

April 2021

## From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear friends,

I'm excited to share that next month [Densho will be hosting the launch of \*Facing the Mountain\*](#), a new book about Japanese American incarceration and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team by NYT bestselling author Daniel James Brown. The book is a gripping story about four Japanese American families during WWII that challenges us to think about what it means to be an American and the many different forms that patriotism can take, from military service to civil disobedience. It is also a story about racism in America that shows exactly what can happen when we let fear of the other override our democratic principles.

When I first read the book, I was struck by Brown's ability to capture the experiences, personalities, and resilience of Japanese Americans as they struggled with the day-to-day challenges of WWII. This people-centered narrative brings to life the principles of Gordon Hirabayashi as he defies the government exclusion orders, the optimism and intelligence of Kats Miho from Maui, the brashness of Rudy Tokiwa who volunteers for the Army from Poston concentration camp, and the vulnerabilities of Fred Shiosaki who fought in the trenches in Europe.

*Facing the Mountain* is a book that humanizes this important chapter in American history and opens hearts. I think that kind of empathy and truth-telling is something we all need at this time of turmoil and division in our country. I hope you'll join us at the launch on May 11th — and I look forward to more discussions after people read the book!

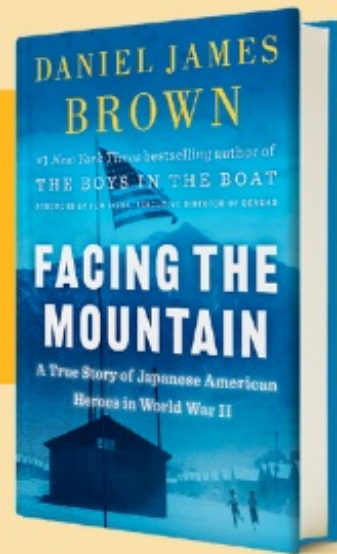
With love and solidarity,

Tom

Tuesday, May 11, 5:00pm PDT

# FACING THE MOUNTAIN

Virtual book launch event with  
Daniel James Brown & Tom Ikeda



## Facing the Mountain: Virtual Book Launch Event

Join Densho on May 11 for the official launch of *Facing the Mountain*, a new book about WWII Japanese American incarceration and the 442nd RCT by Daniel James Brown, NY Times bestselling author of *The Boys in the Boat*. The virtual event will feature a conversation between Brown and Densho Executive Director Tom Ikeda, who has conducted oral histories with many of the men highlighted in the book. [Register for this free event today](#) and invite your friends and family to join!

[Register](#)



## Lauren Iida in conversation with Erin Shigaki

Earlier this year, Densho artist-in-residence Lauren Iida sat down with Erin Shigaki — a longtime Densho friend, designer, and artist — for a conversation about how their art is influenced by their shared lineage as descendants of WWII incarceration. Since they couldn't safely sit in the same room together due to COVID, this interview was conducted via Zoom with creative workarounds engineered by Common AREA Maintenance, a beloved Seattle art space.

Lauren's work is currently featured in their storefront as part of their Second Avenue Sign Project, and is safely viewable from the street. If you're in the Seattle area, we encourage you to stop by and check it out (2125 2nd Ave. in Belltown)!

[Watch  
Video](#)

Wednesday, April 21  
12:00pm PDT

## UNEXPECTED SITES OF WWII INCARCERATION

### Unexpected Sites of WWII Incarceration

Many of us are familiar with the ten major concentration camps where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during WWII, and maybe even some of the dozens of other Department of Justice-run camps that cropped up across the country. But little is known about the everyday buildings that were repurposed to serve as sites of incarceration. Join us as we travel back to a private mansion in Chicago, a tuberculosis sanitarium, upscale hotels in North Carolina, and other sites where Japanese American confinement was hidden in plain sight.

[Register](#)



### Oral History Spotlight: Memories of mother's skill at writing Japanese poetry

Alley Watada grew up on a farm in Fort Lupton, Colorado. He continued farming in Fort Lupton during WWII, employing German prisoners of war as well as Japanese Americans who had been in concentration camps. In this clip, he recalls fond memories of his mother's skill at writing

*tanka* poetry.

[Watch the  
Video](#)

[Blog Spotlight: 10 things you might not know about](#)



## Jerome

Jerome was one of two camps located in southeastern Arkansas — and the first of the ten War Relocation Authority camps to be shut down. At just 634 days from open to close, Jerome had the shortest life of any WRA camp. The entire population, which came mostly from the Fresno area and Los Angeles, was transferred to Rohwer, Gila River, Tule Lake, and other camps by the end of June 1944. But Jerome was unique in other ways, including a severe flu epidemic in December 1943, labor organizing by inmate woodcutting crews, and a camp “delicacy” of rattlesnake grilled kabayaki style.

[Read more](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



[www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org)

[Subscribe to Densho eNewsletter](#)