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

The Dublin project needs you!! As we move forward, we want you to be a part of our work, whether through sharing your history or opinion, through planning future research, or through public events. If you are interested in joining us as a High School intern or volunteer for the 2012 field season, we would love to hear from you. Inquiries can be sent to Dr. Bonnie Clark via email at bclark@du.edu or at the mailing address below.

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Students excavate the 7G garden

Ground-Penetrating Radar was used to locate interesting areas to dig

Field School students pose with Dr. Bonnie Clark

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Visiting instructor, Dr. Lawrence Conyers from the University of Denver taught the field crew about the use of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) in archaeology. By sending energy into the ground and recording how it returns to the surface, researchers can “see” what is beneath the ground. GPR suggested these areas had intact buried remains and so test excavation proceeded.

Joined by our community volunteers, the students opened up their first archaeological units during the third week. The crew learned how to identify soil changes in the ground and sift through dirt while looking for interesting objects, all while measuring, drawing, and describing their results.

Dr. Erika Marín-Spinotta from University of Madison, Wisconsin taught the crew about soil science and how to collect samples that could later be tested in a lab to find out whether internees were amending the soil in their gardens. Archeobotanist Steven Archer taught students about landscape archaeology and how to “float” soil, which separates out small botanical remains. Using this information, along with pollen analysis, we will be able to find out what kinds of plants were being grown in gardens during the internment period.

In the Amache museum in Granada students learned how to manage the many items in a small historical museum – photographs, historic documents, and objects. Students used the collections to research Amache and then created new displays for future museum visitors. Gail Tanaka wrote a wonderful article about her family’s visit to the field school in Nichi Bei weekly, published in San Francisco. The project was also written up locally in the Lamar Ledger newspaper, was featured on a Denver-area newscast, and was also the subject of a Colorado Public Radio broadcast. Links to these stories are available through the DU Amache project website: (http://portfolio.du.edu/amache).

Graduate students David Garrison and Paul Swader, who served as crew chiefs during the 2010 field school, conducted research during the summer field season and have begun analysis and writing on their Master’s theses. Both students are interested in internee ingenuity and creativity but are studying this through different forms. David is focusing on landscaping efforts and how internees used gardening to change their site of internment while Paul is focusing on the role of re-use, recycled materials, and modified objects under internment.

David has plenty of work ahead of him as he begins to analyze and review data collected from the summer field season. Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), a tool that allows archaeologists to get an idea of what lies beneath the soil was used to predict where gardens were at Amache. David will be using this information to compare with the excavations to show the usefulness of GPR in locating gardens at archaeological sites and at Amache. Botanical, pollen, and soil chemistry analysis were used to try and identify possible plants used in the gardens and whether internees were amending the soil in their planting efforts. In addition to these scientific tools, David will be analyzing artifacts collected from the garden excavations, which include objects as diverse as ceramic planters to homemade barbed wire used to keep pests out.

During the field season, Paul collected a great number of objects that showed signs of re-use, jury rigging, and modification. Metal cans with punctured holes used as flower pots and watering buckets, metal wire bent to form handles, and sheet metal used as building material are among the objects collected. Many recycled materials are found in the formation of garden and landscaping features, such as water pipes and domestic tiles. Current research is focused on how objects were modified and where internees obtained these materials.

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Ongoing Master’s Research

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Amache: Fact or Fiction

by Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker

Since I was only three years old when we were relocated to Amache, my memories of my life there were very few and vague. What I knew about Amache was based on my reading, talking to former internees, and visiting the Japanese-American National Museum in Los Angeles. If I tried to talk with my parents about their experiences in Amache, they quickly changed the subject. To this day, I do not know what my parents thought or felt about Amache, but I suppose it wasn’t good. A chance to find out what Amache was really like came during my participation in an Amache Reunion, held in Las Vegas, May, 2009. While there, I met Dr. Bonnie Clark, Associate Professor of Anthropology, at the University of Denver. Attending her workshops, I discovered a lot about Amache and found that I could volunteer on her next Amache archaeological field season, in 2010. So, with a friend, Judy Speer, I went to Amache as a volunteer.

Our assignment was to assist the students and their professors in digging for artifacts in the areas, which had been outlined the previous two weeks. So, besides having to endure hot, dry temperatures of 100 degrees or more, we carefully dug a few centimeters at a time, looking intently for any artifacts that would be evidence of gardening. Furthermore, we sifted the dirt as it was shoveled to see if other items appeared.

I worked in the area around Block 7G. This unit was chosen because we had a photograph showing a gentleman with what we surmised was his ornamental garden. Luckily, we did find lots of things, such as pieces of wire, nails, ceramic pieces and clay pots. We also came across pieces of lumber, which might have been part of shelving used to display bonsai plants.

In the afternoons, Judy and I joined the students as they worked in the Amache Preservation Society’s Museum, in Granada and/or assisting the students as they “floated” the soil samples we collected to see if any seeds or other artifacts were in them. Needless to say, I learned a lot about archeology. The best part for me was to learn about life in Amache from the students with whom I was digging. Each morning, before we left for the field, Dr. Clark would brief us. These sessions were informative and contributed to my search for information about Amache. In the evenings, we listened to the various professors about the methodology to be used to interpret the data collected.

It was during the Open Houses, however, where I met several former internees and being interviewed by the media that Amache became a reality for me. Walking to my barrack/room—Block 11G-4C—and standing in the very room where I lived with my parents, I could visualize and recall a lot about my early years. Imagine this, I was able to “see” where my parents’ cots were, where the pot belly stove was located, where I slept behind the blanket that was strung over a clothes line to give my parents privacy. This was a very emotional moment as visions were forming. I was also able to remember my time in nursery school and being carried on my father’s shoulders to the mess hall (with a scarf over my face to keep the dust off). This was absolutely amazing! The longer I stood in that “room” (there are no barracks left, only the concrete foundations, so, one needs to have a good imagination), there were other things that I now could remember. Amache was now fact, not fiction!
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In addition, during survey of block 12H, crews found a previously undocumented entryway garden in the area of the site that may be the future location of returned barracks.

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The 2010 field crew at the Historic Landmark plaque