



## Amache Historical Society II (AHS II) Newsletter, Winter 2018

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 Preservation – Amache Study Act

Earlier this year, Colorado Senators Cory Gardner and Michael Bennet, together with Representative Ken Buck, (Colorado's 4th Congressional district), submitted Bills S-2870 and HR- 5844, respectively, to direct the Department of Interior to assess the feasibility of Amache becoming a part of the National Park Service. Unfortunately, David Smith, NPS Superintendent, did not recommend the bill due to budget and other unspecified NPS priorities. As of October 2, 2018, however, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources voted to issue a report to the full chamber recommending that the bill be further considered. The next stage includes a Senate vote. Also, the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands is still considering legislation. A bill must be passed in identical form by both the House and Senate and then signed by the President to become law.

Thanks to all the people and organizations that wrote letters of support for the Amache Study Act. And for those who would still like to register support, please contact the Senate and House Committees.

David Inoue, Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League, is helping to track these bills by coordinating actions and providing status updates. The following links can be used to track the Senate and House bills.

SB2870 <https://legiscan.com/US/text/SB2870/id/1802634> and

HR5844 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5844/text>

### Storm Damage Recovery - Help for Residents of Granada, Colorado

On July 29, 2018, the southeastern Colorado town of Granada (population 600) experienced an intense hailstorm that produced baseball-size stones. Hail driven by 70 mph winds blew out windows and skylights of nearly every building and home, punched through metal carports, heavily damaged cars and industrial vehicles, and cratered the athletic fields. The damage was extensive and widespread so that repair, cleanup and recovery will take some time. Although some of the cost of repairs will be covered by insurance, residents and business owners have had to purchase plywood and other supplies to protect damaged homes and other structures. Most vehicles cannot be driven because windows and windshields were completely blown out. Damage at the Amache site was sustained at the research center and other buildings and structures. The barracks building at the site, for example, lost 65 of its small-paned windows. Damage to the water tower and guard tower is still being assessed. Amache Preservation Society under John Hopper has been working hard to repair the buildings, but is in need of funds. So far, the estimated costs already totals over \$3000. Please be generous during this holiday season and send tax deductible donations to APS, PO Box 259, Amache, CO 81041-0269 to help restore the site.

Every dollar counts!

You can send tax-deductible contributions to the Amache Preservation Society.



## Pilgrimage Passport Books and Stamps

At past JACSC meetings, a proposal had been made for creating a pilgrimage book and a stamp for each confinement site—an idea inspired by the National Park Service’s practice of issuing passport books and stamps. A visitor with a passport could have a pilgrimage book stamped during visits to any confinement sites. Volunteers in the Bay Area began by making sample pilgrimage books with blank pages. The Japanese-style accordion book was modeled after the *goshuin-cho* book that pilgrims in Japan carry on spiritual quests to sacred Buddhist or Shinto sites. And Mas Hashimoto made tags identifying the various “relocation centers.”

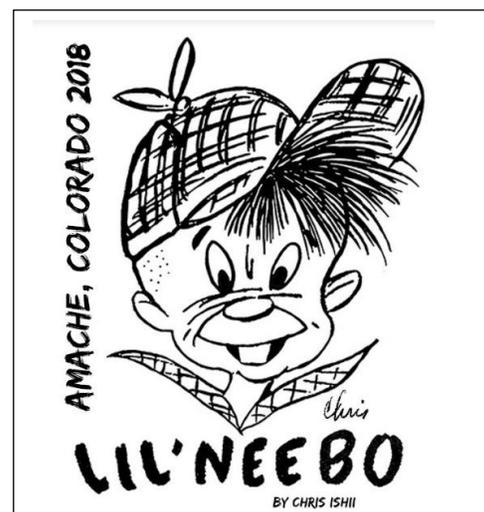
For Amache’s stamp, John Tonai produced a version of artist Chris Ishii’s popular Lil’ Neebo (little Nisei boy) comic-strip character appearing in Santa Anita and Amache newspapers. The participants in this year’s pilgrimage could choose stamps with an image of the water tower or Lil’ Neebo. Mitch Homma, Kirsten Leong, and Nancy Ukai worked to make these stamps available.



AMACHE, COLORADO PIGRIMAGE 2018

Pilgrimage Passport Stamp Books

Ishii, a graduate of the Chouinard School of Art in L.A., had worked on animated films like *Fantasia* and *Dumbo* for Walt Disney studios. At Santa Anita, Ishii’s art class students included Ruth Asawa, whose famous wire sculptures were recently displayed at the Museum of Modern Art and at a David Zwirner gallery exhibit in New York and at the Hauser and Wirth gallery in L.A. When Ishii left Amache in 1942 to work for the Office of War Information, Tom Okamoto, another Chouinard graduate and Disney cartoonist, continued to produce the famous Lil’ Neebo cartoons for the Amache paper, the *Granada Pioneer*. Mitch Homma contacted Ishii’s daughter Naka and granddaughter Adena for permission to use the Lil’ Neebo cartoon.



## **2018 Colorado Preservation Inc. Saving Places conference**

The Saving Places Conference of Colorado Preservation Inc. was held during January 31 – February 3, 2018 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. Its theme, “The Power of Place: From the Mountains to the Plains” focused on underrepresented sites and communities so that the conference gave voice to stories that often go untold. A panel on Amache, “Giving Your Voice to History,” featured Dr. Bonnie Clark, Associate Professor at University of Denver’s Anthropology Department. She gave an overview of Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and work done by DU’s Amache Research Project. Marge Taniwaki presented a personal account of being a child interned at Manzanar and resettlement afterwards in the Denver area. Mitch Homma shared his family story of three generations imprisoned at multiple sites including Santa Fe and Lordsburg, NM, Seagoville, TX, and Amache, CO.

### **Never Give Up! Film about Minoru Yasui** by Sumiko Higashi

As reported in a previous issue, *Never Give Up!* a film about notable activist Minoru Yasui by his daughter, filmmaker Holly Yasui, has been shown as a work-in-progress at the Japanese American National Museum and at the Smithsonian Museum of National History. Yasui, whose mother True was interned at Amache, reports that she has now edited a final cut at 56 minutes for classroom use that is also available online for rent or sale at [www.vimeo.com/ondemand/nevergiveup](http://www.vimeo.com/ondemand/nevergiveup). Arranging a screening for a classroom or organization may be done by contacting [info@minoruyasuifilm.org](mailto:info@minoruyasuifilm.org)

Additionally, an online educational package with a version of the film plus interviews, primary sources, and documents will become available in January 2019 through the Oregon Nikkei Endowment. Please contact [info@oregonnikkei.org](mailto:info@oregonnikkei.org). All proceeds will go to the Minoru Yasui Legacy project.

*Never Give Up!* will be submitted for viewing at film festivals and public television stations and for acquisition by museums, libraries, etc. Already, it has been well-received at screenings in Oregon, Washington, California, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Idaho, and Montana. At present, negotiations are in progress to introduce the film to various educational programs such as Head Start in eastern Oregon and the diversity program at Towson State University in Maryland.

Appropriately, *Never Give Up!* will be shown on Minori Yasui Day, March 28, 2019, in Portland, Oregon at a private screening for the business community. Events scheduled at the Portland campus of the University of Oregon that day will feature speakers involved in the relitigation of the Minoru Yasui, Fred Korematsu, and Gordon Hirabayashi wartime cases contesting the constitutionality of the internment.

### **2018 Amache Field School**

This summer the DU Field School returned to conduct research at Amache in Granada, Colorado. Archaeological site work was accomplished in the mornings, and afternoons were spent working on collections at the Amache Museum. Additional research on Block 11F, where the original recreation hall was recently restored, was a priority. A public open house attended by many former internees, descendants, and visitors was held on Saturday, July 7, 2018.

And former Amacheans and family members attended a special open house day and dinner on Friday, July 6. About 80 people attended and spent time sharing stories and viewing many of the museum's recently collected artifacts, such as a wedding dress, a silk screen print, photographs, and children's elementary school art.



**Artwork by Kumiko Homma Hasegawa, age 8, Amache circa 1943**



**Amache Field School Open House Dinner with former Amache internees and descendants**

## Japanese American Confinement Sites Meeting in Los Angeles, CA

On October 20-21, the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (JACSC), which focuses on the Japanese American wartime incarceration experience, held its fourth meeting of non-profit groups and advocacy organizations from across the nation. The two-day event was hosted by the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. John Tonai (CO), Teresa Tonai (CA), Kirsten Leong (HI), and Mitch Homma (CA) participated as representatives of AHS 2. Min Tonai, who had been active in AHS 1, was also present. Anyone belonging to these respective organizations may attend.



JACSC attendees outside JANM

JACSC is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the Japanese American wartime experience, as well as supporting the Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) federal grants program that has helped fund nearly 200 national projects. The program helps to identify, acquire, evaluate, protect, restore, and repair historic confinement sites so that present and future generations may learn and gain inspiration. Additionally, these sites may demonstrate the nation's commitment to equal justice under the law. Despite the distance separating individuals and organizations, JACS facilitates the sharing of resources.

## Recreation Hall moved to Amache

The 11-F Recreation Hall was moved back to its original Amache foundation from the town of Granada in time for the annual May Amache pilgrimage. Colorado Preservation Inc. (CPI) documented the process with a media crew to share the experience. Several local and international media outlets also publicized articles about moving the rec hall back to Amache. The area around the rec hall was one of the archeological sites selected for study this year by the Denver University Field School, which meets in Amache every other year under the direction of Dr. Bonnie Clark. Aside from moving the rec hall, the larger project included the addition of fences around the water and guard towers, lighting the water tower, and adding a historic searchlight, comparable to the original, to the guard tower.



11 F Rec Hall back on its foundation at Amache



11 F Rec Hall moving back to Amache

### Volunteer Staff:

Rewrite Editor: Sumiko Higashi  
Design and Layout: Mitch Homma  
Distribution: Kirsten Leong, Frances Palmer

### Contributors:

Amache Preservation Society  
Sumiko Higashi  
Mitch Homma  
Kirsten Leong