

AMACHE ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022

Special Remembrance Issue

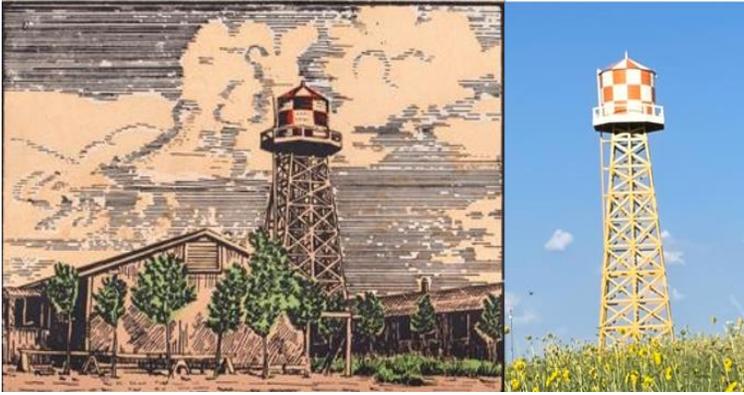


五町
AMACHE



Boy Scouts at Amache saluting, courtesy of Amache Preservation Society





The Amache Alliance 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.

Board of Directors – President's Reflections by Mitch Homma

It seems like just yesterday when many of us gathered at Amache for the July 2018 Denver University (DU) Field School Open House. After that event, we started planning for the National Park Service (NPS) Special Resource Study (SRS) and pushed for the enactment of the Amache National Historic Site bill. Then COVID-19 shutdowns occurred. Virtual SRS meetings, an initial virtual pilgrimage, and community meetings about interpretation, along with the historic passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act (HR 2497) in March, led to the significant events this year.

The annual pilgrimage, hosted by the Amache Preservation Society (APS) and Nikkei-Jin Kai, and the DU Amache Project Field School Open House both attracted record attendance and many first-time visitors. At the pilgrimage, it was great to see former APS members, going back 20 years, assisting current APS students. Such dedication! During both events, I admired the families who brought out elderly Amacheans, even in wheelchairs, who wanted to return and share their stories.



Current and former APS students with John Hopper (left) and NPS acting Amache Superintendent Kara Miyagishima (right)



Amache survivors sharing stories at 12F Field School research site

As the Board of Directors shared their thoughts at several late-night meetings, I reflected on how much the Amache community had accomplished since we last gathered before the pandemic. We discussed forming committees to support the board and getting more people involved with future efforts. The first committee to be formed will focus on communications and will be overseen by board member John Tonai. Among its tasks will be the production of future newsletters. As the last meeting concluded, I began to realize that we were embarking on another exciting chapter with family and friends in the preservation of Amache's unique place in American history.

Amache Alliance News

During its April meeting, the Amache Alliance Board unanimously approved the organization becoming a NPS Friends Group for the Amache National Historic Site (ANHS). While a partnership cannot be formally drawn up until Amache is established under national park management, a Philanthropic Partnership Agreement (PPA) is being drafted. A PPA establishes sustained collaboration (as opposed to short-term or project-specific support) between the NPS and those who contribute staff, in-kind resources, and/or financial support on an ongoing basis. Such an agreement further authorizes partner(s) to raise funds or other resources to benefit the NPS.

The board unanimously voted to attend both the Amache pilgrimage in May and the DU Field School Community Open House over the July 4th weekend. Anticipating a large attendance, the board volunteered to support APS and DU in guiding Amache site tours and family barracks visits.

Prior to the pilgrimage, board members helped John Hopper and the APS set up the Granada High School gym for a potluck lunch and cleaned up the Amache site for visitors. Clean up areas included the new Amache Honor Wall Kiosk at the front entrance and the cemetery area. Special thanks are owed to Derek Okubo and Stacey Okubo-Davis for helping to clean the site and prepare for lunch.

The entire board of directors and many of the special advisors were able to attend the DU Amache Field School. Among other tasks, the board volunteered to pick up broken glass in the barracks that were still strewn there from the 2018 hailstorm. Over time, glass pieces had lodged between bricks so that the clean-up was more difficult than just sweeping with a broom.



Amache Alliance Board of Directors attending the DU Field School Community Open House



Amache Alliance Vice President Kirsten Leong cleaning up broken glass pieces

Please note that volunteer service days may be scheduled in the future to help both the NPS and APS with specific tasks; those interested will be informed about volunteer service dates.

Stakeholders are forming a committee to plan the 2023 Amache Pilgrimage. Volunteers can be of all ages and abilities. What is important is a willingness to help keep Amache vital, relevant and to be an advocate. If you are interested or have questions, please contact John Tonai at jرتونai@gmail.com. There will be more information in the winter issue.



Flowers for the Amache memorial

Establishing the Amache National Historic Site (ANHS)

Until a formal land transfer occurs and Amache is established under the NPS, the site will continue to be managed by the APS in cooperation with the Town of Granada. The NPS has been working hard behind the scenes to facilitate this transition. Some highlights include:

- The NPS Lands Division and the Town of Granada met in April to discuss the process of transferring land that will constitute the ANHS. Negotiations could be completed as soon as April 2023, possibly in time for the annual pilgrimage.
- The NPS Environmental Study will include inspections of the site and a review of official records to identify potential environmental contaminants.
- The NPS boundary survey staff will draw up the legal description and easement for the water system in early fall.

After the NPS region receives funding to support the cost of creating a foundation document, work will begin with input from Japanese-American communities, the Granada community, key stakeholders, and the general public. The document will define Amache's significance and purpose, interpretive themes, and resources. It will also include a prioritized list of issues and data requirements for a long-term management plan. The NPS is in the process of scheduling an initial meeting with the Amache stakeholders. Such tasks may be set forth in partnership agreements and annual work plans.

National Park Service Names New Deputy Director for Congressional and External Relations

On July 11, 2022, NPS Director Chuck Sams announced the appointment of Intermountain Regional Director Mike Reynolds, a 36-year veteran of the organization, to serve as NPS Deputy Director for Congressional and External Relations. As the new deputy, Reynolds will advise Director Sams on issues regarding cooperation with stakeholders, elected officials, special interest groups, and the American public.

The Amache Alliance has in the past worked with Mr. Reynolds to support the campaign designating Amache as a historic NPS site, to conduct the Special Resource Study, and to participate in projects with the Japanese American Confinement Sites Program. An important official in the intermountain region, Mr. Reynolds will surely be missed, but he will continue to support the Amache community. The Amache Alliance looks forward to meeting and working with the new acting intermountain regional director Kate Hammond.

Injustice Forever: Amache Story Denver Channel 9 news

Denver Channel 9News created a 9News Original special called "*Injustice Forever: The Story of Amache*". Thanks to Gary Shapiro for producing this video and for reporting both on the pilgrimage and on Amache becoming an NPS site. A copy of the video will be provided to APS for viewing at the Amache museum.



<https://www.9news.com/article/news/special-reports/9news-originals/story-of-amache/73-3fc392e4-0bec-4a21-aedc-d8c9f0afc075>

A Very Special 2022 Amache Pilgrimage

This year's pilgrimage proved memorable as it was the first gathering in over two years due to COVID-19, and it was also the first public event after the presidential signing of the Amache National Historic Site Act. On a chilly rainy Saturday, approximately 200 people gathered at the honor roll in the Amache cemetery for the opening remembrance ceremony. Two buses and over 60 vehicles filled the parking area. Several film crews were in attendance. According to John Hopper, PBS and CBS news teams from New York were unable to attend due to the unusual spring snowstorm that blanketed the Denver area with over 14 inches of snow and caused flight cancellations.

After the opening ceremony, a festive potluck lunch was held at the high school in nearby Granada. Visitors who arrived by bus then toured the new Amache museum en route back to Denver. Several groups of Amache survivors and descendant families visited their family barracks after lunch. Dr. Bonnie Clark and Dr. April Kamp-Whittaker took time out from their DU Field School survey work to guide some of the visitors and share their knowledge.

The emotional day ended with approximately 60 people gathering for dinner in Granada. Jon Esquibel graciously hosted the event at Shorty's Café and provided excellent food. Marge and Vicki Taniwaki and John Hopper, who had organized such dinners in the past, were present and able to relax and socialize with others.



Shorty's Café provided a special buffet dinner and two rooms for Amache pilgrims to talk to each other

Amache Rose Blooms on Pilgrimage Day

During DU Archeology Field School activities held back in 2012, a rosebush was discovered in one of the barracks blocks. It was probably planted by the internees who had lived there. Although it was periodically checked afterwards, no one had ever seen it bloom.

While a stream of cars headed toward Granada High School for lunch after the opening ceremony, a group including Dr. Bonnie Clark, Dr. April Kamp-Whittaker, the NPS team, Granada mayor Argie Thrall, and Amache Alliance director Mitch Homma decided to examine the rose bush. As they focused on the plant, NPS Regional Director Mike Reynolds pointed out that a rosebud was blooming! All present were amazed! The rosebud, it should be noted, was not the product of cuttings being grown at the Denver Botanic Gardens but on the original plant. No one has seen the rose bloom since the pilgrimage.

As witnesses, we stood there and soaked in the moment on a stormy pilgrimage day in the year that Amache had been designated as an NHS. It was truly special. Walking back to the vehicles, we saw a rainbow appear on the other side of the iconic water tower as if to symbolize the occasion.



A single rose bloom at Amache on pilgrimage day

Amache Pilgrimage Reflection by Christy Teranishi Martinez

Stepping off the plane in late May, my mom and I were greeted by an unexpected flurry of snow. The day before was 99 degrees. The extreme change in weather was a sign that my pilgrimage to the Amache concentration camp in Granada, Colorado would be transformative and enlightening.

I decided to take this pilgrimage to explore my family history, trying to uncover secrets meant to protect my generation from the harsh reality and injustice of wartime incarceration. My grandparents did not want to burden anyone, so they didn't talk about painful memories. *Mentsu* (saving face) – hiding pain and suffering to avoid confrontation or embarrassment – is deeply rooted in the Japanese culture. As a psychology professor and yonsei, I know now that although my parents and grandparents tried to shelter us from what they endured within the confines of the concentration camp, their pain and suffering continued to affect subsequent generations.

Upon arriving at Amache, we visited the cemetery to attend a Buddhist ceremony. Fingers frozen, nose numb, and teeth chattering, I felt ashamed not being able to bear the cold when my father had endured harsh winters, at times 20 degrees below zero. I practiced *mentsu*, staying quiet yet felt miserable. Once the minister began *juseige* (chanting) we all put our hands together in *gassho* (prayer) and formed a line to offer *oshoko* (incense). My attention moved away from my physical discomfort to being completely immersed in the chanting. I felt truly blessed to be a part of this pilgrimage, as I experienced a spiritual moment with my mom alongside the hundreds of others who gathered to pay respect to Japanese and Americans who lost years, if not their lives, in this desolate place.



Sarah Teranishi, Christy's mom, at the opening ceremony

Before arriving, I corresponded with Mitch Homma, who helped me locate the barrack where my father and grandparents lived. Coincidentally, Mitch's dad lived right across the way. I videotaped a tour for my father, recuperating from a stroke, to show the cement platform, the location of the missing front door and the potbelly stove. Facing across from our fathers' barracks, Mitch and I pretended to open the door and waved. We imagined our fathers playing together as kids, as our families reunited through sansei and yonsei children of survivors.

This pilgrimage was not only a physical journey transporting me from California to Colorado, from extreme heat to extreme cold, but also an awakening of mind and spirit. I learned so much about the lives of those who had paved the way for me and my children. By learning and sharing our stories, we can connect with others whose families endured similar hardships and memories of the camp, helping us to heal and grow. Meeting so many who preserved Amache and campaigned to designate it a historic NPS site fostered hope that if we all work together for our common humanity, we can ensure a tragedy like this will never happen again.



Mitch and Christy at 12K, between Barracks 11 & 12 where their fathers played

2022 Denver University Field School Open House

DU project researchers and volunteers engaged in four weeks of archaeological field research at the Amache site and the Amache Museum in Granada during June 14-July 8, 2022. Toward the end of their research schedule, a special community open house was held for those with a personal or family tie to Amache. Following a model of collaborative engagement with the community, this event was structured so that visitors and researchers could learn from each other. Amache survivors and descendant families shared their experiences with field researchers and APS students while observing field work; field researchers, students, and volunteers were, in turn, able to share their discoveries and experiences and to question Amache families.

Afternoons were spent in the museum and Granada community center. Field school crews processed artifacts from the site at the museum. The DU project leads had selected collections from the museum for special viewing. A US 48-star flag was available for WWII internees to sign. The flag is part of Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Johnny Gogo's Japanese American Incarceration Memorial Legacy Project.

Tracy Coppola and the NPCA brought a cake and cupcakes to celebrate the passage of the Amache National Historic Site Bill. The Amache Alliance provided cakes for Saturday's public open house. Jon Esquibel graciously extended Shorty's Café lunch hours to feed visitors and enable the NPS and the alliance board to meet while enjoying a tasty lunch.

For DU Field School photos from some of the visitors, see the following link: <https://duamacheopenhouse2022.shutterfly.com/>



Amachean and WWII veteran, Nob Hashimoto, sharing with students in the afternoon session at the Community Center



Granada Mayor Argie Thrall, NPCA Tracy Coppola, NPS Group Superintendent Stuart West, NPS Amache Superintendent Kara Miyagishima, the Tonai family, with Mitch Homma



Dana Shew and Tomiko Madden learning from each other.

*Education through Collaborative
Community Engagement*

Memories Embraced, Hope Renewed: Returning to Amache by Joyce (Madden) Woods

My mother, Tomiko Yokouchi Madden (“Tomi”), returned to Amache for the 2022 Field School weekend, and I was able to accompany her. Her parents and younger sister Yoshiko lived in 9L-5B. Her grandmother, uncle and aunt lived in 12G-8E (Umezawa). Her grandmother Toku Umezawa died while in Amache and was believed to be buried there.

Visiting Amache in February 1997, my mother recorded “a big disappointment” in her journal. With directions from the Lamar visitor center, they passed a side road marked by a “Dump” sign and veered from the camp only to turn back and eventually find the cemetery. Climbing through barbed wire, they found tall weeds and an abandoned rock memorial.

As DU Field School visitors, we toured the barrack where my mother’s family lived in 1942-3. Standing at the doorstep to 9L-5B with Dr. Bonnie Clark, we saw the remnants of trees that residents had planted between building 5 and 6 to enhance the front yard. We inspected the bath house and mess hall foundations and saw the water tower in the distance.

My mother began sharing her memories. She remembered the remote 9L location that stuck out beyond the other blocks and the bathrooms outside the barracks. She remembered bringing in coal for heat and the need to continually sweep sand off the brick floors. Her father admonished them to eat everything on their plates – even food like hot dogs and rutabagas they had never eaten before – because that’s all they would get. Since he worked in the mess hall, he would start making fresh toast when he saw them in line. Simple pleasures.

My grandmother, Grace Umezawa Yokouchi, was the first Japanese girl born in Alameda, California. As an American citizen and bilingual, she was hired by the Naval Japanese Language School in Boulder enabling her family to leave the camp in 1943. She taught Caucasian naval officers born in Japan, while her husband, Kiyoharu, was employed to write the tests with his beautiful calligraphy. My mother remembers that when they invited the students for Japanese dinners at their home, her dad had to hide the tests.

Since this was my first Amache visit, I found the expanse of the site incredibly overwhelming. Knowing that 7,500 internees lived in cramped barracks does not prepare you to survey block after block of barrack foundations. Amache, though immense, was just one of many incarceration sites. In contrast to Tomi’s first visit, it is heartwarming to see Amache today. My mother and I are grateful to all who contributed to the effort to win NPS status for Amache and to preserve its vital history. We hope that the magnitude of what occurred out of view in this isolated Colorado desert will impress observers as visits increase.

Follow-up note: Research after the field school led to the confirmation of names of the 11 people still buried at the Amache cemetery. John Tonai discovered that Toku Umezawa was buried in the Riverside Church Columbarium in New York with her son Byko and granddaughter Elinor Kajiwara.



Joyce and Tomi, who lived in 9L-5B



Dr. Bonnie Clark and Tomi on the barracks tour with two other 9L families

Amache Preservation Society Donation Needs

APS will be raising funds to erect new signs at the front entrance of the new Amache Honor Wall Kiosk. John Hopper has been soliciting quotes for signage. Also, APS needs funds to paint the water tower. Please send a contribution in any amount via the Amache.org site. Checks can also be mailed to:

Amache Preservation Society, PO Box 259, Granada, CO 81041-0259

Visiting Amache

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.

The site, which is open during daylight hours and not gated, currently consists of the cemetery, a monument, building foundations, and landscaping. Interpretive panels and a downloadable self-guided auto tour are available to assist with navigating the site.

An interactive map on the Amache.org website will enable you to pinpoint your family's barrack location:

<https://amache.org/amache-interactive-directory-map/>

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 any snakes as they are an important part of the ecosystem. See the Amache.org website for additional details: <https://amache.org/visitor-information/>

Amache Alliance Now Available as an AmazonSmile Charity

AmazonSmile is a simple way to support your favorite charitable organization whenever you shop. It is accessible at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and it can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop at AmazonSmile, you'll find the same prices as Amazon.com, with the added benefit of 0.5% of your eligible purchases being donated to the charitable organization of your choice. The same account can be used on Amazon and AmazonSmile.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you will be prompted to select a charitable organization to receive donations from your future eligible purchases. Please choose Amache Alliance. Or use the direct link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/86-3227139>.

Cover Photos:

- Amache site from the water tower, Homma & Wada family collection
- Boy Scouts ceremony, from the APS collection
- Amache memorial dedication, Homma & Wada family collection

Amache Alliance Website:

<https://www.amachealliance.org/>

Facebook Group:

[All Things Amache](#)

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