



心から
KOKORO KARA
"from our heart"



COVER IMAGE

Takeko Tomie Matsumura (pictured left) c. 1929. Check out the article on page 15 about our spring exhibit "Parallel Barbed Wire."

Courtesy of the Matsumura-Sunada-Newlin Family

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Check out the magazine page on our
website to read all past issues of *Kokoro Kara*!

www.heartmountain.org/kokoro-kara-magazine



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KOKORO KARA

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Design/Layout: Kate Wilson

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SWIFT PROGRESS AT THE FOUNDATION

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Sometimes I have to catch my breath when I think of everything our Foundation is doing.

The construction of the Mineta-Simpson Institute is on schedule. The walls of the various buildings are coming up, and each day is another step toward completing this game-changing facility.

We keep attracting interesting visitors and scholars who want to know about the interpretive center and the place where 14,000 Japanese Americans were forced to live between 1942 and 1945.

This July, along with our annual Pilgrimage, we are hosting a delegation from the Bar Association of the District of Columbia. Lawyers and judges from the nation's capital want to visit Heart Mountain to learn more about the Japanese American incarceration and the legal issues surrounding it.

I hope the visiting delegation will return to Washington with a deeper understanding of the incarceration and its place in our history. That legal abomination was not the first time a marginalized group of Americans was mistreated by their fellow citizens or the government that was supposed to protect them.

We last hosted such a group in 2014, when leaders of the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts visited our site. Aura Sunada Newlin, our executive director, is a member of that group's board and will be joining me at its annual convention in Seattle. Our event there will be a tribute to Norman Mineta featuring authors Daniel James Brown and Frank Abe.

Many of the guests who attended the 2014 meeting still talk about it whenever I see them. Our story and site have that transformational power.

Now that Aura is in place as our permanent executive director, we are on the verge of accomplishing some of our major goals. For example:

- We are close to reaching our \$8.25 million fundraising goal for the Mineta-Simpson Institute, which is under construction and set to open in summer 2024.
- We have bolstered our staff with new hires who bring an assortment of talents that will make our organization thrive.
- We are creating new partnerships that spread our message around the world, including a Japanese-language edition of *Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration*. The graduate students who studied under my father, Dr. William Higuchi, at the universities of Michigan and Utah led the effort to publish this new edition under the HMWF imprint.

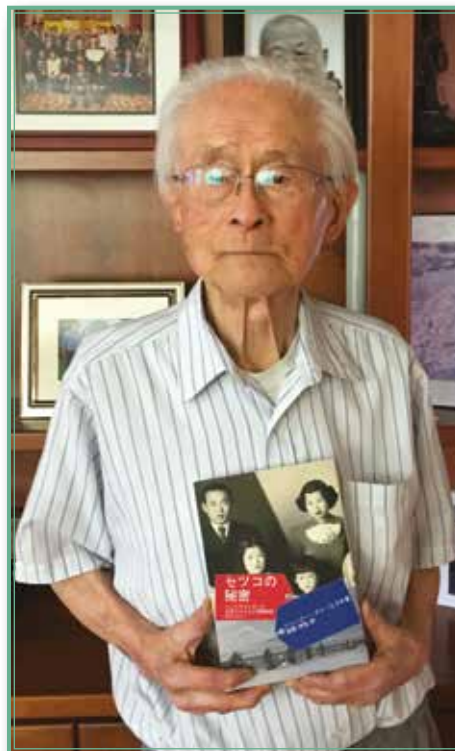
My parents' incarceration experience influenced how they treated my father's doctoral students from Japan. The incarceration made my father into a workaholic and a perfectionist, and my mother always wanted a home large enough to entertain in, which she did frequently for the students.

Our proposal to present at the U.S.-Japan Council annual conference in November in Washington will give us more opportunities to connect with the Japanese as well as the Japanese American community in Washington.

Our supporters' generosity has enabled us to reach many of our goals and encouraged us to reach higher. We must stay vigilant as we move forward and to stay focused on our objectives. I'm confident we have the team to do that.



Brian Smyer



Dr. William I. Higuchi holding the Japanese-language edition of *Setsuko's Secret*.

Part of what makes our Pilgrimage in July so special is that we continue to make new connections with former incarcerated and their families. Barbara Watanabe Batton & her daughter Rachel came to last year's Pilgrimage and will be returning this summer where Rachel will be participating in our Mixed Nikkei Panel. Barbara was so influenced by her Pilgrimage experience, that she wrote a poem published on page 25 of this issue. I look forward to seeing them again this summer, learning more about their family, and continuing to expand the Heart Mountain community with other new attendees.

As we prepare for this year's event, I know more than ever that we are leaders in the effort to tell the world about our history. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at Heart Mountain this summer knowing that we can achieve whatever we put our minds to.

Stay inspired!

Shirley Ann Higuchi



Construction in progress at the Interpretive Center.



Leaders of the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts who visited the site in 2014.

"You can achieve anything you want in life if you have the courage to dream it, the intelligence to make a realistic plan, and the will to see that plan through to the end."
—Sidney A. Friedman



SARA BRUNTON

Heart Mountain is excited to welcome Sara Brunton as **Business Development Manager**. As we grow our programs, products, and reach, Sara comes to us with just the right skillset. She brings extensive experience working with startups in Los Angeles and Denver where she helped research the needs of consumers and companies. A creative problem solver and relationship builder, she has served as a consultant on wholesaling, getting products into new retail outlets, and expanding to new markets. Sara was attracted to Heart Mountain because of her passion for racial justice and her desire to work in a field that helps people and helps humanity. Reflecting on the importance of Heart Mountain's work, she writes: "Correcting long-held beliefs, as well as fostering empathy and understanding is essential in protecting the rights of all Americans." Welcome, Sara!

WELCOME!

EMBRACING DIFFERENCE

Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin

Allyship. Solidarity. Accompliceship. Being a Compassionate Witness. These are terms we use to describe the act of sticking our neck out for the wellbeing of someone whose struggles are different from our own. Over the years, I have come to realize that few things make me feel more alive than connecting—deeply and genuinely—with folks of other races and generations, and with other life experiences. My heart soars to see how every story in this issue of *Kokoro Kara* showcases people actively working across the lines that might otherwise divide us.

As a mixed race White-Nikkei woman, my life is richer through working closely with Johnny Tim Yellowtail (Apsáalooke), the Albright-Marshall family (Black), Samanta Helou Hernandez (Latina), Shirley Ann Higuchi (Japanese American), and Doug Nelson, Logan Christie, and Sara Brunton (White). My life is richer the more I learn about Solly Ganor and his family (Jewish). My life is richer reading the reflections by Barbara Watanabe Batton (Heart Mountain survivor) and recalling the brief but meaningful conversation about race and identity that I had with her daughter, Rachel Watanabe-Batton (Black-

Nikkei), at the 2022 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.

And of course, my life is richer to see the daily progress of construction on our site. The expansion on one side of the building is named in honor of LaDonna Zall, a local White woman who worked tirelessly to help us create the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and Interpretive Center. The expansion on the other side of the building is named in honor of Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson—exemplars of cross-racial and bipartisan allyship.

None of us—as individuals or as groups—can make it through this thing called life on our own. The stories here are testaments to the possibilities that can flow from embracing difference. May *your* lives be enriched by reading them! 🙏



WELCOME!



LOGAN CHRISTIE

Logan Christie joined the Heart Mountain team in February as **Director of Operations**, and he has already established himself as a key member of our leadership team as we manage increasingly complex projects through the Interpretive Center, the Mineta-Simpson Institute, and the wider historic site.

Logan is a third-generation Wyomingite, life-long Cody boy, and University of Wyoming graduate with connections all across the state and a stint of work in New York City. For the past 13 years he has worked in the juvenile justice arena, serving most recently as the Youth Services Coordinator for Park County. He comes to us with a background in criminal justice administration and IT. Logan chairs the Wyoming State Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice, which advises the state on a variety of topics including alternatives to incarceration for youth. Fun facts about Logan: he is the son of award-winning landscape artist Reid Christie, he has an encyclopedic memory for sports (all types) and music (all genres), and he has a 9 handicap on the golf course. Welcome, Logan! 🙏

THE MINETA-SIMPSON INSTITUTE AT HEART MOUNTAIN

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Cally Steussy,
Director of Interpretation and Preservation

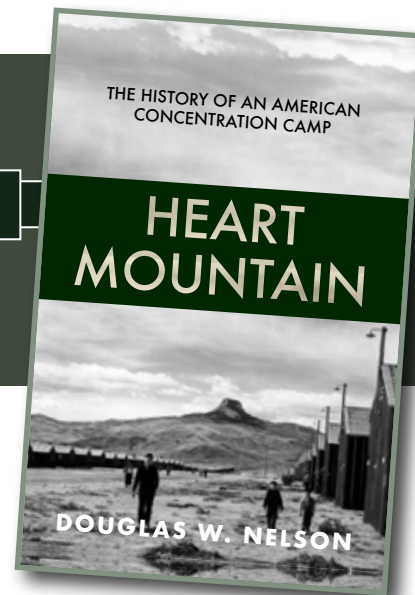
The construction crew officially broke ground for the Mineta-Simpson Institute in the final days of December 2022, following the massive storm that piled snow on the region right before the holidays. That storm heralded one of the worst winters in recent memory, with winter storms closing the highway to the Interpretive Center multiple times from January through March. Snow continued to fall even into April. Construction continued doggedly throughout the wintry weather, and by the time the weather warmed in the last week of April we were only a week or two behind our projected schedule, a testament to good planning and the determined work of our construction crew.

Currently, the foundations are set and ready on both sides of the building. The wooden frames of the walls for the LaDonna Zall Research Lab, which will house the new collections archives as well as staff offices, a research library, and a new exhibition space, have been raised, and the workmen are setting the rafters into place. Once the walls and rafters on the fourth barrack have been completed, the workmen will shift over to the main Mineta-Simpson Institute area, where the conference room will be, and do the same on that side.

At this time, we expect construction to be completed some time in September. 🙏



Author Interview: DOUGLAS NELSON



The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation released a new edition of Doug Nelson's groundbreaking history—*Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp*—last November. It is the first time the book has been released in print since 1976, when Nelson's master's thesis from the University of Wyoming was published by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The first edition of the book became a surprise finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and an inspiration for future scholars of the Japanese American incarceration. It was the first book that explored in depth the case of the Heart Mountain draft resisters who had previously been left out of most incarceration histories.

Former Heart Mountain incarceratedee Norman Mineta, who later became a Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and secretary of Commerce

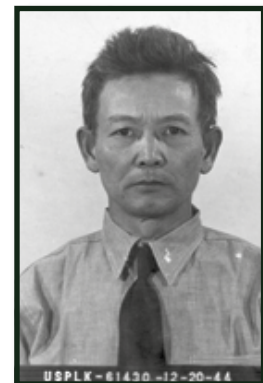
and Transportation, and Senator Alan K. Simpson wrote the new foreword for the book. Nelson contributed new afterthoughts, and the updated edition includes dozens of new photographs of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center and the surrounding grounds.

Nelson took time with Ray Locker, the Foundation's director of communications and strategy, to answer questions about the book and its impact.

RL= Ray Locker DN= Doug Nelson

RL: When did you first realize you had written something that would influence future authors on the incarceration?

DN: When the book was released in 1976, I knew it told an important story, but I had no expectations of it having impact on much of anything. I wasn't even sure that many people would read it, so I was surprised when it sold quickly and was favorably reviewed. But then I was stunned when the book became a finalist for the Pulitzer. I knew then there was a profound interest in the largely untold story of the incarceration.



RL: What was your biggest surprise while working on the book?

DN: Probably the most unexpected part of my research into Heart Mountain was the discovery of the widespread resistance to WRA policies and to the government's decision to draft Nisei men out of the camp. The little that had been written about Heart Mountain suggested that it was "a happy camp," where incarceratedees worked to make the best of their situation and almost no notice was given to the significant and principled resistance and the deep conflict that emerged within the Nisei population at Heart Mountain.

Kiyoshi Okamoto was a bachelor who led the Fair Play Committee as it challenged the military draft. He was previously involved in derailing an attempt to make the camp stores a cooperative.

RL: What is the most valuable result of your book?

DN: I think the most valuable aspect of my book is it remains a warning about the tragic and terrible consequences of manipulating fear and racism for political ends—a warning that is as relevant today as has ever been.

RL: What do you hope will result from this new edition?

DN: I hope my book will provide a helpful and accessible starting point for people who want to know more about this important and tragic chapter in our history. I hope the book enriches the experience of people who visit our museum and provides a way of learning about what happened at Heart Mountain for those can't come there.

RL: What was the most unexpected or gratifying result of the publication of the book?

DN: Shortly after my book was released, I received a letter from a Japanese American draft resister who told me that he hadn't told his children about his experience at camp for fear they would be ashamed of him. He said my book helped them understand and respect what he had done.

RL: What about the book makes you the most proud?

DN: I am proudest of the fact that, despite all the euphemisms that were used by our government to describe the WWII treatment of the Japanese Americans, I tried to be forthright about its illegality and tragic impact on the lives of those unjustly uprooted and imprisoned.

There is now a vast body of research and writing about the incarceration. Heart Mountain, I hope, still provides a good starting point for those interested in this pivotal history.



Bill Hosokawa was the first editor of the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*. The paper followed the line of the Japanese American Citizens League and provided minimal coverage of the Heart Mountain draft resisters.



Sixty-three Nisei men from Heart Mountain were tried for resisting the military draft in the largest federal trial in Wyoming history. Nelson's book was the first to delve into this history.

Making a Neighborhood

An exhibit that tells a story of friends and allies

By Ray Locker

Long before anyone had heard of Hollywood, a formerly enslaved man from Mississippi pioneered a neighborhood that would become pivotal in the history of Heart Mountain and Los Angeles' Japanese American community.

George Washington Albright lived a life that defied convention. Born enslaved in Holly Springs, Mississippi, in 1846, he spied for Union forces during the Civil War. While living in postwar Mississippi, he became a state senator and defied local customs by marrying a white woman from Massachusetts. Together, they moved west, living first in Kansas and then settling in Cahuenga, then a distant community west of downtown Los Angeles.

Before restrictive racial covenants and redlining sealed off Los Angeles from people of color, Albright became one of the first buyers of land in a neighborhood called Dayton Heights in the 1890s. His land became critical to the growth of the Japanese American community in Los Angeles.

Albright's story, along with those of his daughter, Crystal and her husband, Rufus Marshall, is the heart of a new exhibit at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center this July. Three of Albright's descendants—Barbara Marshall Williams, Robin Waller and Karen "Kiwi" Burch—will receive this year's LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness Award during our annual Pilgrimage.

From the turn of the 20th Century to 1942, the neighborhood Albright helped found became a haven

for Japanese Americans. The Marshall family was at the center of the neighborhood known alternately as Virgil Village, East Hollywood and J-Flats.

It was during the hysteria following the Imperial Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941,



Crystal and Rufus Marshall lived on Westmoreland Avenue in the J-Flats neighborhood before, during and after World War II. They helped their Japanese American neighbors by watching their homes and protecting their belongings.

that the Marshall family demonstrated the friendship and support that was conspicuously absent from many communities.

Following the signing of Executive Order 9066, the neighborhood's Japanese Americans knew they were being forced from their homes. The Marshalls stepped in to watch over their homes and protect their belongings.

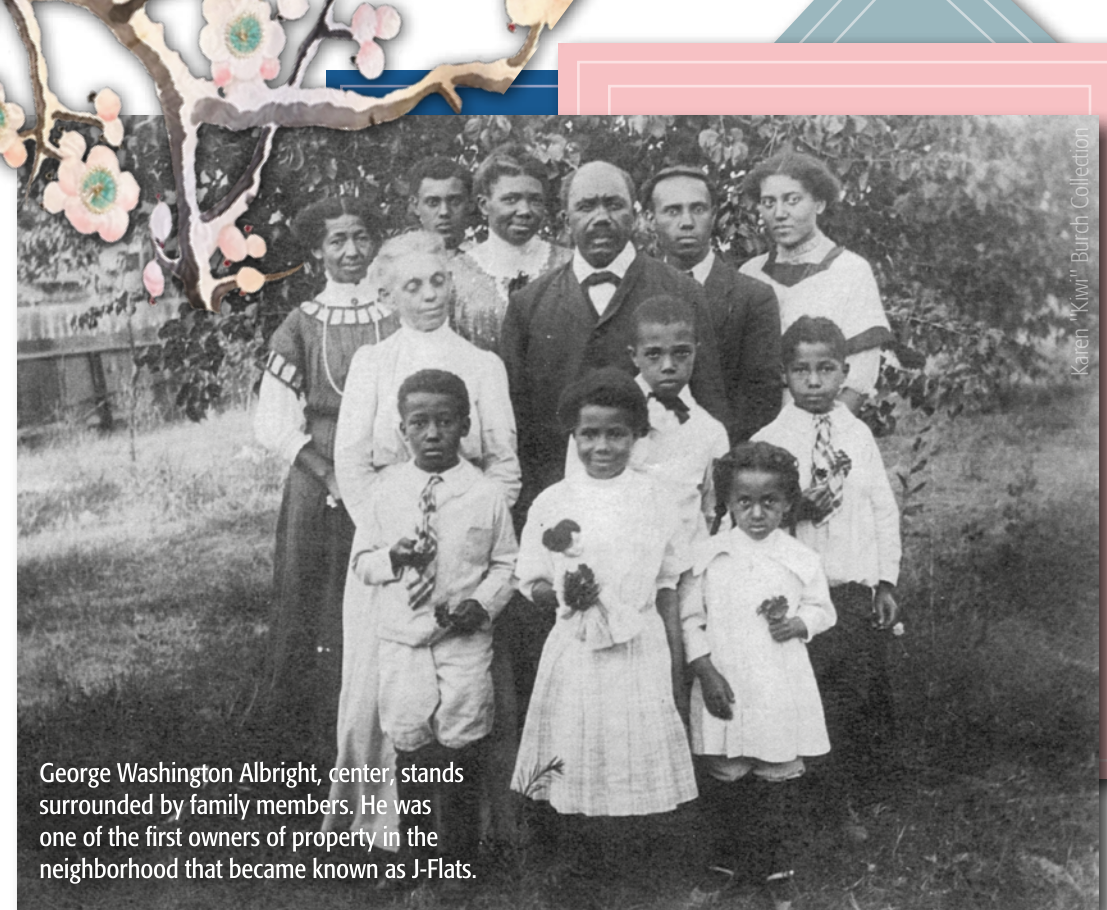
Takashi Hoshizaki, a Heart Mountain board member, remembers how the Marshalls found a tenant for their home and maintained it while the family was incarcerated at Heart Mountain. When the Hoshizakis were sent to the assembly center at the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds in Pomona, the Marshalls visited them with homemade apple pie and ice cream.

It was, Hoshizaki said, "almost a shock, to see, wow, they had gone to the effort of bringing this apple pie, that pie à la mode, and bring it all the way up and having it in the nice frozen state."

Samanta Helou Hernandez, a Los Angeles-based writer and photographer, is creating the exhibit in coordination with Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin and the Heart Mountain staff. Hernandez has published a magazine about various neighborhoods in Los Angeles and photographed many of the landmarks and residents of J-Flats, including Hoshizaki.

In 2017, she created "This Side of Hoover," an on-going visual archive of gentrification and resilience in East Hollywood.

Many of the Japanese American residents returned to the neighborhood after the war, but they eventually moved elsewhere, as the restrictive covenants that limited their housing options eventually fell. Now, J-Flats is home to many Central American immigrants who have brought a new sense of vitality.



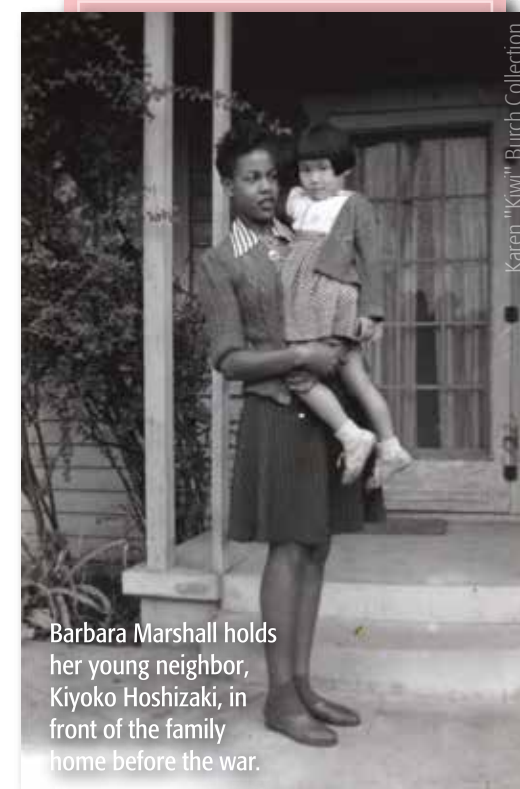
George Washington Albright, center, stands surrounded by family members. He was one of the first owners of property in the neighborhood that became known as J-Flats.

However, the gentrification that has affected other former Japanese American neighborhoods, such as Boyle Heights, is hitting J-Flats. Our new exhibit will view these changes as well as the neighborhood's dynamic history.

Newlin said the exhibit will show the strength of the ties between the different communities who lived in the neighborhood but also the role of the Japanese Americans who left once they gained the ability to move elsewhere.

The exhibit is just part of a growing package of stories about the neighborhood and the relationship between the Marshalls and their Japanese American neighbors. Last fall, Newlin interviewed Hoshizaki and Barbara Marshall Williams in Los Angeles about their memories of the neighborhood, and the Foundation plans to incorporate those interviews into a documentary film.

Since then, the Foundation has acquired new video and materials that will strengthen any future project.



Barbara Marshall holds her young neighbor, Kiyoko Hoshizaki, in front of the family home before the war.

THIS LAND IS OUR LAND, THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND



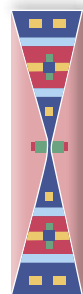
In January 2022, Johnny Tim Yellowtail joined the Heart Mountain team as Historic Site Caretaker. Johnny Tim is a member of the Apsáalooke nation, commonly known as the Crow nation. He is a Men's Traditional Dancing Champion who has represented Apsáalooke traditions in Spain, Canada, and at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. He is also trained in archaeological monitoring and twice helped repair the roof tarp on the Heart Mountain root cellar when full restoration was delayed during the pandemic.

In his role as Historic Site Caretaker, Johnny Tim

is tending to the physical, historical, and spiritual dimensions of this land that is sacred to Japanese Americans and Indigenous peoples alike. In addition to maintaining the grounds and monitoring our historic structures, this summer he will be leading guided tours of the barrack, hospital complex, memorial honor park, and guard tower. He is also serving as tribal liaison as the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation seeks to deepen our connections with the Indigenous peoples that have called this place home.

Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin sat down with Johnny Tim during his fourth month on the job. Here are excerpts of their conversation...

ASN= Aura Sunada Newlin JTY= Johnny Tim Yellowtail



ASN: Tell me a little about who you are—as a person and as an artist.

JTY: My name is Johnny Tim Yellowtail, and my Crow name is Báachia Heeleén Chiwakéesh, which means Praise Within the Forest. My grandfather gave me that name.

I was born and raised on the Crow Reservation in Montana. As a youngster I was pretty much into the culture and the language, but when I got into Junior High, I started listening to AC/DC, Mötley Crüe, all the big hair bands. And then I didn't really pay attention to the culture for a while.

My grandfather's name was George Bearcloud. I would always see him making drum sticks, so I would go ask him what he was making. He would say, "I'm making drum sticks for the singers that want to come and sit at the drum." And I would just stand there and watch him. And then he'd start telling me about the drum, how sacred it is. He would say, "You don't understand right now because you're still young. But one of these days, that big drum will catch you." I never understood what he was talking about until I was around 14. I was walking around at our big celebration called Crow Fair, and it was the first time I'd ever heard a drum group sing in their own language. The beat of that drum called me, and I was just standing there, amazed. That's when I thought of my grandpa, and I said, "This is what he was talking about." After that, all I listened to was drum groups from all the tribes. I wanted to sing, and I joined a drum group called Black Whistle when I was like 15. We started going to the big powwows and I started dancing in the Northern Traditional style, which is a warrior dance.

As I was growing up, I thought the reservation was where I would be for the rest of my life. But my grandma kept on encouraging me, saying, "There's more out there. Don't be afraid to go out and experience more." So when I had the opportunity to leave, I took it. I live here in Wyoming now.

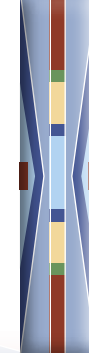
ASN: After you joined our staff, you wrote a song about Heart Mountain. Can you tell me about that song?

JTY: I wanted to write a song for the pilgrimage, and I thought I would have a hard time pulling everything together. I wanted to use the Japanese word for Heart Mountain, but when I put it in there I thought it was gonna be like a tongue twister. But it wasn't, and one day the song just came to me. When I sang the song to my wife, she cried. So I knew it was a perfect song. The song is real special to me.

ASN: Before you knew anything about Japanese American incarceration, you already had a connection to this site. What does this land mean to you and your family?

JTY: This land means a lot to us because we are descendants of Chief Greybull. He lived on this side of the mountain, and they say that this was his camping and hunting area. When my grandparents and the old ones talk about the land, they say that the land is like the flesh and bones of the Apsáalooke, the Crow. That's how much they love their land. That's how sacred the land is to us.

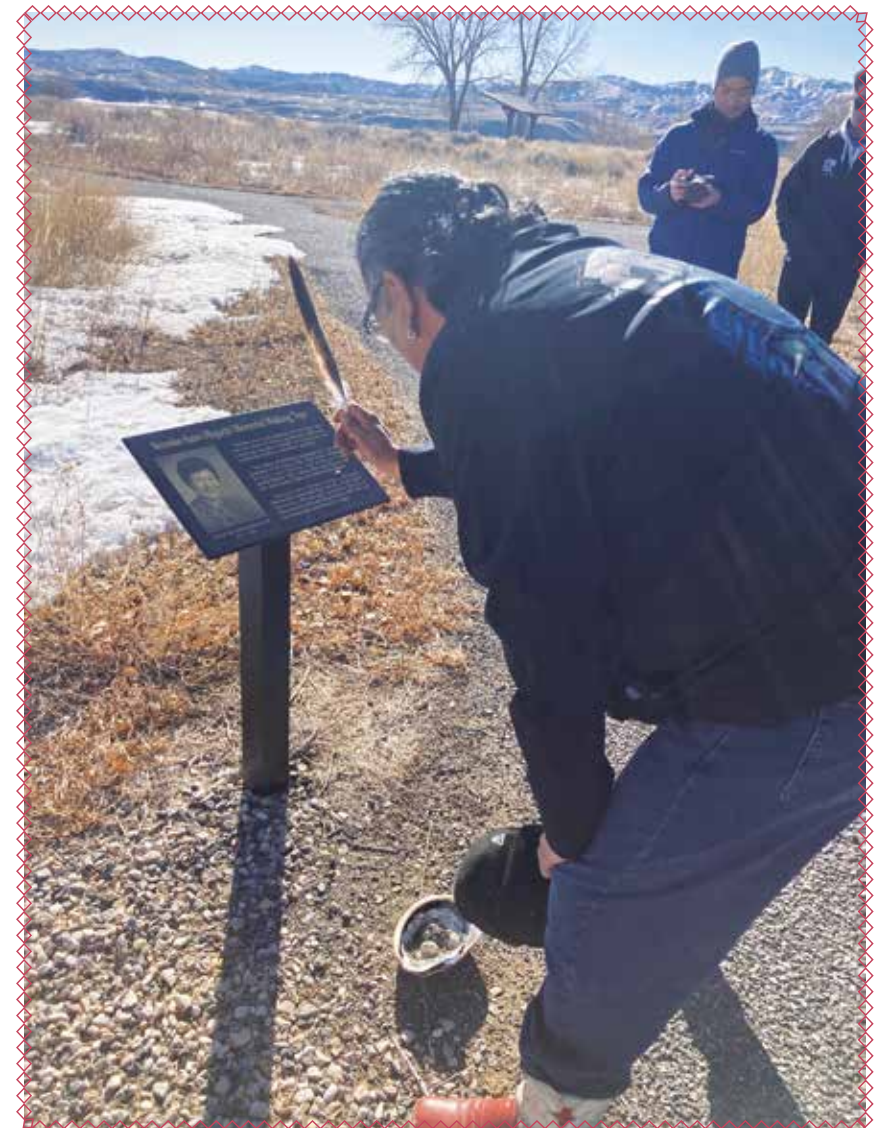
A lot of the old ones are gone now, but they talked about how it was devastating when they took the land away and the reservations happened. They said it was hard because they couldn't come to this land anymore and do the things they used to do. When I started learning about the Japanese Americans, I read one story where a Japanese American man said, "when somebody takes something away from you, you get agitated and frustrated and you want to fight. But when you lose everything, you're numb. You can't do anything about it." So I just imagine going through that, especially when I go up on top of the hill to the Honor Roll. In the morning I go up there and pray and sing an honor song. When I close my eyes and sing that song, I can see the camp. And it's pretty amazing, pretty touching when I'm up there.



ASN: How did you first learn about Japanese American incarceration at Heart Mountain?

JTY: I never really heard about it when I was young. I didn't really know about it until I met Grant Bulltail [who led the annual Return to Foretop's Father event]. He's the one that told me about the camp. After that, I had questions so I went home and asked people. Some people were like, "Yeah, they put a concentration camp right on the Crow land."

Then later I was with my adopted dad, Chris Finley, and we were going to Cody and I asked him what those little houses were, sticking up. He told me it was a root cellar, and he started talking about the camp. He is an archaeologist, and when he started working on the root cellar, he brought me to help him repair the roof. That's when I started learning even more about this place.



Johnny Tim Yellowtail offers a "smudge" blessing in memory of Setsuko Saito Higuchi.

ASN: I first met you in September 2022 when you and your brother Harold and niece Sharmayne came to Los Angeles as part of the Heart Mountain delegation for the Ireichō book of names ceremony at JANM in Little Tokyo. Can you talk about that experience?

JTY: When Harold invited me, I thought I was just gonna go and sing. I didn't really think about it or imagine how it would be. But when we got there and you started explaining what it was about, I was like, "Man, this is a big thing!" The Japanese Americans that were there would come up to us and ask us things. I liked talking to them because I would ask them stuff too. It was pretty neat, communicating about different cultures.

I found out that a lot of Japanese Americans are into Buddhist culture, and it seems like the Buddhist culture and our culture are similar. Especially how Buddhists look at plants as living beings. We feel the same way. So there are a lot of similarities.

ASN: One of the highlights for me was visiting with Brian Kito in the kitchen of his mochi shop, Fugetsu-do. What was that like for you?

JTY: Oh man, I didn't realize he was gonna take us to the back. Once we got to the back and started watching his workers making the mochi, I was amazed. I didn't want to be rude because he was talking, but all I wanted to do was watch them do their thing! When you first take a bite out of it, you wouldn't think it was rice, because they're so good, you know? So to me, it was awesome just to be in his little shop.

Brian gave us mochi to take home, and when we first got off the plane in Billings, we almost fought over that mochi. We finally divided it, and then when I brought it home and gave it to my kids, they already knew what it was. My sons are into Japanese culture so they were real happy. I told them where it came from and that it was made by Japanese Americans. They almost ate it all up, so I had to save some because I wanted my mom to try some. So a couple days later, I shared some with my mom and her husband and my cousins. [In our culture too], if we make food, we'll take it to a relative or a friend. We'll go and share our food.

ASN: What would you like readers to know about you?

JTY: Well, a lot of people think that I'm real serious, that I don't smile. But that's not true—I'm just thinking! I like to laugh and have fun. I'm passionate about a lot of things.

A lot of Crow men, and men in general I should say, want to be tough guys. They don't want to show their emotions. But when I watch a sad movie, I start crying! I'm not embarrassed to show my emotions. I want people to know that I'm not mean. I like to hear good stories, I like to meet different people and ask them questions and hear how they think about what I asked them. I enjoy life. I want people to know that. 🍡🍡



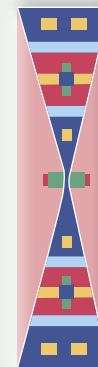
Harold Hill, Johnny Tim Yellowtail, Sharmayne Hill, and Brian Kito in the kitchen of Little Tokyo's legendary mochi shop, Fugetsu-Do.



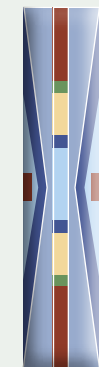
Johnny Tim Yellowtail and Marenda Yellowtail teach members of the San Jose Taiko group in the Heart Mountain barrack.

The Heart Mountain staff hosted San Jose Taiko in March 2023, and we had a magical time sharing about Japanese American and Apsáalooke realities. Here's what some of the San Jose Taiko members had to say about Johnny Tim:

"It really made me feel like the land itself has a spirit. Having him there, giving the prayer, it made the land come alive for me. It allowed the land to know that it could be part of our experience. And it made us realize that this happened to the land as well as to the people."



"I'm not a spiritual person. But when Johnny Tim was singing his first song, I had a vision of spirits of past generations. And they were positive spirits. Instead of being spiteful or hateful, they were joyful. I wouldn't have had that vision without Johnny Tim's presence and the blessing he gave to each of us individually."



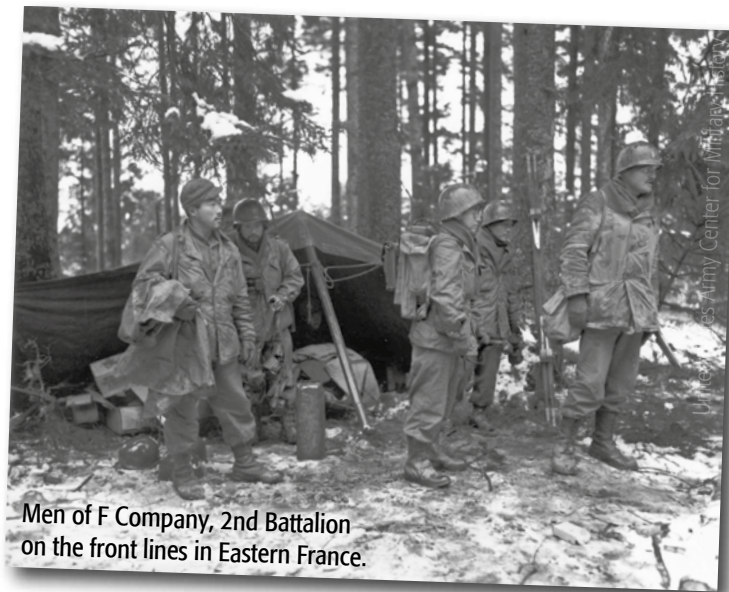
"I felt a sense of welcoming that I wouldn't have been able to feel otherwise. It's easy to say 'Welcome to Heart Mountain,' but it's hard to really feel it. I was able to achieve that with Johnny Tim's help...Of the people who could make me feel okay to be there, I feel like, uniquely, it would have to be him."

We hope to see you at our 2023 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, where you can meet Johnny Tim Yellowtail and hear him perform his original Heart Mountain song.

Part of the Hideo Nakamine papers. Courtesy of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library



52nd Soldiers near The Eagle's Nest.
(L-R): Cpl. K. Miho, Cpl. R. Ogata, & Pfc. T. Watanabe.



Men of F Company, 2nd Battalion
on the front lines in Eastern France.

Courtesy of the Matsumura-Sunada-Newlin family



Above: Clarence shares his LIFE magazine
with some local German women.

Right: Solly is pictured in the top left with
some of his friends after their liberation.

ASK THE CURATOR

The Interpretive Center's spring exhibit, "Parallel Barbed Wire: From Heart Mountain to Dachau," took over a year to research, write, and design. *Kokoro Kara* sat down with the exhibit's curator, Krist Ishikawa Jessup, to learn about the process of putting together such a complex, delicate, and meaningful exhibit together.



KK= Kokoro Kara **KJ**= Krist Ishikawa Jessup



Courtesy of Eric Saul

KK: How long did it take you to create this exhibit and what were the stages involved?

KJ: This exhibit was over a year in the making. It began with the republishing of Solly Ganor's memoir *Light One Candle* by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, and eventually bloomed into the idea of an exhibit about Clarence's and Solly's stories. Once we knew what we wanted to do, I set to work researching. My background is in genocide and Holocaust studies, so I was already familiar with what happened in Lithuania and the brutality that Solly and his family faced. However, I had no idea about the story of the liberation of the subcamps of Dachau and the death march by the segregated 52nd Field Artillery Battalion (FAB), so I began combing through secondary sources about the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and 52nd FAB to learn more. After conducting my general secondary research, I began looking for specific information about Solly and Clarence. I used a lot of primary sources including Clarence's War Relocation Authority (WRA) file, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, oral histories from both men, and first-hand accounts of the 52nd.

Interestingly, in researching Clarence's side of the story, I began to notice inconsistencies in dates and locations between what Clarence was saying and what the documents were telling me. It became quickly apparent that Clarence's memory of his time in Europe was distorted. This is not an uncommon occurrence with oral histories when remembering events that are decades old, especially if they were traumatic. I wanted to ensure that I was able to cross reference what Clarence was saying, so I requested his military personnel record from the National Archives branch in St. Louis, Missouri. Unfortunately, in 1973 there was a massive fire that burned 80 percent of army personnel records from 1912 to 1960, and Clarence's file was one of them. That means we will never be able to know for sure what he was doing and where while he was helping to fight the Nazis in Europe. Due to my inability to cross reference Clarence's story, I pivoted to telling the wider story of the 52nd FAB and incorporated Clarence where I could for several panels. However, both Solly's and Clarence's recollections of the liberation and their meeting were perfectly aligned, so I was able to restore his voice to the narrative in the most crucial part of the story.

Finally, once I had all the research I set to writing the exhibit which took a total of 3 ½ months for the rough draft. The panels and sections naturally broke themselves out as the narrative took shape, but I had to be very discerning on what to add in. The story of both Clarence and Solly could fill an 800-page book, but I needed to ensure that it was interpretive rather than a blow-by-blow account of each man's life. After I finished the rough draft, several staff members including Cally Steussy, Sybil Tubbs, and Aura Sunada Newlin helped me with several rounds of revisions creating the final product we have up in the museum today.

The penultimate stage was the design. I worked closely with our design and brand manager, Kate Wilson, to craft the look and feel of the exhibit. All credit goes to her on how visually impactful this exhibit is. That process took over a month of long hours and late nights. After we had an exhibit we were both happy with, Cally, Sybil, and myself spent three weeks installing the exhibit taking great care in the application of vinyl and hanging of panels. It was an arduous, but extremely rewarding process.



The Dachau death march.

Courtesy of Eric Saul



A Nisei soldier of the 52nd Field Artillery Battalion with survivors of the Dachau death march. This photo was taken on May 2, 1945 by Susumo Ito.

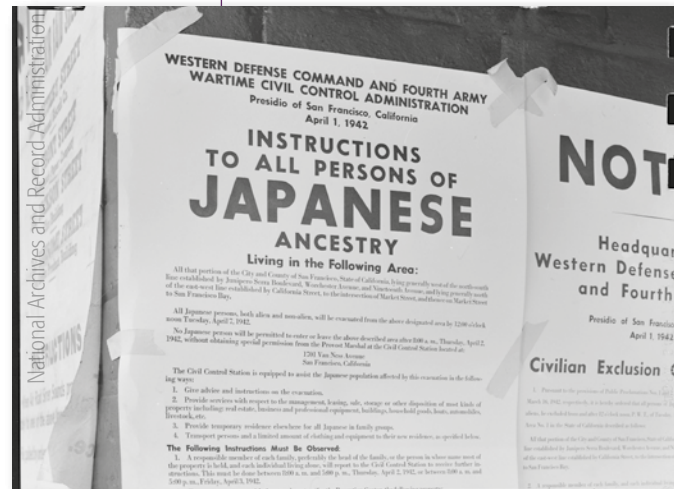
Courtesy of Eric Saul

KK: Did the main goals and thesis of *Parallel Barbed Wire* change from the initial concepts as the exhibit evolved?

KJ: In a word, no. The goal of *Parallel Barbed Wire* was to always use the stories of Solly and Clarence to tell the wider narratives of the Holocaust, the incarceration, and the little known history of Japanese American liberation of the subcamps of Dachau. The primary challenge was figuring out how we could accomplish that goal. There was no initial concept of how the exhibit was going to be physically presented, but as my research progressed, it became apparent that telling their stories on the same panels was going to be too difficult. Rather than grapple with issues of whose story would come first or on the top half of the panel, I decided to follow each man's story individually which is why the exhibit is set up in such a unique way.

Having spent much of my academic and professional life studying, writing, and teaching about the Holocaust and genocide, I have often thought about the mechanisms and strategies that governments, politicians, and organizations employ in order to dehumanize and perpetrate violence against a group they deem undesirable. Because of this, the thesis of this exhibit was always going to center around that theme. To be clear, I am not drawing comparisons of suffering between the incarceration and the Holocaust, nor am I equating the concentration camps that Japanese Americans were held in to the forced-labor and death camps that Jews, LGBTQ+, disabled people, Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, or others were held and murdered in. Rather, this exhibit puts forth that strategies, language, and rhetorical devices used by Nazis to dehumanize their victims bears a striking resemblance to the same strategies, language, and rhetorical devices employed by the United States federal government to attack and justify the incarceration of over 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry.

Exclusion orders like this appeared up and down the West Coast in May 1942.



A group of children observing a sign near the Vilija River in Lithuania that reads, "Entry into the river is forbidden for Jews."



Courtesy of Eric Saul



Courtesy of Solly Ganor



Courtesy of the Matsumura-Sunada-Newlin family



KK: You mentioned the unique layout of this exhibit—for those who have not been able to see it in person, can you talk a little more about how this was set up in the gallery space and how that helped tell these parallel stories?

KJ: The exhibit is essentially split in half. We recommend that people begin with Clarence's side as it also contains an introduction panel to the entire exhibit. From the introduction, you follow Clarence's story beginning with his birth, growing up in Wyoming, moving to Los Angeles, incarceration at Heart Mountain, and eventually ending on the moment that he sees Solly sitting on top of a hill outside Waakirchen, Germany. From that panel, you then head to the other side of the exhibit and follow Solly's story growing up in Lithuania with his loving family, the Nazi invasion, his time in the Kovno Ghetto, the Kaufering and death march, finally ending with his meeting and rescue by Clarence. After learning about their experiences during World II, the exhibit continues on the opposite wall where their stories are now all on one panel. These panels explore what each man did in the 47 years after they met in Germany and finish their story with their emotional reunion in Israel in 1992. The final panel more explicitly draws out the parallels in their stories and ends with a call to action.

As you can see it is a bit complicated in its set up, but the gallery has four walls and no way to foster a more dynamic space, so we had to get creative with the exhibit flow. I felt that telling the story in a linear fashion with both Clarence's and Solly's stories on the same panel would get very confusing. Rather than constantly moving back and forth between the two, it made more sense for visitors to spend uninterrupted time with each man. I wanted visitors to cultivate emotional investment in Clarence and Solly as they learned about their lives so that by the end of the exhibit the convergence of their stories and the messages they impart become more meaningful and impactful.

Top: Clarence and Solly became good friends after they met again in 1992.

Middle: Young Solly, with his parents Rebecca and Chaim.

Left: Clarence's mother, Takeko Tomie Matsumura (pictured left) c. 1929.

PARALLEL BARBED WIRE

FROM HEART MOUNTAIN TO DACHAU

"The United States called these detention camps 'concentration camps' under another name."

"When I saw the temporary barracks and barbed wire fences it reminded me of Poston camp, which I volunteered, it is ironic that many of us who came from the relocation camps in the US would come to Germany to help release the Jewish victims."

—Nosei Soldier of the 32nd Field Artillery Battalion



United States Army Center for Military History

Men of the 442nd fighting in the European theater.

KK: What's one unexpected thing you learned about Clarence (or Solly, or Heart Mountain, or the Holocaust, or anything) during the process of creating this exhibit?

KJ: This may sound like an easy answer, but honestly it was the history of the 522nd FAB and their liberation of the subcamps of Dachau and the death march. It was a history I never knew about and it is such a powerful story. It's impossible not to be struck by the words of the men of the 522nd relaying how these forced-labor camps in Europe, with their barbed wire fences and guard towers, reminded them of the camps their families were still incarcerated in back home, or Solly discussing the irony of being liberated by Japanese Americans whose families were still in camps. As an academic historian we're taught to put an emotional wall between ourselves and our topic of study, but when I wrote about Solly and Clarence meeting on the hillside outside Waakirchen I could not help but feel joy and relief. A sense I still get when I talk about the story.

KK: What do you hope people will take away from this exhibit?

KJ: There are two things that I want people to take away from this exhibit. First, I want people to know the incredible story of the Japanese American liberation of subcamps of Dachau and to take that story and tell others about the men of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion and the irony of their liberation history. Second, I want people to understand the mechanisms and strategies used by governments, politicians, and media to dehumanize, disenfranchise, and discriminate against groups of people deemed to be antithetical to their way of life. These blueprints of hate are not relegated to the realms of history, nor are they under the ownership of any one nation. These methods are being employed right now in countries around the world, including the United States. When hate is left unchecked it is a fire that consumes everything in its path, but if we empower ourselves to recognize the strategies employed by those who wish to isolate and commit violence against vulnerable people, we are better equipped to challenge them.



Krist works with Cally and Sybil to install the exhibit panels and vinyl lettering.



KK: What has been your favorite/the most enjoyable aspect of the outcome of the exhibit?

KJ: I think the visitor reaction has been the most rewarding aspect of this exhibit. Seeing people get emotional lets me know that I accomplished what I set out to do. If there is one thing that I have learned in my time teaching sensitive histories it's that you cannot not change someone's mind, without first changing their heart. If Clarence's and Solly's story touched them in their heart, it means they are more likely to walk away with the messages the exhibit is attempting to impart. Hearing how some folks drove several hours just to come see the exhibit shows that there is a real curiosity and interest in the history. Knowing that you have helped tell a story that has had such a profound impact on people is extremely rewarding.

KK: What is next for Parallel Barbed Wire?

KJ: Unfortunately, the exhibit will come down in July 2023, but it will begin to travel around the United States to other museums. Several institutions have already expressed interest in hosting the exhibit. Simultaneously, we will convert it into a digital exhibit that will be on our website, so those who can't make it out to see it in person will still be able to learn about Clarence's and Solly's stories.



Pilgrimage Home

Going back to where it all began
Eighty years ago
An infant in my parents' arms
On a train with 600 others
Shades drawn
Destination unknown

My father a train monitor
Whatever that meant
On the 80 hour ride
Santa Anita to Heart Mountain
California to Wyoming
My first thousand mile journey

All these years past
Heart Mountain just an image
Drawn by my uncle Paul with carbon pencils
A landform on clay-coated paper
Looming beside a patchwork of barracks
Barbed wire and guard towers

I remade that landform
A snow-covered sentinel above barracks
My first bas relief out of clay
Suitcases, tatami mats, duffle bags:
All tactile replicas of a
Destination unknown

Then my grandson drew Heart Mountain
On the back of a denim jacket he made
A melange of blues with sashiko stitching
Decorating the front and framing the back
With a swatch of Japanese cloth sewn inside:
A gift of love for my eightieth birthday

But I still wasn't prepared for
The stark reality of Heart Mountain
Even though I wore the jacket proudly
All the way to the pilgrimage this summer
Eighty years after we were there
As prisoners, despite being (Japanese) Americans



I spotted Heart Mountain first from above
As we flew to Cody from New York City
Dry, brown, barren land on one side
Lush, green farmland on the other
High desert basin mingled with pockets
Of still frozen patches of snow

My days of reckoning lay ahead
Outside of Cody from the car
I saw Heart Mountain everywhere
A geologic wonder
That became a beacon during dark days
For me now a touchstone

We were three among many
Thousands of Japanese Americans
Three generations
Imprisoned without due process or cause
The one and only time in my life
I lived among and beside other nihonjin

And so my return to Heart Mountain
To be among and beside
Other Japanese Americans again
Not against my will this time
But armed with my own questions
And my own wonderings

Would I find my footing there?
Would I like those I met?
Would they accept me and my daughter,
A mixed race Black and Japanese woman?
Some in our family found it hard to embrace
My Black husband and our hapa children

Within the visitors center
Built to resemble the barracks
Not covered in tar paper
Exposed to wind, sand or snowstorms
No coal-burning stoves here
Only air-conditioned comfort on a hot July day

Amid myriad dioramas and historical displays
I found a room set apart
Making Heart Mountain visible
Through floor to ceiling glass windows
With a long wooden bench
Positioned for observation and meditation

There I met ninety-two year old Josie
Who was twelve at Heart Mountain
Taking care of her one year old brother
He died before her, wanting to go "home"
And so Josie came to the pilgrimage
For the first time to honor his wish

And I met others
Nisei and sansei and yonsei
Who spoke of their parents' pain
Being imprisoned and then freed
Bodily, but with a broken heart
Never mended

I walked to the site of the infirmary
Where I stayed with my mother
Sick with dysentery but surviving
After being housed in a horse stall
At Santa Anita Racetrack for months
Before being brought to Heart Mountain

I went into the replica of a barrack
Reconstructed to its original dimensions
And saw the size of our 16x20 foot "apartment"
Where we arrived to a single light bulb
A pot bellied stove with little coal
And single army cots, piled with makeshift bedding

As I look today at the black and white photos
Taken in November 1942 in front of our barrack
The smiling faces of my parents holding me
Belie the hardships they would face that brutal winter
When Dad's glasses nearly froze as he hung my diapers
And I knew nothing but their love for me

We went underground into a root cellar
The only one of three still passable
Dark and cool, smelling of the earth
A 300-foot long tunnel made solely by our hands
Built to store the plentiful vegetables
Grown by American-born incarcerated

My Uncle Paul Zaima's name is inscribed
On the memorial at Heart Mountain
To those who volunteered to serve America
While our families were imprisoned
Uncle George Zaima and Uncle Hiro Higuchi too
From the Poston prison camp and Honolulu

I brought copies of a few letters
My father wrote to his mother from Heart Mountain
Trapped in Honolulu with her daughter Hisako
After she went to see her grandson Peter
And witnessed the attack on Pearl Harbor
Little did she know what she missed on the mainland

The return address on the letters helped me
Locate the barrack where we lived
And those of the Zaima, Hisatomi,
Konno, and Okida families too
I have all of our family records now
When we were together at Heart Mountain

It was like going home
A pilgrimage to remember
How it must have been
To be a baby there with my parents
Being loved despite everything
It made me not want to leave that place

—Barbara Watanabe Batton
February 2023

Above photo: Barbara Watanabe Batton with
her daughter Rachel at the
2022 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.



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