



# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

March 2017 Volume 40, No 5

Since 1913

## GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, March 5, 2017, 2:00–4:00 pm  
Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road

Note Winter location!

The PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION presents

## Remembering 9066: The Japanese and Japanese-American Experience



The entrance to the Manzanar internment camp in 1942. Photograph by Ansel Adams, courtesy the National Park Service.

2017 MARKS THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066, WHICH PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE-AMERICAN CITIZENS AND RESIDENT JAPANESE NON-CITIZENS DURING WORLD WAR II. The March 5 PAHA program will focus on the impact in California of Executive Order 9066 with remarks by Yukio Shimomura—interned at a camp near Delta, Utah—and Dick Mansfield—a long-time volunteer at Manzanar.

Yukio Shimomura will describe how Executive Order 9066 directly affected him and his family and took them on a journey from San Francisco, to an incarceration camp in San Bruno, to one near Delta, Utah, Camp Topaz. He will talk about the living conditions and dynamics of camp life and relate anecdotes that summarize

not only his own experience, but that of more than 110,000 Japanese and Japanese-American internees in the ten “relocation” camps that dotted the American landscape. He spent “two and a half years behind barbed wire” but was able to attend and graduate from high school in Ogden, Utah; he went on to serve in the U.S. military before earning his Bachelor’s Degree in Manufacturing Engineering.

Sharing the podium is Dick Mansfield. Dick remembers his and his brother’s Japanese caregivers, Chizuko and Sumi, who disappeared from their lives early in 1942. While the young boys considered their relocation unfair and sad, Dick did not become actively involved at Manzanar until about 2000, when he and a backpacking buddy drove into Manzanar to “have a look around.” Even though it was a National Historic Site, Manzanar was undeveloped, with minimal signage or staff. Dick recounts, “... the hook was in, I wanted to be a volunteer.” Since then, Dick, his wife Ellie, and son Bob have greeted visitors, led docent tours, done historical research, compiled the index for a 2-volume history of Manzanar, and raised money to support the National Historic Site.

PAHA is fortunate to have Yukio and Dick speak about their involvement and experiences, one with first-hand knowledge of the Japanese and Japanese-American internment during World War II and one as a volunteer.

### PAHA's Public Meetings

GENERAL PROGRAM MEETINGS are held monthly 2:00–4:00 PM October – May

For the first quarter of 2017 meetings will be held at Palo Alto Art Center 1313 Newell Road

### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- April 2, 2017 Tales of Crime in Palo Alto
- May 7, 2017 Celebrating Historic Preservation Month
- June 7, 2017 Annual PAHA Celebration



### SPEAKER PANEL:

Yukio Shimomura and Dick Mansfield

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC \* REFRESHMENTS SERVED



**Ralph Britton,**  
**PAHA President**

**PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

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## A Resident Reflects: What I Remember

ON FEBRUARY 19, 1942, PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT SIGNED EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066: “Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities ... to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion.”

As noted elsewhere in this issue, men, women and children of Japanese descent were evicted from their homes and moved to internment or “relocation” camps, as were Alaskan Natives of the Pribilof Islands. I was seven years old in 1942, and recall a distraught neighbor’s grief over the departure of her long-time housekeeper. My wife, then a young girl living in Los Angeles, remembered a tearful goodbye to the family’s gardener, “Bongee.” Highway 101 was not a freeway then, and we often drove by Tanforan Race Track on the way to and from San Francisco. We saw tarpaper-covered temporary quarters, former horse stalls, which housed local detainees until more permanent camps, such

as Manzanar or Tule Lake in California, could be set up. I had never encountered anyone of Japanese ancestry until I entered Jordan Junior High School in 1946 where there were perhaps a dozen such kids. I have fond memories of June Kumagai and Susan Kadoguchi, who never talked about their internment. Despite what they had experienced, they fit in with the rest of us, and even seemed outwardly unaffected. I later met and worked closely with Yosh Oshima at Pacific Measurements, originally from Isleton in the Sacramento Delta. Although he rarely spoke about internment and the harsh, bleak conditions and cold winters at Tule Lake, he described with some bitterness the forced sale of family possessions. He did not have kind words for buyers who took advantage of their plight and paid a tiny fraction of what the items were worth.

President Roosevelt suspended the order in December 1944. With minimal possessions and facing real estate covenants restricting their access to housing, many returning internees nevertheless successfully rebuilt their lives. The 1944 Supreme Court decisions “Korematsu” and “Hirabayashi,” which legalized expansive interpretations of government powers in wartime, have yet to be overturned. Indeed, these decisions, and Executive Order 9066, have been mentioned as possible legal precedent for action for detaining Muslims and refugees.

### Suggested Reading on Japanese-American internment

**Fiction**—Three novels chronicle the Japanese-American/Japanese experience: Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, “The Legend of Fire Horse Woman;” Julia Otsuka, “When the Emperor Was Divine;” Jeanne and James Houston, “Farewell To Manzanar.”

**Non-Fiction**—Local journalists have covered the local impact of Japanese-American internment:

Matt Bowling, “Japanese-American Internment: Palo Alto’s Deported Patriots,” [paloaltohistory.org/japanese-american-internment.php](http://paloaltohistory.org/japanese-american-internment.php).

“Japanese American Student Relocation in World War II,” *Sandstone and Tile*, Fall 2003, [bit.ly/2kqfvzr](http://bit.ly/2kqfvzr).

Anna Nakai and Gabriela Rossner, “Interned: The Local History We Can’t Let Ourselves Forget,” *Verde*, February 17, 2016, 17:3, [verdemagazine.com/interned-the-local-history-we-cant-let-ourselves-forget](http://verdemagazine.com/interned-the-local-history-we-cant-let-ourselves-forget).

### Local Resources

**The Korematsu Institute**, San Francisco, educates and advocates for civil rights for all communities. Oakland native Fred T. Korematsu challenged the internment orders, going all the way to the Supreme Court in 1944. [korematsuinstitute.org](http://korematsuinstitute.org)

**The Japanese American Museum**, San Jose, chronicles the many facets of the community’s local history, including the wartime period of incarceration. [jamsj.org](http://jamsj.org)

**Densho** documents the oral histories of Japanese-Americans who were interned during World War II. [densho.org](http://densho.org)

**The National Park Service** documents the “largest forced relocation in U.S. history,” via online resources and dedicated historic sites in Manzanar and Tule Lake. [nps.gov/subjects/worldwarii/internment.htm](http://nps.gov/subjects/worldwarii/internment.htm)

**Additional materials on this topic can be found in the supplement to the online edition of the Tall Tree.** [pahistory.org/publications.html](http://pahistory.org/publications.html)

PAHA would like to thank Paly librarian Rachel Kellerman and Paul Kandell and Alicia Mies of the Paly journalism program for their extensive assistance, materials and research on this topic.

*The Palo Alto Historical Association, a non-profit organization, was established in 1948 as successor to an earlier organization founded in 1913. Its main objectives are:*

- Collect, organize, and preserve materials pertaining to the history and heritage of Palo Alto.
- Spread information about Palo Alto’s history by means of programs, displays, and publications.
- Recognize and preserve historic sites and structures.

*The Guy Miller Archives of the Palo Alto Historical Association are stored at Cubberley Community Center, K-7.*

*Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 pm. General meetings are held the first Sunday of each month (October–December, February–May) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 2 pm. Meetings include speakers. The final general meeting of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all meetings.*

# Locals remember 9066: Tule Lake, Hidden Villa, Stanford

PAHA's March 5 program focuses on Executive Order 9066 and its impact on the Japanese and Japanese Americans in California. Gayle Riggs, longtime Palo Alto resident now residing at the Vi, remembers her time at Tule Lake, where her father, Andrew Bradford "Kit" Carson, a young doctor from Oakland, set up the medical facility and hospital. Gayle, her parents, and her older siblings, Warren and Claire, lived in a barracks wing of the Tule Lake hospital from the summer of 1942 into the spring of 1943, when "Kit" joined the US Navy. Gayle recalls the cold and dust, the minimal facilities, and the restrictions. At first, she went to kindergarten at Tule Lake camp but was terrified by the only recess activity, "jumping off the table." She remarked on how the "snow was black" because of coal dust. Her brother, Warren, who attended school in nearby Tulelake, was bullied and beaten



*Young children go to school walking on the dirt road between barracks at Tule Lake Camp. Courtesy National Park Service.*

up, blamed for bringing the camp to the area. Other Bay Area locals, fully adult at the time of the "relocation" and "internment"—euphemisms for concentration camps—were Frank and Josephine Duveneck. At Hidden Villa, they "assisted Japanese-American families during and after their internment in camps." Executive Order 9066 had a devastating effect on Japanese American students at Stanford. As Katherine Buchanan writes in "Barbed Wire Neurosis: Education, Assimilation, and Japanese American Internment" (*Sandstone and Tile*, 2003),

"they saw their individual hopes dashed...." "Liberal, white intellectuals," including the American Friends Service and Stanford president, Ray Lyman Wilbur, worked to open midwestern educational institutions to Nisei students. Some schools, such as Stanford, awarded degrees to Japanese-American students in absentia.

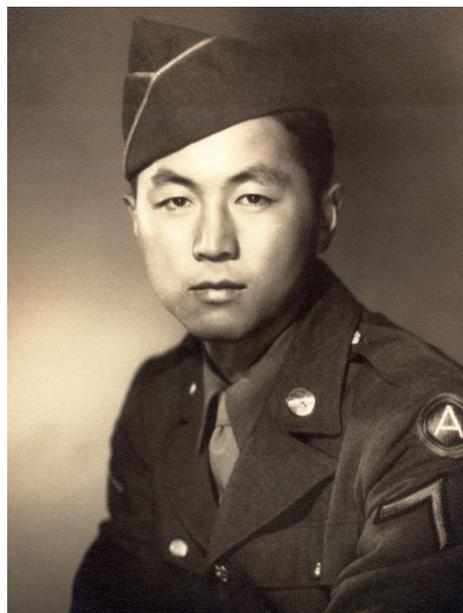
## Fred Yamamoto: A Ramona Street Hero

Fred Yamamoto (1918-1944) attended Jordan and Paly. Like many of the 144 Japanese Americans in Palo Alto, he was sent to the Heart Mountain internment camp in northern Wyoming in 1942. In a March 11, 1943 note to his circle of friends, Fred announced that, based on his "faith and some good friends on the outside," he was "putting all [his] blue chips on the U.S.A." He volunteered for the US Army. After receiving basic training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, he joined the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, whose two units consisted mainly of Americans of Japanese ancestry. Private Yamamoto served in the successful Rome to Arno campaign as well as in the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" in France, where he volunteered on a supply detail to save the 141<sup>st</sup> regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Texas), then surrounded by the enemy in the forest of the Vosges Mountains. In this mission, his 12-man detail was attacked by heavy artillery barrage on October 28, 1944. Along with seven others in his group, Fred Yamamoto perished.

Fred was awarded the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, Silver Star and Combat Infantryman's Badge and is buried at the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno. Back at Heart Mountain, the camp paper eulogized Fred's character, courage, humility and heroism. In notes to family, Fred had described his earlier luck in surviving machine gun fire—thanks to his "being built on the skinny side." While he

sometimes described the hardships of fighting with his brothers, he never mentioned the miseries of war to his mother. He filled his letters to her with cheerful anecdotes. Because of his humility, Fred's family learned of his decorations only after letters from friends at the front. Schoolmate and lifelong friend John Kitasako wrote that for Fred, the war "was a fight for the principles of justice and freedom and he was dead serious about it." His internal morality stemmed back to his childhood, where he would "tower among other kids because he stood for fair play and equality."

Although his ambition to attend college prior to the war was thwarted by the heavy family responsibilities of ailing parents and managing the family grocery in Mountain View, Fred actively pursued education and culture: he attended plays, concerts, lectures, art exhibitions and read voraciously, especially the Bible as an active member of the Page Mill Methodist Church youth group. Volunteering for the military was based on his belief in the future and in equality, that "[i]f you want to be an American and want to be treated like one, you have to show you're American." When asked about the evacuation, he was "sore about it, but that was because it was against American principles, but I know our government recognizes it was wrong and is trying to make up for it." In June 1945, friends of Fred Yamamoto, then scattered around the country, raised and dedicated a book memorial fund in his name at Palo Alto High School.



*Palo Alto High School graduate, Pfc. Fred Yamamoto was interned at Heart Mountain, where he decided to volunteer for the US Army, and later fought valiantly in the Vosges Mountains. Courtesy United States Army.*

## In Memoriam: Kevin Starr (1940-2017)



Kevin Starr, noted historian and librarian of California. Courtesy University of Southern California.

Kevin Starr was the preeminent historian of our state and had a love of California that was reflected in his many writings and lectures. His eight volume "Dream" series chronicled California's history from the first entry ("Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915") to the last ("Coast of Dreams: California on the Edge, 1990-2004.") In between, he wrote a one-volume history of the state, "California," and "Golden Gate: the Life and Times of America's Greatest Bridge." Renowned as an author, historian, librarian, dear friend, mesmerizing lecturer, and raconteur, Kevin was a larger-than-life 4th generation San Franciscan. Governor Jerry Brown said, in his works, Kevin "...captured the spirit of our state..." Kevin himself commented of his voluminous research on his beloved state, "...a kind of enchantment overtook me.... I'd made an absolutely powerful connection between California and my interior landscape."

### Online Archive Photos - We Need Your Help

PAHA has over 10,500 digitized photos online, but there are many more images requiring digitization and description before being placed on our website. We are seeking volunteers to help with this fascinating project. If you have time to help, please contact Steve Staiger at [steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org).

## History Jaunts and Events

Plan a visit to **Manzanar War Relocation Center**, the best preserved of the ten camps where Japanese-American citizens and resident Japanese aliens were interned during World War II. Now administered by the National Park Service and a National Historic Site, Manzanar is situated at the foot of the Sierra Nevada in eastern California's Owens Valley. Information on visiting can be found at [www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm) or by calling (760) 878-2194 x3310.

"**The Wave: Palo Alto's 1967 Experiment in Extremism**" will be the feature of the Palo Alto History Museum event on Wednesday, March 22, 2017, 7:00 p.m., at the Cubberley Theatre, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. In 1967, Cubberley High School teacher Ron Jones sought to teach his students how the German people could accept the actions of the Nazi regime during WWII by creating "The Third Wave," a series of exercises modeled on certain characteristics of the Nazi movement. Ron Jones wrote a book about this experience, and later Norman Lear produced a made-for-TV film about it. Years later, Mark Hancock and Philip Neel, former students in that class, produced the film, "The Lesson Plan". On March 22, Mark, Philip and others will present the film for the first time in Palo Alto, with a conversation following the showing. Free and open to the public.



.....>.....>.....> **Ride Share to Meetings:**  
We are aware that some of our members have difficulty getting to meetings and might be able to attend more frequently if there was a convenient service to provide rides. If this is something of interest to you, either as a driver or passenger, please let us know by contacting Ralph Britton at [ralphbritton@comcast.net](mailto:ralphbritton@comcast.net).



### Welcome New Members!

Ester Bugna, Life Member  
Joseph Teresa, Jr.

## Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for March 2017 will feature

"Mysteries and Discoveries along Old Page Mill Road"

The schedule is

Wednesdays at 8 pm,  
Thursdays at 10 am, and  
Saturdays at 1 pm  
on Channel 30.

DVDs of previous programs may be borrowed from the PAHA's Guy Miller Archives, which are located at Cubberley, Room K-7.

Hours: Tuesdays, 4-8 pm,  
Thursdays, 1-5 pm

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



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