

## *From the Director: Tom Ikeda*

Densho recently reached the milestone of four hundred interviews, and I'm pleased to say that I've conducted over one hundred in the collection. Interviewing is the best part of my work, as I get to study and explore the personal stories that help me understand the Japanese American community. I'm fascinated by how I continue to learn and document significant Japanese American topics that I knew nothing about a few years ago. For example, a couple of weeks ago I interviewed Cedrick Shimo and learned about the 1800th Battalion, made up primarily of Japanese American, German American, and Italian American soldiers whose loyalties were questioned. Cedrick was in this unit because when asked what side he would fight on if Japan invaded the West Coast, he simply said he would fight on the side that protected the Japanese American families incarcerated in the camps. He told us he honestly didn't know which way the machine guns in the guard towers would fire if the camps were approached.

Cedrick's willingness to confront authority while in the military when it would have been easier to remain quiet reminds me of another interview I did three years ago. I recorded a talk with Lt. Ehren Watada a few days before his court-martial hearing, trying to understand why he refused to serve in Iraq. I found a thoughtful, knowledgeable young man who believed the war was wrong and was willing to take the consequences of that belief. Ehren's trial was halted midway without a verdict and in recent days, he was discharged from the army.

The hundreds of stories we've captured give many perspectives of the Japanese American community. Thank you for your caring and support.



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## *From the Archive*

### **Incarceration and Reservations: Japanese Americans Intersect with Native Americans**

*"This country has had a history of forced evacuation and detention of non-white Americans."*

*-- Bernie Whitebear, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation*

Politically oppressed people of color share storylines in American history. Asian immigrants and their descendants were subjected to legal discrimination designed to diminish them as individuals and economic competitors. African Americans experienced as much and worse. The story of how the first Americans were driven from their lands, traditions, and livelihoods stands as a terrible precursor for the government's treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The connection is more direct than some would suspect. Like the Bureau of Indian Affairs, charged with managing the country's displaced Native American population, the War Relocation Authority managed the displaced Japanese American population by penning them in desolate government-controlled territories. The connection does not end there.

>> [Read more of this article](#)



## Densho News

### Volunteer and Enjoy Sushi & Sake Fest!

Come join Densho and more than 1,000 of our friends at Sushi & Sake Fest at the Seattle Westin on November 5. We are looking for volunteers who can stay to help set up in the afternoon (2:00-6:00pm) and break down displays after the event (8:30-10:30pm). Contact Naoko Magasis ([naoko.magasis@densho.org](mailto:naoko.magasis@densho.org)) for details about special benefits for these "star" volunteers. We also need volunteers during the event to help with guest registration, sponsor room service, and the silent auction. And be sure to invite your friends to attend. Tickets are still being sold at \$75 per person, and sponsor tables for 10 are available at \$2,000. Don't miss the fun of participating in the most delicious and festive event of the season!

- >> Visit the Sushi & Sake Fest webpage
- >> Download the volunteer form
- >> Buy tickets online



### Free New Teacher Resources Available

In partnership with the Minidoka National Historic Site, National Park Service, Densho has produced new social studies lessons featuring selected primary sources from the Densho Digital Archive. Teachers can download the lessons free of charge from the Densho website. A limited number of teacher resource CDs containing the lessons are also available upon request. The three lessons are:

- High School - "Constitutional Issues: Civil Liberties, Individuals, and the Common Good"

*Explores the essential question: How can the United States balance the rights of individuals with the common good?*

- Middle School - "Dig Deep: Media and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II"

*Explores the essential question: How can members of a democracy evaluate their sources, to inform themselves responsibly for participation as citizens?*

- Elementary School - "Immigration Journeys: Changes and Challenges"

*Explores the essential question: What transitions and challenges are experienced by immigrants along their journey of creating a new life in the U.S.?*

- >> Order a free teacher resource CD
- >> Download online curricula



## New to the Archive

### Look Inside the Archive: Interview with Ehren Watada

In 2006, Densho interviewed Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned Army officer to refuse to serve in Iraq on the grounds that the war is illegal. The Honolulu-born soldier was charged with missing his unit's deployment and with conduct unbecoming an officer for denouncing President George W.



Bush and the war. His court-martial ended in mistrial in February 2007. The Army wanted to try him in a second court-martial, but a federal judge ruled that a second trial would constitute double jeopardy. On September 26, 2009, the Army announced it would discharge Watada "under other than honorable conditions." With the resolution of Watada's legal case, we are making the interview public in the Densho Digital Archive. In the featured excerpt from Watada's interview, he describes his sense of betrayal upon learning that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and that the government knew its argument for going to war was false.

>> See the featured sample from the Densho Digital Archive  
>> Register for the free Densho Digital Archive

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## *National News and Events*

### **National Arts & Humanities Month**

October is National Arts and Humanities Month (NAHM), a coast-to-coast collective celebration of culture in America. Held every October and coordinated by Americans for the Arts, it is the largest annual celebration of the arts and humanities in the nation. From arts center open houses to mayoral proclamations to banners and media coverage, communities across the United States join together to recognize the importance of arts and culture in our daily lives. See the NAHM website to learn how you can participate.

>> Visit the National Arts and Humanities Month website

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