

November 2015

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friend,

This weekend George Takei's new musical, *Allegiance*, <u>opened on Broadway</u>. As you probably know, the play is a dramatic reenactment of Japanese American World War II incarceration, centered at the Heart Mountain concentration camp. In response to concerns raised by members of the Japanese American community about <u>historical inaccuracies</u> in *Allegiance*, I want to take this opportunity to let you know about Densho's involvement with the show.

Since August, Densho has worked closely with *Allegiance*'s production team to develop and advise on the historical content included in educational materials as well as in an FAQ featured on the *Allegiance* website. We've welcomed this opportunity as it falls squarely within our mission to expand awareness about WWII incarceration, while also allowing our material to reach a new national audience.

Densho had no involvement in developing the script nor in the show's production, but we take the critiques about the show's historical inaccuracies seriously. We have encouraged the *Allegiance* team to address these critiques and they responded to this request by promptly adding several questions and responses to their online FAQ. While we regret that *Allegiance* doesn't more accurately represent historical events, we also recognize the challenges inherent in dramatizing real life events and respect George Takei's underlying goal of bringing broader awareness to WWII Japanese American incarceration.

Ultimately, we feel that with its national audience and thousands of social media followers, *Allegiance* is drawing significant attention to a story that was, for far too long, written out of American history altogether. Let's see *Allegiance* as the start of a conversation. Please feel free to contact me at tom.ikeda@densho.org with your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Tom Ikeda

Densho in the News

We were honored to have two recent stories published about the work we do and are hopeful that it will help bring the story of WWII Japanese American incarceration to more people:

NBC NEWS: <u>Digital Project Aims to</u> Preserve Stories of Incarcerated Japanese



<u>Americans</u>

THE SEATTLE TIMES: <u>Oral histories of imprisoned WWII Japanese Americans now online through Densho</u>

Sushi & Sake: Success!

Thank you to all who joined us for the 2015 Sushi & Sake Fest! It was a truly delightful opportunity to see old Densho friends and to make new ones.

Take a look at this <u>photo album</u> for a glimpse into all the fun we had and stay tuned for more ways to support and celebrate Densho's work.



Oral History Spotlight

Helen Harano Christ was an elementary school student at the Topaz concentration camp, Utah, during World War II. In this clip, she remembers the difficult time some of the teachers had with the students in camp.

View the November Oral History Spotlight



On the Blog: Minidoka, On the 70th Anniversary of its Closing

The <u>inaugural edition</u> of the camp newspaper <u>The Minidoka Irrigator</u>, published on September 10, 1942, presented a bleak view of the camp environs:

"The stage on which the *Irrigator* introduces itself is 68,000 acres of untamed desert. Minidoka, as we know it now, is a vast stretch of sagebrush stubble and shifting, swirling sand—a dreary, flat expanse of arid wilderness. Minidoka, in September of 1942, is the sort of place people would normally traverse only to get through to another destination. But we, ten thousand, from the climatically temperate cities and the lush, verdant valleys of coastal Washington and Oregon, are not passing through to a ready-made civilization."

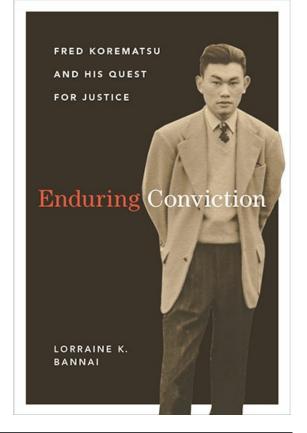


Read more

Fred Korematsu Book Event

If you aren't familiar with Fred Korematsu, he's one of the United States' most important fugitives--and an extremely influential civil rights activist. After the orders were issued for Japanese internment, Korematsu fled from the law and eventually, his case made it up to the Supreme Court.

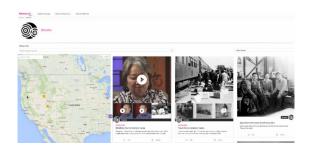
In this event, the judge who overturned Korematsu's conviction (Judge Marilyn Hall Patel) will join Korematsu's daughter, Karen Korematsu, to discuss *Enduring Conviction: Fred Korematsu and His Quest For Justice* with the author Lorraine Bannai herself.



Mapping Incarceration History

Densho has recently joined the digital mapping site, Historypin. We're in the process of using our digital archives to create collections for each of the ten WRA camps, with plans for additional collections in the future.

Visit Densho's Historypin collections



Hello Kitty comes to Seattle

After a successful inaugural run at the Japanese American National Museum, *Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty* is coming to Seattle's EMP Museum.

Gain a new appreciation for the evolution of this transcontinental icon, and learn about the critical role she's played in bridging Japanese and American cultures in the U.S.

Exhibit opens **November 14** at the <u>EMP</u> <u>Museum</u>. Opening party: EMP Museum, **November 13** at 7 p.m. More info and tickets <u>here</u>.

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