

ANNUAL REPORT: Amache, Colorado 2018 FIELD SCHOOL

Director: Bonnie J. Clark assisted by April Kamp-Whittaker



IFR students join project staff, former Amache internees and their families, and local community members at the Granada Town Hall during the field school community open house

The Amache Project is an innovative program of applied anthropology which integrates students into the mission of preserving, researching, and interpreting the material record of Amache, Colorado's WWII-era Japanese American confinement camp. At the heart of the project is a biannual collaborative field school which joins together crews of undergraduate and graduate students, high school interns, volunteers, and staff. Volunteers are drawn from the community of former internees and their families, providing valuable insight and a moral center to the research on this site of conscience. The 2018 field school benefitted from the wide range of talents and expertise of the 30 participants, including seven IFR students, two students from the University of Denver, ten volunteers and two high school interns from the Amache descendant community, and a Granada High school intern. Crews were led by five full-time staff, as well as five visiting scholars who engaged the crews in specialized work, including training in oral history, filmmaking, and garden archaeology. The mornings were spent at the site itself, where crews engaged in intensive pedestrian survey, followed by ground-penetrating radar, and test excavations. In the afternoon, crews worked on managing the collections of the Amache museum, including continuing work on the off-site storage facility at the Amache Research Center.

For the 2018 season students worked on two archaeology projects. First was the complete surface survey of three residential areas that will contribute to dissertation research of the Assistant Director, April Kamp-Whittaker on neighborhoods and social integration at Amache. Field school participants found evidence of coordinated neighborhood efforts to improve the physical environment of Amache. An important finding was the remains of

intensive landscaping to combat erosion on a sloped living surface in one of the barracks blocks. In another block we found evidence that residents had significantly expanded a communal building to create a basement area. From previous research we know that these basements were often used to manufacture traditional foods, especially pickles. These findings draw from archaeological survey, as well as community history, and research done by students with the historic photographs curated in the Amache museum. The second archaeological project involved intensive study of the area surrounding a historic building that has recently been relocated to the site. Plans are currently underway to refurbish the structure, which served as a preschool and recreation hall. Beginning with ground-penetrating radar study, and then targeted test excavations, we learned significant new information about how the area around the building was landscaped and utilized. For example, we discovered evidence of a line of tree plantings that ran the length of the south side of the building, as well as a significant number of marbles. Together they point to a shady landscape that would have been a valuable contributor to the quality of life for those who used this building, especially children. This information will contribute to better management and interpretation of the site's valuable cultural landscape as development moves forward.

In the museum, students engaged in many important activities, including processing new donations of objects and historic documents and creating finding aids for the larger new collections. Another project beneficial for both the museum and archaeological work consisted of students identifying specific places at Amache in the collections historic photographs curated at the museum. This information will be useful for visitors who have family connections to specific places on the site, as well as providing insight for the archaeological work throughout the site. After training in oral history, crews conducted and processed interviews with museum donors and/or people who were incarcerated at Amache. They also researched pre-existing oral histories, pulling out quotes and organizing them in themes that could be used in the future.

Toward the end of the field school we held two very successful open house days. The first was geared to people with personal or family ties to Amache. The 45 attendees were given a chance to see ongoing archaeological research and then were led on tours of their family spaces in camp as well as the newly returned Rec Hall. The afternoon featured activities at the museum and the Granada Community Center. The next day was the public open house day, with a similar chance for visitors to see both the site and the museum. Some of our community open house attendees stayed that day, and they were joined by about 80 members of the general public. A highlight of the open house days was the chance for students to share their independent projects, including a powerpoint on our ground-penetrating radar results, a draft exhibit, a translation of a museum document from Japanese into English, and a 3D reconstruction of a porcelain tea bowl based on sherds discovered during site survey.

Throughout the field school, our findings were shared with the public through the project Facebook page. Dissemination begun at the open house and on Facebook will extend beyond the field school through presentations in public and scholarly venues by both of the field directors. They will be included in April Kamp-Whittaker's dissertation, and a book manuscript currently being finalized by Dr. Bonnie Clark. Also, one of the IFR students will be writing her undergraduate senior thesis about recreation in the camp drawing from this year's results.