

Constructing the Amache Experience Through Documents

Time

1 class period

Overview

The oral historian never undertakes an interview without having thoroughly researched his or her subject to reach a deep understanding of the context into which the subject's life fits. This depth of knowledge serves two very important purposes. First, it enables the interviewer to prepare substantive questions designed to elicit reflective and thoughtful responses from the subject of the history. Second, it allows the interviewer to ask on-the-spot follow-up questions that both probe and challenge the interviewee to remember in greater detail. A well-researched interviewer can offer information that clarifies the responses of the interviewee.

Thus, this lesson is designed to introduce students to the historical issues of the Japanese American World War II incarceration, in general, and to Amache, specifically. Students will be asked to read and analyze a variety of historical sources in order to construct a historical context for Amache in preparation for their interviews.

Objectives

- Students will analyze primary and secondary sources dealing with Japanese American incarceration during World War II.
- Students will use documents and other resources to make inferences about life in Amache in preparation for developing questions to use in their oral history interviews.

Essential Question

- How does preparing for, conducting, and processing oral histories contribute to the interviewer's understanding of history, specifically the World War II

experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache, Colorado?

Guiding Question(s)

- How does the historical record—consisting of primary and secondary sources—illuminate history and the World War II experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache?

Colorado Model Content Standards (2008)

- History 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry
- History 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of historical information.
- History 5: Students understand political institutions and theories that have developed and changed over time.
- History 5.3: Students know how political power has been acquired, maintained, used, and/or lost throughout history.

Materials

- *Handout 2-1: Document Analysis Grid*
- Primary source documents (included in this lesson):
 - *Handout 2-2: Graduates of Winter 1943, Amache Senior High School*
 - *Handout 2-3: List of Births and Deaths in Amache, January 1943*
 - *Handout 2-4: Civilian Exclusion Order No. 43*
 - *Handout 2-5: The Bulletin: Temporary publication of Granada Relocation Center, October 17, 1942*
- Additional primary source documents must be downloaded and printed:
 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 (transcript) can be downloaded from the Our Documents Web site at <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=74&page=transcript> (accessed August 4, 2009)
 - "Prowers County Amache School Teachers and Personnel 1942–1945" can be downloaded from

the Colorado State Archives at http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/wwcod/amache_teachers_1942-1945.htm (accessed August 4, 2009)

- Handwritten student letters responding to the last-minute cancellation of the football game between Amache High School and Wiley High School. These letters from students at Amache High School express their disappointment in the cancellation. They can be downloaded from the Archives and Special Collections Department of Auraria Library, Auraria Higher Education Center at <http://archives.auraria.edu/cdp/corr.pdf> (accessed August 4, 2009)

Background

An overview of the Japanese American experience in Colorado is available as part of the introductory materials accompanying this unit.

Opening

- Distribute *Handout 2-1: Document Analysis Grid* and preprepared primary source documents. Review the Document Analysis Grid with students, clarifying the questions at the top if necessary. Point out the space for questions they may have about the documents and encourage them to use it, as well as the back of the grid if necessary. Ask students, either working alone or in collaborative groups, to complete the grid.
- After they have completed the handout, ask students to predict possible uses for the information they encounter in the documents. Explain that they will be using this information to reconstruct life at Amache in order to better understand it and to prepare for their interviews.

Activities

- Ask students to organize the documents by type (government, personal, etc.) and discuss with others the reasons for the labels they have chosen. Make a note of the labels on the grid next to the title of the document(s).

- Ask students to identify the information from each document which seems to be most important in understanding the Amache experience. Students/teachers can organize the makeup of groups and the recording of information in whatever way makes sense or is required of them by school/district practice.
- As students read and analyze the documents, they should record the questions that occur to them as they look at the documents.
- When they are finished, lead them in a discussion:
 - Which documents work together to give students a better understanding of some aspect of Japanese incarceration?
 - What inferences can be made about the makeup of the camp in terms of staff vs. “inmates” and the roles of each group?

Closing

- Ask students to share their findings and thoughts with others in a class reflection of what they have learned about Amache. Categorize those findings on chart paper or on the board for future reference.

Extension

- Suggest students visit the following Colorado Web sites or conduct further research in order to gain additional information about Amache.

<http://www.amache.org/> (accessed August 4, 2009)

This site is produced by the students from Granada High School’s Amache Preservation Society.

<http://archives.auraria.edu/contents.htm> (accessed August 4, 2009)

The Colorado Digitization Program contains digitized collections from libraries and museums throughout the state and in some neighboring states. The Auraria Library holds student letters from Amache.



<http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/wwcod/granada.htm> (accessed August 4, 2009)

Records about Amache from the Colorado State Archives.

<http://www.santafetrailsenicandhistoricbyway.org/amache.html> (accessed August 4, 2009)

This site about the Santa Fe Trail Scenic and Historic Byway contains information related to Amache.

References

Acheson, Alice Brosman. "A Japanese-American's World War II Valley Experience." *The San Luis Valley Historian* 37, no. 2 (2005): 4-13.

Johnson, Melyn. "At Home in Amache: A Japanese-American Relocation Camp in Colorado." *Colorado Heritage* 1 (1989).

Wei, William. "Americans First: Colorado's Japanese-American Community During World War II—An Interview." *Colorado Heritage* (Winter 2005).

———. "The Strangest City in Colorado': The Amache Concentration Camp." *Colorado Heritage* (Winter 2005).

Document Analysis Grid

Handout 2-1

Name/Period _____

Topic: Japanese American Incarceration at Amache, Colorado

Name of document(s)	What is/are the type of document(s)?	What is/are the purpose(s) of the document(s)?	When was/were the document(s) produced?	What information can be gleaned from this/these document(s)?

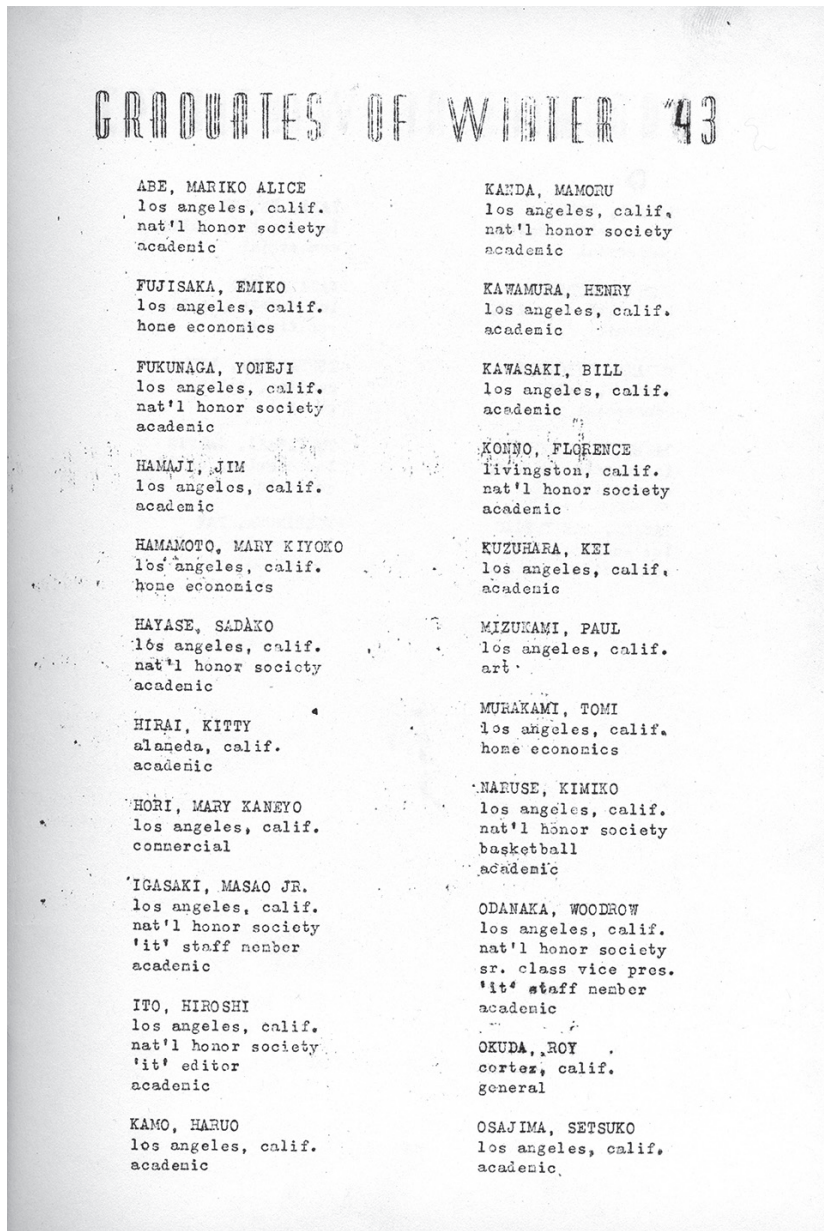
Questions:



Graduates of Winter 1943

Handout 2-2

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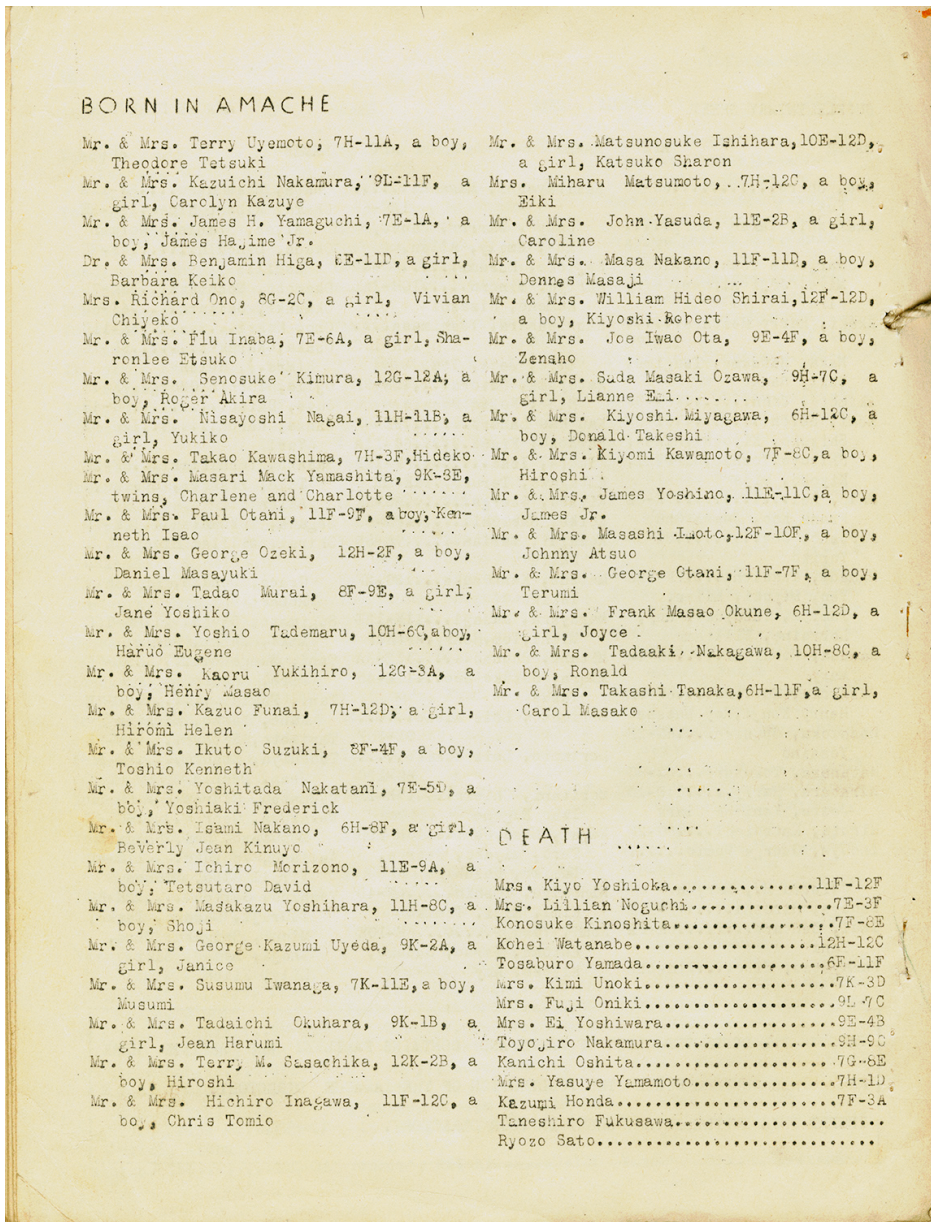


Graduates of Winter 1943, Amache Senior High School

All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.
Gift of the Masaharu Kuraoka Family, Japanese American National Museum (96.74.1)

Births and Deaths in Amache

Handout 2-3



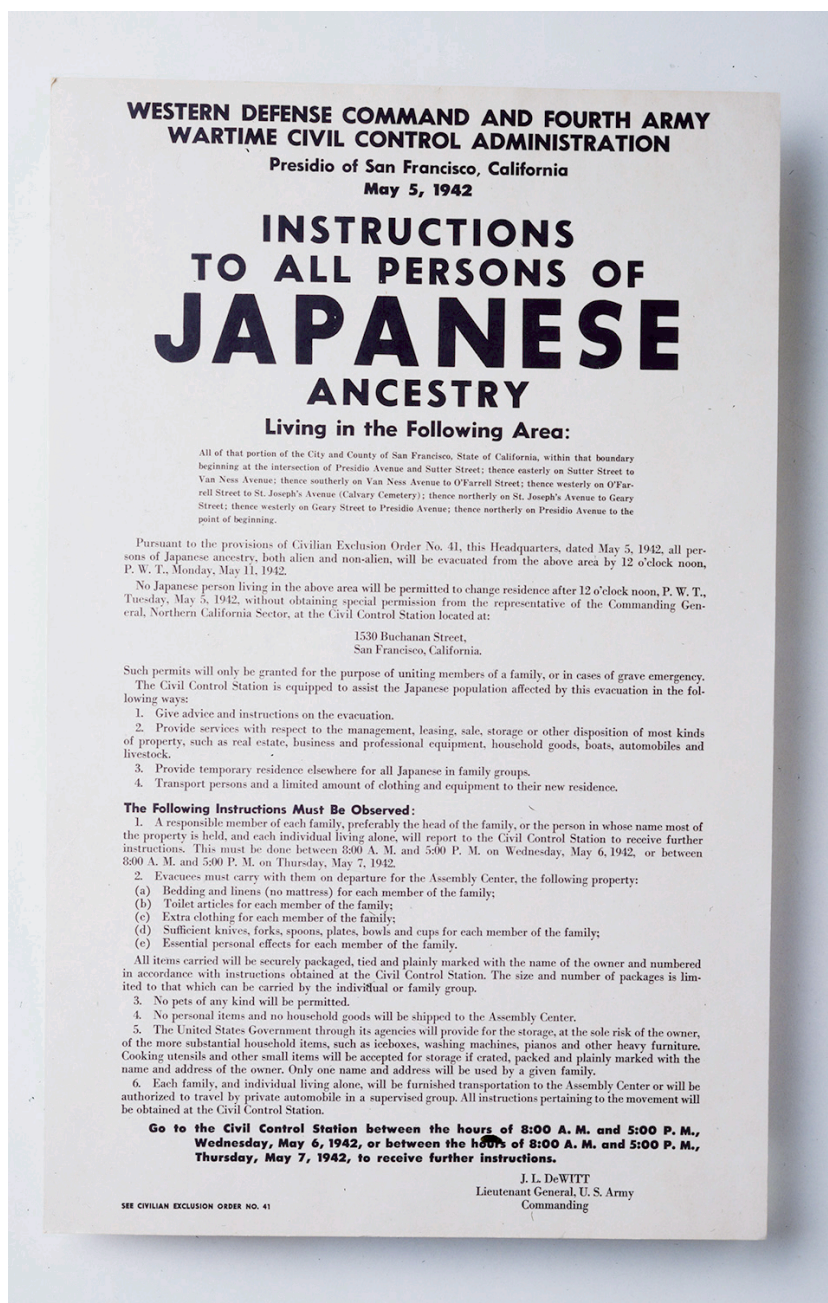
List of Births and Deaths in Amache, January 1943

All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.
 Amache Directory, January 1943
 Gift of Moriso and Asako Nishihara, Japanese American National Museum (91.91.22)

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 43

Handout 2-4

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All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.
Gift of Kiyoshi Toi, Japanese American National Museum (92.94.1)

The Bulletin

Handout 2-5

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TEMPORARY PUBLICATION OF GRANADA RELOCATION CENTER

★ *Bulletin*

Vol. A, No. 2 Granada, Colorado October 17, 1942

NEWSPAPER NAME CONTEST ENDS MIDNIGHT MONDAY

You'd better hurry if you want to enter the "Name Our Newspaper" contest. It ends midnight, Monday, so you only have two more days to enter.

We have over 75 entries right now and think that we'll have double the amount by closing time.

Don't forget that the winner gets a year's subscription to the Reader's Digest, a darn good magazine, plus five copies of every edition of our bulletin and the newspapers which will succeed it.

MAIL ORDER BRANCH OPENS IN BACK OF PRESS OFFICE

A mail order office was opened by the Montgomery Ward Company of Denver this week behind the newspaper office at the 8F recreation hall. R. Darden and Beth Plunkett, company representatives were present at the opening to instruct a staff of Japanese girls.

The office will operate under the Community Enterprise system and a share of the profits will revert to the project, the representatives stated.

Time and expense will be saved by bulk shipment and only cash orders will be accepted. One catalogue has been distributed to every barrack and no more will be issued from the Denver office.

MEDICAL CASE REGULATIONS

Regulations concerning medical treatment for residents of the Project were released this week by Dr. G. A. Duffy of the hospital.

The text of Dr. Duffy's statement:

"1. Only emergency cases are seen after clinic hours, Saturday afternoon and Sundays. These do not include cases of minor nature and cases which may be safely seen the following day.

"2. Requests for home visits should be made before noon, and should be made by a member of immediate family.

"3. A doctor making a special home call should not be asked to see another case in the vicinity. All deserving calls must be reported to the clinic first. It is only fair for all concerned to wait for their turn.

"4. Very careful consideration should be given in each case before requests for home visits are made in order to facilitate this service and to help out the already overburdened doctor on duty."

He also announced the following hours:

Venereal, Mondays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; well-baby, Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; pre-natal, Fridays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Other special clinics will be held as more facilities and working space are available.

The Bulletin: Temporary Publication of Granada Relocation Center, October 17, 1942

All requests to publish or reproduce images in this collection must be submitted to the Hirasaki National Resource Center at the Japanese American National Museum. More information is available at <http://www.janm.org/nrc/>.
Gift of Hana Uno Shepard, Japanese American National Museum (97379.23)