

July 2019

## From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

A couple of weeks ago, during a quiet moment with my wife Sara, I wept uncontrollably as I told her about a protest I took part in at Fort Sill.

My wife of 35 years had never seen me show such grief, and I know from the look on her face it startled her and then moved her to know how much I cared about what I just experienced. I had just returned from a Tsuru For Solidarity protest at the Fort Sill, Oklahoma Army Base, a site being prepared to detain 1,400 refugee children separated from family at the southern border. Fort Sill is also a former WWII detention facility that held 700 Japanese immigrants. One of those inmates was [Kanesaburo Oshima](#), who was shot and killed when he mentally snapped and tried to come home by climbing a fence. I interviewed Mr. Oshima's son nine years ago in Kona, Hawaii, and I still remember how that eighty year old man went back to being an 11 year old boy when he told me this story about his father.

My tears started flowing when I talked about the refugee children being separated from loved ones and placed in cruel and inhumane conditions by our government. I knew my heartache came from the pain of my grandparents, parents, and Japanese American community who were held in American concentration camps during WWII.

Protesting at Fort Sill was not easy for me. It was especially difficult when a Military Police Officer started yelling at us to stop protesting and to leave immediately. I had to fight the urge to leave and was comforted by the words of Dr. Satsuki Ina:

**"We've been removed too many times," Satsuki said, "we want to make a stand. We want to say that we are protesting the fact that 1,400 children are going to be brought to this military site. We're here because we do not want to have that happen. And as former children of prison camps, of concentration camps in America, we are saying, 'No more. Never again.'"**

I share this story to remind us all that we can be the allies for these children, and other vulnerable communities, that Japanese Americans did not have during WWII. The knowledge that "Never Again" is happening right now is hard to carry—but together we can make a difference.

In solidarity,  
Tom

# Fort Sill News Roundup



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## HOT TOPICS

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## Japanese-American Internment Survivors Protest Plan to Jail Migrant Kids at WWII Prison Camp

STORY JUNE 24, 2019 Watch Full Show



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### More from this Interview

Part 1: Japanese American Internment Survivors Protest Plan to Jail Migrant Kids at WWII Prison Camp

Part 2: Japanese Americans Were Jailed at Ft. Sill During WWII. Now Trump Wants to Cage Migrant Kids There



### DAILY NEWS DIGEST

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Densho Executive Director Tom Ikeda was among two dozen Japanese American incarceration survivors and descendants who traveled to Oklahoma in June to protest the proposed detention of child asylum-seekers at a former WWII internment camp.

>> [Watch footage of the protest at Fort Sill](#)

### Haunting symbolism: Migrant children are being held where Japanese Americans were detained (KUOW)

Tom Ikeda spoke to KUOW about why he's taking a stand for migrant children and their families. "Today we want to be the allies that the Japanese American community didn't have during World War II. Part of that is to pay attention, to learn about what is going on, and if you're compelled as we were, you have to stand up and speak. You can't be numb. You can't keep being on the sidelines, thinking that someone else is going to do something."

>> [Listen to the full interview](#)

### Japanese Americans Slam Plans To Detain Migrant Kids In Internment Camps (HuffPost)

"Migrant children and their families should not be criminalized for seeking asylum, and they should absolutely not be locked up at Fort Sill or anywhere. It's imperative that we speak out and show up to prevent other tragedies from happening at this site of shame."

>> [Continue reading](#)



### Fort Sill is a Site of Ongoing Trauma

The Trump Administration's plan to use Fort Sill, Oklahoma as a concentration camp for immigrant and refugee-seeking children is just the latest in a long legacy of violent incarceration and family separation at that site. Over 700 Japanese Americans were

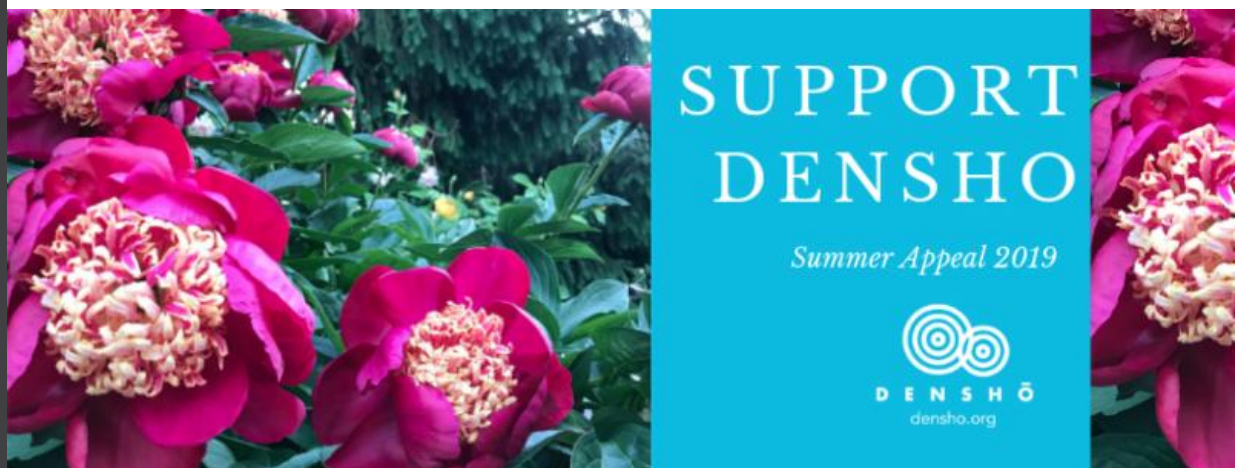
incarcerated there during WWII, and before that it was a POW camp for members of the Apache Chiricahua tribe and a boarding school where Native children were separated from their families, their language, and their culture. Fort Sill is not an anomaly, but it is a reminder of the ongoing violences of settler colonialism, racism, and xenophobia that have defined far too much of our nation's history.

>> [Read more.](#)

## Take Action to End Family Detention!

It's easy to feel helpless against the humanitarian crisis unfolding on our southern border. But together we can stand up and use our voice to support immigrant children and families. Here are a few ways you can help:

- >> [Find resources in Nikkei Resisters' Liberation Beyond Fort Sill Nikkei Action Tool Kit](#)
- >> [Sign the Japanese Americans for Justice petition to #CloseTheCamps](#)
- >> [Join Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network's Rapid Response & Deportation Defense Team](#)
- >> [Share "Know Your Rights" information](#)
- >> [Call/email your representatives to demand they take action](#)



Densho has only two fund drives per year, and we rely on your donations to continue our operations. The demand for Densho's work is growing and exceeds what we can supply with our current resources. We ask that you please give as generously as you can.

If you make a donation between now and August 31, we'll send you a custom Densho sticker!



A HUGE thank you to all who have donated already. Thank you letters and stickers will be on their way to you soon!

[Donate  
Now](#)



### Oral History Spotlight: Harry Kawahara

Harry Kawahara grew up in San Leandro, California and was ten years old when he and his family were imprisoned first in Tanforan Assembly Center and then in the Topaz, Utah concentration camp during WWII. In this clip, he describes the impact his incarceration had on him as a child still in his

formative years.

>> [Watch the clip.](#)



### Watch These Two New Films Online While You Can

Two new documentaries break the mold of traditional cinematic takes on the World War II incarceration story. Densho Content Director Brian Niiya reviews the films—*The Ito Sisters* and *Masters of Modern Design*—and explains why you really ought to make

time to watch them while they're still available for free online viewing.

>> [Read more.](#)

## BE YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY KEEPER

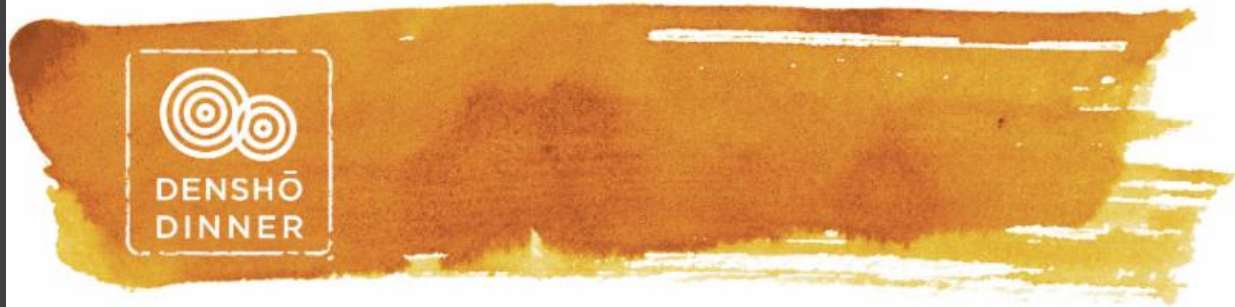
*Workshop with Densho Digital Archivist  
Caitlin Oiye Coon and other Densho Staff  
at the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.*



Look for Densho at next week's [Heart Mountain Pilgrimage](#)! We're offering a free **Family History Keeper** workshop where you'll learn how to care for your treasured archives in your own home, as well as tips for conducting oral history interviews. We still have some spots available—contact Dakota Russell ASAP if you're interested in attending: [dakota@heartmountain.org](mailto:dakota@heartmountain.org) or 307-754-8000, ext. 103.

We'll also be stationed in the registration room so be sure to come by to catch up with Tom Ikeda and other Densho staff members!

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The Densho Dinner is only three months away! We hope that you're planning to join us for this celebration and spotlight of Japanese American community history—on Saturday, November 2, 2019, at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, WA. We promise to make it an evening to remember, but we need our amazing community — that means you! — to make the Densho Dinner a success. Please consider joining or supporting this event, whether you live near or far.

- [Plan a family or friend reunion \(or a date night\) and buy a table or tickets](#)
- [Become a dinner sponsor \(you or your company!\) with all the perks](#)
- [Become a table captain \(you buy a whole table or invite individuals who purchase their own tickets\)](#)
- [Donate items for the Silent Auction \(cool stuff or experiences\)](#)
- [Make a trip out of it and explore 36 hours in historic Japanese American Seattle](#)

Questions? Contact [jen.fukutaki@densho.org](mailto:jen.fukutaki@densho.org) or [danielle.higa@densho.org](mailto:danielle.higa@densho.org).

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### Densho Visual History Program Update

We are excited to report that the Densho Visual History team took to the road this past year to bring back stories of Japanese Americans from different regions of California. These 30 new interviews are part of a larger 60 interview project to help shed new light on the significance of the immediate post-camp experience.

As part of this project, Densho also partnered with other organizations to create three [community dialogues](#) about this under-documented time in Japanese American History. This project was funded, in part, by grants from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, and individual Densho supporters. Thank you for helping us to preserve these important stories and thank you to our narrators for generously sharing them!

>> [Learn more about the Densho Visual History Program](#)

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