

THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AMACHE PROJECT

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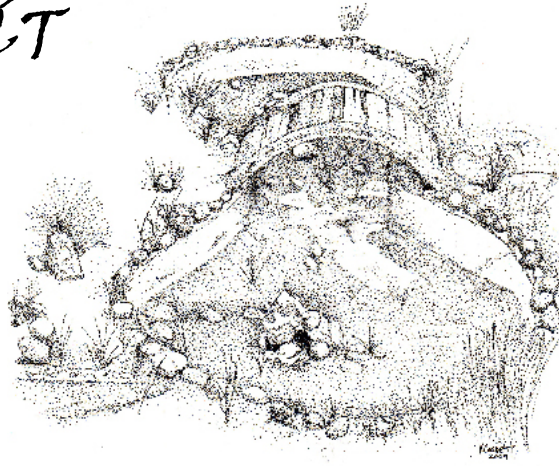
Message From the Director

The past year was a busy one for the students and staff of the DU Amache Project. As you will see in the articles enclosed, our focus since last spring has been the field school held at the site of Amache and the Amache museum in Granada, Colorado. We had a very successful field season, with lots of exciting finds, wonderful community engagement, and robust research.

The first article in this issue overviews the 2014 field school in more detail. The next two articles highlight the thesis work of two new graduate students. Each of them has a fascinating project, ones that you might want to help with. Finally, we overview some of the news about the project and the Amache site. Of particular note is our upcoming exhibit, a second version of the community-student partnership, *Connecting the Pieces*.



Mapping at Amache, Summer 2014



I hope you've had a chance to check out the University of Denver Amache Project Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject>. If not, please come visit the site and share it with your friends and family. The page was created by Kevin Davis, recent DU undergraduate student and a participant in our 2012 field school. Thanks to Kevin and to all who have posted and shared on the page.

On behalf of all the students and staff of the project, thank you to everyone who has supported us over the past year, whether by contributing to a community meeting, attending a talk, or visiting the field school. We are honored and humbled by the company we keep.

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

Educating about Archaeology and Internment

~By Jeremy Haas

My first experience with Amache was this past summer when I worked as a crew chief for Dr. Bonnie Clark. It was not the first time I had heard of Amache though. I read the previous work of Clark and her graduate students, and visited Amache to prepare for the upcoming field school. Each time I read about or visited the site, I wondered why I had not heard about it before during my earlier education. I completed a BA in history, with a focus in secondary education, prior to my attending DU which had left me with the view point of a teacher. How can an event that had such a resounding impact on American civil rights not be common knowledge?

In most high school U.S. history courses, WWII is usually one of the last things to be taught. Many classes begin after the Civil War and continue chronologically. I find that for many school children the emphasis of their WWII education is the European front. This usually means that the American home front is only briefly covered. If internment is taught, it is usually given a day. I find this troubling because the civil rights issues surrounding Japanese American internment are just as relevant today as they were when FDR gave his executive order. With this in mind, I began work on a thesis that sought to combine archaeology, history, and education. While this may seem like a tall order, the three disciplines complement one another well.

Archaeology has enormous potential in education. In the past few decades teachers have been striving to add depth to their once lecture-heavy classrooms by bringing in other disciplines. Children learn in different ways: some learn well through visuals, others learn best through listening, and some



Amache Finds to be used as an Education Collection,
Collected Summer 2014

learn best by practice. To do archaeology well you naturally combine most of these learning styles, especially hands-on analysis of the materials archaeologists uncover.

Thanks to the DU Amache Project, I now have access to Amache objects to be used as an education collection. The original context of these finds had been lost, due to site disturbance, but now they can be used as an educational tool. High school children will have the opportunity to learn about Amache and make their own connections to the internees by analyzing these objects during a WWII unit that will be taught at a Denver-area high school. The goal of this work is to make the American home front more interactive and tangible to the students. Unique experiences such as this may help these students remember Amache and how fragile our civil rights can be, especially as they grow into voters. If you are interested in teaching with Amache, please contact me at jhaas87@gmail.com or leave me a message at 303-871-2406.

2014 Field School Report

This past year's field season was very fruitful, as well as a great experience for all involved. The crew consisted of 12 volunteers, eight undergraduate students, and five crew chiefs (four of whom are current DU graduate students). Many of our crew had a family or personal tie to Amache including our High School intern and all of our volunteers, five of whom were former internees themselves. Between June 16 and July 15, hundreds of archaeological objects were analyzed, dozens of landscaping features documented, and several activity areas underwent test excavation. The museum was reorganized, leading both to better object management and new opportunities for display and interpretation. We also hosted two very successful open house days, one for people with a personal or family connection to camp, the other for the general public.

Three previously unstudied barracks blocks were chosen for survey this year – 7H, 8F, and 9F. Intensive surface survey was performed at all of these blocks in an attempt to document surface objects and features; excavations were performed in 7H (see the next article for detail) and also in Block 12H. Residents of Block 7H originated

primarily from rural communities in the Central Valley of California like Walnut Grove and Woodland. Our survey in 7H documented over 200 objects, many of them cleverly repurposed items like rug beaters made out of springs. We also discovered dozens of barrack entryway gardens in the block and an informal pathway that appears to connect the 7H bathhouse to the communal garden associated with Amache Town Hall in Block 6H.

Block 8F was home to incarcerated from Northern California, especially Sonoma County. Surveyors found objects relating to food consumption and preparation, as well as many personal objects. One of the more unique finds is what may have been a home-made net for fishing constructed from metal screen and large gauge wire. Block 8F has evidence of 15 potential gardens, some of which were located in the central space between barracks, a pattern that we have not encountered before. Located inside what would have been the laundry room of the bathhouse is a likely *usu* which could have been used to make mochi during New Years. One of the more unique discoveries was the remains of a walkway that runs from north to south, connecting the block to 9F.

Block 9F was a public block where the co-op store and the Amache police station were located. During survey we were able to document over 100 objects, many likely broken examples of the kinds of items sold at the co-op. In addition to the sumo ring (discussed in the next article), we discovered large community walkways that paralleled the road and provided access to the co-op building.

12H, the block where barrack and bath house reconstructions are planned, was analyzed with ground penetrating radar in an attempt to document any areas of significance before construction activities that could impact archaeological remains. GPR suggested possible activity areas south of the bath

house. Excavation of one of them revealed a packed surface and fragments of lumber. A visitor to the site open house who lived in that block confirmed that it was the location of their softball backstop. Another excavation was placed in what appeared to have been an entryway garden in 12H. Based on the camp directory, the garden was associated with a couple from Los Angeles, Chosaburo and Ai Okumura. Excavation revealed a dry or karesanui garden using gravel and found concrete pieces to possibly simulate an islandscape.

Although the archaeology and our organizational work at the museum were incredibly successful, one of the highlights for the entire crew was our community open house day. Many community members came with their families to join our students and volunteers in visiting our excavations, their family barracks, and the museum. We ended the day with a home-made dinner cooked by the students. It was a wonderful experience and we hope even more of you will join us at Amache in 2016!



Rug Beater found in Block 7H



Community open house participants, Granada, Colorado



Garden in Block 12H excavated in 2014. The reconstructed guard tower is in the background.

Uncovering Traditional Activities

~By Zachary Starke

I came from the University of California, Davis to attend the 2012 Amache summer field school program as an undergraduate student. The intriguing, exciting, and often painful discoveries about this part of our nation's history led me to enroll in the DU master's program to gain a more in-depth analysis of Amache. As a crew chief for last summer's field school, I helped lead survey and excavation crews. A particular focus for my thesis research is the kinds of traditional Japanese activities that were performed at Amache, specifically those that were inter-generational, bringing together Issei, Nisei, and Sansei.

Over the summer we found evidence of one of the sumo wrestling rings at Amache. During pedestrian survey of Block 9F, home to the co-op store and the internal police station, the crew noticed a large, flat, terrace-like area in the northwest corner of the block. Historically this

section was vacant of buildings, as the block did not have any residential barracks. Gently rolling hills, sloping away to the west, are abruptly halted in this section, suggesting someone cut into the hills to create a level surface. The terrace was exactly where George Hirano, who lived in 8F as a teenager, and the camp newspaper, *The Granada Pioneer*, said the sumo ring was. Records suggest another sumo ring was built in Block 6G early in the center's history but was eventually replaced for unknown reasons. Historic photographs show that sumo matches were attended primarily by older men, but internees also made groups exclusively for young boys.

Crews also found evidence of an *ofuro* in 7H, a sauna-like bath structure that is reminiscent of Japanese public bath houses. The remaining structure is a half-brick, half-cinder block foundation on which a tub sat, providing a soaking

place for about four people at a time. Water was likely heated directly underneath the tub with coal. To test whether it was really an *ofuro* crews placed two excavation units to capture portions of the inside and outside of the structure. The units allowed us to discover the physical construction as well as find a rectangular cut in the foundation, a water and ash clean-out location that confirmed we found an *ofuro*. It is unknown at this time who specifically built or used the *ofuro*, however, they were typically used by entire families, providing a relaxing atmosphere for bonding. A previous field school found evidence of another possible *ofuro* foundation in Block 6G but only cleared the surface.

Lastly, I am performing archival research to document Bon Odori celebrations at Amache, summertime festivals to honor the dead. Records suggest the celebrations were held annually in Block 10F, a non-residential block devoid of all buildings where various sports games were played. Time restrictions prevented us from performing survey in this block. There is, however, a wealth of historic photographs depicting the celebrations. Events included many hundreds of women and girls dancing in traditional kimono set to the rhythm of taiko drums. The celebrations drew crowds in the thousands, as the event is commonly attended by those with ties to Buddhism, as was the case for many internees.

The study of these traditional activities is significant because it highlights the continuance of Japanese practices at a time when the culture was actively being suppressed in incarceration centers like Amache. The specific activities studied all cut through generational divisions, involving the young in aspects of their ethnic heritage at a time when much of their life was shaped by American cultural customs. I plan to complete my thesis this summer. If you have memories or photographs to share, or would like a copy of my thesis, please contact me at Zachary.starke@gmail.com or leave a message at (916) 532-3717.



7H ofuro foundation after completion of excavation.



Boys sumo wrestling league match. From the Joseph McClelland Collection, Amache Preservation Society



Girls dressed in traditional kimono for Obon celebration. Photo from Densho Digital Archives.

Recent News

Return of Connecting the Pieces Amache Exhibit

In 2012, students and community members worked together to create a powerful exhibit, Connecting the Pieces: Dialogues on the Amache Archaeology Collection. A new version of the exhibit will be created this Spring, featuring objects found during our 2012 and 2014 research at Amache. The exhibit will be created by students who are working directly with community members to help tell the story of Amache.

If you live in the in the Denver area, we invite you to attend the Exhibit Opening on May 22. The opening will take place from 5-7 pm in the University of Denver Anthropology Gallery (see below for the address). We are honored to be joined that day by former poet laureate of Oregon and Amache survivor, Lawson Inada, who will read a selection of his poetry at 6 pm. The exhibit will remain on display through September 18 and is available weekdays 9-4 pm, with other times available by appointment

This exhibit is designed to travel. If you live outside of Denver and are interested in helping the exhibit travel, please contact Dr. Clark via phone: 303.871.2875 or email: bclark@du.edu.

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DU Student Research Update

Paul Swader, who served as a crew chief in 2010, has recently completed his thesis research on the reuse and repurposing of materials at Amache. His work reveals internee ingenuity and cooperation at a time of scarce resources. He also compares the archaeological findings at Amache with objects curated by the Minidoka National Historic Site. Once edits are complete, his thesis will be available on the DU Amache website.

John Hopper wins award

In May 2014, John Hopper was given a commendation by the Consul General of Japan in Denver for his leadership of the Amache Preservation Society. Mr. Hopper, who has recently become the principal of the Granada School, was recognized by the Consul for his tireless efforts towards education about and preservation of Amache.

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 future field seasons, 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 contact us at bclark@du.edu or the address below with your mailing address and /or e-mail address.

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