BAINBRIDGE ISLAND JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY
BIJAC News
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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY

By Clarence Moriwaki, president, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial

If you haven't been by the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial (BIJAEM) lately, you're in for a wonderful surprise. The long-awaited Phase 2 "Story Wall" was completed this winter, featuring beautiful old-growth red cedar panel walls and roofs firmly mounted on a base of granite as solid as the Bainbridge Island community that supported their Japanese American friends and neighbors before, during and after their government-ordered exile to concentration camps in World War II.

Like the waves of time passing, the gently curving 276-foot wall—one foot for every Japanese American living on Bainbridge Island at the start of the war—will tell their American story on the historic site when they became the first of 120,000 Japanese Americans to be forcibly removed from the West Coast.

Built at the site of the former Eagledale Ferry Dock at the end of Taylor Road, visitors to the wall will be walking in the footsteps of history, where on March 30, 1942, U.S. Army soldiers with fixed bayonets escorted 227 men, women and children to board the ferry Kehloken and embark on a lonely journey that would change their lives forever.

After arriving in Seattle, they took a three-day train ride and were dropped off in a desolate desert valley in California's Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, becoming the first Japanese American community to occupy the Manzanar "Relocation Center." Less than a year later, most chose to transfer to the equally desolate Minidoka camp in southern Idaho. Being among the last to arrive at Minidoka, they were also among the last to be released at the end of the war, thus becoming the literal bookends of the Japanese American exclusion story.

This historic narrative, the names of all 276 individuals and other details honoring and remembering their courage, quiet dignity and perseverance will be part of the wall's interpretive display materials that are being written and designed by a committee of the BIJAEM board of directors, led by members Cindy Harrison, former director of the Bainbridge Island Public Library; Dr. Frank Kitamoto, Manzanar and Minidoka survivor and president of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; and Mary Woodward, historian, former teacher and author of the well-reviewed book "In Defense of Our Neighbors – The Walt and Milly Woodward Story."

(Continued next page)

FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY *(from page 1)*

The wall's design comes to life

The Story Wall—designed by friends and supporters Johnpaul Jones and Colleen Thorpe of Jones and Jones Architects and master timber framer John Buday of Cascade Crest Designs (who also capably serves as BIJAEM project manager)—begins with an impressive eight-foot high half-circle wall of granite, enveloping visitors like a protective fortress.

The granite wall entry then reduces to one-third of its height and turns into an undulating ribbon, becoming the foundation for the fine furniture-grade clear red cedar wall and protective roof, custom milled from a salvaged centuries-old cedar tree that was buried underwater. To allow visitors the opportunity to personally honor and remember, the wall features patina stainless steel pegs and granite shelves as places to leave notes, flowers, peace cranes and other personal items.

To represent the complete absence of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island during the war, a gap is created when a section of the red cedar panels and roof disappears near the end of the wall, replaced with a trapezoidal wall of dark basalt and the original BIJAEM memorial marker stone, first unveiled at the 60th anniversary ceremony on March 30, 2002. The volcanic basalt is virtually identical to the basalt used to build the chimney and stone foundations for U.S. military buildings that comprise the only remaining structures at the Minidoka National Historic Site.

To enhance the beauty of the site, landscaping improvements are continually being added, with special focus to immediately work on the area directly behind the wall to create an attractive visual buffer from the adjacent privately owned marina. We're grateful to BIJAEM Board Vice-President Sallie Maron for spearheading this effort and to Chris Harui and Bainbridge Gardens for their invaluable expertise and for offering beautiful trees and plants at cost.

New beach access trail and shoreline restoration

Since Phase 1 was completed in 2006, people have embraced the open and easy access that the BIJAEM has created to adjacent Pritchard Park, and with the Phase 2 construction years away there was little concern about the growing numbers of people, families and their pets using the Story Wall's contemplative path as a temporary access to the wide sandy beach. Indeed, the active and frequent visitation may have helped protect the BIJAEM – and the priceless handcrafted timber framed pavilion and gates – from vandalism and other mischief.

However, to help ensure a reverent and reflective experience for visitors, a protective buffer has been built to separate the contemplative path from the more active recreational use of Pritchard Park.

Where people have been accessing the beach trail at the northeastern curve of the path, a berm of soft earth and native landscaping has restored the land to its original contour prior to being excavated decades ago for a log haul road to the former Wyckoff creosote plant. Replacing the hard roadbed with fresh soil and plantings not only adds a sense of seclusion and restores the shoreline environment, it also offers increased ability to secure and protect the multi-million dollar site from off-hours use as the BIJAEM becomes fully developed.

Since people have become accustomed to using the BIJAEM site to access the Pritchard Park beach trail, in partnership and with the generous support of the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Parks and Recreation District, we designed and created a beautiful new beach and park access trail from the BIJAEM parking lot.

The new boulder-lined trail provides a direct and convenient route to the beach and park, reducing the walking distance by more than 130 yards. Perhaps the trail's best feature is a unique and rustically elegant 10-foot long arched boardwalk—designed by John Buday and built by members of the BIJAEM board of directors—custom milled from the trunk of a large cedar tree felled from the construction of Phase 1.

Donations still needed to complete the vision

We are thankful and humbled for all of the generous donations and support that have made Phase 1 and 2 realities. The $3 million raised so far towards the $9 million total comprises a combination of state funds, private foundations, local charities, in-kind services, materials and labor, and, of course, hundreds and hundreds of individual donors.

While we are truly honored that the BIJAEM has been named a part of the National Parks Service as a satellite unit of the Minidoka National Historic Site, private donations and grants are necessary—and perhaps the only way—to complete the project.

No federal dollars have been designated nor anticipated for the $6 million still needed to complete the two remaining phases of construction: Phase 3, the 150-foot departure pier—one foot for every Japanese American who returned to Bainbridge Island—and Phase 4, the 4,000 square foot interpretive center and meeting room complex.

While the Story Wall is now up, funds are needed to put the story on the wall by completing the interpretive materials and other finishing touches.

If you're planning to give, now's the time to seize a unique opportunity to double the impact of your donation!

This summer we received a generous $150,000 challenge grant from an anonymous and supportive donor who will match all donations, dollar-for-dollar! One person who has helped jump start this matching grant is BIJAEM Board Secretary Ed Kushner, who won the Bainbridge Community Foundation's 2009 C. Keith Birkenfeld Humanitarian Award for his tireless community service. Ed generously donated $5,000 of his $25,000 award to BIJAEM. Congratulations and thanks, Ed!

Contributions are tax deductible and donation forms can be found at ***www.bijac.org*** under the "Memorial" link, or you may mail your donation to BIJAEM, 221 Winslow Way West, Suite 306, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

Thank you for your continued support! ●●●

Word of Mouth from Frank Kitamoto

REUNION PICNIC — Our every-other-year BIJAC reunion picnic at Battle Point Park (the old Naval radio station installation) was held on August 15th. It was good to see friends and former Islanders and to share what has been happening in our lives. It was BYOB, bring your own bento. We put all our food together so we could all sit and eat together. There was certainly enough food to share with those who came from afar and weren't able to "cook up" a meal. The every-other-year format gives those who want to have their own "clan" picnic the ability still to do so. Our next BIJAC reunion picnic will be on the first Saturday in August of 2011. We hope you will mark that on your future calendar and plan to join us.

BIJAEM — We have formed a separate 501c nonprofit organization for the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. Donations or In Memoriums for the Memorial should be made out to BIJAEM. Any for the work of the Community itself should be made out to BIJAC.

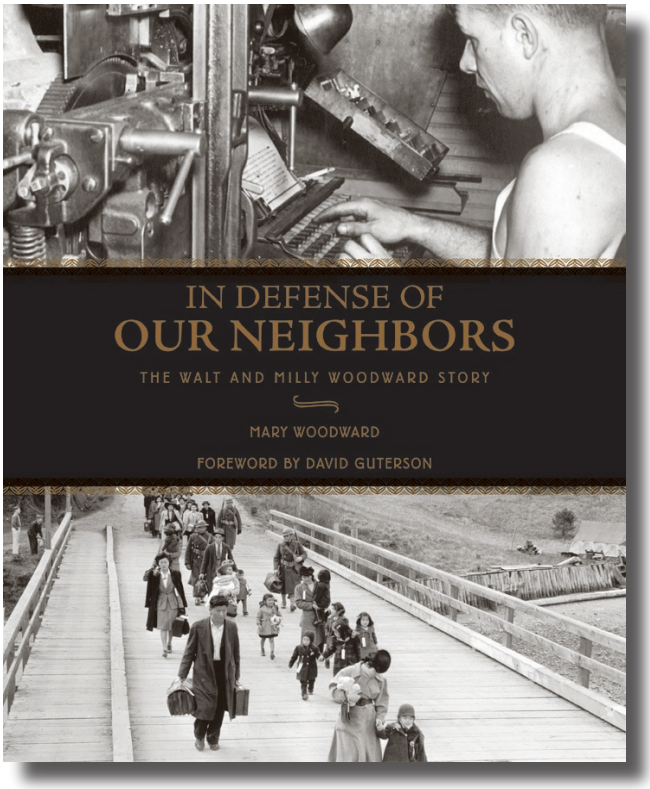
THE MEMORIAL WALL, PHASE II — The wall was scheduled to be structurally completed by the end of October '09. The BIJAEM interpretive committee, consisting of chair Cindy Harrison, Lilly Kitamoto Kodama, Hisa Hayashida Matsudaira, Kay Sakai Nakao, Faith Chapel, Mary Woodward Pratt, Clarence Moriwaki, John Buday, Hank Helm, and myself have been meeting regularly to determine what will go up on the wall. We have been collecting names of those excluded, their ages and occupations at that time; photos and quotes to be used to tell the story. If you have photos, personal quotes of your own or family members, and information of your families you feel we should have, please phone, write or e-mail me. The topics to be covered are early settlement pioneer days, prewar/farming/business days, forced removal, exclusion period, the military, our neighbors who supported/didn't support us, and the return. We want to not only stimulate people in becoming passive gatherers of knowledge but also to be active participants in making a difference.

THE NATIONAL PARKS — As a satellite of the Minidoka National Memorial we met with National parks personnel, Wendy Janssen, Superintendant Minidoka; Alisa Lynch,Chief of Interpretation Manzanar Historic Site; Lynne Nakata, Interpretive Specialist, Pacific West Regional Parks Office; David Guiney, Exhibit Planner, Harper's Ferry Landing, Virginia; Anna Tamura, Landscape Architect, Pacific West Region; and Susan Karren, Director National Archives Pacific/ Alaska Region, for a two-day workshop on the Island. We plan to hire an exhibit designer and to have a mock up on the Wall by the time of our 68th Anniversary Ceremony at the site on March 30th.

MOCHI TSUKI — will be at IslandWood again on Sunday **January 3, 2010** from 11:00 to 3:00. Come see mochi prepared the "old fashioned way" with mortar and mallets, the Seattle Kokon Taiko, our photo exhibit *"Kodomo no Tame Ni"* and models of the Memorial site. You may even want to drop in at the Memorial site at Taylor Ave. and Eagle Harbor Drive to see the progress.

MINIDOKA PILGRIMAGE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES SYMPOSIUM — In 2010 the Pilgrimage will be partially combined with the Civil Liberties Symposium at Southern Idaho College in Twin Falls. The Symposium is Thursday~Friday, June 23~24. The Pilgrimers will attend the Symposium on Friday so will leave by bus early Thursday morning or will have the option of flying into Boise Thursday afternoon and taking a bus to Twin Falls. Those who wish to attend both days of the Symposium will have to make their own arrangements to Twin Falls. Save the dates. Last year several f amily clans from 2nd to 5th generations attended for a family reunion.

MARY WOODWARD's "IN DEFENSE OF OUR NEIGHBORS" Mary has been very active in holding book readings and panel discussions. Her book is also now available through direct purchase with BIJAC for $24.95 plus $2.15 tax and $6 shipping and handling for a total of $33.10. Discounts for large orders and wholesale prices are also available. For more information please visit our website, call 206-842-4772 or mail payment to BIJAC at 1298 Grow Avenue Northwest, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.



ISLANDWOOD FALL FAMILY AFTERNOON was held on Saturday, November 28. The theme of this popular event this time was the experience of the Japanese American Community on Bainbridge, with discussions of such questions relating to the internment.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION — I continue to give my slide presentation "Making a Difference: Lessons From the Past to Help Us Live in the Present — The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Experience," to classrooms, civic groups, service groups and other venues. My goal is to help people understand why sometimes "things" happen and to see themselves being an active participant in making a difference. You can **CONTACT ME** at ***fkitamoto@clearwire.net*** or call (206) 842-4774 or 842-5094 or write me at 1298 Grow Ave. N.W. Bainbridge Island, WA. 98110.

❁IT'S SEAWEED WEATHER!❁

My Grandpa, Yoshiaki Amatatsu, looked up at the semi-cloudy sky and said, *"Kyo-wa nori-tori tenki desu."* ("Today is seaweed gathering weather.") Although I could speak a formal style of Japanese, which I learned from my grandparents, listening and understanding Japanese was much easier. To an eight-year old in 1960, Grandpa was old (77 that year) and thin, but kind and quiet as he towered over me.

This morning, there was a cool breeze bustling through the trees on the farm. Gray clouds were forming, possibly rain later in the day, but the tide would be just right to gather seaweed on a crisp spring day.

"You have to eat something!" Mom said.

She and Grandma had earlier made lunch consisting of *onigiri*, rice balls or triangles, some wrapped in seaweed and filled with *tsukemono* of pickled yellow radish, mustard greens, or *umeboshi*, the tangy, salty, shriveled, purple plums. They also cooked tender chicken teriyaki, glistening golden brown with a marinade of *shoyu* (soy sauce), sugar, ginger, and garlic.

For decades my family had taken part in the seaweed ritual every year on Bainbridge Island, when on a certain spring day, the red/brown seaweed was plentiful off Point White.

"Oishii desu ne" ("Isn't it delicious?") said Grandpa, anticipating the taste of the dark strands of seaweed—baked in the oven, then crushed and sprinkled over rice, broken into steamy *udon* soup, or dried to a crisp on top of the wood stove and eaten as-is, crunchy and salty, like eating a piece of Puget Sound.

Arriving at Point White, we walked to the beach with our galvanized tin buckets and green rubber boots.

"Brrrrr, it's cold!" I grumbled as we waded into the frigid water to hand pick the seaweed. I wore two pairs of socks and a heavy wool beige cardigan under my hooded red jacket. My fingers were numb, but I kept pulling the slippery long pieces of seaweed and dropping them in the bucket until it was almost too heavy to haul over the unstable beach rocks back to the car. The day before, Grandpa made drying racks that looked like rows of wooden clothesline beside the house. We rinsed the seaweed strands in cold, fresh water, and hung them up in single strips. In a couple of days, they would dry and we would bundle them in brown paper, tied with white string, and store them in the basement.

On any other day, Grandpa worked in his *hatake* (garden) weeding, hoeing, fertilizing and growing our family's vegetables of radishes, carrots, tomatoes, corn, zucchini, cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, and rhubarb. He pruned trees of sweet cherries, purple Italian plums, Bartlett pears, yellow transparents, Red Delicious, and King apples, many were grafted for variety. Sweet fragrant raspberries, and a few rows of the big juicy Marshall strawberries were also grown, but the acres of strawberries he had planted and harvested since 1915 were gone by the time I was born.

Before we left the beach, the tide having come in, we sat and rested on the Point White dock, eating our lunch. My short legs dangled over the edge of the wooden planks. As we ate, we put down fishing line that was wrapped around a piece of wood or cardboard. We didn't need a pole or reel. With hook, sinker, and earthworms dug from the garden, we fished in the dark cold water to catch silvery perch and shiners.

"Doshite koko ni kimashitaka?" ("Why did you come here?") I asked him while we waited.

"Kyuka shitai no de America ni kimashita no desu." ("I came to America for a vacation") Grandpa said in his barely-audible voice. It was impolite to ask a lot of questions, but I learned that he fought in Manchuria as a young man in the Japanese Imperial Army, and his family had been samurai who eventually became physicians. He had studied medicine at the university in Japan, and as the eldest son, his duty was to take over the family's medical practice. He chose America instead.

Suddenly, my line started jerking. "I got a shiner!" I shouted as I tried to hang onto the slippery little fish.

Grandpa smiled and took the little guy, unhooked it, and added it to our small pile of fish. *"Mo kairimasho."* ("Let's go home.") We picked up the bucket of fish and headed back to the car loaded with seaweed and a couple of red sea cucumbers.

The perch and shiners were pan-fried, and Grandma chopped up the sea cucumbers and pickled them in a brine of shoyu and vinegar. *"Sake to taberu."* ("Good to eat with sake.") Grandpa smiled; he would share the snack with his men friends while playing a game of Go, the Japanese strategy board game.

Bath Time

After the long day, I welcomed the bath in the *ofuroba*. Grandpa built it himself many years earlier out of wood, the pieces fitting together tongue and groove. The "tub" was deep enough that the walls were higher than my head when I sat down into the steamy water that was heated by a fire. This traditional Japanese bathtub was in a room built onto the back of the garage.

The evening was dark and chilly as I ran outside, and I could see Grandpa in his floppy fedora hat with pipe hanging from his mouth, crouching down outside of the fire pit, stoking the orange-yellow flames. Once ready for the bath, I remembered mom saying "Don't use the soap in the tub!" I stepped onto a wood-slatted matt with a drain below it and drew out a basin of the warm water and poured it over my head and lathered-up.

After rinsing off with clear cool water from a nearby smaller tin tub, which was also used to cool down the hot ofuro water, I climbed in. "Ahhhhh." Even at eight years of age, I knew that relaxing and soaking in a deep tub of hot water was delight for the soul.

Finally, I got out, dried off, put on my PJs and walked back to the house. I don't know how the water was drained (or added), and I never had to tend the fire. Grandpa took care of that. I believed that life on Bainbridge Island with Grandpa would always go on like this.

In 1941, just a couple of days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Grandpa was taken away by the FBI for having dynamite in his storage shed. He used it for blowing up stumps to clear his fields. Unlike many Japanese American families who were interned together, he spent nearly four years in a camp in Bismark, ND, separated from his family who were in Manzanar then Minidoka, because he was classified as an enemy alien of the United States.

In the same year of my story, 1960, Grandpa, who became an American citizen, relinquished all of his ties to his family in Japan. It was his final gesture that he would not return. Bainbridge Island was home.

Grandpa died on his birthday, October 23, 1971, at the age of 88. Grandma Taka Amatatsu died three weeks later at age 80. My mom Michi Noritake, turning 90 this December, is alive and well on Bainbridge, and my brother Greg Noritake and wife Leinette now live on what was once our farm.

—Wendy Noritake

❦CANNERY COVE❦

A relatively remote on Eagle Harbor at the foot of Weaver Road was the site of the Winslow Berry Growers Association's strawberry canneries (ca. 1917~1941). Pioneered by farmers primarily of Japanese ancestry, the Island's home grown strawberry industry engaged a broad and diverse population—native peoples, hakujin and all. Berries were shipped from here to Seattle as early as 1909 by Sakakichi Sumiyoshi and strawberry farmers who followed his lead. Among them, the sons of Takeo & Nobu Sakuma. Today, their descendants operate Sakuma Bros. Farms, Burlington, WA, our state's largest berry farm whose berries are favored by many, including ice cream makers Häagen-Dazs.

George Masukawa oversaw the expansion of the cannery pier begun here in 1923. It grew in stages and tripled in size to 80' x 240' by early 1932. In 1940, 200 cannery workers processed nearly 2,000,000 lbs. of strawberries packed with sugar in 55-gal. wooden barrels made in the cannery by Al & Jim Cooper. During peak season, 500 barrels were barged daily by Capt. Neils Christensen & his son, Capt. Holger Christensen with their vessels, *La Blanca* (seen in the photo below) and *Hannah* to Seattle. There, beginning in 1917, berries were frozen and later shipped by rail across the U. S. by Seattle's National Fruit Canning Co. and R. D. Bodle Co. The Island cannery was operated in cooperation with Bodle, who, in 1937, became the largest berry packer in the country. The uprooting of those of Japanese ancestry during WW II and their exclusion from the coast ended this cannery. Filipino and other farmers saved the industry which grew again after WW II.

Capt. Alvin & Mary Oliver, from Bristol, ME, had a landing, store, boat yard and farm here from 1890 to 1912. They employed Sakakichi & Yoshi Sumiyoshi family in their household and let him use the cove for his enterprises. Later Capt. Benjamin Tilton and his wife, Harriette, from Martha's Vineyard, MA, acquired the site. A retired Arctic whaler, Tilton was a member of the prestigious Explorer's Club of NYC, nominated for membership by famed Arctic explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Tilton and others helped the berry industry grow through a period of discriminatory 1921 State Alien Land Laws and the Great Depression.

After WWII and for 22 years, concrete plants operated here by Ed & Angela Weaver (1948~1960), Pat & Roy Egaas (1961~1962) and Joe Park Sr. & Jr. (1963~1970). Parks manufactured pre-stressed concrete deck panels for Port of Seattle's Terminal 18 at Harbor Island, Edgewater Inn and elsewhere. Inside the cannery, they built Port of Kingston's first public marina.

Cannery Cove's history reaches across our region, state, nation, Canada and Japan. It evokes a response from people as far away as France and India who've read, in any of 42 languages, David Guterson's novel "Snow Falling On Cedars." It was influential in area settlement, development, agriculture, food processing and industrial and maritime history—a rich cultural fabric of many peoples and individuals significant to our history.

The cannery was destroyed by fire in 1997. The concrete remains of the warehouse are as indelible on the cove landscape as the history of the strawberry industry and cove are on the soul of Bainbridge Island.

Cannery Cove Today

The City acquired the site for a waterfront park in a land swap that gave a private developer, in exchange a part of John Nelson Park which had been given to the City by Nelson in his Will and Testament "...for recreation, amusement and education for the people."

Over citizen protests, the historic and cultural shoreline landscape is currently proposed for excavation by the Island's City Council. It is a clean site. City plans propose using $950,000 including restrictive funds exclusively available to establish "fish & wildlife preserves in perpetuity" to remove 5,500 cu. yd. of the historic and cultural landscape and to eliminate public water access and offer only a five-foot-wide gravel trail to a new high tide shore. Parking and opportunities for recreational and educational activities will be lost in this urban park that is only four blocks from downtown and schools. No open public process was used in developing park plans, assessing needs, utilizing community creativity, and exploring cost savings and environmental enhancement options. The City Council has stopped project work while pursuit of permits continue.

A Nov. 7 public meeting is tentatively scheduled to re-study the planning process. Public attendance is encouraged. "Friends of Cannery Cove" have collected 1,000 signatures on petitions for an alternate plan which recognizes the cannery site history and a partial replica shaped structure on the only remaining portion of the warehouse, a 40 x 40' slab on the water's edge. They urge retention of the paved work yard and cove landscape with a ramp and float returned to provide safe, dry, and mudless water access where Shig Moritani and Yuki Katayama used to jig for shiners. They urge facilities to accommodate multiple uses including small boat museum and storage, aqua culture and other water oriented education and recreation.

A film program is available. Information: Friends of Cannery Cove, (206) 842-4164, 780-0786. ***—Gerald Elfendahl***

WITNESSING INTERNMENT

By Jonathan Garfunkel, Global Source Education

Almost a century ago, John Dewey talked about schools being made an authentic form of active community life, rather than "a place set apart in which to learn lessons." This idea about K-12 education is as important today as it was close to a century ago. Educating young people in the 21st century involves helping them bear witness to realities past and present, and fostering responsible citizenship in a world of unprecedented interdependence, challenge, and possibility. Can a lived experience of bearing witness for educators inform and enhance a more lived curriculum for their students? This past school year, a pilot project was launched to test this question by pairing up a team of local elementary teachers with elders from the Japanese American community to retrace their journey to Manzanar concentration camp where they spent the first portion of their internment.

The project, called "Only What We Can Carry: Lessons from the Japanese American Internment Experience" (OWWCC), set out to explore how offering educators responsible for teaching about the Japanese American internment the opportunity to study and travel with former detainees, would impact their ability to more authentically and accurately bring this topic to life for students. The OWWCC project was centered on Bainbridge Island, because of the particular resonance the internment of Japanese Americans has to this Puget Sound community. To our knowledge, this kind of professional learning experience had not been organized for educators, especially to those teaching in communities with histories so closely tied to the internment. The project was conceived, organized and facilitated by Global Source Education, a learning organization based on Bainbridge Island. This pilot project was made possible through a grant from the Washington Civil Liberties Public Education Program, along with the generous contributions of a number of local individuals.

The team for this pilot project included Wilkes Elementary fourth grade teachers, Bill Covert and Warren Read, along with multiage elementary teacher Gail Davis and librarian Mary Fox from Breidablik Elementary, in the North Kitsap School District. These educators have dedicated curriculum related to study of the Japanese American Internment experience. Accompanying and advising us from the Japanese American community were Frank Kitamoto and Lilly Kodama, who were three and seven year old siblings at the start of the internment, and Kazuko Kay Nakao, who was 22 years old when her family was forced to leave Bainbridge. This was the first time Frank Kitamoto and Lilly Kodama had returned to Manzanar since they had been interned. At age 89, it was Kay Nakao's second visit since internment. Mary Woodard, daughter of former Bainbridge *Review* editors, Walt and Milly Woodward, was also part of the team, and her recent book, "In Defense of Our Neighbors," served as a valuable local source for our teachers. Our team met for a series of planning sessions in preparation for this project.

In early May 2009, we made a four-day journey from Bainbridge to Manzanar by plane and car. We spent a couple of days at the Manzanar Historic Site, which is overseen by the National Park Service. Our visit was deeply enhanced by the warm welcome and deluxe hospitality our team received from National Park Service staff, who went out of their way for our Japanese American elders. Led by the Chief of Interpretation, Alisa Lynch, we were guided through the entire camp, including a special visit to the block where Kay, Lilly, Frank and their families lived, along with the rest of the Bainbridge Island residents. While the barracks were no longer standing, we were able to locate their exact position and found remnants and artifacts of the life they once lived in this high desert. We experienced the harsh sand storms, dry heat, and arid climate that Kay recalled many times when describing her memories of Manzanar.

One cannot ignore what Bainbridge residents had to give up in order to be relocated to an unknown, undeveloped concentration camp in the foothills of the high sierra. In the well-designed interpretative center at the Manzanar Historic Site, we read the words of Kay, saw images of Frank and Lilly, and found the names and references of all of the Bainbridge community who were interned at Manzanar. We were introduced to the wealth of educational resources that have been collected and developed by the Manzanar Historic Site, and were also able to visit other local museums and sites related to the internment period.

Reflecting on the Experience

To follow in the footsteps of our Japanese American elders who were reliving their experiences as they walked the grounds of Manzanar, some for the first time in more than 60 years, was a powerful experience of bearing witness. The teachable moments were many. Some of the deepest moments came in listening to the expressions of compassion, humility, sadness and laughter from Kay, Lilly and Frank, as they described their experiences they and their families endured. Here's some of what they said:

"What an educational and memorable journey it was... After the forced uprooting and incarceration of April 1, 1942 to Manzanar, I never dreamed I'd have a positive and good feeling about the place. This trip truly changed all that, realizing strongly the importance of this Interpretative Center as an educational center… These conscientious educators with deep understanding teaching the 'Internment Experience' makes the community and world a better place." – ***Kazuko Kay Nakao***

"To see and visit Manzanar after all these years was quite empowering for me. I was a seven year-old child in 1942 and my memories of the place were a mixture of fun and games; unappetizing food; dust storms; scorpions; rattlesnakes; and a guard with a rifle atop the guard tower. After experiencing a strong windy dust storm as an adult, I better understand the burden my mother and other adults carried to keep the children content and most of all to leave us with no bitterness." – ***Lilly Kodama***

"Our four day trip to Manzanar was one of the most significant journeys I've had in my 70 years. To return for the first time in 64 years to where I spent my early childhood from age three to six was an experience I cherish. Standing at the exact spot where our family lived in Block 3 and to see the surrounding archaeological remnants of our one-mile-square concentration camp helped me to fill in the missing pieces. The bonding of our group of 10 in four short days was what made the trip especially special. To see and feel the empathy and dedication of those who were not incarcerated (Global Source and the teachers) who were with us, gives me hope for the future when we as primary sources are no longer physically here that our stories will live on." – ***Frank Kitamoto***

"As I look back, the journey has allowed me to develop friendships among the community in which I live and come to a better understanding of events in the life of this community. Through this understanding and related stories I have been able to enrich my classroom practices… It is important to remember that this is the story of our community. This is the perfect opportunity to illuminate the diversity of our community… This unique opportunity to retrace and relive the Internment journey with survivors goes right to the heart of developing a social studies curriculum with depth. It is with a background of having relived the history with those who have lived it that we can authentically bring it to life for our students." – ***Bill Covert, Wilkes Elementary***

"My trip to Manzanar with Global Source was a once-in-a-lifetime experience both personally and professionally… As a teacher, I want my students to see the world clearly and truthfully and to understand that every person who watched the Japanese Americans incarcerated allowed a part of themselves to be incarcerated." – ***Gail Davis, Breidablik Elementary***

"The dust, the beauty, the weight of memory in the company of survivors, witnesses, and storytellers. The journey to Manzanar is one of the highlights of my professional career and has infused the work I want to share with students. Each member of the group revealed and burnished a different facet of a complex experience; laughter, sadness, loss, grief, compassion, camaraderie." – ***Mary Fox, Breidablik Elementary***

"Without a doubt… my May trip to Manzanar, to walk among the memories with those who lived it, is one of the most meaningful and stirring experience in which I have ever had the opportunity to take part… I am a firm believer in authentic learning, both as a teacher and as a writer. I believe that the two go hand in hand. We always hear, 'write what you know' in relationship to writing, but the same should and must be true for teaching. 'Teach what you know.' And the more you know—really know—the better you can teach. My experience on this Manzanar pilgrimage showed me that, as much as I thought I knew, I didn't know the half of it. I am richer because of it, and my students are as well." – ***Warren Read, Wilkes Elementary***

Sharing Memories

Something special happened during this project that each member of this team will carry back into our work and lives. Both hearts and minds were deeply touched by this learning experience. We were so grateful to our elders for the openness and honesty with which they shared their memories and stories, so many of which were brought to life by being back at Manzanar, in ways they would not have been otherwise. You cannot bear witness to the internment walking side by side with those who were most directly impacted and not leave more deeply concerned with fairness, justice, diversity, responsibility and rights. The lessons learned about compassion, forgiveness, and the value of community were present in the way Kay, Lilly and Frank approached the injustice and suffering experienced by Japanese Americans. It is by remembering that we carry forward the values that define our humanity.

For educators in this region, Bainbridge Island offers us a unique landscape of learning and living history for bringing the internment experience to life for this generation of students. But the gap of learning and understanding has been in what actually happened to our island neighbors during the years they spent away from home. The OWWCC project aimed to contribute in filling in that experience for educators and students. Going as members of the same community, made the experience even more meaningful, as we were able to put so much of the experience into context of our home and school life. The journey to Manzanar completed the circle of awareness, knowledge and engagement in teaching and learning about the Japanese-American internment experience.

Global Source supported the team of teachers in the process of developing a curriculum shaped by their learning experiences during this project. It is directed at late elementary students, and integrated with the Washington State Social Studies Classroom Based Assessments. A series of essential questions frame the lessons and activities: Why did the U.S. government decide to intern the Japanese Americans during WWII? What was the overall response of the U.S. citizenry to internment? What are the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens? Do individual rights trump the government's rights to make decisions for the "common good?" Are there universal human rights that every human should have?

We will see the significance of such an experience continue to manifest in classrooms and in our community.

There are plans for a community presentation and teacher workshop to share our experiences at Manzanar with the wider community. The curriculum developed will be made available through OSPI and Global Source. The success of the pilot project has inspired interest in carrying forward the OWWCC Project into a second year, and inviting new team of local educators and former detainees to join us for a journey to Manzanar in 2010.

We are also excited about the possibilities of working further with the National Park Service and of connecting our work to the Internment Memorial Site being developed on Bainbridge Island. The educator Maxine Greene wrote, "We who are in education cannot know, cannot truly know how it was, how it is. But we can attend to the some of the voices, some of the stories. And as we do so, our perspectives on the meanings of freedom and the possibility of freedom in this country may particularize and expand" (from The Dialectic of Freedom). By tending to the important stories of the past, we are better able to prepare young people for the future. Making learning a lived experience offers students the opportunity to practice scholarship and citizenship in ways that will serve them, their schools and the larger community.

For more information about the OWWCC Project, visit our website: ***www.GlobalSourceNetwork.org***

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BIJAC

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We urge you all to attend our monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. Call or visit our website for time and location. There are no dues, the only obligation being an interest in Japanese American history and heritage and a willingness to lend your support and interest to our ongoing projects.

BIJAC Completes Military Intelligence Service Film Project

BIJAC has recently completed a documentary film project, "Honor and Sacrifice: Nisei Patriots in the MIS." The project was supported with a grant from the State of Washington's Education Department, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The goal was to create a film documentary and accompanying curriculum on the role of Japanese Americans in the Pacific War. This film tells the little-known story of Master Sergeant Roy Matsumoto, a Nisei linguist with the Military Intelligence Service, who served with Merrill's Marauders in Burma during the war.

Born an American, Roy Matsumoto was raised and educated in Japan. He returned to Los Angeles in the 1930s but was soon sent to a concentration camp in Jerome, Arkansas. Roy volunteered for the Army from the camps for a highly important and hazardous mission in Burma. He is credited by his fellow soldiers for saving his battalion—twice! He emerged from the war a hero, proving invaluable to the Army due to his great courage and unusual Japanese language skills.

The original 17-minute version of "Honor and Sacrifice: Nisei Patriots in the MIS" was funded through the Washington State Civil Liberties Public Education Project. This version will be available free of charge to middle and high schools throughout Washington State along with a classroom curriculum. The film can now be seen on the BIJAC website, and the teacher's guide is downloadable as a pdf file.

In order to tell a more complete, accurate, and effective story, however, a longer film will be needed. We are currently beginning to raise funds for this expanded version, which will adhere to a PBS-length broadcast format. This film will include more background on the MIS, and will do better justice to the remarkable contributions and experiences of Nisei linguists during WWII.

If you would like to make a contribution to this film in honor of the Nisei linguists of the MIS, please send your tax-deductible donation to BIJAC. Donations of any size will be greatly appreciated, and will be of great help in supporting our work on the film. We will make a DVD of the original documentary available to anyone who donates $25 or more to this project.

—Karen Matsumoto

Roy Matsumoto (right) and Akiji Yoshimura
U. S. Army Signal Corps photo.