



## DEAR FRIENDS

We kicked off 2020 at full steam, bringing the history of Minidoka far and wide with our programs reaching audiences across Idaho beginning with the Minidoka Civil Liberties Symposium hosted by the Community Library in Ketchum and the Boise City Department of Arts and History; a Friends of Minidoka meet and greet in Twin Falls; the Minidoka visitor center grand opening; partnering with the Idaho State Museum to bring the Smithsonian's Righting a Wrong exhibit to Boise; and *Minidoka: An American Concentration Camp* film screenings from Boise to Idaho Falls, and San Francisco and San Jose, California. By mid-March, our ambitious plans for the year changed drastically with the outbreak of COVID-19, but we remain tremendously proud of these programs and what they bode for our future, as we aim to reach new audiences and accomplish more than ever through creative collaborations with new and old partners.

With the rest of the year reflecting our new realities, your support has meant that Friends of Minidoka could refocus and reimagine, and continue to spread our mission in creative ways during the pandemic. We successfully took on new challenges, and instead of greeting visitors and leading field trips at Minidoka, we devised hours of digital content through Tadaima! A Community Virtual Pilgrimage, and continued our behind-the-scenes work on our broadcast documentary and educational curriculum. Virtual educational tools have now become even more critically necessary, and we are confident that the resources we are developing will have an even wider use than originally imagined in the years ahead.

While we understand the difficulties this year, we need your help now more than ever. Your support helps us meet new challenges and transform them into opportunities to benefit future generations, and we look forward to the work that awaits us in 2021. Your support will ensure that Friends of Minidoka can continue to grow in 2021 as we recommit to our work to:

- Complete and Distribute our Minidoka [documentary for public television](#), told through the oral histories of first-hand survivors and their children, to bring the story of Minidoka to audiences nationwide.
- Unroll our [7th-12th grade educational curriculum](#) to provide free resources for educators to bring this history to their classrooms.
- Develop innovative ways to provide **virtual outreach and distance learning** about the history of Minidoka.
- Ensure that a lack of funding for school buses doesn't prevent Idaho educators from bringing their students on field trips to Minidoka in the future. With the [Robert C. Sims Community Education Fund](#), students can experience the power of place in understanding nationally important history that happened here in Idaho.

Thanks to the generosity of two anonymous donors investing in our educational programs, **your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar for up to \$20,000 received by December 31**. If you've been considering a gift to Friends of Minidoka, **your impact will be doubled!**

Please consider honoring the legacy of Minidoka as part of your year-end giving and allow us to grow our mission and impact in 2021. Every donation is deeply appreciated, and is vital to continuing our mission-driven work to preserve the legacy of the Minidoka experience and educate new generations about this American tragedy.



Thank you for being a friend,

**Mia Russell**

*Executive Director*



## Updates from the National Park Service

In the weeks following the grand opening on February 22nd, Minidoka’s visitor center closed to visitors due to COVID-19. From Labor Day through the fall season, they were open to visitors Fridays through Sundays. While the center is closed for the winter season, visitors are welcome to explore the 1.6 mile trail and outdoor exhibits from sunrise to sunset daily. Please stay tuned for [updates from the NPS](#) regarding visitor access in the spring. If you missed our photo essays earlier this year with images of the Minidoka [visitor center grand opening](#) and the [Issei: A Legacy of Courage](#) exhibit, they are available to view on our website.

While it has been a quiet year in terms of programs and visitors at Minidoka National Historic Site, there have been several exciting developments, including many changes in staffing at Minidoka and the associated sister parks in Southern Idaho.

JoAnn Blalack, Integrated Resource Manager for the Southern Idaho Parks, took a new position with NPS in Southeastern Arizona. Blalack oversaw cultural resources at Minidoka for 11 years, and was involved in the reconstructions and

transformation of the site over the years and helped care for Minidoka’s museum collections. Memorably, she surprised pilgrimage participants one year by arranging for a historic fire engine to be parked in the fire station during site tours. She has been a great Friend of Minidoka and we wish her the best of luck in the future!

Kurt Ikeda was hired as the first education specialist to jointly manage the education programs of Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Minidoka National Historic Site, and Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument. Ikeda started in February and will develop new educational curricula, present programs, and work with educators to enhance their connection to the Southern Idaho National Parks. He previously served as an intern for Friends of Minidoka and Minidoka National Historic Site and as Education Manager for the Japanese American Museum of Oregon.

Emily Teraoka was hired as a park ranger for Minidoka National Historic Site, after having previously served as Minidoka’s Curatorial and Research Assistant intern. Emily was deeply involved in both coordination and writing for the Tadaima! Virtual

Pilgrimage and curated the exhibit displays in the Minidoka visitor center. She will continue to work on research and writing projects and care for the Minidoka museum collections in her time at Minidoka.

Hanako Wakatsuki, Chief of Interpretation and Education, is currently serving a 120-day detail as Acting Chief of Education at Pearl Harbor National Memorial. She is leveraging her experience coordinating the Tadaima! Community Virtual Pilgrimage to orchestrate a digital event to mark the 79th Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration on December 7th.

Though film festivals pivoted to virtual this year, the 30-minute orientation film *Minidoka: An American Concentration Camp* produced by North Shore Productions for the National Park Service has been on the festival circuit and was recently awarded first place in the documentary category by the National Association of Government Communicators; a Silver Telly in Non-Broadcast History by the Telly Awards; a Gold Remi in the Documentary Category at the 53rd Annual WorldFest Houston; and second place in the video category in the National Association for Interpretation Media Awards. We are heartened by the warm reception to this important story.



Minidoka Visitor Center | NPS Photo/Richard Alan Hannon



Emily Teraoka | Courtesy Stan Honda



## Tadaima! Community Virtual Pilgrimage Programs Available to Watch Online

Due to COVID-19, pilgrimages to Minidoka and other WWII confinement sites were cancelled this year. From June 13 to August 16, the National Park Service and Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages (JAMP) co-hosted Tadaima! A Community Virtual Pilgrimage. It spanned nine weeks with new content provided daily. Each week focused on a theme, spanning from immigration in the 1800s to redress in the 1980s, and explored the ten WRA sites and different types of detention in the United States, Canada, and across the world. Tadaima was a collaborative effort between 94 Japanese American organizations nationwide along with international partners. It included online exhibits, workshops, performances, lectures, panel discussions, a film festival, book club, community archive, first-hand testimonies, and more.

Friends of Minidoka served on the steering committee for Tadaima, and partnered with Minidoka National Historic Site, Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee, Nisei Veterans Committee, Wing Luke Museum, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, Japanese American Museum of Oregon, the Community Library, Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, JACL Chicago, Kizuna, and many individuals to provide content about and relevant to Minidoka including educational sessions, a book club, a site tour, highlights of museum collection items, and more!

Much of the content is archived and available for viewing on the [Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages website](#) and [YouTube channel](#). This includes a screening of [Minidoka: An American Concentration Camp](#) followed by a Q & A with Minidoka survivors George Nakata and Karen Hirai Olen and Director Rory Banyard. The discussion also includes details on the [upcoming independent film](#) for public television broadcast & 7th-12th grade educational curriculum that Friends of Minidoka has partnered with [North Shore Productions](#) on.

## Idaho Matters Radio Interview

FOM Executive Director Mia Russell and Minidoka National Historic Site's Chief of Interpretation and Education Hanako Wakatsuki and Superintendent Wade Vagias were recently interviewed on Boise State Public Radio's popular program Idaho Matters with host Gemma Gaudette. The interview has since aired in October and November, raising public awareness of the Minidoka story. Listen to the interview online at <https://www.boisestatepublicradio.org/post/encore-idaho-japanese-american-incarceration-camp-remembers-past>



Hanako Wakatsuki  
Courtesy Boise State Public Radio





## Visitor Center Receives Orchid Award

Since 1977, Preservation Idaho has hosted the annual [Orchids & Onions Awards](#), a ceremony designed to celebrate those individuals and organizations that have made a positive contribution to historic preservation, and in turn, to bring awareness to those projects which have shown an insensitivity to historic preservation.

Friends of Minidoka successfully nominated the National Park Service for a [2020 Orchid Award](#) for Excellence in Historic Preservation for the adaptive reuse of Warehouse #5 into the new visitor center at Minidoka National Historic Site. This is Minidoka's third Orchid Award, following a 2012 award for the honor roll reconstruction and 2016 award for the guard tower reconstruction.

Preservation Idaho notes that this project maintained the historic integrity of a 75-year-old dilapidated warehouse and rehabilitated it to serve as a world-class visitor center that will continue to stand and honor

the history of Japanese Americans. Built in the early 1940s, Warehouse #5 served as the motor repair and tire shop in the then Minidoka War Relocation Center. The process of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic warehouse into a visitor center began in 2017. Historic parts of the building have been differentiated from the new with an external treatment with derbigum roofing materials and wood lathes to resemble the WWII-era appearance. The industrial character and historic setting of the warehouse have been maintained, as well as many other architectural details.



Warehouse #5 | National Archives & Records Administration, 210-CMB-V2-1907

## Upcoming Live Stream: Community-Engaged Digital Programming

Join Friends of Minidoka on Wednesday, November 18th for a retrospective conversation about this summer's Tadaima! Virtual Pilgrimage. This special program is brought to you by the National Council on Public History and will be of special interest to public historians looking to expand their understanding of community-engaged digital programming. Panelists Kimiko Marr of Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages and Hanako Wakatsuki of the National Park Service will discuss this unprecedented model of community-led programming; best practices and lessons learned for digital programming; and reflections on community building through digital public history. Catch the live stream, or view the event recording at a later time, on the [Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages YouTube channel](#).





## Matsui Introduces the Japanese American Confinement Education Act

Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) [introduced bipartisan legislation](#) on October 21, 2020 to permanently reauthorize the Japanese American Confinement Site (JACS) program to preserve and educate Americans on the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

“The imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II will forever be one of the most atrocious violations of American civil rights in the 20th century. Those of us in the Japanese American community know too well what discrimination feels like, what kind of mark it leaves, and most importantly, what we can do to stop it,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “The Japanese American story is one that is not told nearly enough. It is one of pain, one of redemption, and one of enrichment. This bill will ensure that these lessons live into the future – that we continue bending the moral arc of

this country by sharing these stories, lifting our voices, and fighting so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. The essence of the American experience isn’t that we’re perfect, it is that we heal from seeing where we’ve been and teach our younger generations to build a more inclusive, equitable future.”

The Japanese American Confinement Education Act would permanently reauthorize the Japanese American Confinement Site (JACS) program within the National Park Service (NPS), which is currently set to expire in 2022. This program has been one of the primary resources in the preservation and interpretation of the U.S. Confinement Sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II. Additionally, the legislation establishes a separate, new 5 year, \$2 million per year competitive grant to create educational materials about the Japanese American

confinement. This grant would require the recipient museum to develop and nationally disseminate accurate, relevant, and accessible resources to improve awareness and understanding of Japanese American Confinement in WWII. This new program would bring together many elements of the community and educators performing vital work in Japanese American history education under a more cohesive and powerful effort to ensure that the experience of Japanese American incarceration is taught nationally to as many students as possible.

Friends of Minidoka and our partner organizations rely on the JACS program to support our important work, and we will need your help asking Congress to support the Japanese American Confinement Education Act! Stay tuned to our digital newsletter for specific ways to help support this legislation.

## Call for Comments: Amache as a National Park Service Unit

The National Park Service (NPS) is conducting a Special Resource Study (SRS) of Granada Relocation Center, commonly known as Amache. Located a mile southwest of Granada, Colorado, Amache was one of 10 WRA incarceration sites in WWII. A Special Resource Study applies congressionally-established criteria to evaluate the eligibility of an area for designation as a new unit of the national park system.

An important aspect of the Special Resource Study is gathering information from the public about Amache, including determining the level of public support, and identifying any issues or concerns. The study team requires information from Amache survivors, descendants,

members of the Granada community, the broader Japanese American community, and others to understand what makes the site unique compared to other sites already preserved for the public. They need to hear from as many people as possible why it is important for Amache to become a National Park site!

Your input can help the NPS team understand how designating Amache as an additional NPS site will enhance the broader history of the wartime incarceration of Japanese American. The more people they hear from individually, the stronger the case will be. The comment period closes February 15, 2021. For more information and to [submit your comments](#), visit <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Amache>

Amache Historical Society II prepared a newsletter, video presentation, and slideshow to help the public understand the criteria for submitting comments. These are available at <https://amache.org/site-planning/>



Amache Water Tower



## My Minidoka Story

Earlier this year, we shared stories of our board members' connections to Minidoka and why they are [inspired to serve](#). We heard back from some of our readers who were inspired to share their stories with us. Please feel free to submit your own Minidoka story by emailing [mia@minidoka.org](mailto:mia@minidoka.org).



I was born in Minidoka in the winter of 1943. My memories of the Camp were sparse as we were allowed to move to a little house in Twin Falls because I was ill. I got some information from the National Registry about my birth and found I had bronchitis. We moved to Twin Falls by the time I was 6 months old. I have re-read my father's journal for the time and admire the attitudes expressed even in the time of real trial. My dad, Yoichi Ted Matsuda worked in the fall harvest and wrote:

"This place has possibilities. If we all work together and improve on it. Picked up an old nail barrel and made it into a stool. No we have something to sit on beside the bed."

"Riding in back of a truck on the way from work. We couldn't keep our eyes open. At the same time dust particles kept flying on our neck giving a sensation of being pricked with thousand pins. When I got home the dust was so thick on the floors that every step I took left a footprint on the floor. Wife had closed all windows but dust flew in through the narrow opening around the window. My eyes were red; my face was white. When I washed my face, it felt stingy."

In this terrible time of self-quarantine, I read my dad's journal and am thankful for the comfort of our home and are amazed at the resilience of the Issei and Nisei generation.



Sharon Matsuda Brooks (Irvine, CA)



“

My great uncle, Takaaki “Frank” Yasui, passed a few years ago at 98 years of age. That year he passed, he shared a story about his time at Minidoka. He spoke of his experiences of signing up for farm work during harvest within the region. This was his way of getting out of camp and making a few dollars. He spoke of how sugar beet harvests “wrecked “ his back. But there was one story that really stood out.

He and 5-6 others from camp signed up with a farmer out of Walla Walla. They had to get their own transportation for this job. They went by train to Pendleton, then had to catch a different line to Walla Walla.

When the train stopped in Pendleton one evening, no one in the town would sell these men of Japanese descent any food or groceries. No one would rent them a room for the evening as the train for Walla Walla left the next day. They weren’t sure where they were going to sleep that night, let alone what was for dinner.

My great uncle recalled that they ended up walking into the Sheriff’s office and asked if they could stay the night there. The sheriff agreed to let them stay the evening. My great uncle said they were fed a hot dinner and breakfast. He said it was the only night he ever spent in jail.

He waited decades to tell this story. I feel that it is thus necessary to share with you to keep it at the fingertips of memory.

”

**Eric Ballinger** (Bend, OR)



## 2019 Donors

To our supporters, donors, volunteers, and friends who made our work in 2019 possible - THANK YOU. We could not accomplish our mission of preserving the legacy of Minidoka without your support.

We apologize for any errors found in these records. Please help us correct any errors by contacting [mia@minidoka.org](mailto:mia@minidoka.org).

### Maximize your donation

Don't forget to ask your employer about matching gifts! Employee matching gifts are donations an employer makes to match charitable contributions from their employees.

### Consider a gift of stock

Make a bigger impact by donating long-term appreciated securities, including stock, bonds, and mutual funds, to Friends of Minidoka. Compared with donating cash, or selling your assets then contributing proceeds after the tax deduction, you may be able to automatically increase your gift and your tax deduction.

### Preserve Minidoka's legacy through planned giving

Whatever your stage in life, it is a good idea to plan for how your affairs will be handled. Your estate plan can be used to protect your loved ones and leave a lasting legacy by ensuring that the Minidoka story will stay alive for generations to come.

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*In memoriam: Pat Reeve*

*In memoriam: Robert C. Sims*

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Support **FRIENDS OF MINIDOKA** and the Work We are Doing!

### OUR MISSION

Friends of Minidoka engages in and supports education, research, and historic preservation of the WWII Japanese American incarceration experience. We strive to pass on the history, legacy, and lessons of civil liberties through transforming and inspiring experiences for the general public and those with personal and familial ties to Minidoka. We are committed to working with our partners to accomplish these goals.

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

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Friends of Minidoka, PO Box 1085, Twin Falls, ID 83303-1085

#### ONLINE:

[www.minidoka.org/donate](http://www.minidoka.org/donate)

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