

## Colorado Family Church: February Local Highlights

Michael and Adonia Hentrich  
March 1, 2022



Dear family,

With February come and gone, we look forward to spring right around the corner (hopefully). Please take a look at some of the highlights from our community over the past month.

### CELEBRATING TRUE PARENTS' BIRTHDAYS and FOUNDATION DAY



Despite the weather, we had a really nice pledge service and breakfast to commemorate two of our Holy Days, True Parents' Birthday, and Foundation Day. Thank you to everyone that came and for everyone that helped with the preparations.

### AMACHE INTERNMENT CAMP TO BECOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



Many of you may remember the Amache Japanese internment camps from our Peace Road visit and 50 state holy ground tour. Recently, the internment camp, due to federal legislation, is set to become a national historic site in the near future. For more information, please see this [recent news article](#).

#### HOSTING THE COMMITMENT CEREMONY FOR KRISTIAN and SUNGMI



We were blessed to host the commitment ceremony for Kristian Holdhus and Sungmi Orr. It was a beautiful ceremony and we are so excited for this couple's future. Congratulations!

#### CONGRATULATIONS and PRAYER REQUESTS



We invite you to join in our 21-day prayer condition for the people of Ukraine, which will end on March 16. There are 3 prayer points:

Pray for peace to be restored in Ukraine.

Pray for the families that are trapped and fleeing to be safe and cared for

Pray for our church families to be safe and reunited with one another.

We also took up a special offering last Sunday to directly support a group of church families that are bunkered down together in Kiev. We raised \$2,632 and wired them the money on Monday. Thank you to everyone for your sincerity and support. If you weren't at church this Sunday, you can listen to Pastor Mike's presentation on how our community plans to support our Ukrainian members [here](#).



A big congratulations to Andrew and Uyanga Love on becoming United States citizens! They passed their tests with flying colors and Uyanga received her certificate directly from Senator Michael Bennet.



Mrs. Trudy Harris, Jeri Tamayo's mother, passed away on February 14. Trudy was a dedicated and Blessed member and was known by many as Grandma Trudy. She will be missed by all that knew her.

#### CONTINUED RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Lots of ongoing renovations this month, mostly focused on our house across the street from the church. David, Anton, John, Dr. Hentrich, and Sergii have all been putting many hours into all the ongoing work. Also, we want to give a special thank you to Dariusz Buczynski and his company Littleton Cooling and Heating for donating a brand new furnace and upgrading us from a swamp cooler to central air-conditioning at the church parsonage. We are very grateful!





Through the Sunday messages this month, we focused in on our series on the School of Love. This series is all about the different familial relationships in our lives and how they are the root from which all other relationships stem. We provide spiritual and practical guidance. If you missed any of them, you can find them all on our [Facebook page](#) and [Youtube channel](#). For quick reference, this month's recordings are below.

[School of Love Series: The Spiritual Root of Reconciliation and the Foundation of Substance](#)

[School of Love Series: Deepening the Parent/Child Relationship](#)

[School of Love Series: Deepening the Parent/Child Relationship 2](#)

[School of Love Series: Deepening the Husband/Wife Relationship](#)

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT



# Amache is on the verge of earning national park status — and its place in history — after U.S. Senate approves bill

A Senate vote moved the former World War II incarceration camp that held people of Japanese descent closer to becoming a national historic site

  **Kevin Simpson** 7:51 PM MST on Feb 14, 2022



A brightly colored water tower stands above the desolate landscape and concrete pads of the Amache War Relocation Center near Granada, Colorado, in this Feb. 3, 2021 photo. (Mike Sweeney, Special to The Colorado Sun)

**Credibility:**  Original Reporting  Sources Cited

**N**early 80 years after a presidential order created incarceration camps on American soil to hold people of Japanese descent, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation Monday night designating the site of Colorado’s Granada War Relocation Center – also known as Camp Amache – a national historic site.

The vote marks the last key step toward bringing the almost 1-mile-square parcel in southeast Colorado under the management of the National Park Service, ensuring that the vestiges of what almost overnight became one of Colorado’s largest towns – and the dark period of history it represents – will endure.

The bipartisan legislation will return to the House, where it passed easily last summer, for a final vote on an amended version before heading to President Joe Biden’s desk. An 11th-hour objection by Utah Sen. Mike Lee, who opposed adding more federal land over funding concerns, caused a hitch in the process, but he and Bennet negotiated a deal by which the Amache land would be transferred as a donation and the bill passed by unanimous consent.

The passage arrives just ahead of Saturday’s Day of Remembrance marking the original presidential order.

Colorado Democratic Rep. Joe Neguse and Republican Rep. Ken Buck

championed the bill in the House, while Democratic Sens. Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper advocated for it in the Senate. But the effort to preserve the memory of the tragic incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans – most of them U.S. citizens – began decades ago.

Derek Okubo, whose father was part of the initial effort by the Denver Central Optimists to preserve the site starting in 1968, says his dad felt strongly that preservation of Amache would serve as not only a cautionary tale, but a healing force for both the families of those incarcerated there and the nation as a whole.

“When they first started this, it was their dream to have a long-term support mechanism in place so that the preservation and the sharing of the history would continue – for the purpose that it would never happen again to any people,” Okubo says. “And so that it’s actually happening is a dream fulfilled.”

Over more than half a century, the effort overcame initial local pushback and gained momentum from the work of those who were incarcerated there, their relatives and friends, as well as a local educator who, by making Amache part of the Granada high school curriculum, created an enduring bond between the camp’s descendants and the community.



The Colorado Sun

**Colorado governor resigns from board of major F**  
00:00 / 11:08

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Amache, which opened in 1942 and closed in 1945, was the smallest of 10 such incarceration camps that rose out of fear that Japanese immigrants, as well as their American-born relatives, posed a threat to the United States after the Dec. 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. A handful of other inland states also imprisoned mostly coastal populations of Japanese immigrants – including American citizens – or flatly refused to accept them.



A photograph of the Amache War Relocation Center taken from the prison camp's water tower during World War II. The camp was the state's 10th largest city during that time. (Amache Museum, Special to The Colorado Sun)

But Colorado Gov. Ralph Carr spoke out against the racial prejudice and welcomed the camp’s more than 7,500 arrivals. Though ultimately on the right side of history, his stand cost him his political career.

By coming under the Park Service umbrella, Amache becomes eligible for federal assistance that will augment the patchwork of volunteer efforts and grant funding that has sustained it. That work, led by the local high

school's Amache Preservation Society, has gradually improved a site that once held mostly remnants of building foundations on the windswept prairie just south of U.S. 50 outside of the town of Granada.

Now, the camp's water tower and guard tower rise above the landscape, its cemetery and a barracks building have been restored, and a recreation center that had been moved into town decades ago has been returned to its original foundation. Efforts to collect artifacts from the camp grew to establish a museum and research center, and [an archeological project advanced by the University of Denver](#) adds to the ongoing interpretation.

Descendants still make annual pilgrimages to Amache, though the number of original survivors from the camp has declined, making this official designation all the more meaningful. The bureaucratic process took years, even after Colorado's congressional delegation began an official push extended by a pandemic interruption.

## A rocky start

Okubo has worked for several years with Friends of Amache, a group dedicated to restoring and maintaining the Amache site. His father, Henry, died in 2002, but Okubo recalls hearing about the contentious first meeting with the Granada town council about preserving the historic location – a discussion that ended in a shouting match.

“When my dad came back from that meeting,” Okubo says, “I remember him saying, ‘Well, I guess we’ll have to work at building relationships.’ And so he would go back and he would meet with town council members. And he was able to find a few allies, and the relationship progressed over the years.”

Okubo's mother, Aoki, is 90 and dealing with dementia. She was incarcerated at the Minidoka camp in Idaho and, while perhaps not fully aware of today's development, Okubo says she would be thrilled that her husband's work had come to fruition.

Calvin Taro Hada, whose grandmother was incarcerated at Amache, has continued the family's advocacy for preserving the site as president of the Nikkeijin Kai of Colorado, which can trace its roots to the original Optimist group that started the push. He remembers his father, James Hada, a produce manager at King Soopers, procuring items at cost so the organization could assemble fruit baskets as a fundraiser.

More than 50 years after that first rocky meeting with the Granada town council, the long-term assurance that the lessons of Amache will live on finally stands on the verge of becoming reality.

“It's just been slow and steady,” says Hada, a Denver Realtor. “I think for some things to happen we had to have kind of a change in the attitude of the American people. I wouldn't say that it was always smooth sailing. But it's been kind of a gentle persistence, is what I would say, that kept the ball moving.

“I'm more than ecstatic (the bill) passed,” he adds, “but I recognize that there are a lot of things to be done before we reach our final product.”

Once President Biden signs the bill, it will still be years before the full impact of the changeover will be apparent, says Dan Sakura, a Japanese American with a family connection to the Minidoka National Historic Site, the incarceration camp in Idaho that Amache now joins under the NPS umbrella.

“It's kind of like planting a tree, and they plant a sapling and for years it doesn't seem like anything's happening,” says Sakura, who has advised the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association on the Amache

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project. “But then, over time, with water and fertilizer, the tree will develop, restructure and grow and thrive.”

The National Park Service also manages former incarceration sites Manzanar, Minidoka and Honouliuli National Historic Sites, and Tule Lake National Monument.



An interpretive center and short walking tour greet visitors to the Amache Relocation Center where more than 7,500 people of Japanese descent were held from 1942-45 near Granada, Colorado. (Mike Sweeney, Special to The Colorado Sun)

## Preserving the site’s narrative

Once the property has been secured, the Park Service begins the management planning process. One aspect of that planning looks at interpretation – how to tell the stories of the camp and the people who passed through it.

Through experience with designating previous incarceration sites, the Park Service has a firm foundation of the narratives, and when Congress passed legislation in 2019 for a special resource study on Amache, the resulting public comment also helped inform the future management plan.

Part of the urgency to get the legislation through Congress stemmed from the declining presence of Amache survivors, some now in their 90s. Typically, the Park Service wants to preserve whatever historic resources are on site and provide for a robust visitor experience, which includes interpretation of the site and its artifacts, and appropriate memorialization.

One unique aspect of the Amache legislation is that it enables the Park Service to tell the broader story of the camp’s impact, including stories about after the war, the Japanese-American diaspora and difficulties encountered as they tried to rebuild their lives. Language in the bill also allows for the Park Service to enter agreements or partnerships with local groups or the town itself.

That’s an important dimension for Amache.





## A pivotal partnership with students

For years, the site has operated in conjunction with the Amache Preservation Society, an organization created by John Hopper, a local teacher and school administrator who arrived in Granada in 1990 and, three years later, created a “living history” program geared toward gifted high school students.

As that effort grew to include both caretaking and interpretation of the site, it attracted the attention and financial support of those incarcerated at Amache and their relatives who assemble at the site each spring. Students eventually joined forces with organizations like the Amache Historical Society and Friends of Amache to procure grant funding for restoring parts of the camp.

Hopper says it will be a relief to hand off the constant work of maintaining Amache, even though he knows the transition won’t be immediate. Earlier this week he fired up his tractor to make road improvements after snowfall softened the earth.

“I don’t see a whole lot happening right away,” Hopper says of the imminent designation. “I still see us taking care of it. It’s just knowing that in the future – very near future, hopefully – when somebody needs to paint the water tower, re-roof the roofs of the buildings or something like that, there’s somebody there in place that can do it.”

Descendants credit Hopper and his many students over the years not only for their work maintaining Amache, but also for creating a major shift in perception of its ongoing historical significance and the value in preserving it.

“That’s when everything changed,” Derek Okubo says of Hopper’s arrival in Granada. “It lit a fire within students, and they started doing presentations in the town and then the region. And they changed the hearts and minds of everybody. I always say that that’s an example of where young people changed the world. And I mean it literally. They changed the world.”



A monument honoring the 31 Japanese Americans who were held at the Amache War Relocation Center near Granada, Colorado, then later fought and died in World War II as members of the U.S. military is shown in this Feb. 3, 2021 photo. (Mike Sweeney, Special to The Colorado Sun)

Over the years, Hopper and the students also collected so many artifacts from the era that they opened a small museum in the town’s former city hall. As the teens’ relationship with those imprisoned and their relatives developed, they began collecting audio recordings about life in the camp.

The preservation society will continue to control the museum even after

the Park Service takes over the camp site, Hopper says. In 2019, the ever-expanding collection moved into a new, much bigger space right across the highway – a former bank building that, beneath its stucco exterior, still has bricks from Amache that were repurposed after the camp closed. It features a large exhibit area, a presentation room, gift shop, restrooms and storage – in addition to plenty of parking and, as part of the deal with the former occupant, a working ATM.

Hopper says he’s weighing retirement, though the Amache Preservation Society and the related school curriculum will continue. Tanner Grasmick, a former student who now teaches history at Granada, has stepped forward to be his successor.

“The exciting thing is that all the work that has gone on for so long, it’s coming together where it’s going to be sustained for the indefinite future,” Okubo says. “Because it’s taken a lot of work to keep things going and that federal support is going to be everything as far as continuing.”



The Amache Museum in Granada, Colo. is home to a number of items of significant historical value from the Amache Relocation Center, including photographs and paintings. (Mike Sweeney, Special to The Colorado Sun)



A red banner with white text and icons. On the left, a hand icon points to the text "THE COLORADO SUN DOESN'T HAVE A PAYWALL...". In the center is a yellow sun icon. On the right, another hand icon points to the text "...BUT THAT MEANS WE NEED YOU!".

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ENVIRONMENT  
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## ROAD OF THE FUTURE: WHAT'S THAT LOOK LIKE?

With federal billions at stake, a four-state compact in the West wants to be a leader in the clean energy category. But it may take a while.

Michael Booth [28 minutes ago](#)



## OPINION COLUMNS

### Opinion: If Roe is to fall, Colorado needs to codify an affirmative right to abortion

We were an early leader in the movement, but we can't count on that in a post-Roe era

Gail Schoettler [3 hours ago](#)



## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

### Republicans file federal lawsuit to block unaffiliated voters from participating in Colorado's primary election

Controversial lawyer John Eastman represents current and former GOP candidates, plus two county Republican chairs. The state party is not a plaintiff.

Sandra Fish



## WATER

### Lake Powell likely to drop below critical level in next two weeks

Water managers in the Colorado River Basin have tried to keep Lake Powell from falling under 3,525 feet — it's likely to happen soon.

Chris Outcalt



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