



心から KOKORO KARA

"from our heart"

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION | VOLUME 12-ISSUE 1 2023



Cover image
Heart Mountain guard tower,
surrounded by barbed wire.

Photo by Jessie Santala

Photo by Kate Wilson

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*In memoriam

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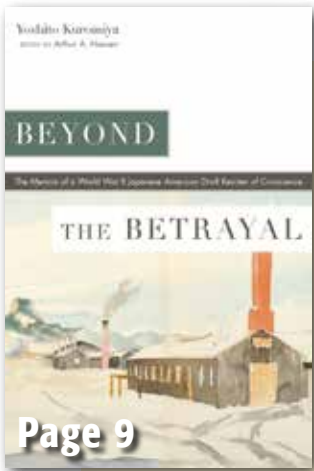
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www.heartmountain.org/kokoro-kara-magazine



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KOKORO KARA

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Design/Layout: Kate Wilson

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Would you like to be a **contributing writer**?
We’re interested! Write to Krist Ishikawa
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FRIENDS AND ALLIES

A PATH TOWARD GREATER UNDERSTANDING

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

In 1942, the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans was made easier because there were no community members in the room when the decisions were being made, and Japanese Americans had few allies.

Now, despite some of the heated political rhetoric of our time, we have more allies than ever. We're working to build more acquaintances into allies.

The result is a stronger foundation that is attracting more donors, expanding our center and spreading our work to a wider audience.

At home, members of our staff have engaged more with the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and shared ideas about finances, exhibits, and diversity, equity & inclusion efforts. I have met in Washington with members of the Buffalo Bill board of directors to strengthen our relationships.

We have conducted sessions of our workshops for educators sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities at the Buffalo Bill center, and all of this collaboration will help in our effort to become a Smithsonian Institution affiliate.

Our alliance with the Japanese American National Museum and the Japanese American Confinement Sites

Consortium are examples of successful collaborations.

We are working with the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and the National Veterans Network to support a touring exhibit about Nisei veterans that will arrive at Heart Mountain. The exhibit is now at the National Museum of the U.S. Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, where I met last fall with museum leaders.

In Seattle, I met with leaders of Densho, the collector of essential oral histories and research about the Japanese American community, and the Wing Luke Museum, which is devoted to telling the stories of multiple Asian American groups that call Washington state home.

Over the last few years, we have hosted teams from Densho at our annual pilgrimage, and we have shared resources with Wing Luke.

Heart Mountain will return to Seattle in May, when we will participate in sessions with the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and have an author panel hosted by Aura Sunada Newlin and featuring Frank Abe, Daniel James Brown, and me.

We are stronger together. That's something I've learned from Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson. That is the reason we started the Mineta-Simpson Institute.

Nowhere was that belief better demonstrated than in the work to pass a new authorization of the Japanese American Confinement Sites program run by the National Parks Service. We first discussed the reauthorization almost four years ago in Washington.

Visiting the National Museum of the United States Army. Second from left: Tammy Call, director of the National Museum of the United States Army; third from left: Ann Burroughs, president and CEO of the Japanese American National Museum and a Heart Mountain board member; fourth from left: Christine Sato-Yamasaki, executive director of the National Veterans Network; center: Shirley; third from right: Ray Locker, HMWF Director of Communications & Strategy.



An initial proposal led by Rep. Doris Matsui of California, the only incarcerated in Congress, failed at the end of 2020. But she tried again, and backed by Sen. Brian Schatz of Hawaii, she was able to get the new version through Congress.

But the bill, now called the Norman Y. Mineta Japanese American Confinement Education Act, almost didn't make it. Finally, help from Sen. John Barrasso, one of our Wyoming allies in Congress, got it attached to the omnibus spending bill that passed in the final hours of the last Congress.

Allies help when times are tough.

No one knows that more than the Heart Mountain incarcerated from Los Angeles who were helped by the Marshall family. The descendants of former enslaved people from Mississippi, the Marshalls lived in the Madison/J-Flats neighborhood of Los Angeles that was one of the city's growing Japanese American communities.

Soon after the signing of Executive Order 9066, the Marshalls volunteered to watch the home of their neighbors, the Hoshizakis, who were being sent to Heart Mountain. Takashi Hoshizaki, one of our longest-serving



Joel Barroquiel Tan, executive director of the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle.



Shirley met with the Densho team in January 2023. (L-R) Deputy Director Geoff Froh, Shirley, Executive Director Naomi Ostwald Kawamura, & Communications and Public Engagement Director Natasha Varner.

board members, remembers the Marshalls bringing pie and ice cream to them while they lived at the Pomona assembly center.

The Marshalls' allyship saved the Hoshizaki home and showed what can happen when we take care of each other during difficult times.

That is why we're awarding this year's LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness Award to Barbara Marshall Williams, who cared for the Hoshizaki home, and her family. We are also dedicating a new temporary exhibit to the inspirational story of the Marshalls, Hoshizakis and the survival of their neighborhood.

The theme of the 2023 Pilgrimage will be the importance of allies, which will be emphasized by all of our panels and speakers. In particular, we will recognize Kathleen Saito Yuille, a pilgrimage co-chair who was born at Heart Mountain 80 years ago in August, and Claudia Wade, the former head of the Park County Travel Council. Their friendship and commitment to Heart Mountain represents two communities that are now one.

In times of division, allies make you stronger. We are lucky to have such good friends, and we are always trying to be good friends and allies in return. It's part of what makes our foundation so unique and ultimately so successful.

Stay inspired!

Shirley Ann Higuchi

"Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light." —Helen Keller

A PLACE OF CONNECTION

Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin

Heart Mountain began as a place of rupture, with families taken from their communities and severed from their livelihoods. Thanks to you all, Heart Mountain is now a place of connection. As I write, I am struck by the depth of connections in this *Kokoro Kara* issue.

The Parallel Barbed Wire exhibit is personal for me. In my family, Clarence Matsumura is known as “Uncle Clarence.” He was my grandma’s brother, and as I absorb the exhibit, I see her face in his.

This issue honors Albert Keimi, whose passing pains our Heart Mountain family. We also honor Jim Murphy, whose wit complemented his expertise. “*Aura*,” he wrote as I transitioned into this role, “*In my humble opinion, you are doing quite damrn well.*”

Yosh Kuromiya was likewise memorable for his wit. During his 2014 visit, he reclined on the museum’s barrack cot—defying the rules, by the way—and sighed, “Ahh, home!” Following the trial reenactment that his daughter mentions, Yosh received a standing ovation from legal professionals who left with the message: Never Again.

The Member & Donor list is a list of friends. One

pair of names—Sandra and Rodney Garnett—stands out for me, as this contribution from my mentors captures the spirit of what we are building. Sandy wrote to me:

“My mom, who is 94, gave money to family members to donate to places we have a passion for...I never learned about the Incarceration in school. I found out about it through a friend during my Senior year at college. Members of her family were incarcerated, and she showed me photos. I was amazed that this was not included in History classes! I am so happy to share this money with Heart Mountain as you educate and inspire in empathy and understanding.”

Thank you Sandy, and all of our supporters whose actions enable us to sustain this magical place of connection. 🙏



Photo by: UW Photo Services



Join us this summer for a memorable weekend!

This year's Pilgrimage will explore the themes of cross-cultural allies and friendships through our upcoming summer exhibit that will feature the remarkable story of the J-Flats community in Los Angeles.

Calling all Heart Mountain



At this year's Sayonara Banquet, we will be honoring the longtime service and friendship of our Pilgrimage Co-Chairs, Kathy Yuille and Claudia Wade. We will also be serving cake for Kathy’s 80th birthday, and will be honoring all those who, like Kathy, were born at Heart Mountain.

If you were born at Heart Mountain and will be attending the Sayonara Banquet, please email Eva Petersen at evap@heartmountain.org.

FAMILY RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

For the first time ever, we are offering private family research for Heart Mountain descendants at the 2023 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. This service is best suited for people who have very little knowledge of their family history, and need help starting on their research journey. One of our highly trained staff members will prepare a file of documents about your family’s time at Heart Mountain, and sit down with you and your group to explain their meaning and answer any questions you may have. They will also provide more information about resources you can use to discover more in-depth information about your family history at Heart Mountain.

Silent Auction Donations

A critical part of planning for the Pilgrimage is collecting auction items for our Silent Auction. This auction is a staple in the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation’s annual fundraising. The 2023 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage is just around the corner, so we are securing donations now. Perhaps you have a treasure from Japan that you would like to pass on, frequent flyer miles, or a piece of artwork—any of these items would be appreciated in our 2023 auction.

To donate an item, please **email a photo and description of the item to Sara Brunton (sarab@heartmountain.org)**. Don’t forget to include your contact information! Sara will get back to you with additional information. We would like to offer a broad selection of items to make the auction successful. Please help us carry on this worthwhile Pilgrimage tradition. We appreciate your continued support!

2023 HEART MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE

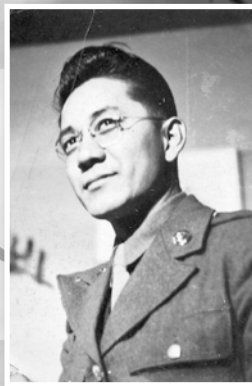
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PARALLEL BARBED WIRE

FROM HEART MOUNTAIN TO DACHAU



Our brand new exhibit, *Parallel Barbed Wire: From Heart Mountain to Dachau*, features the remarkable stories of Heart Mountain incarcerated Clarence Matsumura and Holocaust survivor Solly Ganor.

Clarence was born in Wyoming, but grew up in Los Angeles. He was pursuing his life-long dream of working in radio and electronics before he and the rest of the Matsumura family were forcibly removed and incarcerated at Heart Mountain. After leaving the camp, he was drafted into the segregated 522nd Field Artillery Battalion as a field communications specialist—an experience that would stay with him for the rest of his life.

Solly was a child living in Kaunas, Lithuania before the war, but when Nazi Germany invaded, he and his family were forcibly removed to the Kovno ghetto in 1941. Once the ghetto was shut down, Solly and his father were sent to a subcamp of Dachau while his mother, sister, and other female relatives were sent to Stutthof.

Their paths crossed on a hillside near Waakirchen, Germany in May 1945 when Clarence, assigned to a forward observing unit, found Solly near an overturned horse cart after five days on the Dachau death march. Clarence and his unit brought Solly back to the U.S. Army hospital in Waakirchen but soon parted ways.

After the Holocaust, Solly went to serve in the Israeli

Army during the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. Clarence returned to the United States and restarted his career in electronics. It had been 47 years since they had seen or spoken to each other when they were reunited in the lobby of a hotel in Jerusalem—a reunion organized by Eric Saul in 1992. They formed a friendship that would last the rest of their lives. Their relationship is chronicled in Solly's memoir, *Light One Candle*, which the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation has recently republished.

"This exhibit has been over a year in the making," said Krist Ishikawa Jessup, Research & Editing Manager, who curated the exhibit. "Combing through books, oral histories, primary documents, and with the assistance of Clarence's and Solly's families, we were able to piece together this amazing history."

"Though Clarence and Solly's stories are a micro study of wider historic events, they expose the patterns and strategies of state-sponsored persecution designed to isolate and ostracize disenfranchised communities. Their story ultimately reminds us that fear, racism, and hatred, when left unchallenged, can wreak destruction in any place and at any time."

Their remarkable friendship has been an inspiration to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, and we are proud to bring this story to visitors at the Interpretive Center.

In Memoriam

Albert Keimi (1928–2022)

Albert Tamotsu Keimi, 94 years old, resident of Los Angeles passed away peacefully at home in the presence of his loving wife on September 30, 2022.

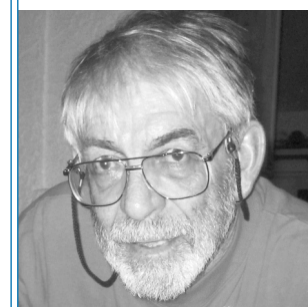
Albert was born on July 8, 1928 in Los Angeles, California. He was incarcerated at Heart Mountain and was a Boy Scout in Troop 379. He then served in the US Army from 1946 to 1948. Albert was a loyal Dodger and Laker fan, and was a member of El Patio Investment Club SCNGA and a CYC referee.

Albert is survived by his wife, Emiko (Amy), daughters Kathleen Keimi-Nunley (Kenneth) and Patty Pena (Richard), and brother Harold Keimi (Barbara), 5 Grandchildren and 8 Great Grandchildren.



A group of original Heart Mountain boy scouts gathered at the Japanese American National Museum to honor the late Norm Mineta in June 2022. Al Keimi is seated in front, and the others are (L-R): Takashi Hoshizaki, Bacon Sakatani, Nori Uyematsu, Hal Keimi, & Richard Kushino.

Jim Murphy (1941–2023)



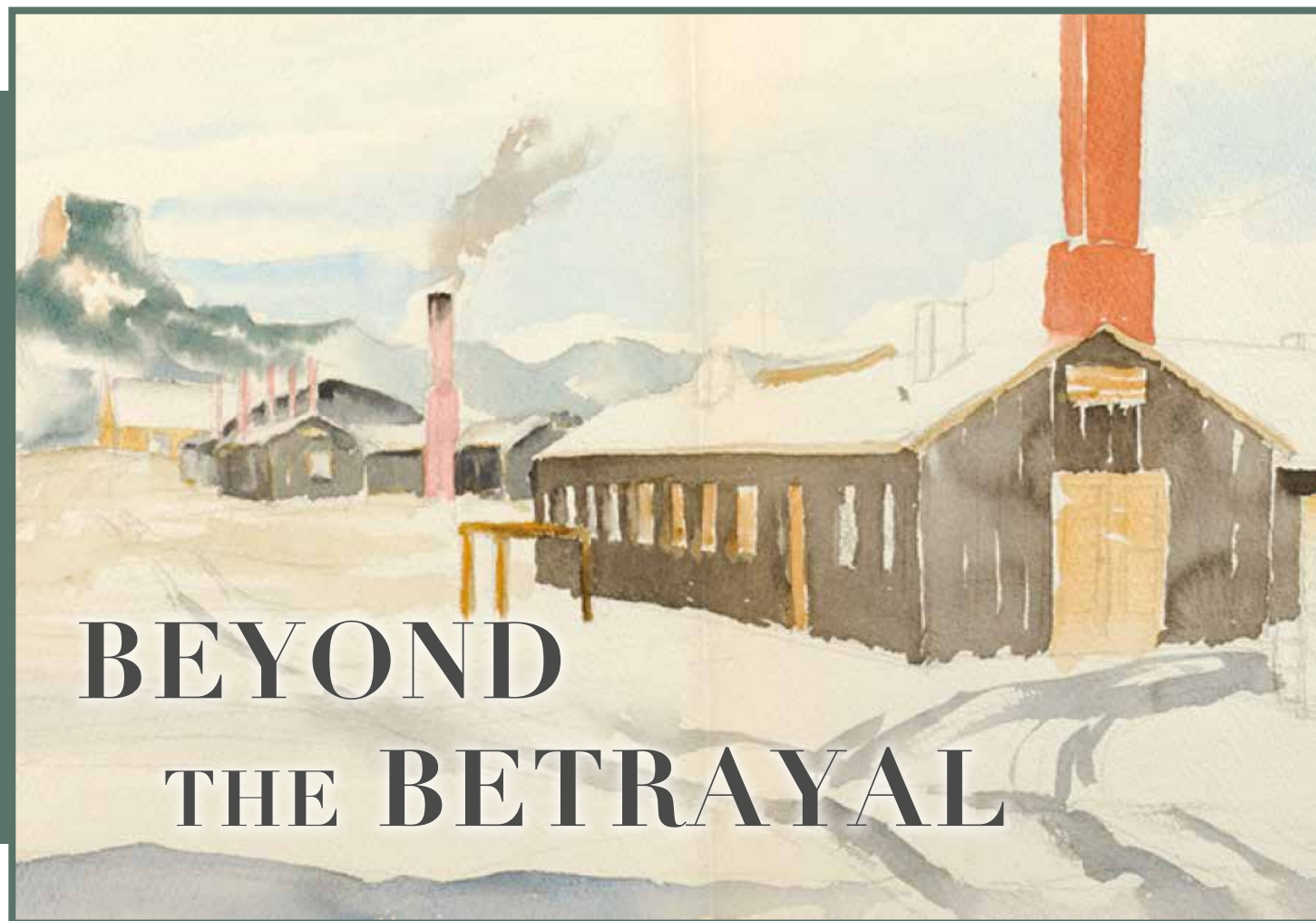
James Murphy, a member of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation's advisory council for too short a time, passed away at his home in Gilbert, Arizona on January 29, after a short illness. He died of natural causes. Jim was born in Denver on July 2, 1941.

Jim and his family lived at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center from 1947 to 1950. At this time the center had ceased to be a center of incarceration for Japanese Americans but became a center of development as the Bureau of Reclamation completed construction of the massive Shoshone Reclamation project whose progress was interrupted by the War. Jim absorbed the sight and sounds of

this most unusual place to spend some of his most formative years.

Jim didn't forget his experiences, so when he retired in 2011 he began researching how this place came to be, why was it here, what happened to it. He spent over 10 years in this search, becoming more meaningful to him as time passed. He amassed an amazing compendium of facts surrounding the Center's unusual history. Together with his brother as co-authors, Jim summarized his work in a publication he hoped to publish, but time didn't allow him to see it complete. His work is now in the process of publication.

Jim became one of the Foundation's most ardent supporters whose thorough, comprehensive, and exhaustive research well serves the Foundation's ongoing dedication to preserve and interpret this place called the Heart Mountain Relocation Center. Jim's contribution will be missed.

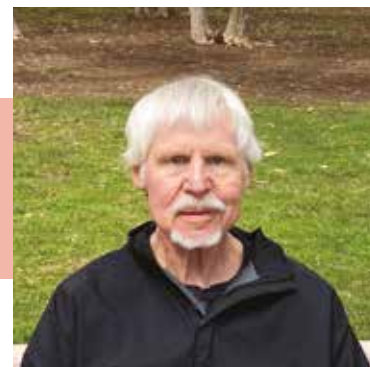


BEYOND THE BETRAYAL

In 1944, Yoshito Kuromiya was part of the draft resister movement at Heart Mountain, joining 63 other young men for a mass trial. In his later years, Yoshito compiled his life story in what would become *Beyond the Betrayal: The Memoir of a World War II Japanese American Draft Resister of Conscience*. Gail Kuromiya, Yosh's daughter, sat down with the editor of the book, Art Hansen, to discuss Yosh Kuromiya, his family, and the journey of bringing the book to publication.



Gail Kuromiya



Art Hansen



AH: What was it like for you and your three sisters growing up in a family with parents who spent part of the World War II years in concentration camps? Were you made aware of this situation as young girls living in Southern California or was this not revealed to you until you became mature women?



GK: As with most families, if the camps were mentioned at all, it was only in general terms and never explained when we were young. Mom and Dad didn't talk about it to us but at family gatherings relatives discussed people they knew in camp, people they met after the war, which camp they'd been in, that sort of thing. Some of the discussions were in Japanese which further prevented us from knowing details.

So, we grew up (unknowingly) under the shadow of the internment camps—what is now being studied as “generational trauma.” It seems obvious now; how could we not be impacted by the challenges our parents and their peers faced in trying to re-establish their place in a society that had rejected and alienated them during WWII?



AH: When did you discover that in 1944 your father, Yoshito Kuromiya, had resisted being drafted into the military while incarcerated at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center and was in a mass trial for 63 Heart Mountain draft resisters that resulted in three-year prison sentences in a federal penitentiary for violating conscription into the U.S. Army under the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940? What was your initial reaction to this information? Did that reaction change thereafter, and if so, how and why?



GK: My junior high school history teacher was a black woman. Our textbook had a single paragraph covering the internment camps. My teacher asked if my family had been affected and although I knew they had, I couldn't give her much more info than that. She appeared both outraged and indignant on my behalf—that this could happen to my family and others.

I started asking questions of Mom and Dad. They gradually shared their stories (Mom and her family had been imprisoned at Manzanar and Crystal City) and at some point, Dad explained his prison time. I don't remember it as being a momentous or shocking discovery. I didn't fully understand the implications, and he didn't become publicly vocal about it until much later.

Once I was older, I appreciated what Dad had gone through, and when he began to speak up for the resisters, his activism made sense based on my childhood years of knowing there was something different about Dad and that sense of underlying grief or betrayal or whatever trauma the camps and prison had created. I was glad he was speaking out—not only for the other resisters but for his own benefit.

When my own sons became of draft age, it was sobering to realize how young Dad was when he had to make those impossible decisions. Thankfully, my sons never faced the same decisions, but my dad admitted that he was very concerned when my sons were born.



The first day of the trial of the 63 Heart Mountain draft resisters in Federal District Court, Cheyenne, Wyoming.



AH: Since only some 300 Japanese Americans resisted the draft in the 10 War Relocation Centers, it clearly took a person with a special character and personality to become a draft resister. Could you discuss what you observed of your father's character and personality that perhaps set him apart from other Nisei men that you encountered while coming of age as a Sansei?



GK: Dad was different from his peers. He didn't golf, watch sports, bowl, fish or camp like other Nisei men. He enjoyed gardening and the arts and listened to musicians like Joan Baez, Woody Guthrie, and Peter, Paul and Mary.

He was a little bewildered to be surrounded by five women (Mom and us four girls). But he told me that while his friends teased him about not being "man enough" to sire boys, he was secretly grateful to have girls—we wouldn't be subjected to the draft as he had been.

He preferred philosophical conversations that my older sister, Sharon, could follow and discuss. Sharon had the courage and brains to challenge Dad verbally; I had neither the ability nor interest.

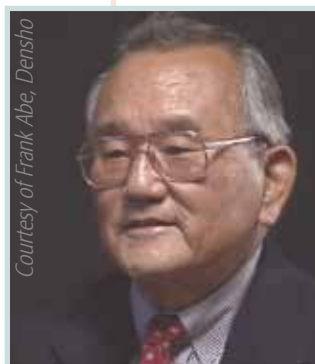
He was creative and had a sharp sense of humor but was stubborn, intense, critical, and principled. If he hadn't been, he likely wouldn't have resisted the draft nor would he have spent the last part of his life championing the resisters' experience.



AH: When did you first find out that your father was writing a memoir that not only covered the length of his life, but would feature his experience as a Japanese American World War II draft resister?



GK: When my boys were young, I asked dad to write his life story for his grandkids and future generations. He started by sending handwritten pages to Sharon to review and edit around 2006. My stepmom would type them up and the files went back and forth for several years until Dad sent Chapter One to me and my sisters in 2010.



AH: When and how did you and your sisters become involved in your father's writing of his memoir? How did this involvement evolve over time until 2021 when it became a published volume in the Nikkei in the Americas series of the University Press of Colorado?

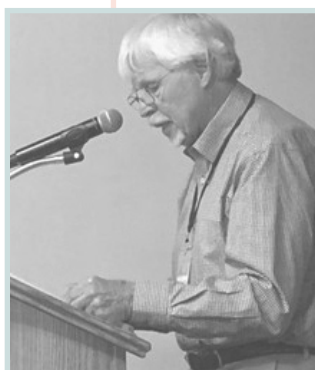


GK: Chapter One (from 2010) was the start of what Dad wanted to become a family project. He hoped to improve our family communication given that all four daughters were geographically scattered (in California, New York, & Washington). He asked for input on the manuscript, but we declined. We felt it should be his voice alone—not ours. Besides, his writing surpassed ours in eloquence. Instead, we offered reviews and suggestions. My stepmom, Irene, continued to type Dad's endless revisions.

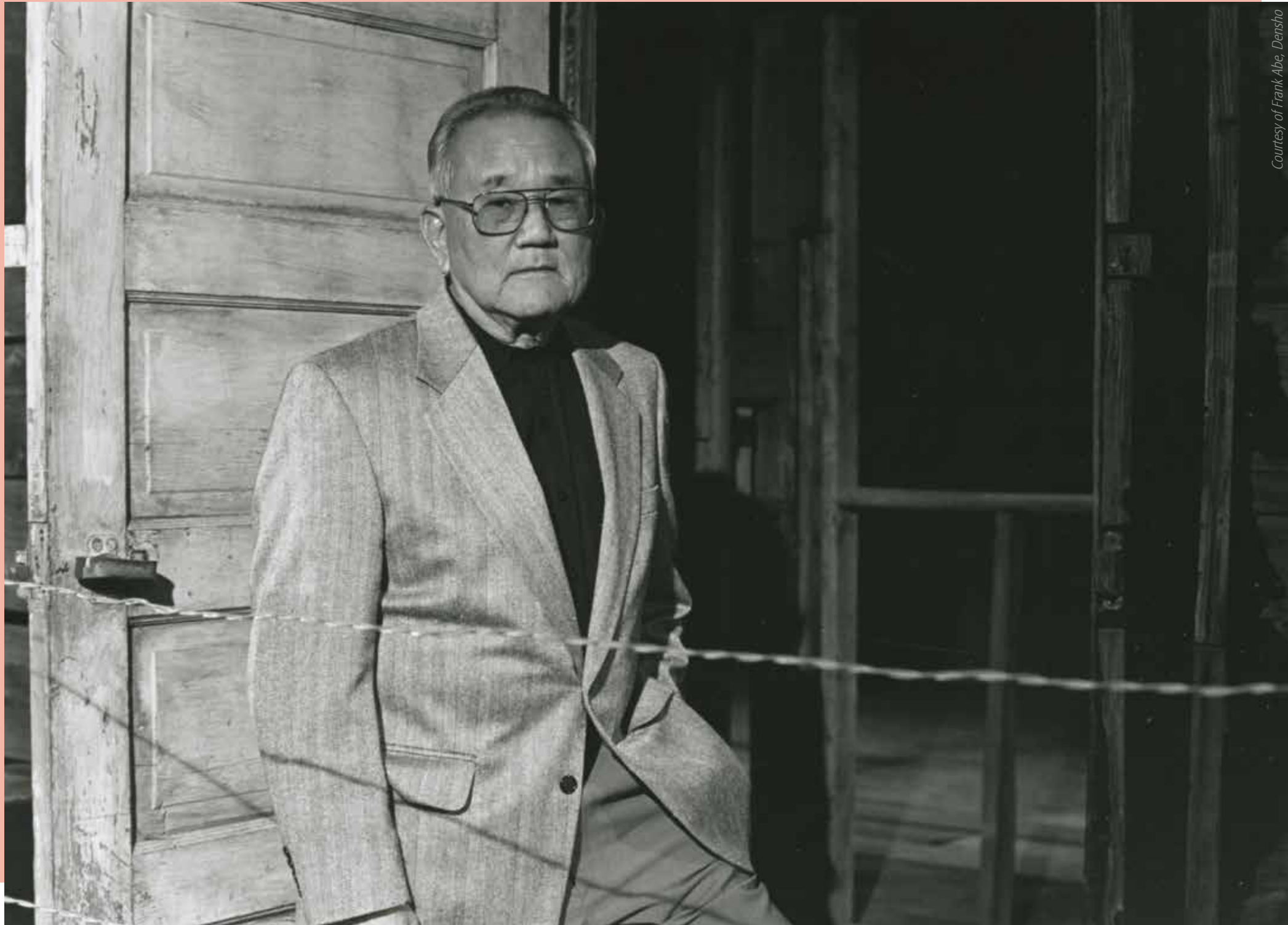
Eventually, Dad decided to pursue publication. With Frank Abe and Lawson Inada's assistance, the manuscript was submitted to the University of Washington Press in 2013. Dad worked with Diane Fujino, a University of California at Santa Barbara professor/writer, to make revisions suggested by the University of Washington but in 2015, the revised manuscript was rejected.

By this time, dad was in his early 90s—getting old, discouraged, and tired. The manuscript sat until 2017 when he handed it off to his daughters with his blessings to do whatever we thought best. With my oldest sister, Suzi, doing the overall design and page layouts, we put our collective graphic design backgrounds to work and printed a family version in March 2018 that Dad approved of shortly before he died in July 2018.

In 2019 I met you, Art, at Elliot Bay Bookstore in Seattle at his *Barbed Voices* book event. Within weeks, you had sent an email offering to be editor, pro bono, of Dad's manuscript and promised not to change the content as was Dad's wish. (At Dad's request, you had reviewed Dad's manuscript several years earlier.)



Yosh Kuromiya, c.1940s.



Courtesy of Frank Abe, Densho

"When did it become a citizens' responsibility to prove his innocence, especially when no charges of disloyalty were ever filed nor convictions established?"

—Yosh Kuromiya

My sisters and I had little expertise in publishing and were reluctant to self-publish. I knew Dad trusted you; his generous offer was a golden opportunity we couldn't pass up.

The COVID-19 lockdown followed in 2020. Working with you became my COVID/retirement project as the family & project coordinator. Suzi handled images and photos. Sharon tracked down image permissions & copyrights, and my youngest sister Miya (who was busy teaching) provided emotional support.

We signed a book contract with the University Press of Colorado in May 2020 thanks to Lane Hirabayashi's support and your editorial expertise and immense dedication. Had you not intervened, the manuscript might still be languishing on my computer.

After some COVID delays, the book launched at the Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles) in June 2022. A paperback version was printed in December 2022.

While I'm grateful that the manuscript is finally printed, it's the phone conversations and table discussions I had with Dad during the family book's development that I value the most.

I highly recommend that every family record their history before our Nisei story holders are gone. Every family has a story; every story is priceless.



AH: Since your father's memoir, *Beyond the Betrayal: The Memoir of a World War II Japanese American Draft Resister of Conscience*, is the only book-length memoir to be produced by any of the roughly 300 draft resisters, do you believe that it can serve adequately as representative for the life story of all of the draft resisters? If so, why? If not so, why not?



GK: Of course, no one book can singularly explain any point in history regardless of the topic. Dad was adamant that his manuscript be presented as his story and not representative of all resisters. But it's a valuable piece of the story especially since we've already lost most of the resisters. He hoped that in sharing his story with younger generations, they'll do a better job of protecting civil rights and the constitution. Each resister made their decision based on their personal convictions and particular situation. And every individual's decision—whether to join the 442nd or resist—should be respected and honored. Otherwise, how do we move forward?



AH: At what juncture in your life did you start actively seeking information bearing on the World War II imprisonment experience of Japanese Americans? What sources did you investigate for this information?



GK: I started as a teen and absorbed material as it became available. There wasn't much around until after the push for ethnic studies in universities during the late 60s and early 70s. Even then, material was scarce, but I talked to my parents and relatives and followed the Asian American movement in L.A. via resources such as *Gidra*, the newspaper, and Visual Communications, the media arts organization.

I moved to Washington in 1976 and continued my own research off and on. I learned enough to comfortably share the incarceration story with my sons' elementary school classes in the 90s. Dad became active about this same time and kept me apprised of his activities which added to my knowledge.

In 2000, Frank Abe's *Conscience and the Constitution* debuted—a milestone documentary about the resisters. Dad continued to send & recommend books such as Eric Muller's *Free to Die for their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II* (2001), William Hohri's *Resistance: Challenging America's Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans* (2001), Mike Mackey's *A Matter of Conscience* (2002), and many others.

In 2014, my husband and I attended a consortium of legal professionals at Heart Mountain where Dad participated (as himself) in a reenactment of the 1944 trial. It was nearly 70 years since the historic mass trial and one of dad's last public appearances.

Recently, many books have been published about camp experiences with some including the resisters such as Frank Abe's *We Hereby Refuse* and your book, *Barbed Voices: Oral History, Resistance, and the World War II Japanese American Social Disaster*. It's gratifying to see that the resisters are finally being recognized instead of maligned. Tragically, most have already passed and with them, their stories. 🌱



Taken in 2017 by Gail's stepmom Irene Kuromiya, this is the last group photo of Yoshito with his daughters prior to his death in 2018. (L-R): Suzi, Miya, Yosh, Sharon, & Gail.

Left: Yosh at Heart Mountain in 2014.



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