



Santa Anita Reunion at JANM

As a way to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, authorizing the internment, the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles held a reunion of the Santa Anita Assembly Center internees. AHS President Min Tonai helped to organize this event, which was attended by approximately 200 people, including the mom and cousins of our own Kirsten Leong. Kirsten reports that her relatives had a great time reminiscing with those whom they met at the reunion.

The internees who were housed in horse stalls, grandstands, and barracks at the Santa Anita racetrack were primarily from Southern California and outnumbered those from Northern California, sent to the Tanforan race track, and those from Seattle, housed at the Puyallup Fairgrounds. Amache internee Frances Palmer's then teenage adopted "aunt," Toshiko Sakamoto Aiboshi, remembers that the US Army made the internees weave camouflage nets in the Santa Anita grandstands—an irony that she recognized even then as a 14-year-old teen.

Creativity Unconfined II Exhibit:

Dana Shew, an oral historian at Sonoma State University, will unveil a second showing of the exhibit, "Creativity Unconfined," originally shown on campus in 2016, at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center in Chinatown. The exhibit will focus on the creativity and resilience of internees at Amache and other incarceration sites and will be on view from July 14 to September 14. Author Delphine Hirasuna will be present at the opening reception.

For details, email shew@sonoma.edu

Call for Contribs

Please contribute pieces (250-300 words or less) about relevant subjects, e.g. reminders, meetings, reunions, social events, pilgrimages, community news, recollections, exhibits, books, letters to editor, etc.

Please send your contributions to Sumiko Higashi at akari@att.net. Contributions will be copyedited and appear in a future issue.

Amache Historical Society II (AHS II) Newsletter SUMMER 2017

AHS II's mission is to:

- preserve the Amache site (Granada, CO)
- teach Amache's history and legacy by reporting survivors' stories
- communicate via the amache.org website
- support John Hopper and his Granada High students, known as the Amache Preservation Society, with maintenance of the Amache site and museum

Last Pilgrimage for Homma Hasegawa family

Amache survivor Kumiko Homma Hasegawa and husband, Fred, who live in Seattle, brought their son, John, and daughter, Holly LeClerq, to the 2017 pilgrimage to Amache; it was likely to be her last one. Holly came all the way from her home in Paris, France, where she practices dentistry.



Kumiko Homma Hasegawa on the Amache pilgrimage with husband, Fred; son, John; and daughter, Holly



Kumiko points to her brother's photo on a National Park Service elementary school sign

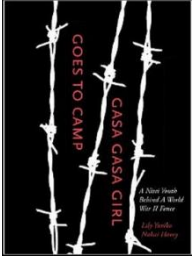
Guided by Denver University anthropology professor Dr. Bonnie Clark, who supervises archaeological investigations of the Amache site, and one of her students, Kumi and her family visited the area where she had once lived, 12K – 12E. She was especially interested in the restored barrack's room with a pot-bellied stove, cot and blanket. Kumiko's family donated their WWII blankets to the Amache site.

Donate to Amache Preservation Society

John Hopper reports that he and APS are very busy at the Amache site, now that it's summer vacation. Since the survey of AHS 2 members, taken in 2016, showed that "preserving the Amache site" was our top priority, we can help by donating to Amache Preservation Society. John often pays out of his own pocket for water and other bills as he and his students keep up the grounds. The guard and water towers, barracks, kiosk area, and cemetery all need to be maintained. Please make out checks to the Amache Preservation Society and send donations to:

APS, PO BOX 259, GRANADA, CO 81041

Gasa Gasa Girl Goes to Camp: Lily Havey's Amache Memories



Lily Yuriko Nakai Havey's touching memoir, an account of her experience in Amache as a pre-teen, keeps her busy with book signings in the US and Japan. The overwhelming response to her book, which is illustrated with her own paintings, has surprised her. A great deal of the emotions expressed by her water colors in relation to her text create an instant bond with the reader. Lily, interestingly, did not begin painting until she was approximately 65 years old-- long after she had graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music, worked as an English teacher, and established a stained-glass studio.

Gasa Gasa Girl Cover (Univ. of Utah Press) Lily's experience at Amache was understandably traumatic, but she has achieved some measure of resolution and realization: "At long last--realizing that the trauma of the war years continually hampered healthy emotional development--I have given myself permission to 'let it hangout' and express these emotions through my paintings and stories."

Now based in Utah, Lily introduced her book to the last Las Vegas Reunion of the Amache Historical Society, in 2015. You can order her book (University of Utah, 2014) from Amazon or may be lucky enough to find it at your local library.

"Out of the Desert" Exhibit at Yale University

Although Japanese American communities do not exist in New England, an exhibit titled "Out of the Desert" was held at Yale's Sterling Memorial Library in 2015-2016. The exhibit dodged the question as to whether internment camps should be labeled concentration camps. Curated by American Studies graduate student Courtney Sato, it drew on material archived at Yale's famed Beineke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library. Among the papers and artwork shown was a diary written by Yonekazu Satoda, who regretted, in an entry dated May 15, 1942, that he was missing his UC Berkeley graduation ceremony on that very day. Still alive at age 94, Satoda was honored at an opening reception.

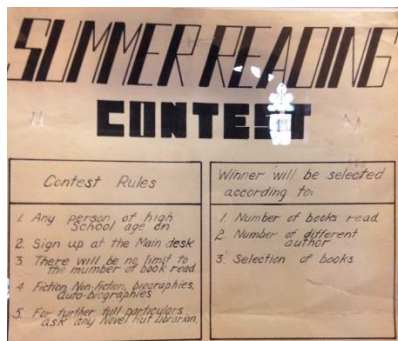


Chart for a summer reading contest
- Yale exhibit on internment camps

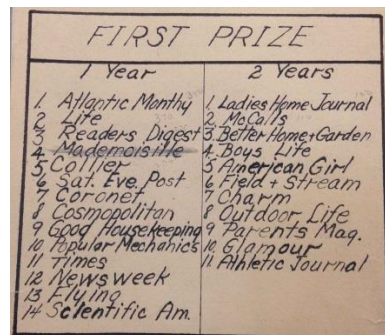


Chart listing reading contest prizes
- Yale exhibit on internment camps

Among the most distinctive items in the display cases was a chart listing prizes for a Poston Summer Reading Contest for high school and older-age internees. Contestants who read the most books by combining authors and genres won magazine subscriptions to Atlantic Monthly, Life Reader's Digest, Mademoiselle, Saturday Evening Post, Good Housekeeping, Lady's Home Journal, Time, Newsweek, Scientific American, American Girl, Field and Stream, Better Homes and Gardens, Glamour, Modern Screen, and so forth.

What remains unknown is whether the contest organizers and participants were aware of the irony involved in the awarding of such subscriptions. As part of popular culture, these publications constructed a vision of an idealized lifestyle based on personal attractiveness; a comfortable home in friendly neighborhoods; pursuit of outdoor living; and knowledge about politics, economics, and culture. Put another way, popular magazines reinforced a vision of the good life from which racialized Japanese Americans were excluded. A pastime to be encouraged, the summer reading contest was, in fact, problematic because it represented more frustration channeled into daydreaming, yearning, and helplessness. We can only conjecture about the titles of books that the contestants were reading to win prizes.

Volunteer Staff:

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Staff Bios:

Sumiko Higashi, who resides in Connecticut, is Professor Emerita at SUNY Brockport and has published several works in film history, especially the American silent era, and media criticism.

Frances Fumi Itow Palmer resides in Seattle and is a retired supervisory investigator of the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where she fought discrimination for 42 years.

Mitch Homma, CA, is an aerospace engineer and on the Board of Managers for the American Baptist Historical Society. He is documenting his family's experiences at Amache, Heart Mountain, Lordsburg, and Seagoville.

Kirsten Leong is a social scientist at NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center in Honolulu, updates the Amache.org website and has supported several Amache projects.