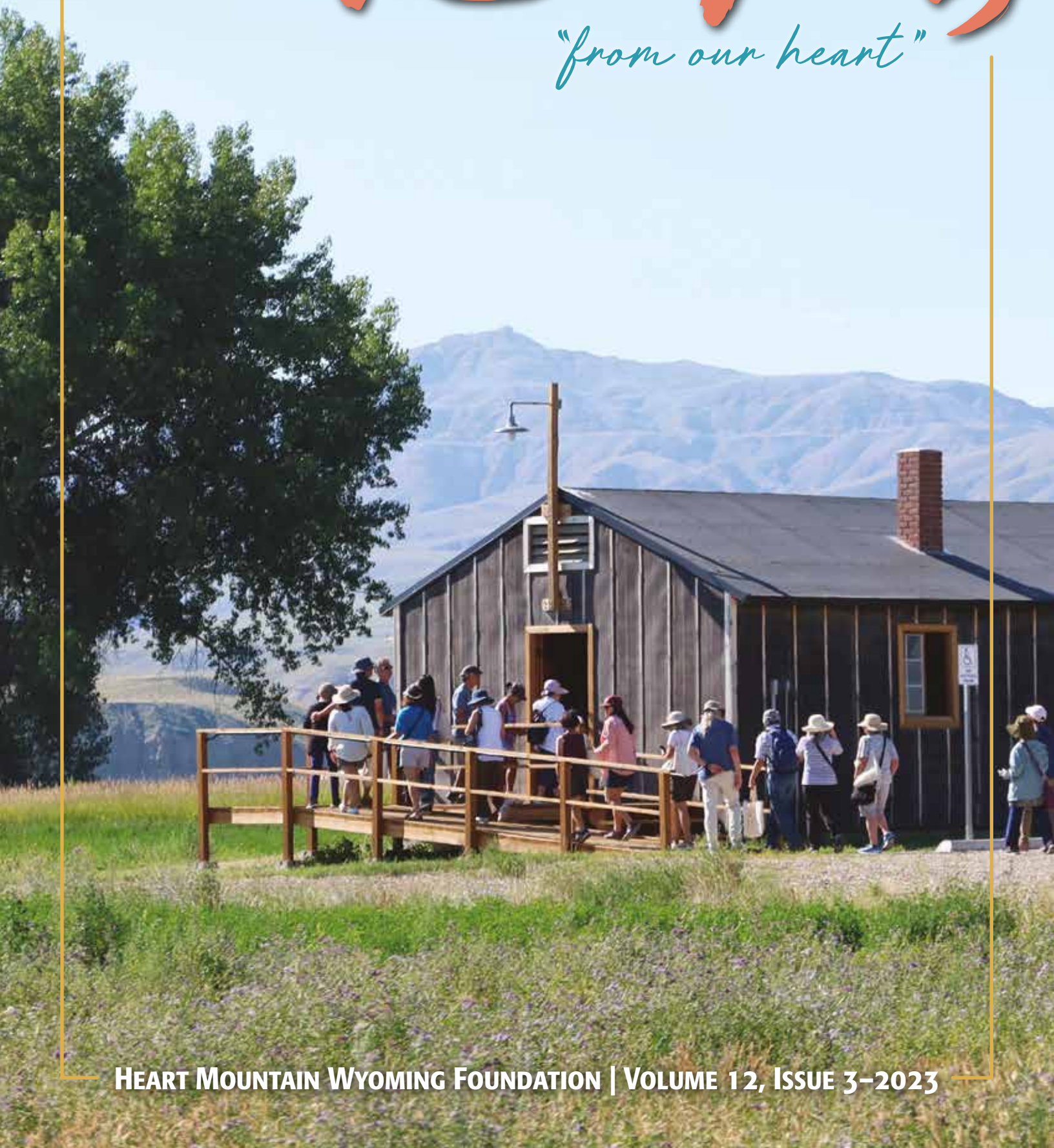


心から KOKOROKARA

"from our heart"



HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION | VOLUME 12, ISSUE 3-2023

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**In memoriam*

COVER IMAGE

Heart Mountain Pilgrimage participants
explore the barrack (read more about the
2023 Pilgrimage on page 16).

Photo by Darrell Kunitomi

Janet Reed-Bradley

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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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FOR THE
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KOKORO KARA

Volume 12, Issue 3

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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 Kate Wilson
with your story ideas.

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CHALLENGES & OPTIMISM

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Our recent Pilgrimage provided yet another example of why I'm so excited about our future.

Amid the dust and clutter of the construction of the new Mineta-Simpson Institute, visitors to our Pilgrimage saw the tremendous progress we have made throughout our National Historic Site.

It will be just weeks before the two key additions to our center—the fourth barrack for archives and artifacts and the mess hall for conferences—are done. As I toured the Mineta-Simpson Institute with Senator Al Simpson, he was overcome with emotion as we walked through the corridor that will house the exhibit about him and Secretary Norman Mineta.

We are making progress on exhibits for our original Heart Mountain barrack, and we continue to look after the land where the former hospital and boiler room stand. Pilgrimage attendees were able to see everything we've done to preserve our history and continue to ensure that similar abuses of human rights don't happen again.

We are taking that message beyond our community—the week before the Pilgrimage, we hosted the advisory board of the National Museum of Natural History. They marveled at the depth of the historical research in our interpretive center. We made valuable connections that will help the Foundation, Institute, and our multiple programs.

Next lawyers affiliated with the Bar Association of the District of Columbia led by President Rawle Andrews Jr. joined DC Superior Court Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring and several of her judges for three days of meetings at the center. They saw how closely the Japanese American incarceration is tied to issues in today's legal environment.

We also hosted a class of 35 teachers from around the country as part of the sixth session of workshops in the Landmarks of American History and Culture program of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). It was the second workshop class of the year, and the teachers have called it the most moving and informative session they have attended. We have just received word that we have received another NEH grant to offer the program next year.

These 10 days taxed our staff and volunteers, who all rose to the occasion. They also, however, represented a new normal for our Foundation, as we keep adding staff, developing new programs and enriching the work we've done for years.

We're no longer just a little museum on the road between Cody and Powell. We're a force for teaching, learning, healing and understanding.

Few things have better communicated that message than the exhibit that debuted in the days just before the Pilgrimage, which you may recall reading about in the most recent issue of *Kokoro Kara*.

"Making a Neighborhood: Exclusion & Community in J-Flats, Los Angeles" told the story of the part of Los Angeles called J-Flats or East Hollywood. Its Japanese American residents were part of a multi-ethnic group of people, many of them barred from living elsewhere, who came together before, during and after World War II to show what can happen when people seek out their common good, not emphasize their differences.



Brian Smyke

The Albright-Marshall family, who first came to Los Angeles at the end of the 19th Century, were Black Americans whose history was steeped in slavery and oppression. They were among the first homesteaders in the neighborhood, which attracted Japanese Americans in the first decades of the 20th Century.

They shared the same values as their immigrant neighbors. They worked hard, tended to their families and homes, and when the government forced the Japanese Americans into camps around the country, the Albright-Marshalls stepped forward to help their neighbors.

We were honored to present the LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness award to three members of the extended Albright-Marshall family—Barbara Marshall Williams, Karen "Kiwi" Burch and Robin Waller. Their allyship during a time of national turmoil is a lesson for all of us.

We're in trying times as a country, but we've been here before. Our community had more than 120,000 people forced from their homes and into camps for more than three years. Many of us, whether incarcerated or not, are still working through the trauma of this difficult history.

What gives me strength and optimism about the future is how many people are following the example set by the Albright-Marshall family. They know that working together and often working through our differences makes



Karen "Kiwi" Burch



The Albright-Marshall Family with Lynne Zall Perry, daughter of LaDonna Zall, for whom the Compassionate Witness Award is named.

for a stronger nation and world.

That's why when I see the various groups of people coming to Heart Mountain, many for the first time, and see how moved they are by the power of place and our message, I am hopeful the spirit embodied by so many of our members will live on.

Stay inspired!

Shirley Ann Higuchi

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

—William James



Educators taking part in our NEH-funded workshops descend into the root cellar.

CONVENTION FOR THE NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS IN THE COURTS



Aura Sunada Newlin

Frank Abe



Daniel James Brown

In May, Aura Sunada Newlin and Shirley Ann Higuchi attended the convention for the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, an organization consisting of judges and justice officials devoted to the equal application of justice to all members of society.

Conducted in Seattle, the convention provided a chance for Higuchi and Newlin to participate on a panel about the Japanese American incarceration with authors Frank Abe, a Heart Mountain descendant, and Daniel James Brown, the noted nonfiction author whose latest book, *Facing the Mountain*, tells the stories of the Nisei soldiers during World War II. Higuchi's book, *Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration*, was published in 2020. Abe is the co-author of the acclaimed graphic novel, *We Hereby Refuse*, which focuses on the resistance to the incarceration.

Attendees of the May convention for the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts in Seattle, WA.



GETTING IT DONE

Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin

Can I get a round of applause for our staff? This issue of *Kokoro Kara* feels like a celebration with its updates on pilgrimage, construction, visiting groups, and more. As Shirley notes in her article, we caught a glimpse this July of the future we are creating at Heart Mountain: a “new normal” in which a steady stream of educators, professionals, leaders, and learners seek out our hallowed grounds to find a sense of belonging and experience what we have to offer.

With just over a year under my belt as Executive Director, the sense of celebration feels even greater because I get to work with the staff members and board leadership who keep this whole thing running. So as the dust settles from tourist season and we ease into autumn, I offer you a behind-the-scenes glimpse of life in our growing organization.

During these months of construction, staff rotate between makeshift workspaces at the Interpretive Center: the staff kitchen, a couple of storage rooms, and the picnic table out back. The staff calendar captures our range of activity: Bus tours, school groups, construction meetings, grant deadlines, media visits, meetings with internal team members, meetings with external partners, and

outreach efforts throughout the state. The front desk staff have become experts in all-things-Heart Mountain as they answer questions and introduce visitors to our complex history. The full time staff are becoming expert problem solvers and brainstormers as the Foundation expands its physical footprint and engages with the public in new ways.

We have our share of brow-furrowing, as we would in any worthwhile endeavor. But not a day goes by at the museum when we don’t get chills from an inspiring story, when we don’t laugh at ourselves in light of the latest predicament, or when we don’t receive a heartfelt gesture of thanks. As a team, we are savvy, creative, conscientious, and supportive of each other. We are geeky in the best kind of way. We are kind. And we care. Thank you to all Heart Mountain staff for getting the work done, and thank you to our members for ensuring that the work continues.



Ted Baumann, WY Photo Services



SYBIL TUBBS

Sybil Tubbs originally came to Heart Mountain in June 2022 for a one-year service position through the Americorps VISTA program. In June 2023, she joined our full-time staff as **Education Manager**. Over the past year, Sybil has helped us advance several initiatives including our Children’s Day Festival, state-wide school field trips, and virtual museum tours. As Education Manager, she is developing new educational materials and taking the lead on our national and regional teacher workshops (including the NEH Educator Workshops pictured here). This fall she presented at the annual conferences of the Mountain-Plains Museum Association and the Montana Federation of Public Employees. Sybil holds an MA in Museum Studies from the State University of New York in Oneonta and a BA in Public History from Athens State University. Heart Mountain and Park County are so lucky to “keep” Sybil as a vibrant member of our community!



NEH Educator workshop participants visit former incarcerated graves at Crown Hill Cemetery outside of Powell, WY.



REBECCA MCKINLEY

Rebecca McKinley joined Heart Mountain’s leadership team in May as **Deputy Director**. A critical hire at this point in the Foundation’s growth, Rebecca brings to this position a wealth of museum, collections, and development experience supplemented by an academic background in anthropology and bioarchaeology. She worked previously as Special Events Coordinator and Donor Advisor at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody; Curator and then Interim Executive Director of the Washakie Museum & Cultural Center in Worland, WY; and Collections Intern for the Meeteetse Museums in Meeteetse, WY. Originally from Oregon, Rebecca has lived in Wyoming for the past six years. She is an animal lover, outdoor enthusiast, and relationship builder whose presence at Heart Mountain elevates our capacity as we grow to new heights. Welcome, Rebecca!



MIRANDA BICKFORD

Heart Mountain is thrilled to welcome Miranda Bickford as our new **Collections Manager**. Miranda moved to Cody in May from Tulsa, Oklahoma where she completed her Master’s degree in Museum Science & Management. Also holding Bachelor’s degrees in History and American Indian Studies, she has worked on collections management and exhibits for seven museums. Miranda impressed the search committee with her sensitivity to sites and stories of racial trauma, having worked directly with members of the Keetoowah, Cherokee, and five Apache Nations as well as Greenwood Massacre survivors and descendants. At Heart Mountain, she has jumped in with both feet to safeguard our collections during construction, accession new items, and help us plan the much-needed expansion of our collections space as part of the LaDonna Zall Research Lab. Welcome, Miranda!



Former incarceratedee Bacon Sakatani speaks to workshop participants.

Below: Frank Abe discusses resistance in the camp.

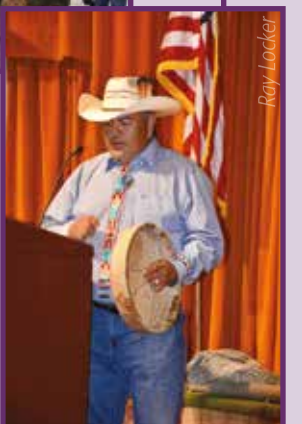


Above: Jerry Millevoi, Richard Mui, Kevin Koppelman, and Angela Guy with Nob Mihara



Above: Johnny Tim Yellowtail addresses a group at the Honor Roll and Memorial.

Right: Johnny Tim Yellowtail sings Apsaalooke song.



Tyson Emborg opens a session.



BADC & Superior Court Delegation Visit Heart Mountain



By Ray Locker

A delegation of judges and lawyers, including four past presidents of the DC Bar, visited the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center in July to learn about the site where 14,000 people were imprisoned without due process during World War II.

Led by Bar Association of the District of Columbia (BADC) President Rawle Andrews Jr., the group met with local lawyers and judges from Cody, to share their perspectives on the legal system and enjoy the scenery of Northwestern Wyoming.

Anita Josey-Herring, chief judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court, attended with other Superior Court judges, including Kelly Higashi, the first Japanese American judge on the court. Her mother's



Shirley Ann Higuchi & Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring

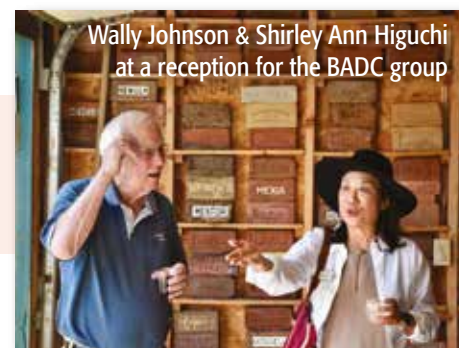


DC Superior Court Judge Kelly Higashi with Willie Ito

family was incarcerated during the war at the Portland, Oregon, fairgrounds, Tule Lake, Jerome, & Rohwer.

The group spent two days at our site and was hosted by Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, a former DC Bar president and BADC member.

During their visit to Heart Mountain, the delegation met with 35 teachers from around the country who were attending an educational workshop about the Japanese American incarceration sponsored by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was the second NEH workshop of the summer. The first was in June. Higashi stayed after the BADC trip to attend the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.



Wally Johnson & Shirley Ann Higuchi at a reception for the BADC group



The BADC group views the exhibits



Rawle Andrews at the Interpretive Center



The BADC delegation views the Heart Mountain root cellar.

Shirley Ann Higuchi, Rawle Andrews, & Aura Sunada Newlin.



Judges Anita Josey-Herring & Eric Manuel check out the root cellar rafters.



Some of the BADC group with Al and Ann Simpson at an evening reception.



Historic Site Caretaker Johnny Tim Yellowtail presents to the BADC group in front of Heart Mountain.

All photos by Ray Locker



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

CALLY STEUSSY

DIRECTOR OF INTERPRETATION
AND PRESERVATION



The non-historic addition to the entrance...

...has been removed...

...so now...

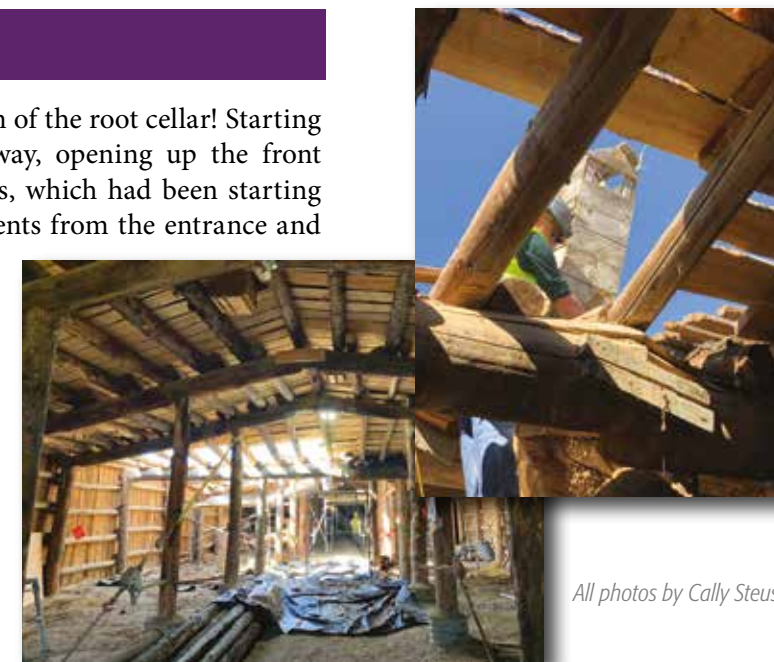
...for the first time since the 1950s...

...the entrance of the root cellar...

...is back to its original layout!

ROOT CELLAR

In addition, we finally broke ground on the restoration of the root cellar! Starting in late May, our work crew was busily digging away, opening up the front entrance of the cellar and the sides of the ramp walls, which had been starting to collapse. They have removed the non-historic elements from the entrance and lifted up the entrance itself back to its original height, and established new concrete foundations to protect the structure into the future. This has been slow and careful work, done with an archaeologist on site at all times, and our workmen are carefully recording, cataloging and storing all original elements that they have to remove, for reuse either in the restoration or as part of the planned exhibit. Now the crew is hard at work putting in the final touches on the restored ramp, and will soon finish replacing the damaged rafters before putting the roof of the cellar back together and battening the structure down for the winter.



All photos by Cally Steussy

MINETA-SIMPSON INSTITUTE

As of our last update in the most recent issue of *Kokoro Kara*, the walls were going up on the fourth barrack, and the concrete foundation of the Mineta-Simpson conference hall was in place.

Four months later, the drywall for the fourth barrack is fully installed, and the first coat of paint is finished on the future office spaces for our expanding staff. The collections space is less finished, due to the more demanding environmental control equipment to keep our collections safe, but overall the fourth barrack has begun to feel like a real building.

The biggest progress has been on the Mineta-Simpson Institute side! Four months ago, the Institute was only a concrete foundation. Now the exterior of the building is almost completely finished, with four brick chimneys facing the entrance of the driveway and black paneling all the way around, giving it the look of a historic mess hall. The non-historic bump-outs for the entrance and recording studio are done up in masonry. On the inside, the drywall is almost fully installed and awaiting plaster, and above the conference space the finished wooden ceiling is almost complete. From the outside, the only thing that shows the building is still under construction are the open spaces where the large glass windows looking out at Heart Mountain will be!



Drywall and general structure taking shape in the future Mineta-Simpson Institute.



Temporary wall in the lobby near the front desk of the museum.



Future hallway entrance into the Mineta Simpson Institute.

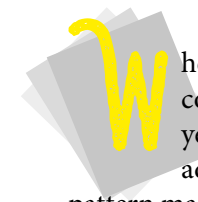




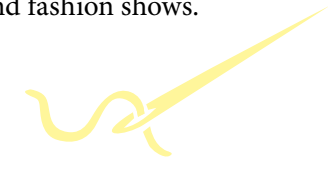
Francis Leroy Stewart, NARA

FASHIONING LIVES BEHIND BARBED WIRE

BY HELEN YOSHIDA



When over 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were unjustly incarcerated in World War II concentration camps, how did they clothe and dress themselves during those tumultuous years? Sewing and fashion were popular classes behind barbed wire. Advertised under adult education, sewing encompassed alterations and costume design, fashion illustration, pattern making, and tailoring. It was taught at all of the camps and incarcerated displayed their work in exhibitions and fashion shows.



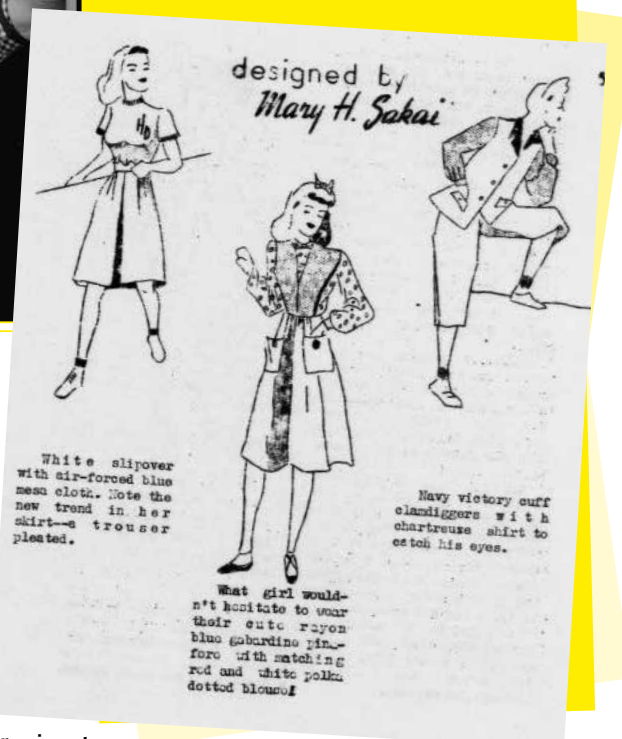
Dorothea Lange, NARA

A sewing teacher stands at the door of her shop in Sacramento, CA, prior to forced removal, May 11, 1942.



Tom Parker, NARA

Incarcerees take a pattern making class in the Amache site, December 10, 1942.



Library of Congress

Drawings by Mary H. Sakai, featured in the Tulean Dispatch, April 1, 1943.



A fashion show at the Tule Lake site, September 07, 1943.



Sewing school at Poston, January 04, 1943.

Francis Leroy Stewart, NARA

DRESSING FOR AN UNFAMILIAR CLIMATE

“This year, when so many girls will be getting their first real winter clothing, fashions are important from the standpoint of practicality, comfort, and health as well as morale and appearance,” wrote an anonymous author in the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*.

Heart Mountain incarceratedees were used to the warmer climates of California, Oregon, and Washington. To survive the harsh Wyoming winter they were encouraged to make or wear clothes made of heavy, insulated fabric. Sweaters, wool-lined leather gloves, wool mittens & dresses, sheepskin vests, knee-high socks, wool and corduroy pants, and layered T-shirts were “fashionable and practical here this winter,” explained the anonymous author. But layering on a tight budget or none at all was no match for weather that dipped below -30 degrees during the winter.

As jobs and classes became available in camp, incarceratedees worked in tailoring & dressmaking fields, learned how to sew, or saved their money to order clothing from catalogs. At the Tule Lake concentration camp and segregation center, over 200 young women modeled the clothes they created for their pattern drafting and design classes. Their work was captured by War Relocation Authority photographer Francis Leroy Stewart and the *Daily Tulean Dispatch* columnist Alyse Hikiji. “The designs were unique and original; the workmanship outstanding,” she wrote.

Fashion advice, along with coverage of events, was also dispensed in the Tule Lake publications: “With our low income, and war shortage up against us, the new trend in fashion has turned toward more practical, streamline, simple, and yet smart-looking clothes. Practice economy by buying quality. And remember that it always pays to choose clothes adaptable to many situations,” wrote Fumi Yumibe in the *Daily Tulean Dispatch*.



Drawings by Lorraine Takayama in the *Tulean Dispatch*, April 1, 1943.

Library of Congress



Young women hold results of pattern drafting class at Tule Lake, September 07, 1942.

Francis Leroy Stewart, NARA

“Wardrobes in Wartime” by Fumi Yumibe, September, 1943.



Library of Congress



Young women learn how to design and make clothing in the sewing school at the Poston concentration camp, January 04, 1943.

Francis Leroy Stewart, NARA

NEW SKILLS BORNE OUT OF NECESSITY

Margie Fujiyama shed some light on the logistics of creating clothes in the camps in an oral history interview for the Japanese American Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton.

My mother took a job as a sewing room monitor. In every few blocks, a small room on the one end of an unused barrack was partitioned off for a sewing room. They used old sewing machines that were brought in, and women and young girls came in to sew and make their own dresses and things. Orders could be placed in the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalogue, or the Spiegel catalogue from Chicago.

Meanwhile, other incarceratedees excelled at this hard-earned skill or looked forward to the day when they could leave that sordid chore behind.

“I think I took sewing and I danced a lot. I love to dance and so I used to go to dances every week,” said

Masaka Oba Sugita in an oral history interview, also for CSU, Fullerton. She was sixteen years old when her family was incarcerated at the Poston concentration camp in Arizona. During the war, Sugita and her friend attended the Ray-Wilkes School of Fashion and Design in Chicago, where they pursued this passion for creating clothes.

“We learned everything from pattern making, designing, everything. I really wasn’t ready for it. I probably would’ve done better if I’d taken it about five years later. Just out of high school and I jump into something like that. But I learned a lot there and there were other Japanese girls there,” she said.

After the war, Sugita worked as a seamstress in Los Angeles, working under the tutelage of Hollywood fashion and costume designer Howard Greer. From 1927 to 1962, Greer designed custom clothing for stars of the silver screen and costumes for movies such as *Bringing Up Baby*.



Francis Leroy Stewart, NARA

Incarcerees attend the fashion show at Tule Lake, September 07, 1942.

ETERNAL FEMININE

TULE LAKE FASHION AT A GLANCE
FRANCES OKAMOTO



It seems to be the opinion of many that in spite of the war, the fashion world should be kept from changing too radically. For one thing, the majority will be wearing what is on hand, finding enjoyment while doing so. We might as well.

Among the very chic variety of appropriately dressed, viewed at a glance is Alice Abe of Ontario 27. The social and refreshing look, suggesting decidedly feminine lines is Miss Abe.

Skirts and blouses are much favored too. Wearing them with dash and spirit is Miss Joe, although she prefers slacks when mercury decides to fall.

Presenting a classic look is Miyoko Mizumachi, showing the tailored touches in her blouses and giving a softer tenderness in her suits.

Teiko Marue and Jean Nagata answer to the example of arresting attire consisting of beige color. Jean usually highlights her pleated skirts with white blouses stressing her preference for tailored lines.

Reflecting wartime smartness too in color and choice of material is Mrs. Ayako Kamamoto, ideally wearing an interesting dirndl skirt of dotted gray seersucker of cotton.

The Hawaiian influence suddenly seems to have taken possession of the younger sets, as vivid tropical scenes of palm trees and forms of ocean beach wave patterns in their blouses and skirts. Then too the artistic hands are busily engaged in the making of leis of crepe papers enfolding variety of colors through them. Setting a good example are the Inouye sisters of Canton 27. Their choices are varied with Hawaiian patterns with accent of harmonious leis.

And do you know something: creative in line of accessories? The something original is the creation of self-made necklaces of sea-shells complemented and greens. The secret of which is the old stand-by—plain ink.

Library of Congress

"Tule Lake Fashion at a Glance" by Frances Okamoto in the *Tulean Dispatch*, August 1, 1942.



Janet Reed-Bradley



Darrell Kunitomi



Janet Reed-Bradley



Mako Inouye



James Gleason



Janet Reed-Bradley



Mako Inouye

2023 HEART MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE

POWELL & CODY, WY • JULY 27-29, 2023



Toyo Miyatake Studio

Helen Yoshida is the Communications Writer at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM). She earned her BA in English from the University of California, Irvine, and her MA in History, with a focus on oral history, from California State University, Fullerton. Her work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The Oral History Review*, *Kokoro Kara*, and JANM's blog, *First & Central*, among others. Previously, Helen worked for the HMWF as Executive Assistant to our board chair (2015-2017) and was instrumental in rescuing the Eaton Collection by working with Heart Mountain board and staff to halt its public auction.

Executive Assistant to our board chair (2015-2017) and was instrumental in rescuing the Eaton Collection by working with Heart Mountain board and staff to halt its public auction.

FAMILY RESEARCH



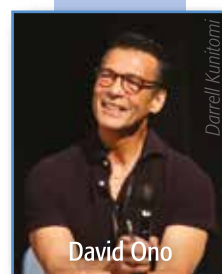
By Ray Locker

The Heart Mountain Pilgrimage conducted July 27 through 29 attracted more than 260 registrants who attended panels on mixed-race identity, multigenerational trauma, books about the incarceration, and tours of the multiple exhibits and projects being developed at the site.

More than 60 percent of the visitors were attending the Pilgrimage for the first time, and many of them came with questions about their families' incarceration experiences. The Foundation started a program offering family research sessions for members interested in learning more about how their family members were incarcerated, what happened to them in camp and where they went after the war.

The Foundation introduced its research work during its opening session on Friday, July 28 with a panel featuring actors Tamlyn Tomita and Ally Maki, who are Heart Mountain descendants making their first visit to the camp site.

They appeared with Los Angeles documentarian and newscaster David Ono as



David Ono



Tamlyn Tomita



Ally Maki

Finn Laubscher, Rachel Watanabe Batton, & Matthew Weisbly participating in the Mixed Nikkei panel discussion, with Alan Maeda moderating.



Ray Locker guides Ally Maki & Tamlyn Tomita through a live family research session, exploring aspects of both families' time at Heart Mountain.

Darrell Kunitomi

CONSTRUCTION TOURS

Pilgrimage attendees also had a chance to tour the under-construction Mineta-Simpson Institute, the new facility that will host conferences and other activities dedicated to promoting the values displayed by Secretary Norman Mineta and Senator Alan Simpson. The two first met as Boy Scouts behind the Heart Mountain barbed wire and remained friends until Mineta's death in May 2022. Simpson toured the institute building with Shirley Ann Higuchi, the Foundation's board chair.

The Foundation will celebrate the Institute's grand opening during next year's Pilgrimage. Along with the conference center, the Institute will feature a new wing dedicated to former Heart Mountain board member LaDonna Zall, the longtime board member who watched the last train filled with incarcerated leave Heart Mountain on November 10, 1945. Zall, who died in 2021, was Heart Mountain's first curator, and the new wing will hold artifacts and archives.



Shirley Ann Higuchi & Alan Simpson

Pilgrimage participants explore the root cellar and future Mineta-Simpson Institute construction sites.



Walking from the hospital with the barrack in the distance.



Exploring the original site from the root cellar to the hospital to interpretive center.



Friday morning opening ceremony



Pioneers who built the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation from a dream of former incarcerated and historians were honored with lifetime achievement awards during the Pilgrimage.

Bacon Sakatani, Jeanette Misaka, and Raymond Uno received the Douglas W. Nelson Lifetime Achievement Medals on Saturday, July 29 in recognition of their work in preserving the memory of the Japanese American incarceration at Heart Mountain and ensuring that it never happens again.

Sakatani, Misaka, and Uno helped raise money for the Foundation in its early years and collected archives and artifacts for the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, which opened in 2011.

AWARDS

Nelson, the vice chair of the Heart Mountain board, also received a similar award for his 25 years of service to the Foundation and his groundbreaking book that led the way for future historians studying Heart Mountain and the incarceration.

Nelson first discovered Heart Mountain in 1968 while he was a history graduate student at the University of Wyoming. He was the first scholar to research what had happened at the camp.

His book, *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp*, was republished by Heart Mountain earlier this year.



Clockwise from top: Amelia Shin, Cheryl Loury, Terry Ross, Sandy Ross, Sharon Fujimoto, Bacon Sakatani, & Shirley Sakatani

HMWF Board members & Pilgrimage co-chairs Claudia Wade & Kathy Saito Yuille were honored for their years of service.



Above, center, & below: Former incarcerated raise their hands to be recognized.



Keynote speaker: David Mineta

COMPASSIONATE WITNESSES

The Foundation gave its annual LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness Award to members of the extended Albright-Marshall family, the descendants of some of the original residents of the Los Angeles neighborhood known as J-Flats.

Before, during and after World War II, the J-Flats neighborhood, also known as East Hollywood, was home to Japanese Americans and Black Americans, such as the Albright-Marshall family. Rufus and Crystal Marshall ran a catering business and were close to their Japanese American neighbors, who were forced from their homes after the signing of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942.

When their neighbors, such as the Hoshizaki family, were incarcerated first at the Pomona Assembly Center and then Heart Mountain, the Marshalls watched over their homes and belongings. Takashi Hoshizaki, a Heart Mountain board member, remembered how the Marshalls brought apple pie and ice cream to his family while they were at Pomona.

Crystal and Rufus Marshall's daughter, Barbara Marshall Williams, Barbara's niece Karen "Kiwi" Burch, and Barbara's daughter Robin Waller received the award for the family.

MAKING A NEIGHBORHOOD

The award presentation coincided with the opening of "Making a Neighborhood: Exclusion & Community in J-Flats, Los Angeles", our new exhibit about the history of the J-Flats neighborhood from its founding through the various communities that found a home in it.

Samanta Helou Hernandez, a resident of nearby Virgil Village, wrote much of the exhibit and took many of the photographs of the neighborhood and its residents, including Takashi Hoshizaki, who still lives on the street where he grew up.

The centerpiece of the exhibit is a vintage kimono owned by the Kakiba family and protected by the Albright-Marshalls while their neighbors were at Heart Mountain. The Making a Neighborhood exhibit will remain in Heart Mountain's temporary exhibit space until next spring.



Aura Sunada Newlin presents Barbara Marshall Williams with the Compassionate Witness Award.



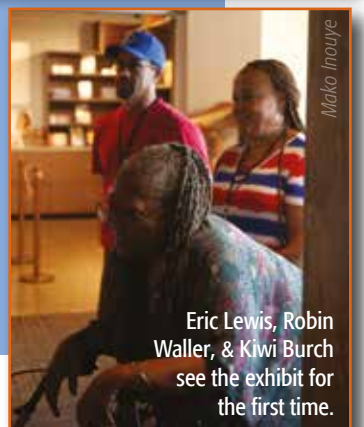
Eric Lewis, Johnny Tim Yellowtail, Kerry Kunitomi Cababa, Cheryl Burch McDonald, Crystal Marshall McCullough, & Robin Waller



Marvin Inouye points out his part of the Making a Neighborhood story.



Eric Lewis, Robin Waller, & Kiwi Burch see the exhibit for the first time.





Frank Abe, Doug Nelson, and Eric Muller from the authors panel.



AUTHORS PANEL

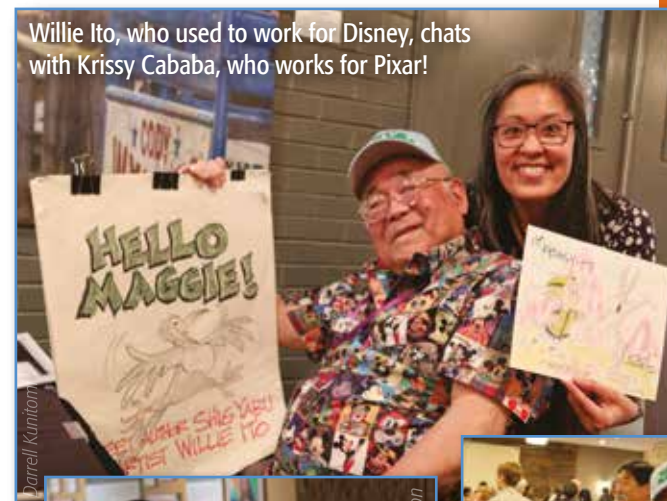
Doug Nelson was part of a panel of Heart Mountain authors that included author and documentarian Frank Abe, a Heart Mountain descendant, and Eric Muller, a University of North Carolina law professor and one of the creators of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center's permanent exhibit.

Muller talked about his new book, *Lawyer, Jailer, Ally, Foe: Complicity and Conscience in America's World War II Concentration Camps*, which tells the stories of War Relocation Authority attorneys who worked at Heart Mountain and two other camps. The book uses fictional techniques to recreate the conversations held by camp attorneys and incarcerated.

Abe's book, *We Hereby Refuse*, tells the story of resistance inside the various camps, including Heart Mountain's draft resisters and Mitsuye Endo, who waged the only successful legal challenge to the Japanese American incarceration during World War II.



Exploring the Heart Mountain barrack.



Willie Ito, who used to work for Disney, chats with Krissy Cababa, who works for Pixar!



CARTOONING

Legendary animator Willie Ito showed participants in a workshop how to create cartoons, such as those included in *Hello Maggie!* the book by Heart Mountain incarcerated and board member Shig Yabu.

Hello Maggie! is now being produced as an animated film that will premiere during the 2024 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. The trailer was shown during the Friday session of the Pilgrimage and received an enthusiastic response.



Honoring family members who served in the military.



Former incarcerated Prentiss Uchida discusses the Heart Mountain hospital.



Save the Date!

2024 HEART MOUNTAIN
PILGRIMAGE

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The Ballad of Baby Virgie

"Standing Alone Back
Against the Wind,"
drawing by
Estelle Ishigo.

A Glimpse Into the Work of Heart Mountain's Social Welfare Department

By Dakota Russell

MARCH 1, 1943

In late February, a Chinook wind blew down from the Rockies and enveloped Heart Mountain in an unseasonable warmth. Even the locals were fooled into thinking spring had arrived early; but it didn't last. "The temperature dropped so fast," wrote Velma Kessel in her diary, "that icicles froze in crooked patterns."

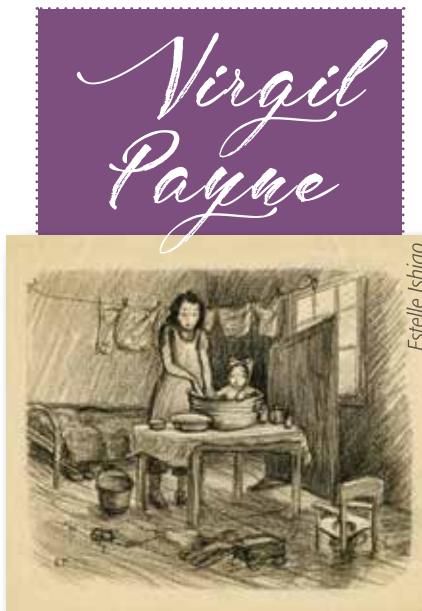
Velma was the overnight nurse at Heart Mountain Hospital, the rough collection of green shingled buildings serving the medical needs of the incarcerated Japanese American community. The only way to reach the hospital was on foot, so winter nights were typically quiet. People wouldn't bundle up and walk a mile across the frozen camp for anything short of an emergency.

It was similarly still at the camp's front gate, where a military guard kept watch from a little booth, 24 hours a day. The soldier glanced down at his watch, noted it was just after 2 a.m., and looked up to see a young *Nisei* woman in front of him. She was completely undressed and sobbing quietly. The guard tossed his wool great coat over her shoulders and demanded to know what she was doing here. Failing to get a coherent answer, he escorted her up the hill to the hospital.

Velma Kessel recognized the woman as a patient she had seen just days earlier, in much happier spirits, with a newborn infant in her arms. It occurred to her that, somewhere in the camp on this subzero night, there could be an infant alone. After admitting the young mother, Velma dispatched a messenger to the staff dormitories with an urgent mission: Find Virgil Payne.

By the time she became Director of the Social Welfare Department at Heart Mountain in 1942, Virgil Payne had amassed a résumé that put her male colleagues to shame. A farm girl from the Missouri Ozarks, she had gone on to earn a degree in education, a master's in sociology from NYU, and a certificate from the New York School of Social Work. The field of social work was largely created by ambitious women like Virgil, women who completed an education only to find most career paths closed to them.

Jobs in social work—even for women—became plentiful after The Great Depression and the New Deal that followed. Virgil first led the Federal Transient program in Missouri, then moved to Wyoming and served as Director of the state's Emergency Relief program and Director of Professional and Community Activities for the Works Progress Administration. This wide breadth of



experience would prove useful at Heart Mountain.

To the incarcerated Japanese Americans, Virgil was something of a curiosity. They told a story of how Virgil, on leave in Cheyenne, missed her bus back to Heart Mountain. Without hesitation, she flagged down a truck full of road workers, jumped into the back, and rode all the way to Cody.

Unusually for a department director, Virgil lived in staff housing at the camp. In the winter, she could often be found ice skating in the rink off Block 17, and in summers she was on the dusty nine hole golf course the incarcerated had built in the administration area. She volunteered

to lead a troop of Girls Scouts in camp, coordinated the YWCA and Red Cross programs, and even helped harvest vegetables on the farm. In 1943, a profile in the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* marveled over her “democratic and somewhat Bohemian ways.”



A new mother looks on at her baby in the nursery at Heart Mountain Hospital.

Hikaru Iwasaki, NARA

Peggy Fujioka

Energetic as Virgil was, she could not look after the social welfare of the camp alone. Virgil found an ideal partner in Peggy Fujioka, a bright Nisei woman of 28 who became the department's second in command. Before the war, Peggy had been recruited by the Foreign Service, and spent several years working for the US government in Japan. Her record of service didn't stop the FBI from arresting her father on dubious charges in early 1942, or the military from removing her and her family to Heart Mountain.

Social work was new to Peggy, but she had a natural talent with people. She was warm and outgoing in a way that made them trust her. In 2022, sociologist Sara Kekki mapped social networks in Heart Mountain, looking for “hidden power”—individuals outside positions of authority that nonetheless wielded enormous influence in the camp. Peggy emerged as one of Heart Mountain's most influential figures. Her connections opened doors that allowed her and Virgil to take on some of the camp's thorniest problems.



Courtesy of David Fujioka

Peggy Fujioka

MARCH 27, 1943

“Foster Parents Sought” read the headline in the *Sentinel*. Virgil and Peggy had found the missing infant safe on the night of March 1, but problems with the case continued to multiply. The baby's parents were two young Nisei who “became very briefly animated of each other” while incarcerated at the Pomona Assembly Center. By the time they arrived in Heart Mountain, the relationship had gone sour. Virgil advised against marriage.

The young woman's parents didn't take news of her pregnancy well, so arrangements were made for prenatal care and delivery at a Salvation Army Home in Denver. The girl had been back in camp just a few days when the guard discovered her at the gate. The combined stresses of family dysfunction, life behind barbed

wire, and care of a newborn pushed the young mother past her breaking point. Her condition continued to deteriorate.

Heart Mountain had no mental health facilities. The doctors recommended sending her to the State Hospital in Evanston, and her parents consented. Neither they nor the father wanted the baby, so the little girl remained at Heart Mountain Hospital. The nurses who looked after the infant, to Virgil's embarrassment, started calling the little girl “Baby Virgie.”

Virgil announced the search for foster parents in the *Sentinel*, but withheld most of the personal details. It didn't matter. Gossip spread fast around Heart Mountain. Soon, the whole camp was following the story of Baby Virgie.

Social Welfare

This kind of case was all too common to Virgil and Peggy, and they had virtually no resources to help solve it. The architects of the camps had only thought about humanity in its most generic, interchangeable form. The work they anticipated for the Social Welfare department was mostly administrative: distributing financial assistance, issuing winter clothing, and arranging transfers between camps. They hadn't planned for the infinite unpredictability of real people, or the complex problems that Virgil and Peggy would have to untangle.

The trauma of forced removal and incarceration had left deep emotional and psychic wounds on the Heart Mountain community. Shell-shocked parents found themselves too overwhelmed to care for young children. Peggy and Virgil set up a system of home visits and established a preschool. No provisions had been made at the camp for the elderly and handicapped, so the Social Welfare Department hired housekeeping aides and worked to establish a rest home. When teenagers slid into juvenile delinquency, Peggy and Virgil stepped in to act as parole officers.

They learned that one of the most important things they could do was just to listen. Once a week, they opened the doors of the Social Welfare office, arranged the chairs in a circle, and waited for incarcerated to come in. People, they discovered, needed a safe place to talk about what they were feeling. This improvised group therapy became one of the great successes of the program.

NOVEMBER 20, 1943

"Little Virgie has become an orphan for the second time," Velma Kessel lamented in her diary. The Social Welfare Department had been finalizing an adoption for Baby Virgie with a Japanese American couple in Denver, but plans abruptly fell through when the prospective mother learned she was pregnant. Baby Virgie had been living in the hospital for nearly nine months now, only leaving Ward 5 when the off-duty nurses carried her over to their quarters. "Every effort [has been] made to give the child the normal affection she should have," wrote Virgil Payne, but her tone revealed her concern.



The Children's Village at Manzanar, where Japanese American children in foster care and orphanages were sent during the forced removal.

Photo by Ansel Adams

Those who were most vulnerable in the community felt the pain of incarceration most acutely. Young women were not only likely to become victims in the camp, but were likely to be blamed for their situation. So many women had been abandoned by their parents or boyfriends, accused of "questionable morals" by their neighbors, and otherwise shunned that Peggy and Virgil made plans to set aside specific barracks to house them.

Amy Iwasaki Mass, just a small girl at the time, remembers Virgil calling on one of those women in her barrack:

"My next-door neighbor was a beautiful, pregnant, 19 year-old, kind, young woman...As you can imagine she had no friends at camp...I spent a lot of time with her. Virgil Payne came to see her regularly to help her plan for what she would do with the baby. Ms. Payne always greeted me warmly, and after months of thinking all Americans hated me, it meant a lot to find a Caucasian professional woman treat me like she liked me."

Years later, inspired by the kindness shown to her and her neighbor, Amy decided to go into social work herself.

There was a precedent in the camps for kids with no parents to look after them. When rounding up Japanese Americans on the West Coast, the military insisted that no one be excluded—not even children. Kids living in foster homes and orphanages were taken from their caregivers and sent to the euphemistically named "Children's Village" at the Manzanar camp in California. If they couldn't find a home soon for Baby Virgie, a transfer to the Children's Village might be the only remaining option. Virgil redoubled her efforts.

Resettlement

In the summer of 1943, the camp's administration began to encourage "resettlement" among the incarcerated. Nisei were given permission to seek jobs outside Heart Mountain—after, of course, their successful completion of a loyalty questionnaire and a mountain of other paperwork. If they were hired, they could leave the camp indefinitely.

Many saw resettlement as a way to escape the indignities of camp life, but there was a sinister motive behind the government's plan. Resettlement allowed officials to control where Japanese Americans went after camp. The West Coast was off-limits entirely, and leaves were approved in such a way as to ensure that no one city ever gained a large Japanese American population. By separating the Nisei from their elders and their peers, the government hoped to force their assimilation and erase their culture.

Social workers like Virgil Payne, who had gained the trust of the incarcerated, were to play a key part of this plan. Virgil's superiors urged her to push all her Nisei contacts to relocate, regardless of their personal circumstances. She went along with the plan initially, even posing for propaganda photos with the Sashihara family as they prepared to leave Heart Mountain for Cleveland.

After watching the Resettlement program in action, though, Virgil grew skeptical. Housing was in short supply nationwide, and wages offered to Japanese Americans weren't always enough to support a family on the outside. In order to save money, men would go out for work alone and leave their wives and children behind at Heart Mountain.

Virgil's growing frustration seeped into her monthly reports. She increasingly complained about problems in the camp "in connection with broken families because of the relocation of certain family members." Saddled with all the domestic work and little communication from their husbands, wives occasionally

developed "strong friendships with other men." Some men were actively preying on them. Virgil noted that one repeat offender at Heart Mountain had "three other women in this center he is seeing regularly and a fourth lady at Poston." If any of Virgil's bosses shared her concerns, they never wrote her back.

Photographing an incarcerated before he resettles outside of the camp.



Hikaru Iwasaki, NARA



Velma Kessel, nurse at Heart Mountain Hospital.



Virgil Payne posing for a propaganda photo with the Sashihara family preparing to leave Heart Mountain.

Hikaru Iwasaki, NARA

Closure

Unable to change the resettlement policy from Heart Mountain, Virgil hoped to reshape it from higher in the organization. In September 1944, she took a position helping to lead the War Relocation Authority's Resettlement Office for the Great Lakes Region. She lasted just under a year there, and then left for an overseas assignment with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, on a mission to rebuild war-torn Europe.

The new Social Welfare Director at Heart Mountain, Adeline S. Kell, offered a marked contrast to Virgil Payne. Kell's view of social work centered less on building relationships and more on the efficient management of people. In many ways, she was exactly the type of person the government had been looking for. No one at Heart Mountain liked her.

Kell brought her own assistant to the camp, effectively pushing Peggy Fujioka out of the department. Most of the rest of the Japanese American staff resigned shortly afterward. Peggy transferred to the camp's Reports Department, where she stayed until her departure from camp in August 1945. Years later, Peggy would return to diplomatic work, enjoying a long career in the Japanese Consul General's office.

After Adeline Kell had been on the job a few months,

even her superiors had to admit she "lacked warmth in her approach." Confronted with this criticism, Kell argued that Virgil's job had been easier than hers. The main focus in the first years of camp, she said, was "giving disaster relief." She, on the other hand, was being asked to do "everything possible to hasten people's departure."

Unsurprisingly, no one came to Kell's defense; but her statement had a grain of truth to it. Once the government lifted its restrictions on Japanese Americans returning to the West Coast in 1945, they wanted to close the camps as quickly and inexpensively as possible. The politicians and bureaucrats of the War Relocation Authority had little concern for the lives they had ruined or the fact that many Japanese Americans had no homes to return to. When Heart Mountain finally closed in November 1945, many families were sent to live in cheap hotels, trailer camps, and even tents—some for years.

The stories from the Heart Mountain Social Welfare Department aren't pleasant or easy to tell. Our instinct is to talk about the resilience of the Japanese American community in the camps, rather than the people who were broken by their incarceration. We want stories about them lifting each other up in a time of need, not about them hurting each other further. But if we want to understand the trauma of this experience, we can't just understand it in the abstract. We need to see all the messy, unpleasant ways that trauma manifests. We have to allow the people of Heart Mountain the humanity that their government tried so hard to deny them.

For years after their release from Heart Mountain, artist Estelle Ishigo and her husband Arthur lived in a series of makeshift trailer camps with other Japanese American families.



Heart Mountain Preschool

Tom Parker, NARA

JANUARY 4, 1944

Over the course of December, several couples visited the Social Welfare office to inquire about Baby Virgie. Newspapers in the other camps had picked up the stories in the *Sentinel* and reprinted them. The news had even leaked out into the nearby towns of Cody and Powell. Two white couples contacted the camp administration about the child. Virgil Payne decided it would be best to place Virgie with Japanese Americans, though, and began interviews of applicants inside the camp.

When Velma Kessel next visited Ward 5 to play with Baby Virgie, she found the little girl was gone. Virgil had found her a family. "The foster father is a Christian minister," she wrote, "and the mother is an extra refined person and there

are already two little children." The *Sentinel* announced the adoption later that week, and the whole camp celebrated. In a place where the whole future seemed uncertain, this was the rarest of gifts—a happy ending.

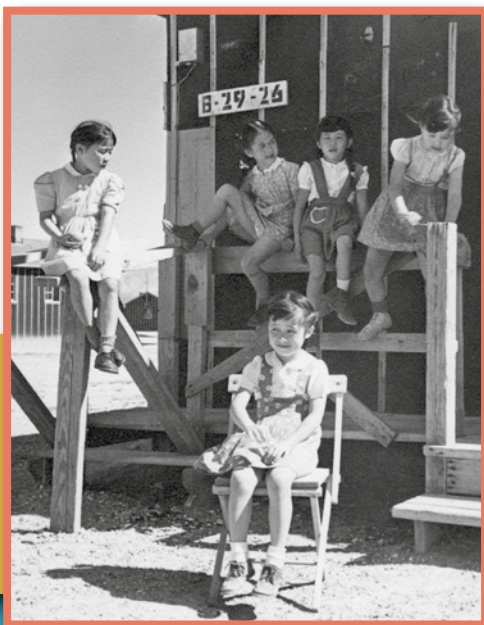


Dakota Russell is the executive director of The House of the Seven Gables, where he tells the story of the Settlement House Movement and the beginnings of social work in America. He serves on the Heart Mountain Advisory Council.



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