

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the temporary visitor center at Minidoka National Historic Site! This spring was filled with changes at Minidoka, and the National Park Service is now operational at the Herrmann House! They have been kind enough to share their office space with me, so I have been spending quiet, contemplative days working for Friends of Minidoka on site. Every day I spend here raises new questions, builds connections, and allows me to engage with visitors and understand how the history of this site truly touches people of all walks of life. NPS has already set up a temporary exhibit and a bookstore, and has welcomed over a thousand visitors since opening on Memorial Day. Please feel free to swing by and say hi if you are ever in the area!

This year we have been staying busy with educational outreach and research. We have completed our project plan and are moving forward on the Minidoka Intergenerational Legacy Exhibit, which we received a 2016 JACS grant for. It will be housed permanently at Minidoka. The goal is to complete it in time to be the featured exhibit displayed during the grand opening of the permanent visitor center in early 2019. This exhibit will use art as a lens to explore the experiences and legacies of the Issei, Nisei, and Sansei who were incarcerated at Minidoka during WWII. We are looking for images from Minidoka to be used for research and potentially in the exhibition. If you would like to donate images or artwork from or about camp, please contact me. Donations can include the actual donation of pieces or just allowing us to take a high-resolution scan so you can keep the originals.

We have also been assisting North Shore Productions in the production of the park's orientation film to be shown in the permanent visitor center. We assisted in introducing the producers to members of the community to have their stories featured in the film. Filming has taken place so far in Portland, Seattle, Bainbridge Island, and the pilgrimage, featuring individuals from these communities as well as from Alaska. This fall we will be completing archival research to uncover new resources for use in the film in Alaska, Chicago, and the National Archives. If any of you are near these locations and would like to connect while we are there, we look forward to hearing from you.



Mia Russell

There has been turnover in the NPS at Minidoka, and I hope you'll join me in thanking Judy Geniac for her service as Superintendent and Carol Ash for her service as Chief of Interpretation and Education and congratulating them each on their retirements. We also welcome Wade Vagias and our long time friend Hanako Wakatsuki as they step in to fill these roles.

We are excited to welcome three new board members to the Friends of Minidoka. Carol Ash, former Chief of Interpretation and Education for Minidoka NHS is joining the board, as well as Debbie Dane, the former Executive Director for the Southern Idaho Tourism Board, and Andy Dunn, who studies Minidoka as a graduate student at Idaho State University and was instrumental in the organization of Field-In-A-Day. Carol, Debbie, and Andy are all based in Southern Idaho and we look forward to working with them to further our reach in the local community and accomplish great things. Welcome!

A quick note on the Minidoka Interlude: we are currently sold out of all copies of our last press but we are in the process of publishing another run. Many of you have contacted me to reserve a copy of the Interlude when it becomes available, and I hope you feel free to continue to do so. We will have an update for you very soon!

Thanks for being a friend,

Mia Russell
Executive Director
mia@minidoka.org
(208) 863-0076

Superintendent's Update and Farewell

by Judy Geniac

In this, the 75th anniversary of the mass incarceration of innocent Japanese Americans in the United States and elsewhere in the world, we commemorate this critical and relevant history through our continued focus on Minidoka National Historic Site.

Minidoka stands as testament to the past and is a cautionary flag to the future. As such, the staff and interns are working closely with Friends of Minidoka, and other organizations to ensure preservation and public outreach. Input, contributions, and engagement from others are critical to the success of this historical site. We thank everyone who has visited, contributed in any way, or simply thought about this site and shared information with others.

The following is an update on Minidoka. We are progressing on a number of projects:

- Minidoka's temporary visitor center opened on May 30th, 2017.
- The construction documents for the permanent visitor center are nearly complete. The NPS has dedicated funding for a construction contract, which is expected to be in place this Fall. Once that is complete, the temporary visitor center will close and become staff offices.
- Thanks to a great deal of JA input (representatives in Seattle and Oregon), the construction documents for the permanent visitor center exhibits are nearly complete. The Site funded Densho and Tetsu Kashima (University of Washington) to provide a scholarly review. The park is currently seeking internal funding, and will utilize other exhibits in the visitor center until this is funded and constructed.
- A contractor is now developing the films to be shown at the Hunt Camp site and at the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. I recognized that the stringent and competitive federal contracting process must be used, but that it is important to allow for a JA liaison role. It's the words of the people that need to be heard, not the words of a narrator. I was able to work with the contracting office, which opened a competitive process. Friends of Minidoka was awarded the contract. We look forward to progress on this project.
- Expertise from the park's Pacific West Regional Office is completing a historic landscapes report, which will help us ensure that this site is mindfully protected.
- Expertise from Channel Islands National Park is in the process of evaluating the root cellar and creating an historic structures report that will outline what will be necessary to properly restore this large facility. It is the only structure known to have built completely by those incarcerated.



I retired on May 31st. Wade Vagias has stepped in to manage a one year pilot: overseeing the three National Park Service Sites in Southern Idaho. This will be a one-year examination of how economic efficiencies in management may translate to "on the ground" work. This important pilot will require support and feedback. Perhaps most importantly, the pilot will help ensure that decisions can be made related to the ongoing development. Wade is honored to be taking on this role and is interested in working collaboratively to address the needs and outreach of Minidoka.

It's been such an incredible honor to work with so many amazing people. Our collaboration together and the input and feedback from those in the JA community, the local community, academia, archives, and nonprofits has been truly enlightening and helpful. I learned and gained an understanding that will remain deeply in my heart. I focused on working within the agency to ensure progress in the development of Minidoka. Words cannot express the heartfelt and meaningful experiences that I have had over the last four years. I simply want to thank everyone who worked with us, engaged with us, or simply cared. I hope that people see that more progress has been made and more is yet to come. I wish the very best for this historic site and all who are associated with it in any way. My thoughts will always be with those who were forced to endure the losses and pain, those who realized and regretted having helped create such wrongs, and those who learn of this past and who are the seeds of change. Thank you for everything.

If you haven't already, please feel free to introduce yourself to Wade Vagias. I know that he is truly looking forward to helping ensure progress at this site.

Judy sends her best to everyone, and notes that she will continue to help others learn of this site and the JA incarceration, including its unending relevancy. Thank you Judy for your service and we wish you all the best in your retirement!

Greetings from Wade Vagias,

New Superintendent of Minidoka

On June 1, 2017, I had the honor of becoming the fourth superintendent of Minidoka National Historic Site. Over the past couple months, I've learned the gravity of this responsibility, and I hope that I can be an effective steward to this important civil rights site.

One of the most important parts of my new job is to listen to community members and stakeholders associated with Minidoka National Historic Site. I am committed to hearing your stories, concerns, and ideas about Minidoka, so I can help ensure the legacy of Minidoka continues to be preserved and shared with the American people and international visitors.

In May, I traveled to Portland, Oregon, and Seattle and Bainbridge Island, Washington with Hanako Wakatsuki, our new Chief of Interpretation & Education. The purpose of the trip was to meet people who have deep and profound connections to Minidoka. For me, the trip was formative and powerful, and I was humbled by the people I met and stories I was told.

At the Portland Assembly Center we attended "Return and Remembrance" where I had the chance to be introduced to former incarcerated individuals and listen to the moving words of individuals including Dale Minami and George Nakata. We then traveled to Seattle where we dined with members of the Minidoka Pilgrimage Committee and stayed at the historic Panama Hotel. We then visited the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial with members of the



Bainbridge Island Japanese American community. On the last day, we toured the Wing Luke Museum and met with Densho staff. During the trip, I realized that all of the people I met work tirelessly to ensure the stories and people who were so unjustly incarcerated are never forgotten.

As I humbly take on this new role, I welcome your emails and phone calls and can be reached at (208) 527-1310 or wade_vagias@nps.gov.

Respectfully,

Wade M. Vagias

New Chief of Interpretation at Minidoka National Historic Site

On January 31, 2017 Carol Ash retired from her career with the National Park Service. Carol came to Idaho in the Spring of 2011 as the Chief of Interpretation and Education for Hagerman Fossil Beds and Minidoka National Historic Site, and became the very first employee dedicated solely to Minidoka. Previously she worked at Women's Rights National Historical Park and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site. She has contributed greatly to the development at Minidoka in the past six years, including six Minidoka Civil Liberties Symposia; developing the park unigrid brochure, foundation document, and long range interpretive plan; working with FoM on the guard tower and leading the Field-In-A-Day effort; kicking off the park film and visitor center exhibit projects; and especially her work developing educational programming for Minidoka including countless site tours and educational talks. We thank Carol for her service and look forward to working with her as an FoM board member.

On January 20, 2017, Hanako Wakatsuki began her tenure as the new Chief of Interpretation at Minidoka National Historic Site. Her prior appointments include being the Education Specialist at the U.S. Navy Seebee Museum in Port Hueneme, California and the Management Assistant at the Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument in Tulelake, California. Before joining the Federal government, Hanako was a state civil servant as the Interpretive Specialist at the Old Idaho Penitentiary in Boise, Idaho.

Hanako has also been a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Minidoka from 2007 to January 2017 and served as Secretary in 2016 and is a past President. Hanako currently serves on the Board of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. We are pleased to continue working with Hanako in her new capacity!

Bob Sims Collection Update

Reported by the Idaho Statesman on 2/7/2017

The Boise State University Special Collections and Archives recently opened to the public the Robert C. Sims Collection on Minidoka and Japanese Americans. Boise State University Professor and former Friends of Minidoka Board member Robert (Bob) Sims, who died in 2015, spent close to 40 years collecting information, writing and lecturing about Minidoka and was one of the most knowledgeable about this period of history. The Sims collection includes 67 boxes and 200 books from Bob's life-long research, and includes government reports and files, personal narratives and letters, interviews, articles and other media resources, books, photographs, oral histories, student papers from the schools at Minidoka, reports from employees at the camps. The collection also contains Bob's personal files, such as correspondence, speeches and presentations, published articles and reviews, and awards he received throughout his academic career and beyond.

Bob's family donated the contents of the collection so that his writings and research could "continue his commitment to social justice and public good," according to a brief biography written by his widow Betty Sims and their daughter, Sarah Sims.

The Sims papers are found in the Special Collections and Archives at the Boise State University Library. Call 208-426-3958 for more information.



Day of Remembrance 2017

Reported by Boise Valley JACL 2/28/2017

On February 20, 2017, the Governor's office hosted a proclamation signing ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066. Lt. Governor Brad Little presided over the ceremony which featured presentations by Katie Niemann (JACL President), Judy Geniac (Superintendent, Minidoka National Historic Site), and Senator Cherie Buckner-Webb. This was the 16th year that the Governor's office has hosted the ceremony.

Approximately 60 people attended the ceremony which included former incarcerated, veterans, JACL members, Idaho Japanese Association members, Friends of Minidoka board members, educators and students.

Senator Buckner-Webb also read a resolution which was passed by the Idaho State House and Senate honoring the life and work of Minoru Yasui.

Civil Liberties Symposium XII:

September 30th - October 1st, 2017

The 12th Annual Minidoka Civil Liberties Symposium will be held the last weekend of September at Boise State University. The 2017 program will explore current relevancies with factors leading to the Japanese American wartime incarceration and offer hands-on workshops to equip participants with the tools needed to actively respond to similar situations today. We will provide additional information, including the program and link for registration, on our website as they become available. We hope to see you there!

Update on Idaho's Refugees

Ron James

The WWII mass incarceration of Japanese Americans has more relevance now, as the nation grapples with Trump's travel ban and expedited deportations of undocumented migrants. There is a great deal of fear, anxiety, and apprehension among immigrants, refugees, and their many supporters. In an apparent case of mass historical amnesia regarding Executive Order 9066, Chase Clark, and a concentration camp located in Jerome County, Idaho's entire congressional delegation voiced support for Trump's executive orders.

Rep. Greg Chaney (R-Caldwell) has introduced an anti-sanctuary cities bill in the Idaho legislature that, if passed, would cut off state funds to any city that offers sanctuary to unauthorized immigrants or refugees. Chaney's previous attempt to introduce similar legislation was opposed by Idaho agricultural groups such as the Dairymen's Association as an assault on their labor force and a serious threat to Idaho's economy. According to a study by the New American Economy, there are nearly 103,000 immigrants living in Idaho—6.3 percent of the population. Their combined spending power is approximately \$1.5 billion and, in 2014, they paid more than \$460 million in taxes. Immigrant-owned companies employ 14,616 people. Approximately 42,000 immigrants living in Idaho are thought to be undocumented.

The future of refugee resettlement in Twin Falls and Boise remains uncertain. Jan Reeves, Director of the Idaho Office for Refugees, says "We're uncertain about where we'll be a week from now or, for that matter, where we'll be tomorrow." Last December, Pew Research Center reported that "over the past decade, Idaho has consistently ranked among the top states for refugees resettled per capita." Since 2012, Boise has resettled more refugees than New York or Los Angeles.

At the same time, Idaho governor Butch Otter has been a vocal critic of refugee resettlement. In November, 2015, Governor Butch Otter called on the Obama Administration to halt refugee resettlement in Idaho. Last February, Otter said he agrees with Trump that persecuted Christians should be treated as priority in the U.S. refugee program despite acknowledging that such preference is discriminatory. "The reason I think he did was because they were being more persecuted than others," Otter said. When asked if Muslims were also persecuted, Otter said "Probably. I don't know that, but I do know that the Christians are."

In January, the Boise City Council unanimously passed a Welcoming City resolution, reaffirming the city's commitment to be supportive and welcoming to all who live there. Twin Falls City Council passed a similar Welcoming City resolution on May 9, after listening to 90 minutes of comments from a local Boy Scouts troop, community leaders, and citizens. This message from the Twin Falls City Council offers a promising message that immigrants and refugees are a significant and welcome part of the local community.

Los Angeles Times Reports on Twin Falls Refugees

Echoing the comments of local citizens in several Twin Falls City Council hearings related to passing a Welcoming City resolution, *Los Angeles Times* reporter David Montero wrote about Twin Falls as a safe place for refugees despite far-right news coverage over the past year that says the opposite. The article made the front page of the *LA Times* print and online publication on May 15, 2017. The article demonstrates the broad support that Twin Falls offers its newest citizens, further proving that the recent anti-refugee movement comes not from within the community, but a small and vocal nationwide anti-refugee community.

In the article, Montero interviews Twin Falls County Prosecutor Loeb, County Sheriff Carter, Mayor Shawn Barigar, the Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Bob Naerebout, and several local refugees. They all de-bunk the claim by far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones that Twin Falls is "being infiltrated by Muslim terrorists spreading disease and committing violent crimes." They remarked that the refugees are a vibrant and necessary part of the work force and cause very few issues with crime or public health.

The *Los Angeles Times* piece is the latest in national print news coverage of Twin Falls as a refugee center embroiled in controversy, following articles by *Slate* and *The Economist*.

FoM Volunteers at Manzanar

FoM was represented at the most recent public archeology project at Manzanar over Memorial Day weekend from May 26-29. In attendance were Executive Director Mia, board members Alan and Jim, along with Jim's wife Lois and granddaughter Rina.



Each day there were between 20 and 50 volunteers signed up, some for the first time and some repeat volunteers, to assist with the project. This project was to restore the administrative housing area to its original appearance. It included clearing brush, uncovering and recreating rock alignments, and painting rocks. The goal is to showcase the military style landscaping of the administrative area to demonstrate the contrast between the administrative housing conditions to the incarcerated housing conditions.

In a few short days a great amount of progress was made in restoring the landscaping to its historic appearance. It was meaningful work to contribute to another Japanese American Confinement Site. We hope to return, and to hold public digs in the future at Minidoka!

Writing to Create Peace

Janet Keegan, Twin Falls, Idaho

In July of 2016, because I live in Twin Falls and work with Friends of Minidoka I was contacted by Gail Nomura at the University of Washington. She was assisting Gen Okamoto, a staff writer for Asahi Shimbun, Hiroshima General Bureau. Mr. Okamoto writes on peace issues and the history of the bombing of Hiroshima and was writing a series of articles for the anniversary of the infamous event. One of the articles involved the Houses of Hiroshima, Floyd Schmoie and Reverend Emery Andrews. Mr. Okamoto's research in Seattle developed his desire to visit the Minidoka National Historic Site. Fortunately, I was able to assist Mr. Okamoto that weekend and Jennifer Hamilton was available to give us a tour of the site and open the buildings for him to photograph. In January, I received a package of Asahi Shimbun papers, a gift, and photos of Mr. Okamoto's visit to Twin Falls. I can't read the articles, but judging from Mr. Okamoto's enthusiasm and expertise, they are surely educational, compassionate, and of great interest to his readers.

He states in his letter to me that he will continue to "... write articles to create peace" and asks for our continued support. Gen Okamoto was a delight to entertain (steak and Idaho potatoes, of course) and we plan to stay connected for future endeavors.

The image shows a page from the Asahi Shimbun newspaper. The main headline reads "日米「負の歴史」刻み前へ" (Before the Japanese and American 'History of Burden' is Etched). A large vertical title on the right side says "収容日系人 支えた父の思い" (Thoughts of the Father who Supported the Incarcerated Japanese-Americans). The page features several photographs: a wooden building interior, a watchtower, and portraits of two men, Fukusue and Ikegami. Text columns discuss the history of Japanese American incarceration, mentioning the 1941 Pearl Harbor attack and the subsequent internment of Japanese-Americans in the United States. The article also touches upon the financial aspects of the incarceration, such as the \$2000 per person per year cost mentioned in the text.

Support Friends of Minidoka While You Shop

If you shop at any of the Kroger family of grocery brands, you can designate a percentage of proceeds to go towards Friends of Minidoka every time you shop. This includes Kroger, Fred Meyer, Ralph's, Smith's, Food4Less, and more.

Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your grocery Rewards Card to Friends of Minidoka at the website for your preferred Kroger brand store. You can search for us by our non-profit number 91168.

Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping FoM earn a donation! You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today. If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk of any Kroger brand store.



Instead of shopping at amazon.com, consider using AmazonSmile at smile.amazon.com. It automatically uses your same login, shopping cart, wish list and account information as Amazon.com. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, select a charitable organization to receive donations before you begin shopping. Search Friends of Minidoka, and select it as your charity. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation of 0.5% of the purchase price to FoM. Don't forget to bookmark AmazonSmile and use it every time you shop on Amazon!



News from Other Camps

Puyallup - There will be a 75th Remembrance of Puyallup Assembly Center, 'Camp Harmony,' on Saturday, September 2, 2017 at the Washington State Fairgrounds. It will be hosted by the Puyallup Valley Japanese American Citizens League. This day is dedicated to honoring those incarcerated at the Puyallup Assembly Center (PAC) and educating the community at large. A re-dedication of the sculpture, Harmony, by George Tsutakawa and the unveiling of the Marker of Names will follow the event. The Fair Museum will house displays, The Silent Fair video and an interactive exhibit of a re-created horse stall and barrack room for the duration of the Fair. Survivors and their families from all assembly centers, camps and detention facilities are invited, as well as the general public. For registration and tickets please visit www.thefair.com/pac. To ensure we have your name and the correct spelling for the Marker of Names we ask all PAC survivors please review the information at www.puyallupvalleyjacl.org/puyallup-assembly-center-names

Tule Lake - the comment period for the Tule Lake Unit of WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment ended on February 28, 2017. Ten public meetings were held in eight cities in California, Oregon and Washington during the months of November, December 2016 and January 2017 to explain the GMP/EA and receive feedback. Comments received will assist the National Parks Service in revising and finalizing the sites general management plan.

Tule Lake - There will be no Tule Lake Pilgrimage in 2017. The Pilgrimage is held every other year and the next Pilgrimage will be in 2018.

Heart Mountain - The 2017 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage will be held on July 28-29, 2017. Presenters will include National Poetry Slam Champion Champion, G. Yamazawa, Emmy-award-winning documentarians Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono, as well as

Former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Senator Al Simpson (ret). Events on Friday will include a silent auction, a dinner banquet and a dessert reception at the Holiday Inn in Cody, Wyoming as well as educational sessions and a Multigenerational Forum to take place at the Park County Library. Saturday's function will be held at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center and will include admission to the Center as well as an exhibit by Roger Shimomura. For more information and/or to register, go to <http://heartmountain.org/pilgrimage.html>.

Topaz - The Topaz Museum in Delta Utah closed on Saturday, Jan. 14, for the installation of permanent exhibits and reopened in June. The permanent exhibits tell the history of Topaz, as well as a broader history of Japanese immigration to the United States and to the State of Utah. Displays of artifacts from the camp and panels depicting the history are part of the new exhibits.

Honouliuli - NPS has begun the creation of a foundation document for Honouliuli National Monument. The purpose of the document is to establish basic guidance for planning and management decisions moving forward by gathering and integrating all information about the park to date. A primary benefit of developing a Foundation Document is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of future planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park.

Honouliuli - NPS and the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu will begin creating an inventory and database of all resources which have been identified at Honouliuli to date, as well as undertaking additional archeological surveys to identify potential new features. This is the first step in establishing a resource protection and preservation program and the development of any on-site visitor facilities or access roads.

Join/Renew/Donate

Support the Friends of Minidoka and the work we are doing. Join or Renew your membership!

By becoming a member, you...

Support public information on Minidoka National Historic Site and FOM projects at minidoka.org

Support the projects we are working on and ensure your voice is present in the plans and implementation of Minidoka as a National Park.

Receive FOM bi-annual newsletters, informational and e-bulletins.

Vote in the FOM Board Elections.

Please mail Membership Forms to to:
Friends of Minidoka
PO Box 1085
Twin Falls, ID 83303-1085

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\$25 Student or Senior \$ _____

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