

The Boundary of the Oppressor: Challenging the Use of the Historic Footprint as an Appropriate Property Boundary for the Minidoka TCP

An Addendum Report to the TCP Study of the Minidoka Concentration Camp in Jerome, Lincoln, Blaine, and Minidoka Counties, Idaho



“The historic footprint does not represent the extent of how Minidoka imprisoned and tethered the incarcerated beyond the physical boundaries of the camp. Effectively, Minidoka’s reach exceeded its grasp” – Lawrence Matsuda, born in the Minidoka Concentration Camp during World War II

Mario Battaglia, M.A. and Rebecca Hawkins, M.A.

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Algonquin
Consultants, Inc.



Friends of
MINIDOKA

Prepared For



Friends of Minidoka
Board of Directors
PO Box 1085, Twin Falls, ID 83303
<http://www.minidoka.org/>

Prepared by



Mario Battaglia – Author and Principal Investigator
Rebecca A. Hawkins – Project Coordinator and Editor/Contributor

Algonquin Consultants, Inc.
57251 East 120 Road
Miami, OK 74354

Cover image: Guard tower and view of the surrounding landscape of Minidoka showcasing the expansive and unobstructed viewshed at sunrise.

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“There is an aura that this is a sacred place, a place to confront the trauma experienced by grandfather and great-grandmother and all the other incarcerated, and to eventually get some sense of healing and peace” – C. Kanaoka (Egashira) Kashima, personal communication, 2023

1.0 Introduction

In 2022, Algonquin Consultants, Inc. (Algonquin) completed an ethnographic study of the Minidoka Concentration Camp (Minidoka), including its surrounding areas and viewsheds. The report was prepared at the request of the Friends of Minidoka (Friends) to document the cultural significance of the property to the Japanese American community in language relevant to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Algonquin concluded that Minidoka is eligible for the NRHP as a traditional cultural place/property (TCP)¹ with a boundary that incorporated key viewshed elements as an important character defining feature.

Algonquin completed several interrelated Study activities to document Minidoka concentration camp (see Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5) as well as the surrounding areas as a TCP significant to the Japanese American descendant community. Algonquin reviewed historic records, testimonies, and accounts, worked with Friends who reached out and consulted with Minidoka descendants to document the ongoing significance of the place, developed maps of the proposed TCP, and assessed the property’s eligibility for listing in the NRHP. Listing in the NRHP can be complicated, time consuming, and expensive, and is not necessary to trigger the review of project effects because Section 106 of the NHPA applies equally to listed and non-listed eligible places. Eligibility is determined following Section 800.4(c)(2) of the ACHP’s Section 106 regulations as well as 36 CFR 60.4, and is a responsibility of the lead federal agency, in this case, the BLM, often in coordination with the SHPO.

The Friends of Minidoka and Japanese American descendant community assert that the Minidoka TCP includes the Minidoka Relocation Center’s historic footprint, the Minidoka National Historic Site, and importantly, the surrounding viewsheds that dominated the incarcerated’s visual environment. Algonquin’s initial 2022 reporting effort explored whether the area in question met

¹ A portion of the Minidoka camp site is included in the NRHP as a “National Historic Site” (See Minidoka National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service) ([nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov/))). But the NRHP status of the remainder, and of the viewsheds “outside the fence” remains undefined.

the definition of a TCP as outlined in NRHP Bulletin 38², and subsequently, whether the property met the National Park Service's (NPS) criteria for inclusion in the NRHP. The report recommended that the TCP is eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion A, with the likelihood that it may also be eligible under criteria B and D. The report found that integrity remained intact, stressing that Minidoka remains a sacred space and place of healing from the intergenerational traumas of the past. For this reason, the property is integral in maintaining a sense of identity among the Japanese American descendant community.

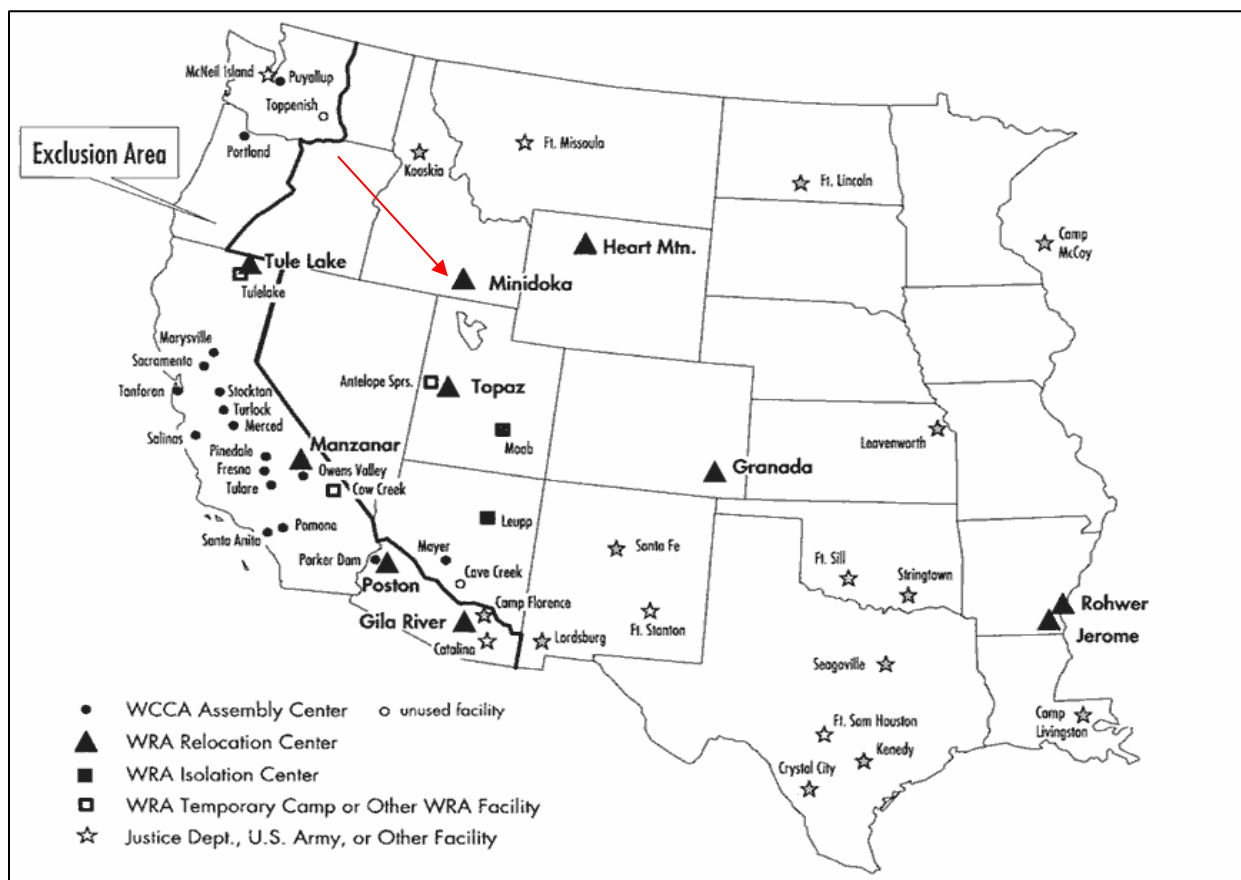


Figure 1: Sites in the Western U.S. associated with the forcible relocation of Japanese Americans During World War II. The Minidoka Concentration Camp (indicated by the red arrow) resides in southern Idaho. Courtesy of Friends of Minidoka, <https://www.minidoka.org/relocation-center-map>.

The Idaho SHPO reviewed the report in November 2022 and provided a concurrence letter shortly thereafter in December 2022, agreeing that the TCP is eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion A with the historic footprint as an appropriate boundary. Other consulting parties have pushed for using the historic footprint as the TCP boundary as well.

² National Register Bulletin 38 (Parker and King 1998:1) provide the following definition of a TCP: a property that is “eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (1) are rooted in that community’s history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.”

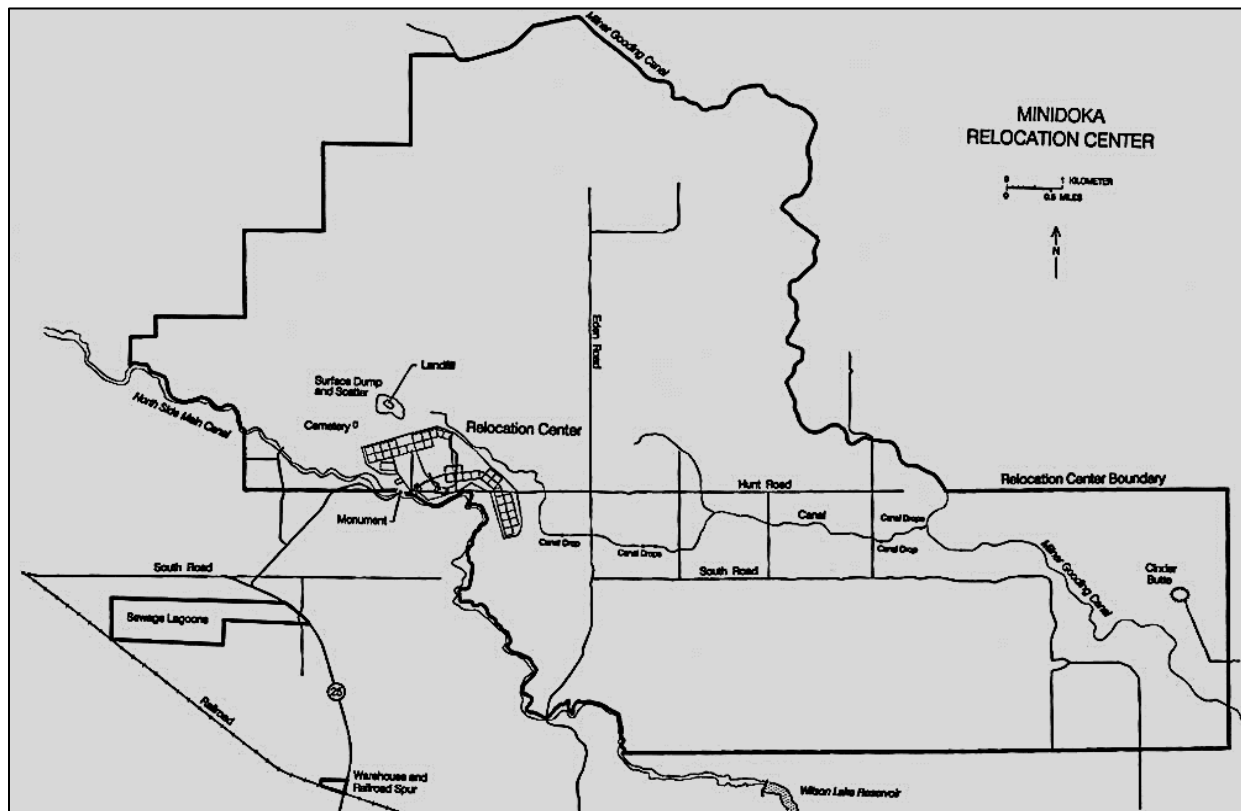


Figure 2: Map displaying the 33,000-acre Minidoka Relocation Center with the canal, one of the more topographically distinct features at Minidoka. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Chapter 9: Minidoka Relocation Center, available at: <http://nps.history.com/series/anthropology/wacc/74/chap9.htm>.

However, although the TCP certainly includes the historic footprint, the Friends of Minidoka and the Japanese American descendant community assert that using the 33,000-acre Minidoka Relocation Center historic footprint does not capture the full extent of the incarcerated's experience. Rather, for the incarcerated, the surrounding farms and homesteads that they helped to develop and frequently worked on, the nearby roadways to and from Minidoka that they were regularly bussed on, the nearby areas they toiled to prevent range fires, and the expansive surrounding views that effectively served to imprison them all are a part of *their* Minidoka.

The widespread use and occupancy of what has been considered "outside" the presently defined historic footprint challenges the notion that the historic footprint is anything but a construct and demarcation of the oppressor. It is a convenient boundary line drawn by the perpetrators but does not reflect the on-the-ground, lived experiences of the incarcerated. For the Japanese American community, *their* "historic footprint" is much larger, encompassing much more of the spatial experience of their incarceration. It certainly includes the area of the concentration camp itself, but critically, also incorporates those areas where they spent many months out of the year developing the sagebrush desert into fertile farmland, where they seasonally planted and harvested crops on already established farms nearby, where they fought the range fires in the areas adjacent to Minidoka, and finally, the expansive viewsheds that imprisoned them; in sum, it includes all nearby areas where incarcerated lived and, in some cases, died.

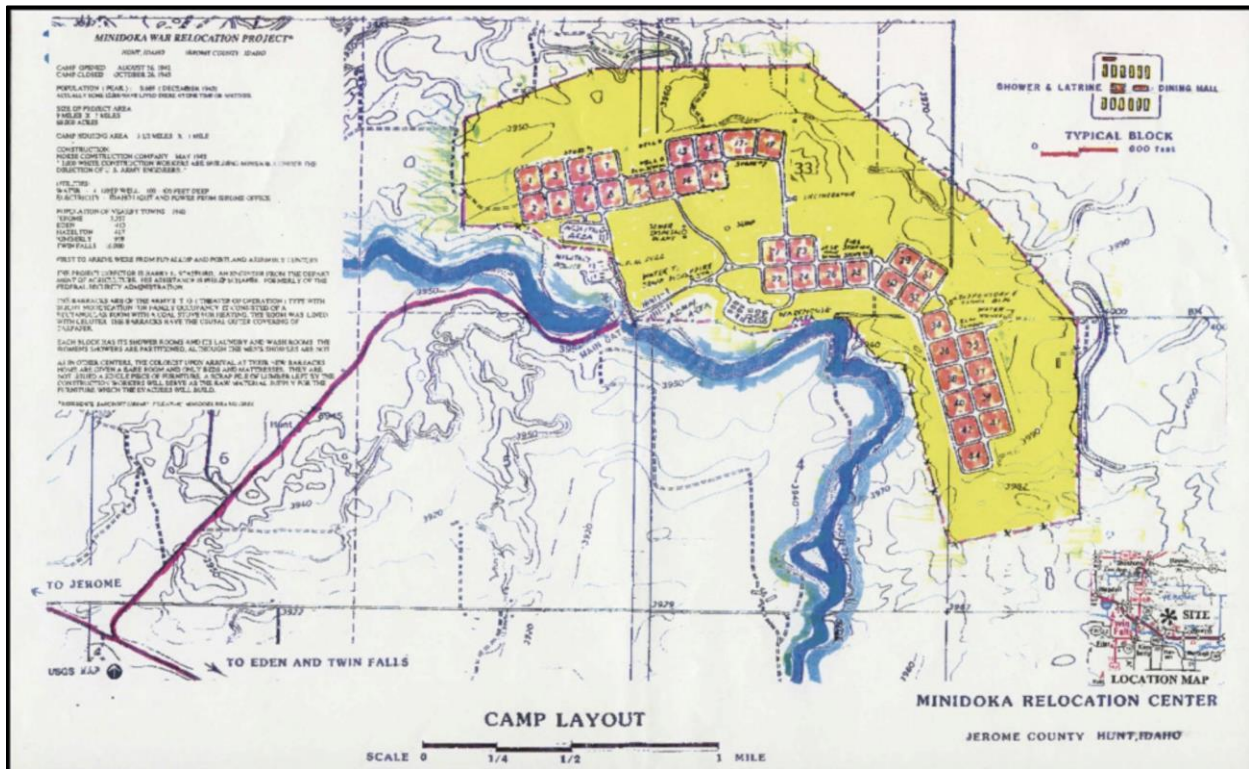


Figure 3: Minidoka concentration camp layout.

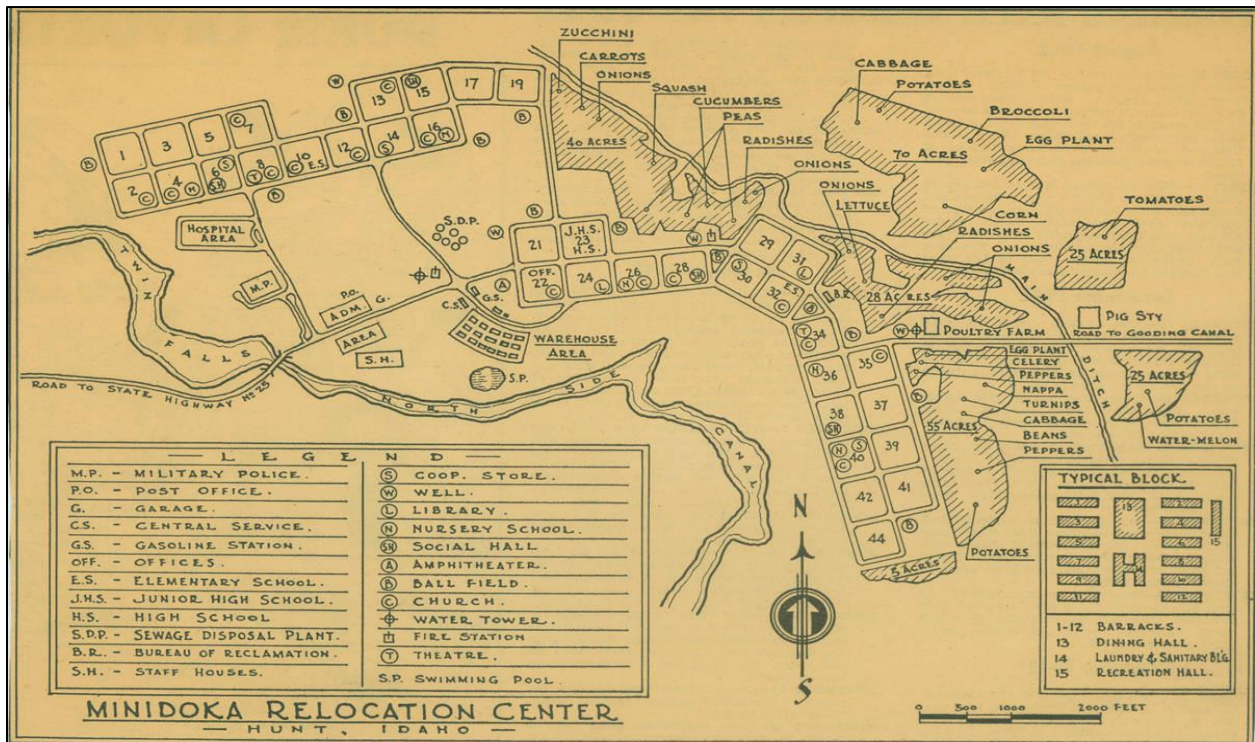


Figure 4: Historic map of the Minidoka Relocation Center in Jerome County, Idaho.

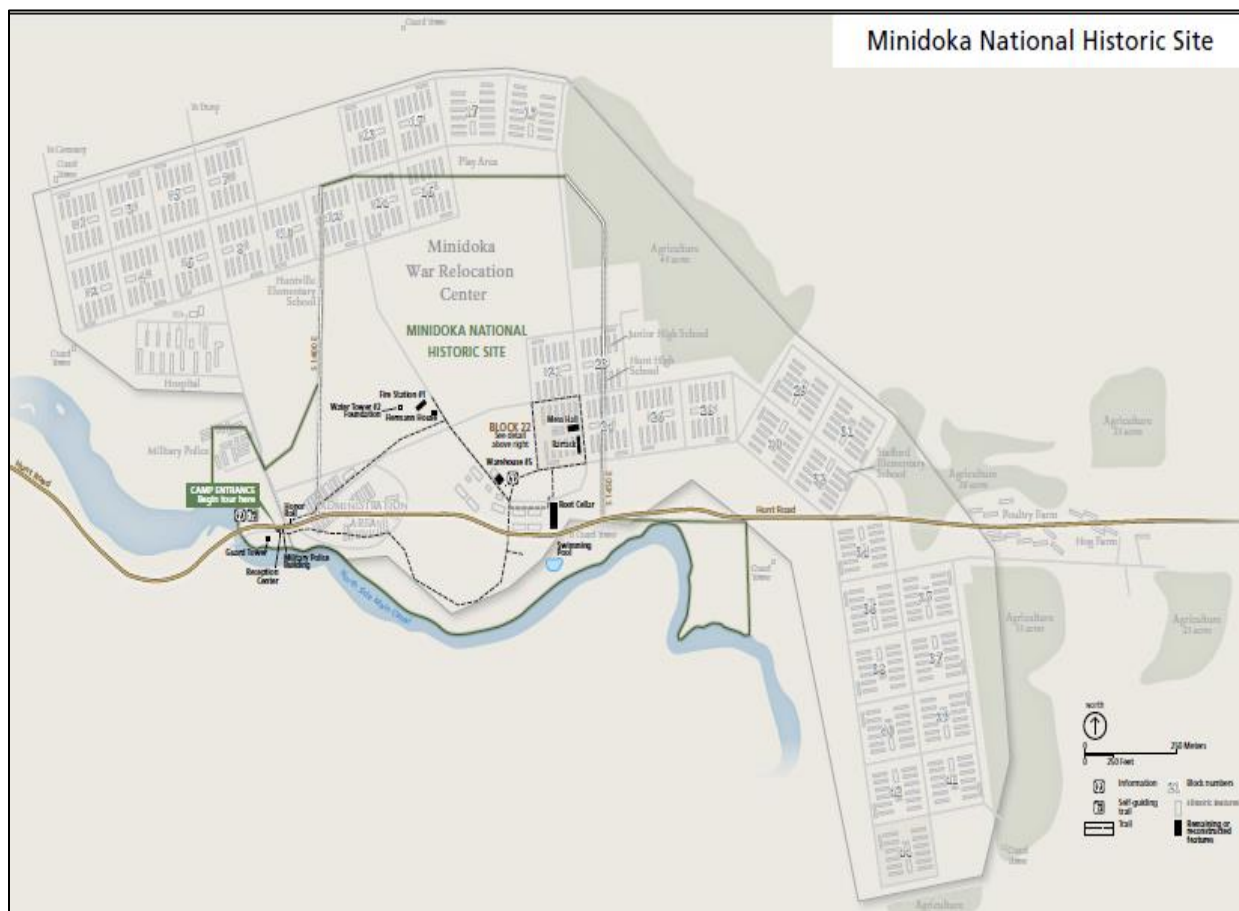


Figure 5: Minidoka Internment National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation via President Clinton using his authority under the Antiquities Act on January 17, 2001. The map shown is the Park boundary as authorized by Act of Congress in 2008, and as modified by a minor boundary expansion.

This area may be best understood more as an agricultural landscape with the concentration camp as its main hub. Such a landscape composed of the concentration camp itself and nearby areas links most closely to the idea of a traditional cultural landscape (TCL). Indeed, Japanese American descendants see and relate to Minidoka as such a landscape: the “*Minidoka TCP is a sacred, traditional cultural landscape for me and my descendants. Protecting the TCP is critical to maintaining Japanese American traditional cultural identity and connecting our past with our future*” (David Sakura, survivor).

Although there is no single defining feature or set of features that comprise a TCL, the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation (ACHP) guidance defines a TCL as:

Such places could be comprised of natural features such as mountains, caves, plateaus, and outcroppings; water courses and bodies such as rivers, streams, lakes, bays, and inlets; view and view sheds from them, including the overlook or similar locations; vegetation that contributes to its significance; and, manmade features including archaeological sites; buildings and structures; circulation features such as trails; land use patterns; evidence of cultural

traditions such as petroglyphs and evidence of burial practices; and markers and monuments, such as cairns, sleeping circles, and geoglyphs [ACHP 2012:4].

Importantly, the fact these historic properties generally encompass a larger area and/or may take a more nuanced, holistic approach to manage effectively should, in no way, prevent the existence of such a property or challenge its NRHP-eligibility: “the size of such properties or the potential challenges in the management of them should not be considerations in the evaluation of their significance” (ACHP 2012:2). In other words, a TCL or similar historic property is first delineated in accordance with the understanding of the descendant community, *then* accessed for NRHP-eligibility. The size, land ownership, and/or management challenges of an historic property should not be a factor in the property’s delineation; the historic property is what it is. When delineating a TCP, National Register Bulletin 38 clarifies that viewsheds can and should be considered when determining an appropriate property boundary:

In defining boundaries, the traditional uses to which the property is put must be carefully considered. For example, where a property is used as the Helkau District is used, for contemplative purposes, *viewsheds are important and must be considered in boundary definition* [Parker and King 1998:18-19, emphasis added].

In the case of the NRHP-eligible property identified in Algonquin’s 2022 TCP Report, much like with the *Helkau* District, the site is widely used for contemplation, healing, and personal as well as society-wide edification. The viewshed is an important and inseparable part of this process, and given this, necessarily encompasses a much broader area. This TCP delineation is how the descendant community defines their historic property. For them, the area they ascribe value to and derive an ongoing identity from includes lands outside the present-day historic footprint.

This addendum report seeks to build on the 2022 TCP study report by expanding upon and contextualizing this large TCP boundary, an area defined by the Japanese American descendant community and not by their oppressors. The information in the following pages serves to challenge the idea that the presently understood “historic footprint” appropriately defines and bounds the Minidoka TCP. In fact, the presently understood historic footprint is restrictive and erases the voices and lived experiences of those forcibly removed to Minidoka. It does not include many areas of the incarcerated near-daily experiences at nearby farms and homesteads, along egress and ingress roadways, and other nearby places. The addendum report concludes with guidance and next-step recommendations. These recommendations are intended to detail how best Friends and their allies (e.g., the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, other tribes, and local property owners) can work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) throughout their Section 106 and Section 110 compliance

2.0 The Minidoka Concentration Camp – The True “Historic Footprint”

Please see Algonquin’s 2022 TCP Report for Algonquin’s overall recommendations, specifically, that Algonquin finds that Minidoka meets the definition of a TCP as defined in National Register Bulletin 38. The report also demonstrates that the Minidoka historic property is eligible for listing

in the NRHP following the four-step process outlined in National Register Bulletin 38 (Parker and King 1998). The sections below present evidence demonstrating that, for the Japanese American incarcerated, the presently conceived historic footprint is much too narrow a demarcation. Their daily lived experiences extended beyond the presently defined historic footprint to the nearby farms and homesteads where they worked, along the egress and ingress roadways into and out of Minidoka, to the nearby scrubland where they fought and prevented range fires, and to the surrounding expansive and unobstructed viewshed that imprisoned them. To them, this larger area defines their Minidoka, effectively becoming a sacred cultural landscape: “*Minidoka and the surrounding landscape is sacred to me. I visit it as often as I can, including several multigenerational pilgrimages with my mom, wife, and sons*” (Fred Sakura, survivor).

2.1 Archaeological Resources

The archeological resources that have been identified at the national monument are comprised primarily of features and artifacts associated with the period of camp operation from 1942 to 1945. While objects that postdate the camp’s closure were noted during the archeology survey at the historic site, no artifacts predating the camp were identified (Burton 2001). Regardless of the presence or absence of archaeological resources predating the historic use in the 1940s, the area is known to be significant to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe (and potentially other tribal communities). For this reason, the Minidoka TCP likely intersects with and/or is overlain by a traditional cultural landscape significant to one or more tribes.

2.2 Railroad Lines

For most incarcerated, their first memories of the Minidoka TCP occurred during their forcible removal into the region. Beginning in 1942, the U.S. removed Japanese and Japanese Americans by train from assembly centers to Hunt, Idaho, and then by bus the rest of the way to Minidoka. Waves of incarcerated brought by train occurred throughout August and September 1942 (Stacy 2020:16). The Minidoka TCP includes the terminus and starting point of two railroad lines that have connections to the survivors and descendant community: a southern line that carried individuals to Minidoka and a northern line that carried them from camp (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). This is a key contributing element to the TCP, deeply embedded within the story and memories of Minidoka.

The route of forcible removal to Hunt, Idaho, by train and then to Minidoka by bus, was long and arduous (see Figure 8). Recalling their first memory of arrival in Hunt, Idaho, a survivor stated:

We arrived late afternoon, at some isolated siding in the desert area, north of Twin Falls, although we did not know where we were. No houses were in sight, no trees or anything green—only scrubby sagebrush and the occasional low cactus, and mostly dry, baked earth ... Baggage was unloaded and piled up next to the road, and Army trucks were rolling in, kicking up huge clouds of dust. People came off the train, were lined up and loaded into the trucks, and went off into the distance. The seats were hard planks, and after riding all day on the train, most were sore and tired [Tateishi 1999:76].

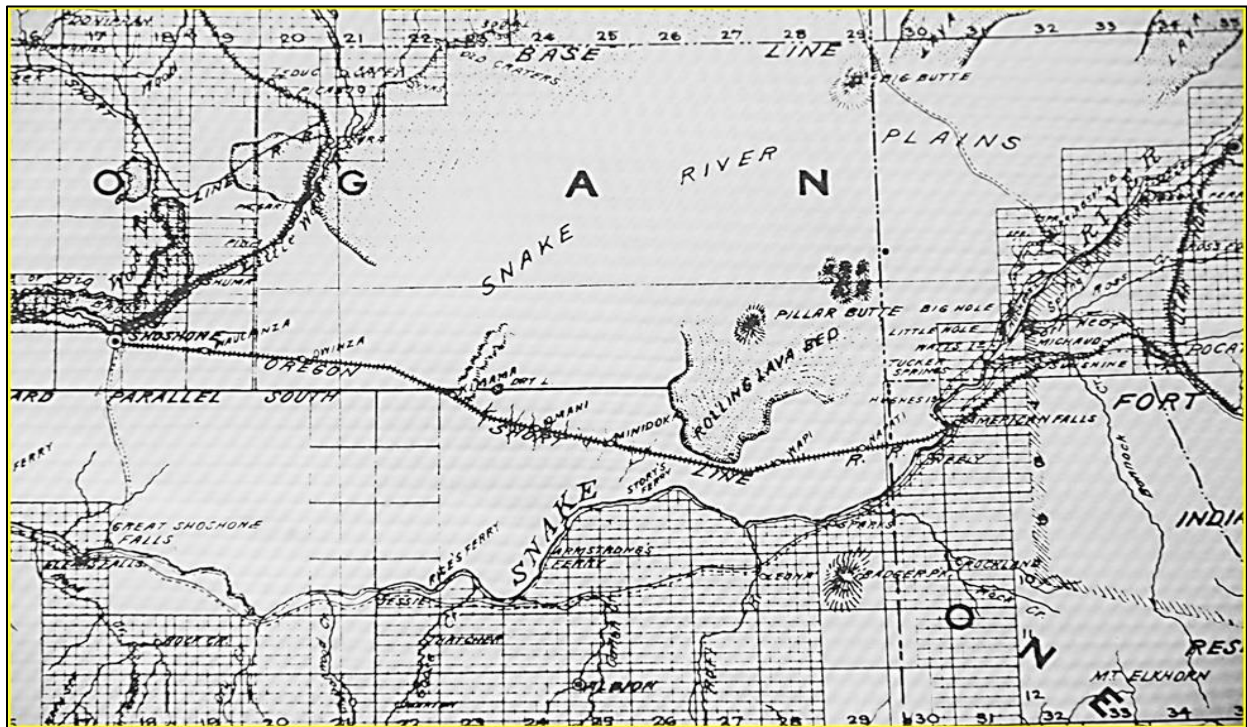


Figure 6: Map of railroad lines entering and exiting the Minidoka concentration camp area. The railroad lines brought incarcerated into Minidoka and transported them to other locales.



Figure 7: Train arriving at the Minidoka concentration camp.

For many, disembarking the train was their first memory of the Minidoka area, and greatly defined their first impressions of the concentration camp (see Figure 8).



Figure 8: Incarcerees arrived at Minidoka in 1942. The WRA transported incarcerated from the railroad in Eden to Minidoka by bus. Many were shocked by their natural surroundings in the high desert of Idaho with sand and sagebrush stretching in all directions. Photo from the National Archives, ddr-densho-37-726.

Recalling that day, David Sakura (see Figure 9), a survivor, noted:

It was a hot, dusty August day in 1942. The train that had taken our family along with 600 other passengers from our homes in Washington state to the Minidoka Relocation Camp had arrived at a railroad siding near Hunt Idaho. We were not prepared for what awaited us as we got off the train and waited for the buses to take us to our new home.

I still remember vividly getting off the train and an army soldier, carrying a rifle, greeting me. "Hi David", he said, looking down at me. Bewildered, I was confused as to why he knew my name. Then I realized that he had read my government issue name tag that all the passengers, including children, were required to wear. My name tag even had my ID number: #1764C [David Sakura, personal communication, 2023].

For many, their arrival by train and their first view of the area was one of shock, dismay, and devastation. Mae Hada, an incarcerated at Minidoka, recalled the shock both her and her mother immediately felt upon seeing the Minidoka concentration camp for the first time:

Well, it was devastating for my mother. We came all through by train and then bus. And when we drove up, there was a total cloud of dust. You couldn't see five feet. After that, it was all dust because they built this huge area for us to come to, barbed wire and all, and these residences were barracks ...

It's the first time I saw her cry hard. "What did they bring us to?" she said in Japanese. Anyway, they, of course, slowly, we were able to be registered coming in, assigned places to come to, and it was just my mother, my sister and myself, I remember, and so we had an end apartment. I forgot how many units there were in each barrack. I would say maybe eight. It's just a guess. We had numbers on our place. And do you want a description of the room we were assigned? It was unfinished walls.

So, you see it was pretty, some dust would come in. And we had cots and one potbelly stove to burn coal for warmth and one recessed area for a closet. That was it. People wanted more had to build their own home up with shelves and so on. We weren't able to do that. We managed. And we were, of course, regimented according to time for breakfast, lunch, and supper. We were told where the main buildings were, where the lavatories were...

And what else do you want to know about the living situation? We had to dig up our own coal when the winter weather came. The first time I experienced such cold that when you breathed, we never had this in Oregon. You'd have icicles on your nostrils. It was scary. And we would have to dig up our own coals, so we can burn it in our, burn it in our stove in our cabin, if that's what you can call it ["Mae Hada Interview" by Masakuo Hinatsu. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive. Densho. June 18. 2003. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-one-7/ddr-one-7-20-transcript-091b5afb0d.htm>].



Figure 9: A picture of David Sakura and his two brothers arriving by train at Minidoka on the southern railroad line.

In another interview, Maru Hirata recalled her first impressions of Minidoka after the train ride:

I couldn't believe that that's where we were going to be, but like I say, my folks never made a fuss about anything, so it was just part of our life, so... I used to think, "My God, the dust!" You couldn't see one barrack to another one, it blew. And then the wintertime, or when it rained, you lost your shoes if you weren't careful. At least the men were nice enough to make little walkways for, from barrack to barrack. I think about Mom having to scrub all our clothes on the washboard. And I think, oh I was so awful, I didn't ever help her and I feel... now I feel guilty [laughs]. But she never complained. And we lived in one room again.

It was a larger room. Mom used to come home from the bathroom with toilet paper, I could never figure out what it was for. And I'd see her making little wads and plugging up the holes, so she wouldn't have to clean all the time. You could see the little piles of dirt with each crack where the dust would come in...

Uh-huh, because there were no inside walls. They were just outside walls. So, like around the windows, there would be little holes, and the dirt would just kind of pile up in little piles there. And we had a pot belly stove. And I don't know how I did it, but I remember I got two dollars -- I don't know whether Mother gave it to me or what -- but I went to the canteen and I bought two bedspreads. Can you imagine? For a dollar apiece. And my brothers and I, we hung 'em up to make a little room for Mom and Dad. Because, if we stayed up late at night to play cards or whatever, then at least they could go to bed in peace ["Mary Hirata Interview" by Beth Kawahara and Alice Ito. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive. Densho. March 27, 1998. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-22-transcript-ea0433fee0.htm>].

Another incarcerated, Victor Ikeda, recalled his experience traveling to Minidoka by train and bus, and his impressions when he arrived:

Well, it was kind of a secret, but we had heard that we were going into Idaho or someplace. We got in the train not knowing where we were going. It took us, I think, a couple of days to get out there. And I remember when we got there the train stopped at Eden, and that was the end of the line, it was kind of a transfer point. And then when you got out you looked around and wondered where in the devil we were [Laughs]. I remember we left in August so you can see it was pretty dusty and hot, and it was kind of like a God-forsaken place that we landed up in...

We got there, and, of course, we went through the gates and there were, the guards were there. And you looked down, and all of the sudden you could see the barracks. You could see some barracks in Block 1, 2, 3, 4. They were building other ones, but it almost looked like a prison camp because they were just tarpaper barracks. It was dusty, I remember.

When we got there you had a guard tower, and you had guards, and there was barbed wire right at that point there. There was an administration building there so you had to come through that to get into camp. And then they had barbed wire around part of the areas. The other part was a canal, so... [“Victor Ikeda Interview” by Richard Potashin. Available at the Densho Visual Archive Collection, Densho Digital Repository. Densho. November 6, 2007. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-23-transcript-8f69d5e15b.htm>].

Janet Keegan, a descendant of a Minidoka incarcerated, recalls the expansive sagebrush as you come into Minidoka and seeing the train tracks which brought the survivors to the site:

When I visit MNHS [Minidoka National Historic Site], I usually approach from the southwest along Hwy 25. My Nisei friend said very quietly, “those are the railroad tracks that took us to camp”. It is all sagebrush and lava rock in the area. The train stopped in the village of Eden and the incarcerated were put on buses to camp. The road from Eden to MNHS is very, very much like what is must have been in 1942 which is what the viewshed would have been. Sagebrush and basalt rock as far as the eye can see. No farm fields, no trees, no homes, just nothing in the eyes of someone from the Pacific northwest. I think about the fear going into the unknown, the not knowing for how long, the wondering how they were going to live [Janet Keegan, personal communication, 2022, emphasis added].

Another descendant, Eleanor Nakayama, a Gosei (5th Generation) Japanese American, emphasized the blackened windows of the train ride:

I was able to visit Mindoka in 2019 and saw what my great grandparents, Kiyoko and Katsumi Nakayama and great aunt, Joni Kimoto, who were brought on trains with blacked out windows so they couldn’t see where they were going, first saw this unknown place. They were met with barbed wire, and the vast Idaho desert, flat and barren with dust storms and frigid nights [excerpt from a comment letter by Eleanor Nakayama to the BLM Shoshone Field Office, dated Wednesday, October 20, 2021].

Both railroad lines are included in the TCP because they are defining moments in every incarcerated’s experience. The main entreat into Minidoka for all incarcerated and their experience of “arriving” at Minidoka is forever burned into minds of those forced to stay there. The route into Minidoka carries as much trauma and historical significance as the concentration camp itself. For many, the railroad stop marked the start of several very tough, traumatic years. Because of this, both the southern railroad line (used predominately for arrivals to Minidoka) and the northern rail line (used predominately for departures from Minidoka) help to define the historic significance and nature of the TCP. The railroad tracks into and out of Minidoka are incorporated into the TCP as contributing elements.

2.3 A Landscape of Isolation: The Expansive, Unobstructed Viewsheds

For the incarcerated, the expansive unobstructed viewshed was another major shock forever embedded in their memories, experiences, and daily reality. After the trauma of forcible removal and loss of so much that was familiar and normal, the expansive viewshed and remoteness catalyzed and compounded their trauma further. Many were brought to tears. Others simply stood silent, the shock and dismay written across their faces. The viewshed became so much more than simply “what can be seen”. It became a symbol of their imprisonment and an oppressive reminder of the hopelessness of escape. For the incarcerated, this viewshed extends across all the surrounding farms and agricultural lands where they worked as well as the sagebrush landscape where they fought range fires.

Much like with the other concentration camps in the U.S. and Europe, the location of Minidoka was selected for its remoteness from development and for its higher difficulty to “escape”. In fact, the remoteness, along with its high agricultural labor potential, was one of the key selection criteria for the WRA and contributed to a “landscape of isolation”:

In order to avoid displacing large numbers of people, the site selection crews had to center their attention on lands which were underdeveloped or sparsely settled. And since the Army cannot afford in a time of war to disperse its manpower for protection of numerous small communities, the Authority had to locate areas capable of supporting a population of at least 5,000 evacuees.

In order to satisfy all of these rigid and sometimes conflicting requirements, the Authority tended to move more or less in the direction of “wilderness areas—among others, to the desert-type terrain of western Arizona, to the intermountain country of Wyoming not far from Yellowstone National Park, to the delta section of Arkansas only recently reclaimed from periodic floods [War Relocation Authority: “Relocation Communities for Wartime Evacuees”; September 1942. James Y. Sakamoto Collection, Box 10, Folder 38]

Minidoka’s remote setting is characterized by low rolling hills covered by seemingly endless bushes of sagebrush. In the distance are the pristine, unobstructed views of the Albion Mountains to the south. This landscape, depicted in historic photos (see Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12, and Figure 13), in Japanese American artwork from the time period (see Figure 14 and Figure 15), and in more recent photographs of the site (see Figure 16, Figure 17, Figure 18, and Figure 19) all convey this pervasive sense of remoteness; the views from the Minidoka Concentration Camp are vast, unobstructed, and truly eye-opening. The viewshed is central to the incarcerated experience, a vastness and emptiness that immediately instills a poignant sense of isolation.

In 1942, for example, an editorial entitled “Eyes on Tomorrow” within the first publication of *The Minidoka Irrigator*, spoke of the incarcerated first impressions about the remote region:

Minidoka, as we know it, is a vast stretch of sagebrush stubble and shifting, swirling sand—a dreary, forbidding, flat expanse of arid wilderness. Minidoka,

in September of 1942, is the sort of place people would normally traverse only to get through to another destination [The Minidoka Irrigator 1942b:2].

Other articles and descriptions of survivors throughout their time at the concentration camp underscored the deep and poignant hopelessness that the viewshed instilled. It was a vast expanse of nothingness that served as a prison and, in a way, a reprieve from “prison life”:

For respite from daily prison camp trauma, my father would often look past the barbed wire and into – what he called – the “vast nothingness” of the isolated, harsh, rattlesnake infested desert. He often thought being free in that “vast nothingness” was far better than being held against his will in a prison camp [Cathy Kiyomura, personal communication, 2023].



Figure 10: View of the Minidoka concentration camp with expansive surroundings, photo courtesy of Boise State Public Radio article entitled “Minidoka National Historic Site makes annual list of nation's most endangered historic places”, <https://www.boisestatepublicradio.org/news/2022-05-04/minidoka-national-historic-site-endangered-historic-places>.



Figure 11: Panoramic view of Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho. Courtesy of the Tazuma Family Collection. Image available and found at the Densho Digital Repository, Object ID ddr-densho-23-27 (Legacy UID: denshopd-p23-00027), <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-23-27/>.



Figure 12: Panoramic view of the Minidoka camp. Available at: Densho Digital Repository, Object ID: ddr-densho-37-746 (Legacy UID: denshopd-i37-00748), parent collection: National Archives and Records Administration Collection. Description: "Original WRA caption: A panorama view of the Minidoka War Relocation Authority center. This view, taken from the top of the water tower at the east end of the center, shows partially completed barracks." <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-37-746/>.



Figure 13: Historic aerial photo of the Minidoka concentration camp.

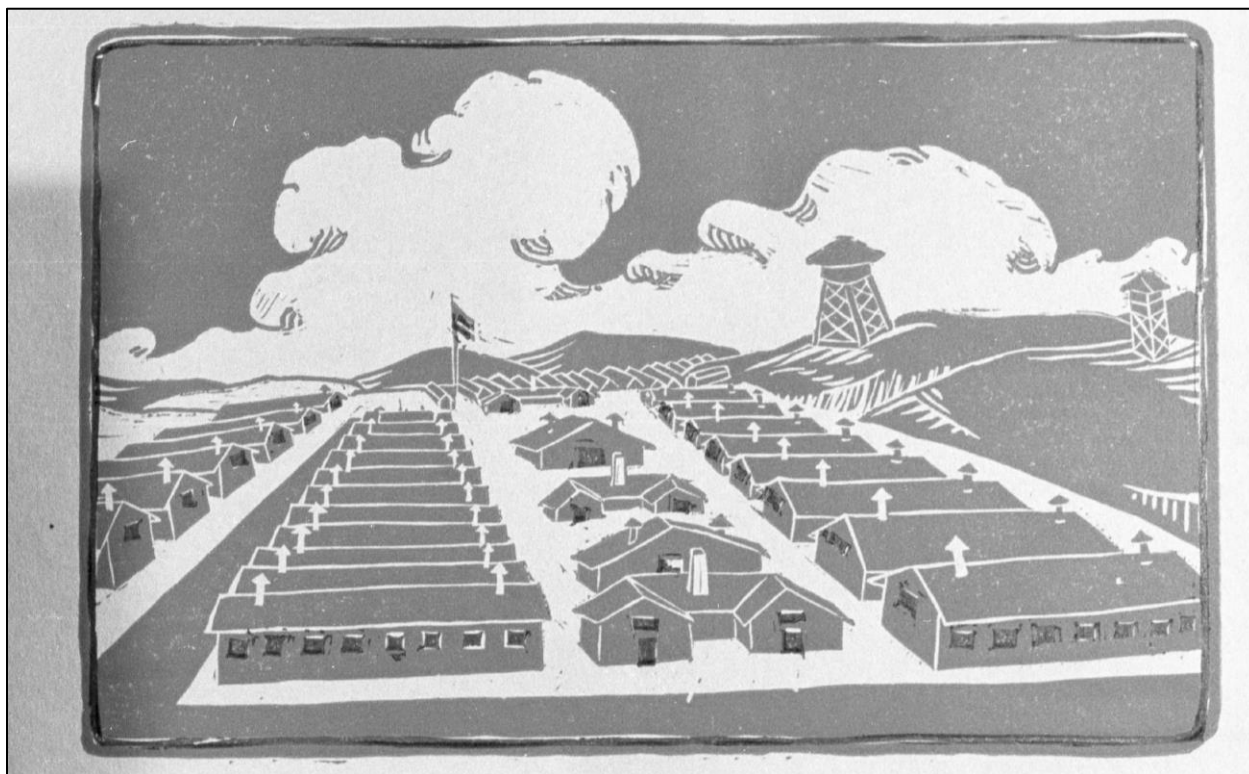


Figure 14: "Camp Christmas Card" of Minidoka. OBJECT ID ddr-densho-13-23 (Legacy UID: denshopd-p13-00023), Mamiya Collection in the Densho Digital Repository, a multi-partner initiative of Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project, containing oral history interviews, photographs, documents, and other materials relating to the Japanese American experience. Additional information on the project is available at www.densho.org.



Figure 15: Roger Shimomura. Minidoka on My Mind: American Infamy #3, acrylic on canvas. Retrieved from: <https://taimodern.com/exhibit/roger-shimomura-minidoka-on-my-mind/>.



Figure 16: Expansive view from an interpretive sign at Minidoka, courtesy of Erik And Roland Ninomiya, Minidoka Descendants, Friends of Minidoka blog: https://www.minidoka.org/blog/2022/10/31/descendant-reflections-by-erik-and-roland-ninomiya?blm_aid=27237.



Figure 17: Expansive view from the replica fence line at Minidoka, courtesy of Erik And Roland Ninomiya, Minidoka Descendants, Friends of Minidoka blog: https://www.minidoka.org/blog/2022/10/31/descendant-reflections-by-erik-and-roland-ninomiya?blm_aid=27237.



Figure 18: Recent photo (circa 2022) taken from Minidoka looking out on the expansive viewshed, photo provided by Robyn Achilles, Friends of Minidoka, personal communication, 2022.



Figure 19: Photo of the sun rising from the Minidoka Concentration Camp demonstrating the expansive, unobstructed, pristine view from the historic site, photo provided by Robyn Achilles, Friends of Minidoka, personal communication, 2022.

For the Japanese American community, essential characteristics of this expansive and desolate viewshed still remain today:

The historic elements of the viewshed that remains important to me are the mountains, hills, farmland and just the wide-open space to the horizon. There are a few trees on the neighbor's property but not many. It's very far away, but I can see the desert (the BLM land) from the visitor's center. The view from the root cellar which is southeast of the VC is very spectacular ... [Janet Keegan, personal communication, 2022].

The nighttime skyscape and viewshed of the stars across the open expanse also is an important element for many in the descendant community. The NPS' dark sky initiative features the importance of minimizing light pollution. The NPS "recognizes a naturally dark night sky as more than a scenic canvas; it is part of a complex ecosystem that supports both natural and cultural resources" (NPS 2022).

At Minidoka, the nighttime dark sky is yet another character defining element of this important place that allows for deep reflection, contemplation, and introspection, especially of the many stories of loss and trauma that occurred at this site; in many cases, these stories are still being

understood and processed today. The importance of the dark sky around Minidoka is highlighted by many in the descendant community, but can also be found in stories, interviews, and even art, as this historic Christmas card below demonstrates (see Figure 20).



Figure 20: Minidoka Night Sky on a historic Christmas card. Courtesy of <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-13-28/>. OBJECT ID: ddr-densho-13-28 (Legacy UID: denshopd-p13-00028). Description: This card was designed by a camp inmate. Densho Digital Repository, a multi-partner initiative of Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project, containing oral history interviews, photographs, documents, and other materials relating to the Japanese American experience. Additional information on the project is available at www.densho.org

As time has passed and farmlands have multiplied in the area, the present-day setting includes a surrounding of rural farms and irrigated fields, a labyrinth of irrigation canals and ditches, and a railroad line that traverses Jerome County from east to west. Fields of alfalfa, corn, barley, rye, and potatoes extend beyond the camp with intermittent farmhouses, outbuildings, and cattle pastures. Farmers, in fact, still use Minidoka's original irrigation canals, as well as some of the wells and roads, and many of the original barracks and outbuildings.

Although certainly more modern intrusions and recent constructions have altered the landscape, the environmental setting still includes the expansive unobstructed views that serve to convey the sense of isolation, a critical component of the site and intrinsically tied to the historical integrity of Minidoka. Those feelings of isolation and loss were deeply felt by incarcerated who were forcibly

removed to this area and had nothing to look at but the wide-open expanse. As Arthur Klienkopf, Superintendent of Education at the Minidoka Relocation Center, noted in his diary:

... these people are living in the midst of a desert where they see nothing except tar paper covered barracks, sagebrush, and rocks. No flowers, no trees, no shrubs, no grass. The impact of emotional disturbance as a result of the evacuation . . . plus this dull, dreary existence in a desert region surely must give these people a feeling of helplessness, hopelessness, and despair which we on the outside do not and will never fully understand [Friends of Minidoka n.d., emphasis added].

The experiences and testimonies of those incarcerated at Minidoka, especially their initial reactions, focused heavily on the remoteness of the area, its undeveloped and expansive desolate nature, and the overwhelming sense of isolation caused by this remoteness. One incarcerated, Art Abe, described his initial reaction to the desolate landscape and dry climate:

Gee, I looked out and I saw that desolate, desolate place on the side tracks of Eden, I couldn't believe what, where we were at [Abe, Art. "Art Abe Interview," by Tom Ikeda. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive. Densho January 24, 2008. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-206-transcript-ca077fc2db.htm>]

In another interview, Jim Akutsu, an incarcerated of Minidoka, discussed the expansive, unobstructed "openness" of the desert:

Number one, there is, you know, below the barracks, wide open and I want to close that, use the local people to close that. Here we had all the plumbing sitting out in the desert. Why can't we put it in? And I, as a civil engineer, I know exactly what to do and why can't we use people of camp? And the camp will say, "Hey, we have contracts out with such-and-such, such-and-such, we can't do anything."

And I'm cold, I'm not feeling good and I have to go out to the john out between the blocks and here it is 20 below zero. Hey, let's get with it. And, you know, all of that is starting to come back, all of the things that we could do and we're the ones suffering [Akutsu, Jim. "Jim Akutsu Interview." By Art Hansen. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive. Densho. June 9 and 12, 1997. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-2-transcript-b1c658930f.htm>].

Multiple other incarcerated have underscored the remoteness and isolation of Minidoka describing the concentration camp as having expansive views of the rolling hills of sagebrush. They also describe the endless dust and desolation of the area, and the ever-present sense of isolation and remoteness. Several statements from interviews and testimonies describing these character defining elements of the site are provided below:

“My impression was all that sagebrush. That’s all we saw. Nothing” (Fukui, Mitsu. “Mitsu Fukui Interview” by Alice Ito. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive. Densho. Interview archived and located at: <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-140-transcript-d1da26ddf8.htm>. December 18 and 19, 2002).

“Sagebrush and dust and dust and sagebrush, a lot” (Uyeda, Fumiko Groves. “Fumiko Uyeda Groves Interview” by Larry Hashima. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Archive. Densho. June 16, 1998. Interview archived and located at: <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-10-transcript-b07a40123b.htm>).

“Oh, [remember] thinking what a desolate place. I have never seen a desert type terrain before. I thought, “Where in the heck is this?” (Inahara, Hiro Heidi. “Hiro Heidi Inahara Interview” by Betty Jean Harry. Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Repository. Densho. July 2, 2014. Interview archived and located at: <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-one-7/ddr-one-7-75-transcript-fa47c1ce53.htm>).

“I do kind of remember finally arriving at, seeing the barracks. And I thought it was bleak, there were no trees, I thought, my goodness, where are we?” (Kajiwara, Lily. “Lily Kajiwara Interview” by Richard Potashin. Interview archived and located at Densho Visual History Collection, Densho Digital Repository. Densho. July 24, 2010).

“Day break finally came and with it a strange new country. Instead of seeing beautiful mountains as we did the day before, the scenery had changed to the barren desert full of sagebrush” (Tom Fukuyama, “December 7 On,” December 1942. Interview archived and located at Bigelow Collection, Densho Digital Repository, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-156-83/?format=doc>).

“When I first arrived here [Minidoka] we almost cried and thought this was land God had forgotten. The vast expanse of nothing but sagebrush and dust, a landscape so alien in our eyes, and a desolate, woebegone feeling of being so far removed from home and fireside bogged use down mentally, as well as physically” (Stacy 2020:16–17).

These testimonies of their experience underscore how the surrounding landscape itself – barren, foreign, arid, and unending – served as a prison, perhaps more so than the barbed wire fencing ever could:

The painful and traumatic experience and the lessons and legacy of this gross injustice for these American citizens is deeply intertwined and held in the environment of South-Central Idaho today. The forced exclusion and removal of Japanese Americans from the fertile land and productive businesses they had built along the West Coast to incarceration in the desolate interior was a means to break the cultural, emotional, political, and economic power of an entire community of color. Families were removed from the familiarity of their homes and communities to an unfamiliar and desolate landscape, which in itself

became a prison [Robyn Achilles, personal communication, 2022, emphasis added].

Finally, the poem entitled “Minidoka”, written by Mitsuye May Yamada, an incarcerated, poignantly captures the trauma, loss, and sense of isolation of the remote, expansive, undeveloped area:

“The train stops at
the end of the tracks
literally.

The tracks simply sink into
the Idaho desert sand
disappear.

1942, a sunny April day
several hundred young and
old men, women, and children
from Seattle transported
by train from the temporary
Assembly Center
at the Puyallup Fairgrounds.
We are rickety bussed farther
into the desert.

All of us carry
an assortment of bags, sacks,
bundles and babies, in our arms.

After twelve hours we arrive
at a gate in a fenced-in area
What we see below the shades
of the bus window:
rows of tar-papered barracks
surrounded by barbed-wire fences.

We enter the gated compound
I suck in my breath
The air is dry
I look back
*Outside the fences are blankets
of low round sagebrush
stretched out wide for miles and miles.*

Minidoka
my home”

[Emphasis added, © 2019 Mitsuye May Yamada, from Full Circle New and Selected Poems, UCSB Department of Asian American Studies].

Following extensive outreach to the Japanese American community in the early 2000s, the National Park Service issued its General Management Plan which highlighted the importance of

the scenery and viewshed to survivors and descendants. The GMP includes the sketch image below (see Figure 21) depicts part of Minidoka's surrounding viewshed. The following image (see Figure 22) also shows the expansive viewshed from the barbed wire fencing with the camp and guard tower in the background.



Figure 21: Conceptual sketch by Seth Seablom depicting “a special commemorative event, that might be held in the future, after park development, and following yet to be determined management actions designed to address conflicts between park visitors and vehicular through traffic”, found in the Minidoka General Management Plan (NPS 2006:65).



Figure 22: The fence line at Minidoka Relocation Center, circa 1943. Painting by Kenjiro Nomura. Courtesy of George and Betty Nomura, NPS Minidoka Management Plan (NPS 2006:5).

In reference to the importance of this viewshed, the NPS Minidoka Management Plan stated:

Minidoka's remote location ... provides an immersive setting that is fundamental to the visitor experience. Views of open fields and distant mountains create a sense of isolation on a vast landscape ... Experiencing this environmental setting allows visitors to better understand and connect to the daily lives of Minidoka [NPS 2006:65].

The NPS Minidoka Management Plan goes on to discuss the importance of the scenic views from the national monument:

Historic views to the North Side Canal from within the national monument will be preserved and restored, as feasible. Scenic viewing areas and interpretive overlooks along the northern boundary of the site and within the east end site will be developed to provide panoramic views of the physical extent of the historic residential areas [NPS 2006:76].

Finally, outlining and describing the NPS management zones for the Minidoka site, the management plan noted that for Management Zone 3: "Special Use – Park Development Zone":

This zone will provide a place for intensive visitor contact and on-site interpretation. Additionally, the NPS can provide a place to *observe and interpret the full viewshed of the camp, including the extents of the historic residential housing blocks and the outlying open and expansive high desert environment* [NPS 2006:61, emphasis added].

In a comment letter dated October 20th, 2021, and addressed to Mr. Prestwich of the BLM Shoshone Field Office, Marie Matsuno, an individual of Alaskan Native and Japanese descent who was born at Minidoka, spoke about the viewshed and the remote, expansive, undeveloped setting, stating:

Minidoka's remote location in the high desert of Idaho provides an immersive setting that is fundamental to the visitor experience. Views of open fields and distant mountains create a sense of isolation on a vast landscape where Minidoka once stood...Extreme changes in temperature, the arid environment, and high winds that the people at Minidoka experienced are part of the environmental setting that are felt today. Experiencing this environmental setting allows visitors to better understand and connect to the daily lives at Minidoka [Marie Matsuno 2021].

The power of the intact, largely unobstructed viewshed to invoke this sense of the past cannot be understated:

On my first arrival to Minidoka, with no one else on site, I was standing alone; softly gazing in the distance In the quiet, undisturbed moment I felt reverential and a connection. I could 'see' my Nisei mom and her brother strolling not far away as they might done seventy years before. The silence and the 'pure'

surroundings were important in invoking that state of mind; an impactful and emotional experience for me. All my family stories and their memories of Minidoka became real to me in that moment. I walked away with a deeper felt meaning of the family and community history [Excerpt from a comment letter by Shawn (Itoi/Nagashima) Brinsfield to the BLM Shoshone Field Office, dated Monday, October 18, 2021].

It is without question that the viewshed at Minidoka must be protected and preserved for later generations, something that is regularly underscored by the descendant community:

We need to preserve the Minidoka National Historic Site and its viewshed so that others can ask questions and learn about the Japanese experience during WWII ... so many fellow Idahoans do not know the history of Japanese Incarceration during WWII and how they impacted Idaho ... There is power in these stories. The words are sacred, and the stories must be told to preserve the past and protect the future [Lisa Shiosaki Olsen comments, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1izFB86lafn-nlv1nyviJXINf_Exv8JKuC1pudPUYIXc/edit?usp=sharing].

To protect the viewshed, Minidoka descendant, Dan Sakura tried to secure passage of legislation to expand the boundary of the Minidoka National Historic Site and increase the authority of the National Park System to acquire historic lands in the Fiscal Year 2010 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This serves to underscore the significance of the viewshed as an integral part of the Minidoka concentration camp. It is a key character defining feature that is inseparably tied to the historic property and TCP itself.

2.4 “Fence Line” of Minidoka

Although no fence existed around the camp when incarcerated began to arrive in August 1942, by November 1942, a barbed wire fence along with eight guard towers were constructed around a portion of the camp. As one would imagine, this fence challenged what fleeting feelings of freedom were left among and greatly upset the incarcerated, especially after the fence was electrified. Only a day after being electrified, however, Minidoka’s administration chose to leave the fence unelectrified due to the distress it caused. By April 1943, just five months later, much of the fence was taken down (Friends of Minidoka n.d. and NPS 2020).

Regardless of the fence location, however, for the survivors and their descendants, Minidoka has always extended well beyond the fence line. *Their* Minidoka includes the expansive and desolate sagebrush landscape surrounding the area, the agricultural labor encampments in nearby farms and homesteads occupied during peak harvest seasons, and the nearby routes and places of the fire brigade. It includes the areas where they collected greasewood, and the travel routes to and from. The fence line does not capture any of these many activities and places where they regularly resided, labored, lived, and even died while incarcerated. It does not appropriately define and delineate Minidoka. For them, the true historic footprint of Minidoka extends well beyond the fence.

2.5 Historically Significant Buildings and Structures

Barracks (e.g., the incarcerated living quarters) along with the guard towers, mess hall, school, other buildings are all significant physical features that accurately depict the internees' experiences at Minidoka. Specific to the barracks, the NPS noted that the lack of barracks in their original locations is certainly a significant concern (NPS 2006:7). Some of the original structures from the concentration camp period do remain, mostly found in the agricultural fields surrounding the living quarters and other related structures associated with farming and housing the labor. The integrity of these buildings and structures remains unknown, however. Algonquin's 2022 TCP report (Battaglia 2022) provides additional information about these contributing elements.

Additionally, the present-day agricultural buildings and structures continue to this story of the landscape. In many ways, you can't properly tell the story of incarceration without the agricultural development of the area. They are part and parcel to the historic landscape, serving to reinforce the longevity of the Japanese American community's impact to this area. These more modern agricultural buildings and structures, although not historic, are still a part of this agricultural landscape and contribute to the integrity of the Minidoka TCP. The story of Minidoka, and its historic significance, is tied into the story of agricultural development. Therefore, these more modern-day agricultural buildings and structures effectively help to tell the story of a major reason for Minidoka's existence: agricultural labor on nearby farms and farmland development.

2.6 Agricultural Labor in the Nearby Farms and Fields

The specific placement of Minidoka is embedded within a history of settler colonialism, western expansion, and importantly, agricultural projects like irrigation and farmland development. The United States government took an active role in settling the West through land and water legislation, intentionally working to develop the agricultural lands of this arid western region (Meger 2005:21-23). During the scoping period to assess the viability of areas for the camps, American Legion groups and chambers of commerce in south central Idaho were initially anti-Nikkei³, voicing discontent on the proposed placement of Minidoka. However, those opinions changed when the U.S. government lifted restrictions on crops, allowing farmers to double their sugar beet acreage. The citizens of Idaho soon realized that relocated Nikkei could then help with the harvest, and two sugar beet refineries almost immediately announced that they could use Nikkei labor (Meger 2005:88).

The ensuing exploitation of the Japanese American labor force, including child labor, is both unconstitutional and abhorrent, with clear links to other stains upon American history such as indentured servitude and slavery. Yet, its abhorrence should not be cause for erasure or silencing of this key part in the history and reason for Minidoka. Indeed, from its very onset, the purpose and placement of Minidoka was inseparably tied to the surrounding agricultural fields and canal improvements, meeting the underlying goals of agricultural land development

³ The term Nikkei was used to refer to a Japanese emigrant or a descendant who is not a citizen of Japan. It is commonly used in Japan to refer to people of Japanese ancestry that are living abroad.

in the region (Meger 2005:35). Specifically, these goals were met through farmland improvements and irrigation canals:

Finalized over several months, Bureau of Reclamation officials in the Department of the Interior and the Secretary of War created a Memorandum of Understanding allowing the use of public land in southern Idaho as a wartime relocation center. In the memorandum, the Bureau made available thousands of acres within the Gooding Division of the Minidoka Project. Among items in the agreement, the Bureau maintained the right to approve the WRA's land use programs and irrigation practices, and its "work programs of lateral construction and betterment, including measures for reduction of seepage losses in the Milner-Gooding Canal [Meger 2005:89].

Department of Agriculture head, Dillon Myer, noted that agricultural projects were particularly desirable due to high public interest, writing: "From the beginning we have been interested in public works and it strikes me that a work proposal which would carry to completion a program in which there is already a large public investment is particularly desirable." From the beginning, a clear link exists between the very existence of Minidoka and its main underlying purpose of agricultural development. Writing about this fact, Myer noted:

These areas were also selected because of the productiveness of the lands, because practically no displacement of local people was involved, and because the [land] development could be carried out with a minimum of critical materials. The labor for this development, as well as the production of foods, would be supplied by the evacuee population in these centers [Meger 2005:90-91].

Indeed, the link between the concentration camps and agricultural labor could not have been more explicit:

During the same early months of relocation, the period when Milton Eisenhower, head of the WRA, wished to help Nikkei relocate to cities and towns in the American interior, other members of the government acted to intern Nikkei in agricultural work camps [Meger 2005:89].

However, although the intention was to use the Nikkei labor force to develop large portions of southern Idaho into productive agricultural fields, the reality did not fulfill the initial estimates or expectations. In part, this was due to shortages of machinery and equipment experienced during war time, but it was also "due to the fact the 2,300 of the center residents worked in the southern Idaho harvest fields to help save needed food crops" (Meger 2005:91). Rather than wholly exploit this labor force for the development of new lands, administrators utilized incarcerated labor to save and further develop existing farmlands. These nearby farmlands, as places where incarcerated regularly worked and lived, contribute to and lie within the Minidoka TCP (see Figure 23, Figure 24, Figure 25, Figure 26, and Figure 27).



Figure 23: High school students from Minidoka pull onions on the project farm during “harvest vacation,” October 1943. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration from the Densho Digital Repository, available at: <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2019/9/2/minidoka/>.



Figure 24: Japanese Americans working on a farm surrounding the Minidoka concentration camp. Courtesy of the Densho Digital Repository with Description: Photograph, black and white glossy of a farm on the outskirts of the Minidoka internment camp. Workers are all women, five of whom are on the left side with one standing and two women squatting on the right. Other women are working in the back. (Info from original museum description) Japanese Americans raised livestock and grew produce such as potatoes, cabbages, and beans for camp consumption. Object ID: ddr-densho-39-12 (Legacy UID: denshopyd-i39-00012), Wing Luke Asian Museum Collection, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-39-12/>



Figure 25: Japanese Americans doing farm work near Minidoka. Courtesy of the Densho Digital Repository with Description: Photograph, black and white glossy of Minidoka internees doing farm work along the canal. All of the workers are men with their backs to the camera and with either hoes, pitchforks, or shovels in their hands. Looks like they are clearing sagebrush. Two road graders are in the background. (Info from original museum description) The Japanese Americans at Minidoka raised livestock and grew produce such as cabbages, potatoes, and beans for camp consumption. Object ID: ddr-densho-39-27 (Legacy UID: denshpd-i39-00027), Wing Luke Asian Museum Collection, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-39-27/>.



Figure 26: Minidoka incarcerated on a farm near Rupert, Idaho, within the Minidoka TCP, taken from Downey (2021).



Figure 27: Japanese American worker on a farm near Rupert, Idaho, within the Minidoka TCP. Photo taken from Downey (2021).

In fact, as was reported in an early WRA correspondence letter, Minidoka had a more successful outside farm labor campaign than any other concentration camp:

The Minidoka Relocation Center led the other nine in farm labor recruitment during the 1942 harvest season by placing approximately 2,300 persons in outside farm jobs (about 500 commuting to work from the center) out of a total center population of about 9,500 [WRA 1943:1].

Largely for this reason, three months after Minidoka opened, the *Minidoka Irrigator* – the newspaper at the camp – announced that more than 2,100 workers had helped harvest the sugar beet crops in the region, saving nearly 13 million tons of beets harvested in the region (Downey

2021). Sugar beets were one of the biggest crops in the area around Minidoka at that time and it remains an agricultural staple in the Magic Valley today. Incarcerees at the Minidoka concentration camp helped farm the sugar beets in the agricultural townships outside of the confinement site itself, helping to establish beets as an important part of Idaho's agricultural history and local economy (Friends of Minidoka n.d.; The Minidoka Irrigator 1942a; Stacy 2020).

A year later, 2,400 Minidoka residents worked in agriculture during the 1943 harvest. In fact, the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company actively sought Japanese incarceration labor, putting a four-column advertisement in the *Minidoka Irrigator* (Friends of Minidoka n.d.; The Minidoka Irrigator 1942a; Stacy 2020:39–40). For the concentration camp administrators and the federal agencies overseeing the operations, Minidoka and agricultural development went hand-in-hand:

The future of Minidoka lies in the 68,000 acres of sagebrush covered land on which the project is located. Most of this acreage is tillable and will soon be cleared for agricultural production. The first 200 acres which will be plowed will produce subsistence crops for the use of the center. Truck crops, tomatoes, corn, cereal, grains, beans, carrots, onions, and potatoes will be planted. The present policy on agricultural production will probably be to discourage the planting of farm commodities which will compete with the produce of the farms in the adjacent agricultural district. Surplus produce will be sent to other relocation centers [Tajiri n.d.:3].

Multiple passages in the early WRA correspondence letters similar to the one above link agricultural labor with Minidoka, underscoring the underlying purpose of both its location and push to move incarceration into the agricultural labor sector. This fact was noted by Robert C. Sims (2005:246-247) in his essay "The Free Zone Nikkei", writing that:

One issue concerning the wartime treatment of the Nikkei centers around their use as agricultural laborers. The enormous demand for farm workers had a lot to do with both the existence and the placement of the camps. Even before the large centers were open, imprisoned Nikkei were urged to leave the assembly centers to work in the agricultural areas of the intermountain West ...

The movement from the assembly centers to the large camps was essentially complete by late September 1942, just in time to meet the fall labor needs of the agricultural regions in which the camps were located. *In the harvest season of 1942, Minidoka led the camps in numbers on seasonal leave*, although most of the camps contributed. In fact, in most respects, the contributions made by workers released from the camps went a long way toward create[ing] a climate of acceptance for the Nikkei. As one historian has noted, "the Nikkei received praise from nearly all quarters and were credited with saving the beet sugar crop in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah." Repeat performances in subsequent years earned a great deal of respect for Japanese Americans [emphasis added].

For Minidoka, specifically, part of the push to get incarcerated into the local agricultural labor force was due wartime labor shortages combined with a need to harvest before it was too late:

...the foremost reason for the large movement of Minidoka evacuees into harvest work was the time element; the occurrence of the farm labor recruitment campaign in relation to the development of the project itself. The call off evacuees to relief the wartime shortage of normal farm workers and to save “food-for-freedom” crops came at the exact period that people were psychologically in a frame of mind to accept outside jobs ... the program moved forward slowly and then rapidly as the campaign gained momentum—more worker told those behind them to “come on”, little improvement in the center conditions did not tend to hold the residents there [WRA 1943:6-7].

Another factor, perhaps most unique to Minidoka, was simply that its location within Southern Idaho’s Snake River Valley made it much more accessible to local farmers seeking cheap labor. This fact, as noted previously, was not missed in the initial plans to determine placement of the concentration camps. As a WRA report noted:

Location of the [Minidoka Relocation] center ... made it easily accessible to farmers interested in recruiting evacuee labor and they could visit the center in person, talk with perspective employees and take them back to their farms with them in trucks or busses. The reports officer of the project provided daily and weekly newspapers in southern Idaho with timely information on the supply of farm workers at the center and the procedure for employing evacuee workers. The project director and other staff members made numerous appearances before civic and social groups which did much to clarify the farm labor relationship of the Minidoka center to southern Idaho [WRA 1943:8].

Generally, incarcerated worked in the surrounding farms near Minidoka often preferring the Farm Security Administration (FSA) camps located at Twin Falls, Rupert, Paul, Gooding, and Jerome, over the more limited and ramshackle housing provided by an employer on a local farm. Several of these larger and more permanent farm labor camps were already in existence well before the 1940s, set up by the FSA to support migratory families during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression. By WWII, Japanese Americans from the concentration camps, Filipinos, Haitians looking for refuge, and Mexicans mostly populated these farm labor camps, although Japanese Americans were the high majority in Southern Idaho due to the proximity of Minidoka. Due to extreme labor shortages, some Minidoka incarcerated were taken even farther afield:

Workers from Hunt went into 22 southern Idaho counties, namely Ada, Bannock, Bingham, Bonneville, Canyon, Cassia, Elmore, Franklin, Fremont, Gem, Gooding, Jefferson, Jerome, Lincoln, Madison, Minidoka, Oneida, Owyhee, Payette, Power, Twin Falls, and Washington [WRA 1943:10].

Emphasizing that much of the incarceration experience, for many incarcerated and their families, existed beyond the confines of the Minidoka concentration camp for much of the year, the WRA report concluded by stating:

While the number of farm workers who will remain out indefinitely beyond the harvest season and on year-round farm jobs is not known, families are being encouraged to join the head of the family working outside if his job is fairly permanent since this would enable the administration to reduce the size of the center and eliminate dining halls, boiler operations, etc., or provide space for additional evacuees from assembly centers or other W.R.M. centers [WRA 1943:13]

In some cases, incarcerated were transported back and forth to nearby farms almost daily:

Well, in the beginning we used to go do different farms to pick ... potatoes, mostly potatoes. Very scrawny, some farms are pretty scrawny. [Laughs] But they didn't have any workers. So, they wanted employees, and somebody to work out there.

And they, I guess they thought the value of us going out there to work and coming back again every night. Driving us out, bringing us back, they could do that. Concession was made, I guess. So, a lot of us, of our age, went out. And we picked straw-, I mean, potatoes [Shig Kaseguma Interview, Densho Digital Archive].

In other cases, temporary encampments would be set up during peak parts of the planting and harvest season. These camp locations varied depending on the work they were doing and the size of the farming operation. Some labor groups, for example, were housed in outbuildings on a farmer's property while others resided in "farm labor camps" that served several of the surrounding farms.

This led to the development of a seasonal leave program that allowed many of the incarcerated to regularly leave the concentration camp to work nearby farms, many residing in "farm labor camps" set up by the (see Figure 28). The commuting workers usually left in large groups, bussed to the nearby fields if they resided in Minidoka, or started their day early in one of the labor camps (Stacy 2020; Downey 2021).

According to "Uprooted: Japanese American Farm Labor Camps During World War II", a photo exhibit of farm labor camps by Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographer Russel Lee, the seasonal leave program allowed Japanese American incarcerated to address the shortage in agricultural labor present during the war:

To address the serious shortage of farm laborers, the seasonal leave program allowed Japanese Americans to leave assembly centers and concentration camps for agricultural work. To participate in the program, state and local officials had to provide assurances: officials would maintain order and guarantee the safety of the laborers, labor would be voluntary, imported labor would not compete with local labor, and employers would pay prevailing wages and provide housing and transportation [uprootedexhibit.com].



Figure 28: Many of the single men and families came to the Rupert, Idaho, camp from Minidoka, Heart Mountain, Manzanar, and Poston. The seasonal leave program drew a mix of people, some with previous agricultural experience and others without. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection, LC-USF34-073890-D. Image taken from Japanese American National Museum, <https://www.janm.org/exhibits/uprooted>.

Because of the multitude of local farms in the area, several farm labor camps existed just outside of Minidoka, located in Twin Falls, Burley, Filer, Hazelton (see Figure 29), and Shelly (see Figure 30), Idaho, connecting the incarcerated to the broader cultural landscape surrounding Minidoka. The Twin Falls camp, in fact, still exists today (see Figure 31). Speaking about the Twin Falls farm labor camp, James K. Tanaka, a survivor of the Minidoka concentration camp, recalled:

The farm labor camp south of Twin Falls was basically a U-shaped road and within that framework, there were the barracks, similar to the relocation center's barracks. Sleeping quarters, pot-bellied stove, beds, table and chairs in the rooms. And then the toilets and washbasins were in buildings between the two sets of, two rows of barracks. And then you had to go to a separate area where the hot water was located, to get showers and wash your clothes and sheets. So that's, the washtubs was located between the men's and women's shower facilities. And then attached to that building was the mess hall and the meeting room, because that's where I went to school [James K. Tanaka, <http://www.uprootedexhibit.com/their-stories/#/?profile=221>].



Figure 29: War food camp in Hazelton, Idaho.



Figure 30: The farm labor camp outside of Shelley, Idaho. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection, LC-USF34-073778-D. Taken from the *Japanese American National Museum*, <https://www.janm.org/exhibits/uprooted>.

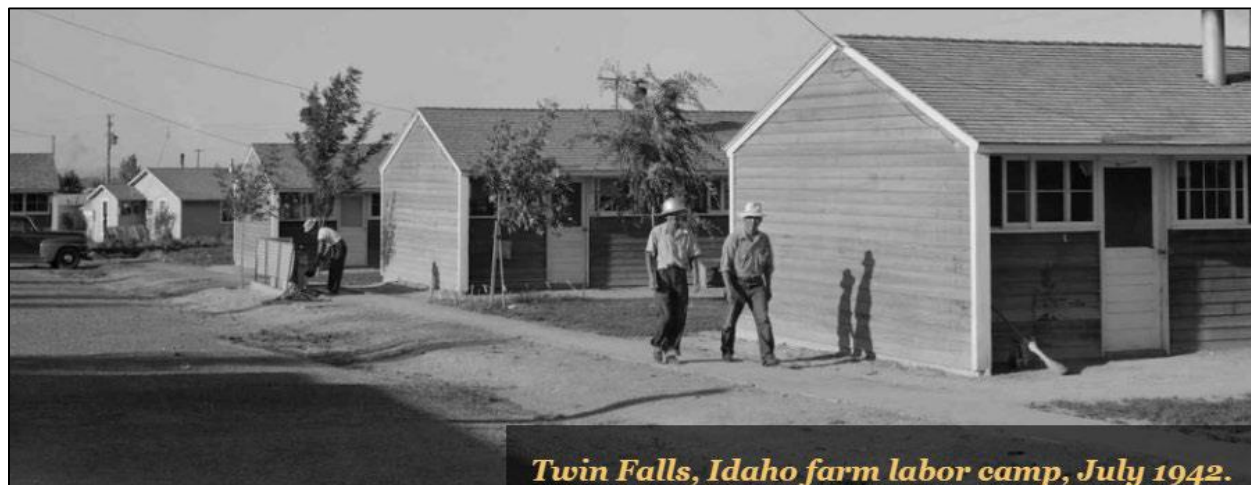


Figure 31: Twin Falls, Idaho, labor camp, image taken by Russell Lee, taken from “Uprooted Japanese American Farm Labor Camps During World War II”, uprootedexhibit.com.

The farm labor camp at Hazelton, Idaho, just southeast of Minidoka, held approximately 100 men and women, mostly boys and girls, during the 1943 harvest season. Multiple farmers in the area employed incarcerated workers staying in the Hazelton camp, although some expressed a preference to employ the workers at bayonet point underscoring the challenging and prejudiced conditions of work in the region (Beeson 1943:3). Joseph C. Beeson relayed in his report entitled “Report on the Investigation of Labor Trouble at Hazelton, Idaho” some of the discrimination experienced by the Japanese American workers at these labor camps:

Upon arrival in Hazelton, it was discovered that a very serious situation did exist ... The disgruntled farmers had become definitely aggravated with the situation to such a point that any incident would cause quite the flare-up. A crew of 9 evacuees [incarcerated workers from Minidoka] reported to work for Mr. Kunkle on November 2nd [1943] working throughout the day. On the morning of November 3rd, Mr. Kunkle called at the American Legion Hall, in Hazelton, which was occupied as a labor camp, to again pick up his crew to take them to the field. At this time one of the men of this crew informed Mr. Kunkle that many farmers were paying more per sack than the 10 cents they were receiving on his job and informed Mr. Kunkle the crew did not feel they could continue to harvest his crop unless he made the adjustment in wages to 15 cents per sack ...

The investigator spent considerable time attempting to reconcile the situation and did reach an agreement with Mr. Kunkle to raise the pay of the crew to 12 cents per sack, which had been determined to be the most common prevailing rate in the locality. [However], Mr. Kunkle refused to pay the workers the wages for the day they worked, using as justification that he had gone to considerable expense in transporting the workers from the [Minidoka Relocation] center to Hazelton [Beeson 1943:1-2].

Another farm labor camp was located just southwest of Minidoka and west of Twin Falls in Filer, Idaho. Speaking of his experience there, and recalling many Minidoka incarcerated workers, an incarcerated from Manzanar recalled:

[Interviewee: Shig Kaseguma]: *And then they said there's a place called Filer that had housing for workers that used to come through there before, I guess. Labor that used to come through, helping. So, we went to Filer and we had to cook for ourselves. Eat potatoes every day ... And then we used to go out to the different farms ... By that time, then, it got colder, we got sugar beets. Chopping. Yeah, harvesting sugar beets. We went there, we were driven out there and we stayed there. We lived out there in Filer [Idaho]. So, and they had showers like things. It was kind of a nice place. Not nice, but it was quite nice in the sense that we could do that, we had freedom. If we wanted, we could go to town. But we didn't have any money, so why should we go to town? [Laughs] Until we got paid.*

[Interviewer: Richard Potashin]: A lot of, a lot of folks from Minidoka --

[Interviewee: Shig Kaseguma]: *All of them went* [Densho Digital Archive Manzanar National Historic Site Collection, Title: Shig Kaseguma Interview, Narrator: Shig Kaseguma, Interviewer: Richard Potashin, Location: Las Vegas, Nevada, Date: November 6, 2007. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-32-transcript-cd66a974d3.htm>].

Another incarcerated also remembered the farm labor camp in Filer, Idaho:

One incident I remember, I went to Filer, I believe, was the town, very small town, couple blocks long as far as sidewalk goes. As soon as I got into town, I ran a block up and down, the hard concrete sidewalk. I missed that sidewalk in that short time being incarcerated, or rolling on the grass. There was a small lawn there. We had no grass, of course, in the camp. That really taught me that even though it was a short duration, (through) deprivation, (you can miss) simple things you miss. You don't appreciate till you miss it. And later on in life when I used to volunteer to meet with the minority inmates in Monroe Reformatory, (and) I could understand being locked up and not seeing the valley or the scenery. I could relate to that [Oral History Interview with Tsuguo Ikeda, available at: <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-123-transcript-4e6063f739.htm>].

Workers housed in permanent or mobile migratory labor camps were more likely to enjoy better living conditions than those on farms. At the Twin Falls camp, 15 miles west of the Minidoka Relocation Center, workers lived in barracks divided into 14-by-16-foot rooms with concrete floors. Rooms came furnished with two double-deck metal beds, a metal utility table with two folding chairs, a small woodburning stove for both heating and cooking, and laundry and shower facilities (Fiset 1999:133). In September 1942, a group of young workers from the Minidoka concentration

camp wrote from Shelley, Idaho, that “their bunks were in a boxcar and the weather was turning cold” (Fiset 1999:132-133).

Indeed, given the dearth of available supplies and speed in which many of these labor camps were erected, many of the accommodations were often ramshackle and bare:

The three room house was a copy 9’ by 21’ shack, a canvas tent, and a discarded, floorless chicken coop. The wood cook stove was placed outside by necessity since there was no other available space. No facilities of any kind were furnished for laundering. A large tin tub was provided, but the materials which were promised us were not given us – the only practical solution to bathing being to convert the tub into a Japanese style bath [Downey 2021].

Many of these farm labor camps (Twin Falls, Burley, Hazelton, and Filer, for example) and the farms they worked on are located within the Minidoka TCP. These areas became an integral and inseparable part of the incarcerated experience and fulfilled the underlying objective of Minidoka: to supply an inexpensive agricultural labor force to Southern Idaho. Each day, the Japanese American workers showed the appropriate permits and approvals as they exited the concentration camp to work on the farms. Life in the fields, however, was not much easier than life in the camp. In fact, days were long and conditions harsh, especially for those inexperienced in farm work:

With so many amateurs in the fields, accidents were inevitable. Mrs. Yae Kato, 46, formerly of Seattle, was run over and killed by a loaded beet truck in the field where she was working near Filer, Idaho. She left a husband, son, and a daughter.

The city people were not used to the stooping required in beet and onion topping, and it was not uncommon to see some workers crawling on hands and knees after the first day or so of stooping [WRA n.d.:3].

In an October 7, 1942, *Minidoka Irrigator* article entitled “Life in Onion Fields is No Bed of Roses”, Tadako Tamura, an incarcerated, described the harsh and long working conditions on the farms surrounding Minidoka where they worked:

This is not an easy life. It’s a strenuous day. It starts somewhere between 4:30 and 5 a.m. with the clanging of coal in ranges and the smell of coffee blending for the eye-opener. By 6:30 o’clock, 40 of us huddle in an open truck to be transported to the onion fields – some 30 minutes’ drive away.

With the dawn still to streak the skies, we gather about a field bonfire, fed by dried woods, trying to warm ourselves. Then in groups of twos and threes, we attack the onion fields leaving countless sacks behind us brimming with round onions. Some of us crawl on our hands and knees while some prefer to stand with bodices bent double and flexing with the rhythms of the work [Downey 2021].

Another survivor also emphasized the harsh, exploitative environment they worked in on the surrounding farms:

This was September 17, 1942. "I signed up to go to sugar beet picking with Kanaya, Sakakibara, Fujihara. Portland-only dance after Seattle-only. Worst dust storm so far, cooler yet. Stove brought in. Table added to room." Table. We had scrap lumber. "Worst dust storm so far." [Laughs] There was going to be many more.

So I got a group of friends from Portland church to go sugar beet topping. And so we went together, six of us. We lived in (a shack), and cooked our own meat, took turns. I remember one day -- in order to get the food, you had to go to town and get a ride from the owner. And we ended up having, just had ketchup and these little macaroni noodles. So we had a great dinner, cooking just those two for our main meal. And so, so we suffered, and didn't have much to eat, cold. One time I still remember was in November, it was snowing all the time, and it was cold. And the beet tops were just frozen to the ground, but the owner told us to get out there and still work. So like obedient workers, we went out there. And it got so impossible, that finally the owner said we could quit [Oral History Interview with Tsuguo Ikeda, available at <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-1000/ddr-densho-1000-123-transcript-4e6063f739.htm>].

Speaking about the long hours, low pay, and general harsh working conditions on the surrounding farms, David Sakura, a survivor of Minidoka, similarly emphasized:

Through my father's work on local farms, I have connections to the Magic Valley's agricultural heritage. Shortly after our arrival at Minidoka, even before the family had settled in their room in the barracks, a call came for volunteers to help farmers in the surrounding area. My father left with a group of 6 men from Minidoka to harvest the potato crop. They lived in migrant housing and had a cook that served meals with free Idaho potatoes. The pay was 8 cents a sack. My father proudly described his most productive day- "100 sacks – earning a princely 8 dollars". After the completion of potato harvest, he continued to volunteer as a day laborer, harvesting the sugar beet crop on nearby farms. The men worked until Thanksgiving Day when there was 6" of snow on the ground and the sugar beet crop was saved [David Sakura, personal communication, 2023].

Another survivor, Mary Abo, recalled this story about her two brothers working on the nearby farms:

My two teenage brothers found work outside Minidoka on a beet farm where they had to bend constantly to dig beets from endless rows. Driving back to Minidoka on the back of a farmer's truck, Bill told me that someone threw rocks at them. We could have died out there and nobody would care [Mary Abo, personal communication, 2023]

A descendant of survivors, Julie Yoshiko, recalled her Uncle working the nearby fields, and emphasized how integral they are to her idea of Minidoka:

I remember my Uncle Bill telling me the story of how he worked on a beet farm outside of camp and how it was really hard work in the fields. He had a special leave and would return to camp. They were harassed a few times by people who saw them. When I look out from the site, I think of my uncle and others out there working in the fields [Julie Yoshiko, personal communication, 2023].

Another descendant of survivors on both sides of her family, Erin Shigaki, also highlighted the role of Japanese American incarcerated in the southern Idaho agricultural labor force:

I reflect that Mitsuko's family, like so many other Japanese American families, were tenant farmers. They skillfully helped to cultivate the high desert land so that fresh vegetables could be added to the shamefully innutritious, often spoiled government food provided. The crops grown by Japanese Americans also fed American people beyond the prison camp [Erin Shigaki, personal communication, 2023].

Mike Ishii, another descendant, also spoke of his family working on the farms surrounding Minidoka, and their deep connection to these lands because of it:

My great uncles were all farmers and worked the fields surrounding Minidoka and Idaho during and after the war. They were prison laborers. Their sweat and life force are in the land. They made this land fertile for the benefit of a nation ... [Mike Ishii, personal communication, 2023].

One of the key components of land development in arid southern Idaho was establishing a system of irrigation. The Japanese American incarcerated were an integral part of this development effort. So much so, in fact, that many farms today owe their existence, at least in part, to the efforts of the incarcerated to bring water to extremely dry land (see Figure 32). Noting this effort, albeit condescendingly, Arthur Kleinkopf, Superintendent of Education at the Minidoka Relocation Center, wrote in his diary:

The farm supervisor is having great difficulty getting laborers to properly care for irrigation water. Running water in an irrigated country needs attention at various times during the day and even at night. If the water breaks through the ditch bank or the corrugations become clogged with refuse, immediate attention is needed. The residents here [in reference to incarcerated at Minidoka forced into working], however, throw down their tools at 11:30 and go home for lunch regardless of whether or not the ditch is broken. They seem more concerned about their working hours and their refreshments than they do about the farm and the farm crops [Kleinkopf 1943:63].

Several local farmers by the name of Gurling, Bauer, Bickard, and Griffith found the labor so profitable, in fact, they wrote a letter in the *Minidoka Irrigator* where they "sincerely hoped that in

the future a program may be worked out between the farmers of Southern Idaho and the War Relocation Authority so that this relationship may continue” (Downey 2021).

Present-day owners of farms near Minidoka recall Japanese Americans working on their farm, mentioning the route along Highway 25 that was often taken:

The farm is located 5 1/4 miles east of Hazelton, Idaho. The Highway 25 was used to access the route to and from the Minidoka site. The transpiration was the family vehicle. Six people could be transported in the car. An agreement between the Minidoka Camp Superintendent and W.H. Vaughn, Sr., owner of the Greenwood Farm, to allow the camp residents coming to help with crops to drive the vehicle to and from the camp. The reason was to be more efficient moving the labors. Planting of carrot tubers, onions, hoeing of beans, sugar beets, stacking alfalfa hay and the harvest of the said crops where all items that were aided by the Japanese work force. The time frame was during the 1942 to 1945 years, during WWII [Joan Davies, personal communication, November 2023].



Figure 32: Field Irrigation outside Minidoka. Original WRA caption: Irrigation of a new field adjacent to the Minidoka Relocation Center is started within a short time after the area was cleared of sagebrush. Image available at the Densho Digital Repository, Object ID: ddr-densho-37-701 (Legacy UID: denshopd-i37-00701), Parent Collection: National Archives and Records Administration Collection, <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-37-701/>.

Another local farm within the Minidoka TCP also recognized the labor of the Japanese Americans:

The Prescotts – local ranchers and farmers – spoke about how the Japanese left the camps to save the crops during harvest time when there was a shortage of labor. Much later, for years after, the Prescott family hosted a BBQ lunch for the Minidoka Pilgrimage attendees in appreciation for what the Japanese did years ago to save the Prescott business [Lawrence Matsuda, personal communication, 2023].

The map below, from the Uprooted Exhibit, shows counties in southern Idaho that participated in the seasonal leave program, encircling the Minidoka concentration camp (see Figure 33). These counties, including Jerome, Lincoln, Blaine, and Minidoka, and the many farms present in this region of Idaho, deeply tie the Japanese Americans to the larger surrounding area.

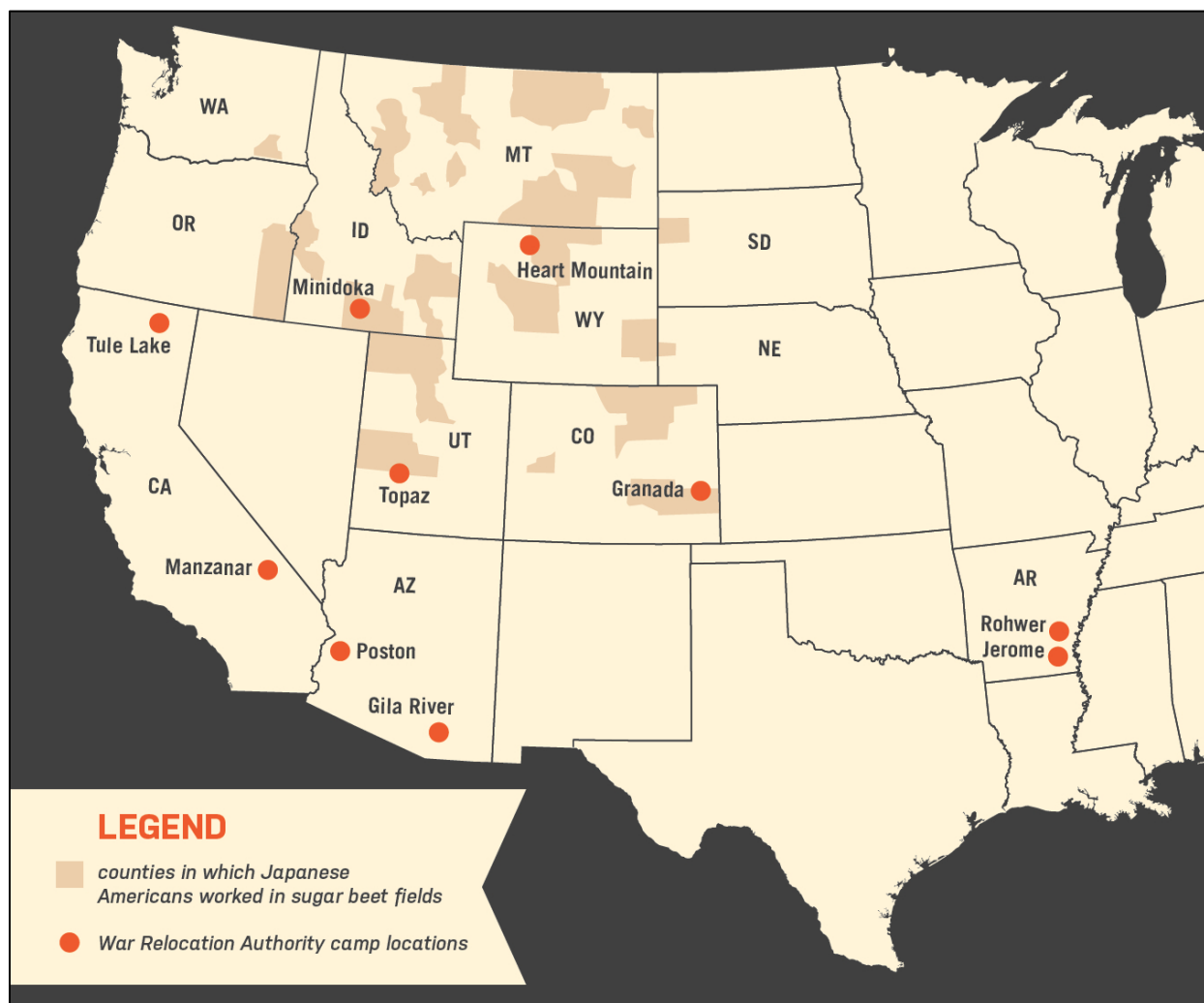


Figure 33: Counties in southern Idaho that participated in the seasonal leave program, including farms in Jerome, Lincoln, Blaine, and Minidoka Counties, Idaho. Image taken from Uprooted: Japanese American Farm Labor Camps During WWII: <http://www.uprootedexhibit.com/farm-labor-camps/>.

Agreements between the Minidoka Camp Superintendent and local farm owners were not uncommon, underscoring the expanded area of the Japanese American incarceration experience; regular activities were not contained entirely within the historic footprint but included a wider surrounding area. In either case, however, agricultural labor was intrinsically linked to the placement and purpose of the concentration camps; it was, in many respects, their *raison d'être*. Minidoka was no exception. Because incarcerated labor used to develop the surrounding land was always a major goal at Minidoka, it serves to underscore the fact that, for the incarcerated, the presently defined historic footprint is too narrow of a demarcation and erases an important part of the story; for the incarcerated, the area of their lived experience and shared pain and trauma included the nearby farmlands. So much so, in fact, that the incarcerated labor force contributed significantly to the Nation's overall harvest:

Nikkei workers contributed significantly to the nation's sugar harvest. Just how significantly may never be known because of the way agriculture statistics were compiled. Nonetheless, in the six states where the numbers of volunteers were most concentrated,⁶⁸ the total beet acreage harvested in 1942 was approximately 467,000 acres, or 49 percent of the national total. Using a sugar company manpower estimate of one laborer to top and load each 10 acres, the 8,000 workers from assembly and relocation centers harvested 80,000 acres, or approximately 17 percent of the crop in those six states. In Idaho, where some 1,850 Minidoka Relocation Center workers were employed, the percentage was higher: 24 percent of 78,000 acres - 255,000 tons of sugar beets. Because an unknown number of volunteers from other relocation centers also helped bring in Idaho's fall harvest, the percentage was likely higher [Fiset 1999:134].

After Minidoka closed, the legacy of the Japanese American labor lived on in Southern Idaho:

Because the land was arid and almost uninhabitable, the US government tried to give it away to homesteaders before the war, but no one could make a go of it. But the Japanese built canals and irrigated by taking water from the Snake River to bring the land and nearby area to life. After the war, the rich farmland created was valuable and the US government gave sections of it to returning US vets through a lottery. No Japanese American vets got any of the land in the lottery [Lawrence Matsuda, personal communication, 2023].

The excerpts, testimonies, and historical accounts included above are a small subset of the historical documentation that exists. Much of it describes a widespread use and occupancy of lands surrounding the Minidoka concentration camp. These accounts serve to demonstrate that, during the period of their incarceration, Japanese Americans were integrally connected to the agrarian history and agricultural development of the lands surrounding the concentration camp in Southern Idaho. It was, in many ways, the *rai-son d'être* of Minidoka: to supply agricultural labor to the region. Because many of these small, family-owned farms resided near Minidoka, these lands effectively became part of the incarcerated's lived experience. For many months out of the year, the lives of many incarcerated consisted of traveling to the farms or living in the more

permanent labor camps and planting, tending, and harvesting crops. For the survivors and descendants, *their* Minidoka is not one confined to the present-day 33,000-acre historical footprint. Rather, it is one that includes *both* the concentration camp as well as the surrounding farmlands and shrublands. These stories, experiences, trauma, and memories inform and help to contextualize the TCP boundary presented in this addendum report.

2.7 Canals

Much of the farmland irrigation would not have been possible without the work done by incarcerated at Minidoka. Their back-breaking labor helped to construct a lateral from the Milner-Gooding Canal, located more than five miles northwest of the concentration camp. The Milner-Gooding Canal provided water for both Minidoka and for the crop fields at Minidoka (Meger 2005:1-2) (see Figure 34, Figure 35, Figure 36, Figure 37, and Figure 38). This, of course, was no small feat, requiring weeks of intensive digging. In a brief account of this effort, Larry S. Tajiri, a camp administrator, recorded in his report entitled “Minidoka: Preliminary Report in a New Frontier Community”:

The Miller-Gooding Canal, which diverts water from the Snake River, flows through Minidoka. The canal is five miles away from the barrack city, but two hundred colonists are already at work on a shallow ditch which will bring enough water from the Miller-Gooding canal to water down the dust problem. This ditch is on its way. Last Saturday, 5000 foot of it had been scooped out of the desert. In two weeks it is hoped that the ditch will have reached the barrack homes of Minidoka. Then grass will be planted [Tajiri n.d.:2].

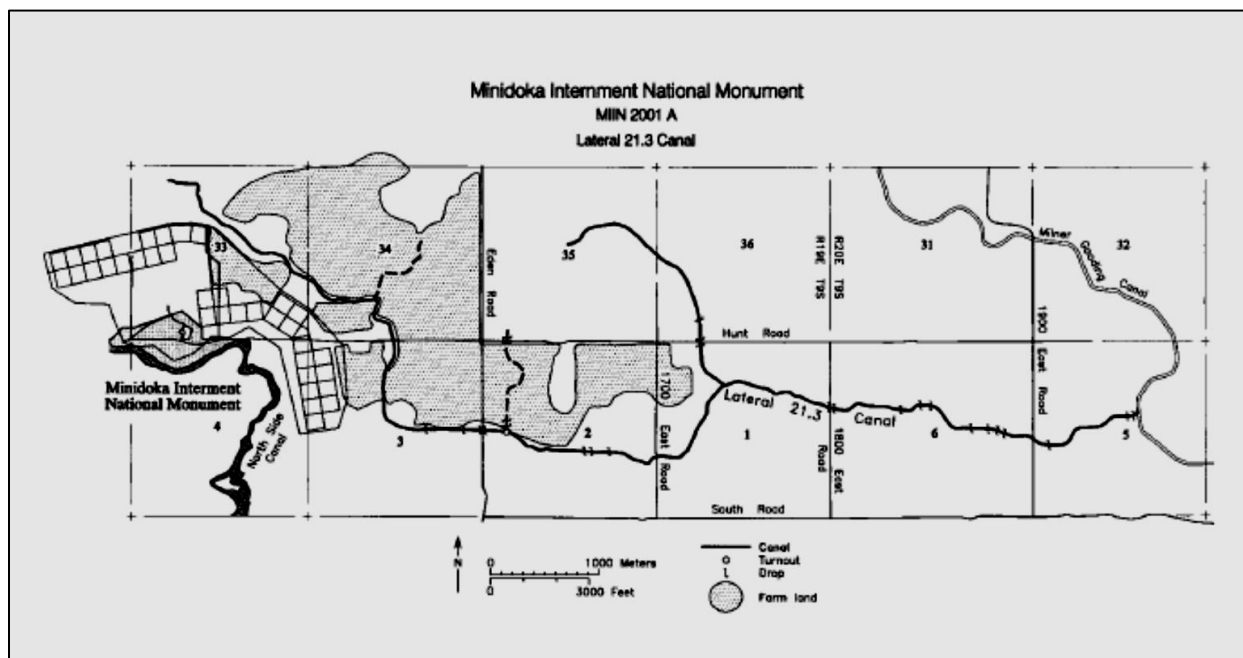


Figure 34: Canal drops and War Relocation Authority farm fields at Minidoka (Western Archeological and Conservation Center), taken from Meger 2005:2, Archives and Records Administration.

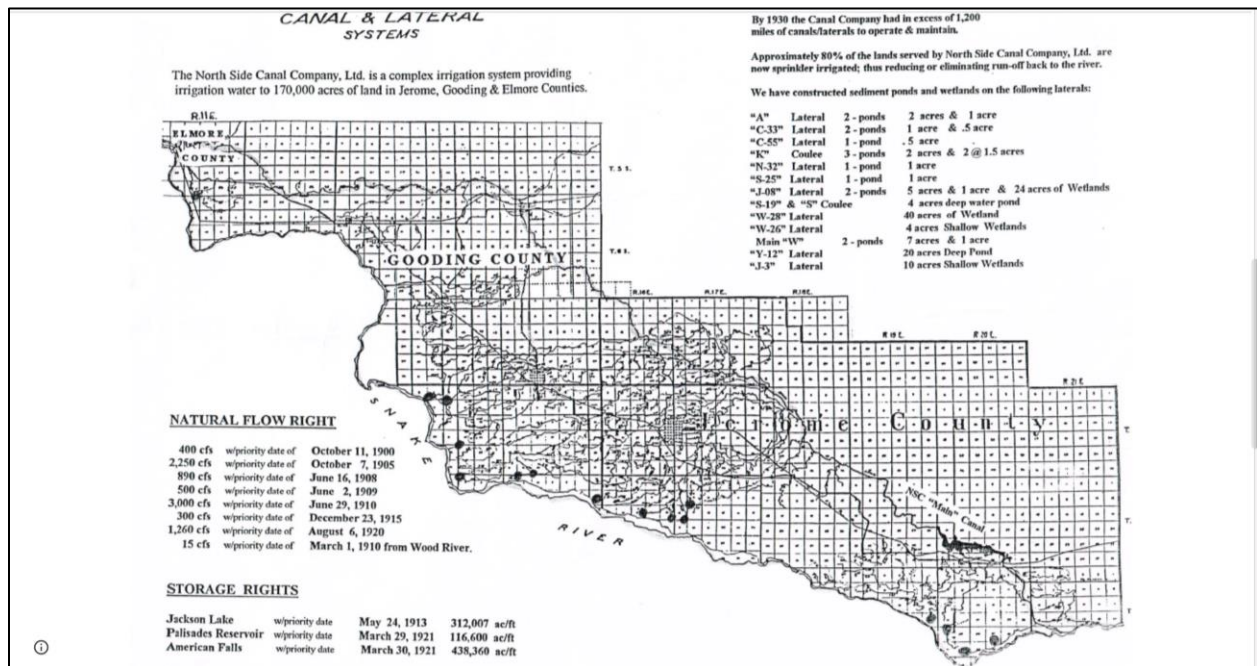


Figure 35: Map of canal system near Minidoka.



Figure 36: Irrigation ditch construction near the Minidoka concentration camp. Image available at the Denso Digital Repository, Object ID: ddr-fom-1-805 (NARA ID: 210-CMA-IC-6), Parent Collection: War Relocation Authority, Minidoka Collection, <https://ddr.denso.org/ddr-fom-1-805/>. Courtesy of the National Archives.

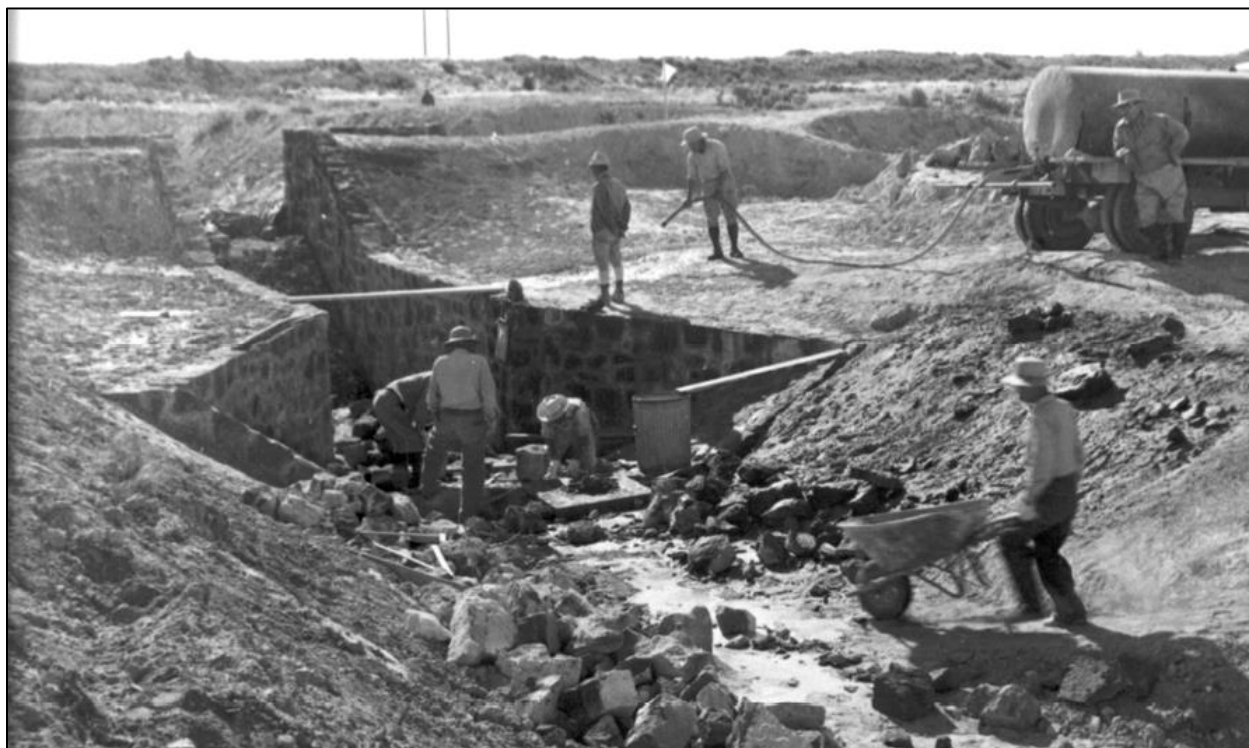


Figure 37: Nikkei working on canal drop at Minidoka, date and photographer unknown, circa 1943. Originally from the Minidoka Manuscript Collection, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument), found in the National Park Service's Historic Resource Study, Minidoka Internment National Monument (Meger 2005:1).

For many incarcerated, working on the canal and on the irrigation was a big part of their lived experience. Their Minidoka was always tied to working and “keeping busy”:

In Minidoka, I kept pretty much busy. First chance we had, during the harvest, I went out with my brother and so on, went out during the harvest, we picked apples and then potatoes and sugar beets, worked in that. Then winter we'd come back in and then I find a job doing things. One year I worked in the warehouse, another year I helped my dad on the irrigation, another year when I came back I worked, I cleaned all the chimneys in the barracks, all the barracks in the whole camp and went in the other [Oral History Interview with Dan Hinatsu, available at <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-one-7/ddr-one-7-60-transcript-27751b15aa.htm>].

Irrigation, and the agricultural benefits derived from it, is a legacy that the Southern Idaho farming community still benefits from today. They owe their success and the productivity of the region, at least in part, to the Japanese American incarcerated who helped to build the irrigation system. The Minidoka TCP boundary includes these irrigation canals and the associated buildings, structures, and features because they are a key part of the story of Minidoka and featured in the lives of many incarcerated. In addition to the concentration camp itself, their Minidoka was one of back-breaking labor that occurred in the fields and farms surrounding the camp.

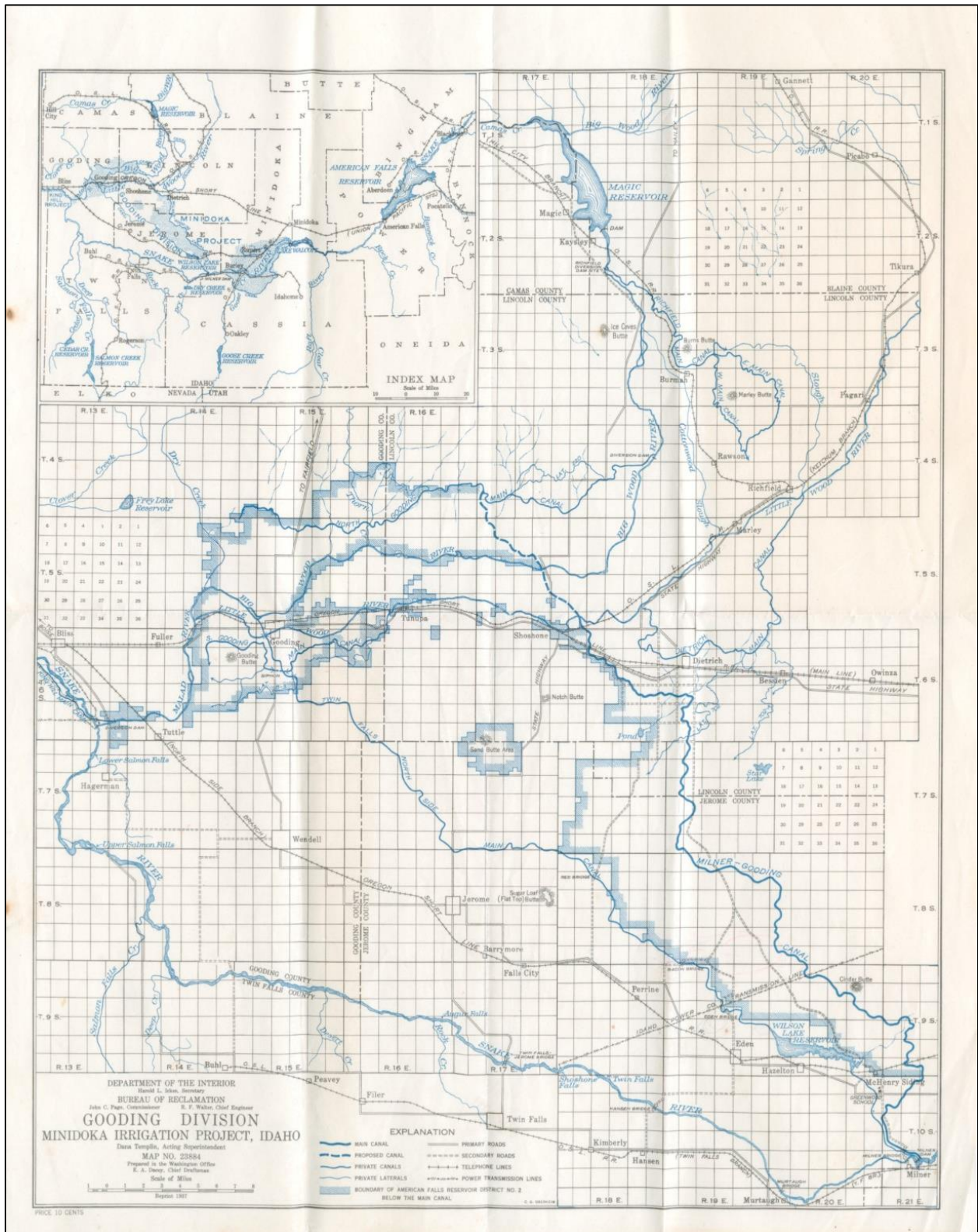


Figure 38: Map of the Minidoka irrigation project.

2.8 Range Fire Fighting

In addition to working on the nearby farms, incarcerated also worked to suppress range fires in the surrounding areas around Minidoka. Speaking of his experience fighting these fires, Nomi Mitsuoka, a survivor of the Minidoka concentration camp, wrote in his book *Nisei Odyssey*:

During the summer months, we would be called upon by Jack Keith of the US Grazing Service in Shoshone to help in the suppression of range fires. Several of these fires were extensive and required our being out of the center for several days.

On these large fires, we would set up cooking facilities. On occasion we would have 20 or more men out on the fire line ...

[One day] we had a large fire and the men were out there for a week. The fire was started by the crash of a bomber on the bombing range NE of Shoshone. Before it was contained it burned 300,000 acres. The first night we were on a butte putting out some burning grass and we could see flames here and there in the distance.

We set up our basecamp east of Shoshone possibly halfway to the town of Minidoka (not the relocation center). There on the remains of the concrete foundations of some building by the side of the road, we set up our kitchen [Mitsuoka 1996:205].

Mitsuoka also highlighted fighting range fires near Shoshone, Idaho, within the Minidoka TCP:

If you visit the site of the Minidoka Relocation Center, hunt, Idaho, and drive north toward the town of Shoshone, you will see to the right of the highway a gradual rise in the terrain which terminates in a small mountain peak.

It was our understanding while we were at the Center that a Lookout Station for the Grazing Service was located at the top of that peak. From there the observer could take in the whole of the area where the Relocation Center was located and then some.

Therefore it was no surprise to have a ranger from the Grazing Service come into the camp when we had a range fire in the general area. Although lightning may set an occasion range fire, I believe man is the primary cause. There were areas near the Relocation Center that never burned while we were at the Center and it was probably because they were remote enough that no one would venture there.

I can't remember which was the first range fire we attempted to control but one of the earliest occurred about a mile outside of the gate. When it was reported to us we took a crew to see what we could do to control it. We were quite new at this and found out right away that without water to aid you an only a shovel and dirt to thrown on a burning area, range fire fighting could be hazardous.

With no one to show us how, we tackled the burning brush with out regard to wind direction. When the wind kicked up a little and the fire turned toward us and the sage brush began to flare with flames ten feet high or so we learned right away that we didn't know what we were doing and got out of there.

We had one fire that may have been evacuee caused because it burned eastward close to the canal and housing area. Or it could have started close to the road to Twin Falls outside of the center and burned toward the housing area. The range fires generally covered a large area and one could not always take it all in visually.

I think it was about the time of this fire that we began to have some rapport with the rangers from the Grazing Service out of Shoshone, Idaho [Mitsuoka 1996:191].

In fact, Japanese American incarcerated played an integral role in the suppression of these range fires so that the land could be used post-war:

They told us of the need to suppress these fires because in that area a bad burn could set the area back a hundred years as far as usefulness to man is concerned. The area is all what you call desert ... I suppose you might wonder why we should be concerned about saving the range lands with the war going on and our being taken into custody and treated like enemy aliens. My thoughts were that peace would eventually come and land use must be saved for that day [Mitsuoka 1996:192].

Speaking about specific areas where range fires were fought, Mitsuoka added that they informally worked on range fires in the U.S. Grazing Service, Shoshone office's jurisdiction:

In aiding the Grazing Service, we worked on fires as far north as Halley, close to Gooding on the West and East to the area between Craters of the Moon National Monument and the town of Minidoka ... in Rupert or Burley and we helped fight a fire or two in that area. We also aide the National Forest people in one fire where we could look down on the American Falls Reservoir [Mitsuoka 1996:193].

In another story of range firefighting in the surrounding area outside Minidoka, Mitsuoka recalled:

On one of our range fire fighting trips out of the Minidoka Relocation Center, Hunt, Idaho, we worked on a fire north of the town of Minidoka which is about 35 miles or so ENE of the Relocation Center. The Union Pacific main line to the coast passed through this area and on the west through Shoshone to the coast [1996:187].

Range firefighting, like the farm labor and other activities, expanded the incarcerated experience well beyond the 33,000-acre "historic footprint" which never served as the true boundary. Their experience include the many years' worth of labor in the surrounding farms and shrublands.

2.9 Soundscape

The soundscape at Minidoka is an important element to the Japanese American community. During its historic use, Minidoka was undoubtedly full of the noises of prison camp life, although there were certainly times out in the surrounding fields when silence was more present. Now, however, the natural silence and stillness of the environment is what instills a reflective state of mind. It helps those visiting the site gaze inward and reflect upon the memories, stories, and emotions of those who were imprisoned there:

It is very quiet at MNHS [Minidoka National Historic Site], especially if you wander away from any others who might around. The VC [Visitors Center] is located on higher ground than that to the north, east and west so the vista is amazing. There are mountains to the north and southeast – actually really beautiful. MNHS doesn't seem far because it's only a 25-minute drive from my house, but the approach is a windy, narrow road and first I see the North Side Canal looming, then around a curve the guard tower replica comes into view. It's hard to explain the feeling I get seeing it. A type of dread almost. But a sense of isolation, remoteness, loneliness, fear, hopelessness, and helplessness all come to mind [Janet Keegan, personal communication, 2022].

Now, the power of the soundscape at Minidoka is one of reflective silence and reverence characteristic of a memorial:

A site of dread had been transformed to a place of historic significance and a co-existing site for small farms and homes. The vast expanse of land as far as one can see still allows for quiet reflection and reverence for people using the land, not abusing the land [Mary Abo, personal communication 2023].

Ensuring the soundscape continues unobstructed and unimpacted by development, especially disturbances from large construction projects, is deeply important to maintaining the integrity of soundscape. Agricultural noises, of course, are part of the story of Minidoka. But in between those noises, sounds of silence help to bring the Japanese American community inner peace and catharsis from the trauma of the past.

2.10 Historic Cemetery

The Minidoka concentration camp also had a cemetery located outside the barbed wire fence (see Figure 39). During the use of the camp between 1942 and 1945, a recorded 193 people died and were buried at this cemetery (Friends of Minidoka n.d.). Service members who passed while serving in the U.S Armed forces were also provided funerals at Minidoka (see Figure 40). As far as is presently known, all individuals have been disinterred and reburied elsewhere although there is certainly a chance other unrecorded burials exist. Beyond this, however, although those who were buried have been removed, the cemetery is still a place strongly tied to their ancestors. The trauma of hopelessness, death, and loss is now a part of that land, and because of this, continues to be a sacred space for many descendants (*sensu* subsection 2.11 *Spiritual Landscape and Sacred Space* below).

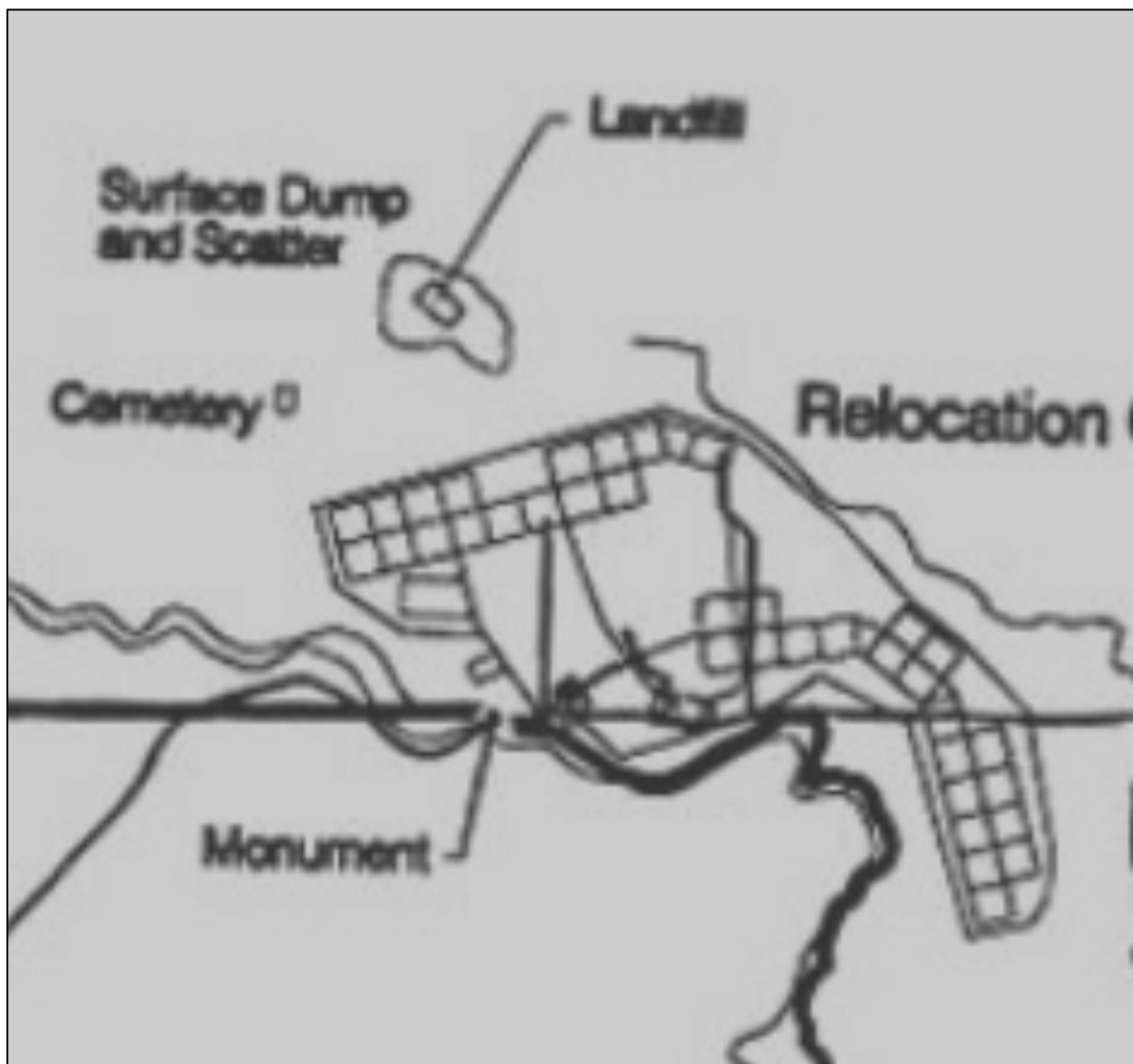


Figure 39: Map of the historic cemetery within the Minidoka concentration camp.

Speaking about the cemetery, and this connection to ancestors, Fred Sakura noted:

I was well on my way to middle age before I was told my mom's mother committed suicide in our barracks by hanging herself using my diapers tied together to make a noose. I was told she was afraid that she would be sent back to Japan. She was one of nearly 200 Japanese Americans who died in Minidoka – many of whom were elderly or infants. The largest number of Minidoka photographs in the Densho Digital Archives are of funerals.

On my last visit to Minidoka National Historic Site, I asked where the cemetery was where my grandmother was buried. I was informed that a contractor was

hired who disinterred all remains and shipped them elsewhere and the cemetery is no more.

Even though my grandmother's remains were removed, I have a deep emotional bond to Minidoka. Visits to Minidoka are more than a visit to my birthplace. They are visits to a sacred place and the spirit of my grandmother who was so distraught that she believed that death was a better place than being in a prison in Idaho. There, she was asked to renounce her allegiance to the emperor while prohibited from becoming a citizen at the same time her sons were serving in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. While fighting for freedom, one of her sons was missing in action and was captured and held as a POW [Fred Sakura, personal communication, 2023].



Figure 40: Reverend L.H. Tibesar, Maryknoll missionary assigned to work with the Catholic group at the Minidoka Relocation Center, conducts a grave side service at the little cemetery cleared out of the sage land adjacent to Minidoka Relocation Center, Hunt, Idaho, taken from the National Archives and Records Administration Collection/DENSHO DIGITAL ARCHIVE.

Currently, the site of the cemetery is located on private land within the historic footprint of the Minidoka Relocation Center. According to descendants, the local farmer continues to steward the site of the cemetery, helping to preserve part of the Minidoka story.

2.11 Spiritual Landscape and Sacred Space

Because of the trauma and loss woven into the TCP, the traditional cultural landscape carries a higher level of sacredness, or *ki*. The concept of *ki*, within Japanese worldviews, can best be correlated to spirit or energy within western ontologies. It is a complex and somewhat elusive concept that is often felt and experienced. Generally, places with powerful *ki* are sites with natural wonders, religious and ceremonial spaces, sites of strong ancestral, familial, or personal connection, and places, especially in the case of Minidoka, of trauma and pain:

Our ancestors are buried there. My mother's childhood was spent there and her resonance is indelibly marked upon the land. It is very personal. It is a gathering place of spirits. Minidoka with all its resonance of violence is also where we belong. We left a part of our family Ki in that place. We are now joined. I felt this even as I drove through the fields before arriving at Minidoka. This place is sacred. It holds ancestral connections for us in the entire area beyond the barbed wire fences. The imprint is not confined to a barrack, a block, or the exact footprint of the site. It is the entire area. Our ancestors Ki is there, and they come to greet us there as if to hold this space for our collective grieving and as a place to now gather to heal. Any space like this has a resonance to it. We must protect these kinds of places for humanity [Mike Ishii, personal communication, 2023].

Importantly, *ki* is not contained to the presently defined historic footprint which, for the incarcerated and their lived experience, is rather meaningless. Rather, *ki* is present in the fields where they worked on the farms, in the sagebrush lands where they fought range fires, in the places where they lived and where they died:

I also tried to locate the area where my mom and her family lived inside Minidoka, feeling the spirits of my ancestors come to greet me in gratitude and feeling my own relief at finding them. They accompanied me through the place. And as I gazed out across the fields I imagined the spot where my great uncle's body was found after he froze to death, miles outside the barbed wire during a blizzard. I mourned him there. Others told me stories of how their family members had gone on search parties trying desperately to find my great uncle. I felt the love and interconnection of many families struggling to survive. I could sense their Ki spread out across the landscape, searching and calling for my uncle. It is part of the permanent weaving of sorrow and trauma across this landscape [Mike Ishii, personal communication, 2023].

For the survivors and their descendants who continue to grapple with the intergenerational trauma, Minidoka has become a memorial to the survivors' experiences; it has become a sacred landscape:

There is an aura that this is a sacred place, a place to confront the trauma experienced by grandfather and great-grandmother and all the other incarcerated, and to eventually get some sense of healing and peace [C. Kanako (Egashira) Kashima, personal communication, 2023].

Sacredness is wrapped up into all elements of the TCP: the adjoining lands beyond the historic footprint, the soundscape, and particularly the viewshed:

As a community, Japanese Americans have fought desperately hard since we began coming to these shores in the late 1800s. We fought so hard for our humanity in those early immigration years, and we fought so hard to survive this mass incarceration experience. We fought so hard to get redress and apology to start the healing process for our elders. And then we fought so hard to make Minidoka a historic site and to make it – in the eyes of the nation – a legitimate place. And now we're fighting so hard to keep a giant wind farm off of our sacred viewshed [Erin Shigaki, personal communication, 2023].

Indeed, as noted earlier, it is a sacred and interconnected landscape that extends well-beyond the presently defined historic footprint; to limit the property to the historic footprint effectively erases much of its sacredness, silences the stories, trauma, and experiences that occurred beyond that footprint, and weakens its powerful didactic message:

Minidoka TCP is a sacred, traditional cultural landscape for me and my descendants. Protecting the TCP is critical to maintaining Japanese American traditional cultural identity and connecting our past with our future.

Sacred Sites-Place of Worship. I was fortunate to attend an early pilgrimage and hope to attend next year's Pilgrimage. As described by Jane Naomi Iwamura, pilgrimages turn incarceration sites into places of worship to honor our ancestors and ensure that mass incarceration does not happen again [David Sakura, personal communication, 2023].

For most, the sacredness of the landscape and the retention of its character defining features like the soundscape and viewshed can help them reconnect with the past and heal in the present:

During the time I spend in that historic space, when I walk on the dusty ground, breathe the dry air and feel the desert heat and wind, I try to imagine what it was like for my family and me and the 13,000 other prisoners that were incarcerated there [Eugene Minoru Tagawa, personal communication, 2023].

Similarly:

When I travel to Minidoka and beyond the historic footprint of the prison camp, I'm a pilgrim experiencing the viewshed's vast nothingness. I understand the landscape characteristics that contribute to the site's historic significance. And, I feel close to my father who passed away in 1980 [Cathy Kiyomura, personal communication, 2023].

All aspects of the TCP – or the sacred spiritual landscape – are important and an integral part of the memorializing and healing process. Later in the same correspondence, Cathy Kiyomura further noted:

When I travel to Minidoka and its viewshed (the vast isolated surrounding area) I experience history and feel close to my father and other family members who were unjustly imprisoned there. These are sacred places where the unconstitutional imprisonment of Americans of Japanese ancestry can be remembered and memorialized by survivors and descendants, but also by all Americans who need to know the complete history of our Nation [Cathy Kiyomura, personal communication, 2023].

The pilgrimages and other events that occur with regularity at Minidoka underscore the ongoing significance and sacredness of the site to the descendant community (see Figure 41).



Figure 41: 2016 Minidoka Pilgrimage, attended by some of the original incarcerated and descendants, photo courtesy of the Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee.

These pilgrimages also demonstrate the desire and need for continued reflection and introspection, for continued processing of the multigenerational trauma and loss, for ongoing commemoration of those who suffered at the site, and eventually, steps toward healing:

As an adult, I have gone on two prior pilgrimages to Minidoka. I went on the first pilgrimage to gain an understanding of what the last years of my mother's life at Minidoka had been like, hoping to meet someone who actually knew her. The isolation and desolation of the Minidoka landscape and viewshed was a bit shocking. It was also heartbreaking to think that this was the bleak prison that my mother had to endure as her life was coming to an end. It seemed as if the country had intentionally buried my family in an isolated place where we would conveniently become invisible. Not surprisingly, I came away from that pilgrimage still emotionally unsettled about the premature death of my mother.

My second pilgrimage to Minidoka in 2017 was different. The most important thing that I learned during that pilgrimage was that a large number of babies had died during their first year at Minidoka. This hit me like a sledgehammer and told me that my mother must have really loved me if she was able to keep me alive as a baby without running water in our barrack and months of blistering heat and arctic cold.

It also allowed me to transform my prior negative reaction to the isolation of Minidoka. Instead of it being a source of anger, I now found its isolation and lack of distractions as connecting me to the love I had received from my parents while in Minidoka. Its very isolation now allowed me to view the camp differently as a place of hallowed ground. And from this, after 70 years, I finally found closure with the death of my mother [Comments by Teiko Saito, available at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RSOKMj3aFT-gor6NSFMuKmd3hxRv-KQLC6oxl0ptCIQ/edit?usp=sharing>].

3.0 Redefining the Historic Footprint

For the survivors and descendants, Minidoka, as they understand and define it, is so much more than the present-day historic footprint. Minidoka is the viewshed, it is the soundscape, it is the surrounding farms, and it is the sagebrush shrubland; in a word, it is the *landscape*. For this reason, the historic footprint (as presently defined) is much too narrow a property boundary to capture all of these landscape elements. The narrower boundary effectively erases much of the lived experience of the incarcerated, what made it Minidoka. Lawrence Matsuda, who was born in the Minidoka Concentration Camp during World War II and has returned numerous times as part of the Minidoka Pilgrimage, noted this very thing regarding the historic footprint, as presently defined:

The historic footprint does not represent the extent of how Minidoka imprisoned and tethered the incarcerated beyond the physical boundaries of the camp. Effectively Minidoka's reach exceeded its grasp ... The incarcerated also left the camps and provided labor to save the sugar beet crop. Had they not done so, many of the current farmers and their descendants would not have farms and the town of Twin Falls would have suffered or disappeared [Lawrence Matsuda, personal communication, 2023].

Indeed, as Matsuda explains, the fenced "boundary" of Minidoka – what is referred to as the present-day historic footprint – is an artificial construct, a delineation of the oppressor that is not grounded in the day-to-day, lived experiences of the Japanese American survivors and descendant community:

The artificial nature of the Minidoka boundaries are exemplified by the fact that there were "inside the fence Japanese" and "outside the fence Japanese" who lived in the Twin Falls area. The "outside the fence" people were free because they lived outside of the exclusion zone. Ironically, they lived near Minidoka where Japanese/Japanese American were imprisoned behind barbed wire because of their race and geographical location of their West Coast homes.

The outsiders have stories of their lives at and beyond the viewshed [Lawrence Matsuda, personal communication, 2023].

Indeed, as another descendant explained, Minidoka extends beyond the historic footprint to areas touched by the viewshed. The viewshed is an integral landscape characteristic that helps to define and delineate the TCP:

When I travel to Minidoka and beyond the historic footprint of the prison camp, I'm a pilgrim experiencing the viewshed's vast nothingness. I understand the landscape characteristics that contribute to the site's historic significance.

To prison camp survivors, descendants, and ALL Americans, the Minidoka viewshed is sacred and must be preserved as a TCP and included in the NRHP because it is an important part of the immersive learning experience of historic Minidoka – doing so will help ensure that such events will never, ever happen again [Cathy Kiyomura, personal communication, 2023].

This viewshed does not end at the historic footprint but extends to the horizon. Minidoka effectively ends at the skyline, the full extent of the viewshed:

In 2012, during the Pilgrimage, my brother Michael Tagawa, who was born in 1944 at Minidoka, took me aside and while looking to the horizon, said to me, "Eugene, look at that skyline, it's still the same as what Mama and Daddy saw during camp!" His statement, at that moment, changed the way I experience Minidoka. And I know many others who visit there come to that same realization [Eugene Minoru Tagawa, personal communication, 2023].

For the survivors and descendants, the TCP is so much more than the historic footprint. It is a multivalent landscape of memory and story, connected to ancestors and to the next generation, interwoven with trauma and pain, but also hope for a better tomorrow:

The Minidoka Historical Site is more than a landscape to me and my family.

...It is a place that represents time and opportunities stolen from my dad in the prime of his young life (from 26-28 years old), and the last years of my great-uncle's life in America.

... a place for which many committed activists have worked for untold hours, to obtain federal recognition, to reconstruct and preserve a permanent memorial of the injustices perpetrated against a small, disfavored minority during a time of national crisis.

... a place with special meaning for the Japanese American community which has since been dispersed throughout the nation and to other countries (I live in Mexico), but who want their families' experience to be preserved as a cautionary lesson that democracy is only as strong as those who defend it [Excerpt from a

comment letter by Holly Yasui to the BLM Shoshone Field Office, dated Sunday, October 17, 2021].

Mike Ishii, a descendant of incarcerated, also noted the multivalent and multilayered nature of the Minidoka TCP, and further emphasized that the TCP includes those lands surrounding the concentration camp:

Minidoka is in the DNA of my family. Our members are now spread across the U.S. but we belong to this place. Our ancestors are buried there. My mother's childhood was spent there and her resonance is indelibly marked upon the land. It is very personal. It is a gathering place of spirits. Minidoka with all its resonance of violence is also where we belong. We left a part of our family Ki in that place. We are now joined. I felt this even as I drove through the fields before arriving at Minidoka. This place is sacred. It holds ancestral connections for us in the entire area beyond the barbed wire fences. The imprint is not confined to a barrack, a block, or the exact footprint of the site. It is the entire area. Our ancestors Ki is there, and they come to greet us there as if to hold this space for our collective grieving and as a place to now gather to heal [Mike Ishii, personal communication, 2023].

As testimony after testimony make clear, for the Japanese American community, *their* Minidoka, *their* historic property and TCP is a traditional cultural landscape. It is a property defined not by the perpetrator – the U.S. government – but by those whose identity continues to be informed by the experiences and the trauma connected to the concentration camp:

Minidoka TCP is a sacred, traditional cultural landscape for me and my descendants. Protecting the TCP is critical to maintaining Japanese American traditional cultural identity and connecting our past with our future [David Sakura, personal communication]

Understood as a TCL, the Minidoka TCP tells a very important story. A story of a concentration camp intentionally designed by the U.S. government to provide an incarcerated labor force to save crops, replace a wartime labor shortage, and develop the farms and fields of Southern Idaho for those most enfranchised: largely white, Caucasian veterans and U.S. citizens:

Because the land was arid and almost uninhabitable, the US government tried to give it away to homesteaders before the war but no one could make a go of it. But the Japanese built canals and irrigated by taking water from the Snake River to bring the land and nearby area to life. After the war, the rich farm land created was valuable and the US government gave sections of it to returning US vets through a lottery. No Japanese American vets got any of the land in the lottery.

This is an essential part of American history, and no part of that story should be left untold, cut-out, or silenced. Beyond the barracks and mess halls, beyond the guard towers and fence line, the stories and experiences of the incarcerated continue. It does not end at the present-day historic

footprint. The history of incarcerated labor working in those surrounding fields and sagebrush shrubland is the true historic footprint of the Minidoka concentration camp. As historic records made abundantly clear, Minidoka was designed that way from the start.

3.1 Suggested Property Boundary

The TCP boundary includes much more than the barracks, mess hall, guard towers, and the barbed wire fenced area. Although certainly a part of the concentration camp, the Minidoka TCP also includes the surrounding fields where they worked, the sagebrush shrubland they helped develop into irrigable farmland, the areas they fought range fires, and the expansive viewshed and soundscape stretching to the surroundings hills and mountains. These mountains effectively created a “natural boundary” that extended well beyond the fence line, as Kay Endo, an incarcerated at Minidoka, explained:

KE: Well, for all purposes Minidoka was not wired [fenced] as such, it was... they may have in the beginning but later on there was no wire 'cause that's the site itself with 33,000 acres but originally portions of the camp were wired and then the canal side, there was no reason to have a fence.

RP: That was your boundary?

KE: That was a natural boundary. And then since they developed a lot of the lands for agriculture, what was the reason for a fence? And, so, we didn't see that much fencing, there probably was fencing but I can't really recollect it. And if there were we would have crawled through it or something. And you know, you couldn't go, where could you go? Just like being in Death Valley, right? [Endo, Kay. “Kay Endo Interview” by Richard Potashin. Courtesy of the Manzanar National Historic Site Collection, Densho Digital Repository, July 24 2019, https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-104-transcript-8c2b16ee_cc.htm].

Sometimes, incarcerated would go out to gather resources as well. Victor Ikeda – another incarcerated at Minidoka – noted that individuals would frequently go out into the sagebrush surrounding Minidoka to hunt rattlesnakes and collect sagebrush wood:

Yeah, that's right, that's right. So, you know, it's not like the assembly center where you had barbed wires and guards. You just came to the main gate, and that was about it. In fact, after you got a little established, a lot of, like my dad and stuff will go out to sagebrush to get the sagebrush wood. Some would go after rattlesnakes and bring it back so they could eat the rattlesnakes. So, it was pretty wide open, so I don't think anybody thought of like the illegal coming over, crossing a desert or anything, 'cause there's no place to go [Ikeda, Victor. “Victor Ikeda Interview” by Richard Potashin. Courtesy of the Densho Digital Repository, November 6, 2007. <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-23-transcript-8f69d5e15b.htm>].

The *Minidoka Irrigator* article from December 5th, 1942, also referenced the collection of greasewood in surrounding lands, albeit under tragic circumstances: Take-ji Abo separated from his partner, got lost, and died while collecting greasewood. His body, located about 3 miles northeast of Hunt, Idaho (see Figure 42), is a tragic but important reminder of the harsh, unforgiving landscape that the U.S. forcibly removed Japanese and Japanese Americans to. It also serves to demonstrate the wider use of the area.



Figure 42: Map in the December 5th, 1942, article of The Minidoka Irrigator showing where the body of Abo was found, located in lands outside the concentration camp.

Recounting this tragic story, *The Minidoka Irrigator* summarized:

Hoping to cover more ground, the pair separated about 9 a.m. Later, Hosokawn, ready to start back, began looking for Abo, but not being able to find him, came home thinking Abo had already returned ... Next day, a volunteer crew of five-hundred search the vicinity west and north of the center, a triangular area four by seven miles, but the all-day hunt proved fruitless...

Under the supervision of Daniel Shechan and Johnny Funai, the internal security police wardens were ordered to comb the country 10 miles north of the project between the Milner-Gooding Canal and the western boundary of the Hunt's outer limits to three miles north of the project [*The Minidoka Irrigator* entitled "Abo Found Dead", December 5 1942, available at Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024049/1942-12-05/ed-1/?dl=all&sp=1>].

Evidenced in the passages above and throughout this addendum report is that the boundary, for all intents and purposes, extends well beyond the historic fence line. The boundary, for the survivors and their descendants, is a natural boundary that extends to the mountains. It is an experiential and traumatic boundary that includes the areas where they labored, the agricultural fields and lands beyond those fields. To leave these areas out is to have an incomplete story, and therefore, a fallacious and limited historic property:

The rational perspective based on Minidoka's footprint focuses on the land, the river, and preserved structures. This view is limited, wrong, and incomplete. It is like examining a chalk silhouette of a body and disregarding the surrounding crime scene. The Minidoka crime scene or viewshed is rich and expansive because its elements are emotional as well as rational. Sorrow, shame, anger, depression, and suicides compose the fabric of the emotional viewshed which are carried by survivors and passed on to descendants.

From my poem, Border Crossing, relevant survivor lines are, "I carry my own fence. Barbed wire circles me always." And a line from Too Young to Remember is relevant about the "fear and sorrow embedded in my genes" [Lawrence Matsuda, personal communication, 2023].

Based on the identification of the various contributing elements presented in this addendum report, and the testimonies of the survivors and Japanese American descendant community, the Minidoka TCP is a unique place that minimally includes the camp facilities, as well as the surrounding agricultural fields cleared and farmed by the incarcerated, the rangeland firefighting areas, the train tracks deeply connected to the incarcerated experience, and the expansive viewshed and soundscape. These landscape elements are encapsulated in the suggested property boundary that uses viewshed analysis from several key points along the concentration camp and combines it with ethnographic and historic sources demonstrating use and occupancy in the surrounding towns and farmlands (see Figure 43).

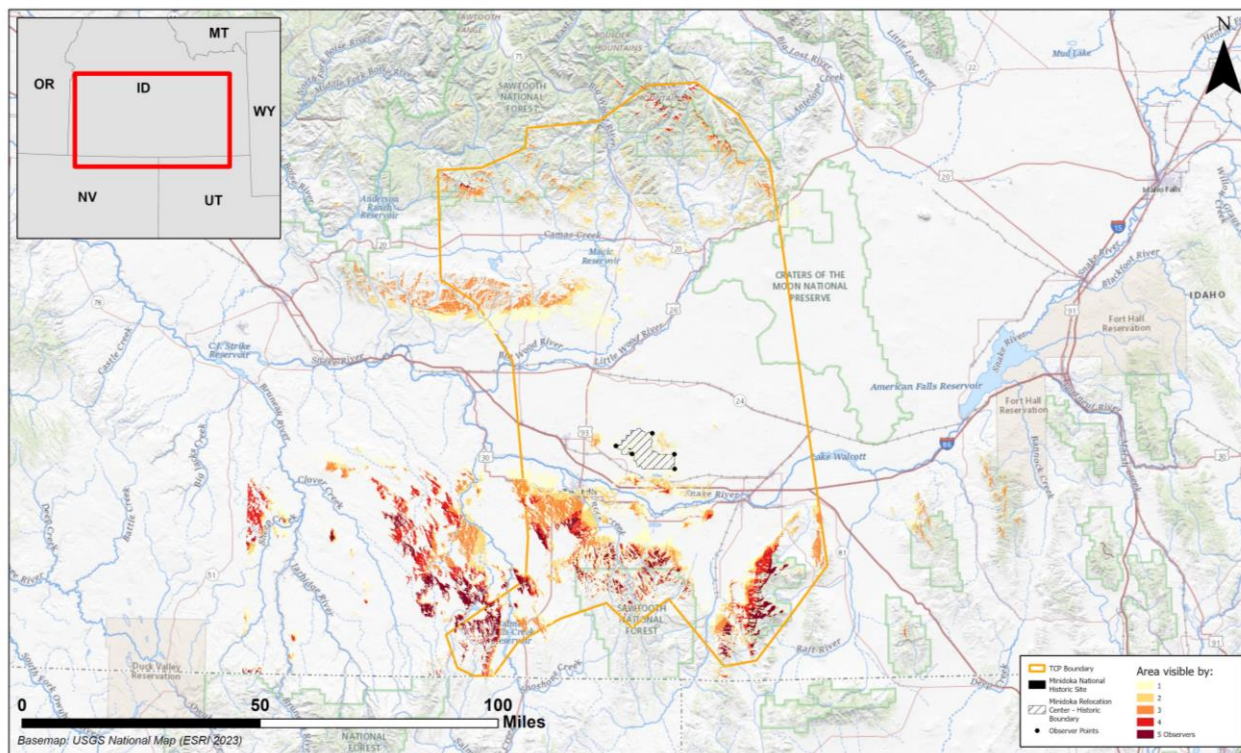


Figure 43: Viewshed from the Minidoka National Historic Site Visitors Center that informs, at least in part, the proposed boundary of the Minidoka TCP.

To establish the extent of the viewshed from the National Historic Site itself, Algonquin conducted a viewshed analysis in ArcMap 10.8 using the Viewshed tool in the Spatial Analyst extension. ArcMap’s Viewshed tool uses a raster elevation surface and input “observer” points to determine the area visible from the observer point at a given height above the ground (ESRI 2022). The state of Idaho’s Digital Elevation Model (University of Idaho NKN 2019) was clipped to an approximately 150 x 120-mile rectangle in the vicinity of Minidoka. In consultation with the Friends of Minidoka, Algonquin selected several key points along the concentration camp fence-line as the observation points from which to conduct the analysis, with an eye height of 2 meters (approximately 6 feet) and a refractivity coefficient of 0.13 (default). The tool was also set to account for earth’s curvature.

3.2 National Register Bulletin 38 and Discussion of Buildings and Structures within TCP Viewsheds

Many TCPs have buildings and/or structures within their viewshed, especially those that interface with the built environment. The fact that there are such buildings and structures doesn’t inherently negate a TCP’s historic significance or integrity, even a property where the viewshed is a key, character defining feature. Rather, in the case of TCPs specifically, the two main things to ask are “first, does the property have an integral relationship to traditional cultural practices or beliefs [of a living community]; and second, is the condition of the property such that the relevant relationships survived?” (Parker and King 1998:11).

In some cases, the introduction of new buildings and structures from a federal undertaking, for example, could push the integrity of a TCP past the tipping point. In other cases, it may not. Although certainly more modern intrusions and recent constructions have altered the modern landscape of many TCPs, the environmental setting may still include enough key landscape characteristics to retain integrity. This is the case with the Minidoka TCP, where expansive unobstructed views still convey a sense of isolation, a critical component of the site and intrinsically tied to the historical integrity of Minidoka (see Battaglia 2022 for a Minidoka TCP-specific discussion on integrity vis-à-vis the viewshed).

In other cases, buildings and structures can significantly impact the historic significance and integrity of the TCP. Bulletin 38 warns that “a property that once had traditional cultural significance can lose such significance through physical alteration of its location, setting, design, or materials,” adding that “in some cases, a traditional cultural property can also lose significance through alteration of its setting or environment; however, a property may still “retain its traditional cultural significance even though it has been substantially modified.” This is because cultural values, belief systems, and other traditional practices are dynamic, and can adapt to change (Parker and King 1998:12).

For example, the Nez Perce Tribe identified several important buttes in Idaho used for vision questing and documented them as TCPs. In 2015, the Tribe identified that a federal undertaking proposing to construct a cell tower on one of these buttes had the potential to greatly threaten the integrity and main character defining feature of the TCP (the viewshed). The viewshed of this TCP, of course, now includes farms, houses, and various structures, but it still retained integrity to the Nez Perce Tribe. Introducing massive cell towers with disturbing lights and infrastructure at the top of the butte, however, imposed an imposition on this viewshed that severely threatened the viability and integrity of the historic property.

Critically, just because beliefs and practices may accommodate change doesn’t necessarily mean they are any less integral to a group’s ongoing relationship to a place. Addressing this, Bulletin 38 specifies that “the integrity of a possible traditional cultural property must be considered with reference to the views of traditional practitioners; if its integrity has not been lost in their eyes, it probably has sufficient integrity to justify further evaluation” (Parker and King 1998:12, emphasis added). Additionally, “some kinds of traditional cultural significance also may be retained regardless of how the surroundings of a property may be changed” (Parker and King 1998:12). This applies to various structures and buildings, privatization of property rendering it (temporarily) inaccessible, development on or near the property, and even partial or full inundation of the property.

In the case of the Mouth of the Kalamazoo River TCP documented by the Gun Lake Tribe in Michigan in 2019, although numerous buildings, structures, and development reside inside the boundary and within the viewshed, the Tribe found that integrity remained (albeit certainly

impacted). The Tribal community continues to conduct traditional ceremonies and relate to the area in much the same way as they have for generations. The introduction of a proposed marina (e.g., a federal undertaking), however, threatened these remaining essential, character defining features of the landscape. It effectively would push the historic property past the tipping point toward a complete loss of integrity.

These examples show that buildings and structures within a TCP boundary and/or within the viewshed don't necessarily impact a TCP, or push it passed the tipping point. It is up to the community ascribing value to the TCP to decide. In the case of the Minidoka TCP, the Japanese American descendant community found that the present level of buildings and structures does not impact the TCP, at least, not enough to cause a loss of integrity. Further, those buildings and structures that are a part of the historic and modern-day agricultural landscape contribute to the agricultural landscape and legacy of Minidoka.

3.3 BLM's Visual Resource Management Program

The BLM is charged with the responsibility to manage lands in a manner that will protect the quality of scenic values. The Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 are central to this responsibility. Sometimes, uses such as natural/cultural resources and energy development can compete with other public interests, like the protection of scenic landscapes. To bridge the gap between these competing interests, the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) program provides tools to help protect the quality of scenic values for present and future generations.

In general, the VRM program provides a system for (1) inventorying scenic values, (2) projecting the present and future use of these values through land use planning, and (3) minimizing visual impacts from proposed projects or activities through project planning practices and "visual design principles". For the BLM, visual design principles include: (1) proper siting and location of projects, (2) minimizing disturbance, and (3) responsive to the ecological, cultural, and landscape character influences of a region.

Given that the BLM is tasked with inventorying scenic values and minimizing impacts from proposed projects, particularly projects that have the potential to disturb key cultural and landscape characteristics of a region, Algonquin recommends the BLM review the 2022 TCP report (Battaglia 2022) and this addendum report. Both documents could be used in support of the BLM's VRM process. Because the viewshed of the Minidoka TCP, a recommended NRHP-eligible historic property with Idaho SHPO concurrence, is a character defining feature of the property and possesses great cultural significance to the Japanese American descendant community, the BLM should work with this community (and others) to assess the present and future scenic value of this viewshed.

For the Japanese American descendant community, the viewshed elements or "scenic value" of the Minidoka TCP includes the expansive and unobstructed views to the surrounding mountains.

But it also includes agricultural buildings and structures, past and present, that contribute to the agricultural landscape. These specific buildings and structures don't impinge upon the viewshed, but rather, help to define it. They are a part of the historic viewshed, and modern agricultural buildings and structures serve to further reinforce the agricultural-ness of the landscape. It is a key part of the story of Minidoka and why the surrounding agricultural farmlands are included in the TCP.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

For the Japanese American survivors and their descendants, the story of Minidoka is dynamic, complicated, and still alive today. It is easy and simple to draw a boundary based on the historic footprint, but history is never easy or simple. Tying the Minidoka TCP to the historic footprint silences and erases a complex story, one that should and needs to be told today. Expanding the boundary to include those areas beyond the present-day historic footprint gives a voice to those who were historically silenced and who continue to fight for their voice to be heard. It brings Minidoka into the present, where it belongs:

As a result, Minidoka is no longer past history or merely a footprint, but is a current event at the heart of our democracy. It is wrong to look at Minidoka as if it were a chalk outline or physical footprint. It must be regarded as a vibrant and dynamic viewshed that exists physically as well as emotionally in the hearts and minds of survivors/ descendents. The message is relevant for all Americans today regarding America's promise of "Liberty and justice for all" [Lawrence Matsuda, personal communication, 2023].

The Minidoka TCP and traditional landscape, in its entirety, must remain intact to tell the story of what transpired there:

This landscape is an integral part of how this history is told, for the visitors to be able to step into the conditions that were forcibly put upon Japanese Americans [excerpt from a comment letter by Eleanor Nakayama to the BLM Shoshone Field Office, dated Wednesday, October 20, 2021].

Indeed, the Minidoka landscape, in many ways, needs to tell the story too:

Although we survivors will not be around long to tell our stories, the vast lands and winds must remain as ever as evidence that Minidoka existed here. We existed here [Mary Abo, personal communication, 2023].

The testimonies included in this report, and the countless others available in archives, documentaries, and publications, showcase the loss, devastation, and hardship experienced by those incarcerated. The testimonies also demonstrate that this trauma is still poignantly felt today by descendants and the wider Japanese American community. It is for this very reason, among others, that Minidoka's preservation and delineation – particularly those elements that contribute to its historic character like the viewshed and surrounding farms – are so critical. The Minidoka

TCP includes all these landscape elements, and necessarily so. To not do so erases history and silences the Japanese American community.

Even though Minidoka, as a WWII-era concentration camp, may be a dark stain upon American history, it is also a place of historical interpretation and healing. It is a place where descendants, and all Americans, visit to learn, commemorate, and hear the stories of those who were imprisoned there. The viewshed and surrounding agricultural fields are all tied to the story of Minidoka and play a central role in telling that story. For many descendants, the telling of these stories and the (re)connection to this landscape begins a process of healing their long-held multigenerational trauma. Without question, Minidoka qualifies as a place of negative heritage (see Battaglia 2022), but it is for that very reason the story of Minidoka must be told, and the historic character of Minidoka preserved; doing so will help ensure that such events will never, ever happen again.

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