

# THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AMACHE PROJECT

Volume X Spring 2018

Message From the Director  
~ Dr. Bonnie J. Clark

We are once again pleased to share updates and news from the University of Denver (DU) Amache Project. On February 16 we will enter a new lunar year, the Year of the Dog. The DU Amache year seems to begin in February as well. That is when we write this newsletter and prepare to participate in Day of Remembrance events. This year the project has been invited to host a table again at the Denver area DoR event. We are also honored to be represented in Wyoming, where the traveling version of *Connecting the Pieces* is currently on display at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. One of our student curators for a new version of the exhibit, at the DU Museum of Anthropology gallery, has written about that experience for the newsletter.

The Year of the Dog will also take us back to Amache and the Amache Museum for a sixth field season. As you contemplate your plans for the year, we hope you'll consider including the project. An article with details on the field school and chances for you to participate can be found on the next page of this newsletter. Research by students associated with the project continues apace this year as well.

Inside these pages you'll learn about the thesis work of 2018 museum crew chief Whitney Peterson. One of our field school priorities will be additional research in Block 11F, where plans are currently afoot to return the recreation hall building. We are excited to be able to contribute to this important project by helping to preserve and study a garden that once graced the building. You can learn more about this project in our final article.

The students, staff, and faculty involved in the DU Amache Project all wish you the best in the Year of the Dog. We invite you to continue to be part of this important work.

Dr. Bonnie J. Clark  
Associate Professor of Anthropology  
University of Denver



Coming together at the community open house, Summer 2016.  
Courtesy of DU Amache Project

## Be a Part of DU Amache!

This summer the University of Denver will be returning to conduct research at Amache and the Amache museum in Granada, Colorado. We will be in Granada from June 12 through July 12, 2018. Our mornings will be spent doing archaeological research at the camp, while our afternoons will be in the Amache museum working on their wonderful collections. We are especially excited to continue working with the Amache Preservation Society on their new Amache Research Facility, a space that houses additional collections and serves as a research facility for visitors and archaeology crews.

### How can you be a part of this important work?

- If you or a family member were at Amache we invite you to our special open house day on **Friday, July 6**, There will be activities all day, including a chance to see the archaeologists at work, individualized tours of the camp, activities at the museum, socializing with other Amacheans, and a group dinner.
- The DU Amache project is looking for an intern from the Amache community for the 2018 field season. If you are currently in high school and had family at Amache, please contact us

• April Kamp-Whittaker, a DU alumna and current Ph.D. student at Arizona State University is collecting data for her research on community structure and social interaction at Amache. If you have insight into this topic, or memorabilia/photographs from camp documenting communal structures or activities, we would love to hear from you!

• Please come see us during the public open house on Saturday, **July 7, 2018**. There will be site tours in the morning and activities in the museum in the afternoon.

To reach us about any of these opportunities, contact information is on the final page of this newsletter.

**Follow the progress of the field school on Facebook!** We will post regularly throughout the month we are in the field [@DUAmacheResearchProject](https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject).



Conversations in the reconstructed barrack at Amache during the Open House Day, 2016.  
Photograph by volunteer, Greg Kitajima

## *The Social Lives of Snapshots*

~ Whitney J. Peterson, DU Graduate Student

While much of the visual landscape of Japanese American World War II incarceration has been dominated by professional and government photography, hundreds of rarely seen images that Japanese Americans took and acquired in the camps reside in personal photo albums. Many of these albums have been donated to museums, but have received surprisingly little attention.

My research is focused on photo albums that people donated to museums at Amache and Manzanar. Unlike many studies of professional photography documenting Japanese American World War II confinement, my concern is less with what the images show, but what they do. Historic photographs are often thought of as static visual forms of information revealing details about a specific moment in time, but my research has shown that these images are more than visual evidence. They are actively involved in how people remember, understand, and carry out their lives.

Through interviews with album donors and museum workers, I have traced album histories as they have made their way from peoples' homes into public museums. As shown on the back of Hatsume Akaki's image of women at the Merced Assembly Center, a common practice is writing, signing, and naming people on the photographs. While this demonstrates that the act of taking and exchanging photographs was a common social practice in the camps, the circulation and use

of these images in museums today follows similar patterns. Both at the Amache Museum and Manzanar National Historic Site, visitors, workers, and community members actively identify people they know, adding to the broader historical narrative and continuing the process of forming new sets of relationships which the images are a part.

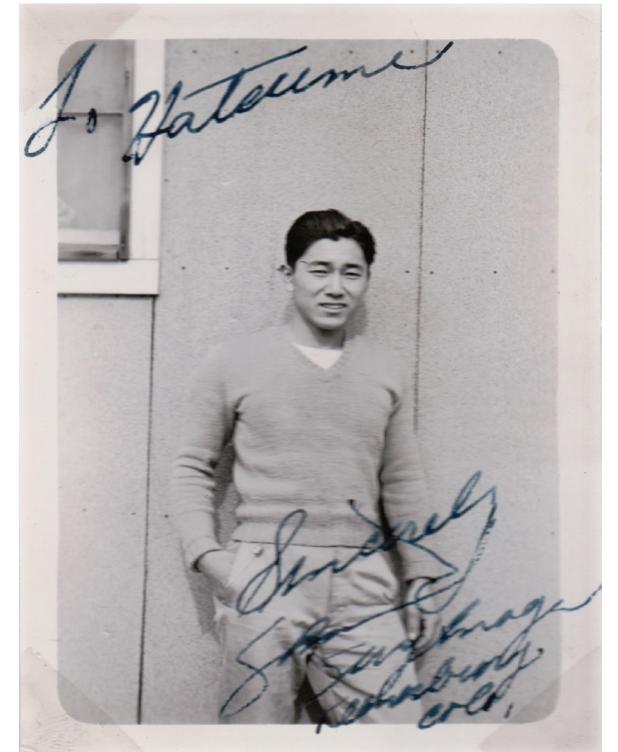


Photograph in Hatsume Akaki's scrapbook likely taken outside the co-op at Amache.

Courtesy of the Amache Preservation Society

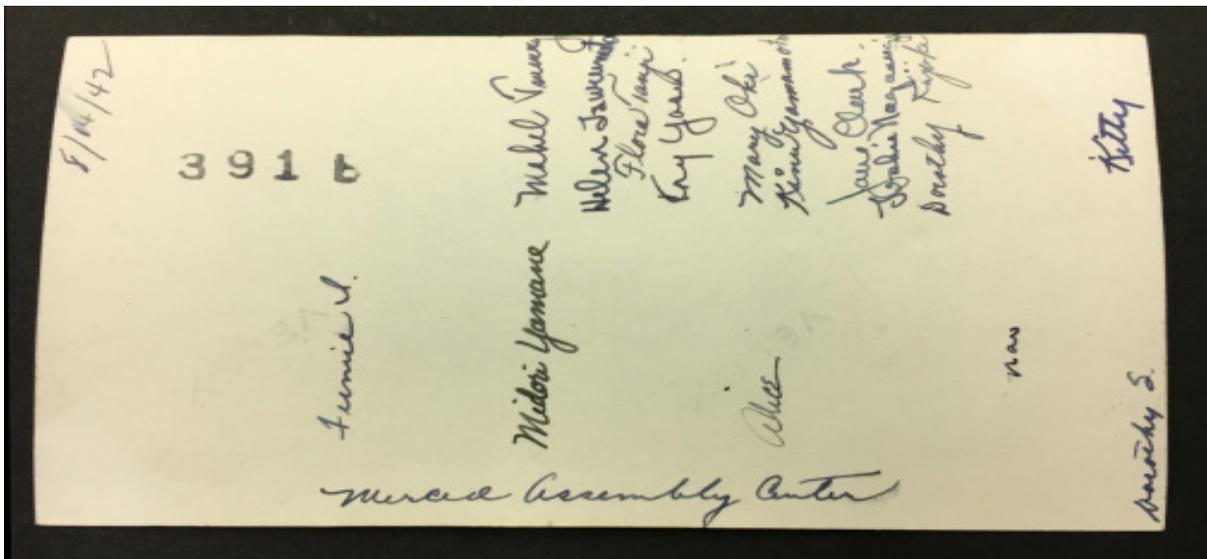
Over time, as people have created, preserved, arranged, exchanged, donated, and displayed these photographs, relationships are made visible, establishing future possibilities for creating new networks. Perhaps most compelling is that the stories the images elicit transcend the moment captured in the photograph. Hatsume Akaki's photographs tell us something about what life was like at Merced and Amache, but through looking at the album with her nephew, Bob Akaki, the images also evoke stories of Hatsume's life beyond her World War II experiences. Ultimately, history is made of people and the material worlds they encounter and create. The complexities of their lives are part of that history and play an active role in how others personally relate and contribute to it.

If you or people you know recall how they acquired photographs in World War II sites of confinement or have insight into Hatsume Akaki's images, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with you. Please email [wjpeterston1@gmail.com](mailto:wjpeterston1@gmail.com) or call (303) 871-2406.



Photograph of a young man posed outside a building at Amache.

Courtesy of Amache Preservation Society



Front and back of photograph in Hatsume Akaki's scrapbook taken at the Merced Assembly Center before going to Amache. The scrapbook was donated to the Amache Preservation Society by her nephew, Bob Akaki.  
 Courtesy of Amache Preservation Society

## Revealing History Through Amache Objects

~ Missy O'Doherty,

DU Undergraduate Student

This year, I had the pleasure of working on the *Connecting the Pieces* exhibit with Dr. Bonnie Clark and the staff of the DU Museum of Anthropology. Working on this project was incredibly eye opening and fulfilling as it was my first time working with artifacts obtained from a field site and far out of my particular realm of studies. I loved working on this project most of all because I learned so much about how our material world illustrates and reveals histories.

Through extensive interviews and research, this project transformed my understanding of Japanese internment during WWII. I was connected with an amazing community partner, who had powerful stories of her own time in an internment camp when she was just two years old. From these stories, we were able to pull ideas together about how a piece of obsidian from California made its way to Amache during this time. This piece of obsidian had its outer surface chipped away, revealing something of beauty and great value. Combining personal insight with research on Amache and Japanese internment, the overwhelming emotional hardships that defined this historical event were revealed and the importance of material objects in these peoples' lives was understood.

We concluded that this piece of obsidian must have been a very important object to its owner and one that may have been of great use in a garden at Amache.

Working with artifacts from the field is incredibly humbling, because you realize that each and every object has its own story. From learning how to first analyze one of these objects to being an expert in evaluation of these objects, my experience was invaluable. I think this project is so special because it serves to honor these rich histories and emotional burdens that members of our own community have experienced. It brings to light the impact that our history may have on our material things and the impact that our material things may have on developing our history.

\**Connecting the Pieces* will be on exhibit at the [DU Museum of Anthropology](#) until March 16, 2018. Missy O'Doherty is a DU senior majoring in Molecular Biology, Psychology, and Chemistry.



Missy's team created an exhibit for this worked obsidian recovered from Block 7H in Amache.  
 Courtesy of DU Museum of Anthropology

## 11F Recreation Hall to be Returned

Since the dismantling of Amache, the recreation hall building from Block 11F has kept lonely watch over a park in the nearby town of Granada. Although some changes were made so the building was better suited for equipment storage, much remained intact including the distinctive stenciling on its original green asphalt rolled roofing siding. That stencil proved not only that the building came from Amache, but just exactly where. The Town of Granada, which owned the building, kindly agreed to make it available for return. After years of grant writing and research spearheaded by the preservation non-profit Colorado Preservation Inc., the recreation building will be moved back to Amache this spring.

During the summer of 2016, DU Amache Project crews completed intensive survey of Block 11F, as well as the block immediately to the north, 10F, where the camp athletic fields were located. Those studies have proven invaluable as plans for the return of the building moved forward. The detailed maps created by the crews have been used to create a moving and monitoring plan that will protect landscape features like the raised walkway that once ran along Amache's busiest street. During the recreation hall return special care will be taken with remains of a garden adjacent to the building foundation. This summer DU Amache crews will return to 11F to

more intensively assess the extent and contents of that garden through archaeological study.

We would love your help! If you or your family members have any photographs or memories of the 11F recreation building, please let us know. It is through such collaborations that the best interpretation and preservation happens.



11F Recreation Hall with stencil.  
Courtesy of DU Amache Project

## Contact Us:

The DU Amache project needs you!! As we continue to move forward, we want you to be a part of our work, whether through sharing your memories or opinions, through planning future research, or through public events. If you are interested in joining us, we would love to hear from you. Correspondence can be sent to Dr. Bonnie Clark via email at [bclark@du.edu](mailto:bclark@du.edu) or at the mailing address below.

For more about the Amache Project please visit the project website at <https://portfolio.du.edu/amache> or the project Facebook page [@DUAmacheResearchProject](https://www.facebook.com/DUAmacheResearchProject).

The DU Amache project will continue to update the community through newsletters and other correspondence. For additional copies of the newsletter or to join our mailing list please email [bclark@du.edu](mailto:bclark@du.edu) or send your mailing address to the address below.

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