

THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AMACHE PROJECT

Volume VIII Spring 2016

Message From the Director

It has been another great year for the DU Amache project. We were honored to participate last Spring in the Amache reunion in Las Vegas. What a great opportunity to discover more about life in camp to talk about shared goals for the future. We also created a new travelling exhibit, which you can find more about inside the newsletter. And of course we are excited about the upcoming DU Amache field school, which will take place this summer from mid-June to mid-July. We are pleased to once again offer summer internships to both a local Granada area high school student, as well as a high school or college student who had family at Amache. Look inside for an article by our 2014 community intern Riki Eijima.

This year we will reprise our successful open house day for former Amache internees and their families on Friday, July 8. Coming near the end of the field season, it offers a wonderful



DU student cleans an Amache object

opportunity for visitors to see the results of our research and to meet other Amacheans. More details about that open house are also available in the newsletter. Of course we welcome visitors any time during our month at Amache.

Thank you all for your interest in and support of the DU Amache project. It is truly an honor to share your company.

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

Be a Part of DU Amache!

This summer the University of Denver will be returning to Amache and the Amache museum in Granada, Colorado. We will be in Granada from June 14 through July 14. Our mornings will be spent doing archaeological research at the camp, while our afternoons will be in the Amache museum working on their wonderful collections. We are especially excited to help the Amache Preservation Society set up their new Amache Research Facility, a space that will house additional collections and serve as a research facility for visitors and archaeology crews.

So 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 day on Friday, July 8, 2016. 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.
- If you are a member of the public, please come see us the next day, Saturday, July 9, 2016. There will be site tours in the morning and activities in the museum in the afternoon.
- We know it's not possible for all of you to come to Colorado, but your input is vital to this project. This year graduate student Sabreina Slaughter will be researching how internees enhanced their diet at the camp, paying attention to the possibility that



Washing objects from Amache during the Open House Day, 2016

these strategies might be different between people from urban and rural backgrounds. If you recall the types of foods being prepared and consumed outside of the mess halls, she would love to hear from you! You can contact Sabreina directly via email: sabreina.slaughter@gmail.com or leave a message at 303-871-2406

Are you interested in our work, but can't come to visit? Follow the progress of the field school on Facebook! We will post regularly throughout the month we are in the field on: <https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject/>

Sonoma State University Receives National Endowment for the Humanities Grant to Digitize Collections Belonging to Former Amacheans

~Dana Shew

The Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University has received a Common Heritage grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of the Amache Digitization Project. This project aims to digitize photographs, objects, documents, and memories to preserve and share the experiences of WWII Japanese American internment at Amache. Although the Amache Museum and other repositories have very rich and full collections of Amache related materials, many former Amacheans and their descendants



still have countless items from Amache in their personal collections. The Amache Digitization Project encourages those with Amache related objects to participate in the project so that the memories, experiences, and lessons represented by these objects will be preserved and shared.

The project will hold a “Day of Digitization” in Sonoma County, California on April 23 during which the public is invited to bring any photographs, diaries,

art work, hand-made jewelry, yearbooks, items printed by the silk screen shop, furniture, crafts, other paper items, and more to the event. These items will be scanned or photographed and the stories and memories associated with the items will be

recorded. Participants will take their objects home along with copies of the photographs and scans. When appropriate event staff will also share tips and advice on the best ways to safely store and care for these precious items.

Digital copies of the scanned and photographed items will be added to the collection at the Amache Museum. Following the digitization event will be an exhibit during the Fall of 2016 at the Sonoma State University Library Art Gallery that will showcase certain objects and items discovered during the Day of Digitization. This exhibit will highlight the Amacheans’ unbreakable spirit, focusing on the surprising creativity and beauty that came out of a harsh, unforgiving landscape. To participate in the project or for more information contact Dana Ogo Shew, Project Director at shew@sonoma.edu or 707-664-3285.



Uncovering the Holes of My Past

~Riki Fujima

Editors note: Riki is currently a high school senior. She served as the DU Amache descendant community intern for the 2014 field school.

My University of Denver Amache Field School experience was a first for everything: taking the plane solo, college class, participating in an archaeological dig, and going to an internment camp. Backed by the generosity of the University of Denver, I became a DU Pioneer, eager to take on this task and uncover the holes of my past.

During World War II, my maternal grandfather, Frank Suzuki, was interned at Granada Relocation Center along with his family and many other Japanese Americans from Los Angeles, Sebastopol, and Central California. I’ve heard my grandparents tell me stories of their camp experiences since I was a little kid. However, until I went to Amache, I was unaware that many third-, fourth-, and fifth generation Japanese Americans never learned of their ancestors’ internment and discrimination. Because this is a dark part of our country’s history, it is imperative that we know about this injustice in order to recognize our wrongs and move forward.

One of my favorite times were the scintillating conversations we had in the evenings. One discussion particularly spurred my interest. We talked about the term “internment” and its euphemistic use. Words like “relocation center” are not accurate representations of the Japanese/Japanese Americans experience. Whenever we talk about Nazi Germany and Japanese American internment in high school, I take exception when classmates argue that the Jews experienced



Three generations of the Suzuki family visit the location of their family’s barrack at Amache during the community open house day, Summer 2014.

greater hardship than did the Japanese Americans. Both incarcerations were great injustices, and the two cannot be equated. No matter the degree of racism or oppression, both acts were racist and oppressive.

According to Webster’s New World Fourth College Edition, a concentration camp is “a prison camp in which political dissidents, members of minority ethnic groups, etc. are confined.” Meanwhile, “internment camp” is not in this dictionary. In

our post-workday discussion, I concluded that even though “concentration camp” is associated specifically with the German death camps, the definition clearly applies to that of Japanese American wartime imprisonment, and should not detract from the hardships experienced by the Issei and Nisei.

In addition to 6 am-to-noon workdays in the field under a warm sun, we spent our afternoons in the local museum run by the Amache Preservation Society, mainly a group of Granada High School students. This part of my journey also stood out as I had never seen so many heirlooms before. I was touched by how the Granada community, as well as my fellow field school classmates, marveled over the artifacts, and treated them with such care.

The highlight of the museum work was creating my own exhibit, “What is Your Story?,” assisted by former Granada resident and DU Amache volunteer, Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker. This participatory exhibit was a space dedicated to descendants’ and internees’ stories relating to Amache, for visitors to get a better sense of the life lived there. On Open House day, guests added their comments and recollections; my distant history was no longer so distant; I felt a sense of closure.

Like my grandparents and many other internees, I feel obligated to stand up against injustice, to secure Constitutional rights for everyone. I must channel frustration into action--to advocate for the voiceless and against racial injustice. Stepping onto my grandfa-



Riki and crew learn ground-penetrating radar

ther’s foundation barracks, with his sister and my family, and telephoning Grandpa Frank from his block was an emotional, memorable moment. I encourage any descendant to visit their family’s camp. But perhaps even more important is that I hope all Americans visit Amache and the other internment camps to understand the true American experience and hopefully work toward a more just United States of America.

Connecting the Pieces Traveling Exhibit

Last spring, the DU Amache Project partnered with the University of Denver Museum of Anthropology to present an updated version of the popular exhibit Connecting the Pieces: Dialogues on the Amache Archaeology Collection. Created as part of Dr. Clark’s American Material Culture class, the exhibit features seven archaeological objects from Amache recovered during the 2012 and 2014 field seasons. Community members partnered with undergraduate students to tell the story of Amache through the objects.

Are you interested in bringing Connecting the Pieces to your local community? The exhibit is available to travel and already has some upcoming destinations. It was on display at the Denver Day of Remembrance event at History Colorado on February 21. In March, the exhibit traveled to Brattleboro, Vermont as part of a service learning project with 7th and 8th grade students. In May, it will be on view at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in Eads, Colorado, about an hour drive from Amache, to coincide with the annual Amache pilgrimage.

We’d love to bring the exhibit to your local museum, library, or community center. If you are interested in learning more about availability or bookings, please contact Anne Amati at 303-871-2687 or anne.amati@du.edu.



These porcelain sherds are the remnants of a large serving platter, carefully brought to Amache by its owner. The central motif of pine, bamboo, and plum tree represents the Three Friends of Winter, making this dish appropriate for an auspicious occasion. Community member Ann Naome Yoshihara-Murphy, whose family was incarcerated at Amache, wrote a poem to her mother inspired by this object recovered from Amache.



This porcelain bulldog was recovered during the 2012 field school. Stamped “JAPAN” on the back, the figurine was imported before the United States cut trade relations with Japan during WWII. Community member Mary Ann Ame-miya theorizes that the figurine was someone’s memento of a beloved pet left behind during the forced relocation.

Amache Historical Society II - We're the "new kids on the Block", Ages 30s-70s
~Frances Palmer

We Amache survivors and advocates appreciate your interest in the archaeology and museum field work at Amache. As the newest of the many Amache groups, we join with the Denver based Friends of Amache, the Amache Preservation Society, the Annual Pilgrimage group (led by the Japanese American Association of Colorado), the DU Amache Project, and the California-based Amache Historical Society (AHS), our mentor, to explore and preserve the Amache era.

Twelve of us met in Los Angeles on July 11, 2015, to discuss ways to continue Amache's legacy, to find interested younger generations to join in this effort and to plan how to work with the existing Amache organizations to meet Amache's future challenges.

Amache Historical Society President Min Tonai, our advisor, has suggested we continue with four main goals that his Nisei generation and AHS have had in preserving Amache ties and its legacy:

A. Communicate about Amache to current survivors and younger generations. We are using emails, skype, the www.amache.org updated website and other new media to reach both current and future generations.

B. Support John Hopper and the Amache Preservation Society which maintains the Amache site and museum in Colorado, and which partners with the DU Amache field program

C. Encourage participation in the annual

May Pilgrimage to Amache

D. Keep Amache in contact with the other Nine Confinement Site groups as we together preserve the 1942-45 period through education and inspiration

Join us today by emailing us your name, Amache family name and block number if you have it, your street address, phone and affirmation that you will be a part of Amache future by letting us send you Amache news. We may also send you our recent Amache future planning interests survey for your input and share the results with you afterward.

Our email address is amachehistoricalsocietyii@gmail.com. You may also write us c/o Carlene Tinker, 4553 East Alamos Avenue, Fresno, CA 93726.



Organizing meeting of the AHS II, July 11, 2015

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 volunteer 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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