 feet long, to hold the harvest.

As they congratulated themselves on their successes, the farmers also knew time was running out. As predicted, the first frost arrived in September. Work crews, depleted now that the teenagers had returned to school, hurried to bring the remaining crops in. The leaders of the agriculture program hounded school superintendent Jack Corbett to cancel classes for a few days, until he begrudgingly relented. In the end, only one field of rutabagas—which grew hardily at Heart Mountain but which everyone despised—was left to wither in the cold.







Heart Mountain farmers prepare the fields for planting. Photo by Yoshio Okumoto.

## A Legacy Remains

There were no shortages of food in Heart Mountain during the winter of 1943. In fact, meals were now more filling, more nutritional, and infinitely more palatable. Once the government managed to procure a contract for rice, real Japanese cooking began to appear in the mess halls.

James Ito, feeling a sense of accomplishment, decided that the work could carry on without him. He applied for a work permit to leave Heart Mountain, and took a job at a government farm in Virginia. He left the agriculture program in the capable hands of Eiichi Sakauye, who led it through its 1944 season. In that year, the camp produced a record amount

of produce, and found themselves with a surplus. Because Heart Mountain was forbidden from competing with local farmers, excess vegetables were loaded onto trains and sent to the other camps.

1944 would be the final growing season for Heart Mountain. In early 1945, the government announced it would allow Japanese Americans to return to their homes on the West Coast. The camp remained open until November, but the Heart Mountain fields were leased out and no agriculture was attempted. The camp's dwindling population relied on local contracts and government shipments for food.

Ito returned to Heart Mountain in 2011, and was shocked to discover that the whole area was now in heavy agricultural production. Homesteaders and post-war farmers built on the groundwork laid by the Japanese American farmers. They even adopted some of the innovations that allowed the incarcerated to grow crops never before dreamed of in Wyoming.

The agriculture program proved to be one of the most lasting legacies of the camp. The locals still call it "The Heart Mountain Miracle," a moniker that would no doubt make James Ito and Eiichi Sakauye chuckle. It may have looked like a miracle from the outside, but for them, it was nothing but long hours and backbreaking work. Yet these two men cheerfully devoted themselves to accomplishing the nigh impossible, and in the process inspired their fellow incarcerated. They believed in hope, even in this grim place. One by one, they convinced the rest of the camp to believe, too. That is where the miracle lies.



Volunteer workers harvest vegetables in September of 1943. Watercolor by Estelle Ishigo. Courtesy of the Japanese American National Museum, Allen Eaton Collection





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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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## 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](http://heartmountain.org/archives.html#donations)



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