

THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AMACHE PROJECT

Volume XI Spring 2019

Message From the Director

Greetings to all in this Year of the Boar! The DU Amache Project returned last summer for its sixth field season of community archaeology. Crews found remarkable evidence of internee efforts to improve the Amache landscape in Blocks 8G and 9E. We also enhanced understanding of the very first block studied by DU Amache crews by resurveying Block 6G. Excavations encircled the newly returned 11F Recreation Hall, which further helped us understand how to protect that area as building stabilization moves forward. We were also honored to be visited by many former internees and their families as volunteers and during the community open house day. More details about the field school and graduate student research are to be found in the next two articles. Inside these pages is also an article by long-time project volunteer Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker about an exciting new oral history project. We hope you consider getting involved.

It has been an especially dramatic year for the Amache site. Shortly after the field school, softball-sized hail struck the Granada area and significantly damaged the barrack reconstruction and the Amache-related buildings in town. Due to the strenuous efforts of the Amache Preservation Society

and the residents of Granada, most needed repairs have been completed. If you would like to donate to site upkeep, please visit www.amache.org. Yet even more dramatic was the inclusion of the Amache Special Resource study in the John D. Dillinger, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act signed into federal law on March 12. It authorizes the National Park Service to undertake a special resource study to explore the addition of Amache to the National Parks system. We will post updates on the process on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject>.

Thank you for being a part of keeping the story of Amache alive. Its lessons continue to be needed now more than ever.

Dr. Bonnie J. Clark
Associate Professor of Anthropology
University of Denver



The DU Crew marches in the 2018
Granada Bristol Days Parade
All newsletter photographs courtesy of the DU Amache Project

2018 Field School Report *~April Kamp-Whittaker*

In 2018 we celebrated 10 years of the University of Denver Amache Project. On a spring day in 2008, I visited Amache and worked with Dr. Bonnie Clark and Dana Shew to start planning our inaugural field school. We decided where to survey and excavate and then prepared for our first students and volunteers. These included Gary Ono and his grandson, Dante Hilton-Ono. It was a wonderful first season and has led to five more.

This summer our program expanded to include more students and volunteers than ever before. The DU Amache Project is now affiliated with the Institute for Field Research, a national organization that helps promote and recruit students for field schools. Thanks to this partnership we had eight students from colleges and universities across the United States. These students were joined by our community volunteers and interns for a large and lively crew. Even as the program grows and develops some things stay the same. We resurveyed a block from 2008, were visited by Dana Shew for a workshop on oral histories, had Gary Ono back to visit, and had his grandson, Chava Valdez-Ono, work with us for the summer.

There have been a number of changes both at the site and in the museum. This past summer, crews processed new collections and conducted interviews about them. Highlights from the interviews included two of our community volunteers, Ken Kitajima and Arlene Makita-Acuna, who made important new donations to the

museum. For example, learning more about Arlene's parents will guide the museum in interpreting items related to her parent's wedding at Amache.

In 2018, an original recreation hall was returned to its previous location in Block 11F. As part of the plans to improve and interpret the building a better understanding was needed of the landscape that surrounded it. To facilitate this our crew worked to excavate six different test units. Each one was located in order to tell us more about how the area around the recreation hall was used. In one unit, located on the north side of the building, evidence of a coal storage pile was found. During survey of the area in 2016 we had seen evidence of tree stumps and possibly some garden material south of the building.

We excavated several units in this area and now have a clearer understanding of how a row of trees were planted all the way across that side of the recreation hall. Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker, another site volunteer who



The 2018 crew jokes around at the 11F Rec Hall.

worked on these units (see later article), returned to some documents after the field school and discovered that she went to preschool in this building! The shade from those trees would have provided a nicer setting for such youngsters.

Survey was focused on collecting data for my dissertation on neighborhoods and community activities. We surveyed Blocks 9E and 8G, and resurveyed Block 6G. Residents of Blocks 9E and 8G came from a mixture of urban and rural communities in California. During survey we found evidence of extensive gardens, but the most exciting information came during our community open house. Conversations with two former residents of Block 9E revealed that there had been a tea house near the end of their barrack! While we found little evidence of this on the surface, it was an amazing new piece of information.

In 2008, Block 6G was the very first

part of Amache that was surveyed. Since then our knowledge and understanding of the history of the site has grown and our ability to find the remains of gardens and landscape features has improved. We wanted to look at two things:

First, we thought there were more gardens in this block than we initially found. Second, we wanted to see how often artifacts were being disturbed by visitors or moved by natural events, such as heavy rains.

Our initial results show that increased visitation has not had a negative impact on the site's preservation. Most artifacts we found in 2008 were still there in 2018! Our students also helped us find over four times as many gardens as we initially located in 2008. I guess our years working at Amache are paying off - and we cannot wait to see what new things we learn in the future.

Whose Community Museum?

~ Ting-chun (Regina) Huang

The Amache Museum is a community-based museum where numerous passionate people and communities are actively involved in preserving history. It tells the stories of Japanese Americans at Amache while it is maintained by the Amache Preservation Society (APS), which is a group composed primarily of local high school students. I was drawn into this interesting phenomenon and decided to research the community collaborations within the Amache Museum for my thesis at the University of Denver.

I was thrilled to directly see the community collaborations when I was at the 2018 Amache archaeology field school. In this field season, we researched the agricultural industry in the camp and developed a draft for a new exhibit. The exhibition team was composed of the field school's participants, including a volunteer who was a survivor of the camp, a local high school intern from APS, and college students from different universities. Each team member was assigned to a research theme that they might have a connection with. For example, the local intern was in charge of finding out the agricultural impact on the local area while they collected the oral history about the agriculture in the camp. This was not the first collaborative exhibit at the Amache Museum. In the previous field season, the exhibit *What's your Story?* was also created through a collaborative effort.

In addition to the collaborative strategy,

part of my research is looking at local Granada residents' thoughts about the Amache Museum. I designed a questionnaire for the local public and distributed it on Granada Bristol Days. The results turned out that, even if some of them had not been to the museum or did not know the content of the museum, the participants of the survey all agreed that the Amache Museum is important for Granada residents and Japanese Americans. The survey also reveals that people have more understanding of the museum if their family members have been involved in it. When I interviewed two Japanese Americans, I learned that they also strongly agreed that the museum is important for both communities. It was fascinating that members of both groups agreed that the museum is important for both communities.

In the museum field, a community museum is a place for a community to tell their stories, to communicate the community's message and construct their identity. Since multiple communities are involved in the Amache Museum it would be interesting to ask: whose stories are being told, whose messages are communicated, and whose identities are constructed within the museum?

If you have your own thoughts and stories about the Amache Museum and are willing to share, please e-mail me at ting.chun1526@gmail.com.



Crews hard at work at the museum, including processing the scythes donated by Ken Kitajima.



Above: The author (center) flanked by Kimberly Campuzano and Chava Valdez-Ono at the Granada city park. **Below:** Visitors take the Amache Museum survey during Granada Bristol Days.



Issei to Gosei Interview Project

~ Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker
Block 11G-4C

In 2010, my uncle and I donated a set of *Granada Pioneer* newsletters that his father, my maternal grandfather, had saved while in Amache. The set starts in September, 1942 and ends in June, 1945 (there are some gaps, but, even so, there are 2,000 plus pages with some miscellaneous documents). I started, as a volunteer, digitizing them and editing them for Fresno State University (the collection's title is *San Joaquin Valley Japanese Americans in WWII*). After several years of work, I finished and asked the Head of Special Collections Research Center, Tammy Lau, for another project. I suggested interviewing Japanese Americans who had been in incarceration camps. We began by asking for volunteers through the local churches and a retirement home. Because we were asking mostly *nisei*, many in their 90s and some who were embittered by their experiences in camps, we had some trouble finding willing people to interview. We did five participants. Me and Howard Ono, also a former Amachean, interviewed them in 2017 and 2018. Their interviews are available in the digital collection mentioned above.

To continue the story of Japanese Americans in the San Joaquin Valley, it was decided I would identify and interview Japanese Americans who were too young to remember the camps or told of experiences from their

relatives. I mentioned my own history of racial prejudice and discrimination as I was returning from Amache in the 1950s and attending UCLA in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ms. Lau approached the library's dean, Del Hornbuckle, with this idea. Dean Hornbuckle quickly supported this project and set both Ms. Lau and me off to outline the project. This was the seed for our next oral history project which we have called the *Issei to Gosei Interview Project*.

The *Issei to Gosei Interview Project* was launched in November, 2018. We started with a flyer and my personal statement which described its focus. The focus is *what has it been like to be a Japanese American in the San Joaquin Valley?* We started with the first generation of Japanese Americans, the *issei*, because we discovered there are several nearby - the first wave of *issei* came in the late 1800s. We knew a fair number of willing interviewees would be *nisei*, the second generation of Japanese Americans. The *sansei* generation is next and several might be from that group - I am *sansei* and I was in Amache. Next are the *yonsei*, the fourth generation, and the *gosei*, the fifth generation.

We hope the project will continue with the *yonsei* and *gosei*, as their stories, experiences and perspectives flesh out a multi-generational narrative about the long-term effects of the immigrant and incarceration experience and of being Japanese American in the San Joaquin Valley.

So far, I have interviewed:

1) Diane Honda, former high school teacher, member of the Yamato Colony in Cortez, California and daughter of two Amacheans who met in Amache. She has reproduced a yearbook from Manzanar that was her father-in-law's; it is available online.

2) Tetsuo Shigyo, former emergency room doctor, son of a family who answered “no-no” to Questions #27 and #28 and expatriated to Japan until he was 15 years old.

3) Paul Saito, currently a landscape architect and designer who is known for his work on both the Pinedale and the Fresno Fairgrounds Assembly centers as well as the Shinzen Gardens in Fresno.

4) Kerry Yo Nakagawa, currently a multi-media expert whose research and publications on Japanese American baseball players have created a history of Japanese Americans in the San Joaquin Valley and led to the development of curricula of this history for schools throughout California.

5) Yutaka Yamamoto, formerly a postal worker and executive secretary for the original Buddhist temple in Chinatown/Japantown, whose family was sent to Tule Lake because they were “No-No’s,” but didn’t expatriate as they were warned by their families in Japan not to come due to the bombed-out areas and food rationing.

My goal is to interview five more by June, 2019, including: Robert Ogata, former art teacher and internationally known for his art (he was in Gila); Ralph Kumano, former internee, and current President of the Sanger JACL; Jeanette Ishii, a former Yamato Colony resident in Livingston, California and active member of the United States Japanese American Christian Church.

For those interested in making a tax-deductible donation, checks can be made out to *the Fresno State Foundation* with a designation for the *Issei to Gosei Interview Project* and mailed to **Karina Cardens** at:

The Henry Madden Library
5200 N. Barton Avenue ML34
California State University
Fresno, CA 93740

To make a secure donation online, visit <https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1692/GID2/blank.aspx?sid=1692&gid=2&gid=905&cid=1861>, please note your gift is for the *Issei to Gosei Interview Project* at Henry Madden Library.

For further information or questions, please contact me at carlenetinker39@gmail.com or text me at 559-301-5957.



Amache Newsletter Edited and Formatted by
Nicholas Dungey.

Contact us:

The DU Amache project needs you! As we continue to move forward, we want you to be a part of our work, whether through sharing your memories or opinions, through planning future research, or through public events. If you are interested in joining us, we would love to hear from you. Correspondence can be sent to Dr. Bonnie Clark via email at bclark@du.edu or at the mailing address below.

For more about the Amache Project please visit the project website at <https://portfolio.du.edu/amache> or the project Facebook page [@DUAmacheResearchProject](https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject).

The DU Amache project will continue to update the community through newsletters and other correspondence. For additional copies of the newsletter or to join our mailing list please email bclark@du.edu or send your mailing address to the address below.

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