

KOKORO KARA

"from our heart"

WINTER 2019



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Cover image:

Night Scene Flood Light Watercolor by Joe Nakanishi,
featured in our current special exhibit

"Joe Nakanishi: Perspective"
(HMWF Collection 2018.045.004)

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Notice something different on the cover?

Working with acclaimed Japanese calligrapher Aoi Yamaguchi, we have tweaked our *Kokoro Kara* characters in an effort to find both an accurate and also aesthetically interesting representation of this phrase, meaning “from the heart.” Born in Hokkaido, Japan, Aoi has been studying the art of calligraphy since age six. Her artistic style combines traditional Eastern classics and contemporary artistic expression. Board members Takashi Hoshizaki and Marc Sugiyama worked closely with Aoi to produce this new look which reflects the historic subject matter of our Foundation and our contemporary and future work as we endeavor to educate and inspire people to never forget this chapter in history and to continue to fight for social justice and equal & fair treatment for all.

In 2018, Aoi also installed a mural in the Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. To read more about this, turn to page 10.



Photo by Danielle McAdams

Takashi Hoshizaki & Aoi Yamaguchi explore different calligraphic designs for the *Kokoro Kara* characters.

KOKORO KARA

Volume 8, Issue 1

Editor/Designer: Kate Wilson

Have an idea for an article?

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

Change of address?

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WORKING TOGETHER TO TELL OUR STORIES

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Any visitor to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center knows the phenomenal story we have been able to tell, and much of that was through the support of the federal Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) program. That funding, however, is in jeopardy. One recent budget proposal from the administration omitted it entirely, and it was only through the intervention of supportive members of Congress that it was restored.

That's why so many in the Japanese American community descended on Washington during the final week of February. We wanted to ensure the continued life of the JACS program so other confinement sites could tell their stories, and so the Japanese American community could move forward to prevent anything that even remotely resembles the wartime incarceration from happening again.



(L-R): Shirley Ann Higuchi, Embassy of Japan Minister Head of Chancery, Kenishichro Mukai, Julie Abo, Noriko Sanefuji (Smithsonian National American History Museum)

Historically there have been challenges in bringing the Japanese American community together. However, over the last year we have been able to integrate, collaborate, and come together. The Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium,

which first convened in 2015, has been key to achieving this goal. We are speaking with a unified voice. It is great to see.

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) has carried the responsibility for this Consortium for some time. Now, two other organizations have agreed to take on larger roles. Ann Burroughs, president and CEO of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, has agreed to chair the Consortium. David Inoue, executive director of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), will act as fiscal agent. It is gratifying that Ann and David and their respected organizations are walking side by side with us to preserve this important part of our history.

Brian Liesinger, former executive director of the HMWF, also plays an instrumental role as the Consortium's coordinator. He recently led the development of a new website (www.jacsc.org) that will provide all members with up-to-date information about activities and spread the word about our important work. Liesinger is currently planning the next meeting of the Consortium, to take place alongside the National JACL Convention in Salt Lake City this summer.

Our newfound unity comes as we face multiple challenges. Representatives from all of the groups in the Consortium reached out in February to their congressional representatives and key administration officials to press the need for continued JACS funding. Heart Mountain is currently depending on this program to restore the original root cellar, which held the crops incarcerated raised out of the dust at camp. The Foundation's educational efforts on Capitol Hill in late February included making our case to key congressional leaders, including the Wyoming delegation, which has been so vital in representing



our Foundation's interests. We need to sustain the story of the incarceration, and the JACS program is vital to that.

We also must make sure that future generations know what happened to 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II and apply that knowledge to the present. In recent weeks, I have written guest columns for the *Seattle Times*, *Salt Lake Tribune*, and *Billings Gazette* about the lessons learned from the incarceration and their relevance today. HMWF is working toward bipartisan solutions that emphasize respect for each other and for the rights of all individuals. Much of that unity comes from bonds forged at camp, including those between



(L-R): John Tobe, Vice Chair of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, Shirley Ann Higuchi, & David Inoue, Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League

Norm Mineta and Al Simpson, who continue to set an example for all Americans about how partisan differences don't have to be personal ones. Their work on behalf of the Foundation has given us respect on a national stage.

Complementing the work of the delegations who arrived here in February is the new Heart Mountain Institute, which I announced in my last column. The board authorized the Institute at its Los Angeles meeting last October, and we're starting our work this year. Doug Nelson and I brought on board member Eric Sandeen, an emeritus professor in American Studies at the University of Wyoming, to help in this effort. We're pulling together some of the work started by Foundation staff members, primarily executive

director Dakota Russell, to push the message of the incarceration and related issues to new markets.

So far, the Institute is working on republishing two seminal works about Heart Mountain—Doug's *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp* and *Lone Heart Mountain* by Estelle Ishigo. We are seeking funding for a documentary film on the parallels between the incarceration and the Native American Crow Nation. We are also working on an augmented reality tour that will take visitors around the Heart Mountain site with archival and current photos and interviews (read more about the Heart Mountain Institute on page 6).

Finally, we have applied to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for a grant from its Landmarks of American History and Culture program to conduct two workshops in 2020 for teachers to learn about the incarceration and how to teach it to students between the grades of K–12. We feel positive about our chances for the grant. The NEH chairman, Jon Parrish Peede, visited Heart Mountain last fall and understands the site's historical significance and relevance today.

Taken together, the JACS funding and the Institute will work with your continued financial support to put the Foundation on a long and sustainable future. You have already received letters seeking help in building our endowment. For those considering leaving a bequest to HMWF as part of our estate planning, please do.

We have so much to do and to tell. The wider world is paying more attention and wants to hear more, and with your support, they will. Stay inspired and thanks for all you do. 🙏

Shirley Ann Higuchi

Ambassador Shinsuke J. Sugiyama speaks to everyone gathered at the Embassy of Japan's New Year's reception on January 14, 2019, highlighting the special alliance between the United States and Japan.



THE VALUE OF REFLECTION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAKOTA RUSSELL

As I write this column, I am also watching my social media explode with activity related to the 2019 Day of Remembrance. This event marks the February 19 anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 in 1942. My activist friends are spending the day marching, the artists I know are creating and performing, and my museum and history colleagues are hosting special programs. Many others are choosing to commemorate the day simply by celebrating parents and grandparents, now gone, whose lives were affected by their incarceration. It's inspiring to see so many people turning this dark anniversary into an opportunity for reflection, and resolution to never allow this to happen again.

I often have to remind myself to take the time to look back, when there's so much to look forward to. I am already impatiently counting the days until the weather starts to warm, and we can resume work on restoring our original barrack and root cellar. Even as I wait, I'm reviewing plans for the Pilgrimage in July, and new initiatives like the Heart Mountain Institute and the Sentinel Society.



As we look to the future, though, we must consider our place in history. We always devote this issue to acknowledging the past year's members and donors. As I look through that list of names, I see donations in memory of the heroes we've lost, and in honor of our living legends. I see longtime supporters of the Foundation, as well as those who only just discovered us and felt moved to contribute. Most of you have deeply personal reasons for your support, but I ask that you take a moment to consider what your combined efforts have accomplished. However modest your gift may have been, you chose to be part of this, to lend a shoulder to carry this legacy into the future. On behalf of the Heart Mountain board and staff, we thank you. 🙏

Welcome!



In January, the Foundation hired **Michael Cannella** as the our new Historic Site Specialist. Michael has had a varied career in construction as a general contractor for over 35 years, from historical commercial & residential preservation & renovation, to commercial, industrial, and military projects. Growing up in Long Island, New York, from an Italian immigrant family, Michael worked in construction on high-rise buildings until moving to Los Angeles. On the West Coast, Michael worked on several commercial and residential historic buildings in the Santa Monica area. He eventually gravitated to design and development, moving to Cody for a life in the beautiful Rocky Mountains.

Douglas Nelson: New Institute Director

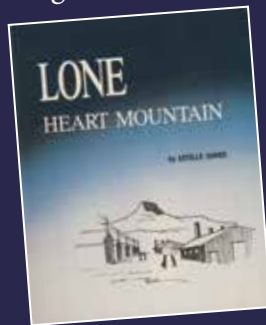
Douglas Nelson, Vice Chair of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, will take on an additional role in 2019 as the volunteer director of the Heart Mountain Institute. Nelson's 1975 Pulitzer Prize-nominated book, *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp*, is recognized as one of



the bedrocks of the study of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II. Nelson's considerable knowledge of Heart Mountain and his long career in the nonprofit world have been critical to the Foundation's success since its early days, and we are grateful he has agreed to guide the Institute.

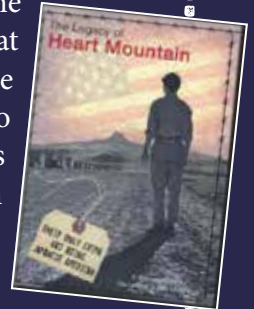
In his new role, Nelson will oversee several projects already in development, including:

- The republication of two major books, both now out of print: Nelson's 1975 history of the camp and Estelle Ishigo's *Lone Heart Mountain*, an illustrated firsthand account of the rigors of life behind barbed wire.
- A pair of teacher workshops, to be held in the summer of 2020, with an aim to encourage teachers to better utilize the incarceration story in the classroom. The Foundation is




currently seeking a National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture grant to fund this effort.

- A planned documentary telling the parallel stories of the Crow tribe that once called Heart Mountain home and the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated at the mountain's base. This film will be produced in consultation with David Ono and Jeff MacIntyre, the team behind the Emmy-winning documentary "Legacy of Heart Mountain."



- An augmented reality project, which will allow visitors to use their smart devices to access archival photos and interviews with former incarcerated as they explore the Heart Mountain site. Jeff MacIntyre and Jon Amakawa, professor at Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts, are helping to develop this idea.

These projects, and more still to come, will help us enhance the impact of the lessons of the Heart Mountain story on public policy and the defense of civil rights in this country, as well as set the Foundation on a path for success well into the future. 

*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 will focus on publishing, filmmaking, education, and innovative technology to bring the incarceration story to new and larger audiences. The **Institute Corner** will feature the latest news about this exciting new initiative.*

INSTITUTE CORNER

Greetings from the 2018

HEART MOUNTAIN REUNION

by Sharon Yamato

It has been decades since the first Heart Mountain Reunion in 1982 garnered a sellout crowd of 800 people in Los Angeles, followed by a record 1,050 people at the 1989 reunion in Reno, Nevada. Those numbers have sadly dwindled over the years as many of the incarcerated who attended those early reunions are now gone and those who are left have slowed with age. Nevertheless, the community spirit and camaraderie at the 2018 Heart Mountain Reunion was as lively as ever. More than 100 former Heart Mountain incarcerated gathered for a total of 230 attendees to reunite with old acquaintances, to reminisce about the good and bad times of their incarceration 75 years ago, and to memorialize the afternoon by taking one photograph after another with all those in attendance.

The Quiet Cannon banquet room in Montebello, California, was again the festive setting for the five-hour marathon luncheon and reception on December 1, 2018. The crowd started arriving as early as 9:30 in the morning to find

their families and friends, some of whom they hadn't seen in years. While reunion committee member Hal Keimi stood at the microphone to regale the growing crowd with ongoing commentary, founding member Bacon Sakatani ran around the room, camera in hand, making

sure reunion committee members were doing their jobs, and attendees were having a good time. As Sakatani aptly summarized the event, "It's all about a time for old friends to get together."

This year's reunion was co-sponsored by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), and President/CEO Ann Burroughs was on hand to welcome the enthusiastic audience, many of whom were current JANM volunteers. She particularly acknowledged those in attendance who helped move the barrack from Heart Mountain more than 25 years ago that now sits at the entrance to the museum's permanent exhibition, "Common Ground: The Heart of Community." Speaking about the barrack, once owned by Wyoming farmer Rod



Above: Reunion founding member Bacon Sakatani (top); Reunion committee member Hal Keimi
Opposite page: Shig Yabu, Teeny Miyano, & Prentiss Uchida share a laugh (top);
Reunion committee members Barbara Keimi & Sachi Tsurudome Sasaki (middle);
(Top row, L-R): Darrell Kunitomi, Prentiss Uchida, David Ono, Takashi Hoshizaki, & Sam Mihara;
(Bottom row): Shig Yabu, Helene Mihara, Ann Burroughs, & Sharon Yamato

Morrison, Burroughs said it is “not just a piece of Heart Mountain but has enormous physical and historical importance.” The project was the result of arduous work by volunteers and former incarcerated Mike Hatchimonji and Keiichi Ikeda, both in attendance, as well as George Iseri, who sadly could not attend. Bacon Sakatani spearheaded the project and located the two barracks with the assistance of former Powell homesteaders Mary and Chester Blackburn.

Also on hand to address former incarcerated was popular KABC-TV anchor David Ono, a regular at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. Ono implored members of the audience who had not been to the historic site not only to attend the annual Pilgrimage but also to participate in the exciting spoken word/video workshop conducted most years as part of the Pilgrimage program. Joining in the request to attend the upcoming July 25-27, 2019 Pilgrimage was Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation board member Darrell Kunitomi, who took to the podium to talk about how the Foundation has worked to continue to preserve the site and educate the public about the lessons to be learned from



Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

the injustices of the mass detention. Offering the perspective of a teenager who spent his eighth and ninth grades at the Heart Mountain camp because his father was employed in the civilian corps there, Tom Main was on hand to talk about his memories of being the only Caucasian in his class and enjoying the friendships he made there.

The program culminated with a dynamic overview of the history of the WWII incarceration from

Bacon Sakatani, who has dedicated his postwar years to researching and sharing the story of Heart Mountain to many still unfamiliar with its history.

Putting together the Heart Mountain Reunion requires many long hours

and hard work by committee members Meri Asano, Tina Asano, Keiichi Ikeda, Marvin Inouye, George Iseri, Richard Iseri, Barbara Keimi, Harold Keimi, Kaleigh Komatsu, Teeny Miyano, Bacon Sakatani, and Sachi Sasaki. Because of the many volunteer hours required to put such a large event together, one always leaves with the sincere hope that despite the

declining numbers of *Nisei* incarcerated, the annual Heart Mountain Reunion will continue to thrive for generations to come.



Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

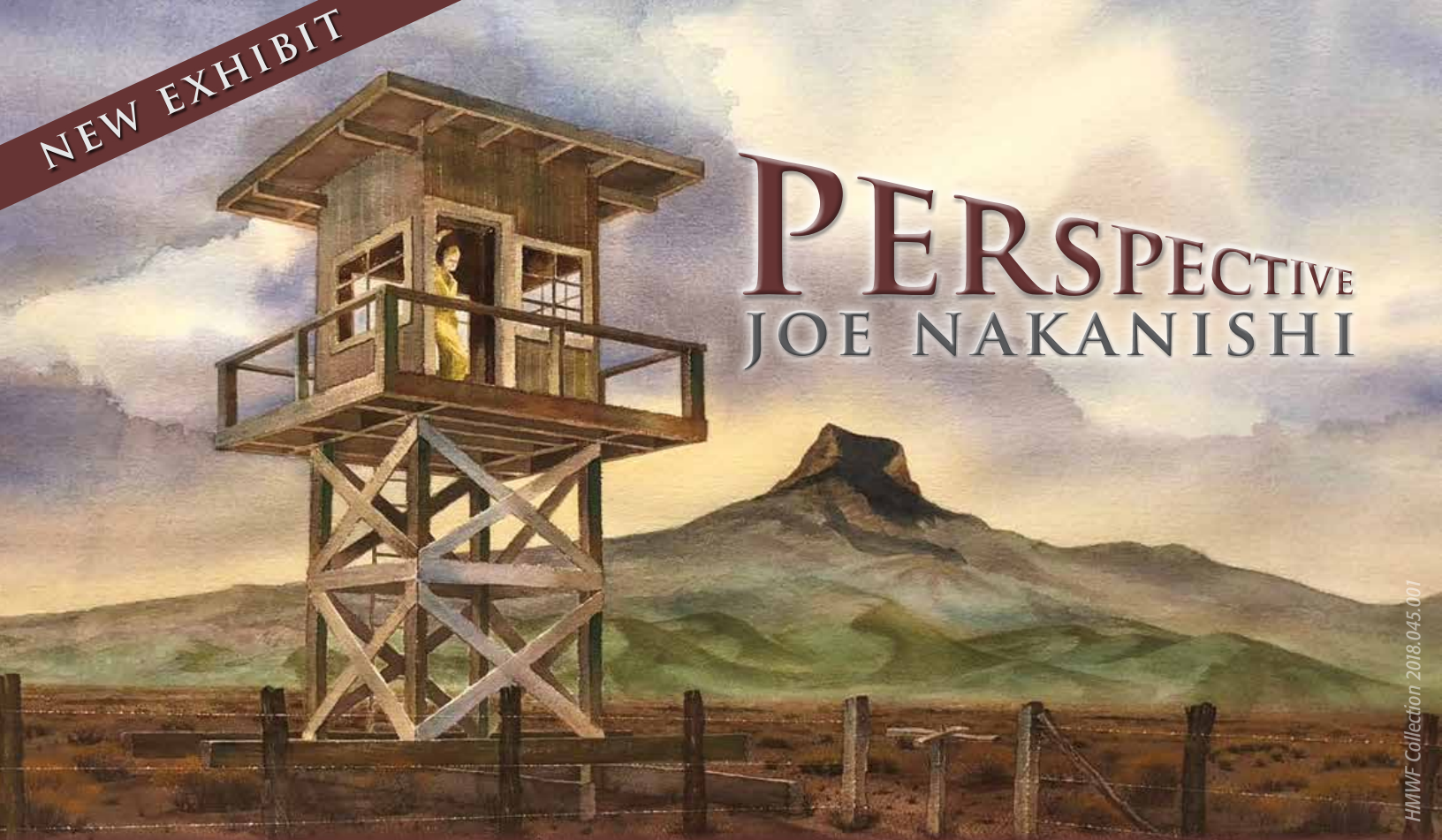


Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

Sharon Yamato is a writer/filmmaker who wrote, produced, and directed “Out of Infamy: Michi Nishiura Weglyn” and “A Flicker in Eternity”, based on the diary and letters of Heart Mountain detainee and WWII veteran Stanley Hayami. Yamato’s latest project has resulted in the film “Moving Walls” about the Heart Mountain barracks. Her immediate family was incarcerated at Poston, Arizona, and her uncle & aunt at Heart Mountain.



NEW EXHIBIT



PERSPECTIVE

JOE NAKANISHI


HMWF Collection 2018.045.001

Joe Nakanishi was just 19 years old when his life was interrupted. At a time when most young men would be striking out on their own, Nakanishi was instead confined inside Heart Mountain. He shared a cramped 16 x 20 foot room with his brother, Yas, and his father, Yobei, in Block 1, Barrack 24, near the camp's southeastern corner. The barbed wire fence that surrounded the incarcerated ran just a stone's throw from Nakanishi's door. A guard tower, one of the five that stood along the camp's perimeter, loomed over his block.

The days in the camp passed slowly. Before his forced removal from California, Nakanishi had been considering a career as an artist. Now, he passed the time sketching Heart Mountain street scenes. The dense crowd of buildings and the fence that disappeared into the horizon at least gave him opportunity to practice his perspective.

Nakanishi's budding talent caught the attention of Vaughn "Bonnie" Mechau, the camp's reports officer. Mechau, a newspaperman from Colorado, joined the camp staff to help produce the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* and to document the incarcerated' efforts to build a functioning community. Mechau encouraged Nakanishi to keep drawing, and promised to keep

him in art supplies if he did. With the support of his new benefactor, Nakanishi continued to hone his skills until his release in 1945. He eventually returned back to California, where he enjoyed a long and accomplished career as a designer, illustrator, and artist.

After his retirement, Nakanishi was inspired to return to the work of his younger years. Drawing from his original sketches and his memory, he recreated Heart Mountain in vivid watercolors. "Artistic perspective is a prominent feature of Nakanishi's Heart Mountain work," says executive director Dakota Russell, "but the title of the exhibit works on several levels. We're also seeing the perspective of a prisoner looking beyond the fences that enclose him, and the perspective of a seasoned artist reflecting back on his formative years." Joe Nakanishi's Heart Mountain work, in more ways than one, is defined by perspective. 

Our spring exhibit "Joe Nakanishi: Perspective" is on display until May 5, 2019.

Nakanishi is one of the only major artists from the camp still living. He currently resides in Los Angeles. For an in depth look at other Japanese Americans who created art during and after incarceration, read our feature on page 13.

Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room

by Marc Sugiyama

The Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room, named for my mother's family, provides a serene space for our patrons for quiet reflection about their visit to the Interpretive Center and the connections between the past and present. Since the Center opened in 2011 there has never been a permanent sign for the Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room.

I struck on the idea of identifying the Reflection Room with a calligraphy mural on the wall leading into the room, perhaps with the kanji characters of the family name 星崎 and a translation for "Reflection Room". With encouragement from my family, particularly my uncle Takashi Hoshizaki, I set about locating an artist to write the calligraphy. It was through a certain amount of serendipity that this project came together.

At the time I was working as a senior software architect for Erlang Solutions, a software consulting firm based in London. I was, essentially, the San Francisco office. In 2016, I was doing some work at

Bleacher Report, a website that aggregates sports news for sports fans. Bleacher Report was in the process of adopting Elixir, a technology based on Erlang.

My technical contact there was Ben Marx, now Architect at Bleacher Report. During one of our meetings, Ben mentioned he was going to Japan with his wife, then fiancé, Aoi Yamaguchi to attend one of her performances. Aoi is a Japanese calligraphy artist who does calligraphy as a performance art, with music and dance. She has a studio in Berkeley, California where she works on commissioned pieces (www.aoiyamaguchi.com).

This started a somewhat slow moving conversation, mostly due to my own inaction as a result of a busy schedule, about finding a time for her to come to the Interpretive Center to paint a calligraphy sign at the entrance of the Reflection Room.

Having settled on a date to coincide with our May 2018 board meeting at the Center in Wyoming, the real work began to pin down the calligraphy more



Photo by Harriet Bloom-Wilson

Aoi Yamaguchi and Takashi Hoshizaki in the Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room with a view Heart Mountain.

precisely. Besides mundane issues like the wall's paint and condition and legal issues such as ownership and copyrights, we had to make decisions about the size, placement, and exact characters to use.

We started by identifying the characters used for the family name. Aoi offered a suggestion, 星崎, which family members felt was correct. This was later confirmed by a photo of my grandparents' tombstone in Los Angeles.

I felt that the calligraphy should reflect the general World War II/1940s aesthetic of the Interpretive Center and asked Aoi if there were any differences we should consider between then and now. I was vaguely aware that Japanese kanji and writing styles changed after World War II. As it happens, the character used for 'zaki' did change slightly, from 崎 to 崎. Aoi explained that the older character was still in use today though only for family and place names. This set off a scramble to identify which character my *Issei* grandparents used after the war. Despite the modern version on the tombstone, we found from family papers that they used the older style at least through the 1970s, so we chose to use the older style for the Reflection Room. Having now chosen to adhere to a World War II aesthetic, Aoi focused us on scripts used during the Meiji/Showa period prior to World War II. After reviewing samples and surveying family members, we settled on a light semi-cursive style that was in use during that period.

Next we needed a translation for "Reflection Room". Aoi offered 追想の間 (*tsuisou no ma*). As no one in the family is particularly fluent in Japanese we had no real way to evaluate the appropriateness of her suggestion. I reached out to a fellow engineer in the Erlang community, Kenji Rikitake. While we have never worked together, we'd see each other at various Erlang conferences and events over the years. I hoped that Kenji might be able to help us given his keen interest in the subtleties of language, his fluency in English, and being Japanese living in Japan. He offered that 追想 (*tsuisou*) means to ponder what has happened in the long term or to retrospectively recap, review, and think about the past events.

間 (*ma*) is a room, a space, or any place to think and ponder quietly. With his help I had confidence that we had a thoughtful and appropriate translation.

Having agreed on the phrasing, characters, and writing style, we next had to settle on the arrangement and size of the characters. Aoi initially suggested a vertical arrangement of all the characters but after seeing this I felt that we should emphasize the name of the family. We settled on an arrangement with the family name about twice the size of the characters in the translation of "Reflection Room". A few samples later, the family decided on an arrangement with the translation of "Reflection Room" offset vertically from the family name.



At Aoi's suggestion, the family chose to keep the calligraphy relatively small and understated. She felt that the negative space around the calligraphy helps set the mood for the reflection room, of isolation, of quiet contemplation, and of reflecting on the past.

After all the planning, the actual installation took less than a day. Aoi inspected the condition of the wall the evening before and the staff at the Center decided to give the wall a fresh coat of paint. The next morning, after verifying the position and alignment with some samples on tracing paper, Aoi sketched the calligraphy on the wall with the help of a video projector and then set out to paint the calligraphy. Writing calligraphy on the wall itself poses physical and artistic challenges. She needed a short ladder to write comfortably and she used an acrylic/latex based paint that is thicker than traditional calligraphy ink

to prevent the ink from running down the wall. After a little touch up, she was done by lunch time.

Traveling with Aoi were her husband Ben Marx, his mother Anne Marx, and Aoi's parents Satoru and Akiko Yamaguchi. Ben, whose own grandparents escaped the Holocaust, said he could not help but draw parallels between the two experiences. Aoi and her parents, natives of Japan, were not aware of this chapter of the Japanese American immigrant story and found their visit with us enlightening. In Aoi's words:

I was born and raised in Japan and I was the first in my family to step out of Japan and live abroad. Even though my family and I weren't directly affected by this tragedy, through the process of designing this calligraphy mural signage, I felt connected to the struggles and strength of the survivors and the honor they radiate.

As a calligrapher, it's an honor to have worked on the mural signage for the Hoshizaki family legacy and to be part of the efforts to memorialize and to ensure this crucial part of history is kept alive so future generations won't repeat these atrocities. I hope the presence of my calligraphy in the Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room will encourage visitors to take a moment to reflect in peace.

I'd like to thank Aoi for her thoughtful and patient guidance through this process and the Hoshizaki family for their support, in particular Takashi Hoshizaki for his ongoing encouragement and engagement, and Kiyoko Penso, Kazuko Immish, and Susan Immish for their insightful feedback and research work. The Hoshizaki family hopes that you welcome this addition and will continue to enjoy a time of quiet contemplation in the Hoshizaki Family Reflection Room. 🙏🏻



Marc is a software engineer at Datometry. A Bay Area native, he is the son of incarcerated of Heart Mountain and Topaz and is a member of the HMWF Board of Directors. Marc has more than 30 years of software development experience. A published author, he wrote his first magazine articles and books while in high school and has presented at numerous software conferences. At Erlang Solutions he works with customers to design, develop, review, and troubleshoot software systems written in Erlang.



Satoru Yamaguchi, Akiko Yamaguchi, Anne Marx, Ben Marx, Aoi Yamaguchi, Marc Sugiyama, & Takashi Hoshizaki.



The calligrapher meticulously lays out her mural.

A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

AN EXAMINATION OF
J A P A N E S E
AMERICAN ARTISTS
DURING AND AFTER
INCARCERATION

BY DENALLIE MOORE

Examining the technique of an artist throughout their life can reveal much about them and the struggles they have endured. The four artists profiled here demonstrated either a distinct change in their artistic style as a result of camp or made an impact on the art scene of America during or after. Chiura Obata, Hideo Date, Miné Okubo, and Isamu Noguchi are but a few of the incredible Japanese American artists of their era. By looking at both their art and their experiences in camp, we can see how incarceration affected their artistic perspective.

began to establish himself, until the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 made him homeless. Obata recovered, married, and had four children, one of whom died young.

During the 1920s and '30s, Obata rose in recognition within the West Coast art community. He produced a series of woodblock prints of Yosemite, gaining a large audience of American National Park enthusiasts. He took a job teaching as a part-time professor at Berkeley. His courses were so effective that he was appointed to a full-time position later that

year, and promoted to assistant professor two years later in 1934.

In 1942, Obata's art was stored by Berkeley while he and his family were removed and incarcerated at Tanforan Assembly Center. He chose to bring his art supplies with him and, like many artists facing removal, began immediately documenting his journey. He quickly found a way to continue teaching, establishing an art school with artists such as George Matsusaboro Hibi and Miné Okubo. By the time they were

relocated to Topaz, the school had over 600 students. It would continue throughout the war.

One of the works Obata created in camp, *Moonlight Over Topaz*, was gifted to President Franklin D. Roosevelt by the Japanese American Citizens League. Obata was outspoken in his pro-government views, stirring anger with some of the Topaz internees who were protesting the loyalty questionnaires the government had recently issued. Obata was brutally assaulted, and had to be hospitalized in the spring of 1943. He petitioned for release from the camp, and



Chiura Obata. *Dust Storm, Topaz*. Watercolor, 1943.

CHIURA OBATA

Chiura Obata, a Japanese American artist held at the Topaz camp in Utah, is but one of hundreds of talented artists and craftsmen incarcerated during World War II. However, his work stands out because of the extent that it was altered by his incarceration experience. Obata was raised by artist Rokuichi Obata in Sendai, Japan. In 1903, he moved to America and

was approved to take his family and join his son in St. Louis. After the war, he returned to his position at Berkeley, where he continued to teach for most of his life.

Before the war, Obata's art had undeniable *sumi-e* influences. He focused on wildlife, landscapes, and *ikebana* floral arrangements that his wife made. His brushstrokes were careful and measured. Every detail was painted meticulously, the color schemes quite simple and staged. The woodblock prints of Yosemite have an extremely painterly quality, showing his interest and expertise in watercolor.

When the war broke out, he was forced to set his watercolors aside and portray much of his relocation using basic line art. Many artists that documented their incarceration did so in such a style, perhaps because of the lack of resources. Obata returned to watercolor to capture the scenery of Topaz, but his style was quite different. While before his brush strokes were measured and technical, there was a newfound chaos in his camp works. As we can see in pieces like *Dust Storm*, *Topaz*, his precision was replaced by a bold, broad application of color and shape. The usual atmospheric perspective of his landscape paintings disappeared, leaving viewers with a visually busy piece.

As the war continued, he let go of his observational hyper-accuracy in favor of a more impressionist, emotional tone. In 1945, he responded to the bombing of Japan with his work *Devastation*. It is a raw piece. Aftershocks of an unseen force are rendered with casual strokes in a spectrum of browns and deep reds that fade into purples and yellows, colors of a setting sun. In the center are two people in a sinking boat. The darkest greys in the water cling to them. In comparison to the aloof, traditional works in his pre-war years, Obata's wartime art is vastly more personal and impressionistic.



Miné Okubo. Untitled. Ink on paper, 1942-44.

MINÉ OKUBO

Miné Okubo, a *Nisei* from Riverside, California, was raised in a very artistic family. Her mother taught her and her siblings to paint from a young age. She graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree from UC Berkeley and was awarded a scholarship to travel through Europe, studying art history and technique under widely known artists. Her trip came to an early end in 1939, as war began to spread.

Okubo met with some resistance in her attempts to return to America, but was ultimately successful, catching a boat from France to return to the US and work on murals. The Works Progress Administration hired her to collaborate with Diego Rivera on a mural in the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939-40. Directly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a curfew was enforced for Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. Okubo was given special permission to travel after curfew to finish another mural.

The government eventually removed Okubo and her brother to Tanforan Assembly Center, where she taught at Chiura Obata's art school. She continued to teach at the school after its reformation at the

Topaz camp in Utah. Okubo also devoted herself to documentation. She used a clean pen-and-ink style to illustrate her personal experiences in camp. Okubo created around 2,000 illustrations while at Topaz. She also helped to produce *Trek*, the camp's literary and artistic magazine. Okubo acted as both the cover illustrator and art editor. Because of its success, she caught the interest of *Fortune* magazine, and was able to leave camp to work at that publication as an illustrator. The magazine also supplied Okubo with an apartment in New York.

Okubo's experiences in camp weren't to be quietly kept in an attic box. In 1946, she published her account of camp, *Citizen 13660*, using her many drawings to create a detailed narrative about removal and life in Topaz. After their incarceration ended, many Japanese Americans were hesitant to talk about their camp experiences publicly. Even speaking about camp in the home was emotionally distressing for some. Okubo, on the other hand, was fearless. She recognized that many people in America didn't know much or anything about what had happened to the Japanese Americans, and she wanted her book to educate them. She later used her novel as evidence in her testimony when former incarcerated sought redress from the government.

Following the publication of *Citizen 13660*, Okubo continued her career in illustration. Her mural work slowed down, and her oil paintings embraced a style she had played at as a younger woman; geometric shapes and simplified forms made up the body of her works. She considered this use of simple color and shape a return to artistic beginnings in Egypt, Asia, and Latin America. She focused often on animals. One of her later pieces, *Cow-Bird-Sun*, is a perfect example of her simplistic mindset: she used a solid application of flat color to portray a cow and bird in hard geometric shapes. Okubo lived in, and made art from, the same apartment *Fortune* magazine placed her in until her death in 2001. Her murals remain beloved and her book continues to educate and inspire.

HIDEO DATE

One of Heart Mountain's own artists, Hideo Date, was very nearly forgotten by the art community until his works gained new popularity with young Japanese Americans in the 1990s. An *Issei*, Date emigrated from Japan to the United States while still in his teens. He attended Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles briefly, before moving back to Japan to study *nihonga*—Japanese watercolor.

Upon his return to America, Date became a promising student of painter Stanton Macdonald-Wright. Both practiced geometric abstraction with exotic colors and hard lines. Date expressed himself with pastel gradients and thick black line work that resembled calligraphy. He was part of a group of artists who rejected modernism and called themselves the "Independents." Their unifying style was quite linear.

Before the war, Date's work was featured in several



Japanese American National Museum (Gift of Hideo Date, 99.11.3)

Hideo Date. Untitled. Graphite on paper, 1947.

prominent exhibitions and he was recognized as a rising figure in the American art scene. The Works Progress Administration in California hired Date to design a mural for Terminal Island, though it was never finished. In the 1930s, Date and his friend Benji Okubo (brother of Miné Okubo) became interested in the female portrait. Date mixed features of Japanese woodblock and *nihonga* with odd colors and moods.

In 1942, Date and Okubo were incarcerated together at Santa Anita before being sent to Heart Mountain. At Heart Mountain, the pair helped to found the Art Students League, a school where they and others taught about 250 students. In camp, Date's source of artistic inspiration changed drastically: he drew almost exclusively cats. In 1944, he was released to work on a mural in New York, where he lived the remainder of his life.

Date's camp work is an exceptional example of how limited resources and removal might change an artist's style. He turned from highly saturated, explorative color to very little color whatsoever. His

works became an imitation of *nihonga* in graphite. He achieved an incredibly painterly quality with a hard medium. His cats, likely modeled after strays around camp, were beautifully fluid. The only color on the pieces was the bright red of his signature *hanko* stamp.

Even after Date returned to California, his work remained devoid of color. The imitation of Japanese watercolor with graphite was a unique choice, but he developed it beyond just cats after his release. Pictured here is one of many landscapes he did in this style. It took some time for him to work back to his Synchronism-inspired work. His achromatic pieces were followed by dark, neutralized oil paintings. He explored geometric abstraction in dark values, some so obscured the figures are difficult to pick out.

Date had very few exhibitions after the war. In fact, he avoided selling his work throughout his life. As he grew older, however, he opened up to art historians and researchers, and eventually donated over 100 pieces to the Japanese American National Museum, where they can be admired.

ISAMU NOGUCHI

Isamu Noguchi achieved fame long before World War II. Noguchi was a *Nisei*, working as a portrait artist in New York. However, after a long period of rejection, his sculpture was ultimately recognized as his most important work. His sculpture was modern and unique, shiny and bold. It attracted the attention of big names, and he created public art pieces for the Rockefeller Center and the Ford Foundation. His work was featured at the World's Fair, and he traveled extensively back and forth to Japan, and to Mexico to meet Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo.

The targeting of the Japanese American community after Pearl Harbor affected Noguchi in a way he did not expect. Noguchi had never even heard the term *Nisei* before the war, but he felt for others on the West Coast and became an outspoken opponent of the removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans. He started the Nisei Writers and Artists Mobilization for Democracy, an organization of creators that pushed



Isamu Noguchi. *The World Is a Foxhole (I am a Foxhole)*.
Bronze, wood, string, fabric, 1942-43.

for patriotism. He organized a team of non-Japanese Americans to address congress, wrote articles in newspapers, and even sent letters to the president himself.

After Executive Order 9066 was signed and removal became inevitable, Noguchi became acquainted with the director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who was temporarily in charge of the Poston camp site in Arizona. The two men conceived an idea: that they lessen the blow of mass removal by creating a democratic, patriotic community, complete with lovely gardens and permanent facilities. Noguchi voluntarily incarcerated himself and was intent on seeing their ideas through.

Unfortunately, the War Relocation Authority, which took over the camp's administration, made it clear they had no intention of making Poston a permanent site. Noguchi's plans were shut down before they could take form. Still optimistic, he attempted to create an art school, but it didn't flourish as Obata's and Date's had. Noguchi had chosen the *Nisei* as his people, but they did not welcome him with open arms as he had expected. He was old for a *Nisei*, about 35 at the time of incarceration, and he was *hapa*, only half-Japanese. Furthermore, his home, artwork, and job were safe in New York. He was not under threat of having his business destroyed or home sold to others.

Noguchi had good intentions, but Poston's conditions were worse than he expected them to be. He was unable to make art with the extreme heat and the lack of facilities available, and he was not accepted as he hoped. Noguchi lasted only a few months before he asked his friends back home to arrange for his release. After the war, he traveled to Japan to study under traditional artists and to try to understand the issues raised by the war, as well as his own identity.

Despite Noguchi's short stay in Poston, he was profoundly affected by his experience. He wrote later about the divide between the *Issei* and the *Nisei*, and what he perceived to be a wealth of knowledge in the older generation. He encouraged the *Nisei* to learn under their parents, and he attempted to do something similar in his travels to Japan to learn traditional techniques.

After Noguchi left camp, he exhibited a show of work based on his time there. One of many pieces featured was *The World Is A Foxhole (I Am a Foxhole)*. It is a delicate piece, in contrast to the heavy stone that he had formerly used to express himself. It combines his feelings about being a person of Japanese ancestry in a hysterical country with the experience of being a citizen in a world at war. It could also be interpreted to symbolize the internal struggle of many loyal Japanese Americans in the face of their mistreatment.

Noguchi went on to create a series of works in precariously thin marble. Each one has the appearance of being quite fragile, despite being made of granite. The forms are fragmented human figures in a remarkable surrealist likeness, further discussing the state of the post-war world. In the 1980s, Noguchi designed a public plaza at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Los Angeles. The monument at the center of the plaza, titled *To the Issei*, features two large stone pillars, a metaphor for perseverance and strength.

It is regrettable that many pre-war works did not survive their creators' incarceration, but a unifying feature of Japanese American artists is their perseverance. One might think that artists who have lost their medium, place of inspiration, and livelihood would find it difficult to continue their work. Instead, Japanese American artists pushed forward during the camp years, not only making art for themselves, but teaching others how to do so. As a result, there is a wealth of knowledge in these camp works, that tells us more about the people who made it than even photographs could. 🦊📷



DENALLIE MOORE

"As a resident of Cody, Wyoming, I was always very interested in Heart Mountain, even before there was a center. I began volunteering there my freshman year of college, and I was very excited to be able to contribute more as an intern last summer. I am a fine arts major at the University of Wyoming,

and what caught my interest was the role artists played during camp. Learning about the impact they made on history has been enlightening, and helping people to find creative ways to tell their stories has become a passion of mine."

DUSTED OFF

Highlights from the HMWF Collection

Every item has a story to tell. From paintings and drawings that show the camp's landscapes and changing seasons, photographs and blueprints that document the building of camp and help us to stay historically accurate, to everyday items that convey the perseverance of the incarcerated. Artifacts and archives help us to tell these stories of the Heart Mountain concentration camp to our visitors and are valuable

resources to our researchers. A part of our mission at the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is to preserve these items and narratives so that the story of the Heart Mountain concentration camp and the Japanese American incarceration experience can be told to generations to come. Thank you to our collections donors in 2018 for being a piece of this story. Pieces featured in this issue were donated in 2018. 🙏

If you have items relating to the Heart Mountain concentration camp that you would like to donate, please contact Danielle McAdams, Registrar, at archives@heartmountain.org.

****Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of Sandy Sugawara and Catiana Garcia-Kilroy from the "By Military Necessity Project"*

The baby dress, hat, and shoes were donated to the HMWF by Carrie Imai, who was one of the 500+ babies born at the Heart Mountain concentration camp.

Yellow baby dress and hat
HMWF 2018.023.001



White baby shoes
HMWF 2018.023.002a-b



HMWF 2009.035, Yone Kubo Collection

The Heart Mountain Fire Department and Police Department was staffed primarily by incarcerated who worked together to keep the camp safe. Thomas Keimi, an *Issei* at Heart Mountain, was a member of the camp's Police Department. Keimi can be seen wearing the cap in the photo above. The cap was donated to the Foundation by Hal Keimi, a former Heart Mountain incarcerated and son of Thomas. The HMFD helmet was found inside of one of the surviving camp hospital buildings in 1982 by Timothy Zeller and was donated by Frank Zeller.



Heart Mountain Fire Department helmet
HMWF 2018.005.001



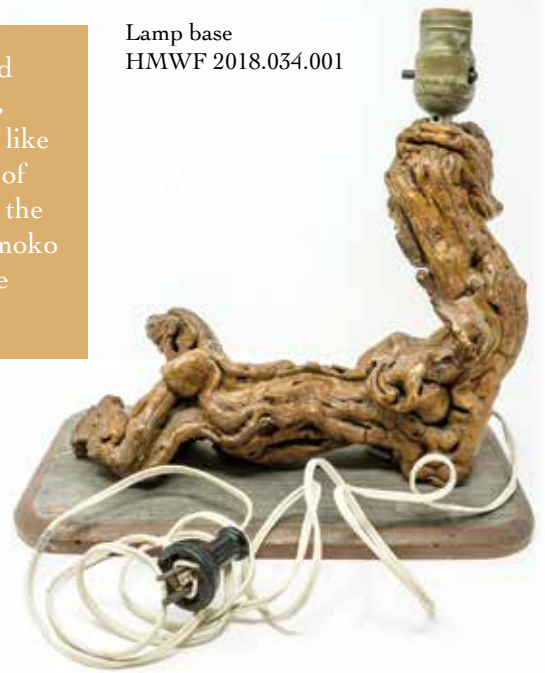
Thomas Keimi



Heart Mountain Police Department Cap
HMWF 2018.032.001

This handmade lamp base, made of gnarled wood, was donated by Momoko Murakami. Momoko's father, Noboru Murakami, would collect wood from areas nearby camp and crafted items like vases and this lamp. Items to furnish barrack units were some of the most crafted objects in the first years of incarceration with the hope to improve living conditions and spruce up the unit. Momoko also donated over 100 books about incarceration and Japanese American history to the Foundation's Education collection!

Lamp base
HMWF 2018.034.001



Wood Carvings
HMWF 2018.027

Included in a large donation from Janet E. Furukawa (Kado) of personal belongings used or crafted during her family's time at Heart Mountain was this woodblock scene of camp and wooden turtles carved by the donor's father, Yukiharu Kado.

With the barracks and layout of the blocks being nearly identical and standardized, items like mailboxes and nameplates aided in identifying a family's barrack unit from their neighbors. This mailbox was displayed outside of the Oana family's Heart Mountain unit, 29-15-C. This mailbox was donated by the children of sister and brother, Miwako (Oano) Miya and the late Francis Akira Oano.

Mailbox
HMWF 2018.004





In 2018, the HMWF accessioned a collection of items previously on loan from the Homesteader Museum in Powell, WY into the permanent collection. The majority of the collection is everyday items that were left behind after the closing of camp. Books, furniture, geta, and more were collected by local homesteaders who resided at Heart Mountain following the war. This painting, *Heart Mt. Wyo. 1944*, by Heart Mountain incarcerated Jishiro Miyauchi was purchased from the artist in 1944 and stayed with the family until they donated the artwork to the Homesteader Museum in 1999. Throughout the years, the painting has unfortunately deteriorated from water damage and the nature of the materials used.

The HMWF is dedicated to caring for these important artifacts.

Donations to the **Collections Care Fund** go towards the preservation and management of our collection, like the conservation of the above painting.

If you are interested in donating, please use the form below or go to www.heartmountain.org/archives.html#donations for more information.

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A word cloud graphic with the word "GIVING" in large teal letters at the center. Other words include "MEMBERSHIP" (multiple instances in red script), "COLLECTIONS CARE FUND" (yellow sans-serif), "COMMEMORATIVE BRICK PAVER" (blue sans-serif), "ENDOWMENT" (purple serif), "Save-A-Barrack" (orange serif), "ROOT CELLAR" (purple sans-serif), "DONATION" (multiple instances in brown sans-serif), and "Save-A-Barrack" (orange script).

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

MEMBERSHIP

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—not only because you give annually to the HMWF, but also because you allow us to form stronger relationships over time. “It is heartening to see the growing community, both locally and nationally,” says Danielle Constein, Operations Manager. “The members who support us are the backbone of our organization and the foundation of the HMWF, continually helping us to reach our goals.”

You may have received a membership renewal reminder in the mail. As we continue to grow our membership, we will continue following up. If you are already a member, we cannot thank you enough for your support. If not, we would love if you would accept this invitation to take a more active role in the Heart Mountain family. Your membership helps us educate the public and tell the stories of those families who were confined at Heart Mountain during WWII and of those who have been affected by the Japanese American incarceration experience. It also helps you become more connected to the Foundation.



TO BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW ONLINE, GO TO WWW.HEARTMOUNTAIN.ORG/MEMBER
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Beginning this year, we are teaming with the Reciprocal Organizations of Associated Museums (ROAM) to offer a new benefit to Heart Mountain members who join us at the *Friend* level (\$100) or above. These members are entitled to receive free admission not just at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, but at 350+ other museums nationwide! With a ROAM Reciprocal Museum Membership, eligible members will receive at least two complimentary admissions and depending on the museum, may also receive gift shop discounts or access to members-only events. For more information, and to see a list of participating museums, visit <https://sites.google.com/site/roammuseums/>.



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