

Dear Friends,

2019 has been a very exciting year for Friends of Minidoka! This spring we have been supporting the National Park Service as they receive requests for more tours and field trips than ever before, a sure sign that as the site develops and becomes increasingly relevant today, the American public has a strong desire to learn from this important history. Each time I am at the site I admire the transformations that Warehouse #5 is undergoing. All of us at FoM are excitedly looking forward to joining all of our Friends at the 2019 Minidoka Pilgrimage and dedicating the new visitor center, and taking in the improvements to the warehouse and the new exhibits that will fill it.

In preparing for the opening of the visitor center, all of our efforts have turned towards tangible projects that truly support our mission of preserving the Minidoka site and its legacy, and educating the public on this history. In this newsletter you will see updates on three projects we are currently working on that fulfill these aims, from digitizing and sharing historic photographs that haven't been made publicly available, to creating a documentary through the voices of survivors along with a curriculum to get this under-taught history into our classrooms, to fulfilling our commitment to honoring our Issei pioneers at the Minidoka site and telling their story through an exhibit and a memorial wall.

This spring we also took part in a 3 day Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium meeting in our nation's capitol, advancing the foundation of the Consortium through meetings with stakeholder organizations from across the country, and educating our nation's leaders in Congress about our united efforts in keeping this history alive and advocating for their continued support of the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant program.

You may notice that this newsletter doesn't include our 2018 donor report. We didn't forget you, but we will be publishing it separately. We will be releasing a 2018 Annual Report soon, and it will include our donor acknowledgments there.



Mia Russell

Finally, we hope you will consider supporting us this Idaho Gives. Idaho Gives is a 24-hour giving day taking place on May 2, 2019. It is a celebration of nonprofit organizations all across Idaho (and with the help of our friends from out of state.) Last year generous supporters donated over \$1.5 million dollars to Idaho nonprofits in a single day! If you have been planning to renew your membership or donate, please consider doing so on May 2nd at <https://www.idahogives.org/organizations/friends-of-minidoka>

For 24 hours on May 2nd, every donation we receive will give us the opportunity to also receive matching donations from Idaho corporations. Make your money go further on May 2nd, and help us accomplish our goals in 2019!



Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mia Russell".

Mia Russell
Executive Director
Friends of Minidoka
mia@minidoka.org

Friends of Minidoka Collection Densho Digital Repository Project

With support from a Japanese American Confinement Sites grant awarded in 2018, we are nearing completion on an exciting photograph digitization project in partnership with Densho. We were able to work with a researcher to digitize 1,000 images held in the National Archives, most of which were unprinted film negatives from the official WRA records, in which government photographers were hired to document the Minidoka camp during the war. Most of these images do not yet exist in a digital format, and will help us better understand and tell the story of the Minidoka experience through our future exhibits, film and curriculum project, and more. Many images have never been used in any publication, including the *Minidoka Irrigator* camp newspaper, and are entirely new information for researchers and descendants alike. The final phase of this project will be for Densho to catalog and host the images in their Digital Repository. These will be made available to all through the Densho website! Pictured to the right are just three of the new images we were able to obtain high-resolution scans of.



Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Image 210-CMB-SA2-1695.



Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Image 210-CMB-SA1-1597.

The Lessons of Minidoka: Broadcast Documentary and Education Project

In 2018 we were also awarded a Japanese American Confinement Sites grant to produce an hour-long documentary for national public television and a 7th-12th grade educational curriculum package, through a partnership with Portland-based film company North Shore Productions. This project allows us to expand the 27-minute orientation film created by North Shore for the National Park Service being screened in the Minidoka visitor center. These films are almost entirely oral history driven, and strive to tell the story of Minidoka and its relevance to civil liberties today primarily through first-hand interviews with survivors and descendants of incarcerated. Our project is moving along, with a first draft of the script complete and focus groups with educators and partner institutions underway.

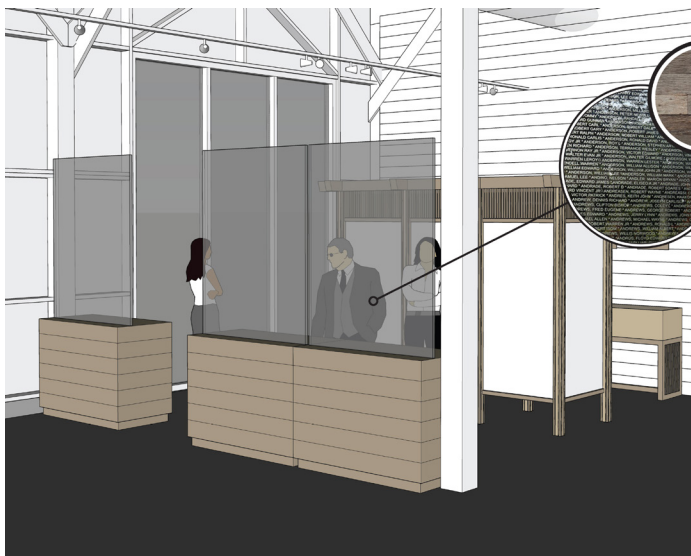
As the JACS grants are 2-1 matching awards and require additional fundraising towards the projects, we are thrilled to announce that we have received generous support towards from the Freeman Foundation and the Regional Arts and Culture Council. We are immensely grateful for their support of this critically important project of bringing the Minidoka story into classrooms. However we still have additional fundraising to do, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you are interested in supporting this project and helping us reach the finish line!



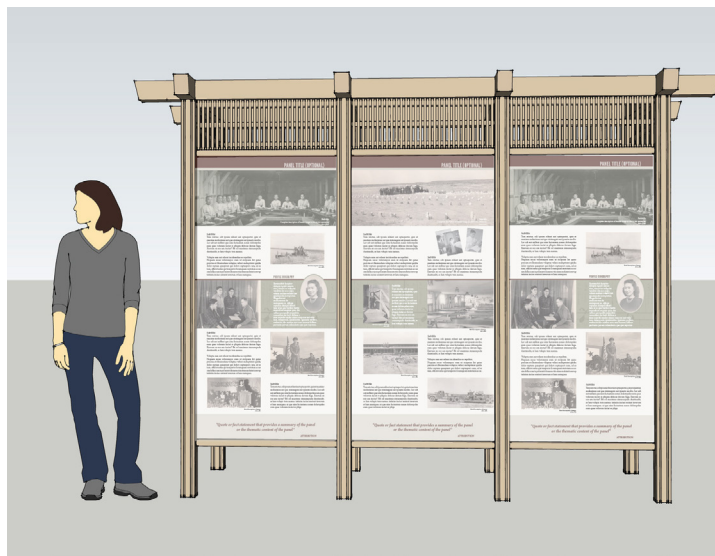
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Image 210-CMB-SP1-1269.

Issei Memorial Exhibit Underway

Through the support of a 2016 Japanese American Confinement Sites grant, we are creating an Issei Memorial Exhibit to honor the Issei, or the immigrant generation of Minidoka incarceratedees, who made the greatest sacrifices in establishing our Japanese American communities in times of overwhelming anti-Japanese sentiment, and in enduring the incarceration experience and the impacts of the incarceration in the wartime and post-war eras.



Issei Memorial engraved name wall design mockup



Issei Memorial exhibit panel design mockup

This project is being produced by Friends of Minidoka with the assistance of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, and as a collaboration with architect Byron Folwell, interpretive writer Meggan Laxalt Mackey, the many volunteers who have assisted us throughout the project, and the Minidoka National Historic Site staff.

Drawing upon the Issei name banners that we collected data for several years ago, and then using the WRA final accountability rosters and other government records, several volunteers assisted us in individually researching the names of every Japanese-born person who was incarcerated at Minidoka at any point during its operation. With this data, we are able to recognize the 4,429 first generation Japanese immigrants who courageously set out to build communities from the ground up, only to be forcibly removed and imprisoned by the country they chose to settle in. These names will be engraved into a permanent wall that will be installed in the Minidoka National Historic Site visitor center, allowing their descendants and all visitors to reflect upon their legacy of courage, perseverance, and sacrifice. We hope this exhibit will allow all visitors the opportunity to learn from the Issei story.

In addition to the Issei Memorial name wall, the exhibit will also feature a set of graphic panels interpreting the Issei experience from leaving Japan, the difficulties and triumphs encountered while establishing roots throughout the United States, their incarceration at Minidoka, the daunting prospect of once again beginning their lives anew after the war ended, through to their legacy today.

We thank you for your generous donations that have made this exhibit possible. We are still seeking any items related to the Issei at Minidoka, from the pre-war to the incarceration and post war experiences, that we may be able to include on display in the exhibit in the future. We are also seeking the final match for the grant. If you would like to donate in support of this project, please visit www.minidoka.org/donate. We hope you will join us as the exhibit is premiered during the 2019 Minidoka Pilgrimage, or come see it in the future!

News from the Board of Directors

The Friends of Minidoka board of directors met March 11, 2019 in Boise for their annual retreat and board meeting. The Board selected Andrew Dunn to be Chairperson; Marsha Edwards to be Vice Chairperson; Julianne Abe to be Secretary, and Janet Keegan to be Treasurer for the coming year. These directors also comprise the Executive Committee.

Two other committees were selected and their duties outlined. Finance Committee will be Janet Keegan and Andrew Dunn. Board Development committee will be Julianne Abe, Marsha Edwards and Lynn Fuchigami Parks. There was much energy in planning and strategizing for the future of Friends of Minidoka and we all look forward to accomplishing goals and continued success.

Minidoka Books Available

Thank you to all who have been supporting Friends of Minidoka through your book purchases! The proceeds from your purchases go right back to supporting our operations and special projects. Don't forget that the reprinted *Minidoka Interlude* is available online, as well as the newly released *Minidoka National Historic Site* from the Images of America series. Written by Hanako Wakatsuki, Mia Russell, and Carol Ash, this book features nearly two hundred historic images of Minidoka, many from personal family collections which haven't been viewed by the public.

These are available online at www.minidoka.org/shop.

Minidoka Visitor Center Dedication and 2019 Minidoka Pilgrimage

We are fast approaching the long-awaited dedication of the Minidoka National Historic Site visitor center! This represents a great milestone for the site, which has been operating without a permanent visitor center since its establishment as an NPS unit in 2001. The visitor center will include a ranger information desk and bookstore, an auditorium for viewing the orientation film about Minidoka, as well as interpretive exhibits.

Warehouse #5, the camp's historic tire and motor repair shop (pictured here in 2014), is being converted to the visitor center and we can't wait to see the completed transformation!



To access the sneak preview of the visitor center before it opens to the public later this year, please join Friends of Minidoka and the National Park Service in the dedication ceremony, to be held in conjunction with the Minidoka Pilgrimage on the morning of July 7, 2019. Guests will then be invited to join the pilgrims on a guided walking tour of the Minidoka site, followed by lunch. We encourage everyone to register for the full Minidoka Pilgrimage, to be held July 5-8, for an immersive, multi-day educational experience. To register, please visit www.minidokapilgrimage.org. Questions regarding registration should be directed to minidokapilgrimage@gmail.com. If, however, you are interested in joining the dedication ceremony but are unable to attend the full pilgrimage, partial attendance will be an option. If you are interested in attending, please email mia@minidoka.org.

JACSC Connects, Evolves, and Advocates in DC

Friends of Minidoka is proud to be an Advisory Council Member of JACSC. For more information about the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium and to read these articles in full, please visit www.jacsc.org. We hope to see you at the JACL Convention!

The Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (JACSC) convened in Washington D.C., recently for a robust three-day agenda to strengthen collaboration, work on sustainability of the consortium, and to meet with legislators on Capitol Hill. JACSC is a nation-wide network of historical organizations, educational institutions, advocacy groups, and grassroots organizers focused on preserving the sites and artifacts related to the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and dedicated to educating the public about this history and its still-relevant lessons.

Meeting at the law firm offices of Hogan Lovells, who sponsored many of the week's events, the JACSC discussed long-term funding for long-term impact as a primary goal for plenary sessions. JACSC received startup funding from the federal Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program through awards in 2015 and 2017. Having identified a mission of capacity building for individual members, preservation, and advocacy, it seeks firmer footing by generating ongoing funding. A membership dues resolution, aimed at giving JACSC long-term financial stability, was discussed and drafted.

February 27-28 was spent educating legislators about the JACSC, advocating for JACS grant funding, and discussing border issues and the treatment of immigrant families in detention. Individual JACSC stakeholders met with their respective congressional delegations, and a JACSC leadership group, including the Friends of Minidoka, met with key allies and members of crucial Congressional committees.

The Capitol Hill visits culminated with the entire JACSC contingent meeting with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in the U.S. Capitol. Speaker Pelosi was a co-sponsor of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which was a significant achievement of the redress movement—a movement that many of the JACSC attendees had participated in. She applauded her visitors for their work across the country and was particularly interested in the significant contributions toward educating the public.



Pictured above are members of the JACSC, representing the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, Japanese American Citizens League, and Japanese American National Museum on a day of hill visits in Washington D.C. Mia Russell, Executive Director of FOM, represented both FOM and the JACSC Advisory Council in visits with the offices of 11 members of Congress to educate them about the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program.

David Inoue, part of the leadership of the JACSC who led many of the Capitol Hill visits set the tone for the group in preparation for the visits. “There are no individual needs,” said Inoue, who is also Executive Director of JACL. “We have come together, and we celebrate these partnerships that make us stronger as a people and stronger as a community.”

JACL Announces 2019 Convention, includes JACSC Component

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) has opened its National Convention for registration, which will take place in Salt Lake City, UT, July 31–Aug. 4 this year. (More information at <https://www.convention2019.jacl.org/>). The theme of this year's conference is “Advocacy, Inclusion, Action.”

For the first time, the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (JACSC) will partner with JACL to offer a series of workshops related to their work and to increase the engagement in the World War II experiences of Japanese Americans among the JACL membership. In addition, the convention will include an optional visit to the Topaz Museum in Delta, UT, which covers the history of the Topaz concentration camp.

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.

Please mail Membership Forms to to:
Friends of Minidoka
PO Box 1085
Twin Falls, ID 83303-1085
or visit www.minidoka.org/join

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

\$25 Student or Senior \$ _____

\$50 Individual \$ _____

\$100 Household \$ _____

Additional Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____