

## Amache Alliance Newsletter (Spring 2022)

Our mission is to:

1. Preserve and interpret the Granada War Relocation Center (Amache) National Historic Landmark;
2. Educate all Americans about the forced evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans by preserving Amache's historic structures, artifacts, and stories;
3. Collaborate with other organizations to stress the relevance of Japanese American confinement in preserving the civil rights of all Americans today.

## Amache Alliance Nonprofit Replaces Amache Historical Society II

The Amache Alliance (AA) was formed as a California nonprofit public benefit corporation for charitable, educational, and historic purposes and received its Federal IRS 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status in August. Why was it formed? Unfortunately, the Amache Historical Society 2 (AHS2) could not be recognized as a nonprofit under California business rules because its name was similar to the original Amache Historical Society (AHS). In addition to assuming AHS2 responsibilities, the AA fulfills the role of the earlier Nisei-led tax-exempt group. And it continues to support Colorado and national organizations in their preservation efforts. Continuing the work of our Nisei pioneers is an honor.



Please be patient as the organization and supporting programs are still being set up. Visit [AmacheAlliance.org](https://AmacheAlliance.org) for updates.

### Amache will Join the National Park System!

The Amache National Historic Site Act, sponsored by Representatives Joe Neguse (D-Colorado) and Ken Buck (R-Colorado) in the House and by Senator Michael Bennet (D-Colorado) and Senator John Hickenlooper (D-Colorado) in the Senate, was passed sequentially in each chamber during 2021-2022. The House was required to pass the bill a second time—on a version that had been amended unanimously by the Senate on February 14, 2022— and did so without objection on February 18. President Biden signed the bill into law on March 18, 2022. Since a critical part of the mission of the NPS is to narrate America's history, survivors, descendants, and the community of Amache will have their stories interpreted, preserved, and honored for generations to come. Congratulations to all those who worked so hard to make this dream come true!

Among organizations at the forefront of preservation, the National Park Conservation Association will continue to advocate for Amache as the site becomes established under the NPS. The formal transition to NPS management will occur only after land acquisition has been completed. The NPS will work with the Town of Granada, the sole landowner, to discuss this formal process of the land donation, which may take a year or two, and will require funding to draw up legal land descriptions, environmental site assessments, and agreements to maintain the town's water rights.

For the foreseeable future, the Amache Preservation Society (APS), in cooperation with the Town of Granada, will continue to manage the site. The NPS will work with stakeholders to develop a site description and comprehensive management plan. We ask newsletter readers to please continue supporting the Granada High School's APS.

## Donate to Amache!

Although Amache will become part of the NPS, the transition will occur only after a year-long land transfer process. Since initial staffing and funding will be minimal, please continue to send your tax-exempt donations to:

Amache Preservation Society, PO Box 259, Granada, CO 81041-0269

For those of you interested in remembering Amache in your will, Sumiko Higashi's attorney in Connecticut worded the naming of the beneficiary as follows:

Granada School District No.RE-1 in Granada, Colorado, to further the tax-exempt purpose of the Amache Preservation Society, PO Box 259, Granada, Colorado 81041-0269 to preserve the historic site, the Amache Internment Camp (Granada Relocation Center) in Granada, Colorado.

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## 2022 Amache Pilgrimage scheduled for May 21, 2022

The Amache Preservation Society and Nikkei Jin Kai of Colorado are currently scheduling the annual pilgrimage on May 21, the Saturday before Memorial Day weekend. COVID-19 conditions will be closely monitored to ensure that the event can be held safely, and updates regarding the situation will be promptly posted.

Since the passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act, this pilgrimage represents the first opportunity for an in-person gathering in over two years. Great interest is expected. The event is free and open to everyone, individuals and groups should register by filling out an [online form](#) to enable planning.

For an online form, see the Amache.org In-person Pilgrimage webpage: <https://amache.org/pilgrimage/>

### Pilgrimage Schedule, May 21:

- 11:00 AM Memorial Ceremony at the Amache Cemetery
- 12:30 PM Potluck Lunch at Granada High School
- 1:30 PM Visits to the Amache site or Amache Museum
- 2:30 PM Bus departs for Denver

Persons driving on their own or flying and renting a car should register for optional informal activities:

- Amache family barracks visit **NOTE: \*Please give the bus riders priority to visit the museum after lunch**
- Informal dinner at Shorty's Restaurant in Granada **NOTE: No credit cards accepted, bring cash please.**

Please be advised that lodging is available in Lamar, Colorado, 17 miles to the west of Granada on Highway 50. Staying in the area overnight provides more time to visit the site, go on a driving tour, and visit the Amache Museum. NOTE: Annual Lamar Days is the weekend too. [See the above Pilgrimage webpage for alternate routes.](#)

Visitors who plan on spending time at the site should come prepared with sturdy shoes, water, sunscreen, and a hat. The terrain is uneven with low bushes, rocks, and cactus. The weather can be very hot and dry and restrooms are not available on site.

**Caution: Rattlesnakes are Present!** Avoid stepping in areas where you cannot see your foot placement. Not all rattlesnakes forewarn with a rattle. Please do not harm snakes as they are an important part of the ecosystem.

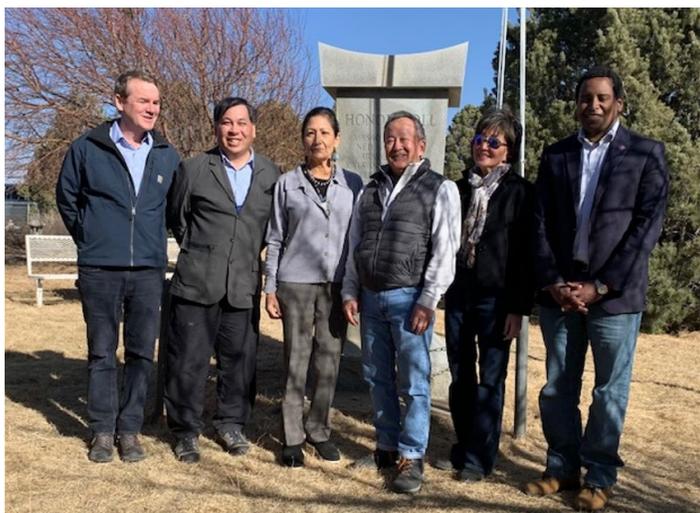
See the Amache.org website for additional details: <https://amache.org/pilgrimage/>

## Day Of Remembrance at Amache with Distinguished Guests

February 19 is the anniversary date of an historic event that forever changed the lives of over 100,000 Japanese Americans. According to Kenneth Kitajima, incarceration camp survivor, “President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a 3-page Executive Order 9066 that resulted in placing 120,000 Japanese into concentration camps with barbed wire fencing, guard towers, ... military men armed with rifles and machine guns and searchlights.” Along with over 7,000 other Japanese Americans, Kitajima was imprisoned in southern Colorado at Amache, a confinement site from 1942 to 1945.

After Senate passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, as well as Senator Michael Bennet, Representative Joe Neguse, Mayor Argie Thrall of Granada, NPS members, and others visited Amache on the Day of Remembrance. Acting as hosts were John Hopper and the Amache Preservation Society. Bob Fuchigami, Derek Okubo, Stacey Okubo-Davis, and Mitch Homma were invited to represent the Amache community. Fuchigami and Amache descendants were able to share the experiences of their families while touring the site. APS students provided the special guests with a museum tour.

A recording of the virtual roundtable discussion with the Secretary of the Interior, members of Congress, Amache survivors and descendants on February 18 is available at ( [Roundtable Amache Bill passage discussion](#) ) and CBS News coverage of the Colorado delegation’s visit to Amache on the eightieth anniversary of the Day of Remembrance on February 19 is accessible at <https://denver.cbslocal.com/2022/02/19/camp-amache-80th-anniversary/>



Left: Sen. Michael Bennet, Mitch Homma, Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland, Derek Okubo, Stacey Okubo, Rep. Joe Neguse  
Right: Walking to the Amache Cemetery on Day of Remembrance as the cold dusty wind blows across the landscape



Windy Day or Remembrance at Amache

### National Day of Remembrance: 80 Years of Reckoning Was Observed on Feb 18-20, 2022

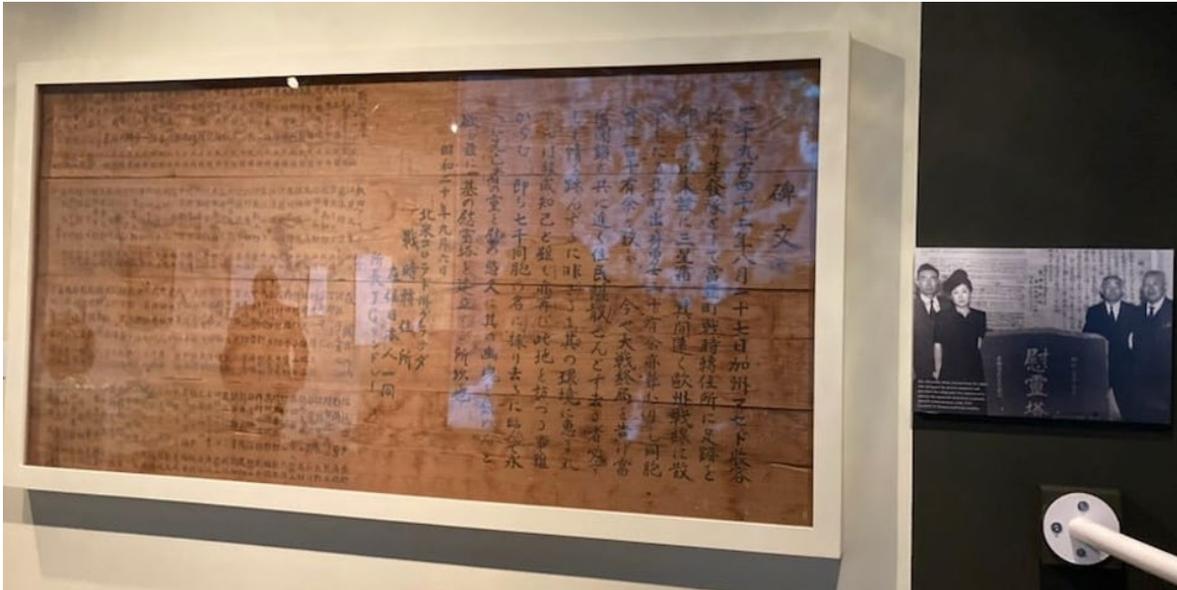
During February 18-20, the NPS, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, and the Heart Mountain Foundation co-hosted a virtual National Day of Remembrance: 80 Years of Reckoning. The Amache Alliance was represented by Kirsten Leong on a panel titled “Restorative Justice and Healing in Preservation and Interpretation Through Community Engagement” on February 20. Link: [Restorative Justice and Healing in Preservation and Interpretation Through Community Engagement](#)

For the full program and links to recordings, visit the National Museum of American History’s Day of Remembrance 2022 site: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/day-of-remembrance>

## Amache Memorial Wall on Display at the Japanese American National Museum

A current exhibit titled “Sutra and Bible” at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California, will be on display until November 27. Co-curated by Duncan Ryuken Williams and Emily Anderson, the exhibit represents the ways in which Buddhist and Christian communities provided refuge, instilled hope, and taught compassion as Japanese Americans experienced martial law, survived behind barbed wire, and fought on the battlefield.

The Amache Memorial Wall is part of this exhibit and is one part of the original three-piece commemorative memorial designed by Reverend Masahiko Wada and dedicated on September 6, 1944.



Amache Memorial Wall currently on display at JANM in Los Angeles, CA

How did this piece get to Los Angeles? The following is Derek Okubo and Jim Hada’s (father of Calvin Hada) recollection of saving the memorial wall:

T. Aigaki, Henry Okubo, and Jim Hada were visiting Amache and they saw smoke and ventured to investigate. A number of migrant workers had built a bonfire and were tossing a bunch of different items into it...wood, trash, whatever they could find

They saw that among the items ..were the memorial boards. By the time they ran over a few of the boards had been tossed into the fire. Jim and Henry ran ... and pulled the boards out of the flames and took the others away as well. They were unsure what other artifacts might have been thrown in that they could not save.

From the way that Jim described the incident it was...scary.... I got a sense that the workers were not happy (...they might have been drunk) and tried to stop the visitors from pulling the boards out. T. Aigaki spoke Spanish, and tried to reason with the workers.... Jim laughingly told me the three got the boards and got out of there with their lives, so everything worked out!

Several years later, John Tonai, son of Minoru Tonai (Amache Historical Society), picked up the boards stored in Denver and drove them to Los Angeles. The Denver Optimist Club (Okubo and Hada), with the help of Tonai, loaned them to the Japanese American National Museum.

A translation of the epitaph in Japanese on the Amache Memorial Wall reads as follows:

#### EPITAPH

Three years have passed since the advanced party set foot in the Amache wartime Relocation Center, arriving from Merced Assembly Center in California on August 27, 1942. During that time, thirty-some brave soldiers from Amache lost their lives at the remote European front, and we count more than one hundred ten fellow countrymen who were buried here. Now that the great war has come to an end and with the closure of this camp, the residents are soon to be dispersed. People who depart are not necessarily going to forget those who are buried here, but if their circumstances are not favorable, even their relatives and acquaintances may have a difficult time revisiting this place. Therefore, as we leave, we are erecting a monument wall, in the name of their seven thousand fellow countrymen, hoping to honor forever the memories of the buried, and to rest their departed souls to eternity.

September 6<sup>th</sup> in the twentieth year of Showa (1945)

The Entire Japanese Residents  
J.G. Lindley, Camp Administrator  
War Relocation Center Granada, Colorado USA



All three pieces of the Amache Memorial from September 1945.

The original granite stone monument, *hakaishi* (墓石), is still standing at the Amache cemetery, but the wooden Honor Roll plaque in English is missing. At the top of the Honor Roll plaque is a gold star, the US military's symbolic representation of service members killed or deceased while serving in the armed forces. The 31 names on this plaque honor the Amache servicemen who died while serving their country even though their families were confined behind barbed wire. These names are also first on the Amache Memorial Wall composed in Japanese.

The 3-piece Amache memorial, blending Japanese and American culture, honors the Japanese tradition of *ohaka mairi*, with annual visitation and cleaning. The honor roll will hopefully be reproduced with weatherproof material in the future and displayed together once again at the site.



Amache Cemetery, 2012. The original building contains the Amache memorial stone. Photo by Kirsten Leong

## Univ. of Denver (DU) Amache Project Field School Open Houses on June 30 – July 1 and July 2

After a long break due to COVID-19, Denver University's Amache Project is returning in 2022. A seventh field school will focus, as in the past, on historical archaeology and museum studies. Archaeological work this summer is planned for Blocks 7E, 12F, and 10G, the site of the high school.

The DU Amache Project will host two public events this summer: an open house for the Amache community scheduled for June 30-July 1, and a public open house planned for July 2.

The Amache Field School Community Open House is designed for individuals with a personal connection to Amache or the Japanese American incarceration experience. The Open House begins on Thursday, June 30, includes an evening meet-and-greet and a research talk. July 1 activities include tours of the archaeological site, individual visits to barracks or other important camp locations, exploring the new museum, and a group dinner.

The Amache Project is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of incarceration. As part of on-going community engagement and research, the biennial field school creates a rich educational environment, advances scholarly research, and provides expertise in archaeology and museums studies to local and descendant communities. Visitors are encouraged to interact with archaeologists and to share family stories that are connected to the artifacts.

For details see the **Amache.org** Archaeology Open House webpage: [Link: DU Amache Field School page](https://amache.org/archaeology-open-house/)

Please register using the online form if you plan to attend. <https://amache.org/archaeology-open-house/>

### Schedule:

#### June 30 – July 1, 2022 Denver University Amache Field School Community Open House

##### June 30:

7- 8:30 PM Welcome and Discussion at the Granada Community Center

##### July 1:

8 AM – Noon Visit with archaeologists at work at Amache

1 – 4 PM Visit Amache Museum in Granada

5 – 8 PM Dinner for open house participants (Amache NPS celebration)

#### July 2, 2022 Denver University Amache Field School Open House (share your stories with the public)

8 AM – Noon Visit with archaeologists at work at Amache

1 – 4 PM Visit Amache Museum in Granada



Morning Field School research at Amache



Afternoon Amache Museum work

## **Amache Stakeholders Discuss Transition to NPS Management** by Sumiko Higashi

On April 18, Kara Miyagishima, who is the Program Manger of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants Program (JACS) and Acting Superintendent of Amache under the National Park Service (NPS), chaired a meeting of Amache stakeholders and NPS personnel to discuss the process of Amache becoming part of the NPS.

First, the establishment of the Amache National Historic Site is contingent upon a successful real estate transfer. That is to say, the NPS must acquire ownership of the land from the Town of Granada, which is donating the property outright. Due to compliance with the Amache National Historic Site bill and environmental concerns, the historic dump site will be exempt from this initial transfer but will be acquired during a subsequent phase. Among important issues involved in a complicated year-long process is the finalizing of the town's water rights.

Also an essential part of the transition is the writing of a foundation document that sets forth objectives regarding Amache's future management, development, visitor experience, and so forth. A collaborate effort, this document will be drawn up by NPS leadership, Amache survivors and descendants, members of the Japanese American community, and the Town of Granada. Outreach will be an important part of the process and reviews will be solicited. Parallel documents such as the Special Resource Study, written prior to legislation evaluating Amache for NPS inclusion, current Comprehensive Interpretation Plan, and the NEH-funded site interpretation plan will be consulted. The NPS inquired whether planned public meetings to solicit input that had been canceled and held virtually due to Covid should now be reconvened. Funding for writing the foundation document has already been requested.

Cooperative association agreements will in the meanwhile be set up between the NPS and the Town of Granada, the Amache Preservation Society, Denver University, and other organizations. The Amache Alliance is considering the possibility of a philanthropic partnership with the NPS. After the transfer is effected, staffing and funding tend to be minimal in initial years. The Amache Preservation Society under John Hopper will continue to manage the museum. The NPS has criteria regarding displays, exhibits, and interpretation. The NPS Amache website, which at present is minimal, will be developed, in consultation with stakeholders, to add details for interpretive themes, narratives, visuals, and overall presentation.

Kara announced that future sessions will be more specific and devoted to topics such as partnering with the NPS, museum management, revising interpretations, and so forth. The conclusive issue is: What does it mean for Amache to become part of the NPS?

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## **Amache Documentary Film & Educational Curriculum Project**

Colorado Preservation, Inc., in partnership with North Shore Productions in Portland, Oregon, is making a documentary film about Japanese Americans who were incarcerated in Amache during World War II. A 2021 NPS Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant provided the initial funding. Additional grants from State Historical Fund (Colorado), Wend Collective, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Japanese American Community Foundation, and North Shore in-kind donations completed budget projections.

The documentary will be screened at the Amache Museum and will also air statewide and regionally on public television stations. Shorter accompanying films and study guides will be available so that the film may be incorporated into social studies and history curricula for grades 6-12. The project is in its early stages. North Shore Productions plans to film at the DU Summer Field School.

## Grant Awards to Update Interpretation Plans by Dana Ogo-Shew

The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University in California a Public Humanities Projects-Historic Places grant. Dana Ogo-Shew leads a team updating the Interpretive Master Plan for the Granada Relocation Center National Historic Landmark (Amache) by focusing on its site, exhibitions, and public programs.

Please visit <https://forms.gle/fMNgWB8TPvns3Xy2A> to participate in our survey. Your input may be crucial in shaping the future of Amache's interpretation!

Rec Hall and Barracks Exhibit Plans:

Colorado Preservation, Inc. received a NPS JACS grant to develop public exhibits for the reconstructed barrack and recreation hall. The project team, including Dana Ogo Shew and April Kamp-Whittaker, is drafting a conceptual framework and plans.

These existing pre-NPS era tasks will be extended to incorporate the parallel efforts with the NPS site establishment team.



President Biden signing the Amache National Historic Site Act (H.R. 2497) into law on March 18, 2022

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