



## Amache Historical Society II (AHS II) Newsletter, FALL 2019

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](http://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

### Amache Club Funds Wind Storm Damage Repair

The Japanese American Association of Colorado, also known as the Amache Club, approved a large grant for the Amache Preservation Society to repair massive damage to structures, etc. caused by an unprecedented wind storm in 2018. Sixty-five windows, for example, had to be replaced. Artifacts, thankfully, were not damaged.

John Hopper reports that significant funding has been secured to pay for the cost of extensive repair work. But funding still needs to be raised to repair the north side of the damaged barracks and to furnish the rec hall, recently relocated on its original site; it used to be the site of a pre-school. Furthermore, an effort will be made to complete the interior of the barracks with a wood stove, furnishings, etc. because many visitors express a wish to go inside.

Please send your tax-deductible donations to:

Amache Preservation Society  
PO Box 259  
Granada CO 81041-0259



Amache Elementary School Class

### JACL Anniversary

On August 6, 2019, the Japanese American Citizens League's held its fiftieth convention and celebrated the organization's ninetieth anniversary at the Little America Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. Significantly, this same hotel was the site, in 1978, of the JACL's commitment to the movement for redress and reparation. This year's convention, scheduled full of activities and workshops, included support for marriage equality, an open-mic night hosted by local youth, and a trip to the Topaz incarceration site. The convention concluded with a sayonara banquet honoring local basketball legend Wat Misaka; social justice advocate and Los Angeles teachers' union leader Arlene Inouye; and United States Senator from Hawaii, Mazie Hirono.

### New Museum in Granada, Colorado

About fifty steps from the old museum, a spacious new museum with a room equipped for media presentations will open on the site of the former TBK bank. The bank has generously granted the Amache Preservation Society a 99-year lease on the building, at no cost, with the proviso that the ATM machine in the parking lot still operate and that the structure be maintained. Interestingly, the bricks used to build the bank in the 1950s had been taken from the internment site. Artifacts will now be stored in the old museum.

## **JACL Annual Convention includes JACSC**

The JACL convened its annual national convention at the Little America Hotel in Salt Lake City this past July 31 - August 4th. (For information, check out <https://www.convention2019.jacl.org/>).

The theme of this year's conference was "Advocacy, Inclusion, Action."

For the first time, the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (JACSC) worked in partnership with the JACL to offer workshops about their projects and to increase the participation of Japanese Americans among JACL members. An optional visit to the Topaz Museum in Delta, UT, site of the Topaz concentration camp, was scheduled. Workshops were open to all, especially Utah community and youth groups, and focused on issues such as LGBTQ rights, immigration, and social media. Workshops were also held on how to do research on your family history and included visits to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, the largest genealogical library in the world.

At its Advocacy Meeting in Washington DC, scheduled for March 4-April 2, 2020, JACSC will continue to inform Congress about its objectives: these include maintaining relationships with Congressional delegations and developing strategies to fund internment sites and related projects.

## **Amache Special Resource Study**

Kara Miyagishima, Program Manager of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, has been in contact with the National Park System in the Department of the Interior and recently sent out a notice to those interested in serving as contacts for the Amache Special Resource Study. Only Congress can authorize such a study. A team has yet to initiate a study based on NPS guidelines that specify the following: national significance (already proven in that the Granada Relocation Center was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006); suitability in terms of comparisons with Tule Lake, Minidoka, and Manzanar; feasibility in terms of resource protection, administration and cost; and the need for NPS management.

Also included in the study will be an investigation of other potential sources (governmental, private organizations, non-profits, etc.) for the preservation and interpretation of the Amache site. An especially important focus of the study will be estimated costs for budgetary items such as operation and maintenance—whether the site becomes part of the NPS or secures alternative forms of support from other sources. When the study is concluded, the Department of Interior will forward a recommendation regarding Amache's status to Congress.

At present, the emphasis is on securing for the study team titles of general works, rather than primary sources, regarding the history of incarceration and Amache's unique significance. Documents, such as the 2004 Amache Management Plan, 2007 Interpretive and Development Plan, 2011 Building Stock Research and Inventory, and numerous reports from the Denver University Amache Project have been collected. If you have others, please feel free to send to the [amachehistoricalsocietyii@gmail.com](mailto:amachehistoricalsocietyii@gmail.com).

A meeting in the spring will solicit input from Amache Stakeholders in Colorado and California.

## Amache Block 10-E Defenders

Gary Ono recently discovered a snapshot of Block 10-E defenders that was most likely taken by his enterprising and resourceful aunt, Yukiko Masuoka. A group of young boys dressed as well-armed GIs is shown prepared to defend their homes. Who exactly, we may ironically ask, was the enemy? Clutching a doll, the only girl in the picture is not dressed for combat or brandishing a weapon.

Since Gary's aunt had a camera, she probably sent photographs of him and his siblings to their mom, Kimiye, who had contracted tuberculosis and was convalescing in distant Boulder. She was separated from her family for eighteen months; meanwhile, her bilingual husband, Sam Masami, had been assigned to live in Denver to broadcast Allied radio propaganda to the Japanese. Without either parent in Amache, the Ono children were cared for by family members until their mother could rejoin them. Uprooting, loss, and internment were thus even more exacerbated for the Onos.

Please send photos and stories to be written up in future newsletters to [akari@att.net](mailto:akari@att.net)



**Yuki Okamura with her trusty camera at the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island, San Francisco**

Mrs. Kimiye Ono



**Haruo Roy Otsuji, Unidentified-1, "Nurse" Yae Phyllis Okamura, Hiroichi Kenneth Okamura, Unidentified-2, Tsutomu Gary Ono, Kazumi Stanley Ono (1/20/1939-12/28/2018)**



## Amache's Famous Photographers

An interesting story about Gary Ono's aunt Yukiko and her camera piques our curiosity about the important subject of photography and photographers at Amache. Gary informs us that confiscated cameras were returned to internees early in 1943 and that the Co-op had both a studio and processing services. Although he has not seen any photography sessions listed in Amache's records, at least two notable photographers were learning and practicing their craft in the internment camp.

In 2011, Patricia Wakida and Gary conducted a video interview of Jack Muro, who was in Amache when he met photographer Tosh Matsumoto, the first Japanese American member of the New York Photo League.

Significantly, Matsumoto's work was included in two Museum of Modern Art exhibits in postwar years.

At Amache, Jack learned how to take and develop photographs and, in fact, built a secret underground darkroom under his bunk; he photographed daily life in the camp with the intention of preserving a historical record and estimates that he produced hundreds of pictures.

For further information see <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2013/5/13/jack-muro>

A photographer who achieved global fame, Yasuhiro Ishimoto was a kibe who returned to the US shortly before the war to study architecture. Significantly, he learned photography at Amache and then studied at the Institute of Design in Chicago. A critic describes his work as a convergence of Bauhaus and Japanese aesthetics. After the war, Ishimoto lived mostly in Japan, where he produced, among other works, well-known black-and-white photos of the famous imperial villa at Katsura in Kyoto. Around this time, he was recognized by the inclusion of his work in the famous "Family of Man" exhibit (1955) at the Museum of Modern Art.

Spending a few years in Chicago, where he had earlier come of age as a photographer, Ishimoto became known for photos that showed the city's residents including blacks in neighborhoods, public spaces and beaches (1969). Some of his shots, it should be noted, were abstractions of crushed soda cans, pavement, leaves, clouds, and water. A retrospective view of his work concludes that Ishimoto's aesthetics and political awareness, cultivated in Amache, brought a sense of social justice to his famous photos of Chicago.



Jack Muro near the Block 6H. From "Jack Muro Amache Photo Album" by Gary Ono. Gift of Jack Muro, Japanese American National Museum (2012.2.309) © 2013 Gary T. Ono

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