

# KOKORO KARA

*"from our heart"*

AUTUMN 2021

HEART • MOUNTAIN • WYOMING • FOUNDATION





# HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

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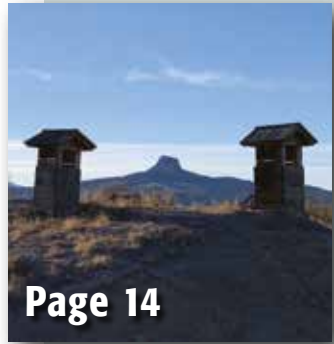
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Check out our website to  
read past issues of *Kokoro Kara*!

[www.heartmountain.org/kokoro-kara-magazine](http://www.heartmountain.org/kokoro-kara-magazine)

## KOKORO KARA

Volume 10, Issue 3

Editor/Designer: Kate Wilson

## Have an idea for an article?

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

[katew@heartmountain.org](mailto:katew@heartmountain.org)

## Change of address?

Contact Deni Hirsh to update your contact information and for questions regarding membership & donations.

[denih@heartmountain.org](mailto:denih@heartmountain.org)

307-754-8000, ext. 102

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# PERSONAL STORIES DOMINATE OUR HISTORY

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

So much of the history of the Japanese American incarceration revolves around key dates, such as the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor; the February 19, 1942 signing of Executive Order 9066; and the November 10, 1945 closing of Heart Mountain. During this coming year, these anniversaries will dominate much of our attention.

On December 7, we remembered the 80th anniversary of the Imperial Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which unleashed a wave of fear and hysteria that led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans without evidence or trial. Executive Order 9066, signed the following February, enabled the federal government to force Japanese Americans on the West Coast into assembly centers and then ten concentration camps located throughout the United States.

These two actions are the reason our foundation exists. But just focusing on these dates can conceal what truly makes our organization and community so special—the human stories behind every record and artifact we have in our growing collections.

The stories of Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson, who met as Boy Scouts in Heart Mountain and went on to forge legendary careers in Congress, are the foundation of our new Mineta-Simpson Institute at Heart Mountain, which will enable us to expand the reach of our mission and connect with a wider audience.

The stories of incarcerated Takashi Hoshizaki, Naomi Oshita, and Bacon Sakatani were essential to the success of last summer's educator workshops, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. We'll repeat those workshops in 2022, bringing 72 educators from around the country to our site to learn more about our important work.

My book, *Setoko's Secret*, is rooted in my family's personal stories, as well as the stories of prominent members of our community: Raymond Uno, Sam Mihara, Norm Mineta, and others. The force of what happened to them, bolstered by government documents and other

accounts, has helped the book resonate with many readers.

And this is only the beginning. Through the Mineta-Simpson Institute, we will be producing an astonishing amount of new content in the year to come. Our new printing of *Light One Candle*, the Holocaust memoir of Solly Ganor, will be released in the coming weeks. Ganor's book recounts his rescue from the Dachau Death March by former Heart Mountain incarcerated Clarence Matsumura. We will support the book's release with a new digital exhibit and a series of events partnering with Jewish history organizations and museums.

In 2022, we'll also publish for the first time a memoir from one of the leaders of the legendary 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Japanese American unit famed for its valor during World War II. The book, titled *Kotonk*, was told by Chester Tanaka to Eric Saul, the historian who first brought the story of Solly Ganor and Clarence Matsumura to the world. Other publications will include *Lone Heart Mountain*, artist Estelle Ishigo's illustrated account of her time at Heart Mountain; and *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp*, the Pulitzer Prize nominated history by our vice chair Doug Nelson. It was his book that told the story of Heart Mountain draft resisters for the first time. These are vital stories that bring the Heart Mountain experience and that of World War II to a wider audience beyond our center.

Our historic site in Wyoming will also see major growth in 2022. We'll continue our work on the restoration of the root cellar, an engineering and construction marvel that held the produce grown by the dedicated incarcerated farmers at Heart Mountain. We will also open to the public



our restored Heart Mountain barrack, with recreations of living spaces as remembered by former incarcerated.

All of this is what makes our site so special. I'm so proud of the work done by our staff to make all this possible, and by the support of our board and our members. It just wouldn't be possible without you.

"All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them."

—Walt Disney

For years, the history of the Japanese American incarceration was hidden by those who endured it and those who perpetrated it. No more.

I hope to see you in person at our 2022 Pilgrimage on July 28–30, 2022, where we will celebrate our accomplishments and the building of the Mineta-Simpson Institute.

Stay inspired!

Shirley Ann Higuchi



## APPLY FOR OUR SUMMER WORKSHOP!

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is accepting applications from K–12 educators to participate in two weeklong workshops sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The workshops will take place at Heart Mountain Interpretive Center and other sites around Cody and Powell, Wyoming. Participating educators will hear from a faculty of international and local experts about the incarceration during World War II. The workshops will place this event in the larger context of Wyoming history, and will include segments on Native American history related to Heart Mountain and the stories of the homesteaders that moved onto the site after the camp was closed.

APPLICATION & DETAILS @ [www.heartmountain.org](http://www.heartmountain.org)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2022



# IT'S GOOD TO BE PART OF A TEAM

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAKOTA RUSSELL

I suspect that many of you are, by this point, familiar with the work of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium. Heart Mountain played a key role in creating this group in 2016. Since that time, the Consortium has grown to include over thirty member organizations dedicated to preserving and educating about Japanese American history. The Consortium promotes communication and resource sharing between groups, but it also helps to amplify our voice when we lobby Congress for support and advocate for our mission with the public.

This October, I was pleased to see many faces, both new and familiar, at the Consortium's annual education conference. Held virtually again this year, the conference featured sessions about the latest educational efforts, advocacy in the Japanese American community, and important new research into the history of the camps. I was especially pleased to hear that, thanks to the efforts of Consortium partners, the Japanese American Confinement Education (JACE) Act is steadily working its way toward Congressional approval.

The JACE Act will reauthorize funding for the National Park Service's Japanese American Confinement Sites grant program, which is close to exhausting its original allocation. Heart Mountain and other sites have benefited

immeasurably from these grants, which we used to stabilize the hospital chimney and build the interpretive center, and are currently using to complete restoration of the barrack and root cellar. The JACE Act will not only preserve these important grants, but will also establish new funds to be used by Japanese American organizations for collaborative education efforts, including future Consortium activities. Our hopes are high that this important bill will be passed in 2022.

This legislative effort would not be possible without the spirit of unity created by the Consortium. However, this is only one of its many projects. As part of the Consortium, Heart Mountain is also helping the Amache Alliance to seek designation as a National Historic Site and the Friends of Minidoka to defend against a massive windmill project that would have negative visual impacts on the historic site. We are truly stronger together, and I'm proud of the role our Foundation has played in building this team.



*Dakota Russell*

# Welcome!



Courtesy of Krist Jessup

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is pleased to welcome a new member to our staff: **Krist Jessup**. Krist is coming to Heart Mountain from the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming, where he was the Assistant Supervisor for the Content Listing department. Human rights has always been an unyielding passion for Krist, prompting him to pursue his bachelor's degree in history focusing on the Holocaust and genocide. Following the completion of his degree, Krist interned for the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. where he became increasingly interested in modern genocide. Upon his return to Wyoming, he pursued and completed a M.A. in history focused on the ties between socioeconomic disparity and violence in Rwanda between the Hutu and Tutsi. Over the past year, Krist, a Yonsei Japanese American, began to put his history training to work researching his own family incarceration story. As he researched, his interest in the history of the incarceration and Japanese Americans continued to grow. Through this exploration of his family history, he encountered the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center and remained in its orbit until he applied for and accepted his current position as Communications and Marketing Manager.

\*Check out the Summer 2021 issue of Kokoro Kara for Krist's article titled "Father Luke Yokota."

## My Heart Mountain

My favorite place to sit as a 7 year old  
Was looking out the window of 1-9-B  
Our home during WWII  
In an American Concentration Camp  
In North-Western Wyoming.

What I saw from the window was Heart Mountain  
A large, imposing mountain, filling the distant landscape  
The top of the mountain looked shaved off  
Slanting slightly downward to the right  
Overall, it remained strong, solid, and sturdy.  
As a child living in an unfamiliar wilderness,  
It gave me a sense of refuge, protection, and comfort.

Thirty years later my family stopped at Heart Mountain  
On the way to visit Yellowstone National Park.  
There was nothing left of the camp  
But a Chamber of Commerce type sign  
Explained how the Federal government housed Japanese Americans here.  
I did not miss the camp, its buildings, landmarks, rows of barracks,  
But tears filled my eyes, and my heart overflowed with joy  
When I saw my Heart Mountain again.

At the beginning, the Crows were the only people living in the area  
When they were raided and over-whelmed by the Blackfeet tribe  
A young Crow warrior prayed to the Mountain for help  
And the Mountain saved their homeland for them.  
Eventually the Crows were removed to a reservation in Montana  
But the Elders return yearly to Heart Mountain  
Now they share their history with Japanese Americans.  
They believe Heart Mountain lent strength to the Japanese Americans  
To endure their imprisonment  
In the same way it helped the Crows endure hardships over past generations.

As I looked out the window the many days we were at camp  
I saw dust blowing so hard it was hard to walk and keep my eyes open,  
Rainy days with thunder so loud and lighting so frequent, I wanted to hide,  
Snow swirling so hard in the winter, it wasn't easy to make it to the mess hall,  
Temperatures so low, icicles were a regular part of our window decorations.  
But my favorite scene looking out of our window  
Were those calm, serene, relaxing times  
When I could gaze at my Heart Mountain and know  
She kept me safe and sound  
Through all the storms during my life at Heart Mountain.

**A**my Iwasaki Mass was seven years old when her family first arrived at Heart Mountain. Inspired as a young girl by Heart Mountain Social Welfare Director Virgil Payne, Amy pursued a career in social work. She was one of the first professionals to research the internalized trauma Japanese Americans carried with them after being incarcerated. Since retirement, Amy has expanded her horizons from academic writing to creative writing. She wrote this poem in the spring of 2021. Amy currently serves on the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Advisory Council.

poem by  
**Amy  
Iwasaki  
Mass**



David Izu

Photo by Yoshio Okumoto, HMWF

Visit [www.50objects.org/object/bag-by-the-door](http://www.50objects.org/object/bag-by-the-door) to read more about Amy and her family's experience before, during, and after WWII.



# In Memoriam

## Frank Hitoshi Ono (1924–2021)



Frank Hitoshi Ono passed away on September 5. Frank was born in Terminal Island, California, and was a 1941 graduate of San Pedro High School. His studies at Compton State College were abruptly terminated when he and his family were incarcerated at Manzanar, California during World War II. Educating people about this dark period in US history became Frank's mission in life during his latter years.

The son of a commercial tuna fishing family, Frank was an avid fisherman who garnered almost a cult-like following among fellow fishermen on his beloved Delaware Bay. The highly effective Ono Lure, which he designed in the 1950s, was used up and down the Eastern seaboard for many decades.

Frank married into the Heart Mountain community. His wife, Fumi Yokoyama Ono, and her family were incarcerated at the Wyoming camp. Fumi passed away in 2010. Frank's son, R. Dana Ono, serves as a member of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Board of Directors.

Frank Hitoshi Ono with his son, Dana, on the San Juan River.



## Evaleen Hulet George (1924–2021)



Evaleen Hulet George passed away October 9, in her home of 74 years on Heart Mountain. Evaleen was born in Parowan, Utah. In 1945, Evaleen married her sweetheart, Arley Wallace George, two weeks after his discharge from the Army. The Georges applied for the first drawing of Heart Mountain homesteads in 1947 and were surprised to read in the newspaper that they had been selected.

Arley and Evaleen also purchased the inexpensive housing offered to Heart Mountain homesteaders—former barracks from the camp. Evaleen was initially shocked at the poor condition of her new house, but the Georges made many improvements over the years, and Evaleen remained in her barrack home for the rest of her life.

Evaleen was the last living homesteader of the first Heart Mountain Division. She was a key contributor to the "Moving Walls" project by Sharon Yamato and Stan Honda, which explored the story of the Heart Mountain barracks from their construction to the present day.

## Amy Iwagaki Higuchi (1922–2021)



Amy Higuchi, who escaped incarceration at Heart Mountain by taking a train to Arkansas to marry an Army doctor, died November 2, 2021, in her hometown of San Jose, California. Her parents, Jugoro and Tsuchiye, arranged a marriage with James Higuchi, the son of their neighbors, Iyekichi and Chiye Higuchi, so Amy could avoid incarceration. "Unbeknownst to me, my parents and Jim's parents were thinking seriously of getting us together," Amy recalled in

*Setsuko's Secret*, the book by her niece Shirley Ann Higuchi. "Jim was as innocent as I was. His parents indoctrinated him, too." After the war, Amy and James returned to San Jose, where he practiced medicine. They had four children, who were planning Amy's 100th birthday party for June 2022.



## Donald Yamamoto (1930–2021)



Donald Yamamoto passed away peacefully in October at the age of 91. Born in San Jose, Donald was incarcerated at Heart Mountain during World War II. During that time, he became an active member of Heart Mountain Boy Scout Troop 333. Later, Donald had the honor of raising the United States flag at the grand opening of

the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center with members of the Wyoming Council Boy Scouts. Donald joined the US Air Force in 1950 and was stationed in Alaska. He later worked for the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health, then for Good Samaritan Hospital as the Environmental Health Officer. He then changed careers and worked as a machinist and quality control inspector. Donald enjoyed gardening and fishing and was a longtime volunteer at the San Jose Obon festival.

## Margaret Ann "Peggy" York (1941–2021)

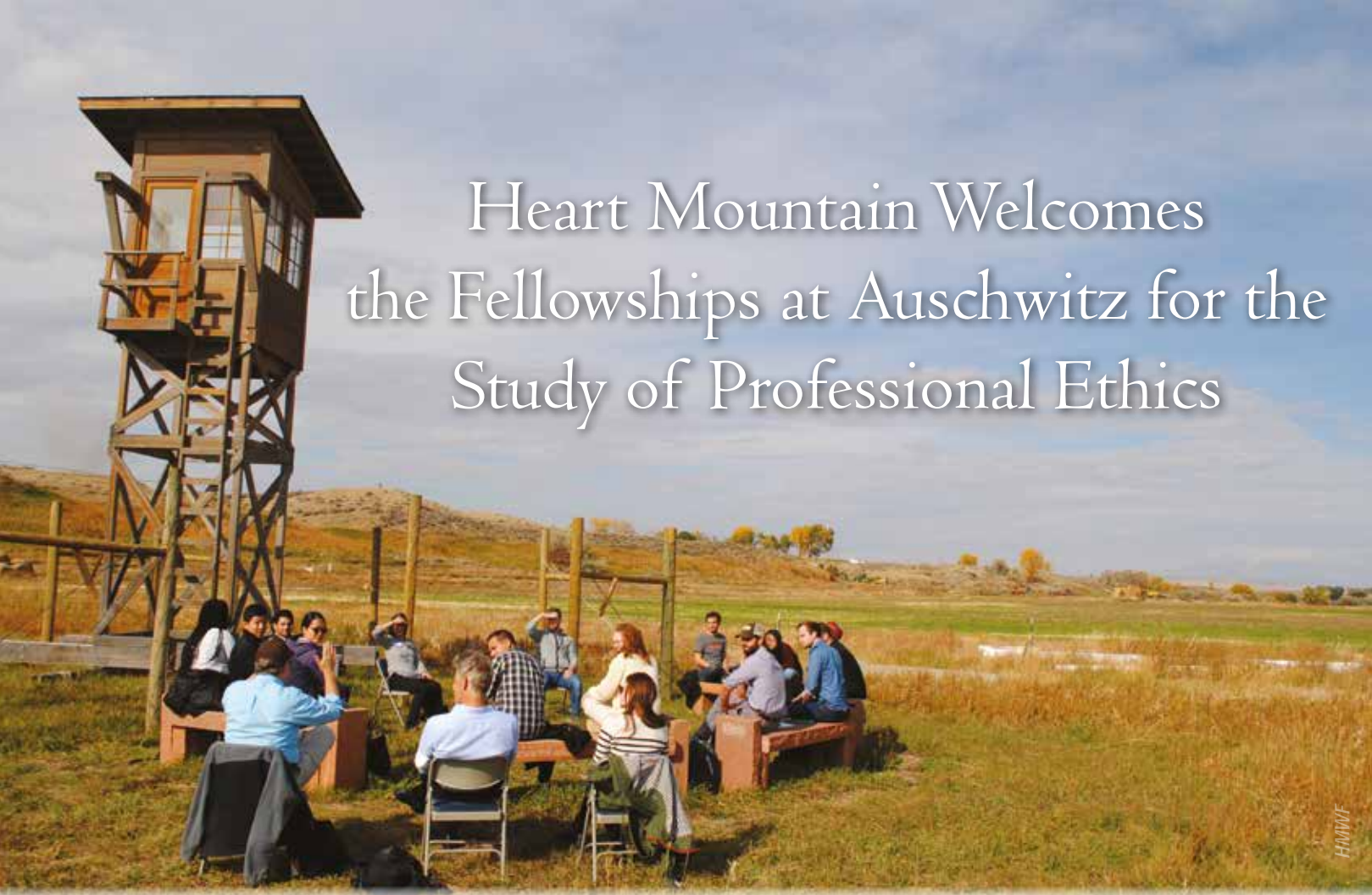


Peggy York, the first woman to hold the rank of deputy chief in the Los Angeles Police Department, passed away at the age of 80 in October. Peggy's long and storied career with the LAPD served as inspiration for the television series "Cagney & Lacey." While working the scene of a murder in 1981, Peggy

met her future husband, attorney Lance Ito. Ito would go on to become a respected judge of the Los Angeles County Superior Court. Peggy, alongside her husband, was a longtime supporter of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. They most recently attended the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage in 2019, where Lance provided the keynote speech. His parents, James and Toshi Nagamori Ito, met and fell in love while incarcerated at Heart Mountain during World War II.



# Heart Mountain Welcomes the Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics



This October, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center hosted two sessions of the Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE). Each year, FASPE selects young professionals in the legal, medical, journalism, seminary, and business fields for an intensive look at how German professionals in these same fields became complicit partners in the Holocaust. The aim of FASPE is to use lessons from the Holocaust to guide young professionals facing ethical dilemmas in the present day.

As the name of the program suggests, FASPE sessions typically take place in Germany and Poland, on the site of the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. The COVID-19 Delta variant complicated the group's travel plans this year, and led organizers to consider a domestic destination instead. The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation eagerly accepted the invitation to host and partner on the content for the Fall 2021 fellowships.

Heart Mountain already had a connection to FASPE through faculty member Eric Muller, a historian of Japanese American incarceration who formerly served on the Foundation's board of directors and helped to develop the interpretive center. Muller is the author of two books

about Japanese American incarceration—*Free to Die for their Country* and *American Inquisition*—and is the editor of *Colors of Confinement*, a collection of Heart Mountain incarcerated Bill Manbo's Kodachrome photographs of the camp. Muller's upcoming book, *Lawyer Jailer Ally Foe*, tells the stories of government lawyers at Heart Mountain and the other camps, and illustrates how they both helped and harmed Japanese Americans incarcerated.

"It was marvelous to return to the interpretive center and be reminded of what a potent learning tool our fantastic team created a decade ago," Muller said, "and to experience the many developments of the site since then. Our FASPE Fellows in Law, Medicine, Journalism, Seminary, and Business benefited enormously from the chance to reflect on how the work of ordinary professionals was essential to the planning and implementation of the mass injustice that occurred to Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain and the other nine War Relocation Authority concentration camps."

FASPE sessions at Heart Mountain began with a presentation via Zoom by Foundation board member and former Heart Mountain incarcerated Sam Mihara.

Mihara's talks wove together explanations of government policymaking with remembrances of his own experiences, underscoring the human cost of each decision. After Mihara's presentation, Executive Director Dakota Russell and Museum Manager Cally Steussy led participants on tours of the interpretive center and historic site, with a special emphasis on introducing topics of interest to the professional fields of participants. Muller then led a more

in-depth discussion about the role of professionals in those fields in the incarceration of Japanese Americans. Participants spent the remainder of their time in thoughtful discussions led by the experienced FASPE faculty.

Both Heart Mountain staff and FASPE faculty found this collaboration rewarding, and have expressed hopes of working together again in the future.



Opposite page and to the right: the FASPE group hold outdoor discussions at the base of the flag pole and at the guard tower.

Top: Dakota Russell guides the FASPE group around the site map.

Above: Eric Mueller presents to the FASPE group.





# HEART MOUNTAIN BARRACK

## RESTORATION UPDATE

In 2015, Iowa State University contacted the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation about an original barrack from the camp that had been used as a dormitory for the University's Geology Field Camp in Shell Canyon. The University built a new dormitory and wanted to donate the original back to us. Following a massive fundraising effort by both the Foundation and the local community, we moved the Shell Barrack over 70 miles and brought it safely back to Heart Mountain.

In the years since that time, we have repaired and replaced components of the building's roof, removed modern additions to the structure, and restored the original windows. In the summer of 2019, we installed siding to recreate the original appearance of the tar paper from the camp era, added stairs and porches leading to the original doors, and built an accessible ramp on the northern end of the building.

Almost all of the interior walls of the barrack were removed during its time in Shell, so we also created new subdivisions within the building. Rather than recreating all six residential units, we opted to leave half of the building open as a larger gallery space (60' x 20'). This space will allow visitors to better see how the barrack was constructed.

Through a grant from the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, this space features panels describing how the barracks were built, what life inside them was like, and what happened to them after the camp closed. One panel will also tell the story of the Shell Barrack specifically. The space also features augmented reality markers, part of the larger *Heart Mountain AR* self-guided tour made possible by the Aratani Foundation. Visitors can use their smartphones to interact with these markers and bring to life incarcerated memories of activities that occurred within the barracks. In the future, we will also be using this gallery space for events such as concerts and film screenings.

The other half of the building, meanwhile, has been subdivided to reflect the original room layout. We are working with former incarcerated people to turn their remembrances of the spaces their families lived in into physical recreations. The Nisei advisors will narrate these recreated rooms themselves, making a visit to the barrack an intimate and personal experience for visitors. We also plan to highlight the Issei experience by recreating Nyogen Senzaki's "Wyoming Zendo" in the smallest end unit, based on his writings and Estelle Ishigo's drawings of the space. We are excited to showcase stories like this, which illustrate how the barrack rooms were adapted by incarcerated people to meet different purposes and respond to the stresses of life at the Heart Mountain site. 🏡



Reconstructed living quarters inside the barrack.



Gallery space inside the Heart Mountain barrack.



## RESTORATION UPDATE

# HEART MOUNTAIN ROOT CELLAR

As part of the agricultural project that helped to feed the Heart Mountain camp, the Heart Mountain Engineering Department designed and built two massive root cellars in the summer of 1943 to hold the produce from the farms. Following the closure of the camp, the root cellars were purchased by the Jolovich family.

Over the years, one of the cellars collapsed completely, but the other remained in use. In 2013, the Jolovich family donated the surviving cellar and surrounding land to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. With the support of a National Park Service grant, the Foundation conducted a detailed assessment of the surviving cellar and began a preliminary restoration in 2018, exploring the challenges and needs of working on such a unique structure.

We initially planned to begin full restoration work in summer of 2020, but these plans were frustrated by COVID-19 and associated supply chain issues. Even so, we have put in temporary stabilization in the most

endangered sections of the cellar to prevent further degradation, and installed temporary roofing to protect the cellar from wind and weather in the interim. Grants from the National Park Service and the Aratani Foundation have allowed us to work with an architectural firm specializing in historic structures to develop plans for a full restoration of the cellar that respects the historic fabric while also accommodating modern concerns of safety and accessibility. We anticipate we will solicit bids from contractors in early 2022, and begin construction in the spring.

In the meantime, we are also working with Split Rock Studios, the designers behind the interpretive center's award-winning permanent exhibit, to begin planning exhibits for the cellar. They are drawing design inspiration from archaeological sites like the ancient ruins of Greece and Rome to create an interactive exhibit that will allow visitors to actively move through the cellar and experience this incredible piece of history first-hand! 🏛️



Interior of the Heart Mountain root cellar, with the recently stabilized columns. This will transform into an exhibit space, while still allowing visitors to experience the original structure.





# Getting Rid of Flies the Heart Mountain Way

by Erin S. Thomas

Agricultural-based communities are a buzz of activity during the fall harvest season. In October 1943, Heart Mountain was no exception. In fact, the camp buzzed more than the incarcerated would have preferred!

In its first full year of operation, Heart Mountain's agriculture and livestock projects were well underway towards making the camp self-sustainable. By the end of March, about 2,000 acres of sage-brush land was cleared and prepped for crops like Chinese cabbage, sweet corn, daikon, and cucumbers. Several months later in May, 400 animated hams and 5,000 chicks were initially purchased, tended to, and butchered as needed.

With average day-time highs of 74 degrees and night-time lows of 45 degrees, September 1943 turned out to be a great month for crops to grow and mature. During the week of September 26th alone, crop yields soared, producing 7,750 pounds of Chinese cabbage, 1,335 dozen sweet corn, 4,761 pounds of cucumbers, and 3,590

pounds of spinach. The agriculture project expected to harvest eighty percent of the crops planted before the first frost, around the middle of October.

Maybe it was the perfect storm of unseasonably warm September temperatures, an ample amount of farm animals (and waste), and ripening fields of crops that caused the fly population to explode into a fever pitch. But by the beginning of October, incarcerated were in the midst of a fly-swatting frenzy.

One housefly buzzing around is a nuisance...a handful of the flying menaces swirling over dinner plates creates chaos...but hundreds of thousands of the swarming terrors is simply maddening.

Clearly fed up with the flies, Bennie Nobori used his "Zootsuo" comic featured in the camp newspaper, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, as the platform to start a center-wide fly-swatting drive. To sweeten the pot and lessen the fly load, The Sentinel Trust donated \$50 to be paid



This drawing by Estelle Ishigo depicts a mess hall in the camp as incarcerated line up for a meal. Note the fly strips hanging from the ceiling, an attempt to control these pests!

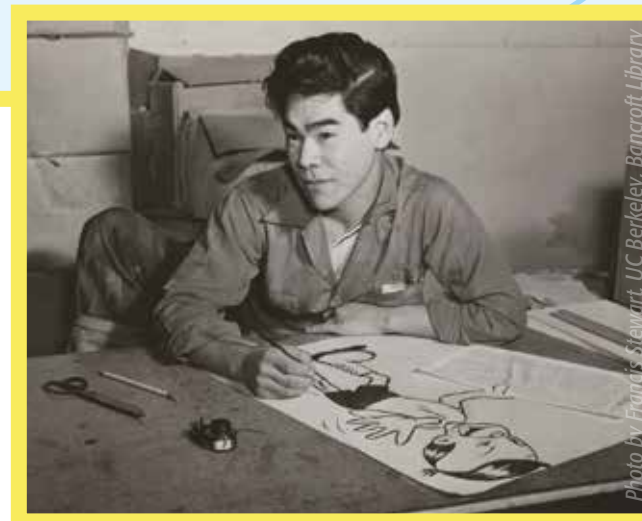


Photo by Francis Stewart, UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

## Zootsuo Comes to Heart Mountain

In June 1943, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* welcomed two new residents to the camp: cartoonist Bennie Nobori and his creation, Zootsuo. Before the war, Nobori worked as an animator at Walt Disney Studios. In 1942, he was removed from his home in California and sent to the Topaz camp in Utah. During his time there, Nobori served as cartoonist for the *Topaz Times* and created the comic strip "Jankee." The title character was a good-hearted young Japanese American whose adventures helped Topaz incarcerated laugh at the sometimes absurd nature of life in the camps.

After transferring to Heart Mountain in 1943 to join his wife's family, Nobori started his new strip "Zootsuo" in the pages of the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*. Inspired by Heart Mountain's *pachuke* zootsuiters, Zootsuo was more sly and mischievous than his predecessor. Even so, he wasn't above doing a public service—especially if it meant ridding the camp of pesky flies!

out to any flying insect bounty hunter. The goal was to exterminate 50,000 flies. For every one hundred dead flies brought in, a 10-cent war stamp was awarded.

For the next two weeks, *Heart Mountain Sentinel* readers were kept informed of the fly-killing tallies. The *Sentinel Supplement* reported on the morning of October 5th that Heart Mountain's pesky population was down by 7,000 flies. The following week, "Zootsuo" gave a comical tutorial, encouraging the camp's youngest members to keep up the good fight.

But as with any widely popular contest, there was controversy. Most boys and girls were wildly swatting away, bringing in bunches of two to three hundred flies. However, one innovative young man of 30-19-C opted to use his brains over brawn. In only two days' time, Mas Tachibana's wood and wire screen fly-trap captured 40,000 insects and \$40 in defense stamps. Questions were raised since



Heart Mountain Sentinel, "Zootsuo", October 9, 1943





Tachibana technically didn't swat his flies. But Bennie Nobori simply said, "a dead fly is a dead fly, no matter how captured, and flies from the hog pen area would eventually find their way into the center." Since \$40 was equivalent to roughly three months' wages for adults in camp, young Tachibana opted to forego any further prize money.

Bennie Nobori's "Zootsuo" subsequently increased the camp-wide goal to 100,000 flies. The Sentinel Trust raised the prize money by \$34.70, to a total of \$100. Young camp swatters were encouraged to "bring them in early." The

drive ended at noon on October 16th or when the \$100 was paid out, whichever came first.

All told, the camp's little swatters netted a total of 104,300 flies and \$104.30 in war stamps. Mas Tachibana was the clear top exterminator, but brothers Paul and Makoto Kato came in second with 4,000 insects. Masakazu Toma lessened the flying load with 3,800 flies; followed by Henry Kumagai, Reiko Takakura, Setsuko Yamamoto, and Kyoko Nemoto, each killing 3,000 of the buzzing menaces. Unfortunately, there always seems to be one more fly left to swat!



Erin Thomas loves to wear ballcaps. Mother. National Park Service "brat." Coast Guard spouse. National Board Certified Teacher and principal in-training. Travel and history enthusiast. Children's book author and blogger. Incessant baker. Erin enjoys filling people's bellies with tasty food, and tickling their funny bones with wacky, coast-to-coast adventures. She feels it's an added bonus if someone learns a new tidbit of information or considers visiting unfamiliar destinations. Check out [GloveBoxEats.com](http://GloveBoxEats.com) for more historical, travel, and culinary adventures.

# Recreating a Taste of "Home"

## The Challenge of Finding Good Food While Incarcerated

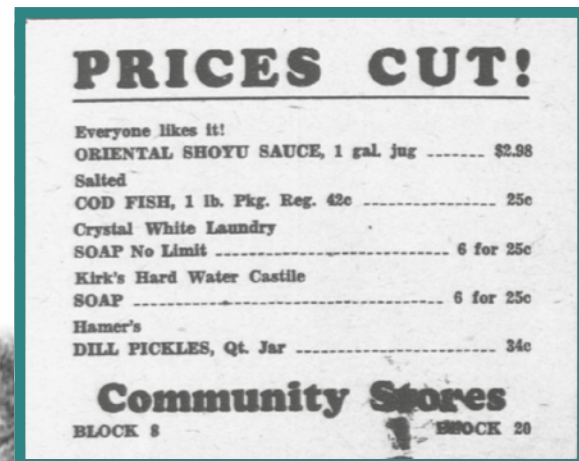
by Emily Anderson



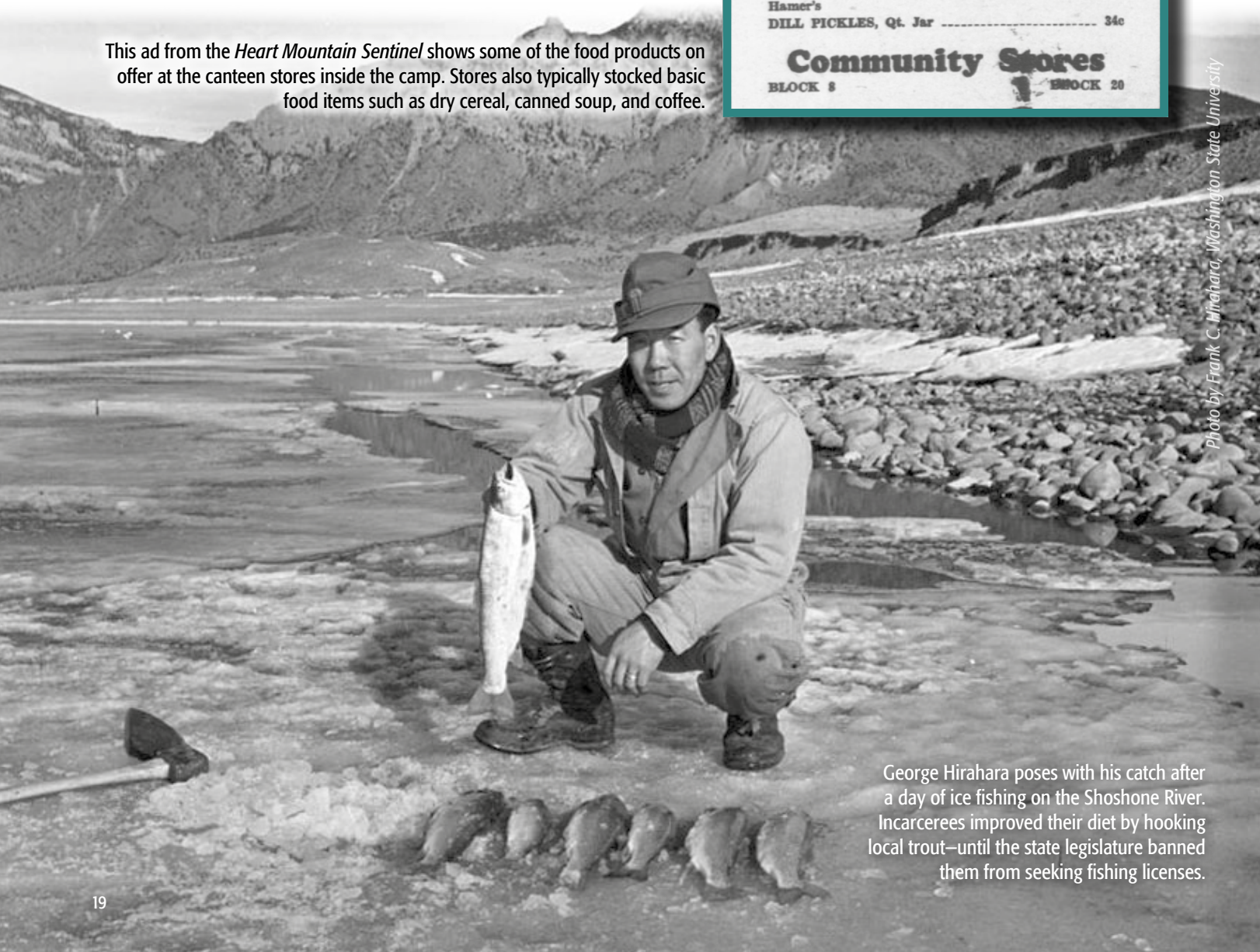
The first meals at Heart Mountain and the other incarceration camps, as recalled later by former incarcerated, were inedible. For Japanese Americans exhausted from days of travel and still devastated by the disruption to their lives and careers, their first meals—consisting of Army surplus canned foods like sauerkraut and canned mini-sausages or pungent mutton stew—seemed like the last straw. Japanese immigrants and their American children were accustomed to diets with typical Japanese foods like rice, fish, soy-based products like tofu and miso, and Japanese fresh and pickled vegetables they often grew themselves. Highly processed canned foods and organ meats were foreign and difficult to stomach. In some camps, the distasteful and oddly textured meat served in mess halls led to rumors among incarcerated that they were being served horse meat.

Food is never just about sustenance or survival; it is also about comfort, cultural adaptation and resilience, and even power. In all ten of the camps established

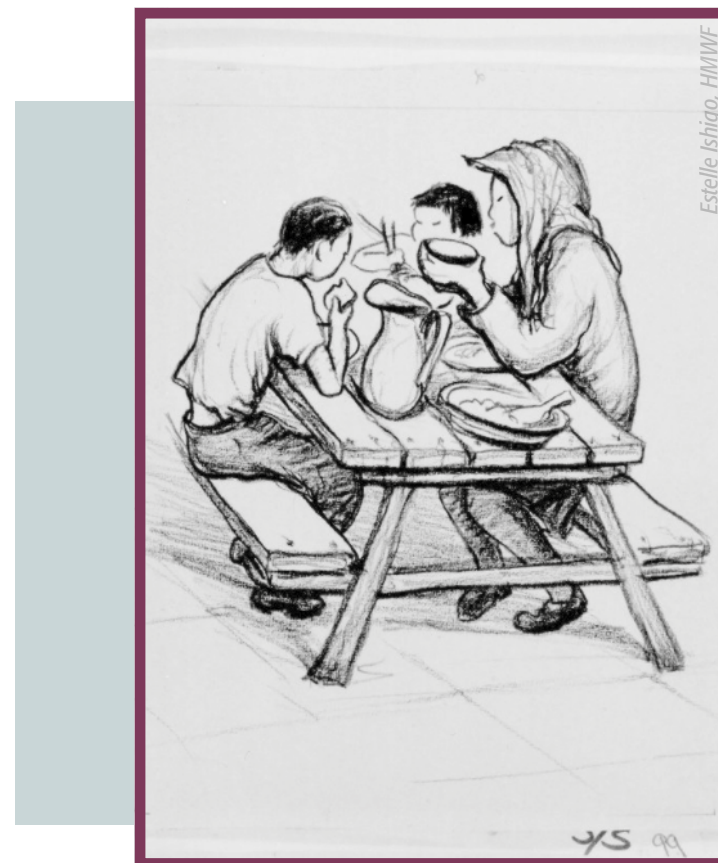
by the government's newly created War Relocation Authority (WRA), the "disgusting" and "ghastly" first meals were gradually replaced—through great effort and experimentation—with better fare. Incarcerated grew vegetables on large-scale farms developed within the confines of camps. Livestock—besides sheep—supplemented the cheap and offensive meats. Even more importantly, familiar vegetables, comfort foods like tofu and miso, and even fresh fish were either sourced from within the camps or brought in from the outside.



This ad from the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* shows some of the food products on offer at the canteen stores inside the camp. Stores also typically stocked basic food items such as dry cereal, canned soup, and coffee.



George Hirahara poses with his catch after a day of ice fishing on the Shoshone River. Incarcerated improved their diet by hooking local trout—until the state legislature banned them from seeking fishing licenses.



At first, food in the Heart Mountain mess halls did not reflect typical Japanese American meals at all. This gradually changed, as incarcerated helped to supply their own fresh ingredients.



In addition to growing their own produce, Heart Mountain incarcerated also raised hogs and chickens...



...providing a steady supply of eggs and meat to the camp.



Most of the food at Heart Mountain was prepared in mess hall kitchens like this one.

The War Relocation Authority included agricultural self-sustenance as a criterion for selecting sites for the camps. It proposed that even locations with poor soil could be transformed by incarcerated into viable farmland that would be attractive to white farmers after the war. This proposal encouraged neighboring communities to accept the controversial intrusion of a concentration camp nearby, and promoted the idea that through adding to food production—both for themselves and for possible sale on the open market—Japanese Americans were directly helping the war effort.

WRA officials naively envisioned dozens of eager incarcerated farmers tilling the fields to produce their own food, and with such success that they would also have surplus to sell. Their vision was quickly dashed. The vast majority of incarcerated at Heart Mountain—and in most of the camps—developed their farming skills and knowledge in California. The temperate climate and year-round growing season failed to prepare them for the complex conditions in the high desert of Wyoming, the

alkaline soil of central Utah, or the swamps of Arkansas. Despite the government's insistence that the camps were built on fertile soil, the reality was that topography, elevation, climate, and soil composition severely limited what could be grown and for how long. Government officials also failed to account for how vulnerable the growing crops would be to the same harsh conditions that made human habitation challenging.

These challenges notwithstanding, by the end of the first year of incarceration, the initial harvest of camp-grown crops offered incarcerated more familiar and more palatable foods. In Heart Mountain, farming occurred in both formal and informal settings. Issei seed salesman Kumezo Hatchimonji helped arrange for a communal victory garden to be established on the west edge of the camp. In its first year, around 150 people, many first-time farmers, planted and harvested crops from the garden for their own consumption and for distribution in the mess halls. With Hatchimonji's help to procure the crucial seeds necessary to grow Japanese vegetables, these crops





Left: Meals were served cafeteria style in the mess halls. Dinner bells at each hall signaled for incarcerated to line up at meal times, and people quickly learned to recognize the particular tone of their mess hall's bell.

Below: Stanley Hayami and his family share a meal in their mess hall. The mess halls were often cramped and noisy—not the ideal place for a relaxing family dinner.



improved the offerings in the mess halls. Simultaneously, a camp farm of over 1,400 acres was established. This farm became the main source for improvements to what was available for incarcerated to eat, producing a variety of leafy greens like nappa cabbage, spinach, *takana*, and *shingiku*, along with root vegetables that were easier to store like rutabaga, red radishes, and beets. One crucial factor unique to Heart Mountain was the arrival of Japanese Americans from Washington's Yakima Valley, who introduced hot caps—individual greenhouse-like coverings that protected young plants—and improved the farm's chances of successfully growing crops despite the harsh weather.

This first harvest also produced daikon, but in order to grow Japanese crops at a large scale, it was necessary to acquire more seeds, many of which were not available outside of the west coast. In the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, a simple announcement requested that people with “Japanese vegetable seeds, especially daikon, adzuki, go-bo and shiro uri seeds” sell them to the agricultural department. At the Gila River camp in Arizona, where a formal seed program was developed, a December 24, 1942 article explained that if residents could provide the Agricultural Department with Japanese vegetable seeds, it might be possible “to provide the mess halls with these products.” Furthermore, “All donors will have twice the amount of seeds returned to them after the initial planting.”

Other important staples, like soy bean-derived tofu and miso, were manufactured onsite. Issei who had, until

recently, earned their living by manufacturing tofu or miso led the effort to create and put into operation commercial factories for these essential foods. The first discussions for creating a tofu factory occurred at the Poston, Arizona camp in October 1942; half of the camps had factories up and running and supplying hundreds of cakes of tofu to mess halls by late 1943. In Heart Mountain, the tofu factory made its first batch in time for tofu to be a featured item on the 1944 New Year's Day menu. A twelve-person crew led by Kichizo Umeno, who had operated a tofu firm in San Francisco before World War II, eventually churned out 800 cakes a day.

In addition to tofu and miso, shoyu was also produced in the Manzanar camp in California, and three kinds of noodles were made in a factory in Poston. Other camps sought out purveyors of Japanese food to provide mess halls with more appetizing food for the incarcerated. For example, until the Amache camp in Colorado had its own tofu factory, it contracted with wholesaler George T. Nagamoto, from the nearby town of Swink, for tofu. He also sold “koji, miso, shoyu, [and] agé [deep-fried tofu].” The demand for Japanese staples like soy sauce was so great that once the WRA camps were opened, Japanese groceries outside of the West Coast exclusion area faced bare shelves. Stock “dwindled to almost nothing... because inter-mountain Japanese merchants...sold their stock to various relocation centers.” Stores also frequently placed ads in camp newspapers to inform incarcerated of the availability of these staples.

Perhaps the most astonishing category of food available

in the WRA camps was fresh ocean fish. To supplement meals served in the mess halls, multiple camps created fish markets where incarcerated could purchase a wide variety of seafood. In the *Gila River-Courier*, the opening of the fish market (a weekly market appearing in the “block 6 ironing room at Canal and block 42 at Butte”) was marked with fanfare, with an article titled: “Ika, Ten Cents a Pound.” In addition to the “slimy but delicious mollusk” *ika*, or squid, customers were also likely to find “sea bass, bonita (sic), pike, mackerel, sardines, oysters, shrimps, and sundry others.” The *Topaz Times* in Utah noted the decision to sell fish at the Topaz camp canteen in a tiny announcement at the bottom of the front page with the title, “A Fish Story.” Eventually, when the fish market opened, customers could get “buri with bone; sashimi; shrimps large size; shrimps medium size; oysters ½ pint; chicken-friers; suzuko-kasazuke; suzuko-shiozuke.” In Heart Mountain, beginning in September 1943, fresh fish was available on “Tuesday and Friday mornings at the block 21 laundry room and in the afternoons at the block 6 laundry room. James Tsuchiya, an experienced fish dealer, will be in charge.”

The expansion of available foods no doubt improved the

daily mess hall experience, but holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day required special menus. Camp newspapers announced festive menus that would be made available on these occasions. Roast chicken, and occasionally roast turkey, was served as the centerpiece of these festive meals, with typical trimmings included. For example, the first Thanksgiving in Topaz featured not only turkey, but also “walnut dressing, cranberry sauce, candied sweet potatoes, steamed rice, green peas, pumpkin pie, tea and bread and butter.” The *Heart Mountain Sentinel* reported that “7,500 pounds of turkey and 600 gallons of ice cream” had been ordered for Thanksgiving in 1942, and that “Japanese food [would] be served as long as the necessary items are available.” For Christmas, most mess halls served roast chicken along with assorted vegetables and dessert.

New Year's Day, or *Oshōgatsu*, which was also the most important holiday in Japanese culture, occasioned the most elaborate menu and required the purchase and preparation of numerous specialty foods. The most important was sticky rice, or *mochigome*, to make rice cakes that were a ubiquitous feature of *Oshōgatsu* spreads. In multiple camp newspapers, articles announced the

Pounding the *mochigome* (sticky rice) into rice balls to be enjoyed as a New Year's treat!


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Helen and Frank Tsuchiya, Proprietors

Asian groceries located outside the West Coast suddenly found themselves with a large population of potential new customers. They often advertised their stock in the *Heart Mountain Sentinels*.



moment mochigome had been ordered, and kept readers updated on the progress of shipments until they were safely delivered. The precious rice was distributed ahead of time, and often each camp block was responsible for providing the equipment necessary to pound steaming cooked rice into a big sticky ball. All hands would be on deck to divide up the large warm balls of sticky rice into individual morsels, enjoyed with shoyu, chestnut powder, or in bowls of special broth made especially for New Year's Day. Other specialty dishes included *onishime* (simmered chicken and vegetables), *kinton* (pureed sweet potato and chestnuts), *kuromame* (sweet black beans), and *sunomono* (pickled vinegar salad).

For the nearly 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry incarcerated during World War II, inadequate and unpalatable food symbolized the deprivations they experienced. Carefully grown vegetables and manufactured Japanese staples like tofu, miso, and shoyu represented the resilience and ingenuity of incarcerated. Perhaps the author of the Japanese section New Year's Day article in the *Gila News-Courier* put it best: "War is

war, New Year's is New Year's. This New Year's Day, our traditions will dance in our hearts." Regardless of the harsh circumstances of incarceration or uncertainty and anxiety of war, food—when it was familiar and comforting—reinforced community ties and reminded incarcerated of a fundamental taste of home. 🍡

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Enjoying a farewell seafood meal on makeshift tables in one of the barracks.

# DUSTED OFF

## Highlights from the Heart Mountain Collection

For those pictured below, May 11, 2002 was a momentous day some six decades in the making. It was on this day that the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) officially apologized for its critical stance of their wartime activities. This condemnation began

when they, or someone they loved, decided to stand on principle and resist the draft during World War II. Their civil rights, they argued, had been violated when they were imprisoned in War Relocation Authority camps because of their Japanese heritage.



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Nonetheless, by refusing their draft notices, they had broken the law, and for that they were punished. The draft resisters from the Poston camp in Arizona were fortunate to appear before a judge that recognized the injustice of their confinement and their valid reasons for resisting the draft. They were fined one cent each for their act of protest. Conversely, the 63 members of the Fair Play Committee from Heart Mountain were sentenced to three years in federal prison in the largest mass trial in Wyoming history.

In a separate trial, the leadership of the Fair Play Committee—including Kiyoshi Okamoto, the group's founder; Frank Emi, their most outspoken activist; and Guntaro Kubota, their Issei translator—were convicted of Conspiracy to Encourage Draft Evasion. Their convictions were overturned due to a technicality in 1945. Later, in 1947, President Harry S. Truman issued a pardon to all Resisters of Conscience from the camps. Though most of the Heart Mountain resisters had completed their prison sentences by that time, the pardon restored their full civil



and political rights as citizens. Yet, they still faced some ostracism from the Japanese American community.

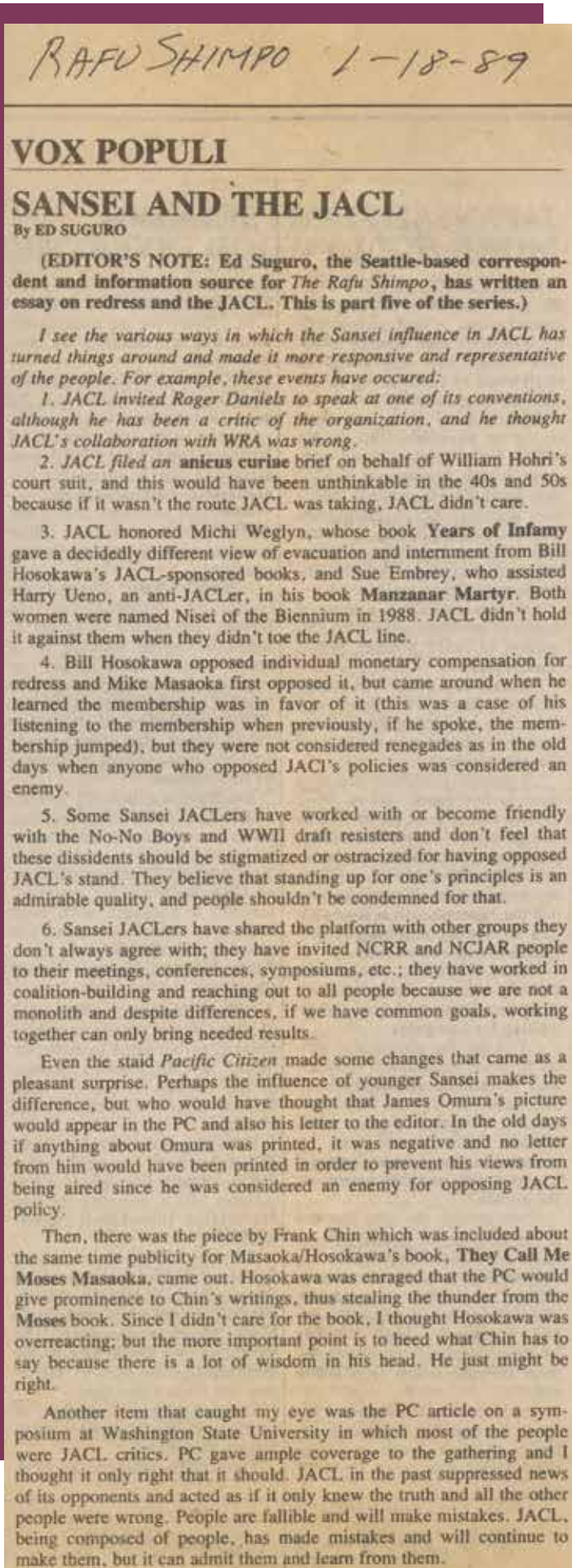
Throughout the war and their imprisonment, draft resisters were often maligned in camp newspapers such as *The Heart Mountain Sentinel*, and by the official publication of the JACL, *The Pacific Citizen*. Those that supported the resisters, such as *Rafu Shimpō* editor James Omura, also faced ostracism from the greater Japanese American community. Omura was tried alongside Okamoto and the other Fair Play Committee leaders, but found innocent thanks to the First Amendment freedom of the press. After a brief return to the *Shimpō*, Omura left journalism for over thirty years and instead operated a landscaping company until the late 1970s.

After the war ended, the Japanese American community was able to hold up the heroism and bravery of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Infantry Battalion, and the Military Intelligence Service as examples of their contributions to the United States to petition for reform. Most notably, they championed the Immigration Act of 1952, which finally allowed the Issei to become naturalized American citizens.

The post-war period, however, is more famous for a different approach to Civil Rights. The African American community led the way in protest and activism, organizing the Freedom Rides, Bus Boycotts, and marching from Selma to Montgomery and on Washington, DC. These protests became the most visible and effective way to bring about change in American society. Nearly every community of color developed their own version of these movements, including the Mexican American El Movimiento, the American Indian Movement and—in the Japanese American community—the movement for Redress and Reparations.

The loudest proponents for redress within the Japanese American community were members of the Sansei generation. Growing up in the age of protest and activism shaped the Sansei point of view. Looking back at the incarceration experience, they found heroes in the Fair Play Committee, the No-No boys, and those who challenged the legality of the incarceration in the courts. It is no surprise that as Sansei became more involved in organizations like the JACL, they began taking actions that would have been unfathomable to the League of the 1940s and 50s—as seen in this editorial written in the *Rafu Shimpō* by Ed Suguro in 1989.

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Pushing the JACL in these new directions was met with decidedly mixed reactions from the Nisei, especially when an official apology to the draft resisters was proposed. Perhaps the most divided group of Nisei were the veterans of the 442nd. Some veterans, like those

of the 442nd Veterans Club of Hawaii, recognized early on that the draft resisters had done what they thought best as patriotic Americans—as seen in the resolution passed by the organization in 1998.



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Other veterans felt that asking the JACL to apologize for its treatment of the resisters was equivalent to asking them to apologize for their service to the country. They expressed their feelings in these two letters posted in the *Rafu Shimpō* and the *L.A. Times* in April 1995.



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In addition to the Sansei, surviving members of the Fair Play Committee also tried to make their wartime position understood. At the head of this effort was Frank Emi, often considered the most outspoken member of the resistance movement. In the 1990s, Emi once again began writing and speaking on behalf of draft resisters. In this article from the April 18, 1995 issue of the *Rafu Shimpō*, Emi responds directly to the letters published on April 7 and 8. Beyond writing letters to the editors of various newspapers, Emi began speaking publicly, primarily to school groups and civic organizations, in an effort to educate the public about what the Fair Play Committee stood for.



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Emi was an effective spokesman both because he had been one of the original leaders of the group and because he had kept so much of the material that the group published during World War II. Emi's ability to produce original documents and prove that the members of the Fair Play Committee were always patriotic Americans, seeking to defend their rights as American citizens, helped galvanize support within the JACL. Shortly after Emi's death in 2010, his papers, ranging from original FPC publications, World War II era correspondence, and materials from his work defining and defending the legacy of the FPC, were donated to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and are available to researchers looking to learn more about draft resistance.

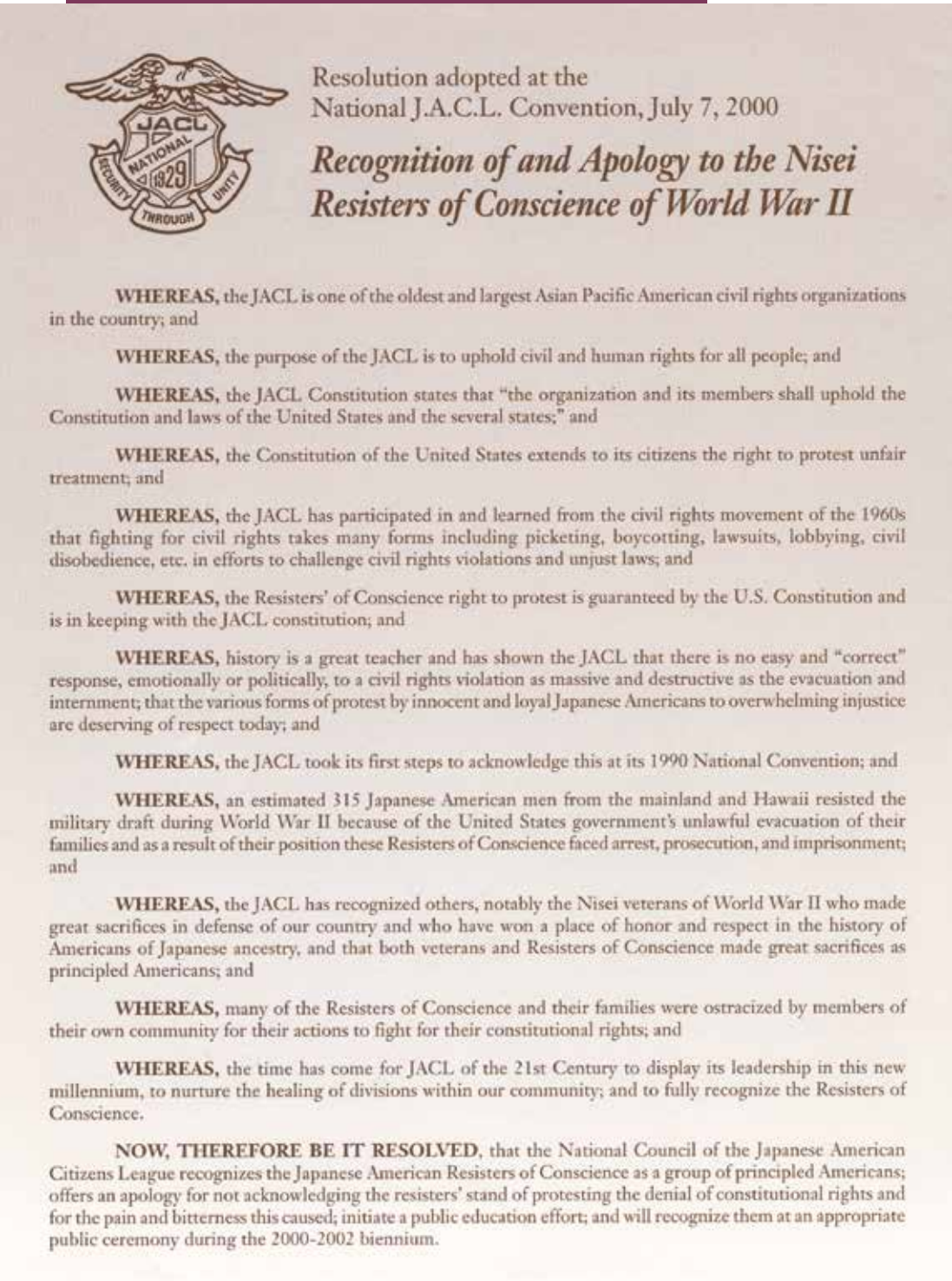


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The controversy over the apology continued even as the JACL adopted an official resolution at the National Convention in 2000. Much of the language in the JACL resolution mirrors the language used by the 442nd Veterans Club of Hawaii. The official ceremony to present the resolution, pictured at the beginning of this article, was held in 2002.

Today, over 20 years after the adoption of the resolution at the National JACL Convention, it seems that the controversy surrounding the apology to the Resisters of Conscience has largely run its course. The healing that many hoped the resolution would foster is now happening. Here at Heart Mountain, it is recognized that the stories of the veterans of the 442nd and the Military Intelligence Service and those of the Fair Play Committee are complementary. The honorable military service of the veterans helped the Japanese American community navigate the immediate postwar period which, in many ways, was still governed by the racial animosities that put Japanese Americans in concentration camps in the first place. At the same time, the Fair Play Committee helped foster the spirit of protest and activism that led to redress and can still be seen today in organizations like Tsuru for Solidarity. The story of the Fair Play Committee shows that there is more than one way to live up to the ideals of America. 



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