



KOKORO KARA

"from our heart"

HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION | VOLUME 12, ISSUE 4-2023

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WYOMING FOUNDATION

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COVER IMAGE

Painting by Jishiro Miyauchi (read more about Heart Mountain in the Wyoming landscape in the article on page 17).

HMWF Collection

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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



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

This publication has been made possible
through a grant from Wyoming Humanities & the
National Endowment for the Humanities.



KOKORO KARA

Volume 12, Issue 4

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Design/Layout: Kate Wilson

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We’re interested! Write to Kate Wilson
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COOPERATION WITH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT IS GETTING BETTER & BETTER

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

Throughout the years, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation has benefited from the cooperation of the Japanese government. Ambassadors and consuls general have attended our Pilgrimages and other events, and the Japanese Foreign Ministry has supported many of our projects.

A Foreign Ministry grant paid for the translation of the Heart Mountain Bungei, the literary magazine published by Issei incarcerated during the war, and some of the episodes of *Look Toward the Mountain*, our podcast series.

In 2019, the Japanese Foreign Ministry sent me and three other Japanese American storytellers to Japan to share stories of the wartime incarceration with students and to meet with government officials. I was able to travel to Saga Prefecture on the southern island of Kyushu, from which my Higuchi grandparents emigrated to the United States.

Now I hope we are in the middle of another wave of cooperation with the Japanese government and organizations as we prepare for the official opening of the Mineta-Simpson Institute.

Last summer, I met Keiichi Otsuka, an editor in the Washington bureau of Japan's Kyodo News Service, at the summer cookout at the Japanese ambassador's home in Washington. He later interviewed me and wrote an article about the Japanese-language edition of my book, *Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration*.

Now he will be traveling to Wyoming to interview Senator Al Simpson, visit our center and prepare an article about the Mineta-Simpson Institute and the incredible relationship between Al and Secretary Norm Mineta. Otsuka will also interview Deni Mineta, Norm's widow, at the Mineta family

home in Maryland.

Otsuka's work will enhance Heart Mountain's visibility in Japan and strengthen the ties we are creating with the land of our ancestors.

In Washington, I have been fortunate to participate in many events with Japanese embassy officials, including the November meeting of the U.S.-



Japan Council.

I'll be on a panel with Otsuka and Sam Mihara, our hardworking board member, and Smithsonian curator Noriko Sanefuji to discuss the wartime incarceration and its connections to Japan and the Japanese people.

Also in November, I was part of a group honored by the Asian American Legal Defense Education Fund (AALDEF) for our work as Japanese American lawyers promoting our community. I was joined by Erika Moritsugu, the White House liaison to the Asian American community who attended our 2022 Pilgrimage, and Stuart Ishimaru, a former member of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. The forum was moderated by Phil Tajitsu Nash, a University of Maryland professor and co-chair of AALDEF.

Judge Raymond Uno, a Heart Mountain incarcerated instrumental in the building of our foundation, was also honored at the event, although he could not attend personally.

The wartime years were devastating for Japan and our community. Many families were separated by the Pacific Ocean as the nation of our ancestors and our adopted



Shirley with her cousin Sumiko Aikawa in 2019 on the Japanese Foreign Ministry-sponsored trip to Japan. Shirley and Sumiko discussed Shirley's grandmother's return to 1956, bearing news and stories of the Japanese American incarceration.



Japanese-language version of *Setsuko's Secret* book.

Shirley meets with Fumiho Suzawa & Noriko Sanefuji of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History and Masaru Sato of the Japanese Embassy in Washington.



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
—Helen Keller



At the Japanese ambassador's residence (L-R): Gerald Yamada, president of the Japanese American Veterans Association; Noriko Sanefuji, curator at the National Museum of American History; Terry Shima, a member of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team; Shirley; & David Inoue, Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League.

country were at war. Since then, however, our two nations have come together, and this bond is something I treasure.

I've watched the Japanese government bestow its coveted Order of the Rising Sun on four Heart Mountain incarcerated for their work building U.S.-Japanese relations—Norm Mineta, Raymond Uno, educator Jeanette Misaka, and my father, William Higuchi. I hope as we continue our work building our foundation and the Mineta-Simpson Institute those ties will only get stronger.

Stay inspired!

Shirley Ann Higuchi

SEEKING: Incarcerated Photos for Upcoming Book Venture

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation has been asked by Arcadia Publishing, which publishes the widely known Images of America series, to create a book about the Heart Mountain camp and the lives of its incarcerated.

That's why we're looking for any incarcerated, family members or friends who have photographs from their lives before, during or after the Japanese American incarceration to contribute to the book.

Each Images of America book is 128 pages long and features between 128 and 200 photographs. We're looking for photographs that depict the scope of the Japanese American experience, from the arrival of the Issei immigrants to prewar Nisei becoming full Americans to the incarceration and the return home.

We will need high-resolution scans of each photo and

detailed descriptions of who is pictured, where and when it was taken and any other background information you can provide.

Images of America books are great ways to share our story with a wider audience. We're glad they reached out to us, and we're looking forward to creating this book to spread the word about Heart Mountain to even more people.

If you're interested in sharing your photos and memories, please contact Ray Locker, our director of communications and strategy, at rayl@heartmountain.org. He'll coordinate the details with you. Inquiries may also be directed to the general Heart Mountain email address: info@heartmountain.org.

Thanks for your interest. We're looking forward to sharing your memories.

NEW FRIENDS

Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin

When I was growing up, our family had a “New Year’s Chart” tradition. In addition to aspirations for the upcoming year, we would jot down highlights from the past year on sections of a folded sheet of paper: new friends, places we visited, books we read, most embarrassing moments, and more. As 2023 comes to a close, I am recalling all of the incredible people I met this year through Heart Mountain. I’d like to use this space to share the most surprising one.

I confess that I was unfamiliar with Ally Maki, as I am out of the loop on most things other than work and family these days. But I loved the proposal of bringing Ally—a Yonsei actor, social media influencer, and founder of the Asian American Girl Club (AAGC) apparel line—to our Pilgrimage as someone who could inspire new audiences. Because Ally is a Heart Mountain descendant, it made sense to invite her into the fold.

Our planning team had an initial Zoom meeting with her to discuss the Pilgrimage and the creation of limited-edition AAGC shirts celebrating the women of Heart Mountain. Part way through the meeting we realized that Ally and I are directly related! Maki is her stage name, but her actual last name is Matsumura, which is my

grandmother’s maiden name. I joked that maybe we were related, but it soon became clear that our parents really are cousins! Her grandfather and my grandmother were siblings. Our jaws hit the floor, and the realization kicked off a wonderful path of discovery. As the year winds down, I am thankful for my new cousin, and for all of you who are my new friends and friends-to-be.

Did any of you make a surprising or memorable connection in our Heart Mountain network this year? Tell us about it so that we can feature some highlights in an upcoming issue of *Kokoro Kara*! Send your “new friend” stories in 300 words or less to Kate Wilson (katew@heartmountain.org).

In friendship,



P.S. The AAGC+Heart Mountain shirts are available at shopheartmountain.org.



Ted Berman, NY Photo Services



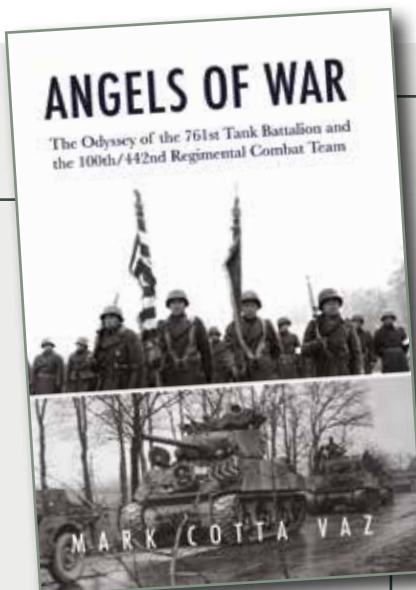
ANGELS OF WAR

Angels of War: The Odyssey of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team by Mark Cotta Vaz, a dual history of the Nisei soldiers of 100th/442nd Regimental Combat and the all-Black 761st Tank Battalion, will be released this fall under the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation publishing imprint.

It is the first original book published by the foundation. The first three were reprints of books originally released by other publishers and updated by the Foundation.

Vaz is a bestselling author from the San Francisco Bay Area who spent a decade researching and writing *Angels of War*, which draws its title from the term Holocaust survivors used for their rescuers. He interviewed dozens of former soldiers who served in both units.

Angels of War shows the challenges faced by soldiers in both segregated units, as they had to overcome racism simply to serve their country in war. The 761st Tank



MICHAEL MCDANIEL

Michael (Mickey) McDaniel joined Heart Mountain’s team in July as **Membership & Development Manager**. Prior to this role, he worked with our staff to get Heart Mountain content into Wyoming schools via the University of Wyoming’s Malcolm Wallop Civic Engagement Program. In addition to managing our databases and assisting with grant tracking, Mickey is helping us develop new member-focused initiatives like our Family Research program and Nikkei Mapping project—both of which will be rolled out in 2024. Originally from Casper, Wyoming, Mickey earned his MA in Political Science from the University of Wyoming and is currently working on his EdD. His master’s thesis examined state justifications for paternalistic policy, and his doctoral dissertation focuses on administrative responses to hate speech in higher education. Mickey’s combination of technical skills, people skills, and out-of-the-box thinking make him a natural fit for this role at Heart Mountain. Welcome, Mickey! 🙌



TRACEY ROSENLUND

Heart Mountain is excited to introduce Tracey Rosenlund as **Governance and Leadership Coordinator for the Office of the Chair**. This position was previously based in Washington, DC, but we shifted it to Wyoming to support our growth with the Mineta-Simpson Institute. As someone who is from Wyoming but has lived in northern Virginia and the DC area, Tracey is well-suited for both the local and national dynamics of this role. Tracey comes to us with a wealth of experience in marketing and communications, administrative support, and community organizing. She holds a BA in Journalism from the University of Wyoming, and she previously served as Marketing and Public Relations Specialist for Handel Information Technologies in Laramie. Her commitment to community service is evidenced by her passion projects in disability support services, public health, community-centered criminal justice reform, and animal rescue. Welcome to the team, Tracey! 🙌

Battalion was one of the few Black units that was allowed to serve in combat, as most Black soldiers were relegated to support roles.

The book includes the story of Clarence Matsumura, the former Heart Mountain incarcerated who rescued Holocaust survivors from a death march in Germany at the end of World War II. One of those rescued by Matsumura was Solly Ganor, who would go on to write *Light One Candle*, a memoir that was the first book updated and published by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

The other two books published by the Foundation are an updated edition of *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp* by HMWF Vice Chair Douglas W. Nelson and a Japanese language edition of *Setsuko’s Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the*

Japanese American Incarceration by Shirley Ann Higuchi, our board chair.

Heart Mountain’s Director of Communications and Strategy Ray Locker edited the manuscript. It was designed by Darlene Swanson, a book designer based in Florida, and graphic artist Paul Cannon designed the dust jacket. The book was printed by Signature Book Works of Gaithersburg, Maryland, the printer for all of the Foundation’s books.

Longtime museum curator and researcher Eric Saul introduced Vaz to the Foundation and provided guidance about photographs and other research.

Angels of War will be available at www.shopheartmountain.org, on *Amazon.com*, and in person at the Interpretive Center. 🙌



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

CALLY STEUSSY
DIRECTOR OF INTERPRETATION
AND PRESERVATION

Cally Steussy is pictured in the new mirrored windows on the Mineta-Simpson Institute (seen from the inside in the photo to the bottom right).

MINETA-SIMPSON INSTITUTE

As of the last report, the exterior of the new buildings was almost complete, with black paneled siding and four red brick chimneys at the end of the Mineta-Simpson building. Now, as the first wintry gusts start blowing in from the north, we are finally coming in sight of the finish line. The last of the black panels have been installed, the rooftop furnaces are in place, and paved sidewalks lead to each of the new doors. The windows and glass doors—the most delicate part of the operation!—were installed at the end of October.

The interiors are still works in progress, but even there

things are starting to take their final shape. The fourth barrack still has a bare concrete floor, but the walls have been painted their final colors of cream and blue, and the gridwork for the ceiling panels is installed, with the panels themselves soon to be set in place. Electricians are alternating between installing the new driveway lights and getting the interior lights ready to go, depending on the weather. In the Mineta-Simpson side, the kitchen hardware is being installed, the main hallway spaces have their first coat of paint, and in the main conference area, the new stage is framed out, while the high ceiling has its finished wooden panels installed.

By the time this issue goes to print, we hope to be ready to move in! 🏠



Opposite page bottom left: pouring concrete for the new sidewalk behind the additional section of the museum, housing the LaDonna Zall Research Center.

Opposite page bottom right: varnishing the new doors.

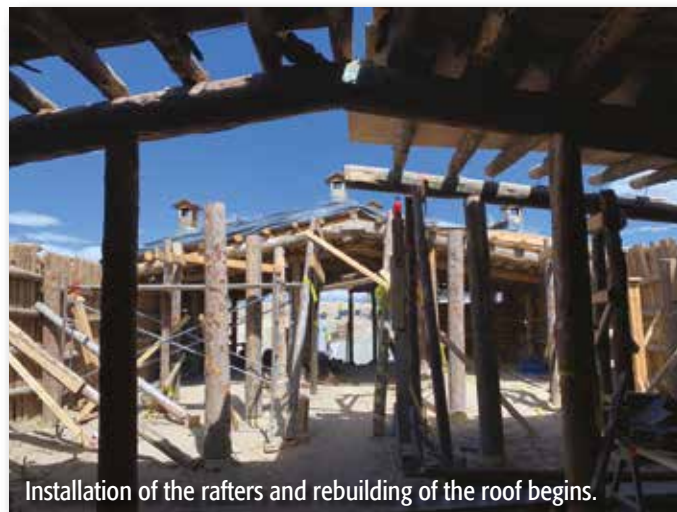


Work on the inside and outside of the main space for the Mineta-Simpson Institute has progressed, showcasing the four chimneys. Outside here they are installing the dark panels, completing the look. Inside, the drywall is installed, readying the space for painting and other interior touches.

Cally Steussy



Glimpsing a beautiful sunset and Heart Mountain framed by the new picture windows of the Mineta-Simpson Institute entrance. Doors stand ready to be installed.



Installation of the rafters and rebuilding of the roof begins.



The extremely heavy rafters are ready to place.



One week after the photo above, the roof is taking shape.



The planks have all been installed.



Finally, all the roofing is finished!

ROOT CELLAR

When our Pilgrimage visitors toured the root cellar in June, they were met by a massive pit where once the entrance ramp had stood, and two bays of the cellar were missing columns and open to the bright blue sky above! Today, the columns and rafters have been replaced and the roof is back and buttoned down for the coming winter. The pit has been filled back in around the concrete walls that will frame the entrance ramp, and workers are busy laying the rebar to pour the concrete for the ramp itself. When all is done, the only concrete visible will be the ramp itself, tinted to the color of the local earth (so that visitors with mobility issues can enter safely). The walls will be covered over with wood, to maintain the historic appearance of the cellar while keeping it stable so that visitors will be able to see it for decades to come. 🛠️

BARRACK

And, as a quick side note, we have made progress on our barrack restoration at last! We were finally able to bring in an experienced contractor to sand away the non-historic varnish from the wooden floors. This took so long in part because the floors are so old and worn that it took a delicate touch to keep from sanding too far. When he was done, he went over the wood with a special finish that will help preserve the floors from further damage, without visually affecting them.



The sanding begins on the barrack floor. Note the color difference between the non-historic varnish and the raw wood.



Cleaning up the edges by hand.



The concrete for the entrance to the root cellar is complete, just in time for winter.

THE SAWMILL AND THE ROOT CELLARS

BY BEN MURPHY



Forrest LaViolette

Overlooked in many descriptions of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center is the War Relocation Authority's (WRA) sawmill in Wapiti, Wyoming. The word "Wapiti" translates to "white rump" in the Cree Native American language (waapiti) and is used in reference to elk. Located 34 miles west of the confinement site near the highway approaching the East entrance to Yellowstone National Park, the sawmill was an important, even critical, asset for Heart Mountain.

ESTABLISHING THE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

One of the WRA's requirements in building and managing the confinement site was the need to become as self-sufficient as possible, through agriculture programs including farming and raising livestock. Heart Mountain's agriculture program planned to intensively farm up to 8,000 acres of irrigable land upon which the camp was built. Although irrigable, this land had never been cultivated. When the camp opened on August 12, 1942, water for irrigation was not yet available, although an extensive canal and lateral system was in place to deliver it.

The proposed agriculture program required a considerable infrastructure: root vegetables required storage, fences were needed for controlling livestock, cattle and hogs required holding pens and shelter from the weather, and chickens required brooding houses. All these projects needed lumber—lots of it.



PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Preparations for timber cutting at the sawmill began at an early date, in December 1942. Fourteen Heart Mountain incarcerated were employed at the sawmill at this time, this number growing with the ever-increasing demand for lumber. The trees, growing on federal land used to produce the lumber, were free, if the lumber was used within the camp itself. In addition, the lumber produced was not controlled by the War Production Board (WPB).¹ The lumber was rough-cut, as the sawmill's equipment was unable to provide finished, construction-grade lumber. Nonetheless, it was a much-needed blessing to the lumber-hungry confinement site. Heart Mountain's infrastructure expanded significantly, and quickly, with the availability of free lumber from the sawmill, exempt from WPB allocation oversight.

Christopher E. Rachford, the camp's first director, was called from retirement in May 1942, by Milton Eisenhower to take the Director's job at Heart Mountain. As a young man, Rachford went to work for the U.S. Forest Service in 1905, retiring in March of 1942. His retirement was short-lived.

With a career in the Forest Service behind him, Rachford was aware that Congress had eliminated all funding for the Civil Conservation Corps program in July 1942, as war approached. He was familiar with the Civil Conservation Corps camps nearest to the Heart Mountain confinement site, abandoned as men went to war. He was also aware of a privately owned sawmill located next to Whit Creek near Wapiti, Wyoming that was for sale by its owners...the pieces were starting to fall into place.

¹ The War Production Board, created by President Roosevelt by Executive Order 9024 in August 1939, directed the conversion of industries from peacetime work to war needs, allocated scarce materials and services, and prohibited nonessential production. It rationed such commodities as building materials, gasoline, heating oil, metals, rubber and plastics.

Root cellar vents constructed of timber from the Wapiti sawmill.

George Mix established the Whit Creek sawmill in 1937. Mix bought a sawmill from H. N. Black, located on Green Creek, Wyoming, moved it to the Whit Creek site, and went into the sawyer business with Burt Stevenson, et. al., signing a “Partnership Agreement” on February 11, 1939. Several of the men who had families built houses at the sawmill site and sent their children to school in nearby Wapiti. The men worked the mill, and the women kept the books, managed the payroll, maintained sawmill operation and production records, along with cooking for everyone. As the war came, family members living at the site began to scatter as the men entered the military or left to work in defense-related industries. Women also left, attracted by good-paying jobs in war-related factories.

Whether the reduction of workforce at the sawmill played a part is not known, but the partners sold the sawmill to the War Relocation Authority sometime in the summer of 1942, for \$8,000.

The sawmill was in the WRA’s possession early in the camp’s life, indicating that Rachford and his Assistant Director, Guy Robertson, may have engaged in some advance planning to acquire the assets of other local, federally owned facilities and the privately-owned Whit Creek sawmill site, for use by the WRA in supporting the running of Heart Mountain. Indeed, on October 13, 1942, it was announced that a sawmill had been secured and would be in operation within the week. The early appearance of the sawmill suggests prior planning on Rachford’s part.

THE SAWMILL IN FULL SWING

Little time was wasted getting the sawmill into production, aided in no small part by a former operator at the site who agreed to act as foreman. During the last week in October 1942, six Heart Mountain incarcerated left for Wapiti to construct a mess hall and a workers’ dormitory. This advance crew fumigated and installed Celotex in the living quarters and repaired the roads. The mess hall was located beside Whit Creek, whose water was reported to be so pure it could be used for cooking. With fourteen men at the sawmill site by early December 1942, timber cutting began. Among the first products of the sawmill were eight flagpoles delivered to the camp the following week.

The sawmill’s infrastructure was soon composed of the structures listed to the right.

STRUCTURES & INSTALLED EQUIPMENT	
SAW SHED	rough fir lumber
ROUGH LUMBER	BATTENED & LINED
boiler room	w/ BUILDING PAPER
FUEL SHED	double sloped roof
fir lumber	DRYING SHED
BARE LUMBER	BARE WASTE
TRESTLE	TRESTLE
HEIGHT 80 FEET	165 FEET LONG
rough fir lumber	QUARTERS
115' LONG	fir lumber 21'x 40'
LABORER'S QUARTERS	LABORER'S QUARTERS
rough fir lumber	16.5' x 16.5'
17'x 25' FULL PORCH	SHED PORCH
MESS HALL	LABORER'S QUARTERS
& LIVING QUARTERS	two-room
KITCHEN	12'x 38' CELOTEX
front & back	GARAGE
porches	& TOOL SHED
28'x 40' SLOPED ROOF	FIR 12.5' x 22'
DOUBLE GARAGE	double sloped roof
SINGLE BOARD	WOOD SHED
double sloped roof	rough fir
ROUGH FIR FLOOR	SINGLE SLOPED ROOF
rough fir lumber	TWO-ROOM
BATTENED	BATH HOUSE
sloped roof	BOX CAR SLOPED ROOF
17'x 30' BARN	#15 FELT 20' x 7'
SPRING HOUSE	W.P.A. building sections
7'x 10' rough fir lumber	

The sawmill was capable of turning out 10,000 board feet of lumber daily. According to Glenn Hartman, the Heart Mountain's agriculture and industry chief, the mill was able to cut 400,000 board feet of lumber per year.

Situated at an elevation of 6,800 feet, the sawmill was located about 2.5 miles from 1,710 acres of timber owned by the government. The forest consisted of Douglas Fir, Lodge Pole Pine, Engelmann Spruce, Limber Pine and Alpine Fir. Trees to be cut were marked "US" by the forest ranger. Only trees eight feet in height and at least eight inches in diameter inside the bark on the small end were eligible for use.

The felled timber was cut and trimmed according to its quality, then hitched to a team of horses and dragged to a platform built on a hillside near the trail leading to the sawmill site. This platform helped to load the logs onto a bobsled for transport to the sawmill. A bobsled normally held from fifteen to twenty logs.

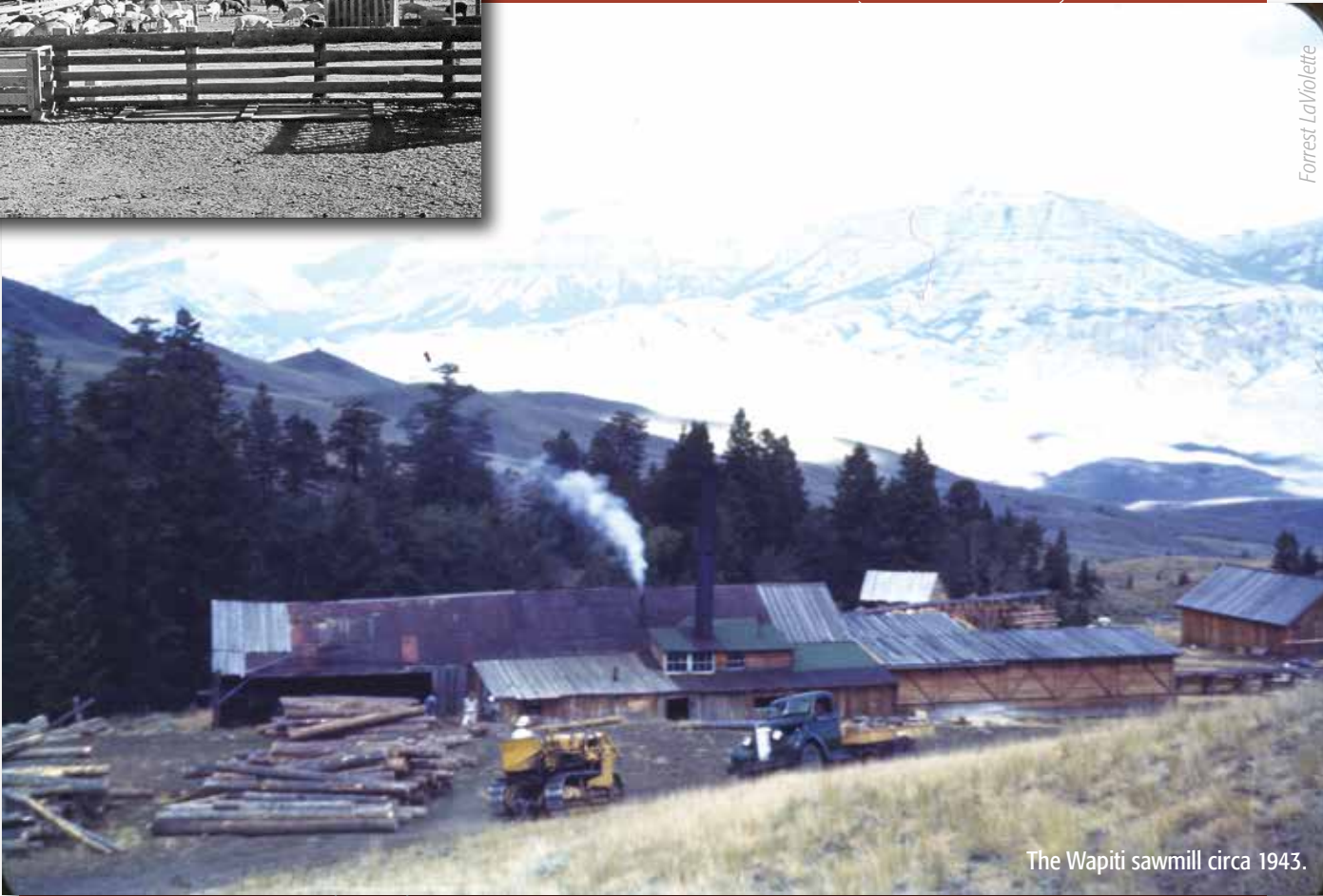
The color photo below shows a track-laying tractor one

would assume to be better at dragging logs than a team of horses. By 1943, when the picture was taken, perhaps the horses had been replaced by mechanical power.

The mill equipment wasn't capable of removing bark from the logs, relying on the slab-saw method to do so. By this method, the logs were sawed nearly square and the bark slabs discarded. But nothing was wasted—the slabs and sawdust were fed into the steam engine powering the equipment that sawed and processed the logs.

Lumber of the standard sizes, 2 x 4s, 4 x 4s, 2 x 6s, and 2 x 8s, no more than nine to twelve feet in length were produced. The lumber was green and rough-sawn. Lumber of this type would be best used for fence posts, outdoor railings, building foundations, rough construction for coal bins, and similar projects.

The photo below shows the hog farm infrastructure and the extensive use of sawmill-produced lumber to build it, an example of the many uses of one of the camp’s most valuable assets.



The Wapiti sawmill circa 1943.

When the sawmill started up operations for the 1944 season in August, it turned out an average of 4,000 board feet of rough-cut lumber per day. The rough lumber was brought to the Heart Mountain site where it was processed into construction-grade lumber. Who upgraded the lumber to construction grade is unknown.

In late February 1943, the sawmill began dispatching four to six truckloads of lumber to the camp each week. This lumber was earmarked for the poultry and hog programs, and for use in foundations of new buildings.

In 1942–1943, transporting the lumber from the mill site to Heart Mountain was a difficult endeavor. The highway from the mill through the Shoshone Canyon, past the Buffalo Bill Dam, through Cody to the camp was a terrible road in places, particularly in the canyon portion. One observer noted it was, “a very tough highway, a lot of it cut out of solid rock.” The Author (Ben) recalls, in 1948, the road near the dam was so steep, a tractor was stationed there to help pull cars with campers and trailers over the dam. There was also a tunnel, he remembers, with some one-way traffic areas on the highway.

Trucks hauling lumber from the sawmill to the camp may not have been fully loaded due to the bad road conditions. When the trucks returned to the sawmill, they would transport supplies required by the 30-man crew.



Three root cellars were built to store surplus vegetables and were located near the Vocation railroad siding. Their dimensions were 42'x320', 35'x304', and 15'x75'. In August 1943, the Camp's engineering department ordered over 8,100 logs for the root cellar construction. The size of logs needed for the project measured from ten to eighteen feet in length with a diameter of six to twelve inches. With this heavy order, the employment office put out a request for more men to work at the sawmill.

George Kometani was in grade school when he lived at Heart Mountain. George recalls:

I remember when my brothers and some of their friends went swimming and we went into the root cellars and stoled (sic) some potatoes, packed mud around them and threw them into a fire, went swimming and when we got back, cracked off the mud and ate the potatoes. They were a little hard, but delicious.

The hasty construction of the Heart Mountain “Relocation Center” left much to be desired, with a bare bones site consisting of barracks buildings, latrines, and mess halls. The materials needed to make it a functioning town and community sprang out of a mixture of circumstances and components that coalesced at the right time—necessity being the mother of invention. This lesser-known aspect of Heart Mountain history has elements that remain to this day, in the form of the original root cellar. This original structure will soon be open again to the public, a testament to the work and ingenuity of the Heart Mountain incarcerated.

The entrance to the Heart Mountain root cellar.



The Heart Mountain root cellar circa 2018.



He currently lives in the San Fernando Valley in Southern California.

As adolescents, Ben and his brother Jim spent three years (1948-1950) living with their parents at Heart Mountain after World War II ended and the incarcerated had left. As kids, the brothers explored the many open and

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ben Murphy is retired from the U.S. Army (colonel) and subsequently worked for Paramount Pictures Corp in its Information Technology department in Hollywood. His interests include travel, historical research, and writing.

abandoned buildings. Years later, as adults, they decided to know more about this unusual place where they spent part of their growing-up years. In recent years, they have continued to research the Heart Mountain Relocation Center's unique infrastructure.

Jim Murphy passed away earlier this year. Ben is continuing their work in his upcoming book. You can read previous articles written by both Ben & Jim in the following issues of *Kokoro Kara*: Summer/Autumn 2019, Summer 2018, & Summer 2015 on the Heart Mountain website magazine archives (heartmountain.org/kokoro-kara-magazine).

Below is a memory of Ben's from his time at Heart Mountain, related to the root cellars...

The camp's root cellars were located about one hundred yards south of the Visitor's building where the authors' family lived. At that time (1949), the root cellars were still in good shape, but unused. Ben remembers visiting them several times, "They were built partially below ground, composed mostly of logs, with many ventilators overhead. Dirt was piled on top of the structure, making them almost a cave. The air inside was damp and it was a gloomy place."

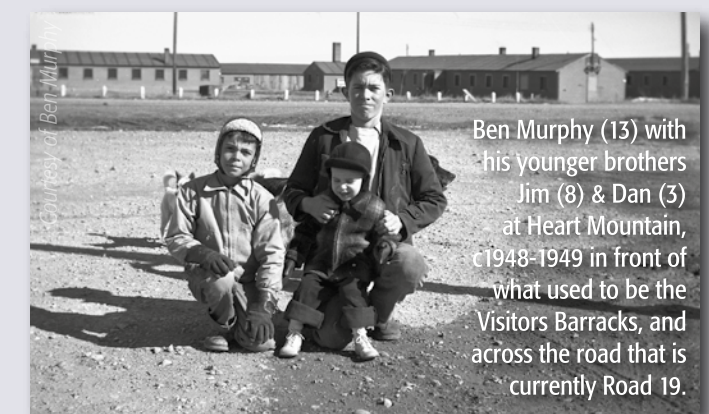
He recalls that there were thousands of tiny insects in the cellars, a fact of some significance to the Murphy family when the wind was from the south.

Being only a short distance from the cellars, a southerly wind blew many of the tiny insects toward the Visitor's building. They were so small that the screen wire was unable to keep them out of their family's apartment.

Ben recalls that one afternoon in the summer of 1949, his parents invited a couple of their acquaintance over for dinner. Mrs. Murphy served spaghetti and a salad with Italian dressing. As luck would have it, the wind was from the south that afternoon. When everyone sat down for dinner, the tiny bugs came too, attracted to the Italian salad dressing. They got into everyone's salad.

Embarrassed and unable to do anything to get rid of the unwanted guests, Mrs. Murphy set a saucer in the center of the table, as a “cadaver dish” to hold the expired victims plucked from the salads.

In spite of the unwanted guests from the root cellars, it was an enjoyable afternoon.



Ben Murphy (13) with his younger brothers Jim (8) & Dan (3) at Heart Mountain, c1948-1949 in front of what used to be the Visitors Barracks, and across the road that is currently Road 19.

IN THE NORTHERN COUNTRY



HEART MOUNTAIN IN THE
WYOMING LANDSCAPE

BY CALLY STEUSSY

The Japanese Americans incarcerated at Heart Mountain came primarily from Southern California and the Pacific Northwest. To them, the landscape of the Bighorn Basin was a harsh desert far from their homes, but they also found beauty and inspiration here.





Painting by Jishiro Miyauchi

ほっこく しもふ わ を はな へや そだ
 北国は霜降る早し我が愛しむ花のいくつは室にて育つ

*In the northern country
 Frost comes early.
 Some of my favorite flowers grow indoors*



—Matsumoto Gennosuke, Block 29, Volume 1

One day in the 1960s, a plow hit something buried in the Solsbergs' fields—right in the area where the Heart Mountain camp cemetery used to be. But when they dug it up, what they found was not a forgotten coffin (thankfully!), but a large stone with a Japanese haiku inscribed on it. Translated, the poem reads: *The high peak behind; a thousand barracks beneath the autumn moon*. The stone was also inscribed with a date: August 26, 1942—the day that the poet, Taketaro “Shikai” Azeka, arrived at the Heart Mountain confinement site.

Most of the people sent to the Heart Mountain camp came from southern California, and they were not very happy at the sight before them when they first got off the trains in the late summer of 1942. Before them was a bleak and uninviting landscape. The Heart Mountain camp was built in the middle of a high sagebrush desert. To make matters



worse, in the process of building the camp the ground had been completely cleared, leaving nothing but bare dirt. Every time the wind came up, the air turned brown with dust from the loose, dry soil.

The guard towers didn't help that first impression. Neither did the barbed wire, although that went up relatively late. In November of 1942, the fence was still incomplete, and the residents of the camp actually sent a petition asking for it to be removed. They had been told that they would retain their status as citizens, including freedom of movement and speech, and...really, where would they even *go*? At that time, there were no farms for miles in every direction. The fence was pointless, because the landscape itself was a barbed wire fence.

The 1944 yearbook of the Heart Mountain High School starts with a poem describing the Japanese Americans' first impression of the Heart Mountain camp and its surroundings:

WE CAME

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To a bleak
 Solitary
 Square-shouldered peak;
 Barren wastelands,
 Barbed wire fence;
 Then...a terraced slope...
 A wide expanse of tar-papered
 Barracks
 Looms into view
 In patterned monotony,
 As if mocking
 Memories
 Of shady orchards
 And flourishing fields.
 An empty, hopeless feeling...
 No grass...
 No trees...
 Only withered sagebrush;
 Sharp-spined cactus;
 Sharp-barbed fence,
 Sharp-edged dust—
 “Can anything live here?”
 No grass...
 No trees...
 Only wind and dust.



War Relocation Authority

The camp's location in a remote and desolate part of the Bighorn Basin was not an accident. When selecting the sites of the ten confinement sites, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) deliberately selected places that were remote. They wanted land that could be developed into farmland, but they also wanted to use unoccupied land still owned by the federal government as much as possible, to avoid ousting any farmers. Unfortunately, if a large area of potentially farmable land hadn't been settled by the 1940s, there was generally a good reason. At Heart Mountain, that reason was the lack of water. The Japanese Americans arrived in the middle of a sagebrush desert that no one wanted—at least, not as it was then.

The newspaper tried to put a positive spin on the situation where they could, by describing the Japanese Americans as “pioneers” and “settlers” who were making previously uninhabitable land bloom! However, even that description carried with it the understanding that the land was largely uninhabited and uninhabitable before they came. Often, these efforts only made the Japanese Americans even more homesick for the homes and farms and lives that they'd been forced to leave behind on the West Coast. The more they thought about the homes they had been forced to leave behind, the brighter the West Coast seemed, and by contrast Wyoming seemed even starker and harsher.

However, this bleak view of the Wyoming landscape only really came out when the Japanese Americans were *talking* about the Wyoming landscape.

Even as the people confined at Heart Mountain talked about how bleak and barren the land was, hiking emerged as a hugely popular activity. The WRA even installed a turnstile in the barbed wire fence for hiking groups to leave the residential area and explore the 46,000 acres of land given over to the Heart Mountain project for agricultural use. On a few, rare occasions, they could even go farther, to the Shoshone River or all the way to Heart

Mountain. For many of them, this was an opportunity to get out and away from the crowded camp, stretching their legs and finding some quiet space. But for others, these expeditions were a chance to get a closer look at the new environment they'd found themselves in.



Personal Photo, Copeland Family

Tadashi Kinoshita

Tadashi Kinoshita came to the United States in 1906 from Nagano in Japan. As a younger son, he'd worked on the family farm, but he'd also studied and trained to be a teacher in geology and geography. Like many Issei, however, when he came to the United States he ended up working in a variety of jobs. He eventually became a life insurance salesman, and was successful enough to buy a large house for himself and his family in El Monte, California. However, he was also a rock lover and enthusiastic mountain climber; he collected English-language books about geology and botany, and even wrote a book in Japanese, *American Alps*, about climbing Mount Whitney.

When the war broke out, the Kinoshita family was forced to go first to the Santa Anita racetrack, and then



HMMWF Okumoto Collection

Getting away from the crowded camp and exploring the Wyoming landscape.

to Heart Mountain. Within a few months at Heart Mountain, Kinoshita had volunteered his services as a trainer for guides taking groups out to explore the wider grounds of Heart Mountain. Kinoshita was more than just a guide; he was also the president of Heart Mountain's Nature Study Society. Sadly, we don't know much about the society; they aren't mentioned much in the WRA records, and most of the members seem to have been Issei men. But we do know that the Nature Study Society put on a Rock Exhibit in June that featured:

Rocks, fossils, meteorites and arrowheads, rattlesnakes, scorpions, cottontail rabbits, painting of Heart Mountain, pressed wildflowers, sketches of flowers, rock crystals and agates, hand-polished stones, varnished wood ornaments, petrified tree trunks, and “a huge, gnarled Rocky Mountain red cedar tree trunk believed to be hundreds of years old.”

(One does wonder how the trees were brought in—and what happened to them afterward!)

The exhibit brought in over five thousand visitors—over a thousand more than any other exhibit mentioned in the newspaper. Nor was it the only such exhibition; the Nature Study Society held three in 1943 alone. The exhibits even drew in visitors from Cody and Powell, with a judge from Cody, W. S. Owens, contributing to the December exhibit. In August of 1943, the Nature Study Society even brought in Dr. Taylor Thorn, a geologist from the Smithsonian, to give a talk on the geological history of the area—a topic that Kinoshita wrote about extensively, even publishing an article in the Japanese-language newspaper about the geology of Heart Mountain.



HMMWF

Heart Mountain Rock Club.



Personal Collection, Elizabeth Nishura

While the Nature Study Society was out hiking and finding arrowheads, fossils and occasionally even coal veins, the children of the camp were out and about as well—not always with permission. Many of those children had been forced to leave beloved pets behind when the removal orders came, and wanted new pets to fill the void. Most families adopted strays that found their way to the camp, but some children caught wild animals instead. The most famous of these is Maggie, the pet magpie that Shig Yabu raised when he was a child in the camp who was later immortalized in the book *Hello, Maggie!*, but Shig had many other pets while he was at the camp, including lizards, salamanders, and even a mysterious thing like a string that he kept in a bottle that might have been a tapeworm!

Shig was far from the only child from the camp trying to catch animals to keep as pets. In his memoir about life as a child at the Heart Mountain camp, Robert Saito's attempts to find himself a pet only to be thwarted (either by the animals or his parents) are something of a running joke. Others were more successful. Horned toads (which are actually lizards, and were designated Wyoming's state lizard in 1993) were particularly popular as pets, in part because they were small enough to carry in your pocket and in part because they would eat the ants that often came in through the cracks in the barrack walls. The *Sentinel* even ran an article about an Issei named Yoshio Sagina who kept a colony of horned toads in his barrack; Sagina would let people adopt lizards from the colony and return any that didn't want anymore.

Some people kept stranger pets. Shig wasn't the only one who had a pet magpie—Arthur Ishigo, Estelle Ishigo's husband, also had one...and he also had a pet

rattlesnake. In fact, rattlesnakes were apparently popular enough that the camp administrators actually had to pass rules banning them. Not everyone who kept rattlesnakes considered them pets, however. At least one incarcerated, Kinnozu Kitazono, had heard that rattlesnakes could be used for medicinal purposes. Kitazono had come to the United States in 1905, after deciding he did not want to become a teacher. He was well-educated in Japan and worked as a wholesale businessman. He was part of the Nature Study Society and kept live rattlesnakes, but he also would hunt and dry them and then grind them into powder to be mixed with alcohol or rice to be used as medicine.

Not everyone was comfortable with this. In fact, one Issei, who only gave his name as "Washizuka," wrote an essay in the camp's Japanese-language literature magazine, describing the arrival of the Japanese Americans from the point of view of a horrified rattlesnake, deliberately imitating a famous satirical novel written by Natsume Sōseki called *I Am A Cat*. In the essay, Washizuka's articulate rattlesnake makes a very pointed comment:

At the risk of sounding self-serving, we rattlesnakes are in fact a rather gentle and docile species. We are excluded and persecuted by others solely because of the way we look.

Another author, Sōji Tanahashi, in the same magazine issue was much more direct about the parallels between the Japanese Americans confined at Heart Mountain and the animals around them: writing about a chipmunk being kept as a pet by his neighbor, he comments:

This must be what we look like from outside the barbed wire fence: like we are living easy with all our basic necessities provided for by the government! I think about how much better off even the poorer families among us would be if they were able to work outside of the camp to make ends meet. Even if this small rodent would do nothing more interesting in the wild than look for nuts when hungry and sleep in its burrow when tired, I can't help but think it would be much happier out there, outside the cage.

So when the Japanese Americans talked about the open, windy sagebrush desert, they often used it as a symbol of their exile from their homes. But they also looked at the animals, the flowers, the fossils and arrowheads and rocks, and saw themselves in them, and all the losses and hardships they were going through.



Arthur Ishigo with his pet magpie.



Exploring the Wyoming landscape.



Incorporating Heart Mountain into portraits.



They also thought about Heart Mountain itself. For the most part, the Japanese Americans couldn't actually go to the mountain; it was well outside the boundaries of the wider camp project where regular hiking was allowed. However, occasionally small groups could get permission to go beyond the boundaries. Women sometimes went to the lower slopes to harvest wild herbs to use as seasonings for homemade pickles, and Scout troops sometimes got permission to hike to the top. Most of the Japanese Americans, however, only knew the mountain as a vivid presence dominating the horizon west of the camp.

Even so, Heart Mountain figured prominently in discussions about the camp. In fact, the mountain frequently acted as a symbol that encompassed all of the camp, the good and the bad. Describing the Japanese Americans returning to the West Coast after the camp closed in her memoir *Lone Heart Mountain*, the artist Estelle Ishigo describes how the mountain seemed to hover on the horizon behind them all the way to Los Angeles,

writing "the Mountain was our secret." In addition, when taking portraits of individuals, families, and groups, the photographs frequently featured Heart Mountain in the background. Nor was it simply part of the surrounding environment; the people usually arranged themselves so that the mountain would be one of the most prominent features of the photograph, even arranging themselves around it so that it appeared in the middle of the group.

Heart Mountain also appears frequently in the art made in the camp. On the one hand, this is hardly surprising given how prominent it is. However, the Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain developed an entire genre of landscape art featuring the camp buildings in the front and Heart Mountain in the background. In these depictions, artists often made the mountain bigger, darker, and taller than it actually appears. Oddly, however, the barbed wire around the camp almost never appears. This may be because it was difficult to get an angle where one could see the fence, the mountain and the barracks all at once, but ultimately, the effect is as if the mountain is standing *over* the camp, with no fence between them.



Heart Mountain also features in poetry, especially poetry written in Japanese. Returning to the haiku stone, there's an interesting detail that's easy to miss: the poem talks about a *high peak*. To anyone who spoke Japanese in the Heart Mountain camp, there would be no doubt that the peak Azeka was referring to was Heart Mountain.

When people talked about the Heart Mountain camp in English, they usually just used "Heart Mountain" to refer to both the mountain and the camp. This practice continues today, much to the occasional consternation of tourists who come to the Interpretive Center looking for the hiking trail, or vice versa. In English, we generally rely on context (and checking the map) to know whether we're talking about Heart Mountain the mountain, or Heart Mountain the camp.

However, there are several ways to say "Heart Mountain" in Japanese. One can translate the entire name (*Shinzan* or *Kokoro no Yama*, 心山). But one can also treat the "Heart" like a proper name and just translate the "mountain" part (*Haato-san* or *Haato-yama*, ハート山). One can also simply transliterate "Heart Mountain" into Japanese (*haato maunten*, ハートマウンテン).

The interesting part is that in Japanese documents from the camp, people talking about the camp itself use ハートマウンテン or shorten it to ハート山—which is the name "Heart" plus the Japanese word for "mountain." But when they write about the mountain, they often use *haato-mine* (ハート嶺)—literally Heart, plus the Japanese word for "peak." Interestingly, the term 嶺 is almost never

used for mountain names *in Japan*, but this usage was almost universal among the Japanese speakers at Heart Mountain. So when Azeka's poem talks about a *high peak*, he's very specifically talking about Heart Mountain the mountain.

And while the Wyoming desert usually represents the homesickness and loss the Japanese Americans felt, *Heart Mountain* is often cast as a protective presence. The name of the camp newspaper, the *Sentinel*, was chosen as an homage to the mountain. One might wonder if this name was intentionally ambiguous; after all, when living in a camp surrounded by armed guards in watchtowers, the term "sentinel" might not be a positive one. However, the *Sentinel* editors were far from the only ones who depicted the mountain as a protective presence.

Satoru Tsuneishi, who went by the pen name Shisei, was a famous haiku poet who even received an imperial award in 1977 for his promotion of haiku in the United States. He was a pacifist who openly supported the Heart Mountain draft resistance movement, but almost all of his sons served in the military. One of those sons, Paul Tsuneishi, went on to become one of the founding members of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. But Tsuneishi didn't just write haiku. He loved poetry in all forms, and Heart Mountain was one of his favorite subjects to write about. He mostly wrote in Japanese, but he also translated his own work into English. Here is one of his poems:

With five thousand friends we left
Our flowered California,
Crossing over deserts and states
To be chased two thousand miles inland,
This fateful day arrived.

Parents of American citizens
We were designated the enemy,
Into this wild world of war
And the vortex of its waves,
We are caught, like it or not.

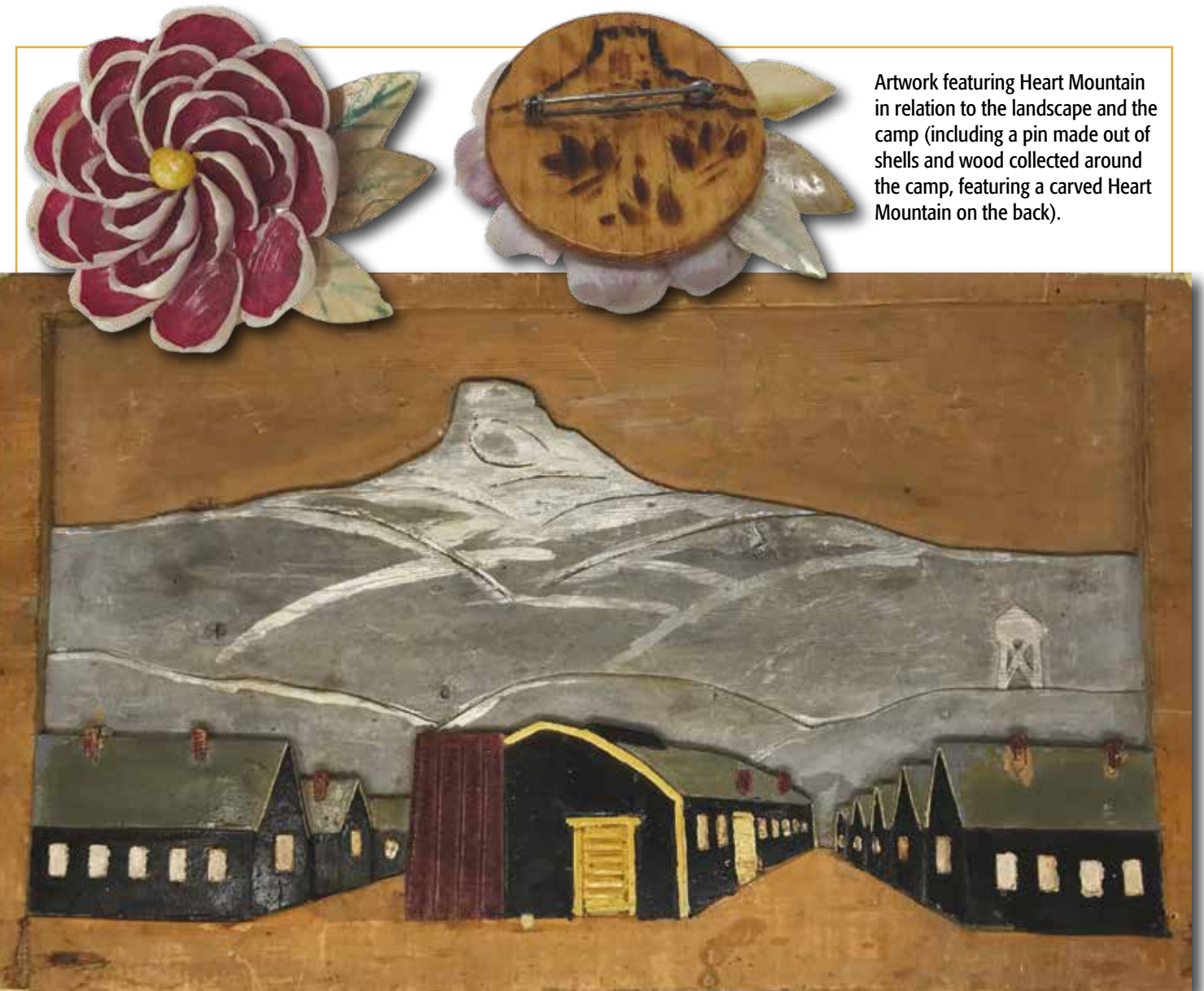
Pushed around by our strange fate,
Our fellow countrymen,
Though our hearts despair,
Deep down there spreads
A ray of hope will shine through.

In this desolate corner of Wyoming,
Ten thousand beings entrust their lives.
Oh, Mountain of Heart, if you have a heart,
To the proud and noble people,
Please show us the way to our future.

The people at Heart Mountain wondered a lot about what the future would bring. But they also thought a lot about the past. Which is the final, and maybe most important, part of how the Japanese Americans understood the Wyoming landscape: they knew, when they arrived, that they were in a landscape full of stories. In short, the landscape wasn't just a landscape—it was a *timescape*. When the Nature Study society went out and gave presentations about the geology of Wyoming and collected fossils, they were thinking about the deep history of the region. They knew about the Native Americans who had been here before the settlers—even if that image was mostly filtered through Western movies out of Hollywood and stories about Buffalo Bill Cody.

And they knew that the Heart Mountain camp would become a part of that timescape. They knew that the camp was likely to be temporary, and thought about what would remain when they were gone. When Azeka buried the haiku stone before leaving the camp, he did so because he was afraid that the story of the camps would be forgotten. He hoped that someday, archaeologists would find the stone and rediscover what had happened in the shadow of Heart Mountain.

In the end, the camps *were* more or less forgotten for a very long time—but not forever. The people of the Heart Mountain camp remembered, and those memories remain alive and well and part of the living, breathing Northern Country of the Bighorn Basin today.



Artwork featuring Heart Mountain in relation to the landscape and the camp (including a pin made out of shells and wood collected around the camp, featuring a carved Heart Mountain on the back).

Opposite page: Poem featuring drawing of Heart Mountain by Estelle Ishigo from Volume 1 of the *Heart Mountain Bungei*, the Japanese-language magazine published during WWII.



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