

## LOOK TOWARD THE MOUNTAIN, EPISODE 2 TRANSCRIPT

ROB BUSCHER: Welcome to *Look Toward the Mountain: Stories from Heart Mountain Incarceration Camp*, a series about life inside the Heart Mountain Japanese American Relocation Center in northwestern Wyoming during World War II. I'm your host, Rob Buscher. This podcast is presented by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

ROB BUSCHER: The second episode titled "What Is This Place?" will explore the Big Horn Basin of northwestern Wyoming and the people who called it home before the Japanese Americans arrived.

### INTRO THEME

ROB BUSCHER: Desolate fields of sagebrush and dusty dirt roads drape across the backdrop of Heart Mountain Wyoming. In winter, temperatures exceed negative 30 and summers can reach over 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Conditions like these were unknown to the people of Southern California where a majority of the Heart Mountain incarcerated haled from. Most of them did not own winter clothes, and if they had, few would have chosen to pack them among the limited possessions they could carry to a destination unknown.

ROB BUSCHER: As inhospitable a climate as this was when Japanese Americans began arriving in 1942, Heart Mountain was only livable because of the vast irrigation project that had been initiated by none other than Buffalo Bill Cody.

Long before Cody, manifest destiny and the Lewis and Clark expedition sent white Americans to settle the West. But this land was already home to another people. The Crow Nation and other tribes inhabited these lands for hundreds of years, and even now continue to make their home in the nearby reservation lands of Montana.

ROB BUSCHER: Many geologists say that the Big Horn Basin where Heart Mountain incarceration camp was built is the best place on Earth to tell the story of our planet. This land contains rock layers more than 2.5 billion years old, buried deep below the many layers that formed in subsequent millennia. In the United States, Northwest Wyoming is one of the best places to hunt dinosaur fossils. From this ancient land rose Heart Mountain.

ROB BUSCHER: Heart Mountain was named by the Apsaalooke tribe or the Children of the Large-Beaked Bird -- who made their home in this area for centuries. White Americans called them the Crow Nation. Viewed from the south, the mountain used to resemble the heart of a buffalo, the sacred animal that provided many plains tribes with food and clothing. The mountain also came to be known by some as Foretop's Father, referring to a legendary Crow leader named Foretop.

ROB BUSCHER: Crow historians said that Foretop fasted near the mountain and had a vision that he would live as long as the mountain was intact. Foretop believed he would live forever, because nothing would ever happen to the

mountain. After a sudden landslide caused a portion of the mountain to crumble, Foretop died. Although the landslide permanently altered the shape of Heart Mountain, the name remained.

ROB BUSCHER: For Japanese Americans who later viewed the mountain from the East via their fixed vantage point in the prison camp, it resembled a thimble jutting up from the ground. Whatever it looked like, Heart Mountain stood as a silent sentry over the more than 10,000 people who lived there in confinement.

ROB BUSCHER: Long before their arrival, Heart Mountain was the focal point of the Crow Nation and other tribes who lived in and around the Big Horn Basin of northwestern Wyoming. The Crow once lived in lands that spanned over 30 million miles in what is now Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Today, the Crow Nation has been relegated to a 3,600 square mile reservation in southeastern Montana, a mere fraction of their former dominion, and yet the fifth largest reservation in the United States. Among their neighboring plains tribes, Crow land was renowned as the best hunting grounds. Water flowing from the nearby Shoshone River sustained life in the area, providing clean drinking water for the Crow and plentiful fish to eat.

ROB BUSCHER: This pristine country would be set on a course for change when the white man began settling the area in the early 1800s. After President Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803, he dispatched two explorers — Meriwether Lewis and William Clark — to scout the northwest territories and discover the true scope of the United States' new holdings.

ROB BUSCHER: Jeremy Johnston is a leading historian at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, located in Cody Wyoming. Johnston describes the white explorers first encounter with Heart Mountain, and how a simple spelling error resulted in discrepancies about the name that have continued to this day.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So John Colter, George Drouillard who were both with the Lewis and Clark expedition were both really the first two known Europeans to come in and start identifying the physical features here. And they called it Buffalo Heart Mountain, but on the Lewis and Clark map, they identified it as “Hart Mountain.” It was unfortunate that Lewis and Clark were not better spellers, because occasionally they would spell it as “H-a-r-t” so some people speculated it was named after someone with the last name Hart. But it was definitely named because of its resemblance to a buffalo heart. I think if you go through and even within certain nations such as the Crow you would find different bands with different names for these physical features. So while some may have referred to it as Foretop’s Mountain, others may have referred to it as the Buffalo Heart Mountain. You know, so it is interesting because it’s kind of one of those things here locally that people like to debate. And you can start all sorts of good bar fights with different theories about where the name comes from.

ROB BUSCHER: Fur trappers and explorers followed Lewis and Clark to the Big Horn Basin. They established a fort near the juncture of the Yellowstone and Bighorn Rivers – Fort Raymond – from which they trapped and hunted. They also met with the local tribes here to trade and negotiate terms of settlement. As

often happened with the arrival of white men to areas where indigenous people lived, disease followed. An estimated 70 percent of the Crow died from epidemics in the decade following the arrival of white settlers.

ROB BUSCHER: By 1851, tensions between settlers and the local tribes resulted in the first treaty of Fort Laramie, which carved up the area's land among the Crow and seven other tribes. The federal government's goal in signing this treaty was to secure safe passage for settlers traversing the Oregon Trail, while also codifying the territorial claims of each tribe. A key tenet of this treaty would allow the federal government to build roads and forts on tribal lands. In return for this concession the government promised an annuity of \$50,000 for 50 years.

ROB BUSCHER: Because the Crow Nation allied itself with the Federal government in previous conflicts with rival Cheyenne and Blackfoot tribes, they were given preferential treatment in this and subsequent treaties. Crow territory was reduced significantly, but still included the lands surrounding Heart Mountain that had historically been central to their way of life. Johnston explains the history of land disputes among warring indigenous nations of the region.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So the Bighorn Basin really, by the time the Europeans were out here, it was pretty much claimed by the Shoshone and the Crow, who did not get along with one another. But then there were other American Indian nations that were also expanding and moving forward, pushing out Crow, Shoshone, such as the Blackfeet. The Lakota and the Cheyenne were really aggressive. Today if you go up to the Battle of Little Bighorn site, it's on

Crow land. And you have to stop and think, you know here you have a battle with the Cheyenne, and the Lakota, and the Arapaho - and if you ask the Crow they were basically trespassing on their land.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So in a lot of cases, the Crow, the Shoshone have very open welcoming relationships with the Europeans that came through here. Starting in the fur trade era because a lot of them realized that connecting with the European traders gets us very important material goods that make life a lot easier. More importantly, it gives us access to firearms for protection, and so what happens, these European traders unwittingly step in, create what becomes an arms race between a lot of these bands. And you think about the Blackfeet, they had connections with the Canadian traders so they already had access to a lot of these goods, and the Blackfeet were really hostile toward the early American traders trying to keep them out.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So the same thing that goes on throughout the years, the generations, when the Lakota, the Cheyenne are expanding westward pushing up against the Crow and Shoshone lands. When the US military comes out here to push the Lakota and Cheyenne back, the Shoshone and Crow basically banned with them because in their mindset, those people are more of a problem than the whites. Of course it all kind of ends up with the same result, where all these Indian Nations regardless if they sided with the whites or against the whites get confined on an ever shrinking plot of land.

ROB BUSCHER: The federal government broke its end of the treaty almost immediately, reducing the amount of compensation to 10 years and failing to stop miners from settling and prospecting on tribal lands. This resulted in violent clashes instigated by white settlers that drew several of the treaty tribes back into conflict with the federal government. The Crow also faced territorial incursions from the Sioux tribe seeking to expand into their rich hunting grounds.

ROB BUSCHER: Despite their alliance with the federal government against the hostile Blackfoot, Sioux, and Northern Cheyenne tribes, Crow Nation was betrayed in a second treaty in 1868 that pushed the Crow's land further into Montana, away from the Big Horn Basin and Heart Mountain. By then, white cattle ranchers and sheepherders had moved into the area. In other parts of Wyoming, ranchers and farmers engaged in a series of range wars over control of the water rights and grazing lands in the open range. This was a violent and turbulent time in the Old West.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: The real big conflict occurred on the other side of the Bighorn Mountains, the Johnson County War, but certainly some of the violence spread out over here into the Big Horn Basin. And basically it's a classic case of few resources and more and more people coming in to claim those resources. So the popular notion of the range wars is often, you know, it's the Cowboys against the sheepherders because the Cowboys dislike sheep and sheep herders smell. Yeah, that's not it.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: You know before then you had a conflict developing between established ranchers who are claiming these mass domains of land. And trying to keep other settlers from coming in, and after the blizzards of 86-87 that really wiped out open range ranching this concept where you just turned all the cattle loose on the public domain and round them up in the spring. Brand them and then in the fall around them up again and send them off the market. That begins to fall apart because they realize we have too many cattle, too many people grazing on this land. We need to control that. And that's where you really start to see the stock growers associations being very aggressive and keeping out newcomers.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: Unfortunately, at the same time after the blizzard of 86-87 when they're cutting back on their herds, the size of their cattle herds. They're throwing a lot of cowboys out of work. And if you're a person that spent your career as a cowboy and now you're out of work. Well, you think, why don't I grab a few cows, start up my own little ranch, and try and make it. Well that defeats the purpose of, you know, cutting back on the herd sizes as advocated by the associations, the established ranchers. So really, the early conflicts were more about, you know, these large ranchers fighting former cowboys and trying to control over who, who gets to use this land. And that's where you get all sorts of accusations being made about rustlers. When in actuality, you have a bunch of cattle turned loose here.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: It's kind of impossible to determine, especially if a calf escapes branding, who does this cow belong to? And, you know, if it's

identified as a maverick usually its first come first serve here in Wyoming. The Stock Growers Association said if you brand a maverick and you're not a member of the association, you are a rustler. So that meant that they could come in with their stock detectives. People were shot in the back, killed at random here and that did spill over. We did have a few incidents here in the Big Horn Basin where people were kind of pushing and shoving against each other. A few shootouts here and there.

ROB BUSCHER: In the 1890s a man arrived who would shape the next 130 years of the region's history. William "Buffalo Bill" Cody was perhaps America's greatest showman of his era, and had become one of the world's most famous people by the time he set his sights on settling the Big Horn Basin. It was his dream to turn this part of Wyoming into an agricultural paradise that would eventually make possible the placement of a Japanese American prison camp at Heart Mountain.

ROB BUSCHER: Cody was a former military scout and hunter whose nickname came from his proficiency in killing the huge beasts that roamed the Great Plains. He became the stuff of legend through the pulp novels of author Ned Buntline, a reputation that was equal parts myth and actual accomplishment like many of the characters from the Old West. Leveraging his dime novel fame, Cody created the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show in 1883 and toured across the United States and Europe, building a reputation as a showman in the mold of his role model, circus master P.T. Barnum. Jeremy Johnston offers his insight into Cody's larger-than-life reputation, and how difficult it is to separate the man from the legend.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: With Buffalo Bill it's job security sorting out what's truth and what's fiction with him. There's a common story out there that Buntline was looking for a hero. He was a dime novelist. He wanted a star for his new dime novel. He ran into Frank North, who was the commander of the Pawnee scouts. And Frank North did not want the attention so he said, "there's your hero over there." And supposedly Buffalo Bill Cody was sleeping off a drunk underneath a wagon and Ned Buntline went and nudged him with his foot and said, "hey kid, how would you like to be a hero?"

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: That story didn't happen that way, it became very popular because one thing about Buffalo Bill as he became more popular, a lot of these individuals who had similar careers in the military being scouts... a little bit jealous, including Luther North, Frank North's brother - and Luther North liked to tell this story that you know, basically Buffalo Bill was a made star. But anyway, he certainly was very popular through the dime novels and Ned Buntline did a really good job of making him into a sensational hero, but you know, you have to keep in mind that Buffalo Bill was an authentic Western figure. It's still open for debate if he did or did not ride for the Pony Express, but he was a very effective military scout. He participated in two significant military engagements, won the medal of honor, entertained royalty, and all sorts of wealthy Easterners looking to come out to the American West for adventure. So he's this really strange mix of a kind of semi-fictional character, but yet an authentic frontier hero. And it's really hard to separate the two out.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: For example, when he was at the Battle of War Bonnet Creek which occurred in 1876 right after the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Buffalo Bill right before that engagement was on stage playing himself. He came out west. By some accounts. He was wearing some kind of stage costume that made him look like a vaquero, real fancy black pants, a bright red shirt. But he got into this very real engagement. This duel with one of the Cheyenne warriors by the name of Yellow Hair. And the two fought it out. Buffalo Bill killed him, and scalped him, and held up the scalp, and proclaimed it to be the first scalp for Custer. Well you imagine, all these soldiers are sitting here watching this, watching an actor come out and perform this very real act. Killing this individual, scalping him, very dramatic, and then Buffalo Bill takes the scalp, goes back east and recreates it on stage. So you kind of ask yourself, what is fact and what is fiction? And be it if you're at Battle of War Bonnet Creek as a soldier or back in Philadelphia watching Buffalo Bill perform on stage. You know, how do you sort out what is drama and what is authentic? And that's to me one of the more interesting things about Buffalo Bill, because it's kind of hard to sort out, you know where the hero begins and ends with Buffalo Bill Cody, and where the truth begins and ends.

ROB BUSCHER: For ten years, Cody packaged a fantasy version of the Old West, complete with shooting exhibitions by sharpshooter Annie Oakley, staged Indian attacks, buffalo stampedes, and the pounding hooves of hundreds of running horses. For residents of rapidly urbanizing cities in more developed regions of the United States and Europe, it was a trip inside a world of which they had only read about. With his long blond hair, sweeping mustache, groomed beard, and fringed

buckskin jacket - Cody cut a striking figure to city dwellers who could easily imagine him riding in a frenzied buffalo hunt, or to rescue pioneers from a hostile Indian attack.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: I like to tell people that, especially in light of the recent news he was bigger than Kanye West is today. So very, very popular individual. His Wild West traveled throughout the United States and really depicted this glamorized romantic vision of the American West, which a lot of Americans could identify with. Also traveled throughout Europe performed before Queen Victoria and various royal political figures in Europe. And again, they were really fascinated with America, and what had happened here on the American frontier. Back in the 1970s, one of the early biographers of Buffalo Bill Cody, Don Russell, examined Wild West shows and he came up with at least 116 different Wild West shows. And if you were to stop someone on the street today and ask them to name a Wild West show more than likely they'll say Buffalo Bill's Wild West and they will be unable to identify any other Wild West show. Sometimes they'll mentioned Pawnee Bill thanks to *Annie Get Your Gun*. But really, he did so much to establish those iconic images we hold the day of the American West. The last stands, cowboys vs Indians, attacking Deadwood stage coaches, Pony Express. He really embedded that into American culture.

ROB BUSCHER: Apart from his showman act, Cody also had the grand visions of a real estate developer. He dreamt of founding a town in the public lands of the Western territories and profiting from its development. He had already tried and failed once before to start such a community in Kansas. But in the Big Horn Valley,

Cody saw greater possibilities for a commercial center surrounded by profitable farms fed by the waters of the Shoshone River that ran down from the Absaroka Mountains in the west to the dusty plains below.

ROB BUSCHER: Water was key to heralding the riches that Cody dreamt about. The Crow were nomadic hunter-gatherers, in part because the arid desert plains where they resided could not support crop life. Cody was an ardent believer in the practice of irrigation and believed that access to water for crops could turn any land into a profitable farm. Soil scientists now know that the high alkalinity soil and harsh climate of northwestern Wyoming with its long hard freezes and short growing seasons would make farming nearly impossible there. Even with irrigation, the water would create a thin slurry of sand and clay that would hold little in the way of productive crop yields.

ROB BUSCHER: Nevertheless, Cody planned to build a massive dam west of his namesake town that would create a lake to regulate the flow of water that could then be fed through irrigation channels in the basin below. Cody easily recruited investors captivated by his reputation and founded the Shoshone irrigation company, enticing them with the idea of creating a town built around his already legendary persona. Alas, Cody's reputation alone would prove unable to deliver this nearly impossible task.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: Buffalo Bill was one of the late comers to the project. So the idea of building a community here in Cody Wyoming, a farming community where you could divert water from what was then called the Stinking

Water River and create farmland really originated with George Beck and others. George Beck had learned about this site from a man by the name of Laban Hillberry who has been identified as a prospector, a fur trader, but anyway Laban Hillberry had seen this site, reported it to Beck and Beck decided this would be a good place to develop. At the time Beck was near the Sheridan Wyoming area and he started collecting investors there. And one of the investors was actually Horton Boal, and Horton Boal happened to be the son-in-law of Buffalo Bill Cody.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So Buffalo Bill came to Sheridan to visit Horton and his daughter Arta and he learned of this project that Beck was pushing. And Beck met with the partners and said, “you know, if we're going to make this work, if we're going to get investors and, more importantly, if we're going to get homesteaders to come to this area, we need someone that can sell it.” And Buffalo Bill being the international star that he was at the time, was a person that could sell this. My family, they homesteaded here in the late 1890s and I look at the early photos of this place and think they're coming from places like Iowa, they come out to this high plains desert. I wonder what in the world was going through their minds? Because you know it's a place that was identified as Colter's Hell at one time by the third traders, it's along the Stinking Water River, it's desert. How in the world did you even envision you're going to turn this into farmland?

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: Well Buffalo Bill sold the story. And he did such a good job of it that really we've forgotten about Beck and these other investors. And Buffalo Bill has been given the sole credit of being the town founder and the one really promoted reclamation in this area, whereas really he was more of the

person who sold it to everyone. And being a celebrity spokesperson for this project, he really came up with some just outlandish stories that seem kind of silly today but really appealed to a lot of people back then.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: Buffalo Bill claimed that he first saw the Big Horn Basin from the Bighorn Mountains, he was suffering from an eye infection and he was blindfolded at the time. But one of his partners ran down and grabbed some medicinal water from the hot springs around Cody here, bathed Cody's eyes after his eyes were cleaned out he could then see the Big Horn Basin and he describes it, you know, he's seeing this clear water rushing from the mountains, all these green trees, green grass, deer, antelope frolicking all over the plains there and he realizes it's the promised land.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So he begins depicting himself as the Moses-like figure that's leading all these people into the Big Horn Basin and little, little more glamorous than this idea that George Beck just picked him out to sell it to investors and homesteaders. But it worked and, you know, wasn't quite the success that they wanted it to be. At one time they were going to, were trying to promote this as the next Denver of the American West. Didn't quite get there, but you look around, Wyoming and other places. There's a lot of abandoned towns, a lot of ghost cities and Cody was one of the few communities that actually did succeed and make it.

ROB BUSCHER: Freezing temperatures made it difficult to mix and pour cement, and workers complained of the harsh conditions. The first irrigation channel they

dug ran too far from the land that Cody claimed for his town. Ultimately Cody's venture would be rescued by the federal government, who shared his dream of a West made fertile by irrigation.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: So now Buffalo Bill envisioned that the whole Shoshone River from the canyon from where present day Cody is today to the mouth, where it joins the Big Horn River would be irrigated, and he wanted to develop that. But after they finished the Cody canal, they realized they didn't have enough money or resources to pull the rest of it off. So they started working with other entities. So they actually work with the Mormon Church, transferred some of the claim the water claims to the church there, which then built a Mormon community that irrigated the lower portion of the Shoshone River. Where a lot of conflict came in is the other sections were given back to the federal government, and the federal government through the reclamation service, which was created in 1902 and really brought in the first federal investment in reclamation in the American West. That's where the tension began so Buffalo Bill assumed that with his celebrity status, he could tell all these bureaucrats what to do. Even though they were kind of working on the same goal of reclaiming the land there was just a lot, a lot of tension as to which areas should be developed first, and who should benefit from it. I mean, in Cody's mind, he was one of the first pioneers. "First in time, first in right. I should have say in how this land's developed."

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: But the time of the Progressive Era though under Roosevelt, the concept was the greatest good for the greatest number. And that

means we're going to do these other projects we're going to work on the Shoshone Dam and build the reservoir to store water, so we have water for years to come. We can open up these areas, instead of that area where you invested so you know it's kind of ironic in 1946 they renamed the Shoshone Dam the Buffalo Bill Dam, because Buffalo Bill really wasn't too supportive of that project. He wanted that area, the Heart Mountain canal area to be developed before they did anything with the dam. And by the time it was all said and done, it was like many other aspects of the American West, where the residents here came out with a deep resentment towards the federal government, a staunch anti-federal stance that of course you still see out in the West today.

ROB BUSCHER: In the early 1900s, the federal government encouraged farmers to come settle the area with promises of cheap land and the chance to start their lives anew, free from the confines of modern industrial society. Hundreds arrived, but their enthusiasm would not overcome the realities of trying to grow crops in Wyoming's rocky desert soil. With limited economic prospects for homesteaders, Cody turned his attention towards building the tourist trade.

JEREMY JOHNSTON INTERVIEW: Buffalo Bill realized that you needed more than just farming and ranching in this area to make a solid community and one thing he focused on was the tourism. He wanted to bring the railroad down here, which happened, the Burlington railroad came through and finally we had a railroad connection. And then he really began promoting the Cody to Yellowstone road, where visitors could come in, they could stay in Buffalo Bill's hotel, the Irma Hotel. And then travel through the Shoshone River Valley up into Yellowstone, the East

Gate and do Yellowstone. And he set up an inn there in the middle and the Pahaska Tepee as well. So it's kind of a way for visitors to come in, have this Old West experience because you could go see the scenic wonders of Yellowstone through Buffalo Bill country. So you could get a little bit of a taste of, you know, those pioneer days with Buffalo Bill's connection to this area.

ROB BUSCHER: In the end, Buffalo Bill Cody brought white Americans, the federal government, and farming to northwestern Wyoming. His other legacy was creating the infrastructure that would make the area an ideal candidate for the camp that would eventually be home to almost 14,000 Japanese Americans. Who would ultimately be settled in the area between Cody and Powell.

JEREMY JOHNSTON: That was the area that Buffalo Bill really wanted to develop. He wanted that area to be irrigated by the Federal reclamation project, and they focused on all sorts of projects, but that. So they worked on the Garland Division, the Franny Division, which kind of failed because when they put water on the land alkaline started bubbling up and the settlers just left in droves. Wasn't until the Heart Mountain Relocation Center was established and Japanese Americans came in that the Heart Mountain Canal Project was finished, and finally irrigated the land that Buffalo Bill wanted irrigated. And the reason why he wanted it irrigated instead of these other regions was that's where he invested. He got his sisters and other family members to make land claims in that area. He was heavily invested in the town of Ralston, Wyoming. Assuming that would be the next boom town of the area and when the reclamation service decided to focus instead on the area

around Powell and develop that community, you know, Buffalo Bill was kind of left high and dry on his investments.

ROB BUSCHER: Although Buffalo Bill would never see profit from the land claims he and his family purchased in Ralston, Cody was successful in developing his namesake town. Despite his resentment towards the federal government, the Shoshone Dam that was completed in 1910 with funds from the Reclamation Act would be renamed in his honor in 1946 as the Buffalo Bill Dam. Little did he know that his actions would later lead to the largest single migration of pioneers in the history of Wyoming, made against their will as prisoners of the same federal government he so detested.

ROB BUSCHER: Once the federal government decided to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast, it faced the challenge of where to put them amid mounting anti-Japanese sentiments that were being furthered in part through wartime propaganda. At first, some were allowed to leave to a location of their own choosing during the so-called voluntary evacuation, as my family did when they relocated from Gardena California to Ogden Utah in the weeks before the evacuation order went into effect.

ROB BUSCHER: The military created the Wartime Civil Control Administration to oversee the temporary assembly centers like Santa Anita, which we explored in the previous episode. A majority of the Japanese Americans sent to Heart Mountain came from Santa Anita, but others came from Pomona and Portland assembly centers as well.

ROB BUSCHER: Even in 1942, the optics of the US military mass incarcerating members of its own citizenry ran contrary to the moral authority needed to win the war of ideology being waged against the fascist dictatorships of the Axis powers. After experiencing criticism from concerned citizens and Axis propagandists alike, the federal government created a new civilian agency called the War Relocation Authority, whose first task was to find a permanent location for the displaced Japanese Americans to be resettled.

ROB BUSCHER: Despite calls for clemency from calmer heads, state governors such as Nels Smith of Wyoming said they would not welcome Japanese Americans to their state unless they were confined under military guard.

GOVERNOR NELS SMITH VOICE OVER: The State of Wyoming while willing to render every assistance in our war program cannot acquiesce to the importation of these Japanese into our State. In the event the War Department proceeds to evacuate the Japanese from the West coast into Wyoming, it will be imperative that they be kept under strict Federal control, supervision, and Federal maintenance. If these evacuees are brought into Wyoming in accordance with War Department plans, Wyoming citizens fully expect that the proper Federal authorities will remove them from our state upon the termination of this emergency.

ROB BUSCHER: Alan Simpson, a nearly life-long resident of Cody Wyoming and frequent guest at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage who served three terms as a

U.S. senator, famously called Smith a “rustic.” Smith was a rough-hewn rancher first elected in 1938. Born and raised during the last decades of the old west, his unscripted comments about the possibility of Japanese Americans moving in large numbers to his state showed the federal government how limited its options were. Smith told Milton Eisenhower, the first director of the War Relocation Authority:

GOVERNOR NELS SMITH VOICE OVER: If you bring any Japs into my state they will be hanging from every tree.

ROB BUSCHER: Only one Western governor – Ralph Carr of Colorado – welcomed Japanese Americans to his state. In a radio speech, he said.

GOVERNOR RALPH CARR VOICE OVER: They are as loyal to American institutions as you and I. Many of them have been born here— are American citizens, with no connection with or feeling of loyalty toward the customs and philosophies of Italy, Germany and Japan.

ROB BUSCHER: Carr’s support for the loyal Nisei was not enough to make a difference as Japanese Americans would ultimately be held under armed guard at Camp Amache in his state as well. The perception that Carr was “soft on the Japs” would also cost him a Senate election bid that Fall.

ROB BUSCHER: Even at this early stage of the war, it seemed unlikely the Japanese Americans posed any real threat to the war effort. However, given the staunch

objections from local residents to Japanese Americans roaming about freely, the WRA concluded the best course of action was to build camps, complete with guard towers and barbed wire fences.

ROB BUSCHER: Finding adequate sites for these camps would prove a challenge in its own right. Their main criteria was that the sites had tracts of land large enough to house 10,000 prisoners, with access to electricity, water, and a nearby railroad. Regions spacious enough to house this many people generally lacked these required amenities. The area between Cody and Powell Wyoming was identified as a top choice for its many advantages. It had water because of the Shoshone irrigation project dreamt up by Buffalo Bill Cody. A rail line went through the area, thanks to the development of Yellowstone National Park. And the government controlled much of the open land in this area, negating the need to negotiate terms with private landowners. These factors combined to make Heart Mountain one of the 10 sites selected for a permanent relocation center.

ROB BUSCHER: Despite the WRA's enthusiasm, the local community reacted with alarm. "10,000 Japs to be interned here," read the headline of the *Cody Enterprise* newspaper on May 27, 1942. The next day the *Powell Tribune* offered an editorialized assessment of the situation.

POWELL TRIBUNE EDITORIAL VOICE OVER: Ten Thousand is a Lot of Japanese. Ten thousand Japanese raining down upon the Shoshone Valley in such a sudden manner would be the biggest event in the way of news that the Tribune has ever had the opportunity of publishing. It would be as though a population half as large

as the city of Billings was to be added to the county between Powell and Cody, all in one season. Such questions as to when the building is to start and who will build it, water, heat, and hospitalization are all vagaries upon which one person's speculation is as good as another's.

ROB BUSCHER: The paper made unsubstantiated claims in a later editorial stating that,

POWELL TRIBUNE EDITORIAL VOICE OVER: These peaceful hard-working people of oriental origin have been infiltrated by that element of Japanese who are sympathetic with the Mikado's realm in this very serious war with America.

ROB BUSCHER: Claims like these misinformed the local population about the Japanese Americans before they even arrived, further supporting the military necessity narrative that was used to justify this gross violation of civil liberties.

ROB BUSCHER: Despite their concerns, the local papers in Cody and Powell also identified a silver lining - the construction of the camp would mean a business boon. Soon, more than three thousand men had arrived from across the country to help build the camp, including John and Henry Kessel, who came from Billings Montana to take jobs hauling lumber to the building site. Velma Berryman, John's girlfriend, signed on as one of the first nurses at the camp hospital after a nursing shortage forced her hospital in Billings to close. She would later tell stories of those who sought treatment inside the hospital, which became one of the best in

the state of Wyoming after the sudden influx of workers brought additional resources to their community.

ROB BUSCHER: In less than three months, the Kessel brothers and the thousands of other workers built a camp that held 450 barracks spread over 20 blocks. Each block had two mess halls, and two 20x100 foot recreation halls. Each barrack held apartments that were 16x20 feet for couples, or 24x20 feet for families with children. A crew working at regular speed could build a barrack within a single hour, but the untreated green wood they used shrank when it dried, just as it had at the assembly centers. The harsh Wyoming winters with below freezing temperatures contributed to the wood shrinkage, leaving cracks as wide as a half-an-inch between the planks of the walls. The tar paper insulation covering the planks did little to keep out the wind and dust that swirled across the plain. Nevertheless, with the barracks complete, Heart Mountain was ready for its first residents who began arriving on August 12, 1942.

ROB BUSCHER: The WRA handpicked prisoners from the assembly centers who were considered leaders in the community and had also demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with camp administration. These pioneers would be sent early to help finish setting up the camps before the larger population began arriving. Some, such as Clarence Uno, had worked as community organizers before Pearl Harbor.

ROB BUSCHER: Uno previously served as secretary of the San Gabriel Japanese Association, where he helped Issei farmers and others navigate the complicated

bureaucracy of American society. Clarence Uno also served in the U.S. Army in France during World War I. That made him eligible to be among the 500 Issei immigrants who were granted U.S. citizenship through a special law for combat veterans of the Great War. His value to others often made him unavailable to his family, said his son, Raymond, who would later be the first person of color to become a judge in Utah.

RAYMOND UNO VOICE OVER: It seemed like every time we moved that my mother and the kids were the only one that were there. My father had already gone on.

ROB BUSCHER: Two young Nisei men who later went on to serve valiantly in the military were also among the first to settle Heart Mountain. Kei Tanahashi grew up in Pomona California, where his family owned a cleaning business. He graduated from UCLA with a business degree and returned home to help the family. Tanahashi was a leader of the Los Angeles Boy Scout troop that greeted President Roosevelt in 1935, and he possessed leadership abilities the government needed to help the thousands of other arrivals get acclimated to their new surroundings. Tanahashi would spend only one month in Heart Mountain before he was released to attend graduate school at the University of Nebraska. Hitoshi "Moe" Yonemura was another UCLA graduate among the first wave of incarcerated. He was a UCLA cheerleader and big man on campus. In Heart Mountain, Yonemura took a leadership role in many community activities, like helping to run the holiday celebrations.

ROB BUSCHER: Bill Hosokawa was another early arrival to Heart Mountain. Born and raised in the Seattle area. A trained journalist, he wrote for several publications while based in China. He sensed war with Japan was imminent, so he returned home just weeks before the Pearl Harbor attack. The next day, Hosokawa offered his services to the FBI, the Army, Navy Intelligence, and the Federal Communications Commission, according to a story published in the Heart Mountain Sentinel when he was leaving camp in 1943.

ROB BUSCHER: Hosokawa was named Head of the Emergency Defense Council of the Japanese American Citizens League, a job in which he cooperated with government authorities as they prepared the community for evacuation. Assisting the government in this manner caused the JACL and its leaders to be branded as collaborators by some, which would lead to tensions at Heart Mountain and elsewhere in the camps. Hosokawa and his family were sent to the assembly center in Puyallup, Washington, where they remained for three months. Most Japanese Americans from Puyallup Assembly Center were destined for Minidoka Camp in Idaho, but shortly before the scheduled departure for Minidoka, the camp director summoned Hosokawa to his office and told him without explanation that he had four hours to leave for Heart Mountain.

BILL HOSOKAWA RECORDING FROM DENSHO: Well I don't know why I was considered a troublemaker. The one guess I have is that I was too outspoken. When something went wrong I would go to the white administrators at camp and say, "this isn't gonna work, now we gotta do it some other way" or I would go and say, "hey we've got problems here, let's take care of them." And I thought I was

trying to help in the administration of the camp, but I'd been there about three months. People in the camp had been told they were going to Minidoka Idaho, but I was called in and said, "Hosokawa you're not going to Idaho, we're going to send you somewhere else." And there were several others in the same category. And I said, "why are you sending me?" J.J. McGovern who was administrator of the camp said, "I don't know, the army says you have to go." Well I knew damn well he know, but he didn't have the guts to tell me. So I was sent to Heart Mountain, and I was given about three hours to pack my stuff and escorted to the railroad station and the escort took me to Heart Mountain.

ROB BUSCHER: Despite whatever reservations the military may have had about him, Hosokawa's background as a journalist and pro-government leanings made him the WRA's top choice to head up the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, a weekly camp newspaper staffed by his fellow prisoners. In his weekly column as editor-in-chief, Hosokawa supported the government's efforts to promote military service, as well as the JACL's position that the incarceration was a necessary sacrifice in order to prove their loyalty as good Americans.

ROB BUSCHER: The Sentinel would set the tone for much of camp life for the next three years. Hosokawa and his staff routinely criticized the racism that led to the incarceration, but also promoted the government's plans to relocate Japanese Americans throughout the country, contrary to the desires of many incarcerated to return home to the West Coast. *The Sentinel* also actively promoted military service and was highly critical of incarcerated who organized resistance to the military draft through the Fair Play Committee. We may never know the full

extent of Hosokawa's collaboration with the government during this period. Nevertheless his contributions to camp life in the year and a half he spent at Heart Mountain were innumerable, and he remained an important voice in the Japanese American community and civil rights advocate until the end of his life.

ROB BUSCHER: Once preparations for the mess halls and other camp services were in place, the first wave of incarcerated were joined by trainloads of prisoners arriving each day. What they discovered shocked and saddened them. Bill Hosokawa remembered.

BILL HOSOKAWA RECORDING FROM DENSHO: I saw only desolation. The camp was still under construction. The place was overrun with carpenters and tractors and dust. Middle of the Wyoming desert. And I thought, "Jesus Christ, they're going to put 10,000 people here." Now, there were two blocks that were already occupied. An advanced group from Pomona Assembly Center had come to Heart Mountain a day or two before I got there. They were the advance crew, helping to set up the kitchens and preparing for the others who would come later. I didn't know a soul. And one reason for sending me there was that I would have no constituency. I would be among strangers. But it was dusty, and dirty, and desolate, and disheartening.

ROB BUSCHER: Amy Uno Ishii was a niece of Clarence Uno. Her father, George, had been detained in a series of camps run by the Justice Department, because he was deemed a dangerous community leader. Most of her extended family was sent to Camp Amache in Colorado, but because she married days before leaving

the assembly center, Ishii was sent to Heart Mountain with her new husband. Memories of her arrival at Heart Mountain were filled with sadness.

AMY UNO ISHII VOICE OVER: Well, we knew that America was huge, but we didn't know it was this huge, to have so much barren, open space the way they had up there. For miles and miles around, you could look as far as your eye could see and you couldn't see the first tree. No trees, nothing green, it was all brown and there was this mountain just sitting behind us. We thought, "Well, maybe the mountain will act as protection for us." By the time we arrived there, which was approximately the tenth or the twelfth of September, they were in the middle of a dust storm. You couldn't open your mouth because all the dust would come in. You could just barely see, and the only way to keep your eyes clean was just to cry and let the tears wash your eyes out. Inside your ears, up your nostrils, you could just feel the grit and grime, and when you rubbed your teeth together, you could feel all this sand. It was a horrible feeling, and there was total confusion.

ROB BUSCHER: Kara Kondo had lived in the Yakima Valley of Washington state, and was better prepared for the cold weather at Heart Mountain than many of the incarcerated who arrived from California. Even so, her memories of their new home carried the same sense of foreboding as the others.

KARA KONDO RECORDING FROM DENSHO: I was in Block 14, and we got off the train and were put on backs of trucks, I think it was. And the wind was blowing and the dust was blowing, and we were assigned our apartment. We were in the regular barrack-type with small apartment housing up to three or so on the end. And then there were bigger units that would house up to five, I believe. And then

smaller sizes. But the tarpaper wasn't on it yet, and you could see the cracks between the boards and the dust sifting in. You were given an army cot, and I think, we had a mattress there at the time. And the potbellied stove was your heat. And one single light bulb dangling from the ceiling -- no, I guess our ceiling was complete. I can't remember, yes. It probably was, had the rough boarding up there. But, but it seemed like it was so dusty, and the wind blew the dust around and, and, and having to go out to the latrine and to... for showering and to all the laundry facilities. They were located in buildings in the middle of the block your heat was from coal that was delivered in and you ate your meals in a mess hall. You did your laundry in the laundry, shower, and latrine room, and, regardless of the weather. And it wasn't so bad even when it was blowing, but when it got to be twenty or thirty below, that was really a chore.

KARA KONDO RECORDING FROM DENSHO: And gradually, though, the evacuees or the residents of the camp was, they were very ingenious and they used to have orange boxes that were, wooden boxes. And they would get them from the mess halls and build shelves, and occasionally they would pick up lumber from, from construction of the school or whatever they were building. And there was building going on all the time. And they would make tables and chairs, and some people became very ingenious about making furniture. I think that you've seen apartments that look very cozy and very home-like. And others, it was a touch and go kind of thing.

ROB BUSCHER: A Nisei writer named Miwako Oana wrote a regular column in *the Sentinel* called Mo's Scratch Pad that succinctly summarized the feelings of many incarcerated as they began adjusting to their new surroundings.

MIWAKO OANA VOICE OVER: One year ago today there were no such things as assembly centers or relocation centers. There were fair grounds and race tracks and Japs – but they were all far apart. Then the rumblings of war came closer and closer and black heads began to whisper, “If war should come, what will they do with us?” Tar-paper match boxes were built on parking lots and on burning desert sand in long rows like rabbit hutches, only humans, not four-footed animals, moved into them. Again we were on the move – the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the farmers and the city folks, the great and the meek, the well and the sick – all because God had given us yellow skin and black hair and slant eyes. We love America – she belongs to us, a part of our very lives – but some politicians and misguided “patriots” didn’t know this – wouldn’t believe this. “Once a Jap, always a Jap,” they said, “you can’t trust them...” Climbing up and looking back now, that’s how it was. That’s how it is.

ROB BUSCHER: Many of the newly arrived incarcerated at Heart Mountain would remain there for the full three years it was open. They would learn to live through the harsh Wyoming winters, watch their community divided by the loyalty questionnaire as neighbors and friends were segregated to the camp at Tule Lake, California, and hear the painful and anguished reactions of their neighbors who lost sons and husbands fighting a war for the same country that imprisoned them.

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