

# THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AMACHE PROJECT

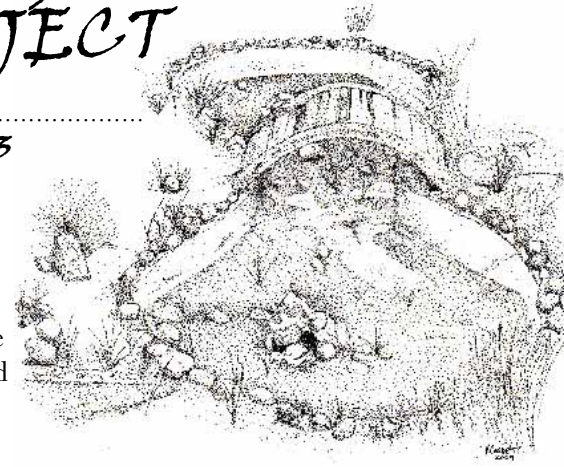
Volume V

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## Message From the Director

If I were asked to choose a single word to summarize the past year of the University of Denver (DU) Amache project, it would have to be **family**. This past summer we returned for a third time for our field school in historical archaeology and museum studies at Amache and the Amache Preservation Society (APS) museum.

In Granada they treat us like family, helping us house our ever-growing crew, treating us to dinner at the school, even letting us temporarily adopt the neighbor dog. Our high school interns this summer came to us through family connections. We were honored to be joined by Abby Hopper, daughter of APS founder John Hopper, as well as Kelli Tadamaru, whose grandfather Eugene Tadamaru was born at Amache. We were once again joined by former Amache internees Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker and Anita Miyamoto Miller, who along with Anita's husband Duncan Kelley are definitely part of the DU Amache family. A father and son addition to our volunteers was former internee William (Bill) Sueoka and his son Michael. A short newspaper piece about the Sueokas and their involvement at Amache is available online at: [http://www.toacorn.com/news/2012-07-19/Community/Archeology\\_student\\_digs\\_up\\_his\\_past.html](http://www.toacorn.com/news/2012-07-19/Community/Archeology_student_digs_up_his_past.html) Family connections also brought us Kirsten Leong, whose Amache story is included in this newsletter.



*The crew for the last week of the 2012 field*

Our archaeological research also highlighted the importance of family and community. We uncovered even more evidence of the incredible ways internees made Amache more like home. You can read about our results, and of new research at the camp, in the articles that follow. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and thank you again for letting us be part of the Amache family.

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

## Field School 2012

From June 18 to July 17, Dr. Clark and Graduate students Peter Quantock, Jennifer Moon, Natalie Ruhe, and Christian Driver led the 2012 Summer Field School in Archaeology and Museum studies at Amache. A total of 16 students, interns, and volunteers came from across the country to Colorado to engage with the project which was focused this year on continuing survey and excavation for research and preparing one foundation for the return of a barrack.

The first two weeks were dedicated to survey and an additional five blocks were covered in 2012, bringing the total number of surveyed blocks to 15 out of 34. We surveyed blocks to assist Christian Driver's master's thesis research which looks at where guards in towers could see into camp in relation to where we find children's objects and objects related to alcohol.

The selected blocks were within sight of three guard towers at Amache. While the blocks surveyed in the interior of the camp possessed a relatively low density of objects, two blocks on the edge of the site (11K and 9L), had hundreds of objects, due to the placement of several large informal dumps at their eastern edges. Recovered objects included the normal personal and domestic types, but many notable objects such as modified metal, Sake jug bases, and beautifully embossed bottles were also found.

The field crew also surveyed using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), which allows archaeologists to "see" what is underground. A grant has been approved to return an original barrack to the site for interpretive purposes, and students surveyed the area using GPR to make sure there was nothing around the foundation that could be damaged during the process of barrack return. No features were found, and the return of the barrack can now move forward without damaging archaeological evidence.

Excavation was extremely rewarding this year. In block 12H, the crew located a small cement wall in what appeared to be an entryway garden. Excavation revealed that it was indeed an entry garden, but with a substantial stone wall placed directly in front of the doorway. The wall is consistent with traditional Japanese gardening practice, encouraging mindfulness in those who passed through by channeling movement. This garden also possessed various planting holes showing the purposeful placement of vegetation. Most striking was the discovery of the remains of a cedar plank walkway which was once placed



*The portion of brick flooring found inside a barrack in Block 9L.*



*The garden wall and walkway found in block 12H.*

designers The pieces of wood were fragile, but still in place and showed the original form of a part of the entryway garden.

The 2012 field season was also the first time that excavations have taken place inside a barrack. In 2011, Christian conducted a GPR survey in one of the 9L barracks and saw something promising in the data. This field season, a unit placed over the location of the GPR data revealed the remains of the original brick flooring in the barrack, something unexpected given that all the brick was thought to have been removed after the closure of Amache. Even more surprising was the appearance of what seemed to be a small hole cut into the brick, as if a small pit had been dug into the ground.

In the Museum, the crew undertook a number of major projects. Crew members helped to document and properly store many objects which helped to clear the backlog of donated materials. They also created new exhibits for the museum and installed them while totally reorganizing the display gallery. The new exhibits and reorganization were showcased during our successful open house on the 14th of July and were the subject of many compliments by visitors to the museum.



*Bill Sueoka and his son Michael return to the site of Bill's childhood Barrack.*



*A Saké jug neck found during survey of one of the blocks.*



*Field school students conducting GPR survey.*

## Connecting with the Past *-By Kirsten Leong*

I'm half Japanese, Yonsei (4th generation), and although I knew that my grandmother had spent some time at the Santa Anita Assembly Center during WWII, I had always been assured that "Grandma and Grandpa were never in the camps." Imagine my surprise in 2010, when we found photographs labeled "In Concentration Camp, Amache Camp—Colorado '43." While my grandparents never lived at Amache, it turns out that the rest of their families did, both the Sameshimas and Omoris. After a little sleuthing on the internet, I discovered the DU field school and was a bit in shock. Not only do I live in Colorado, I have an undergraduate degree in Anthropology, have worked at a number of museums, and currently work for the National Park Service (NPS oversees the National Historic Landmark program). It seemed like too much of a coincidence not to pursue! I contacted Dr. Bonnie Clark and was able to volunteer for the second half of the 2012 field season.

In the mornings I helped identify field artifacts and worked on some of the first excavations within barracks, and in the afternoons I worked with the other students in the museum and developed an exhibit on foodways. One of the blocks we surveyed was where my grandmother's family lived. I found their barracks and talked to my great-uncle, Ko Sameshima, about standing on the spot where they had lived so long ago. He spoke about the lack of privacy and having to whisper all the time. Sometimes, when I was logging artifacts, I would stop and listen to the wind in the sagebrush and try to imagine how loud it must have been when it was more densely populated than New York City.

On the day of the open house, I led tours describing surface surveys in Block 11K that culminated with looking into the doorway of the Sameshima barrack. All the visitors had some sort of personal connection to the site, many of which I hadn't considered. One man had lived at camp, and others from town worked with the field school. But others had come to Colorado to farm sugar beets from other camps, or had relatives who were Military Police or teachers at the camp. Another family had hosted two girls from Heart Mountain in Wyoming during the war. I'm sure I learned as much from the visitors as they did from me!

Volunteering with the field school not only gave me a glimpse into my relatives' past, but also has forged connections with other relatives who were at other camps. Perhaps it's been long enough now that people are willing to talk about what they can remember. Thanks to efforts like the DU Field School, let's hope we never forget.



*Kirsten at the doorway of her Great-Uncle's Barrack.*



*The Omoris and Sameshimas at Amache. Historic photo placed in a modern photo of its exact location.*

# A Life Before Amache

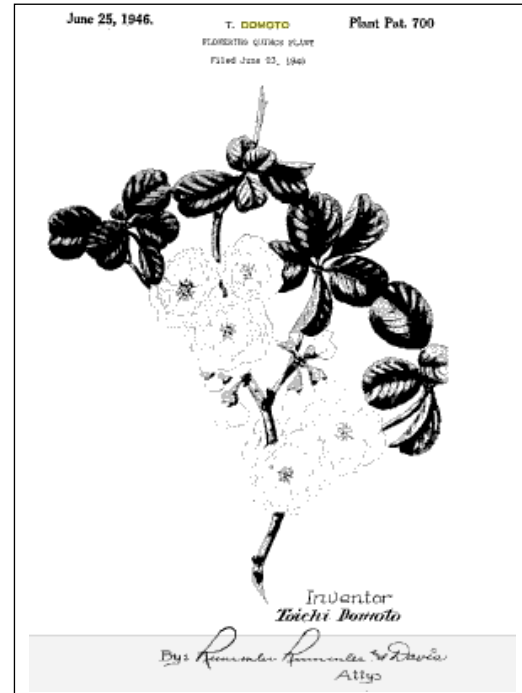
-By Erin Riggs

*Note: Erin is completing her BA in anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley this spring.*

While attending the University of Denver's Field School last summer, I skimmed through the camp newspaper, the Granada Pioneer and became interested in two articles that featured members of the Domoto family who had come to Amache from Oakland, California. I began to research the history of this family in hopes that I could write a senior thesis focused on the physical remains related to their experiences and legacy.

At the time of internment, Kanetaro Domoto was 77 years old. He had immigrated in 1883 at the age of 16 and earned money by peddling imported Japanese Satsuma oranges from a cart he pushed through the streets of Oakland and San Francisco. Eventually, Kanetaro was able to purchase land (this was in the 1890s, prior to the Alien Land Laws of 1913) and opened a nursery. By the early 1900s, this nursery had grown to be an immense and prosperous enterprise that spanned across over 40 acres of land in Oakland and included row upon row of greenhouses, lath houses, housing for workers, and the Domotos' own home. Kanetaro's sons also chose occupations related to gardening. Toichi opened his own nursery in Hayward, while Kaneji became a landscape architect and contributed to projects such as the Japanese garden portion of the 1939 International Exposition, the UC Berkeley Botanical Garden, and Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian homes.

For this rather remarkable family, internment meant an immense life disruption. As I write my senior thesis, I am trying to wrap my brain around this immensity. When Kanetaro awoke on a typical Tuesday morning in, let's say, 1925, what surrounded him? How drastically did this differ from what surrounded him when he awoke on a Tuesday morning in 1943? Well, in 1925, Kanetaro would have found himself in a nearly three story Victorian home that featured scalloped eaves,



*Flowering quince plant illustration that accompanies Toichi Domoto's Patent.*



*Picture of Toichi Domoto and one of his tree peonies.*

two porches and a study room. His daily reality would have included the Mediterranean climate and hilly topography of the Bay Area, the close proximity of the ocean, living on the fringes of the young but booming city of Oakland, trying to find the funds to send eight children to college, managing dozens of employees, educating customers about which plants do best where, and haggling over prices. In 1943, Kanetaro's situation had been drastically altered. He would have woken up within the 24 by 20 foot space of Barrack 6H-5C. His daily reality would have included the open, dry, flat landscape of Eastern Colorado, sharing a small living space with his five adult children and two infant granddaughters, eating meals communally at the block 6H mess hall, and helping with the construction of community gardens (maybe not by contributing physical labor, but, surely, by contributing advice).

While excavating at Amache last summer, I developed a better understanding of these past realities. I was able to stand within the cement foundation of the Domotos' narrow barrack, photograph the remnants of their entryway garden, and map the Chinese elms and cottonwoods that Kaneji organized around the mess hall in 6F (the neighboring block). Physically experiencing the spaces that had been transformed by the Domotos made it easier for me to imagine what it might have been like to be an elderly man who had spent his whole life greening the world as he faced a forced transition to living out his life in a desert.



*Japanese garden display at the 1939 International Exposition a garden Kaneji Domoto helped to design.*



*Erin and her crewmate Jackie at work in the field.*



*A Tree Planted By Kaneji Around the Mess Hall in Block 6F.*

## Recent News and Upcoming Events

### Connecting the Pieces Museum Exhibit

Last Spring, Dr. Clark brought DU students and community members together to create *Connecting the Pieces: Dialogues about the Amache Archaeology Collection*. The collaborative exhibit features research and personal stories about items collected during our work at the camp. Since its debut at DU, the exhibit has been a great success and was at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs campus in the Fall. The exhibit continues to travel and will be at the Auraria campus in Denver from February 19-March 20. There are also plans to create an online version of the exhibit which would be available via the internet on a permanent basis. More information on the Auraria exhibit can be found on the DU Amache website.

### Upcoming Article on Amache Photographer

One of the most compelling stories to come out of Amache is that of Jack Muro, the internee who documented camp life with a camera, possibly even before the WRA allowed photography inside the camp. In order to do this, Jack ordered supplies through the mail from a company in Des Moines and then excavated a pit underneath the floor of his barrack to create a darkroom to develop his photos. Jack's photos offer an unvarnished and honest picture of life at Amache and efforts are being made to preserve them. Japanese American National Museum (JANM) volunteer and former professional photographer Gary Ono has been working with Jack (now 92 years old) to scan all of his negatives for the JANM archives and record information about each and every photograph. Gary and Jack have made fabulous headway and work will continue on the scanning project. The complete archive will be made available to the public once it is completed. Gary is preparing an article for the Discover Nikkei website which will contain some of Jack's photographs and a diagram of the darkroom that Jack constructed under his barrack floor. The article will appear on: [DiscoverNikkei.org](http://DiscoverNikkei.org)

### Amache Field School to be Featured in DU Magazine.

The DU Amache project's most recent field season will be featured in the University of Denver's 2013 spring magazine. During the field season, the university's photographer and a reporter visited Amache in order to put an article together. The field crew had a great time posing for photos and showing the reporter important aspects of Amache. The article will serve to expose the story of Amache to many more people, especially alumni of the University of Denver who regularly receive the magazine. An online version of the magazine can be viewed at: <http://blogs.du.edu/today/content/magazine>

### Digital site tour now available

Former DU graduate student Dana Ogo Shew, who completed her thesis in 2010, has recently completed another project meant to educate more people about the history of Amache. Early last year, Dana finished recording an audio driving tour of Amache. Dana used information gleaned from interviews and her own extensive research experience with Amache to both create and narrate the tour. The tour can be burned to a CD or loaded on to a tablet, smart phone, or any other digital music player. The tour is meant to be used in conjunction with a map of the site, both of which can be found on the Amache Preservation Society's website. The link to these materials is: <http://www.amache.org/driving-tour-map-podcasts/>

### 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 as a High School intern or volunteer for the 2014 field season, we would love to hear from you. Correspondence can be sent to Dr. Bonnie Clark via email at [bclark@du.edu](mailto: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>

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 contact us at [amachedu@du.edu](mailto:amachedu@du.edu) or the address below with your mailing address and /or e-mail address.

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