

Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage 2026



Little Rock, AR
May 20-23

Jerome
Rohwer
Committee



Jerome Rohwer Committee

Welcome to the 2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage

Dear Pilgrims,

Welcome to Little Rock and to the second Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage organized by the Jerome Rohwer Committee—an all-volunteer group composed mainly of survivors and descendants of Jerome and Rohwer.

We are happy you joined us. Whether it is your first pilgrimage or you are returning, it means a great deal to gather again to honor and remember those who endured unimaginable challenges during one of the most poignant chapters of our nation's recent history. Your presence reflects a shared commitment to memory, to understanding, and to caring for one another as we continue the journey together.

This year's theme, Yuzuru—"Pass It On"—feels especially meaningful as we come together once more. Each of us carries stories, names, and histories that have been entrusted to us. In sharing them with one another across generations, we help ensure they continue to live. The stories we share and the new ones we create together inspire us to Always Remember—not just as words, but as something we practice together.

Over the next four days, we invite you to experience the activities in your own way—relating to one another and to the stories that are shared; reflecting on the history and what it asks of us today; and renewing our sense of connection, responsibility, and care for the future.

The Jerome and Rohwer concentration camps were places of profound struggle, resilience, and fortitude for the Japanese and Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II. As we visit the historical sites, we honor those whose lives were upended, and we take time to remember them not only through history, but through our presence, our conversations, and our quiet moments.

We hope the pilgrimage continues to be a meaningful experience for each of you—a chance to connect, to learn, and to find space for reflection and for healing. However you move through the coming days, we are grateful you are here, and we welcome you into our community, whether for the first time or as you return.

Together, we honor those who came before us, and we carry their stories forward.

Thank you for being part of our continuing journey.

With gratitude and a heartfelt welcome,

John N. Nishio

Board Chair and CEO

Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and honor the land on which we stand in Little Rock, Arkansas as the traditional and ancestral land of the Quapaw, Caddo, Osage, and Cherokee Peoples. We honor their enduring connection to the land and express our gratitude for their stewardship over generations. As we learn and grow, may we also remember their histories and cultures, as well as the contributions Native Peoples made and continue to make to the region.

Thursday, when we travel to Rohwer and Jerome, we acknowledge the same Peoples above, and at the site of the Jerome Concentration Camp, we also honor and acknowledge the Tunica Tribe.

The acknowledgment calls on all of us to commit to being better stewards of all land, as well as to respect the original inhabitants of the land.

We thank Andrea Singleton and the American Indian Center of AR for their assistance in crafting the acknowledgment.

--Jerome Rohwer Committee

NOTE: the "a" in Caddo is pronounced like the one in "father", and "cher" of Cherokee is as in burn.

Original b&w ink graphic on front cover courtesy of Patricia Wakida, colorized by John Nishio. Program design, John Nishio Original kokoro art and sumi-e courtesy of Hisashi Otsuka and original enso sumi-e courtesy of Shozo Sato incorporated into JRP and JRC logos by John Nishio.

Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage 2026

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Jerome, AR, WWII



Integrated soldiers, Europe, WWII



Program Overview

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

- 12 pm–5:00 pm; 8–10 pm**—Registration, Razorback
6–8 pm—Welcome Dinner, Doors open 5:30 pm
8–10 pm—Optional activities to encourage interactions amongst Pilgrims
- Obon Odori Practice for Thursday, at McGehee
 - Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei Generational Socializing
- * Taken from Their Families Exhibit will be available for viewing throughout the Pilgrimage
- * Densho is scheduling short oral histories throughout the Pilgrimage

THURSDAY, MAY 21

- Breakfast is served 6:30–9:30 am
Pilgrimage to Jerome, Rohwer, and McGehee
- 8–8:20 am**—Board Buses
8:30 am—Buses Depart for Rohwer
10:30 am—Arrive Rohwer Memorial Cemetery
11–11:20 am—Buddhist Memorial Service
11:30 am—Group Photo
11:50 am—Buses depart for McGehee
12:10 pm—Arrive McGehee
12:10–3:00 pm—Multiple Activities
- Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum, RR Station South Bldg., provides a glimpse into the lives of incarcerated; Meet locals
- 12:20–1:20 pm**—Lunch, prepaid boxed lunches, water provided
1:05–1:50 pm—Program
1:50–2:50 pm—visits to Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum
2:50 pm—Buses depart for Jerome
3:10 pm—Buses arrive Jerome Memorial Monument
3:25–3:45 pm—Buddhist Memorial Service
4:30 pm—Buses depart for Little Rock
6:30 pm—Buses arrive Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock
6:30 pm—Dinner on your own. If you want to eat at Benihana, advanced reservation recommended; explore local restaurants on your own.

Multiple Optional Activities

- 8–10 pm**
- Taiko Drum Clinic, Central AR Taiko Group. Hands on workshop.
 - Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei Generational Socializing, other activities

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

Breakfast is served 6:30–9:30 am

FRIDAY GENERAL SESSION

- 8:30–9:20 am**—Irei Project, New Memorial Designs—Duncan Williams
9:30–10:20 am—Taken from Their Families—Grant Din
10:20–10:40 am—Break
10:40–11:30 am—Camp Stories—Walter Imahara, David Meltzer
11:30 am–1 pm—Lunch on your own
11:30 am–1 pm—Survivor Luncheon
1–1:50 pm—MIS/442—Roselyn Tonai
2–2:50 pm—Densho, Caitlin Coon, Jennifer Noji
2:50–3:10 pm—Break
3:10–4:00 pm—Genealogy—Grant Din & Roselyn Tonai
4:10–5:00 pm—Kansha History Project—Amanda Kim

FRIDAY GENERAL SESSION, CLOSED



FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026 (Continued)

- 5:00 pm** Dinner on your own
Multiple Optional Activities
7:30 pm—The Misadventures of a Nisei Week Queen, film—Sharon Yamato, with the Queen, June Aochi Berk, joining us for Q&A by video conference
8:30–10 pm—Hands on Genealogy with Grant Din; Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei Generational Socializing

SATURDAY, MAY 23

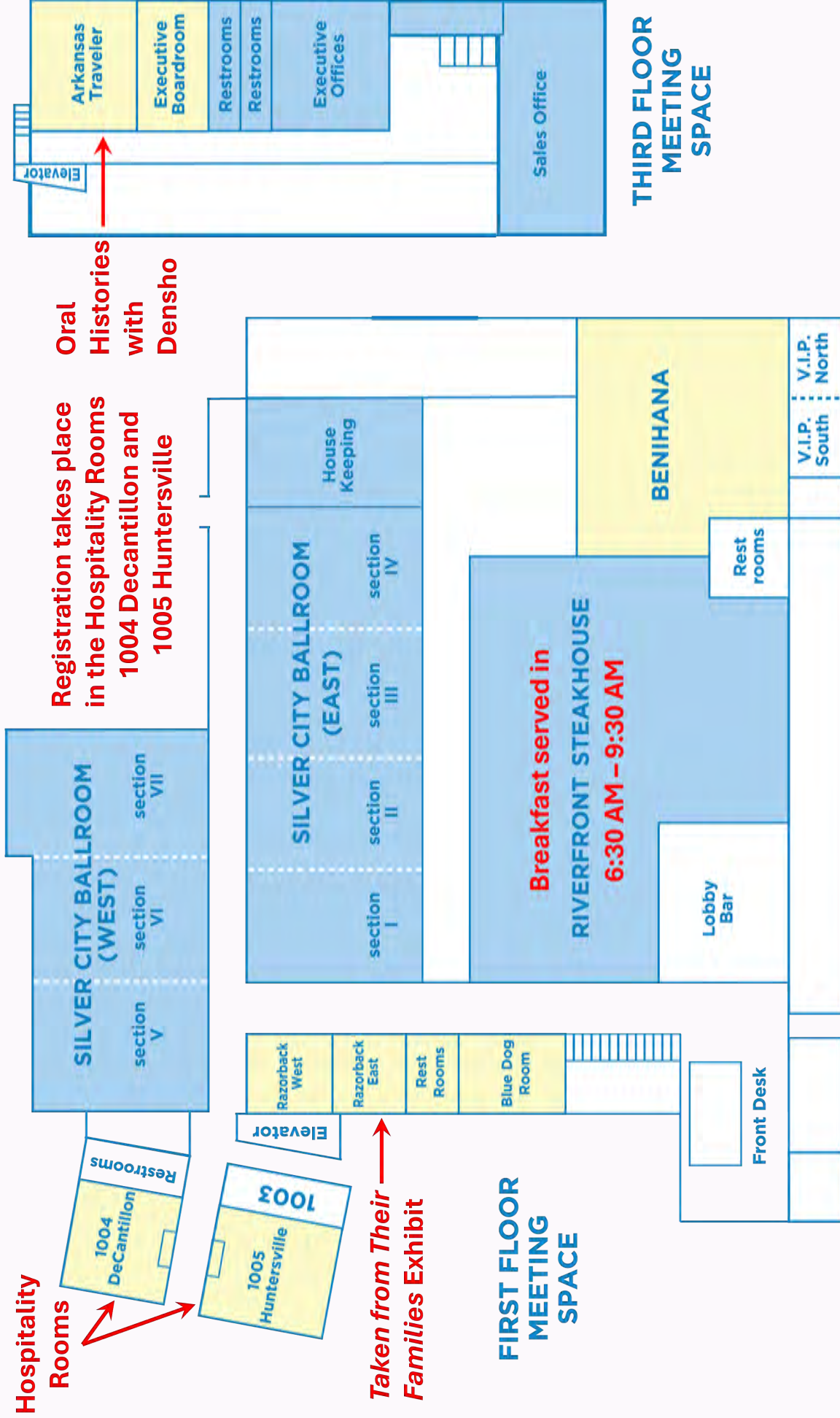
Breakfast is served 6:30–10 am

SATURDAY GENERAL SESSION

- 8:30–9:20 am**—One Fighting Irishman, Film—Sharon Yamato joined by Wayne Collins (son of Wayne Mortimer Collins) and Hiroshi Shimizu for Q&A
9:30–10:20 am—Life Interrupted—Sybil Jordan Hampton
10:20–10:40 am—Break
10:40–11:30 am—National Civil Rights Museum—Mari Carpenter
11:30 am–1 pm—Lunch on your own, option to start generational sessions early or over lunch.
1–1:50 pm—Post War Chicago—Lisa Doi
2:00–2:50 pm—Generational Sessions—One's relationship to incarceration and JA identity looks different depending on when one grew up. Facilitated group sessions.
2:50–3:10 pm—Break
3:10–5 pm—Facilitated Intergenerational Group Discussions. The friendly discussions were highlights of past pilgrimages.

SATURDAY GENERAL SESSION CLOSED

- 6–8 pm** Closing Dinner
7 pm Survivor Acknowledgement & Tribute
7:15–8:30 pm—Grateful Crane—Soji Kashiwagi
8:30–10:00 pm Multiple Optional Activities
- Social Activities, Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei Generational Groups
 - Gatherings to talk, join in activities, and say farewell
 - Densho preservation workshop—Archiving and care of family history



2 Riverfront Place
North Little Rock, AR 72114
501.371.9000

WYNDHAM®
Riverfront Little Rock



Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock

12 PM–5 PM; 8-10 PM	Registration; Razorback
10:00 AM–5:00 PM, 8:00PM–10:00 PM	Taken from Their Families: Japanese American Incarceration on Angel Island During World War II. Available throughout Pilgrimage in Razorback Room. Exhibit reveals the lesser-known history of Angel Island. The exhibit explores the events and policies that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and presents stories from 24 individuals whose lives were forever changed after December 7, 1941. After the U.S. Immigration Station closed in 1940, the U.S. Army used the remaining buildings to hold approximately 600 Japanese immigrants from Hawai'i and 100 from the continental United States. Taken from Their Families will be available for viewing throughout the Pilgrimage.
6:00 PM–8:00 PM, Doors open 5:30 PM	Welcome Dinner and Program—Silver City 1, 2, 3, 4 • Welcome and Indigenous Land Acknowledgment—John Nishio, JRC CEO and Board Chair • Little Rock Civil Rights Acknowledgment—Ross Harano, JRC Board Vice-Chair and CFO • Acknowledgments • Pilgrimage Introduction—John Nishio
8:00-10:00 PM	Optional activities to encourage interactions amongst Pilgrims • Obon Odori Practice for Thursday, at McGehee Silver City 5, 6 • Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei Generational Socializing • Densho is scheduling short oral histories throughout the Pilgrimage. All will be done in Arkansas Traveler

Thursday, May 21, we embark on the Pilgrimage to Rohwer and Jerome.
 At Rohwer, when you look across the field to the north, you will see a tree-lined horizon. Behind them, you may see the smokestack from the hospital boiler room. One other structure exists to the northwest, the water tank. It is completely obscured by tree. You will get clear views of the types of structures at Jerome.



Rohwer Cemetery

When you are facing the headstones at the Rohwer Cemetery, you can imagine the barracks would have been located in the field to your left (north). To the south was an open field.



Your Bus Ride
(Google generated estimates) **14 mi, 17 min**

1 Rohwer
Memorial Cemetery

2 McGehee

3 Jerome
Jerome Relocation Center Memorial

Arrive Rohwer, 10:30
Depart 11:50 AM
Arrive McGehee, 12:10
Depart, 2:50 PM
Arrive Jerome, 3:10
Depart 4:30 PM

15 mi, 16 min

33 min
29.5 miles

45 min
41.8 miles

Wyndham to Rohwer
108 mi, 1 hr 50 min

Load Bus, 8:00
Depart, 8:30 AM
Return, 6:30 PM

2 hr 22 min
138 miles

Return Jerome to Wyndham
124 mi, 2 hr

- 1. Rohwer Memorial Cemetery**
Off AR Highway 1 via Vogel Road, Tillar, AR 71670
GPS: 33.76630° N, 91.28016° W
- 2. Jerome-Rohwer Interpretive Museum**
100 South Railroad Street, McGehee, AR 71654
GPS: 33.62835° N, 91.39518° W
- 3. Jerome Memorial**
Hwy 165 & County Road 210, Dermott, AR 71638
GPS 33.41167° N, 91.46111° W

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Rohwer, McGehee, Jerome

6:30 AM–9:30 AM	Breakfast available for registered hotel guests
8:00 AM–8:20 AM	Board buses
8:30 AM	Buses Depart for Rohwer
10:30 AM	Arrive Rohwer Memorial Cemetery
11:00 AM–11:20 AM	Buddhist Memorial Service • Introduction, John Nishio • Memorial Service, Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams
11:30 AM	Group photo. Please move to group photo after service
11:50 AM	Buses Depart for McGehee
12:10 PM	Arrive McGehee
12:10 PM–3:00 PM	Multiple Activities • Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum, RR Station South Bldg. Explore lives of incarcerated • Meet with locals
12:20 PM–1:20 PM	Lunch, Prepaid boxed lunches, drinks provided
1:05 PM–1:50 PM	Program, Commons in front of Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum • Central Arkansas Taiko. Taiko group based in Little Rock, AR will perform two pieces • Introductory Remarks, Glenn Yabuno • Invocation, Rev. Peter Tanaka • National Anthem, Kelsey McGraw • McGehee Welcome, Mayor Jeff Owyong • Mike Smith, President of the McGehee Industrial Foundation, Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum donations and wall plaque • JRC Donation to Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum • Mini Obon Odori, with Rev. Patti Nakai and Central Arkansas Taiko to lead everyone in celebrating and honoring our ancestors.
1:50 PM–2:50 PM	Continued visits to Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum
2:50 PM	Buses Depart for Jerome
3:10 PM	Buses arrive Jerome Concentration Camp Memorial Monument
3:25 PM–3:45 PM	Buddhist Memorial Service • Introduction, Ross Harano • Memorial Service, Rev. Patti Nakai
4:30 PM	Buses depart for Little Rock
6:30 PM	Buses arrive Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock
6:30 PM	Explore local restaurants on your own. If you want to eat at Benihana (attached to Wyndham), an advanced reservation is recommended.
8:00 PM–10:00 PM	Multiple Optional Activities • Taiko Drum Clinic with Central Arkansas Taiko Group, Helen McMillin, Founder and Leader. Must Register and pay in advance, Silver City 3 • Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei Gosei Socializing, other optional activities may be scheduled.
8:00 PM–9:00 PM	Short Oral Histories conducted by Densho, must sign up to participate, Arkansas Traveler





Rohwer Concentration Camp Layout Plan

December 31, 1942

INTERNMENT



Issei=Alien
Enemy

Legally authorized detention of alien
enemies during declared war
Alien Enemy Act, 1798

→
Geneva Conventions

Require prisoners be treated with dignity,
given adequate food, shelter, and medical
care, and protected from violence, coercion,
and public humiliation.



**DOJ
PRISONS**

Department of
Justice Prison

Issei individually apprehended and placed in DOJ prisons
were “interned” and called “internees”. DOJ prisons were
called “Internment camps”, terminology used during WWI
for German nationals detained under the Alien Enemy Act.



Nisei=
US Citizen

INCARCERATION

→
Mass Detention of Individuals
No due process, Forced
confinement, Public humiliation

Forced Removal

Wrongful Imprisonment

Not “Evacuation” “Relocation”



**WRA
CONCENTRATION
CAMP**

War “Relocation”
Authority
“Evacuation”
“Internment”

Nisei and Sansei (US citizens, considered enemies because of their appearance and property holdings) were forced into prisons with no due process. They were not protected by Geneva Conventions, as were the Issei, who were individually arrested by the FBI and imprisoned in the DOJ prisons. The Alien Enemy Act made it “legal” (though morally questionable). The WRA also forced Issei into prisons, so technically those Issei were “interned” in US concentration camps, but legal scholars make a distinction between Issei individually arrested and sent to DOJ facilities vs. those Issei forced into WRA facilities, en masse. Only non-citizens imprisoned could be “properly” called “internees”, and scholars only refer to those in DOJ facilities as internees.

So, as early as 1942, the DOJ prisons for Issei were called internment camps. The media and prisoners in the WRA facilities started misusing the term. The euphemistic “relocation” and “evacuation” were being intermingled with “internment”, even though it was not fully correct usage.

“My father was forced from Fresno to Jerome. He used to say he was in prison when talking about Jerome. He referred to the prison as a concentration camp.” —John Nishio

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/debate-over-words-to-describe-japanese-american-incarceration-lingers>

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/center-shatters-myth-of-quiet-japanese-americans-imprisoned-in-camps>

Friday, May 22, 2026

Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock

6:30 AM–9:30 AM	Breakfast served for registered hotel guests
8:30 AM–10:00 PM	Taken from Their Families—Razorback Room; see description Wednesday, May 20
8:30 AM–5:00 PM	Main Programming in Silver City West 5, 6, 7
8:30 AM–9:20 AM	The Irei Project: A Legacy of Monument Building for Healing and Interactive Remembrance—Reverend Duncan Ryuko William The Ireito and Ireihi monuments built by incarcerated in the cemeteries at Amache, Manzanar, and Rohwer during the wartime incarceration serve as inspirations for the Irei Project today. Duncan Ryukun Williams will reflect on the idea behind the building of the WWII monuments and how the project’s vision of three types of interactive monuments—Ireicho (the Book of Names), Ireizo (online archive and sonic monument), and Ireihi (sculptural installations at confinement sites)—work to “heal the spirit” through ritual actions. Given that one of the future locations for the sculptural installation will be at Rohwer, the speaker will share some of the initial conceptual idea for its design.
9:30 AM–10:20 AM	Taken From Their Families—Grant Din During WWII, the U.S. Army used the former Angel Island Immigration Station to briefly intern Japanese “enemy aliens,” 600 from Hawai‘i and 100 from the West Coast. Then, after journeys to several Department of Justice camps including Santa Fe, some from Hawai‘i ended up at Jerome, where some of their families joined them. Be sure to also view the accompanying exhibit in the Razorback Room.
10:20 AM–10:40 AM	BREAK
10:40 AM–11:30 AM	The Internees Speak: Remembrances of Jerome and Rohwer—Walter Imahara and David E. Meltzer About seven years ago Walter and David began to collect personal remembrances from dozens of former internees and their family members. They realized the importance of the first-hand accounts and the need to give them wide exposure. Their efforts resulted in the collected stories, <i>Jerome and Rohwer</i> (University of Arkansas Press 2022). They then began to assemble stories from those who had been in all ten of the concentration camps. The new collection “Remembrances of the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942-1945.” was published last year by Gatekeeper Press. They will talk about the books, how the stories were collected, and how they were able to get them published.
11:30 AM–1:00 PM	Lunch on your own. Survivor Luncheon by invite only—Silver City 1, 2
1:00 PM–1:50 PM	From the Camps They Served. The Story of Nisei Soldiers of the 100th Bn, 442nd RCT, and MIS—Rosalyn Tonai An introduction to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service, which were crucial components of the U.S. military during WWII. Many of the soldiers enlisted in the military from Jerome and Rohwer.
2:00 PM–2:50 PM	Densho—Caitlin Coon, Jennifer Noji Densho is dedicated to preserving and sharing stories of Japanese American incarceration during World War II. Through their work, they ensure that the experiences are recorded, remembered, and accessible for future generations. Ms. Coon and Ms. Noji will share some lesser known information about Jerome and Rohwer followed by explorations of some primary sources (oral history clips, photos, letters, etc. from Densho’s archives) to bring you fascinating snippets of the vast history Densho has amassed over 30 years.
2:50 PM–3:10 PM	Break—Coffee, tea, water
3:10 PM–4:00 PM	Genealogy—Grant Din and Rosalyn Tonai Rosalyn and Grant will talk about some of the resources they used while researching immigration, internment, incarceration, and resettlement histories. Learn about a Zoom game they developed during COVID to teach the Yonsei generation about their great-grandfather’s Department of Justice internment and War Relocation Authority incarceration.

Friday, May 22, 2026 (continued)

Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock

4:10 PM–5:00 PM	The Incredible History of Nikkei Farmers—Amanda Kim During World War II, government employees documented thousands of Nikkei farms (owned and rented), crops, and equipment. Kansha History volunteers are transcribing these records and returning them to families through a community process. These records are an important chapter in many Nikkei family histories and show the enormous contributions of Nikkei farmers. Learn about this project and search for your family record. To search for your family record, visit www.tinyurl.com/searchkansha and enter your information. If your ancestor was a foreperson, laborer, sharecropper, or was part of a family of farmers or another partnership, search for the person who was most likely to be on the lease and/or principally responsible for the farm.
5:00 PM–7:30 PM	Dinner on your own
7:30 PM–10:00 PM	Various Optional Activities • Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei Gosei Socializing, other optional activities may be scheduled
7:30 PM–8:30 PM	Misadventures of a Nisei Queen—Sharon Yamato, director and writer, Silver City 5, 6, 7 The short documentary, narrated by actor Amy Hill, follows the life of spirited 92-year-old June Aochi Berk, tracing her journey from prewar Little Tokyo to surviving a horse stall at Santa Anita Park and a barrack at the Rohwer concentration camp, eventually to being crowned Nisei Week Queen. It is a story of survival told with poise, humor, and strength. Sharon Yamato will be joined by June Berk via video conference for Q&A.
8:30 PM–10 PM	Hands on Genealogy with Grant Din and Rosalyn Tonai—Silver City 4 Bring your laptop or other device that has internet connectivity to learn more about your family history. There will be a some devices available. A device isn't necessary, you will still learn about the process.

Saturday, May 23, 2026

Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock

6:30-9:30 AM	Breakfast served for all registered hotel guests
8:30 AM–10:00 PM	Taken from Their Families—Razorback Room; see description Wednesday, May 20
8:30 AM–5:00 PM	Main Programming in Silver City 5, 6, 7
8:30 AM–9:20 AM	One Fighting Irishman—Sharon Yamato A 30-minute documentary, narrated by George Takei, focuses on the story of civil rights attorney Wayne M. Collins, who filed lawsuits on behalf of more than 5,500 detainees who renounced their U.S. citizenship while incarcerated at the embattled Tule Lake Segregation Center. The film explores the issues that led to segregation and the unprecedented mass renunciations, as well as his 23-year struggle to retrieve citizenship for nearly all them. Sharon will be joined by Hiroshi Shimizu, President of the Tule Lake Committee, and Wayne Collins' son Wayne Mortimer Collins for discussion and Q&A.
9:30 AM–10:20 AM	A Girl Whose Life Was Disrupted Honors Those Whose Lives were Interrupted—Sybil Hampton As a girl Sybil Hampton was the first three year African American graduate of Little Rock Central High School in 1962. She endured and persevered, went on to the university to earn a doctorate, and she become the president of Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. She and the foundation were instrumental in establishing the 2004 Life Interrupted Project, and her efforts to educate Arkansas about the experiences of Japanese and Japanese Americans in Arkansas during WWII are felt today. She will provide insight and understanding of the far reaching project that she made possible.
10:20 AM–10:40 AM	Break

Saturday, May 23, 2026 (continued)

Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock

10:40 AM–11:30 AM	National Civil Rights Museum—Marian (Mari) Carpenter The National Civil Rights Museum located at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, serves as a powerful place of reflection, education, and inspiration about the pursuit of freedom and equality. Dedicated to the history of the US American Civil Rights Movement, the museum traces the struggle for civil rights in the United States from the era of slavery through key moments such as Reconstruction, segregation, and the mass protests of the 1950's and 1960's. Through exhibits, photographs, and interactive displays, it highlights important events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and the March on Washington. A central focus is the life and legacy of Dr. King, along with the broader movement for equality and justice. The museum connects past struggles to ongoing efforts for civil rights and social justice today. As a past curator at the museum, Mari offers an inside look into the museum.
11:30 AM–1:00 PM	Lunch, On Your Own
1:00 PM–1:50 PM	What happens to a dream deferred? Japanese American resettlement to Chicago—Lisa Doi Nearly one in five incarcerated Japanese Americans spent some time in Chicago during and after WWII. Lisa Doi will share research on the experience of the resettlement community that formed far inland from the West Coast. Her research looks at residential patterns of Japanese Americans within the broader racial demographics of Chicago and the post-war experiences of Japanese Americans as America rapidly changed in the mid-century. In addition to archival research, Lisa draws from her family members who were among those resettlers. The presentation will interlace familial stories of over 80 years of Japanese American Chicagoans.
2:00 PM–2:50 PM	Generational Group Discussions, 11 different groups throughout will be identified by assigned groups One's relationship to incarceration and Japanese American identity looks dramatically different depending on when one grew up. We will break into small generational group sessions to bring together peers to share experiences and observations specific to the Yonsei, Sansei, and Nisei generations. Understanding both what is common and what is unique in a safe sharing space can help build and educate our community and provide a foundation going into the Inter-generational Session later in the day.
2:50 PM–3:10 PM	Break
3:10 PM–5:00 PM	Intergenerational Group Discussion Our formal programming ends with intergenerational group discussions to foster dialog between generations to better connect our community. Learning about the WWII experiences directly from survivors is priceless. The stories may be eye opening. Our theme this year is Yuzuru, which means "pass it on". We have the duty of sharing our story with the world, which is ever more relevant today. The history must be remembered and "passed" to the next generations. Each group will be unique. The sheer number of Yonsei at the 2026 Pilgrimage provides evidence that our community is in good hands. The friendly group discussions have been enlightening highlights of past pilgrimages. Always Remember
5:30 PM	Closing dinner, doors open—Silver City 2, 3, 4 non-alcoholic beverages available, plus small snacks
6:00 PM	Buffet Dinner Service begins; Survivor tables will go first, then table numbers for service will be announced.

Saturday, May 23, 2026 (continued)

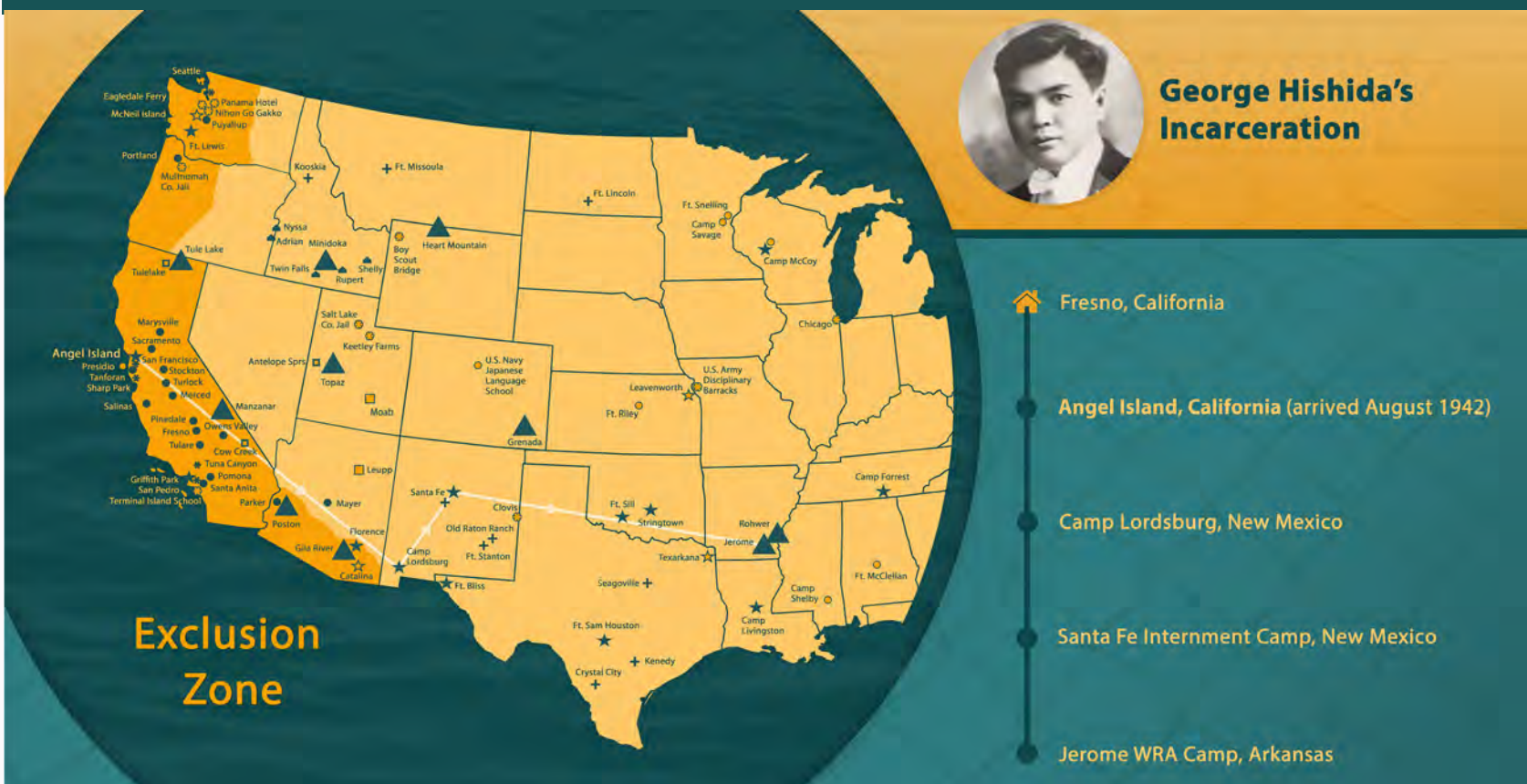
Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock

7:00 PM–7:30 PM	Closing program • Welcome • Survivor Acknowledgment • Acknowledgments, Thank Yous • Closing Address—John Nishio Grateful Crane Ensemble: “Camp Dance Memories”—Narrated by Soji Kashiwagi, Executive Director and playwright of Grateful Crane The Los Angeles-based Grateful Crane Ensemble will present “Camp Dance Memories,” a program filled with favorite songs from the 1940’s and entertaining vignettes from its popular “Camp Dance” show. The show will feature scenes specifically set at Rohwer and Jerome, as told to us by former Japanese American inmates from Stockton, California. The scenes, along with songs such as “Sentimental Journey,” “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy” and “Moonlight Serenade,” will be sure to bring back many memories from the floor of the camp dances as young Nisei danced and romanced at Rohwer and Jerome.
8:30 PM—10:00 PM	Various Optional Activities • Learn about archiving your family artifacts with Caitlyn Coon of Densho. • Survivor, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei Socializing, other optional activities may be scheduled.

Taken from Their Families

Japanese American Incarceration on Angel Island during WWII
Presented by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation

Available throughout the Pilgrimage for viewing in the Razorback Room. Be certain to view it.



Centenarian Mits Yamamoto

Be sure to say “Hello!”

Mitsuo (Mits) Yamamoto

was brought into the world by a midwife at 2:30 AM on February 25, 1926 at a Sacramento, California hospital. At the time of his birth, his parents, Tamehachi and Asako, and older sister, Shizuko (Sally), lived near the Antioch Bridge on Sherman Island, which was over 50 miles from the hospital, and they had no car.

In the late 1920's, the Yamamoto family moved to a vacant farm in Elk Grove. They leased and prepared the land to grow strawberries. The Florin/Elk Grove area was well known for grapes and strawberry farms. It was their dream to make enough money to go back to Japan.

Mits ended up going to school at an early age (that's his story to tell you) and graduated from Pleasant Grove Elementary School (K-8) in 1939. In the fall of 1939, he attended Elk Grove High School (9-12), but he graduated from Denson High School in Arkansas in June 1943. (Another story to ask him!) He also received an honorary diploma in June 2005 from Elk Grove High School. They honored five Japanese Americans who did not receive their diploma because of the war. Mits' wife, kids and grand kids were honored to witness the heart-healing occasion. The five graduates received a long, well-deserved standing ovation!

***“Our lives changed drastically,” said Mits,
“We were not free anymore.”***

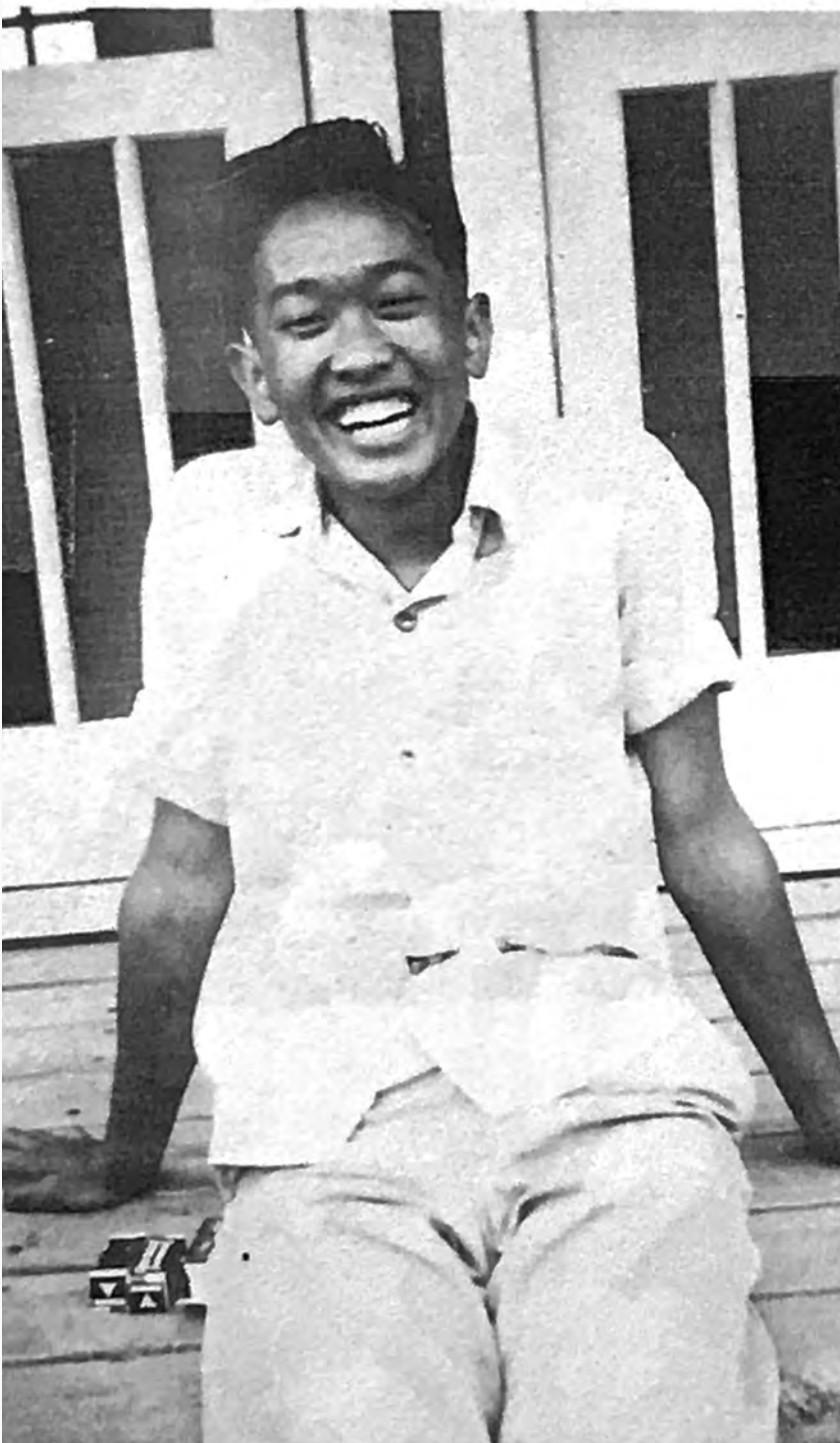


Mits on his 100th birthday working in his favorite room, his wood shop.



Pre-war Tamehachi and Asako Yamamoto family near Sacramento, California

Sunday, December 7, 1941, changed their lives forever. “Our lives changed drastically,” said Mits, “we were not free anymore. Now, although we were born in California, a citizen of the United States, we were considered the enemy, as though we were the ones who dropped the bomb on Hawaii. Getting on the bus to go to school was scary, but nothing really happened. As I look back today, being friends with your neighbor one day, and enemies the next, it was quite confusing. Not being able to travel freely, and “No Japs Welcomed” signs around. It was not a good time to an American of Japanese ancestry, believe me.”



Mits on his porch in Jerome Concentration Camp

In 2019, Mits learned there was going to be a pilgrimage to Jerome/Rohwer camps. He participated in a Manzanar pilgrimage years before, but never one to Jerome. When asked why he wanted to attend the pilgrimage, he said, “it was home.” Since then, Mits has attended several pilgrimages to Jerome, Rohwer, Manzanar, and Tule Lake. He loves sharing his unique stories, especially with the younger generations. “It’s the younger generations that will keep this history alive.”

Mits has many stories (too many to put here) about his travels during camp time. The theme of the 2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage is “Yuzuru”, which in Japanese means “Pass it on”. Mits is at the 2026 pilgrimage, and he is willing to pass it on! Please visit with him. He spent over 15,000 miles traveling by trains across the United States to various “seasonal leave jobs” from camp. Stories of discrimination, unexpected encounters, working side by side German POW’s, even some fun times, and more — you’ll have to ask him. As you know, Mits is 100 years old now. We don’t know how much longer he will be able to attend the pilgrimages, so ask him. — Always Remember.



May 1942, they boarded the train with one suitcase in hand, destination: unknown. They arrived at the Fresno Detention Center, Block A, barrack 17, apartment 4, their new home. October 12, 1942, they again boarded a train. This time, they arrived in Jerome, Arkansas on October 14, 1942. Block 2, barrack 5, apartment C was their new address. When Jerome closed in June 1944, they boarded a train once more to Gila River Relocation Center.

Early 1945, Mits permanently left Gila River. The thought of going back to California was a little scary for him. He took his \$25 and a train ride to Chicago, Illinois. At Chicago, he found a job working at an ice plant.

In the early months of 1945, at the age of 20, rumors were going around the camps would be closing, except Tule Lake. Mits was worried about their future since his father was 70 (70 back then wasn’t like people in their 70’s now. Farm life took its toll). Mits returned from Chicago to Gila River to move his parents back to Elk Grove, where they lived with his mother’s cousin until they could find a place to live.

Post-war back in California, Mits held various jobs like working in a hop field, other odd jobs at berry farms, grape vineyards, and Williamson’s Orchard. It was the Williamson’s Orchard where he met his future wife and brother-in-law who became his best friend.

August 1949, Mits started working at Campbell Soup, where he had various jobs from packing cans to the accountant paying the bills. Mits retired in July 1988 after working for 39 years and 9 months.

In 1950, Mits married Jayne Sako at the Sacramento Buddhist Temple. They were married 70+ years until Jayne passed away, August 2023. Mits and Jayne have four children, Diane Nakao, Gary Yamamoto (passed away June 2012), Ginny Syphax and Glenna Madeiros. Mits still lives in the house he and Jayne purchased in 1956.

In 1990, Mits starting creating wooden trains, which was the beginning of his wood crafting that fills much of his time today. He is in his garage everyday for hours...except when it’s too cold or too hot. He loves to teach people the craft. He often has a few pilgrims come by his house to learn...will you be next?

From Hanford to Chicago



Ross Harano with parents in Jerome Concentration Camp



Ross Harano

While we honor centenarian Mits Yamamoto, who graduated high school while in Jerome (Page 13), one of the co-founders of Jerome Rohwer Committee and its CFO and Board Vice Chair was an infant in Jerome, being born in the temporary Fresno detention prison. Ross Harano shares his story, "From Hanford to Chicago".

In 1942, when the evacuation notices were being posted, my parents lived in Berkeley. My mother was pregnant with me, so they traveled to Hanford where her family lived and her three sisters could help her after I was born. On May 9th the family was forced into the Fresno detention center, where I was born on September 17th.

A month later we were transported by train and entered the Jerome Concentration Camp on October 30th. My mother recalled that the train was very crowded and hot. While in Jerome, my father, who worked as a locksmith, was paid \$16.00 per month.

We left Jerome in August 1943 when my father was able to get a job working on a small farm in Alton, Illinois. In the spring of 1945, we moved to Chicago where my dad was hired by the Bowman Milk Company in the refrigeration maintenance department. At the time very few landlords would rent to Japanese so our family ended up living in a tenement on the west side of Chicago. It was the first time that they ever encountered bedbugs.

By the summer of 1945, my mother's Issei parents and her sisters were able to leave camp and join us in Chicago. They had pooled enough money for a down payment on a 4 bedroom townhouse on the southside of Chicago. At one point we had 14 family members living under one roof after my uncles and my aunt's husbands were discharged from the MIS and the 442nd RCT. For several years I was the only youngster in the household and I loved to be spoiled by my doting aunts.



Alton, Illinois



Ross Harano's 8th Grade Class, Ross is seated bottom right

Ross Harano, a successful businessman and leader in Chicago, is CFO of the Jerome Rohwer Committee and Vice-Chair of the Board

Story written by **Ross Harano**, photos courtesy Ross Harano

Editing/layout by John Nishio



Surprise! Ross Harano not just a businessman--here he is being crowned high school prom king



Three of Ross's uncles served in the MIS. They returned to Chicago, where they lived together.

Jerome Rohwer Committee

The Jerome Rohwer Committee (JRC) was founded in late 2024 and granted 501(c)(3) status in May, 2025. JRC shares the legacy of those illegally imprisoned at Jerome and Rohwer Concentration Camps in Arkansas. We aim to share the experiences of the heinous violation of civil rights suffered by US Americans of Japanese descent and Japanese in the USA during WWII and to preserve and protect the locations of the Concentration Camps for future generations. The Committee embraces protection of civil rights and efforts to prevent and stop loss of civil liberties by other groups.

The Pilgrimage organized by JRC honors those imprisoned, initiates healing and communication amongst survivors and descendants, and provides learning opportunities for Pilgrims. Below is what two survivors said about the 2025 Pilgrimage.

“Coming to this pilgrimage has been the most eye-opening, most emotional journey for myself, and I’m sure for my daughter, and for all of us that are here today. When I return to our retirement community, I’m going to tell everybody what happened, and I’m gonna spread the word.” —Survivor

“It was a most enlightening experience. I have told everyone who will listen about my experiences there. I feel even more strongly that our story must be told and not forgotten.” —Survivor

As the survivor stated above, “...our story must be told and not forgotten”, and this year, as mentioned in the welcome message, JRC adopted a theme of Yuzuru—Pass It On, that it will continue to follow into the future.

A corollary is “Always Remember”.

History survives, when we remember. Documenting stories is a strength of Densho. Please consider doing an oral history with them.

At its peak, Jerome housed 8,497 inmates, while Rohwer held 8,475. 4,200 prisoners at the Santa Anita detention facility were transferred to Rohwer, most of the about 5,000 inmates held at the Fresno Detention Prison were sent to Jerome, and most of the about 4,000 incarcerated in Stockton were transferred to Rohwer. 810 Hawai’i residents were incarcerated at Jerome, the largest inmate population of Hawai’i residents. Jerome closed in June 1944, and Rohwer closed Nov. 30, 1945. The Jerome Concentration Camp was the last to open and the first to close. Little evidence of either camp remains. Rohwer has a cemetery, and Jerome has a lone obelisk constructed in 1992. Both have a smokestack and a water tank.

The camps at Jerome and Rohwer were built in nonproductive, swampy regions of southern AR, that had freezing winters and extreme humidity in the summer. Unlike the western concentration camps, Jerome and Rohwer had to deal with water-borne diseases and swamp-related diseases, including malaria. Jerome was considered to have some of the worst living conditions, which may have contributed to Jerome having the highest per capita of “disloyals” compared to the other camps.

At our 2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage, survivors and descendants will share stories of their experiences. Not all pilgrims are descendants. Non-descendants learn from others and enjoy the connections as much as the survivors and descendants. We welcome non-descendants, and we encourage you to share your perspectives. Through open discussion and story-telling, opportunities for dealing with and healing from the experiences of those imprisoned during WWII in the US, simply because of race, will be offered. Pilgrimages can be life-changing experiences. We hope you participate in all the activities.

On the opposing page is a story about Ross Harano, he is a founding board member of JRC, along with our present CEO and Board Chair John Nishio. After receiving 501(c)(3) status not less than a year ago, our board has expanded to seven. Please feel free to speak with any board member about JRC. If you don’t get an opportunity to meet with us, you may write to us at info@jeromerohwer.org. We seek volunteers, support, and ideas.



Left, 2025 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage, photo by John Nishio, Right, Girls at Jerome, photo from George and Mitzi Naohara Collection (Densho)





MARIAN (MARI) CARPENTER is the John & Neville Bryan Senior Director of Museum Collections for the Historic Sites Division at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She has experience in heritage preservation with emphasis in collections management, exhibitions, curation, community engagement, and interpretative programming. Carpenter has worked in various museums including the Ringling Museum of Art, the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel, and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibitions Service. She holds a B.A. in American history from Indiana University and a M.A in American history with a concentration in African American history from the University of Cincinnati.



CAITLIN COON graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in History. She also holds an MA in History/Archives and Records Management from Western Washington University and an MLIS from San Jose State University. Caitlin has over 15 years of experience as an archivist, with a specific interest in community-based archives and the impact of technology in the archival profession. At Densho she currently manages their archives program in which she oversees a team dedicated to the preservation and access of historical materials and oral histories through digital technologies.



CENTRAL ARKANSAS TAIKO was founded in 2022 and has been performing to Arkansas audiences since 2023. As Arkansas' only taiko group, they try to educate, as well as entertain. The group plays traditional pieces like Matsuri Daiko and more recent works, including original pieces written for them. Central Arkansas Taiko is open and inclusive, welcoming all who want to learn the art and joy of the ancient instrument. Central Arkansas Taiko is honored to be returning to play for the Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage for the third year. Central Arkansas Taiko proudly plays drums made by Toshi Kato of Torrance, California.



WAYNE MERRILL COLLINS, a Bay Area attorney since 1973, was a journalist, ship's clerk, and student at UC Berkeley, before attending law school at Golden Gate University, San Francisco. After the death of his father, Wayne Mortimer Collins ("One Fighting Irishman"), Wayne continued to litigate his father's wartime civil liberties cases. Mr. Collins helped to secure a presidential pardon for Iva Toguri d'Aquino ("Tokyo Rose"). He remains active in interpreting and preserving the history of civil rights violations during WWII.



GRANT DIN has worked with Bay Area nonprofit organizations for over 40 years including the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF). Currently he focuses on historic research and genealogy, as well as speaking to educational institutions, libraries, and genealogical societies throughout the country through the magic of Zoom. He was co-curator of "Taken From Their Families," a permanent exhibit about Japanese "enemy aliens" briefly interned at Angel Island during World War II, lead author of the San Francisco Chinatown Historic Context Statement, and was on the research team for the film *The Six* about the Chinese seamen who survived the Titanic. He serves on the board of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation and Mu Films. Grant has a B.A. from Yale in sociology and an M.A. in public policy analysis from Claremont Graduate University and last year he received a "Spirit of Angel Island" award from AIISF.



LISA DOI (she/her) is an assistant curator and project manager at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. There she is leading a multi-year effort to redevelop the museum's permanent exhibit, which tells the comprehensive history of the Japanese American community from 1860 to today. She recently completed a PhD in American Studies from Indiana University with a dissertation focused on efforts within the Japanese American community to memorialize the wartime incarceration. Previously, she completed an MA at the University of Chicago where she studied the resettlement of Japanese Americans to Chicago. Lisa is also currently a board member and past president of both the Chicago Japanese American Citizens League and Tsuru for Solidarity.



JASON FONG took Intro to Acting in college and got hooked when he got up on stage to perform a piece about the musician, Jim Morrison. Jason bowed, the audience clapped, and an actor was born. Acting credits include *The Camp Dance* (Grateful Crane Ensemble), *Pacific Overtures*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Cabaret*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Passion* (East West Players); *A Jive Bombers Christmas* (JANM). He has also worked with Cold Tofu, HereandNow Theatre Company and East West Players Theater for Youth. Jason enjoys writing and directing for the stage in his spare time.



SYBIL JORDAN HAMPTON is a lifelong educator, foundation leader, and advocate for social justice whose work spans education, philanthropy, and civic leadership. She was President of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas and Contributions Manager for Education and Culture at the GTE Corporate Foundation. Earlier, she spent more than two decades as an academic administrator at Iona College, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Southwestern University, after beginning her career as an elementary school teacher. Dr. Hampton earned a B.A. in English Literature, Earlham College; an MS in Teaching, University of Chicago; and master's and doctoral degrees in Higher Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. Southwestern University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. After retirement, she served as Interim General Manager of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and continues as a consultant and speaker on education, governance, and social and economic justice. A 1962 graduate of Little Rock Central High School and one of its first African American students to complete three years there, she remains active in education and public service, engaging with students nationwide and serving on numerous nonprofit and advisory boards.

Presenter and Performer Bios



ROSS HARANO, managing director of ecoSolv Technologies, LLC brings over 40 years of experience in public policy, management, and finance. His career spans leadership roles in government, international trade, banking, and community organizations, including serving as president of the World Trade Center Chicago and involvement in various public and civic activities, earning him recognition from several institutions and organizations for his contributions.



WALTER M IMAHARA was born in California, where his father was a prominent member of the local Japanese American farming community before World War II. After being incarcerated at the Jerome and Rohwer relocation centers during the war, Imahara became a US Army officer, the owner of a successful nursery and landscape business, and a national champion weightlifter. He is the author of *I Am an American: Japanese American, Asian Cajun*, and the editor of *Jerome and Rohwer: Memories of Japanese American Internment in World War II Arkansas*.



SUSAN HARUYE IOKA has been performing in theater for over 30 years. Her favorite shows include *Pacific Overtures* and *Canton Jazz Club* at East West Players in Los Angeles, *Tea* at Syracuse Stage in Syracuse, New York, and *The Camp Dance* and *Misora Hibari: A Tribute to a Legend* with the Grateful Crane Ensemble.



SOJI KASHIWAGI is the co-founder and Executive Director/Playwright of the Grateful Crane Ensemble. A native of San Francisco, Soji's plays include *The Camp Dance*, *Nihonmachi: The Place to Be*, and the Japanese American dysfunctional family comedy, *Garage Door Opener*. In 2025, he led Grateful Crane's fifth goodwill tour to Tohoku and Noto, Japan where the group performed songs of hope and inspiration for disaster survivors. In 2026, he is looking forward to celebrating the 25th anniversary of Grateful Crane later this fall.



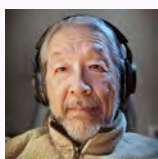
AMANDA KIM is a Yonsei and Korean American writer and founder of KanshaHistory.org which engaged 200 volunteers in the transcription of 7,000 Nikkei farm documents from World War II. Amanda grew up on a farm in Saticoy, California. Her mother's side of the family farmed in Norwalk, Palos Verdes, San Gabriel, Strathmore and Oxnard. They were incarcerated at Poston and Tule Lake. Amanda's writing has appeared in *The Gate of Memory*, *Brick*, *LitHub*, *NYTimes*, *PANK*, *DiscoverNikkei*, and *the Common*. She has been recognized as a Narrative Initiative Changemaker, a Steinbeck Fellow, a deGroot Writer of Courage, and a Mesa Refuge Fellow. She has volunteered for the Poston Pilgrimage and the Crystal City Pilgrimage.



DAVID E MELTZER, originally from New York City is currently an associate professor at Arizona State University in Mesa, Arizona. His primary area of research is physics education, and he has published more than 40 research papers in professional journals. He is a long-time competitor in Masters weightlifting and has collaborated with Walter Imahara on five different book projects.



PATTI NAKAI is a third-generation Japanese American born in Chicago. She graduated from the University of Minnesota and went to Japan to study Buddhism at Otani University in Kyoto. While there she was ordained as a minister in the Otani-ha sect of Jodo Shinshu. She served at the Los Angeles Higashi Honganji temple 1987-1995 and then served at the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, retiring in 2023. She was active with various Japanese American community groups and she has participated in many interfaith events. She writes fiction and non-fiction as a hobby along with her continuing interest in Japanese music and folk dancing and Japanese American history.



JOHN NISHIO has been a farm laborer, janitor, executive secretary, forest fire fighter (helitac), USNPS Ranger/Naturalist, teacher, environmental educator, actor, project manager, professor of plant cell biology, and CEO and owner of clean technology companies. He is a co-founder of the Jerome Rohwer Committee and its present CEO and Board Chair. His paternal family was imprisoned in Jerome, Rohwer, and Tule Lake. His mother fled California to Mankato, MN before she would have been forced into the temporary Fresno detention prison.



JENNIFER NOJI is the Senior Development and Communications Manager at Densho. As a Yonsei and the granddaughter of Gila River, Tule Lake, and Minidoka camp survivors, she has dedicated much of her personal and professional life to learning and teaching about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and other historical injustices. She holds a B.A. in Communications and Comparative Literature from Rutgers University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from UCLA. Jennifer's research and writing explore US legacies of racial and colonial violence, cultural memory, and political responsibility, and her work appears in *Narrative*, *Parallax*, *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, and *The Densho Catalyst*.



HELEN H. OTA is proud to be a performing member of the Grateful Crane Ensemble and thankful for the opportunities to be in shows that share and reflect on the extraordinary stories of the Japanese and Japanese American communities. In addition to Grateful Crane, she performs with Asian Persuasion, a five-member vocal harmony group singing classic songs from the 50's, 60's and 70's. Helen is also known for her comedic performances with Cold Tofu Improv, where she served as its Artistic Director for more than 15 years and is currently an improv instructor. In 2009, she co-founded Yes, And...Productions with her husband, Mike Palma, and produced and performed in the musicals *Songs for a New World* and *Ordinary Days* (LA premiere). Helen is active in the community, serving on the Board of Directors of the Nisei Week Foundation (2025-26 President) Zentoku Foundation, Veterans Memorial Court Alliance and the Little Tokyo Service Center.



HIROSHI SHIMIZU was born in a US American concentration camp, Topaz in Utah, in March of 1943 and released from the last of the camps, Crystal City, TX, in October of 1947, 2 years after the official end of WWII. Of the 6,000 or so children born in the camps, Hiroshi was one of those incarcerated the longest. His family was one of the last released from the last camp. He was 4 years and 7 months old when he got his first taste of freedom. His family returned to San Francisco where his father worked on the editorial staff of the "The New World Sun" before the war and became one of the founders of the "Hokubei Mainichi", the Japanese American newspaper that represented the Buddhist community of Northern California. Hiroshi went through public schools in San Francisco and graduated from San Francisco State University. In 1994 he went to his first Tule Lake Pilgrimage which was life changing. He joined the Tule Lake Committee in 1996. In 2002 Hiroshi, along with Jimi Yamaichi and Hiroshi Kashiwagi, began efforts to preserve the Tule Lake Segregation Center. In 2004, Hiroshi became president of the Tule Lake Committee and chairman of the Tule Lake Pilgrimage Planning Committee.



PETER TANAKA (he/him) is a Yonsei. Many of his family members, including his grandma and grandpa, were held at the Jerome and Rohwer concentration camps during World War II. He received a B.S. in Biology at Lewis University, where he played on the golf team, and went on to do neuroscience research at Wayne State Medical School in Detroit, MI, before shifting away from this field and going to teach English in Nagano, Japan for three years. Since then, he has earned his Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He is currently a chaplain resident at a hospital in Brooklyn.



ROSALYN TONAI Under Executive Director Rosalyn Tonai's leadership for 36 years, the National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc. has produced nationally impactful, award-winning educational initiatives, exhibitions, public programs, and documentaries. With the National Park Service/Golden Gate National Recreation Area and The Presidio Trust, NJAHS developed the Military Intelligence Service Historic Learning Center at the historic site of the first US Army language school that secretly trained mostly Japanese American linguist soldiers one month before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Ms. Tonai serves on the Advisory Board of the National Veterans Network and served on the boards of the East Bay Asian Local Development Center and Japantown Task Force for many years. She is a graduate of the Getty Museum Management Institute, holds an M.A. in nonprofit management from the University of San Francisco, and a BA from the University of California, Berkeley. Her maternal family from Stockton was incarcerated at the Stockton Detention Facility before being sent to Rohwer.



PATRICIA WAKIDA is a Yonsei illustrator, linoleum block carver, and letterpress printer. At the heart of her practice is a deep respect for the power of storytelling, both in its visual and literary forms. She was an apprentice papermaker in Gifu, Japan and an apprentice printer and hand bookbinder in Berkeley, California before opening her own linoleum block and letterpress business, handcarving and cranking out prints on 100 year old equipment. She is equal parts hands-on artist and historian, working in community engagement, printmaking, and publishing, and has worked with cultural institutions such as the Japanese American National Museum, the Oakland Museum of California, Densho, and Yonsei Memory Project. Her mother, uncle, and maternal grandparents were incarcerated at Jerome.



DUNCAN RYUKEN WILLIAMS is currently the Alton Brooks Professor of Religion and Director of the Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture at the University of Southern California. He was ordained a Buddhist priest in the Soto Zen tradition in 1993; served as the Buddhist chaplain at Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D.; and received Dharma transmission in 2024 at Kotakuji Temple in Nagano, Japan. His monographs include *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War*, the 2022 Grawemeyer Religion Award winner and an LA Times bestseller, and *The Other Side of Zen*. He is also editor of seven volumes on race and American belonging or Buddhist studies including *Hapa Japan*, *Issei Buddhism in the Americas*, *American Buddhism*, and *Buddhism and Ecology*. His most recent project is the building of the Irei Names Monument, a memorial to honor those of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated in America's internment and concentration camps during WWII. He serves on the boards of the Yonex Corporation, a Japanese sports equipment company, as well as the Irei Project, Tricycle: The Buddhist Review, the Japanese American National Museum, and the Asian Pacific American Religion Research Initiative.



PING WU has supported The Grateful Crane Ensemble for more than 2 decades, serving as a roadie, a techie, and occasional performer. He dedicates his performance today to Mary Kageyama Nomura and Kurt Kuniyoshi. They are sorely missed. Ping has performed as an actor at East West Players, Playwrights' Arena, the Mark Taper Forum, along with numerous television shows and films.



GLENN YABUNO, a Sansei, was raised in Fresno, CA. Both of his parents were incarcerated during WWII. His mother's family was from French Camp, and they were sent to Gila. His father's family was from Fresno, and they were sent to Jerome. Glenn's father served as one of the optometrists at the Jerome camp. When Jerome closed the family was sent to Gila until the end of the war. Glenn has served as a judge for the San Bernardino Superior Court since 2010. He has also served as a Supervising Judge, Assistant Presiding Judge and Presiding Judge. Prior to his appointment to the bench he worked for over 24 years as a prosecutor with the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office. Glenn and his wife, Chris, have two children, Michael and Allyssa and they enjoy traveling in their spare time. While attending college at CSU Fresno, he worked for the Fresno County Probation Department as a Group Counselor. Glenn attended Santa Clara University School of Law.



SHARON YAMATO is a writer/journalist, TV producer, and independent filmmaker whose latest films include *Misadventures of a Nisei Week Queen* and *One Fighting Irishman*. Her other films include *Out of Infamy: Michi Nishiura Weglyn*, *A Flicker in Eternity*, and *Moving Walls*, for which she wrote an accompanying book, *Moving Walls: The Barracks of America's Concentration Camps*. She has written articles for the Los Angeles Times and is a columnist for the Los Angeles daily newspaper, The Rafu Shimpo.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Jerome Rohwer Committee is indebted to all the individuals and organizations whose contributions made the 2026 Pilgrimage possible.

THANK YOU!

Special Thank Yous to the Family of Saburo (Stone) Ishimaru for the generous donation of books that are your Pilgrimage gifts and to Vicki Ishimaru and Tiffani Hara, who made it happen; and to Mits Yamamoto for the special wooden gifts for the survivors and for all of the pilgrims.

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***Thank you to all the speakers and performers at the
2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage***

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The Jerome Rohwer Committee is grateful for your support of the 2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage and our mission.

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We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please let us know if you find any.
info@jeromerohwer.org
<https://jeromerohwer.org>

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Little Rock Hospitals **UAMS Medical Center Emergency Room**

4401 Shuffield Dr.
Little Rock, AR 72205
(501) 320-7000

Baptist Health Medical Center

North Little Rock Emergency
Department
3333 Springhill Dr.
North Little Rock, AR 72117
(501) 202-3000

John McClellan VA Hospital **Emergency Room**

4300 West 7th
Little Rock, AR 72205
(501) 257-4900

Hospitals en route to McGehee

Jefferson Regional Medical Center

1600 W. 40th Ave.
Pine Bluff, AR 71603
(870) 541-7100

Delta Memorial Hospital

811 US-65 South
Dumas, AR 71639
(870) 382-4303

McGehee Hospital

900 S. 3rd. St.
McGehee, AR 71654
(870) 222-5600

Little Rock Urgent Care

UAMS Neighborhood Clinic

1401 W. Capitol Ave.
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 320-7000

8:00-5:00 Monday-Friday
Closed Saturday and Sunday

Baptist Health Urgent Care

3550 Springhill Dr.
North Little Rock, AR 72117
(501) 214-7177
Monday-Friday 8 am-8 PM
Saturday 8 am-4 PM
Sunday 1 am - 6 PM

Little Rock Pharmacies

If your regular doctor calls in a prescription for you, please be aware there are no 24-hour pharmacies in the metro area and many are closed on weekends. Two with weekend hours are listed below.

Walgreens

9200 N Rodney Parham Rd.
Little Rock, AR 72227
(501) 223-9714

Walgreens

4823 JFK, Jr. Blvd.
North Little Rock 72116
(501) 771-1971



Rear Cover Photo, Hospital Smokestack, Jerome Concentration Camp, Hikaru Iwasaki, June 22, 1944, Courtesy National Archives. Photos above are Jerome Hospital photos courtesy WRA. Pilgrimage T-shirt graphic by Patricia Wakida, T-shirt design by John Nishio. Yuzuru and Enso graphic generated by AI and incorporated into Pilgrimage design by John Nishio

Jerome Rohwer Committee



Jerome Rohwer Committee

<https://jeromerohwer.org>

info@jeromerohwer.org

Relate, Reflect, Renew

JRC honors the legacy of those incarcerated at Jerome and Rohwer.

JRC is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Your support helps sustain educational programs, preserve history,
and ensure that the pilgrimage continues for years to come.

