



Word on Feedlot at Minidoka

by Emily Momohara

Last summer, Jerome County Commissioners voted that permitting a 13,000 dairy cow 160-acre feedlot or CAFO a few miles from Minidoka would have more negative repercussions than positive. The National Park Service (NPS) and many locals testified last fall that proper environmental studies had not yet been done. Protecting Minidoka National Historic Site from pollutants and airborne particles is critical. Big Sky Limited Partnership, who proposed the feedlot, argues that the county would see minimal environmental impact but significant economic growth.

5th District Judge Richard Bevan presided over the Big Sky appeal and in July 2008 ruled the denial of the permit illegal. The decision returned to the Jerome County Commissioners, however, no testimony was allowed. Commissioners Charlie Howell and Joe Davidson voted to give the permit to the Big Sky feedlot, while Commissioner Diana Obenauer voted to reject it. At that time, lawyers for local farmers presented a case against the feedlot. The Commissioners' vote was made final on September 22nd with their written decision.

Currently, Friends of Minidoka (FOM) is beginning an environmental impact study thanks to a grant from the National Historic Trust. NPS will match this grant this fall. This study will assess the impacts of the feedlot and enable us to take necessary and appropriate action.

We are partnering to build support for keeping Minidoka pollutant-free. FOM, Preservation Idaho, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Japanese American Citizens League, Idaho Concerned Area Residents for the Environment (ICARE), Dean Diamond, Minidoka's neighbor, and NPS have put out a press release and sent a letter to the Jerome County Commissioners with our concerns (read more at www.minidoka.org). Alma Hasse, of ICARE, outlined the coalition's concerns at the Commissioners meeting on September 22nd. Superintendent Wendy Janssen spoke on behalf of the Minidoka National Historic Site.

This coalition continues to fight this vote. We need local help and official legal representation. If you can offer assistance, please email Emily Momohara, ehmomohara@yahoo.com.

Minidoka is a national park that tells an important American story. FOM supports agriculture in Jerome County. Our neighbors are farmers and we want what is best for our neighborhood. This feedlot location is damaging to the safety of Minidoka. We hope that the greater good of our nation will be considered, as well as local concerns.

New Superintendent of Minidoka National Historic Site

by Maya Hata Lemmon

Wendy Janssen, who celebrated her 20th anniversary with the National Park Service in August, was selected as the new Superintendent of Minidoka National Historic Site in Jerome County and Fossil Beds National Monument in Hagerman, Idaho. Wendy is a graduate of Rutgers University in New Jersey, majoring in Political Science.

I spoke briefly with Wendy while she had a few days left as Chief of Interpretation and Education at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California. Wendy said she "...was humbled, excited and honored to be able to work at the site with partners, stake holders and communities surrounding Minidoka National Historic Site and Fossil Beds National Monument".

She looked forward to meeting all of us and working together in "implementing the General Management Plan that Neil (King) and others worked so hard to put together". Wendy said "Minidoka was a national AND international story that should be told and not forgotten".

Prior to her position in Santa Monica, Wendy managed the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area in CA, was Chief of Cultural Resources and Planning at Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District in GA and Interpretive Planner at Harpers Ferry Center in WV. Wendy felt that her experience, especially at Martin Luther King Jr. and Harpers Ferry historic sites, would help in telling the story of Minidoka.

The variety of National Parks, National Historic Sites, and states Wendy has worked in show her adventurous nature. She has also worked as a Park Ranger at: USS Arizona Memorial, HI, Natchez National Historical Park, MS, Boston National Historic Park and Lowell National Historical Park, MA, St. Gaudens National Historic Site, NH, and Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park in TX. Few are so well grounded in the varied history of our country!

The new Superintendent is accompanied by her husband, Steven Floray, a curator with National Park Service-Pacific West Region. She will be starting her new position at Minidoka National Historic Site and Fossil Beds National Monument in early September.

Friends of Minidoka look forward to working with you and welcome you both to Idaho!

3rd Annual Civil Liberties Symposium: “Civil Liberties in the Media”

by Dr. Russ Tremayne

The third Civil Liberties Symposium sponsored by the Friends of Minidoka, the National Park Service, and the College of Southern Idaho took place June 19 and 20 in Twin Falls.

Titled “Civil Liberties and the Media,” the symposium focused on the role of the press and its relationship to civil rights.

Grants from the Idaho Humanities Council and the CSI Foundation helped make the 2008 symposium a huge success. Boise State University, University of Idaho, Treasure Valley Community College, and the Idaho Human Education Center made major contributions to the event this year and several individuals and businesses made donations as well. About 150 people attended (35 CSI students, 25 BSU students, 25 TVCC students) and listened to a series of brilliant lectures and participated in several stimulating panel discussions.

Geoffrey Stone, author of the award winning book Perilous Times, delivered the keynote speech. Idaho Supreme Court Justice Jim Jones and Seattle Times journalist Mark Trahan provided talks before joining Dr. Stone on a panel moderated by one of Idaho’s finest journalists, Marc Johnson. Dean of the University of Idaho Law School, Don Burnett, Georgetown professor Diana Owen, and Idaho State University political scientist Dr. David Adler offered provocative presentations Friday morning. Federal Judge Lynn Winmill delivered a powerful, emotional talk during lunch and Tom Ikeda of Densho followed with an impressive talk about the media and Japanese American incarceration. The symposium concluded with a panel of local journalist and conference participants before a special, spectacular performance by the Minidoka Swing Band and Dancers.



Images from the 2008 Pilgrimage

Record Turnout for 2008 Pilgrimage!

by Ryan Kozu

This year’s Pilgrimage was held over the June 20-22 weekend in Twin Falls, Idaho. A record number of over 250 people attended, some from as near as Twin Falls, ID and others from as far as Florida and Japan! People of all ages participated, from youth to Nisei over 90 years old! We were also blessed by the presence of the Minidoka Youth Swing Band from Portland, Oregon who gave an amazing performance enjoyed by the entire pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage started off on Friday evening with a Dutch oven dinner at Rock Creek RV Park where pilgrimage participants were able to mingle and interact. Saturday was full of events including a tour of the IFARM historic barrack. The pilgrimage to Minidoka was very emotional for many of those people who were returning for the first time. The story sharing time gave Minidoka returnees a chance to share their experience with both their friends and to pass their stories on to the younger generations. Many of the Yonsei were very grateful for the chance to hear the stories that the Nisei were so willing to share. Saturday night, we were fortunate for the generosity of a local rancher, Roy Prescott, who opened up his home to us for a BBQ and it gave everyone a chance to rest after a long day.

Saturday Night played host to a Social Night which featured the Minidoka Youth Swing Band. They played classics such as Blue Skies, Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy and Satin Doll. Many pilgrimage attendees said that listening to the Youth Swing Band was one of the highlights of the trip. The evening also featured singing by Toru Saito.

The second visit to the Minidoka site brought an emotional closing to the pilgrimage. Kats Okamoto read the names of the 72 soldiers from Minidoka who were killed while serving in WWII and taps and the rifle salute were conducted. Speakers at the closing ceremony included Mary Woodward, author of “In Defense of Our Neighbors,” and interim Superintendent Scott Eckberg. Following the ceremony, pilgrimage attendees had the opportunity to leave a small memento of an origami dragonfly on a replica guard tower that will one day be displayed at the future visitors’ center.



Participants leave origami dragonflies as mementos during the closing ceremony.

Pilgrimage Memories: Reflections from the Swing Band Students

provided by Robbie Tsuboi, edited by Lisa Doi Ferrier

The following are some thoughts from the youth who attended the Pilgrimage:

Daniel Griffith, 17 yrs old: I've taken a lot of history and knowledge away with this experience, and I'm glad I had this experience. I feel like I will go home now with a fuller understanding of justice and equality.

Shaun Nakamine, 16 yrs old: At Minidoka it was everything I expected but tenfold. Every internee has many good and bad memories to tell. Very exciting to hear them all. Dancing was fun. It was not too bad dancing in front of all the people. No butterflies.

Mariko Newton, 17 yrs old: From the stories I have heard and read, I pictured Minidoka as a deserted, barren piece of land... The strong whirl wind carried sand and dust to people's eyes, the rocky path made simple tasks such as walking difficult, and the bright sunshine diligently burned people's skin.... As I strided across this land full of heart-breaking memories, I contemplated what I, a Jr. JACL member, can do to help prevent similar, unjustified actions from happening today. We, the youth, hold the key to creating a peaceful world.

Ross Seeman, 14 yrs old: After going to Minidoka Internment Camp I feel very lucky to have not lived 70 years ago because I would have had to go to camp. I feel very worthy to have heard internees stories first hand, and be able to see Minidoka. Seeing the hard and miserable conditions and living quarters the [internees] had to live in makes me feel terrible knowing many people had to go through this.

Miho Ishii, 19 yrs old: I could see a large flat field which is really different from Portland or Japan. It was amazing... It was a good opportunity to hear the true story about Japanese American's Camp. It was really emotional for me. When I was hearing their experiences, I almost started to cry. In Japan, we never learned about them. Many people don't know and in fact I didn't know about it before I joined JACL. I'm

really glad to be one of the members, and had such a great experience. Thank You!!!

Rachael Seeman, 16 yrs old: Wow! What an amazing Pilgrimage. After going to Minidoka and meeting some internees and descendants of internees, I have learned that the most important thing that made everyone persevere through those hard times was the strong community. The support that we have from people around us is so important, and it makes me proud to be a part of the Japanese Community.

Chizumi Rojas, 18 yrs old: Emotional (sad memory and happy memory)... Adults suffer but then kept the struggling feelings away from the children. But listening and looking at the history in-person, I was able to guess the feelings behind the events and buildings. Someone told me at the *Talk Story*, "it makes me happy to see that younger people, children are interested in the internment camp because that way, the sad stories will be pass down to the younger generation and people will remember." I will always remember what he said.

Christine McFadden, 18 yrs old: My grandmother described the horrible dust storms and all of the mud that resulted when it rained, so seeing so much green was a definite surprise... Talking with the former internees was a great learning experience. I was able to be a part of the documentary that one of the schools from Bainbridge, Washington was making about a lady who was interned with her daughter... It was fantastic to listen to the stories they had to tell, and I ran into a lady in the group who was friends with my grandmother in high school at Minidoka - which was really serendipitous. A lot of people said they remembered my grandmother or at least one of her siblings at camp; despite the large amounts of people interned there, I was still able to make a few familiar connections - that's the memory I will take with me from my pilgrimage to Minidoka.



May Namba, FOM board member, in front of barrack at the IFARM



Recreated school interior



Roger Shimomura, Univ. of Kansas Distinguished Professor Emeritus

Ongoing Projects!

2008 All Camps Meeting

by Emily Momohara

This 4th of July, the Japanese American National Museum held the fourth all camps meeting. It was a part of the conference *Who's America? Who's American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice* held in Denver, Colorado. Three Friends of Minidoka board members attended: Dr. Frank Kitamoto, Alan Momohara and Emily Hanako Momohara.

We met with representatives from eight War Relocation Authority Centers and Department of Justice Centers to hear about possible funding opportunities. Speakers discussed the new *Confinement Site* grants made possible by Public Law 109-441, *National Trust for Historic Preservation* grants, and the *California Cultural and Historic Endowment* funds.

All the camp groups in attendance made short presentations about the projects and accomplishments at their respective sites. Among the camps represented were Amache, Heart Mountain, Topaz, Camp Missoula, and Manzanar. Frank Kitamoto, Friends of Minidoka Secretary, talked about Bainbridge Island and Emily Hanako Momohara, Chair, gave a presentation on Minidoka. There are several land acquisition and visitor center projects on the horizon for many camps. Manzanar is currently moving historic barracks back to create a block, just as we are planning to do at Minidoka. It was very exciting to see the activity all over the country to preserve and tell the stories of the incarceration camps.

Friends of Minidoka set up a display table with the National Park Service where we were able to talk with many people about our current projects. Handouts about the Issei Memorial, Pilgrimage, Honor Roll, and Civil Liberties Symposium were distributed to interested conference goers.

Can you help us with our wish list?

- Brochure printing
- Envelope printing
- Volunteers for outreach events

Contact: Emily Momohara at ehmomohara@yahoo.com

Minidoka Interlude For Sale!

Reprints of Minidoka's "yearbook" originally published in 1943 are available for \$55.00 each (plus shipping).

Contact: Janet Keegan at bjspud@cablone.net or 208-734-5806

Issei Memorial Update

by Alan Momohara

There have been several developments on the Issei Memorial project since our last newsletter. First the public outreach phase of the project was kicked-off at the Minidoka Pilgrimage in June. Participants were given the first look at the proposal for the Memorial by design team members Kenichi Nakano, Valerie Otani, and Jerry Arai at the closing luncheon. The Friends of Minidoka is very excited about getting this phase started. We are planning to hold meetings in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho in the near future to share our vision for the Memorial and to receive input.

In addition, the Friends of Minidoka has entered into a contract with a professional fundraiser to raise funds for the Issei Memorial. Bif Brigman is developing a fund raising plan and, with members of the FOM Board of Directors, will begin our fundraising campaign soon. Bif has substantial fund raising experience and most recently worked with the Nikkei Heritage Foundation on a fund raising effort.

The FOM has also provided information regarding the Issei Memorial project at a national conference sponsored by the Japanese American National Museum in Denver, the National Convention of the Japanese American Citizens League in Salt Lake City, and the Aki Matsuri Festival in Bellevue Washington.



Joseph Gerald Osamu Sakamoto, 80, and Mary Ann Tsuchi Sakamoto, 80, on their golden wedding anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. Sakamoto came to the United States from Japan in 1894. He was the first Japanese second-hand furniture store proprietor, first Japanese express man and one of the first vegetable market operators in Seattle. -- Hunt, Idaho. 12/11/43 (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley)



Minidoka after the rain, 1942 (National Archives)

Preserving Barracks

From August 1942 to October 1945, those at Minidoka were forced to live in tar-papered barracks. Each barrack was 120 feet long and 20 feet wide and contained 6 rooms of various sizes. Families and groups of individuals without families were assigned to a single room. The barracks were organized into neighborhood groupings called blocks. Each block contained twelve barracks, a mess hall, and a laundry building, which contained communal showers and toilets.

No barracks remain on the Minidoka site, as they were auctioned off after the war. They were dispersed through the local area and remodeled into homes, apartments, and sheds.

We hear many comments during the Minidoka Pilgrimage about how surprising it is that the barracks are gone and the landscape is so changed. For those of us who were not interned, we have to use our imagination to visualize the extreme conditions and living quarters our relatives faced during the war. The General Management Plan, which outlines future construction and interpretation at Minidoka, includes reconstructing a residential block (Block 22), showing visitors what daily life was like at Minidoka.

A number of barracks in good condition are still located in the Magic Valley area. The Friends of Minidoka and the National Parks Service are in the process of identifying and acquiring barracks to return to the Minidoka National Historic Site. We hope to return as many historic barracks as possible for visitors to view and tour, while others in Block 22 may be new reconstructions. The Friends of Minidoka is currently collecting donations to help move these barracks back to the site.

Minidoka Honor Roll

In 1943, the U.S. Army formed a segregated Japanese American combat unit, the legendary 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team which fought in Italy and France. This unit became the most decorated unit of its size in American military history, earning over 18,000 individual decorations for bravery and 9,486 Purple Hearts. The greatest numbers of volunteers in the 442nd came from Minidoka. Over 1,000 from Minidoka enlisted in the military and 73 soldiers died fighting for their country.

The Honor Roll sign was installed in 1943 and listed the names of all the men from Minidoka who served in the U.S. Army. The whereabouts of the Honor Roll is unknown today.

The Friends of Minidoka is working with the National Parks Service to re-create the Honor Roll at its exact location at the Minidoka National Historic Site. We are having difficulty identifying the names listed on the two side-panels of the Honor Roll. If you have any pictures of either side-panel or both, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Contact: Keith Yamaguchi
Phone: 206-767-0914
Email: kyamaguchi@yahoo.com

For more information, please visit the Friends of Minidoka website at www.minidoka.org.



(The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley)

“Fumi Onodera, 20, proudly points at the names of her 3 brothers, Ko, Kaun, 24; and Satoru, 22, on the Honor Roll of Japanese Americans serving in the U. S. Army from the Minidoka Relocation Center, Hunt, Idaho... The Onodera brothers are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Toyosuke Onodera of Hunt. He was formerly a tailor in Seattle, Washington. The Hunt Honor Roll numbers 416 now and the list is still growing. More than half volunteered since Pearl Harbor. -- Hunt, Idaho. 10/14/43”

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Thank you!

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Questions? Corrections? Please contact Lisa Ferrier at littleferrier@hotmail.com



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