



# Minidoka NHS News

March 2016

## Breaking News

### Nisei Soldier Stamp Effort:

A nationwide grassroots campaign to honor the Nisei World War II soldiers with a postage stamp was launched on February 19. The campaign hopes to gain the attention of the president and the U.S. postmaster general. Supporters hope the campaign will lead to a stamp next year to coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Executive Order 9066. The USPS often issues stamps to commemorate key anniversaries of events.

### Nisei Soldier Congressional Gold Medal Exhibition Update

The Nisei Veterans Network, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, and the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center are pleased to announce that the Nisei Soldier Gold Medal Digital Exhibition will “go live” on May 12, 2016. It will serve as the permanent online exhibition for the Congressional Gold Medal now on display at the Price of Freedom exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

### 2016 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage

The 2016 Pilgrimage will be on Friday and Saturday, July 29-30. Luis Valdez, playwright of “Valley of the Heart,” will be a guest speaker. The relationship between the Japanese American and Mexican American communities will also be explored. There will be a digital storytelling workshop led by Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono and Heart Mountain Executive Director Brian Liesinger. The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) will be collaborating on this project.

## Friends of Minidoka Appoint First Executive Director

Friends of Minidoka (FOM) is pleased to announce the hiring of its first Executive Director, Mia Russell. The hiring of an Executive Director will allow FOM, an all-volunteer organization, to expand its reach in the community and better fulfill its mission of honoring the legacy of the Japanese American incarceration experience through education, preservation, and advocacy. Mia begins her position this month.

Mia is a shin-nisei “quapa,” born in Visalia, California and raised in Boise. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities from Soka University of America in 2013. Her senior thesis research focused on the annual Manzanar pilgrimage. Having never learned about Minidoka while attending public schools in Idaho, Mia has become passionate about preserving the Japanese American incarceration story and related sites.

Mia returned to Boise in 2013 and is earning her Master’s degree in Applied Historical Research from Boise State University. For her graduate thesis, Mia developed “NPS Minidoka,” the recently launched walking tour mobile app for Minidoka National Historic Site (NHS). This interpretive app helps to fill a critical gap at Minidoka while the site awaits construction of the future visitor center, and allows visitors to immerse themselves in the story of life at camp.

During her time at Boise State, Mia was able to work with Dr. Robert Sims and National Park Service (NPS) staff in researching collaborative preservation efforts at Minidoka. She was also a member of the team that constructed the guard tower. As a result of her in-depth research, Mia



Mia Russell

has an intimate knowledge of Minidoka NHS and the Japanese American incarceration experience. Mia has worked closely with FOM as a member of the 2014 and 2015 Civil Liberties Symposium planning committee as well as on the 2014 and 2015 pilgrimages as an NPS intern.

Most recently, Mia has been working at the Minidoka NHS since September 2015 as an Education and Interpretation Intern through Americorps and the Student Conservation Association. She also served as an intern at the site from June to August 2014, while she completed research for the app.

Mia has many qualities that will make her an exceptional Executive Director. She works effectively with the NPS staff who manage the site, FOM board members, as well as additional stakeholders and community partners. She also has background in historical preservation and interpretation, cultural resource management, and excellent knowledge of social media platforms and technology.

Please join us in welcoming Mia to Friends of Minidoka!

## Minidoka Irrigator Headlines March 1944

Each month this column will feature headlines from the *Minidoka Irrigator* during the same month in 1944.

### March 4: **"Go For Broke" Now Being Shown Throughout Center**

Depicting Nisei soldiers in training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, including some from Hunt, the new WRA moving picture, "Go For Broke," will be shown to camp residents.

### March 4: **18 Students Place on Honor Society**

With a grade average of 3.6 or better last semester, eighteen Hunt High School students were placed in the Honor Society, a recently organized club.

### March 4: **117 Hunt Men Pass Pre-Induction Physicals to Report for Duty Soon**

V.V. McLaughlin, leave officer, noted that a Nisei draftee has the same choice of which branch of service he wishes to serve in as does any other draftee.

### March 11: **Co-op Board Elects Hatate as President**

At a joint meeting of outgoing and incoming members of the Co-op Board of Directors, Harry Hatate was chosen Board President, succeeding Yoshito Fujii.

### March 11: **Openings in Cadet Nurse Corps for Nisei Announced**

Highlights of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps program include free complete nursing education, free tuition fees and maintenance, monthly allowance, and uniforms.

### March 18: **21,000 Persons of Japanese Ancestry Relocated**

Secretary of the Interior Ickes announced that more than 21,000 of the 112,000 people of Japanese ancestry removed from the West Coast are now living and supporting themselves outside the centers.

### March 18: **Construction on Gymnasium Again Resumed**

Twenty workers from other construction projects were transferred to the gymnasium project that resumed on March 15.

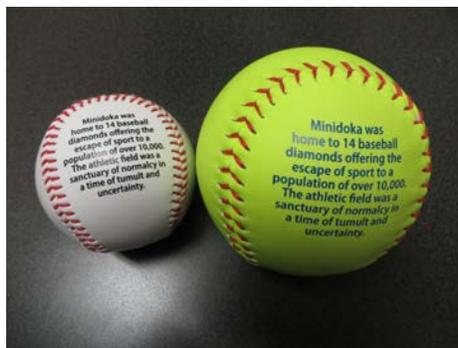
## Diamond Stories: Field-In-A-Day Update

### Donations and Commitments

The Portland Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) has donated \$180, the cost of two player benches for the field.

### Hunt Softball and Baseball

A commemorative Hunt Camp softball and baseball has been created to highlight the importance of baseball and softball at Minidoka. The balls sell for \$8.95 (baseball) and 11.95 (softball); they can be purchased at the Hagerman Fossil Beds NM Bookstore. The balls will be on sale at the Field-In-A-Day event on May 28, the Pilgrimage on June 24-26, and the Mini-Tournament on August 20.



### Volunteers Needed for May 28

Even if you are not handy with a saw or hammer, there are many other opportunities to help on this historic day, May 28:

- Assisting with registration
- Installing wayside exhibit panels
- Providing food and water
- Pulling weeds in the infield
- Staffing a sales area
- Directing traffic
- Dispensing VIP bags
- Directing activities in a "Children's Corner"
- Photographing the event

Perhaps you are not available to help on May 28. We can use help setting up during the week of May 23. If you are interested in helping during the week of May 23 or on May 28, contact Jeni Hamilton at [jennifer\\_hamilton@nps.gov](mailto:jennifer_hamilton@nps.gov); 208-933-4126 or Carol Ash at [carol\\_ash@nps.gov](mailto:carol_ash@nps.gov); 208-933-4125.

Come join us at Hunt Camp! Help us build the Field-In-A-Day!

## Hunt Camp Photo Album



The Minidoka Mass Choir sang several concerts of sacred music in Minidoka Relocation Center and nearby towns during the winter of 1942-43. Many members of the choir had been in Seattle church choirs before removal. The photo is one of two concerts the choir sang in the Jerome High School auditorium.  
NARA Photo

## Minidoka Visitor Contact Station: Exhibit Design Workshop in Seattle

The project to rehabilitate a historic warehouse to become the site's visitor contact station is in its second phase. At the same time, planning for the exhibits that will occupy the new space is also moving forward.

Friends of Minidoka and National Park Service staff along with other interested partners met in Seattle on Wednesday, February 23 to discuss the building design, the exhibit planning process, and park-wide interpretive efforts. The group discussed appropriate exhibit themes and shared stories, experiences, and resources.

Exhibit designer Daniel Quan noted that the "arc of the storyline for the visitor center follows the journey of the Nikkei from immigration in the early



Participants in the workshop provided insight into possible interpretive themes.

1900s up to December 7, 1941, the period immediately following Pearl Harbor through evacuation and the journey to Minidoka, life during incarceration, and the post-war period leading to the present day."

As defined in the Long Range Interpretive Plan, much of the story of the camp will

be told throughout the site as the historic buildings are rehabilitated and exhibits installed.

A highlight of the meeting was a spirited discussion of an Issei Memorial and how this long-desired Memorial could be achieved. It became obvious that the Issei Memorial is a high priority among all participants. The first step is the formation of a committee to work with designers to propose options for the Memorial.

If you would like to share thoughts or concerns or are interested in participating in this important work, please contact Carol Ash at [carol\\_ash@nps.gov](mailto:carol_ash@nps.gov) ; 208-933-4125.

*Thank You*

The Minidoka NHS Newsletter is in its second year of monthly newsletters designed to update our partners and friends on recent events at the historic site and elsewhere.

A special thank you to everyone who suggested special features, wrote articles, shared information and images, and wrote encouraging emails. You have been the heart of this newsletter.

If you have information you would like to share or topics you would like to see discussed in the coming year, please email Carol Ash at [carol\\_ash@nps.gov](mailto:carol_ash@nps.gov).

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



### Book Corner: *Midnight in Broad Daylight: A Japanese American Family Caught Between Two Worlds*

Author: Pamela Rotner Sakamoto

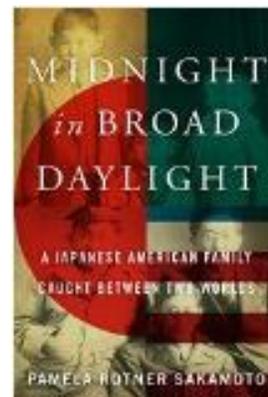
The book traces the true story of a Japanese American family that found itself on opposite sides during World War II.

The Fukuhara children – all born and raised in the Pacific Northwest – move with their mother to Hiroshima, their family's ancestral home, after their father's death. Harry and Mary returned to the United States in the late 1930s while the rest of the family remained in Japan.

After Pearl Harbor and the issuance of Executive Order 9066, Harry, Mary, and Mary's daughter Jeanie are sent to the Tulare Assembly Center in California and then to Gila River Relocation Center in Arizona.

Harry volunteers to serve his country and becomes one of the finest bilingual interpreters in the Military Intelligence Service.

Back in Japan, brothers Frank and Pierce become soldiers in the Japanese



Imperial Army while their mother and other relatives experience increasingly difficult struggles to survive.

This combination of history and biography captures the reader from the start with alternating American and Japanese perspectives, a riveting look at racism and xenophobia, and recognition of the tremendous Japanese American contributions to the American war effort.

The book is published by Harper Collins and is available from Harper Collins e-books.

# Finding My Park Roots at Minidoka NHS

**By Kelsea Holbrook**

The NPS Centennial campaign encourages us all to “Find Your Park” and discover inspirational places and stories. Though I have found many national park sites that I have a strong personal connection to, one park in particular connects me to more than just personal memories – it connects me to the roots of my heritage. In its interpretation and resources, I am able to find my own family roots.

In 2012, I made a tri-generational pilgrimage to Minidoka NHS, where my grandmother, Fujiko (Tamura) Gardner spent her childhood. She had visited Minidoka many years ago and was reluctant to return – I remember her telling me it was just a remote site in the Idaho desert, somewhere we did not want to risk getting stranded. When we made the trip and she got to see first-hand the interpretive development, she was very impressed by the work of the National Park Service and traveled to the Minidoka Pilgrimage the next year.

We started our visit at Hagerman Fossil Beds’ Visitor Center to see the Minidoka Internment exhibit. While my grandmother shared her stories of Block 21, several other visitors approached us and listened to her

childhood memories. When she finished speaking, a visitor embraced her in a sincere hug. He apologized for her internment, and we all began to cry. Even now, almost 4 years later, she will comment on how remarkable and meaningful that interaction was. No one had ever apologized to her for what her family endured during World War II.

We ventured onto Minidoka. While walking along the interpretive trail, I heard stories of her mother growing plants and trees in the camp, how they reacted to the terrible dust storms, and about the time she almost drowned while attempting to save another girl in the swimming hole. It was incredible to have her mention something, only to encounter that same message on a wayside exhibit sign along the way!

We found my great-uncle Masaru “Richard” Tamura’s name on a bronze plaque honoring those killed in action while serving in the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT; Mas was killed in the Po Valley Campaign on April 20, 1945. It was very meaningful to know that his memory is being honored. When looking at the Honor Roll, I told her that the National Park Service was searching for the missing names on the third panel, and assured her that



Fujiko Tamura Gardner at Honor Roll

the names of her brothers were submitted for inclusion. Just a few months ago, she gave me a picture that she found among her brother Mitsuru’s belongings. It was a picture of her sister Tadako (Thea) Mori standing in front of the panel! This missing picture is helping to complete the panel’s reproduction

Someday, I will bring my own grandchildren to Minidoka NHS and retrace the path that I walked with my grandmother, sharing the stories of our family history and the memories of our visit. The World War II experience of the Tamura family will be passed through generations. It is incredibly important for families to connect, share stories, and make memories. I am forever grateful that I have been able to find the park that allows me to discover my family roots and connect with my heritage.

This newsletter is published monthly for our friends and partners across America.

**Superintendent**

Judy Geniac

**Editor/Chief of Interpretation**

Carol S. Ash

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**The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial on Bainbridge Island is a unit of Minidoka NHS. It is managed by Klondike Gold Rush NHP.**

**Comments? Write to:**

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## Guard Tower Wayside Panel Installed

Boise State University Professor Casey Cline and student Ed Kron traveled to Minidoka National Historic Site on Friday, March 11 to install the guard tower wayside interpretive panel. They were assisted by Minidoka staff Richard Cox, Ray Vader, and Brian

Smith. The panel was created by exhibit designer Nate St. Amand.



Ray Vader, Casey Cline, Brian Smith, and Ed Kron in front of new panel

