

THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AMACHE PROJECT

Volume XIII Spring 2022

Message From the Co-Director ~ Dr. Bonnie J. Clark

It is with excitement and gratitude that I start this edition of the DU Amache Project newsletter. After taking a pause during the pandemic, we are so pleased to be reaching out to you in this auspicious year. The project's staff, alumni, and volunteers were so honored to be part of the successful efforts to have Amache recognized as a National Historic Site. As a unit of the National Park Service, Amache's tangible history will be preserved for generations to come! There's still much to do, and we are looking forward to returning to Amache in June and July for our first field season since 2018. More on the field school and how you can be involved are included in the following article

You may notice a change in my title for this volume. In 2020, April Kamp-Whittaker completed her dissertation research on how archaeology and archives can help us understand community-building at Amache. You can access her dissertation at: <https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/158439>. In recognition of Dr. Kamp-Whittaker's ongoing leadership of the project, she and I now share the title of project director. As April transitions to a job as an Assistant Professor at California State University - Chico, the project moves into a new collaboration at a key moment in Amache's preservation history.

Students and community members are the heart of the DU Amache Project. In this newsletter we are happy to feature an article by Greg Kitajima, a garden professional, Amache descendant, and long-time project volunteer. You'll also find another by Juniper Bessemer, a DU undergraduate who is completing her Senior Capstone research on the Japanese language section of the Amache newspaper.

We invite all our readers to reach out if they have ideas about the work we do or should do. It is an honor to co-lead this collaborative endeavor to keep learning from Amache.

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



Archaeology crew on a break in Block 6G, 2018
Courtesy of DU Amache Project

Be a Part of DU Amache!

This summer the University of Denver will be returning to conduct research at Amache and the Amache museum in Granada, Colorado. Crews will be in Granada from June 14 through July 8, 2022. Mornings will be spent doing archaeological research at the camp, while afternoons will be in the Amache museum. We are especially excited to help the Amache Preservation Society employ strategies to best use their new building for meetings, exhibits, and collections storage.

How can you be a part of this important work?

• If you or a family member were at Amache we invite you to our special open house **Thursday, June 30 through Friday, July 1**. Activities kick off on Thursday evening with a meet and greet and research talk. On Friday, there will be activities all day, including a chance to see the archaeologists at work, individualized tours of the camp, activities at the museum, socializing with other Amacheans, and a group dinner. We ask that attendees RSVP by June 10 by calling 303-871-2677 or use the online form available through this link: <https://amache.org/archaeology-open-house/>.

• If you are a member of the general public, please come see us during the public open house on **Saturday, July 2**. There will be site tours in the morning and activities in the museum in the afternoon. No RSVP needed for the July 2 event.

• **Follow the progress of the field school on Facebook!** We will post regularly throughout the month we are in the field. <https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject>.

To reach DU with questions or comments about any of these opportunities, contact information is on the final page of this newsletter.



2018 Open house participants visit the 11F Rec Hall excavations

Courtesy of DU Amache Project

A Remarkable Amache Tree

~ Greg Kitajima, Gardener and Amache Descendant

The fallen tree in block 11H to the untrained eye, looks just like any of the many trees that were cultivated during the WWII Japanese incarceration. However, a deeper look at tree reveals that this is an incredibly rare find and a valuable artifact that exhibits unquestionable evidence of human manipulation.

There are two types of trees that we know were planted by the incarcerated at Amache, Cottonwoods and Siberian elms. Both of these trees exhibit a natural growth pattern wherein wood forms in a linear fashion from the point of branch origin, this is true of most woody plants. Unless there is some type of outside influence on the formation of a trunk or branch, i.e. wind, severe weather, a foreign object forcing the growth in another direction, or human input to name a few, they will follow a fairly straight line pattern moving outward from the center. We know from historical photos from the time of incarceration that these trees were very young when they were planted, 3-5 years old, give or take. As anyone familiar with Cottonwoods or Siberian elms know, these trees can reach heights of 40+ feet. We also know from the historical record that these trees were planted in close proximity to the buildings, which long term would pose an issue that would need to be dealt with.

Most pruning in our Western culture is done on a reactionary level. A tree or shrub has grown too big, so it is cut back in reaction to make it smaller. The problem with reactionary approach to pruning is that it results in trees that lose the natural taper of the wood from coarse to medium to fine. The coarsest or thickest wood being the oldest at the base of the tree, moving up and out, gradually tapering to the medium sized wood, ending at the finest, the newest growth. Trees that have been drastically cut back exhibit this lack of taper in the extreme, where trees have been “hat racked”, large cuts have been made deep on a branch and that is where the branch ends, hence derivation of the term, as the tree looks like an old style hat rack (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Photo by Greg Kitajima

A much better approach and the approach that I was taught in my training in Japanese Gardens and Aesthetic Pruning, is to have a vision of the future of the tree and a plan to achieve that vision. In a pruning plan, cuts are made and branches are developed or removed in order to train the tree to a structure that will allow the tree to grow into or maintain a size that will fit into the environment in which it is planted. A competent pruner should have a minimum of a 5-year plan, a seasoned professional should have at least a 10-year plan, and a master pruner could have a 25+year plan.

What is fascinating and special about this tree is the incredibly high skill level that is exhibited through the work that was begun. When observing this tree, there is a severe bend in a lateral branch that comes off the main trunk. The wood doubles back on itself and at the apex of the bend, there is a small nub where the branch was cut back to a vertical shoot, which was subsequently bent and secured, changing the line of the branch (Fig. 2a).

This bend in the branch is indisputable evidence of human manipulation of this tree. Were the noted wound a result of natural causes, or even someone simply breaking the branch unintentionally, the remaining branch, the one we are seeing that continued the growth, which was originally growing straight upward off the main branch, would have continued to grow in a straight vertical line perpendicular to the main branch. This fact is proven by the growth above the bend which then grew straight upward (Fig. 2b).



Figure 2a. Photo by Greg Kitajima

Rather than letting the branch grow vertically, the pruner bent the remaining branch back toward the trunk, creating the severe bend that is evident today. It is important to note that the incarcerated at Amache for around 3 years, which in arboricultural and pruning timelines, is a very short period of time, hence only the first bend was made. Had the person who began this process continued it, he would have in subsequent years, bent the branch back outward away from the trunk, then back inward, and then back outward, in a continual pattern making a zig-zagging branch structure.



Figure 2b. Photo by Greg Kitajima

By creating a zig-zag pattern it is possible to compress the length of a branch into a much more compact form. A branch growing in its natural state, a linear form can be compressed into a much smaller area.

The fact that this was done at such an early stage in the trees life shows a level of intention and planning that is rarely seen. Keeping in mind that this work was done at a time when the branch in question was 1-2 inches in diameter, possibly less, reinforces the foresight that the person who developed this tree had.

Identity and Word Choice in *The Granada Pioneer*

~ Juniper Bessemer, DU Undergraduate Student

Perhaps one of the most interesting and surprisingly well-preserved artifacts from Amache are the countless issues of *The Granada Pioneer*, the sometimes-biweekly-sometimes-triweekly newspaper written, edited, and published by the Japanese Americans who resided there. Every single issue was published in both English and Japanese, and to this day the majority of both texts have been preserved and digitized online. Despite this, the Japanese version has received little attention in studies of *The Granada Pioneer*, and I hope to change that.

During my time as a part of the DU Amache Project in 2021, I was able to have access to original copies of these newspapers thanks to the graciousness of those at the Amache Museum. Using my knowledge of Japanese, I am currently doing a comparative study of the two different versions of *The Granada Pioneer* focusing on how the authors referred to Amache residents and other Japanese people in different contexts. I decided to work with a year's worth of issues from between 1942 and 1943 during the beginning of the newspaper's lifetime.

Although one would expect the versions to be translations of each other, this is not always, and I would argue rarely, the case. Stories in *The Granada Pioneer* change heavily between the two languages, and in many cases, each language will have its own set of unique articles that do not have a translation in the other language. Part of this is caused by logistical problems: the Japanese version was working with extremely limited staff throughout its run, and unlike the English version, they didn't have access to a typewriter.

Every issue was handwritten and mimeographed. Part of the change was due to a shift in intended audience, with the Japanese version being targeted toward issei, the older first generation of immigrants from Japan who were more likely to be literate in Japanese. Another cause of change is simply the difference in structure between the two languages.

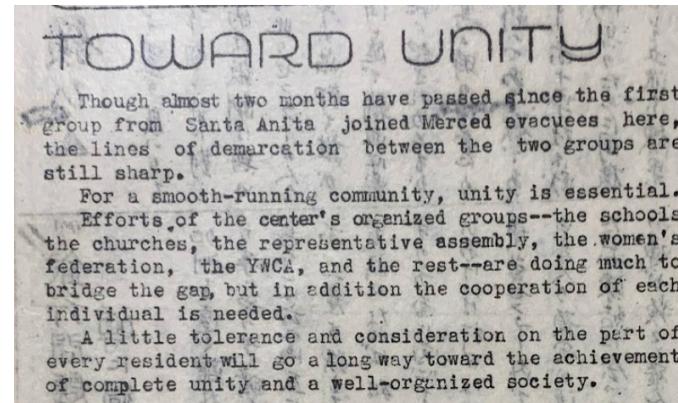


Figure 1. "Toward Unity" from page 7 of the English 11/14/1942 issue.

Regardless of the cause of these differences, they naturally continue into the choice of self-referential terms used by the authors. For example, in English, the term "evacuee" is a popular choice when referring to the residents of Amache and other camps. However, in Japanese, a common replacement for that term is ijuusha and ijuumin, which would be roughly equivalent to immigrant. In English, we see an uptick in odd terms for Japanese Americans in 1943, such as "American of Japanese blood" and "American of Japanese ancestry". This could be a sign of a push toward Americanization that similar studies on internment camp newspapers see. It lines up with the timing of the movement both in the government and in camps for Nisei men to enlist in the military, which lends a lot of credence to this. In the Japanese version, though, this never occurs. The only similar term is nikkeijin, which is a Japanese emigrant, in this context Japanese Americans. Nikkeijin is a common self-referential term throughout the Japanese version, regardless of the events going on around them.

On the other hand, we see a number of interesting similarities. In both versions, terms that refer to generations, like Issei and Nisei, are incredibly common choices, appearing in the title of multiple articles per issue. I see this as a sign of desire to hold onto heritage.

The goal of my research is to better understand the shifting identities of Japanese Americans during internment. The ways in which people refer to themselves are key to understanding how they interpreted their place in the wide net of group identities of our society. Within these terms, we can see how Amache residents both came to terms with and avoided acknowledging their own oppression, the pride with which they take to their families and generation, and the shifting struggle of trying to understand themselves as Japanese, American, both, or neither. There is also the tricky question of censorship. Supervision was likely lighter on the Japanese version due to the fact that camp administration knew minimal Japanese. I hypothesize that this is partially why we see much less of an obvious push toward Americanization in the Japanese version, along with the desire of many issei to hold onto their Japanese heritage. The extent of newspaper censorship is something that we know little about today, and it is another aspect of my research that I would like to see further built upon by others. Understanding identity is difficult and finicky, but I believe the Japanese version of *The Granada Pioneer* represents a gold mine of information to help with this.

I am hopeful that others see this and continue research on it and other Japanese newspapers from the incarceration camps in the future. Having the opportunity not only to work with these historic texts, but to be a part of such an important project has been an amazing experience. Being able to work in the field with Amache residents and their descendants is such a powerful reminder to me that the archaeological work we put in has real, lasting impacts and connections to living people today. This is why I love anthropology. I want to be able to use my skillset to the benefit of those whom history has wronged and forgotten, as the Japanese incarceration camps often are. I hope that my work on *The Granada Pioneer* helps give Amache descendants a better understanding of the lives of their ancestors, and in the future, that I am able to continue to give back to communities through my anthropological career.

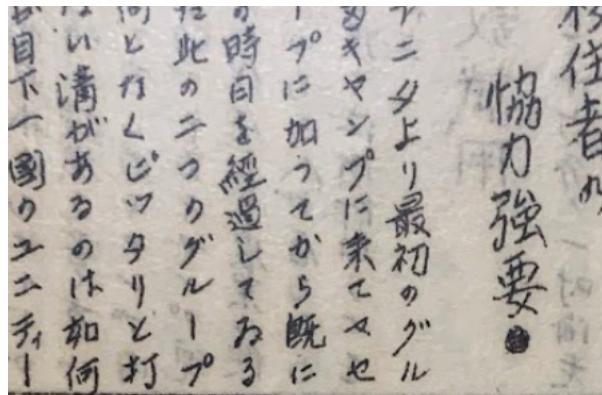


Figure 2. “The Cooperative Force of All Immigrants” from page 1 of the Japanese 11/18/1942 issue

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 <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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