



Minidoka NHS News

May 2015

Breaking News

Japanese American Incarceration Artifacts

The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) announced on May 2 that it had acquired the collection of 400 pieces of historical art and artifacts that were scheduled for auction by the Rago Arts and Auction Center. These pieces were created by Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II and collected by historian Allen H. Eaton while he was researching his book, *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire: The Arts of the Japanese in Our War Relocation Camps*. Citizens and organizations mobilized to prevent the auction. At the JANM Gala Dinner when the announcement was made, George Takei remarked, “All of us can take to heart that our voices were heard and that these items will be preserved and the people who created them during a very dark period in our history will be honored.”

Uprooted: Japanese American Farm Labor Camps

Uprooted, an exhibit of photography from Japanese American farm labor camps during WW II will be in Twin Falls, ID from June 1-30 at the Twin Falls Center for the Arts. The exhibit’s time coincides with this year’s Minidoka Pilgrimage. On June 4, the Center for the Arts is hosting an open house from 6:00-8:00pm. On June 11, *Uprooted* curator Morgan Young will present a history of the labor camps in Idaho: Twin Falls, Rupert, and Shelley. The lecture will begin at 6:30 pm at 195 River Vista Place in Twin Falls.

Baseball Field Project Launched

In the February issue of this newsletter, we introduced the “Center Field” Project to rebuild one of the 14 ballfields that were spread throughout the camp. The goal is not to create just a cultural landscape but a field that visitors can actually play on.

Several steps have been taken to achieve this goal. The four acres that comprise the field were taken out of the 2015 agricultural permit. The field has been plowed and rolled. Bases and a home plate will be purchased and base lines laid down so that the field can be used during this year’s pilgrimage. This first field will look much like the fields did shortly after the camp opened in August 1942.

A number of people have voiced an interest in contributing to this project. Assistance from individuals and groups is welcomed. This assistance can be financial, in-kind donations of materials and labor, and additional information related to the importance of baseball to the incarcerated.

The park’s cooperating association, Discover Your Northwest (DYNW),



Outline of the ball field superimposed on the newly plowed area.

and park partner, Friends of Minidoka (FOM), have agreed to accept donations for the project.

To donate to this project through DYNW, go to their website, www.discovernw.org, click “Donate,” click “Support one of our featured programs,” and click onto the “Minidoka Center Field” page.

Donations through FOM, can be mailed to: P.O. Box 1085, Twin Falls, ID83303. There will also be the opportunity to donate online through FOM within the next few weeks.

We are excited about this project and hope you will joining us in “Building Center Field.”



Possible outfield fence and scoreboard

Minidoka Irrigator Headlines May 1943

Each month this column will feature headlines from the *Minidoka Irrigator* during the same month in 1943.

May 1: **Throng of 3500 Bids Moving Farewell to Boys**

A large crowd of well-wishers gathered to say goodbye to the first contingent of Hunt volunteers to leave for induction into the U.S. Army.

May 1: **Course in Nursing Open to Residents**

Red Cross nursing certificates will be awarded to those successfully completing the principles of nursing care course.

May 8: **Worthy Nisei Should be Given Jobs Outside Center**

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt declared that trustworthy American born Japanese should be given jobs outside the centers...and the sooner the better.

May 8: **Million Dollar Extravaganza Slated Tonight**

A spectacular talent show, "Fantasia," will be held in the newly-constructed open air theater west of Block 22.

May 15: **Hunt High Plans 60-Page Annual**

The Hunt Hi Annual being prepared under the co-editorship of Itsuko Terazi and Ben Ninomiya is expected to be a colorful 60-page edition.

May 15: **Three Tons Books Swell Library**

The Central Library in BI 23-3 DEF is becoming one of the most popular establishments in the community.

May 22: **Myer Announces Step to Ease Relocation Procedure**

A definite job offer is not needed to depart on an indefinite leave. This is a step to relax the relocation procedure.

May 29: **Hunt Semi-Pros to Open Against Filer Nine**

The Hunt team consists of ex-college, high school, and amateur stars.

Bainbridge Island: Exclusion Tag Project

As part of the community conversation surrounding the Bainbridge Performing Arts production of David Guterman's book, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, the audience had the chance to express their reactions to the performance in a special way.

They were invited to share how the experience of exclusion related to their own lives. Messages were written on the back of tags very similar to those issued to Japanese Americans during the exclusion experience.

Completed tags were displayed during the March 30th commemoration ceremony at the Memorial Wall. They will be archived at the Bainbridge Island Historical Society. Comments reflected a variety of perspectives:

My beloved grandparents survived the Holocaust. They were Polish Jews who were forced to abandon family and flee to Russia and 'Middle Asia' for the years of the war from 1939 on. They lost family and had to wander through Europe working their way to the U.S. in 1951 to start anew. They never wished for anyone to have such an experience ever again.



Exclusion tags being hung for display at the Memorial Wall.

My mother was incarcerated during the Japanese American exclusion. I fear how quickly we seem to forget the injustice on a family, community, regional, national, and global level.

Two of my uncles, both German immigrants, were interned, one at Fort Lincoln, Bismark, ND, the other with his family (pregnant wife and 3 children) at Crystal City, TX.

My parents were sent to Heart Mountain, WY Internment Camp. They returned to California with perseverance and resolve. From them, I learned that life may not be fair, but people can be. Speak up against injustice - be the voice for the voiceless. Make Walt and Millie proud.

In Memory: Frances Egbert



Before the return of the historic barrack block to Minidoka NHS, the Pilgrimage included a tour of the Jerome County IFARM. Pilgrims could tour the well-preserved barrack building that was part of the complex. Very often the guide for that tour was Francis Egbert. Francis had a profound respect for this part of Idaho's history. He was a prominent member of the Jerome County Historical Society and provided tours for many years. The photo is of Francis doing a tour for a Girl Scout troop several days before his death on April 4th.

Thank you, Francis. We miss you.

Bainbridge Island: Echoes of the Taken



Heidi Wastweet and "Echoes of the Taken" sculpture at the Memorial Wall.

A bas-relief bronze sculpture, "Echoes of the Taken," was unveiled at this year's March 30th commemoration of the forced removal of 227 Japanese Americans and legal resident aliens from Bainbridge Island.

Heidi Wastweet, a leading American medallist and sculptor, was asked to design a sculpture for the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. Her developing awareness of the Japanese American incarceration motivated her to create

the sculpture. She was particularly inspired by photographs taken on March 30, 1942. In an artist statement she shared how she pulled those observations together in clay: *The four characters represent four different emotions – the young girl represents innocence lost, grandpa shows dignity, auntie is grief, and the soldier is shame. Gouged below the surface are the citizens taken away, many who never returned. Only their absence remains.*

The piece was sculpted in her studio and cast in Tacoma, WA. It is a local story told for the whole nation.

Working with private mints, she has produced over 1000 coins, medals, tokens, and rare coin replicas since 1987. In 2001, she opened her own studio and in 2013 she moved to San Francisco. She is serving a second four year term on the Citizen's Coinage Advisory Committee for the US Mint in Washington, DC. She has also created a number of public art pieces including the University of Washington Medal of Honor.



The sculpture is on exhibit at the Bainbridge Island Historical Society Museum

This newsletter is published monthly for our friends and partners across America.

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The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial on Bainbridge Island is a unit of Minidoka NHS. It is managed by Klondike Gold Rush NHP.

Comments? Write to:

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Volunteer Opportunities at Minidoka NHS

In recent meetings in Seattle, park representatives were asked about park project needs and about opportunities for individuals or groups to contribute. The superintendent noted that collaboration is a high priority. She also noted that some of the projects could be student intern projects, when there is such an interest and if they meet school requirements. The park has agreed to create a project opportunity portfolio and make it available to anyone who is interested in helping.

The portfolio will be split into two categories: projects that could be done off-site and those needing to be done on-site. Examples of what could be done include: uncovering historic footpaths; site clean-up; writing

articles; conducting research and interviews; creating educational and junior ranger programs; and organizing documents and photographs.

If you have a desire to help the park – in any capacity – please contact Carl Ash at 208-933-4125 or carol_ash@nps.gov.



Buhl 8th grade students and the pile of trash collected around Fire Station No. 1.