

KOKORO KARA

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

"from our heart"

Summer 2015

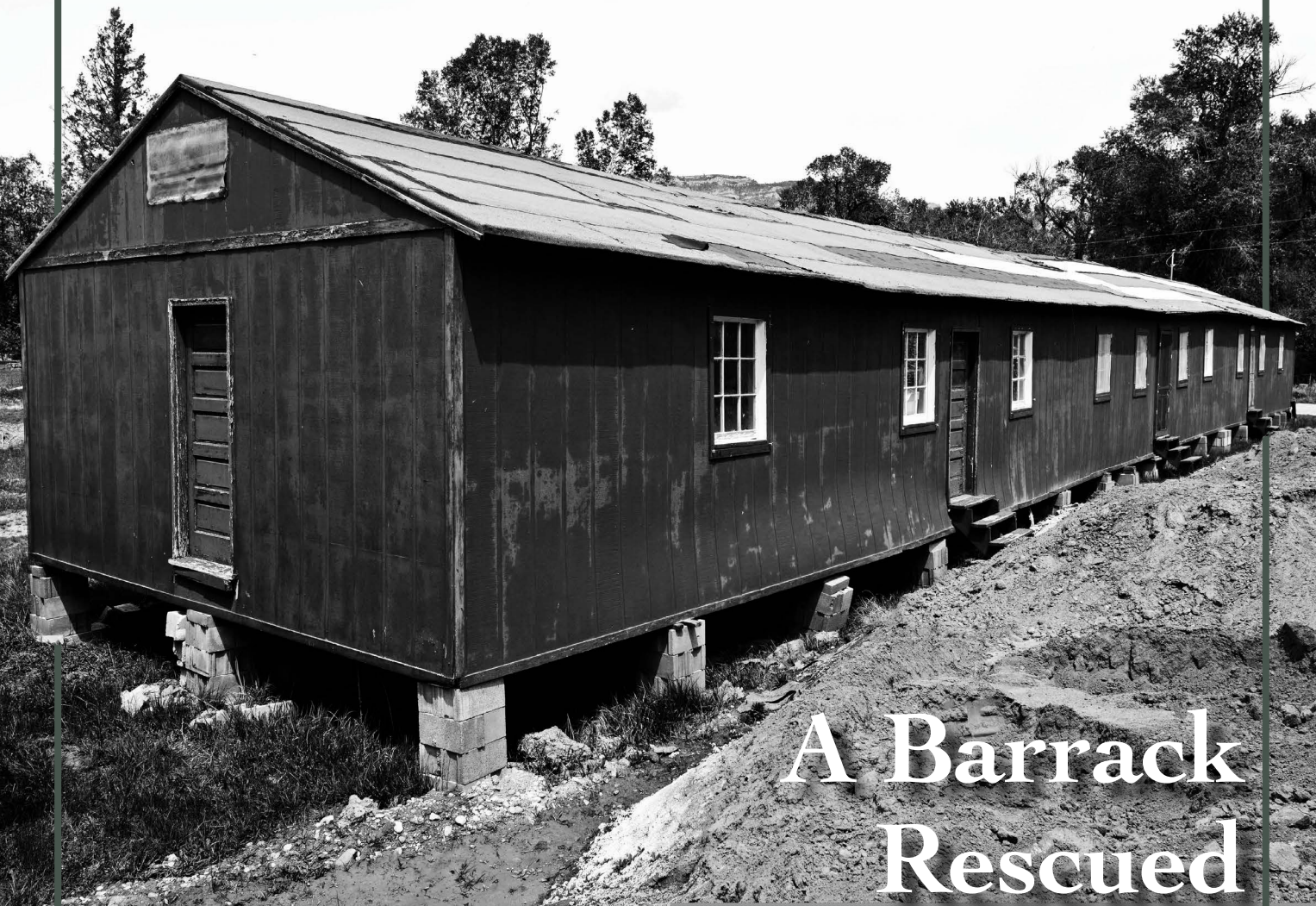


Photo by Stan Honda

A Barrack Rescued

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Artifacts of Incarceration:

Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi

What is our purpose in life? Who has made us what we are today? I often ask myself these questions and reflect upon my parents and grandparents who suffered deeply when they were unjustly forced from their homes on the West Coast and wrongly incarcerated in isolated areas during World War II. Their suffering and wounds are painful reminders of how the government and our society failed us, and these scars of the past are carried on through the descendants of the incarcerated.

I felt the pain of these scars return this past March when I read a *New York Times* article about a collection of about 450 Japanese American artifacts coming up for public auction. The artifacts were procured by the arts and crafts expert and collector Allen Hendershott Eaton. From the article it appeared to me that the current owner's family and auction house did not fully appreciate the personal, emotional, and even spiritual meaning these objects had for many in the Japanese American community.

When Japanese American families were torn from their homes and forced into camps in isolated parts of the country, many turned to the arts to pass time and cope with their significant loss of livelihood and freedom. With the closing of the camps, incarcerated were given \$25 and a

train ticket to any location in the United States. Having arrived in camp with only what they could carry, many were focused on rebuilding their lives from scratch and were in no position to preserve their artwork. They entrusted their work to Eaton because they believed he did not intend to sell it and instead do what they could not—preserve and exhibit their work for the education and interest of the public good.



HMWF Board Member Shig Yabu with the Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi at the May 2015 board meeting held at the Interpretive Center. (Photo courtesy of Board Member Darrell Kunitomi)

Reading the *New York Times* article made me think about my family and the tears they shed when uprooted from San Francisco and San Jose and forced into prison camps. It's because of their experience that I have learned how to fight for my beliefs and this makes me the person I am today. I believe we have a moral and ethical obligation to advocate, resist, and fight for what we believe in. In this case, it means recognizing the significance of a public sale of camp artifacts crafted out of the talent, suffering, and hope of a population that was wrongly incarcerated during World War II.

The Foundation's dedicated leadership took immediate action to halt this transgression, with the stated intention to work with a consortium of Japanese American organizations to reach a consensus on where these artifacts would most appropriately be preserved, housed, and exhibited. We engaged with goodwill in a thoughtful negotiation to prevent these items from going to auction. (A detailed account of these actions are contained in the auction story on page 8).

After the HMWF exhausted every possible non-adversarial avenue to protect the artifacts from public auction, we felt our only choice was to retain a New Jersey law firm to file an injunction on the legal theory that the Japanese Americans entrusted their work to Eaton for public interest purposes and not private gain. During this process we strategized with our supporters and reached out to key Japanese American organizations to best serve the interest of the public.

We know that our legal efforts paired with collective grassroots action from parties across the country prevented the holding of this public auction. A heartfelt thank you goes to our leadership and supporters for their financial contributions and for their support of the lawsuit. Along the way, we deepened many friendships and alliances during this challenging period, with Dr. Franklin Odo, Dr. Satsuki Ina, Barbara Takei, and other members of the "Ad Hoc Committee to Oppose the Sale of Japanese American Historical Artifacts." We celebrate the purchase of the Eaton collection by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), and we look forward to working with all stake-holding organizations to find the best ways to share these artifacts with the sites and institutions where they would have the most positive meaning and impact.

Estelle Ishigo, whose work was featured prominently in the New Jersey auction

ON THE COVER

Photo by Stan Honda.
The barrack at its current home in Shell, Wyoming. Read more about the historic, ground-breaking effort to rescue a Heart Mountain barrack on page five.



lots, is fondly remembered by our current board and advisory council members (like Shig Yabu, who I share a picture with in this column).

Estelle recorded the hardships of Heart Mountain through personal illustrations and artwork for the War Relocation Authority. She and her husband, Arthur, did not want to leave Heart Mountain, but were forced out of their barracks and onto the last train that departed the camp.

Heart Mountain incarcerated became part of her extended family, as she described in her memoirs. When Estelle was found later in life by a former Heart Mountain incarcerated in Los Angeles, she was destitute with both legs amputated due to gangrene. The Japanese Americans she befriended in camp became her adoptive family and fulfilled her wish to have her ashes spread atop Heart Mountain after her death in 1990. Though the HMWF tries to use words and photos to do justice to Estelle's talent and artistic insights at our

I believe we have a moral and ethical obligation to advocate, resist, and fight for what we believe in.

Interpretive Center, our collection contains none of her artwork.

We believe that her artwork, along with the other artifacts in the collection, should be returned, wherever practical, to the appropriate confinement sites of origin—to sacred and significant places where they were created. Just as there has been a movement to repatriate Native American cultural artifacts, there needs to be a conversation about the appropriate treatment of these items. Furthermore, the Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program was passed by Congress to help confinement site groups build their

capacity to protect the memory, tell the stories, and preserve the artifacts and history made at the World War II confinement sites. Returning Estelle's artwork to Heart Mountain would not only strengthen our museum immensely, but also ensure that her memory and the experiences of more than 14,000 unjustly imprisoned individuals that she captured on canvas and paper will not be forgotten by future generations of Americans.

We hope that JANM will be supportive and will convene a meeting with appropriate community advocates, camp organization leaders, and other stakeholders. As many of you know, we have made plans, announced last year, to host a Confinement Site Consortium ("All Camps") meeting this August in Wyoming. The aim is to build a network of partners and a platform for ongoing communication and collaboration for a successful preservation plan for those who are active in the memorialization of the Japanese American Confinement experience.

Throughout this ordeal I have crafted a better sense of purpose and the need to tell our story. I hope you will join me and my Heart Mountain Family honoring former incarcerated from all the confinement sites for our "All Camps" Pilgrimage on August 21–22 (see story on page 7). Together we will honor the memory of our ancestors who advocated, resisted, and fought for all of us during World War II and whose perseverance during this period helped make us who we are today. We will highlight stories that symbolize the unique identities of each camp, and ensure that the lessons of the Japanese American story, which are alive in the Eaton collection and our own family heirlooms, will not be forgotten.

Shirley Ann Higuchi

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

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An “All Camps” Effort: Executive Director Brian Liesinger

Preservation is a major topic in the museum world in general and a large focus of the staff’s work for the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF). For us this includes the preservation of the stories in an overlooked chapter of World War II history, the lessons of injustice that resulted from this chapter, and the physical remnants representing that heartbreaking experience. However, as is the case with many non-profits, we face the constant demands of organizational self-preservation. We are constantly wrestling with how to sustain ourselves and preserve what we have built.

This is the point in the column where you expect me to make a pitch for donations or call you to act on behalf of the HMWF (both things you absolutely should do at any level and in any way you are able). I could emphasize the need to rapidly grow our endowment and membership (which we must). I could ask you to join us in the historic effort to rescue a Heart Mountain barrack from demolition (which you should do—see the story on page 5). I could lament the struggle of trying to extend our educational and outreach goals in the face of rising operations cost. I could even bend your ear on the effort and cost of fighting a New Jersey auction this spring.

Instead, I’d rather focus on achievement—past and future—as well as our larger role beyond self-preservation to ensure others in our field can build capacity and reach their own goals.

The HMWF has reached tremendous milestones, the most important of which is the creation of an award-winning Interpretive Center that welcomed about 14,000 visitors in 2014 and will surpass that number in 2015. We have a committed staff and a deeply engaged and incredibly knowledgeable Board of Directors.

We have restored significant original structures and memorials on this National Historic Landmark site. We have rescued deteriorating structures—a root cellar and soon a barrack—that were at risk of being lost to history and now demand further preservation.



Brian Liesinger

With these and many other successes, wide acknowledgement is due to many partners, supporters, and friends—too many to name here. We recognize both your contributions to making us what we are and also the need for your continued support to meet the operational, programmatic, and fiscal challenges we face. In order to tackle these challenges,

we need to continue growing partnerships and building new ones.

As HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson stated in 2010 at a Japanese American confinement site summit held at the Japanese American National Museum, “We somehow have to work together to create an ongoing network of communication among us—a network that would help Heart Mountain find where our part of the story fits into a larger narrative; to learn what role we are best positioned to play in a larger movement for social learning; and to discover how our efforts can best complement, complete, and create synergy with every other enterprise that has a deep stake in this subject matter.”

We must reach out—not simply because of our common interests—but because a broader base working together will be able to achieve much more than any single organization. Heart Mountain’s ability to survive, endure, and succeed hinges on the collective effort of organizations devoted to preserving and memorializing the World War II story of Japanese Americans. Of all the preservation work ahead of us, we remain determined not to let self-interest

drive our actions. We recognize that Heart Mountain alone will not have the reach or resources abundant enough to leverage the powerful lessons of the Japanese American incarceration into an effort to ensure it never happens again.

We must work with and engage all other confinement sites, with the National Park Service, with Japanese American-related museums (like the Japanese American National Museum and the Japanese American Museum of San Jose), with state and federal preservation organizations, with the people and institutions of Wyoming, with other museums of conscience, and with educational institutions across the country.

With that collective strength in mind, the HMWF will initiate a Confinement Site Consortium this summer. Since last fall, we’ve been working with a number of key stakeholders to build support.

The effort will formally begin with a planning meeting taking place in August this year to discuss how to grow this Consortium into a sustainable interconnected resource through which we can help each other build capacity and collectively ensure our work remains at the forefront of World War II history.

It is not time for the HMWF to rest on its laurels, nor to leave in our rearview those organizations that have yet to benefit from the kind of hard work, support and, frankly, luck, we’ve benefitted from to get us where we are. We are prepared to use our place-based assets, our experience, our staff, and our resources as a catalyst for this Consortium.

Collectively, we can create broader public awareness, inspire better teaching, and create a deeper understanding of not only the historical importance of the Japanese American confinement experience but also its continued impact today. Together, we can do more to make our country wiser, fairer, more tolerant—and a better place for those who come after us.

An Auction of Incarceration Artworks Averted

Faced with the prospect of witnessing Japanese American World War II incarceration artifacts on a New Jersey auction block in April, the Japanese American community responded to rally an effort that resulted in the artifacts being pulled from the auction.

The artifacts, part of the Allen Hendershott Eaton collection, were scheduled to go to public auction at the Rago Arts and Auction Center in Lambertville, New Jersey, on April 17, 2015.

A tremendous grassroots effort and public outcry within and beyond the Japanese American community, coupled with the direct action of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF), led the charge opposing the sale.

When the *New York Times* announced in March that these artifacts would be available for a public sale, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF), after careful consideration, chose to take steps to halt the auction.

The HMWF contacted Rago to suggest several remedies that would have prevented the items from going to auction. The HMWF first requested the consignor consider a donation of the artifacts. When they were told it was not a feasible option, the HMWF requested a private sale of the artifacts to appropriate Japanese American organizations, and for a postponement of the auction. When the consignor declined, the HMWF, through pledges from the board of directors and friends, made a substantial cash proposal—exceeding the estimated auction value—to purchase the collection on behalf of the Japanese American community and work with Japanese American organizations and interested parties to reach a consensus on how the artifacts would be preserved, housed, and exhibited.

After their final proposal was refused, and after the HMWF exhausted its administrative remedies, the HMWF felt compelled to pursue the protection

of the collection through legal means and retained the New Jersey law firm Lite DePalma Greenberg to prepare an injunction on the claim that incarcerated had entrusted folk art expert Allen H. Eaton with their artifacts on the condition that he would exhibit them for the interest of the public good and therefore, he, his descendants, and the consignor were stewards, not owners, of the collection.

On the afternoon of April 15, the law firm called the court and auction house to notify them of their intent to file an injunction the following morning. That evening, the auction house withdrew the artifacts from the auction.

On May 2, the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) announced they had purchased the Eaton collection of about 450 Japanese American incarceration artifacts. JANM President and CEO Greg Kimura was “pleased that our museum, Rago Arts and Auction Center, and the John Ryan family of Connecticut, which possessed the artifacts, were able to reach an agreement that reflects our mutual interests. We all want to see these items appropriately preserved.”

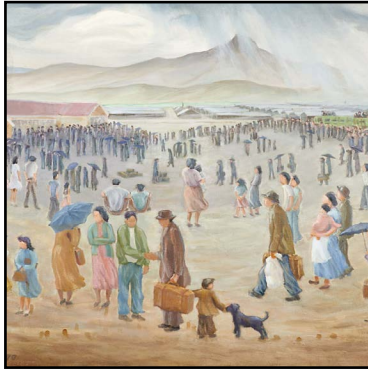
HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson expressed his hope about the treatment of the collection in the wake of JANM’s acquisition. “The commitment to collaborative planning on the handling of the Ea-

ton items had been a constant hallmark of Heart Mountain’s entire campaign to buy this collection, and it was one of the reasons that dozens of leaders and organizations, including JANM, expressed strong support for our efforts,” Nelson said. “I am hopeful that, with the collection safely secured, JANM will find prominent ways both to honor all those whose voices and actions made their acquisition of the collection possible, as well as to publicly commit to an inclusive process that will assure that the art and artifacts in the collection will end up in those places where they can most powerfully pay homage to the lives, talent and struggles of the men and women who created them.”

HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi hopes Japanese American organizations and interested parties can work with JANM to “achieve what is in the best interest of the Japanese American community as a whole.”

The HMWF has already participated in a conference call with JANM, the Wing Luke Museum, and the Ad Hoc Committee to Oppose the Sale of Japanese American Historical Artifacts to discuss the future of the artifacts in light of JANM’s acquisition.

In a May 8 Facebook post on the page “Japanese American History: Not for Sale” the Ad Hoc Committee to Oppose the Sale of Japanese American Historical Artifacts referred to the conference call as “a good start,” suggesting the most important issue to consider is “the proper home for these items,” and it could be argued that the items “belong in the museums of the incarceration camps where they were created.”



Watercolor by Estelle Ishigo included in auction items

If you have Heart Mountain artifacts and objects, archival materials and works, please consider donating them to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. Your donation will help educate future generations on the Japanese American incarceration experience at Heart Mountain and beyond.

For more information on donations, visit our website or contact us at archives@heartmountain.org, 307.754.8000 ext. 103, or by mail at 1539 Road 19, Powell, WY 82435.



Photo by Brian Liesinger

History Rescued: Returning an Original Heart Mountain Barrack

A barrack originally built at the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center” will be coming “home” to the National Historic Landmark site this summer. The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) will be saving it from demolition in what they hope to be a community-wide effort.

The barrack is located in Shell, Wyoming, and has been offered by Iowa State University, which had been using it for housing at their geology field studies station just outside of Shell. It has remained in service there for 50 years but has finally outlived its useful life. Iowa State, which originally had three barracks, was aiming to demolish the building to make way for a new housing complex. The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) discovered their plans and has negotiated the rescue of the building. Iowa State has agreed to donate the barrack at no charge if the HMWF can move it this summer.

The HMWF found out about the barrack last summer, and upon review, found it to be in solid shape, with few modifications. It is also complete, measuring 20 feet wide by 120 feet in length, which is rare, as many barracks were dismantled, split in half, or generally modified to create houses

or farm outbuildings.

More than 450 barracks were originally constructed on this site. After the camp closed and the Japanese American internees were freed, the government sold many of the barracks to homesteaders for \$1 each, provided they could remove them from the site. As a result, many of the camp structures dot the surrounding landscape and continue to see use as houses, shops, sheds, and outbuildings.

To maintain the historic integrity of the Heart Mountain site, the barrack will be placed on the original site where there once sat five barracks as part of the Military Police complex adjacent to where the Interpretive Center currently sits. The goal is to have it in place in early August.

An archeological survey, led by Greg Smith, an anthropology professor at Northwest College in Powell, was conducted on May 2. The point of the survey was twofold: to sweep the ground on which the barrack will return for significant artifacts and to identify indications of a barrack foundation to confirm an exact location.

Northwest College students, area volunteers, and HMWF staff spent the day picking up broken glass, pipe fragments, square

nails, and other remnants that confirmed the existence of the former barracks. Smith has also agreed to assist with construction monitoring as the ground is prepared for the arrival of the barrack.

The barrack will travel nearly 80 miles for its return to Heart Mountain. After being moved from Heart Mountain, it was used by the city of Greybull for public programs. It endured another move to its current site at the Iowa State University geology field station in the late 1940s. Because it has been cut into three sections during these two previous moves, the building will be moved back to Heart Mountain in three pieces to ensure its structural integrity.

It is estimated that the HMWF will need to raise \$140,000 for the move, construction work, and ongoing preservation of the structure for public view. The Foundation has already obtained a \$10,000 grant from the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund to help with the cost. We are currently seeking individual donations, local sponsorships, and other grants to cover the remaining cost.

This will not be the first Heart Mountain barrack moved for preservation purposes, though it will be the first complete one moved to a historic site. A Heart Moun-

tain barrack is prominently featured in Los Angeles at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and represents a centerpiece of their permanent collection. Many of the incarcerated confined at Heart Mountain were from the Los Angeles area. Others came from the San Jose and the greater Bay Area. A smaller group also came from Washington state.

The JANM barrack move was a decade-long effort completed in 1994 by 32 volunteers coming from Los Angeles, San Jose, Seattle and Denver. Early JANM leadership, including Nancy Araki, had envisioned the importance of a barrack to help tell the story of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II.

When “Mr. Heart Mountain” Bacon Sakatani found out about this vision, he claimed he knew where JANM could find a barrack, and he delivered on his promise. Sakatani had been incarcerated with his family at Heart Mountain and had celebrated his 13th birthday on the four-day train ride from California to the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center.” He made regular visits back to Wyoming throughout the 1980s and through his connections there, the crew identified two barrack segments located very close to the original Heart Mountain site. One was a 20 foot by 40 foot section from the farm of Tak Oga-
wa and the other a 20 foot by 60 foot sec-

tion from the farm of Rod Morrison.

The volunteers who arrived in September 1994 were tasked with dismantling the barrack segments and loading them on flat-bed trailers for transport back to Los Angeles. It was laborious work for the group but by October, the fragments had been put back together in a parking lot in Los Angeles’s Little Tokyo for exhibition. The segments were connected and a newly-constructed extension was built onto it to extend it to the full size of a barrack: 20 feet wide by 120 feet long.

Now, one of these tattered segments stands in the middle of JANM and serves as both a gripping and haunting piece of incarceration history.

HMWF Executive Director Brian Liesinger is inspired by the effort of those 32 volunteers who traveled great distances to endure backbreaking work for the JANM barrack project. He sees a similar opportunity to build support around the HMWF effort.

“This is an opportunity for the greater



Heart Mountain community to be a part of a truly historic effort,” said Liesinger. “This barrack-saving is like a barn-raising in a sense. We need local and national support to save this. Whether it is through in-kind contributions or donations of any amount, we can preserve it together.”

The HMWF has created opportunities for donors to claim a role in the project. Through a fundraising page on the website at shopheartmountain.org/barrack, donors can choose their level of participation and track the project’s progress. In exchange for participating, donors receive a number of awards, ranging from historic square nails used to build the camp to an invitation to a donor recognition event to permanent name recognition at the barrack site once it is returned.

In addition, businesses are being encouraged to “sponsor a mile” of the project through direct or in-kind contributions. For more information on sponsoring a mile, email info@heartmountain.org.

With its return, the barrack brings important historical significance as a powerful artifact of camp life and beyond. It will remain a fixture of the landscape that can speak not only to the Japanese American confinement during World War II but the extended homesteading and farming history in the Big Horn Basin.

“This structure represents many things: injustice and pain, but also perseverance and resourcefulness,” said Liesinger. “And being back on this historic site will allow us to extend not only our preservation mission but our educational goals as well. Not to mention the gravity it will lend when reminding people of a mistake we must not repeat.”



Photo by Stan Honda

HMWF Executive Director Brian Liesinger photographs features of the barrack in Shell in April in preparation for its return to the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site.

Three Generations Reflect on Heart Mountain Pilgrimage

Eight members of the Yasui–Hayman–Flory clan came together for the 2014 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. It was a moving experience, and below, three generations of the Yasui family reflect on what that experience meant to them.

Nisei Perspective: Miyuki Yasui

I lived for two and a half years in Heart Mountain, from 1942 to 1944. I was fifteen when I arrived, and I graduated from Heart Mountain High School. I left Heart Mountain to work in a frozen food plant in Seabrook, New Jersey, so that I could save money for college. After I graduated from Drexel Institute of Technology, I got married and eventually settled in Portland, Oregon, where I have lived for the past 64 years.

I have attended a total of seven Heart Mountain reunions and three pilgrimages. When I heard about the first reunion in 1982, I was very excited, because I hadn't been back to Heart Mountain in all those years. I had a great time, because many of my former classmates and friends were there.

In those days, there were lots of internees who attended the reunions, even some *Issei*. But over the years, there have been fewer and fewer *Nisei*, and there were only a handful at the 2014 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. At the earlier reunions, there were so many attendees that they gave us photo directories of everyone who was there, and they took group pictures by blocks and clubs.

The program has changed over the years as well. They used to have dances, golf tournaments, socials, and karaoke sessions, which were a lot of fun. They don't have anything like that now, because there are so few internees who attend.

The first time I re-visited the old camp site was in May 1995, when my husband and I attended a symposium on Heart Mountain in Powell, Wyoming. At that time, there was very little of the old camp remaining. The only thing that was still there was the chimney from the old hospital. We drove around the area and saw some old barracks that were sold to farmers for \$1 each.

When we lived at Heart Mountain, it was the third largest city in Wyoming, but it was just desert, dry land, and sagebrush. Water was scarce. But the internees dug irrigation canals, the area was farmed, and it's really beautiful now.



Joy (Takeshita) Teraoka & Miyuki (Yabe) Yasui on "Bow Day" on May 28, 1943

The Foundation has done a good job of rebuilding and preserving the old site. The new Interpretive Center, the veteran's memorial, and the walking trails are very nice.

This last pilgrimage was a little lonely for me, because there were hardly any internees whom I knew. I saw Takashi Hoshizaki, whom I knew from back home. He's been to every reunion, and it's always good to see him. Many people who used to attend weren't there, but some of their children were there, and it was fun to meet them.

This pilgrimage was special because my own children and grandchildren were there with me. I was younger than my grandchildren when I lived at Heart Mountain, so I enjoyed being able to show them what it was like to live in camp.

Whenever we come to a reunion, I search for the mountain. It's always exciting to see it appear as we approach the camp. It was like a sentinel watching over us while we lived there. But last year, we couldn't see the mountain because the weather was bad. The kids were planning to climb to the top, so we were holding our breath and hoping that the weather would clear. Finally on Sunday, the clouds dispersed, and voila—there was Heart Mountain! Everyone was elated, and they had a successful, memorable climb.

Sansei Perspective: Barbara Yasui

I was born on the 10th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, so I've always felt a connection with the incarceration of *Nikkei* during World War II. Growing up, I heard both my parents talk about "camp", but my only frame of reference for that was my experience going to summer camp as a Camp Fire Girl. So it wasn't until I was in high school that I realized that the "camp" they were talking about was not about singing songs and roasting marshmallows around a campfire.

I had an awakening of my Japanese American identity in college, took Asian American studies courses, and began to understand the full meaning and impact of the incarceration. I read *Years of Infamy*, learned about my Uncle Min's Supreme Court case (*Yasui v. United States*), and attended the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearings in Seattle. As I became more knowledgeable, I began to give presentations on the incarceration to students and teachers as a multicultural education specialist and trainer. More recently, I assisted Densho with their teacher trainings on the incarceration. Some might accuse me of being a "know-it-all," confident in my knowledge of what happened.

Well, there's nothing like standing on the actual soil of the prison camp where your mom spent two years of her life to really "get it." Attending the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage with her, my father, my kids, and my sister and her family was an incredibly moving experience. Suddenly, the incarceration was no longer an abstract concept, but rooted in an actual, physical place. As I looked out over the beautiful, but bleak, landscape, shivering in the unexpected rain, I began to truly understand what it must have been like for my mom to have been moved from sunny California to this alien place as a teenager.

She had told me stories about dodging the searchlights when she had to go to the bathroom at night, about the terrible dust storms, and about the rattlesnakes. Now these stories took on real meaning for me. I could imagine her eating in the mess

hall, going to school, and attending camp dances with her friends.

As we gazed around the site of the prison camp, taking in the Interpretive Center, the chimney and boarded-up hospital building, the newly restored honor roll, and the guard tower, the thought on many people's minds was, "Where's the mountain?" The iconic, looming presence that appears in so many pictures of the prison camp was nowhere to be seen. It was shrouded in clouds and rain, frustrating pilgrims and photographers alike. Our family had planned to climb the mountain, but our plan was being threatened by the inclement weather.

However, by the next day, the rain had stopped, and the clouds had lifted somewhat, so we decided to go for it. Seven of us embarked on the four-mile hike to the top of the mountain. We took our time, stopping to catch our breath, take photographs, admire the scenery, and enjoy the wildflowers. When we reached the summit, the clouds parted, and we were rewarded with a spectacular view of the surrounding landscape. As I stood on the top of that mountain, looking down at the prison camp far below, I was struck by a deep feeling of ambivalence. How could such a beautiful spot be the scene of such injustice and tragedy for my family, my people?

Making our way back down the mountain, I thought about how glad I was that we all came to this place. It was a special experience to be able to share with my parents, my children, and my sister and her family. It was important that three generations of our family did this together. I want my children to understand, in their bones, what happened to their Grandma and Grandpa, and to pass that knowledge on to their children, *Nidoto nai yoni*, so that it doesn't happen again.

Yonsei Perspective: Mari Hayman

It's funny how a bureaucratic document can make things real in a way that history books and photos sometimes can't. As I lingered in the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center last August, I came across a three-ring binder full of names. Flipping to the "Y" section, I found prisoners 12678-12681—Emmie, Mitsuye, Miyuki, and Rayko Yabe. Citizenship statuses: C, A, C, C ("A" for "alien," "C" for "citizen"). Ages: 21, 45, 15, 17. There they were, my family.

My Grandma Miki was among the last group of prisoners to arrive at Heart Mountain in September 1942, after a four-day train ride from Los Angeles. She came with her mother and two older sisters, and was about to celebrate her sixteenth birthday.

Nearly seven decades later, our family traveled to Wyoming with Grandma on the eve of her *beiju*, or 88th birthday. As part of the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage 2014, we had all gathered at the former prison site to remember and pay our respects. It was the first time many of us had set foot in this desolate place.

Many things surprised me about the trip—especially my conversations with former inmates, who remembered "camp" as a time of unexpected camaraderie and friendship. I heard about their escapades beyond the barbed wire fence, the Boy Scout drum and bugle corps, the mess halls with the best food. My Grandpa Homer—who was imprisoned at age 17 in Tule Lake—jokes about how much fun he had chasing girls and learning to smoke, left to his own devices after the war split his family apart. "Bacon" Sakatani, the weekend's unofficial master of ceremonies, was just 12. "We went through this experience thinking it was a big summer outing for three years, that's how stupid we were," he

said. "We went to mess and ate our meals and saw our friends and went hiking. Man, we had things to do!"

Grandma remembered boys at Heart Mountain hunting for rattlesnakes while she and her friends formed social clubs with fancy names (she belonged to the "Radelles Club") and played softball. In a photo from that era (see photo on previous page), she and her friend Joy look like glamorous, All-American high school girls, carrying schoolbooks and smiling. But "camp" was still a prison, and the barracks in the photo's background make that clear. "We never knew what would happen to us," Grandma remembered.

After the war, with just \$25 each to start their lives anew, the former inmates of Heart Mountain eventually made their own futures. Grandma and her mother left in late 1944 to work at Seabrook Farms in New Jersey. Sakatani's family went to Idaho to pick potatoes. In the 1980s, he and my grandparents joined thousands of other *Nikkei* to demand reparations for Japanese Americans' wartime imprisonment. "When the redress movement started, I realized we'd been wronged," Sakatani said.

I know it's harder for Grandma to visit Heart Mountain as the years pass and more old friends are gone. "We're doing it for the sake of the children—you people," she told me. The names in the prison roster document an ugly, indelible truth—the United States imprisoned its citizens without trial; it denied immigrants their citizenship and put them behind barbed wire because of their race. We can never forget this.

But 70 years have gone by since my grandmother left Heart Mountain, and she's lived a full, free life since then. The background of the photo still matters; but it doesn't change the fact that the woman in the foreground outlasted it.



(L-R) Mari Hayman, Miyuki Yasui, Danny Hayman, Barbara Yasui, Tazi Flory, Erin Flory, Homer Yasui & Meredith Yasui at the 2014 Pilgrimage.



2015 Heart Mountain PILGRIMAGE

This year we invite all former incarcerated and their families from all confinement sites to join us for fellowship, commemoration, healing, and celebration. In addition to celebrating the personal and historical connections of all the camps, we'll be highlighting the current work happening at the confinement sites across the country. Friday's events will feature a day-long "All Camps" Fair, where there will be a rare opportunity to connect with former incarcerated and representatives from each site will be available. The HMWF will also be celebrating the rescue of the barrack (as described on pages 5-6 of this newsletter) and the dedication of the Heart Mountain Root Cellar.

This year's featured artist is G. Yamazawa. Born in Durham, North Carolina, and raised by Japanese immigrants, George Masao Yamazawa, Jr. is widely considered one of the top spoken word artists in the country. At 24 years old, "G" is the youngest poet to become a National Poetry Slam Champion. He is also an Individual World Poetry Slam Finalist, and Southern Fried Champion, and has toured in over forty American cities and five European countries. An advocate for youth empowerment, G also has extensive experience as a teaching artist facilitating writing/performance workshops for inner city youth in the Washington, D.C., public school system through *Split This Rock*, a nationally recognized non-profit organization with a focus in political poetry.

Find out more and register by calling 307.754.8000
or by going to: <http://heartmountain.org/pilgrimage.html>

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, August 21

- "All Camps" Fair
- Pilgrimage Dinner with special program
- Dessert Reception

Saturday, August 22

- Opening ceremony with remarks from HMWF leadership and local and national dignitaries
- Performance by G Yamazawa, 2014 National Poetry Slam Champion
- Dedication of the Heart Mountain Root Cellar
- "All Camps" Panel Discussion
- Lunch Buffet
- **Colors of Confinement** exhibit featuring Kodachrome photos by Bill Manbo
- Special barracks and root cellar exhibits
- "Kids Corner" activities



*Executive Order 9066, Series 25.
Naïve Newcomers.
by Hatsuko Mary Higuchi*

What does kindness mean and how is it fostered? For Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) Board member Sam Mihara and his family, kindness came in the form of neighbors Maurice and Margaret Harrison, prominent attorneys who agreed to take care of the family home when the Miharas were uprooted from their home in San Francisco's Japantown and taken to the Heart Mountain confinement site.

The Miharas lived on Sutter Street on Nob Hill. Six blocks away on upper Nob Hill lived the Harrisons. The relationship between the two families was forged when Mihara's grandfather, Tsunegoro Mihara worked as a gardener for the Harrison family. That relationship developed with time and became invaluable when the Miharas were forcibly removed from the West Coast and sent to the desolate Wyoming landscape. According to Mihara, his father, Tokinobu Mihara "had the wisdom to know that if he could hang on to the house he could at least have something to come back to."

Tokinobu was educated at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. He specialized in English and when he immigrated to the United States, he was well-qualified for jobs that required both English and Japanese language skills. As an educated man and the English editor of the San Francisco Japanese newspaper *Shin Sekai* he felt it was important to develop relationships with English speakers and locals in their surrounding neighborhood.

"Because of my grandfather's relationship with the Harrisons, my father felt that the least they could do was take care of the house for us and make sure that the mortgage and other expenses were completed," said Mihara.

While the Miharas were taken to the "Pomona Assembly Center" and then Heart Mountain, the Harrisons rented their house to Bay Area naval ship yard workers. In addition to taking care of the Mihara's house, the Harrisons sent packages of food every two weeks to them while they were at Heart Mountain.

"There were canned foods, veggies, meat, candy, cookies. I call it a care pack-



Photo courtesy of Sam Mihara

(L-R) Tsunegoro Mihara (grandfather), Tsune Mihara (grandmother), Nobuo Mihara (brother), Suyeko Mihara (mother), Tokinobu Mihara (father) and Sam Mihara

age, but it was these food packages that came every once in a while and that was a nice touch," said Mihara. They were very kind and very helpful. They tried to make life as comfortable as possible for us."

Christmas at Heart Mountain was also a time for acts of kindness. According to Mihara, "every Christmas, the camp would get about 5,000 Christmas presents from outside, including from some people in Wyoming." This act of kindness was initiated by a Presbyterian church based out of New York, which appointed one church to each of the 10 camps. These churches would then receive and deliver the gifts to the camps. Mihara stated that the Presbyterian church of Cody would then bring these thousands of gifts unwrapped, with "money to buy some wrapping paper" to Heart Mountain.

"The parents picked and wrapped the gifts and designated them to their children. Everyone up to the age of 16 or 17 received a Christmas present," said Mihara.

HMWF Board Member Shig Yabu, who was 10 to 13-and-a-half years old while at Heart Mountain, recalls that the younger

children enjoyed receiving these gifts.

"Each year, we had a Christmas party with a Christmas tree in the mess hall. Santa Claus came in and everyone received a gift. I remember what I got. It was a tablet that you could draw or write on and then erase it by lifting up the cellophane. We always looked forward to it and wondered what other kids got."

When the Mihara family returned to their San Francisco house, their relationship with the Harrisons grew even stronger as the Harrisons would invite them to visit their country home in Napa Valley on weekends.

"The first time I ever swam in a swimming pool was at the Harrison's country house," said Mihara. "They invited us to stay overnight and go swimming in their pool. It was very kind of them."

Unlike many Japanese Americans who had to sell their homes in the wake of forced removal from the West Coast, the Miharas were able to preserve their home through the generosity of the Harrisons, and continue the lasting friendship they had built prior to incarceration.

Do you have "Acts of Kindness" stories to share? This will be part of an ongoing series in which we feature uplifting moments of generosity amidst the turmoil and injustice of incarceration. Send your ideas to info@heartmountain.org.



IN SEARCH OF A HEART

By Ben & Jim Murphy

Several scholars and researchers have scored the numerous emotional, social, financial, and health stressors imposed on the Japanese American incarcerated of the ten War Relocation Authority “relocation centers” during the three-and-a-half years of their incarceration. Many remembrances, therefore, of the people who endured their confinement in these facilities are not pleasant ones. Many are simply tragic. The story Dorothy Kometani Kittaka relates about an individual she refers to as the “Poo-Pa-Poo Man” is a refreshingly pleasant, poignant, positive memory that many others did not experience.

Dorothy’s family consisted of her father Kizo, her mother, Sakaye, and her three older brothers, Theodore (Ted), Thomas (Tom) and George. Dorothy was two years old when her family went into the camps.

The Kometani family entered the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center” on October 10, 1943, one of the last groups to arrive. They came from the Tule Lake camp in California where they were initially sent, after having been confined in the “Pinedale Assembly Center.” Because Dorothy’s brother, George, came down with the chickenpox in Pinedale, the Army kept him there in quarantine, to prevent the spread of the illness throughout the Tule Lake camp. Dorothy’s mother refused to be separated from George, so the entire family remained at Pinedale for four months while all of their friends and relatives were sent to Tule Lake.

While the Kometani family was at Tule Lake, the infamous “Loyalty Questionnaire” was distributed throughout all of the relocation centers. All adult men and women were required to fill out this document. Dorothy’s parents answered “yes/yes” to questions 27 and 28. As far as the Army was concerned, everyone who answered these two questions with “yes/yes” were considered to be “loyal” to the United States and those answering any other way were branded as “disloyal.”



Dorothy Kometani Kittaka

Several thousand residents throughout the ten camps, for personal reasons, answered “no/no,” becoming “disloyal” as a result. The Army decided to isolate all “disloyal” detainees in the Tule Lake center. In order to make room for these people, and since Dorothy’s family was now “loyal,” they were relocated to make room at Tule Lake for the incoming “disloyal” people from the other camps. The Kometani family was sent to Heart Mountain after spending about a year in Tule Lake.

The Kometanis were assigned to barrack

nor her brother found out this man’s name.

The Kometanis left the Heart Mountain camp on October 17, 1944, settling in the little town of Marengo, Illinois, 65 miles Northwest of Chicago. Dorothy writes, “This little town in Illinois was a nurturing place where my family lived until we went to college and moved away.”

The educational path Dorothy selected—music—was defined for her by the unknown man and his trumpet-playing from the camp she left many years before. “My most vivid memory is the sound of that

SONG OF THE "POO-PA-POO" MAN

as recalled by Dorothy Kometani Kittaka



Sheet music of the song played by Ichijiro Yoshida according to Dorothy Kometani Kittaka.

room 28-24-B at Heart Mountain, a single room measuring 20 by 24 feet for the six of them. It was there that the four-year-old Dorothy recalls hearing an unforgettable sound.

“As a child of 4 or 5 years old, I remember being curious about this first sound of music that I heard from the rather lonely looking man who played the same lonely sounding tune, which I remember to this day,” said Dorothy.

What Dorothy heard, along with other residents of block 28, was someone in the camp blowing a trumpet, playing the same tune over and over. Young Dorothy characterized this tune as a “poo-pa-poo” sound, so the mysterious musician became her “Poo-Pa-Poo Man.” Her brother, Tom, remembered that this man also played the Japanese flute, the *shakuhachi*.

“My brother George also remembers it, and we both were told by our mother not to go near him, because he was rather eccentric to play this instrument all by himself in the playground.” Dorothy said. “I skipped out of nursery school while everyone else was taking a nap and went to hear him up close. He was very nice and played for me and pushed me on the swing. My brother also skipped church to go hear him and both of us got into trouble with my mother for not obeying her wishes.” Neither she

man who played a bugle or trumpet every day in the playground in Heart Mountain, Wyoming,” she said.

“Since hearing that first musical sound, I have loved music, and it became my life’s work. I graduated from Northern Illinois University with a music education degree and have a master’s in education from Indiana University.”

She is now retired after 47 years of teaching music privately (ten years) and in public schools (37 years). She is also a soprano and has performed in operas. She married Robert Kittaka (deceased in 2010), and has three sons, Paul, David, and Mark who are married. She also has 10 grandchildren.

Dorothy is the co-founder of the Foundation for Art and Music in Education (FAME), a multicultural arts organization which highlights a region of the world each year and brings international artists and musicians to school children in the Fort Wayne, Indiana, area. FAME’s seven arts programs have touched the lives of over 4,500,000 children since 1987.

In 1993 Dorothy started her search for her “Poo-Pa-Poo Man” who so influenced her life. She arrived at many dead ends. But in 2014, Dorothy got in touch with Ben and Jim Murphy, who have been researching the history of Heart Mountain. They joined in her effort to identify the mystery

MOUNTAIN MUSIC MAN



musician. At some point after Dorothy and the Murphys were introduced, Dorothy attended her first Heart Mountain Pilgrimage in 2014 at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center.

Dorothy met many people at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage and finally got a lead on her mysterious “Poo-Pa-Poo Man.” His name quickly surfaced as if by magic.

His name was Ichijiro Yoshida and he lived in 29-11-B. He was a divorced, single man while living in the camp and was in his late 60s. He was known by many as “Harry” Yoshida as his trumpet playing reminded people of Harry James, a famous trumpet player then. Ichijiro resided in Los Angeles when the war broke out and was forcibly removed from his home to the “Santa Anita Assembly Center.” He arrived at the Heart Mountain camp by train on September 6, 1942, along with 595 other people from the “Santa Anita Assembly Center.” According to the 1930 census, he was born in Japan around 1879 and immigrated to the U.S. in 1906. His occupation was listed as “social worker,” and his industry was “Gospel Army.” He had a fourth-grade education.

In the 1940 Census, Ichijiro resided on East 1st Street in Los Angeles and paid \$15 per month in rent. His annual salary was \$400. His date of death is shown as March 27, 1959.

The Gospel Army was a social-service organization similar to but not connected with The Salvation Army. Perhaps the Gospel Army had a band similar to that of The Salvation Army—Ichijiro’s uniform and musical instruments suggests he was a member.

The photo depicting Ichijiro playing his trumpet was taken on October 3, 1945, by Ruth Wiltz just before the Heart Mountain camp closed. The Heart Mountain hospital (the same hospital where Dorothy had her tonsils removed) can be seen in the background.

Tak Hoshizaki was seventeen years old when he and his family were at Heart Mountain. The Hoshizaki family lived at 12-5-CD. Tak was shown this photograph, and he recalls seeing Ichijiro in the camp: “Yep, we used to call him ‘Harry James’... the satchel at his side identifies the pictured person as one who used to blow the horn.

I say blow because I could never figure out what he was playing. I felt sorry for him. Seemed to be a lonely person.” Tak’s memory confirms Ichijiro “Harry” Yoshida as Dorothy’s “Poo-Pa-Poo Man.”

“Each life has a purpose and sometimes we don’t get to tell that person what his life has meant to us. My search for my ‘Poo-Pa-Poo Man’ was fueled by the melody that kept playing in my head for over 70 years,” Dorothy said. “I wanted to find him and tell him that he made a difference in my life. If there are any of his relatives still living, I hope they know that Mr. Yoshida’s life had great meaning to a young girl in Heart Mountain Internment Camp so long ago.”

Dorothy sums it up, “Music is my life and it (sic) all started by being inspired by the first sound of music from my ‘Poo-Pa-Poo Man’ in Heart Mountain.”

* * *

Dorothy and the authors were connected through the serendipity of an article published in the Fort Wayne newspaper which featured Dorothy and mentioned that she and her family had been incarcerated at Heart Mountain. The authors’ brother, Kevin (youngest of four siblings), coincidentally resides in Fort Wayne and Dorothy was contacted by Pat, Kevin’s wife to inquire if she would be interested in connecting with the two eldest Murphy brothers, Ben and Jim. These two brothers, along with a younger brother Dan (third of the four siblings), lived with their parents Bernard and Madelene Murphy at Heart Mountain after World War II when the facility housed staff/family of the US Bureau of Reclamation. As a result of their “voluntary stay” at Heart Mountain as children, the authors had for a number of years been diligently researching and collecting extensive information about Heart Mountain.



Photo courtesy of Wing Luke Museum

Ichijiro Yoshida, October 3, 1945, at Heart Mountain.

Heart Mountain Leadership Delivers Diversity Program to U.S. Navy

In honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) partnered with the United States Navy for a screening and panel discussion of *The Legacy of Heart Mountain* at a Naval air

station near Washington, D.C. on May 13. This unique diversity program was broadcast to stations across the country in Jacksonville and Orlando, Florida; Cherry Point, North Carolina; San Diego, Point Magu, and China Lake, California; and Lakehurst, New Jersey, to an audience of nearly 1,000,

including a packed in-house audience of 360, 40 of which were Great Mills High School students who were studying the incarceration of Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain.

Following the screening, the in-house and virtual crowd joined a discussion with HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson, and ABC7 co-anchor David Ono. Together, they addressed the lessons of the Japanese American incarceration experience and the significance of the camps today.

Higuchi spoke of the “ironies of the Japanese American experience,” describing how the young men in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the resisters of conscience fought for their liberties and civil rights in the United States and in Europe while their own families remained incarcerated behind barbed wire.

Nelson stressed that “there is still much to learn from the experiences of the Japanese Americans during World War II and from the camps themselves.” Ono, one of the film’s creators, emphasized that the goal in the making of *The Legacy of Heart Mountain*

I was really impressed with the Navy’s efforts to tackle diversity. Their willingness to explore this topic shows their interest in a period of history that wouldn’t have been explored 70 years ago.

“was to tell the stories and lessons of the Japanese American experience and beyond.”

“It is significant that the U.S. Navy honored Heart Mountain for Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month,” said Higuchi after the screening. “It is all the more

meaningful considering the military’s role in the mass removal of Japanese Americans during World War II.”

The diversity event was covered by Ono’s ABC7 Los Angeles station, and he reported

the story on Friday, May 15. In that report, he thanked the Navy and concluded that the program was “all part of the U.S. Navy’s efforts to foster a better understanding of our country’s multicultural population.”

“I was really impressed with the Navy’s efforts to tackle diversity,” said Ono after the event. “Their willingness to explore this topic shows their interest in a period of history that wouldn’t have been explored 70 years ago.”

“I think it was a great opportunity to bring the lessons of *The Legacy of Heart Mountain* to an audience that really knew little about the meaning of the World War II experience of Japanese Americans,” said Nelson after the event. “It was also a great opportunity for us to field questions by people who clearly wanted to learn more and were moved by the film. I think this reminds us that there are audiences far beyond the Japanese American community that are deeply interested in this story and see its relevance to the challenges we face today.”



Photo by Helen Yoshida

(From L-R) ABC7 co-anchor David Ono and co-creator of *The Legacy of Heart Mountain*, HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson, Rear of Admiral CJ Jaynes & HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi

Membership Matters: Join Us or Renew Your Membership Today!

Member support is an ongoing commitment to the mission of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and to the daily operations of the Interpretive Center. We love our members! This is not only because you give annually to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, but also because you have allowed us to form relationships over time. "I feel like I've gotten to know so many of our members," says Operations Manager, Bethany Sandvik who has been heading up membership responsibilities for three years. "There are some who will write us a personal note every year and some who will call in to renew asking how work at the Center is going." Sandvik continues, "Even though I haven't met many of our members in person, I recognize names and notice when they renew or increase their gift. Membership renewals serve as a constant reminder of who we serve, as well as an affirmation that we're doing our job well."

You may have received a membership card reminder in the mail. As we continue to grow our membership, we will continue following up. If you are already a member, THANK YOU! If not, we would love it if you would accept this invitation to take a more active role in the Heart Mountain Family. Your membership helps us tell your stories and the stories of your families who were confined at Heart Mountain during WWII. It also helps you be more connected to the Foundation. To become a member or renew online, go to www.shopheartmountain.org or use the form below and mail it in (feel free to enclose a note)!

Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Membership Benefits:

General Membership Benefits

(Valid for one year and renewable annually)

- Free Admission to the interpretive Center
- Subscription to the newsletter
- Free admission to exhibit receptions and previews
- 10% discount on store purchase including online.

Senior/Student (\$30)

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(Kokoro Kara-from the heart)

- All the benefits of Heart Mountain Circle plus
- Any-time admission for 2 member accompanied guests
- Free use of Multi-purpose room (by appt.)



Photo: Okumoto Collection HMWF

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— New Exhibit: **COLORS OF CONFINEMENT** —

Our new exhibit features color photographs of life behind barbed wire at the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center.” The photographer, Bill Manbo, was an incarcerated originally from Hollywood, California. Unlike most inmates who took photos in the camps, Manbo shot using Kodachrome slides. Kodachrome was a technology in its infancy at that time, but its colors, if properly preserved, have proven enduring, making these images stunningly vibrant and beautiful.

This exhibit explores how viewers’ perceptions of this tragic episode of racial injustice shift when seeing images of it in color rather than black and white. These photographs depict Japanese Americans engaged in both culturally Japanese and culturally American activities while behind barbed wire, providing new insight on the nature of life during wartime incarceration. The exhibit relates closely to the book from which the photographs are drawn: *Colors of Confinement: Rare Kodachrome Photographs of Japanese American Incarceration in World War II*, which is available in our gift shop.



— Exhibit runs from June to September —