

From the Director: Tom Ikeda

One of the great things about my monthly eNews messages is that when I ask for help, people respond. Last month I wanted suggestions and advice about Densho's mission statement, and several dozen messages poured in with good ideas. In the coming weeks I will work with staff and board going over these ideas to come up with a revised mission statement for you to review and give feedback.

This month I have another important request. In the next two years Densho will commit the resources to conduct 100 new video-recorded oral history interviews about the World War II removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans. After two years, we will do fewer interviews as we focus more on education. I want your help in identifying the 100 people we should interview in the next two years. Please email me at tom.ikeda@densho.org the name, a brief description of why you think this person should be interviewed, and where this person lives. In particular we are looking for stories and perspectives that are less known or unusual. Thanks!



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From the Archive

Pioneer Generation: Remembering the Issei

*"They were early pioneers. And especially on farms it was very difficult for them."
-- Kara Kondo*

The stories Nisei interviewees tell about their parents form a pattern: Fathers left the villages and rice farms of Japan at the turn of the last century to earn money in Hawaii and mainland United States. Some still in their teens, they took grueling jobs at farms, lumber mills, railroad camps, and fishing canneries; others worked as houseboys. Once they earned enough money, the men returned to Japan to find a bride or sent for a picture bride. Babies arrived, and the Issei built churches and Japanese language schools to educate the next generation. They formed business associations to support each other in an inhospitable country. They turned undesirable land into flourishing farms by working dawn to dusk, and even into the night. While many decided to make America their permanent home, others expected to return to Japan. As Ike Ikeda says, "I had a feeling that, like many immigrants, they were ready to make their mint. They thought they would really get rich in a hurry and go back. But that never happened." What happened to the Issei instead in the 1940s no one could have anticipated.

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Archive Spotlight

Hello Maggie!: Shig Yabu, Children's Book Author

As a boy Shig Yabu was taken from his home in San Francisco



to the Pomona Assembly Center, California, and the Heart Mountain incarceration camp, Wyoming. While in camp, he saved an injured baby magpie, named it Maggie, and adopted it as a pet. Following the war, Shig became involved with the Heart Mountain Foundation, where members encouraged him to write stories about the talking magpie. The resulting children's book, *Hello, Maggie!*, was illustrated by Willie Ito, a former Disney animator. In an excerpt from his recent interview with Densho, Shig tells how the bird became a popular inhabitant of the incarceration camp.

- >> [View the interview excerpt](#)
- >> [See other Archive Spotlights](#)
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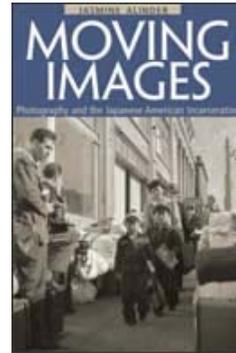


Densho News

Author Event: Moving Images: Photography and the Japanese American Incarceration

On Thursday, September 23, at 6:00 p.m., at Seattle's Elliott Bay Book Store, Jasmine Alinder will speak about her book *Moving Images: Photography and the Japanese American Incarceration*. *Moving Images* examines the work of Dorothea Lange, hired by the government to document the forced removal and "assembly centers"; Manzanar inmate Toyo Miyatake, who covertly constructed his own camera to document camp life; Ansel Adams, who attempted to counter negative war propaganda through his photographs of Manzanar; and contemporary artists Patrick Nagatani and Masumi Hayashi, who revisit the former camps to help bridge intergenerational divides. Alinder investigates why the photographs were made, how they were meant to function, and how they have been reproduced and interpreted subsequently by the popular press and museums in constructing versions of public history. Jasmine Alinder is an assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The event is free and open to the public. The event will conclude with book sales and signing.

- >> [Read more about the event](#)
- >> [Read about the book](#)
- >> [Visit the Elliott Bay Book Company website](#)



Sushi & Sake Gala

Densho supporters are invited to our annual fundraising event, **redesigned** and expanded this year. Join us for an evening featuring a sushi and sake reception, a silent auction, and a seated benefit dinner. The Sushi & Sake Gala takes place on **November 10**, 5:30-8:30pm, at a **new location**, the Seattle Sheraton. Proceeds from this event will support the education work of the organization and help us collect many more life stories waiting to be heard. We would like to ask you to consider being a **table captain** for this year's event. Being a table captain is a fun and easy way to support Densho by filling ten seats with your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors to enjoy the evening's festivities with you. Please visit our **event website** for more details. **Tickets** are available online for this unique dining experience for \$100 through September 30. We look forward to seeing you at the Sushi & Sake Gala.

- >> [Learn more about the Sushi & Sake Gala](#)



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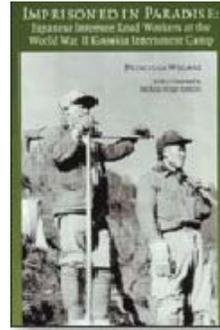
Recommended Resource



Book Note: *Imprisoned in Paradise*

Imprisoned in Paradise: Japanese Internee Roadworkers at the World War II Kooskia Internment Camp, by Priscilla Wegars (University of Idaho, 2010), is a meticulously researched study that opens a window into an all but unknown aspect of the imprisonment history of Japanese Americans during World War II. The 265 Issei men who did road construction work in rugged territory in Northern Idaho on what is now the Lewis and Clark Highway from May 1943 to May 1945 were all volunteers who had been interned in various Department of Justice camps. The facility was unfenced and was run under conditions conforming to the Geneva convention. The men were paid \$55 a month plus room and board and not allowed to do "dangerous work." Most had been resident aliens but some had been seized by the United States in Peru and Panama. The author has compiled a roster with basic biographical information listing each man. The book is profusely illustrated and describes a very different kind of incarceration. Wegars is the curator of the University of Idaho's Asian American Comparative Collection.

- >> Listen to a report on the Kooskia camp
- >> Read about the Kooskia camp
- >> Order the book



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