

WINTER 2020



HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION



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Check out the Newsletter page on our new and improved website to read all past issues of *Kokoro Kara*!

www.heartmountain.org/newsletter

KOKORO KARA

Volume 9, Issue 1

Editor/Designer: Kate Wilson

Have an idea for an article?

Would you like to be a contributing writer?
We're interested! Write to Kate Wilson
with your story ideas—these could include
a profile of a former incarceree, a specific
aspect of the Japanese American experience
before/during/after the war, or an act
of kindness from a non-incarceree,
just to name a few.
katew@heartmountain.org

Change of address? -

Contact Danielle Constein to update your contact information and for questions regarding membership & donations. daniellec@heartmountain.org
307-754-8000, ext. 102

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ACROSS OCEANS & GENERATIONS: THE LANGUAGE OF SHARED HISTORY

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Shirley embracing Sumiko Aikawa

when they met in Japan

ast November, I found myself in an assisted living center in Takeo City, Japan, speaking through an interpreter to Sumiko Aikawa, beloved niece of my grandmother, Chiye Higuchi. Though Sumiko is 89 years old now, the interpreter was scarcely necessary. The power of what happened to our family during World War II overcame any language barrier.

Sumiko told me about the night in 1957 that Chiye explained to her how the Higuchi family had lost their farm in San Jose and were sent to a dusty and windswept corner of Wyoming where the Heart Mountain concentration camp was located. She held me in her arms and told me she could feel my grandmother in me. At that moment, she was crying with me.

Sumiko's story provided the compelling end to

my upcoming book—Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration. I would not have had the chance to talk with her if not for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs selecting me to travel to Japan and talk about my family's experiences, as part of its Japan Up Close program.

I owe opportunities like this not only to my family history, but my work with the Heart

Mountain Wyoming Foundation. The support of our members and the efforts of our grounded and dedicated staff enable us to reach ever-growing numbers of people with the story of the Japanese American incarceration, and to ensure that something like it never happens again. The challenges are daunting. Impulses in our society push us toward fear and insensitivity, but we remain strong.

Our commitment is a beacon for those who

believe in consensus, caring, and connection. I was reminded of that while at a New Year's celebration at the home of Japanese Ambassador to the United States Shinsuke Sugiyama, where I was able to catch up with our dear friends Norman and Deni Mineta. Last July,



Ambassador Sugiyama and his late wife Yoko visited our Pilgrimage and came away as believers in our mission. At the New Year's event, we presented him

with a beautiful photo book of his visit. During his talk at the reception, he held up the book to the assembled crowd and told them how much his time at Heart Mountain meant to him, Yoko, and the rest of the embassy team that came with him.

Another guest at the Pilgrimage last July was Linda Aratani, whose family foundation supports many of

the cultural and artistic institutions in Little Tokyo and greater Los Angeles. With Executive Director Dakota Russell, she toured our iconic root cellar and saw the work being done to restore it. Just a few weeks ago, the Aratani Foundation granted us the funds to complete the root cellar, and for that we are eternally grateful. Soon our visitors, students, and educators will be able to enter that magnificent space and see firsthand how Japanese Americans strove to



In December, I was joined by my aunt, Kathleen Saito Yuille, and her daughter, Vanessa, for a week at the Rancho

La Puerta in Tecate, Mexico. Kathleen was born at Heart Mountain and serves on our Foundation's board of directors. Alongside David Ono, the ABC 7 journalist in Los Angeles, we gave four presentations about Heart Mountain and the Japanese American experience. During that week, dozens of other guests at the ranch approached us to say how moved they were by our talks and the power of the Heart Mountain story. Many had heard about us on an episode of WNYC radio's *Death*, *Sex*, & *Money* podcast, which host Anna Sale recorded during the Pilgrimage in July. All those messages brought home the scope of what happened at Heart Mountain and encouraged them to share that story with others. That experience

gets repeated whenever any of us shares the larger story of the incarceration and its lessons for America in 2020 and beyond. That's why, as I write this in the early months of 2020, I know we're on the verge of our best year yet.

Many challenges remain for society at large, and our Japanese American community in particular. Our community, while it salves many of the wounds created 78 years ago with the signing of Executive Order 9066, still has challenges



David Ono, Vanessa Yuille, Shirley, and Kathleen Saito Yuille at Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Mexico

to overcome. I remain hopeful, however, when I see how successful we have become in bridging many of those political divides as we work with the local community in Cody and Powell. I remain inspired by the examples of bipartisan leadership shown by Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson, which started in 1943 with a

Boy Scout jamboree inside the barbed wire. I remain committed to our cause and I know we will succeed.

I look forward to working with you in 2020, the year associated with wealth and high fertility. As Milton Berle once said, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door."

Stay inspired,

Trinky Ann Digachi

1 dedicate this column to the late Yoko Sugiyama, a devoted friend to Heart Mountain.



A HISTORY FOR THE PRESENT DAY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAKOTA RUSSELL

This past summer, Anna Sale from New York Public Radio approached me about recording an episode of her popular *Death*, *Sex*, & *Money* podcast at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. As the title suggests, Anna's podcast is about the issues we shrink from discussing openly with one another. Anna wanted to understand the silence that surrounded the incarceration experience for so many decades, and to learn about the journey former incarcerees and their children took to find their voice. She believed this story wasn't just worth telling for its own sake, but also for the benefit of others working through different traumas.

That episode, released this winter, is just one example of how the incarceration story has recently received visibility in some unexpected places. Perhaps the most unique is the historical horror series *The Terror: Infamy*, which aired on AMC in the fall. Beginning on page 7, you'll find our interview with series creator Alexander Woo, who explains why the time felt right to revisit this history, and why genre television felt like the right way to do it.

Another surprising showcase for Heart Mountain came about through board secretary Aura Newlin's participation in the Women in Wyoming project. Lindsay Linton Buk began this multimedia initiative in 2016, as a way to profile



the diverse lives of women in the Equality State. The project was recently adapted into an exhibit at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody. To learn more about Aura's participation, see page 15.

This recent interest, coming from such a wide range of sources, reminds us that the work of the Foundation isn't wholly rooted in the past. People also look to Heart Mountain as a point of reference to try and understand issues in the modern world. As we embark on a new year, full of new projects and opportunities, let's renew our commitment to fostering that understanding.

Correction: Please note that the photos of Tets Bessho and the Surf Riders in the "Songs on the Wind" article of the Summer/Autumn issue of Kokoro Kara were taken by George Hirahara and not Frank Hirahara, as they were credited.





The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is pleased to welcome a new member to our board of directors: **Lia Nitake**.

A native of Torrance, California, Nitake is a public affairs consultant based in Sacramento. Her experience in economic development policy spans the local, state, and international levels. She also serves on the board of the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Greater Sacramento Chapter. Nitake holds a B.A. from California State University Long Beach and an M.A. from the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. She is the granddaughter of Heart Mountain incarcerees (Taro Inouye & Heidi Takagi; David & Ruth Nitake). Her grandfather served in the Military Intelligence Service.

TEACHER WORKSHOPS

Reaching Students through Education and Experience

ast year, Heart Mountain received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to host two week-long educator workshops this summer. This grant will bring 72 teachers from across the country to Wyoming this summer, to learn about the Japanese American incarceration, Heart Mountain, and the land on which the camp was located.

The first workshop will be held from July 19-24, and will culminate with participants attending the annual Return to Foretop's Father seminar near the base of Heart Mountain. At this event, participants will learn the long cultural history of Heart Mountain from Apsáalooke (Crow) tribal elder Grant Bulltail and other speakers. The second workshop, to be held July 26-31, will end with the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.

The workshops are part of the Landmarks of American History and Culture program, an initiative designed to use the power of place to instruct teachers for grades five through twelve about critical pieces of American history. Heart Mountain is the first institution in Wyoming to receive such a grant.

At present, enough teacher applications have been received to fill both sessions, and more are coming in each day. Word is spreading through the education community about this opportunity, and the Institute hopes to hold more workshops in the future.

second workshop, to be held July 26-31, will end with the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.

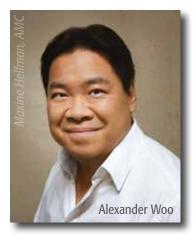
The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation board created the Heart Mountain Institute to explore new ways to expand the reach of our mission. The Heart Mountain Institute focuses on publishing, filmmaking, education, and innovative technology to bring the incarceration story to new and larger audiences. The **Institute Corner** features the latest news about this exciting initiative.

DETAILS & REGISTRATION @ heartmountain.org/pilgrimage

2020 HEART MOUNTAIN
PILGRIMAGE
POWELL & CODY, WY • JULY 30-AUGUST 1



*KK=Kokoro Kara *AW=Alexander Woo

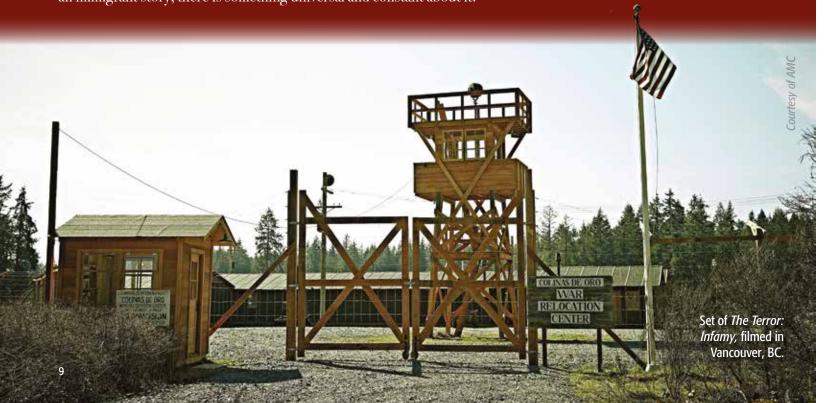


KK*: Why did you choose to focus on Japanese American confinement sites and incarcerees? What drew you to that particular chapter in history and that particular segment of WWII?

AW*: The original idea was pitched to AMC by my co-creator Max Borenstein, who had been inspired by a talk he had seen George Takei give, something like 20 years ago. When AMC was soliciting pitches for a new season, Max thought of that and pitched it to [the network]. I was the beneficiary of Max's extremely successful screenwriting career because he wasn't available to write the pilot or run the show—being part of the AMC family, they asked me to step in and I eagerly agreed. It's easy to imagine anyone being inspired to want to tell this story on a larger scale after hearing a former incarceree tell their story, especially one with George's passion and craft as a professional actor.

KK: Is there a particular significance to featuring this topic now? Do you think that the focus on the Japanese American community and this particular part of World War II would have been supported or given the green light in the past, even ten years ago?

AW: I think it would have, it just would have been very different. We were able to tell this from a Japanese American perspective. You think of other depictions on screen, at least for the mainstream market, and often it's through a white lens. I can imagine not even 10, maybe 5 years ago, that would have been a request that another network might ask for—"We want it to be relatable for all the people who aren't Japanese American, can we have a white character be the hero of this?" To AMC's credit, they never once pushed back on the storyline or the composition of the cast. They were fully supportive the entire time about telling the story from a Japanese American point of view because it's a Japanese American story. So I think the story could have been made on television at some point in the past, but probably not in quite this way. To answer the other part of the question, there is of course a particular significance now. I would actually say that the struggles of the immigrant experience have been relevant forever—it would have been relevant if we'd done the show in the '60s or the '70s or the '80s or the '90s, and probably would be relevant in 20 years, 30 years, because as an immigrant story, there is something universal and constant about it.



KK: What was your process/what criteria did you have for casting the show?

AW: It started very practically. We wanted actors who could speak Japanese because they would be speaking Japanese to one another and we didn't want to have to teach people how to speak Japanese or have them figure it out phonetically. So that was our first criteria. It should have been obvious to me at the time, but it wasn't: if we were bringing in Japanese-speaking actors here in the United States, it was highly likely that many of them, nearly all of them, would have had family members who were sent to a camp. So what we discovered in the casting process is that actors would come in and they'd bring photographs of their grandparents, mementoes, books, and objects that showed how personal this was to them. As we were putting together the cast, it became very important to us to have as many people with that personal investment in the story as possible. As the casting process continued and we saw that this could be possible, we endeavored to have every single Japanese American character played by an actor of Japanese descent. And we managed to pull it off. It wasn't easy—it required a lot of searching, but we figured it was only right for this particular cast to tell this particular story.

KK: What were the methods of research for you and your team in terms of creating the story and characters, designing the sets, and generally bringing this season to the screen?

AW: We wanted to recognize that we weren't making up the story—we were telling the story of more than 100,000 people who lived through this experience over 70 years ago. So in order to tell their story as accurately as possible, we availed ourselves of every avenue we could find, whether it was books, archives, oral histories, etc. We brought in a number of people who lived through the incarceration, and we cast an actor who is arguably the most notable living person who was incarcerated [George Takei]. We immersed ourselves as deeply as possible in order to tell these people's stories.





KK: Can you speak about working on the delicate balance of featuring this subject matter in a horror/supernatural setting while also being sensitive to the material and the history?

AW: To us, the goal/strategy for using this genre lens was to use the genre vocabulary as a way to help the viewer feel the emotional experience of the characters who are living through this terrible incarceration. We are by no means the first to do it—many successful movies and TV shows have done this as well. There's a danger, always, when you're doing a period piece, for it to feel musty—there's a feeling of safety—it's there behind a piece of glass. What I wanted to avoid was for the viewer to feel safe, because that's not what the characters are experiencing. So we employed the vocabulary of ghost stories, *kaidan*, and the Japanese horror stories that were descended from it, to allow the viewer to build empathy and make the viewer feel what it was like to be in those characters' skin. The rule we tried to follow was that if we could employ that genre vocabulary to advocate the emotional journey of the characters, we would use it. If it was just prurient, we would set it aside—then we would just be using it for horror's sake. So that was our North Star for how we used genre in telling this particular story.





Much care was put into dressing the sets with period details.

(Left) Miki Ishikawa as character Amy Yoshida arrives at the confinement site.

(Below) Naoko Mori as character Asako Nakayama filming on the hospital set.





Naoko Mori and Shingo Usami as married couple Asako & Henry Nakayama filming a scene on set.

KK: Now that the season has finished, were there any unexpected challenges or issues that arose during production?

AW: An expected challenge is always that there are never enough resources to do everything you want to do, especially time. An unexpected challenge was that we had written most of the scripts before we started production and with the exception of George Takei, we didn't really know how the dialogue would sound in those actors' mouths (we all know what George sounds like). It only took a couple of days on set to understand the rhythms of these actors—we realized they were all so gifted that they could convey the emotional experience with far less dialogue than we gave to them. We had often written very long monologues that many of these actors could convey with just a single look or a couple of words. So we stripped away some of the dialogue and towards the end of the season, we could write to that particular instrument more effectively. Generally you don't want to be doing this during shooting, as things are so hectic, but that was an adjustment we had to make.

KK: What was your ultimate goal in creating this season of *The Terror* and do you feel that you have achieved it?

AW: Well there's a very wide spectrum of viewers that we were reaching, hoped to reach, and did reach. On one hand you have people whose families lived through the incarceration, or themselves might have lived through it as well, who are extremely familiar with the subject matter, extremely sensitive about the subject matter, who want to see it portrayed sensitively and accurately and respectfully, but are also excited about seeing the story told on a larger scale. On the other end, there are probably more people who know very little, possibly nothing at all, about this experience. As we would be showing them these moments in history, what one of these camps looked like for the very first time, there was a responsibility across a very large range of familiarity levels. We hoped to be able to reach out to everyone, but across the board we wanted all the viewers to feel emotionally connected with what the characters on the screen were going through and to feel emotionally engaged, and to understand a little bit what it was like to live in the shoes of those people at that time. Then maybe by extension, they could understand the plight of immigrants all the way to the present day. Do I feel we achieved it? I suppose to the people we reached, yes I think we did. I felt it was really well-received and something that we're all very proud of.

The entire season of The Terror:
Infamy is available to watch through AMC Premiere,
Hulu, iTunes,
Amazon Prime,
Google Play,
and other
streaming sites.





ANTHROPOLOGY: A Path to Empathy

ura is an anthropologist, educator, advocate, and public speaker whose Wyoming roots run deep. A fourth-generation Japanese American Wyomingite, she grew up in Riverton. Her parents, former Peace Corps volunteers, exposed Aura and her siblings to a broader world through international volunteer work. This global imprint influenced Aura's interest in learning about other cultures and led her to become an anthropologist.

After she completed her studies, Aura landed her dream job teaching anthropology and sociology at Northwest College in Powell, a mere fifteen miles from Heart Mountain, where her relatives had been incarcerated during World War II. She notes that working as an educator in such close proximity to her relatives' experience "feels like destiny." In addition to teaching her students, she speaks around the state and to legal audiences around the country about what happened at Heart Mountain and the Japanese American incarceration.

Aura strives to share the world with her students by introducing them to anthropology and the practice of "questioning whether something is normal and natural or if that's just seemingly normal and natural because that's the way you were raised." In her words, anthropology is about "compassion and empathy—to understand what someone else's experiences are through their eyes." The positive outcome of opening up the mind to this way of thinking leads directly to the core of being human. "If we make an effort to hear people out, learn about their realities, and try to empathize with their situations, it is harder to fear and hate them, and it's easier to feel compassion toward them."

IMMIGRATION: From Japan to Wyoming

ura's ancestors emigrated from Japan to the United States around the turn of the twentieth century, and headed immediately inland to settle in Wyoming. Their work ranged from coal mining to

pitching a laundry tent in Yellowstone National Park for a summer, which later became a fully-fledged laundry business in Green River. On the other side of the family, her great-grandfather made his career as a railroader in southern Wyoming. He was a section foreman, so the family moved around the state and northern Utah every few months. "My grandma used to say 'we kids were born all up and down the railroad between Ogden, Utah and Cheyenne, Wyoming."

In the 1930s, Aura's great-grandfather moved to Hollywood, California for health reasons. Aura's grandfather continued to work for the Union Pacific railroad and stayed in Green River, Wyoming. Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he was fired, along with all the other employees of Japanese ancestry. Months later, the government sent Aura's great-grandfather back to Wyoming, this time as a prisoner at Heart Mountain.

I asked Aura about the post-war years, and how her family had picked up the pieces after being incarcerated at Heart Mountain. She told me, "My family, they ended up okay. As far as I know, they lost everything from the store, but they did alright and made a life for themselves again...Many people didn't fare well. The three years of wartime imprisonment was such a disruption and it destroyed so many futures, often ripping families apart. We're now seeing the effects of generational trauma in adults who lived through the incarceration as children, seeing their parents go through that experience."

PHILOSOPHY: Learning from the Past

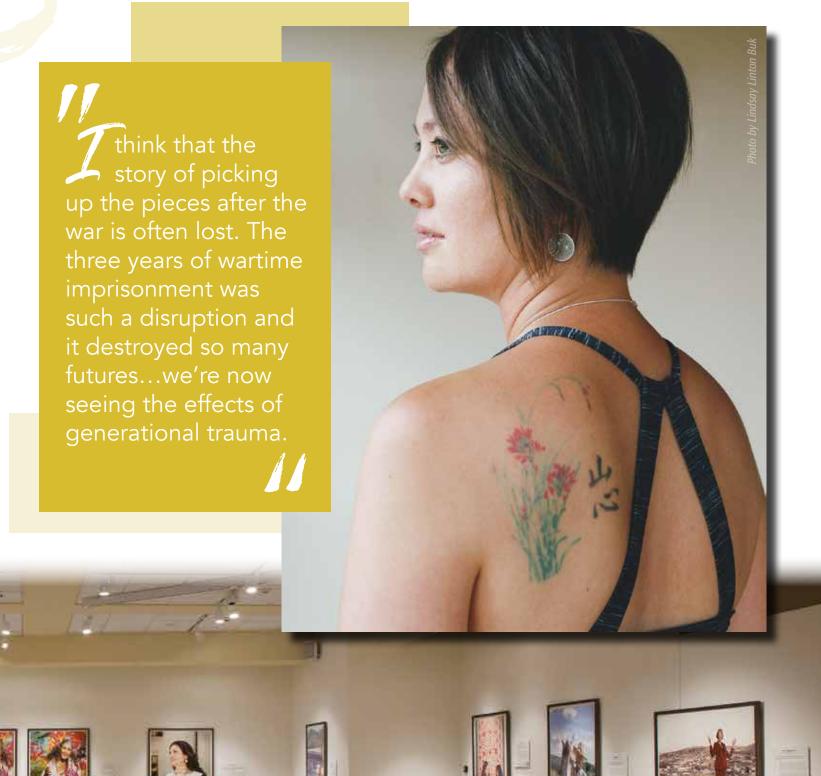
ach summer since Heart Mountain Interpretive Center opened in 2011, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation has held a Pilgrimage at the site. When I asked Aura why people would want to come back to the places where their families were incarcerated, she said they "return to these sites of trauma and try to heal, try to pick up the pieces. Now more and more people, including the younger generations, are reconnecting with that past and hopefully committing to healing within our own community, but also reaching out to other groups who benefit from the authenticity of our voice."

Aura says that when she speaks about Heart Mountain, no matter who her audience is, she wants them to "remain cautious about what happened to the Japanese Americans during World War II and how that could very well happen again if we're not careful about protecting our democracy all the time...I try to contextualize how Japanese Americans were perceived at the time and how that allowed them to so easily be rounded up and placed into camps based on really as it turns out, nothing but their race...whatever ethnic group might be targeted at a particular time may be vulnerable again if we're not careful about learning from lessons of the past."

Reflecting on why she continues to educate her students and speak to various audiences, Aura says, "We need to embrace the bad along with the good, because it's part of what makes us who we are. I don't see Heart Mountain as something that belongs to Japanese American history. It is American history, and it is Wyoming history. As I go around the state talking with different communities about this, I hope to instill some of that passion and hope that I feel about this history. I would like to continue to have a voice at the national level and to be heard because we have an important story that needs to be told, and I like telling it."



Lindsay Linton Buk is the founder and director of the Women in Wyoming project. She is a photographer, artist, and fifth-generation Wyomingite. Women in Wyoming is on exhibit at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody through August 2, 2020.



DUSTED OFF

Highlights from the Heart Mountain Collection

In the past year, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation added several important historical pieces to our collections. Many of these artifacts were treasured family heirlooms donated by former incarcerees and their descendants. Others, however, came from unusual places. Eagle-eyed supporters of our Foundation discovered objects from Heart

Mountain that had found their way into flea markets, estate sales, thrift stores, and more. We're grateful for the donors who entrust us with objects that have special meaning to them and their families, and for the donors who rescue artifacts that might otherwise have been destroyed. Below are some of the highlights of pieces we collected in 2019.

If you plan on bringing an item to the Pilgrimage or on a trip to the museum, please get in touch first to discuss our collections needs and the process of donating.

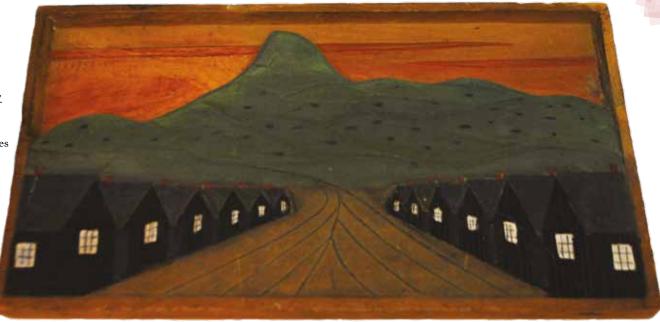
Contact the registrar at archives@heartmountain.org.



Pins and earrings collected in camp by Hironi Uyeda were brought to the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage by Sherry Uyeda.

The Heart Mountain Pilgrimage brings over three hundred people to the museum and historic site. Many attendees take advantage of this annual event to bring their family artifacts for donation. Large, bulky items and small, fragile items can be difficult to ship and often travel better safely packed in a carry-on or transported via car.

Pin and Earrings HMWF 2019.014 Gift of Cheryl "Sherry" Uyeda Painted Wood Carving HMWF 2019.002.001 Gift of Dennis F. Davies, in memory of Jutta A.L. Davies



This scene, carved from a piece of shiplap, features rows of barracks and Heart Mountain centered prominently in the background. Wood carving was one of the community activities that took place in the camp. Wood scraps left over from the building of the camp or from shipping crates became project materials. This carving was found by Dennis F. Davies in the bottom of a grocery cart at the Salvation Army Store in Bullhead City, Arizona. "As a person who has spent a life working with wood I was amazed at the detailed three dimensional carving," says Davies, who immediately recognized it as a Heart Mountain artifact.



Traditional Japanese geta were a popular footwear choice in camp, especially when melting snow turned the Heart Mountain streets into mud. Geta were inexpensive to make out of readily available materials like scrap wood and fabric. The high stands on the sole kept the wearer's feet above the mud. This pair also features a toe cover to protect against the snow. Frank Bohan, an antiques dealer from Cody, Wyoming, came across these geta when he purchased the estate of a local farm where camp incarcerees worked during the war.

Geta HMWF 2019.008.001 Gift of Auntie Q Antiques, Frank Bohan





Customers line up at the counter as the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* is delivered, January 1943.



Mimeograph Machine HMWF 2019.011.001 Gift of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Donated by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, this mimeograph machine has a long history of use. It was used by the staff of the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* to print the earliest issues of the weekly newspaper. Eventually, a deal was made with the *Cody Enterprise* to print Heart Mountain's paper, but this machine was still used to create the "Sentinel Supplement," which published late-breaking news. It may also have been used to print other camp publications, like monthly literature journals and the high school newspaper, the *Heart Mountain Echo*.



FAREWELL

This winter, we said goodbye to registrar Danielle McAdams, who left Heart Mountain to accept a position with the museum at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. During her tenure with Heart Mountain, McAdams implemented procedures and policies that helped us to better care for our artifact collections and chart a course for our collecting in the future. She also established this recurring "Dusted Off" section in the newsletter, refreshed our Volunteer program, and was integral in crafting our traveling exhibits. We wish her all the best in her upcoming endeavors!

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Thank you to our 2019 Donors!

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Donations to the Collections Care Fund go towards the preservation and management of artifacts in our care. If you are interested in donating, please use the form below or go to www.heartmountain.org/artifact-donations for more information.

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As a member, you will receive free admission to the interpretive center and access to special events and early registration for the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. You will also begin receiving *Kokoro Kara* magazine, which features the latest news from Heart Mountain, insightful features on the camp's history, and commentary on contemporary issues of importance to Japanese Americans and people of all backgrounds.

Membership contributions are vital to us in maintaining the interpretive center and historic site, offering programming for visitors and school groups, and reaching new audiences around the country through traveling exhibits, events, and this magazine. As a member, you will be joining a broad coalition of supporters who choose to make an annual commitment to our mission. Together, we can preserve what remains of the camp, educate the public about this history, and use the lessons learned from Heart Mountain to prevent future injustices.

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