The Amache Camp in Documents

"The Uyano family in their barracks room at the Amache Center. The mother’s handiwork in preparing drapes, fashioning furniture out of scrap material, plus the boys ingenuity in preparing double deck bunks have made this bare brick floored barracks room a fairly comfortable duration home. Tosh Uyano, left, is charged with documenting the history of the Amache Center."

Photo by Tom Parker 12/9/42.

The "Americanization" of the Japanese-Americans was a primary concern in the camps for the War Relocation Authority. This photograph shows the Amache Summer Carnival Parade, dated July 10, 1943, which emphasizes American-type freedom.

Photo by Joe McClelland
This “Americanization” of Japanese-Americans was complicated by the existence of two distinct groups. The Japanese Issei leaders were immigrants and were under more suspicion by the U.S. government than the younger generation of Nisei who were either born or had spent most of their lives here. Since the Issei had been here longer they usually had more property and possessions to lose than the Nisei. Many Issei believed that the United States was treating them unfairly which led to some either being neutral or having sympathy for Japan. The Nisei tended to speak better English making their communication with non-Japanese Americans better and their assimilation into the American culture somewhat easier.

The Training of Patience
by Lily Havey

"I remember long lines and waits to board trains to Colorado. The woman with the staff is my mother in contemporary clothing walking toward those same trains. The rides were sporadic stop-and-go legs with the blinds pulled down during the day. This not to prevent us looking out, but to prevent people outside seeing us. In a diary lost in a flood, I noted each stop on the trip. There were many. It was a three day trip from California to Colorado."

Many young men joined the United States military to create a distinctively Japanese-American unit in the Army. Representatives from the War Department recruited these men with the following encouragement:

“If your strength were diffused through the Army of the United States – as has already been done with many other Americans of your blood, relatively little account would be taken of your action. You would be important only as manpower—nothing more. But united, and working together, you would become a symbol of something greater than your individual selves, and the effect would be felt both in the United States and abroad. All other Americans would long remember what you had done for the country, and you would be a living reproach to those who have been prejudiced against you because of your Japanese blood.” (Nisei in Uniform)

"Captain Jerry P. Tobin, infantry recruiting officer, swearing in a group of Nisei youths, loyal Japanese-Americans, who are recruiting for service in the United States Army, after undergoing a stiff examination, determining their ability as interpreters on both spoken and written Japanese. All of these Nisei boys formerly held draft classification cards 4/C. There were 24 signers."

Photo by Tom Parker 12/12/42
The Japanese-Americans fought nobly and effectively, were highly decorated and earned reputations as being some of the most heroic soldiers in the U.S. Service.

"The tempo of relocation has been accelerated with the Army’s acceptance of nisei into the armed force of the United States. One hundred and twenty-four American – Japanese have volunteered for the new combat unit while 19 volunteered at an earlier date for specialized service."

(Amache; 1945, pg. 21)

Photo from Nisei in Uniform
By 1944 the contributions of the Japanese-Americans in the armed services and Governor Carr's leadership may have influenced many Coloradans to soften their attitudes towards the Japanese. Proposed Amendment # 3 which would have prevented aliens ineligible to citizenship (the Issei) from owning property in the state was defeated in the General Election in November, 1944. The following document comes from the Secretary of State's Office:

STATE OF COLORADO

Abstract of Votes Cast

AT THE
PRIMARY ELECTION
Held on the Twelfth Day of September, A. D. 1944

AND AT THE
GENERAL ELECTION
Held on the Seventh Day of November, A. D. 1944

FOR
Presidential Electors, United States Senators, Congressmen, Sta
Legislative and District Officers

AND
Soldier Absentee Vote

AND
Proposed Constitutional Amendments, Initiated
and Referred Bills

ALSO
Directory of the United States, State, Legislative,
District and County Officers

COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL RETURNS
BY
WALTER F. MORRISON
Secretary of State
1944
PRICE, 50 CENTS
NO. 1
Amendment of Section 15 of Article II of the Constitution of the State of Washington, Providing for Jury Service by Women.

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>780</td>
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NO. 2
An Act Appropriating
Out of Any Money in
the State Treasury
Such Sum as may be
Necessary for the
Construction, Alteration
and Improving of
Lighthouses and Light
House Appurtenances.

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<td>1,509</td>
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NO. 3
An Act Amending
Section 21 of Article II of
the Constitution of this
State, Providing for
Alaska Natives, Five
Hundred Thousand
Dollars to Loan the
State, on Demand, to
the Mayor and Council of
Sitka for the Purpose of
Acquiring the Printing
Plant of the Alaska
Commonwealth, to
Adopt and Provide for
the Purposes of this
Act, and for No
Other Purposes.

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NO. 4
An Act Amending
Article XII of the
Constitution of this
State, Repealing the
Tobacco Tax.

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Totals

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