

## UNCOVERING THE JOURNEY:

Japanese American Pioneers in Box Elder County

Box Elder County is home to thousands of human stories, always held dear within families but never formally collected, belong to the Japanese American Pioneers. Their struggles and successes belong alongside the many other stories remembered and shared in our collective history.

This guide was prepared to help build connections between your classroom and the exhibition *Uncovering the Journey: Japanese American Pioneers in Box Elder County*. It can be used to prepare your students before your visit, or to facilitate meaningful discussions afterward. Our exhibit only skims the surface of the information available on the life experiences of Japanese Americans in Utah.

For further information, please see the supplemental information included.

We hope you enjoy your experience!

*Please contact us to access oral histories from local Japanese Americans.*

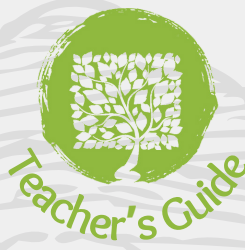
### TEACHING STANDARDS

- Kindergarten
  - K.1.1
- First Grade
  - 1.1.2
  - 1.1.3
- Second Grade
  - 2.1.1
  - 2.1.5
- Third Grade
  - 3.3.1
  - 3.3.4
- Fourth Grade
  - 4.4.6
- Fifth Grade
  - 5.6.2
  - 5.6.4
- Sixth Grade
  - 6.4.1
  - 6.4.3
- Utah Studies
  - UT 2.2
  - UT 3.2
- World History
  - WH 6.2 (incarceration)
- US History II
  - USII 4.1
  - USII 4.3

### JAPANESE GENERATIONAL TERMS

Early immigration to the U.S. from Japan occurred in the late 1800's to early 1900's. Due to the importance of intergenerational relationships, each generation is identified by a distinct Japanese term.

- **Nikkei**  
Persons of Japanese ancestry who live outside of Japan
- **Issei**  
First-generation **Japanese pioneers** who were born in the U.S.
- **Nisei**  
Second-generation Japanese Americans born to Issei parents
- **Sansei**  
Third-generation Japanese Americans born to Nisei parents
- **Yonsei**  
Fourth-generation Japanese Americans born to Sansei parents
- **Gosei**  
Fifth-generation Japanese Americans born to Yonsei parents



## UNCOVERING THE JOURNEY:

Japanese American Pioneers in Box Elder County

The following is an informational guide through each step of the *Uncovering the Journey* exhibit. Each bullet point provides information about a particular display. Links are provided for further information.

### Section 1: Farming

- The first Japanese Pioneers emigrated to the United States around 1863, after the government of Japan opened its borders. Oftentimes, people settled in Hawaii and California, but offers of steady work building the railroad took some further inland. The first generation, the Issei, knew Box Elder County through those railroad jobs. When the railroad was complete, they settled on farms in the area just after the turn of the 19th century.
- Other Issei were enticed to work in Utah in the sugar beet fields, which were a major cash crop at the time.
- When Japanese Issei arrived, they could not speak or understand English and depended on Japanese-to-English dictionaries to communicate.
- In 1942 the Uyematsu family was sent to the Heart Mountain Incarceration Camp in Wyoming. For the duration of the war, they “were surrounded by barbed-wire fences and guard towers.” Norio was in 8th grade. Like many families, the Uyematsus had no home to return to when the camp closed in 1945. But a farmer in Brigham City, Utah offered them an apartment, a job, and a second chance to rebuild their lives on his farm.

For more information, check out the links below:

[den sho.org](http://den sho.org)

[www.nationalww2](http://www.nationalww2)

[museum.org](http://museum.org)

[goforbroke.org](http://goforbroke.org)



Watch Norio speak at the FDR Library:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYD\\_-mGIR2k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYD_-mGIR2k)

### What do you know?

While sugar beets are no longer a cash crop in Utah, Box Elder County is still home to the famous “Fruit Way.”

What crops are still grown here?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How might it feel to have no choice but to leave everything behind and move to a place where you did not know the language or culture?
- What do you think life was like for the Uyematsu family as they tried to build a new life? Can you find evidence in the displays?
- Reflect on what school might have been like for children being held in the Heart Mountain Camp. Back up your ideas with evidence in the displays.

## Section 2: Civics

- On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, leading the United States into WWII. In response to the attack, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, ordering the forced removal and mass incarceration of over 120,000 persons of Japanese descent. Two-thirds of them were American citizens. Most of those sent to camps were removed from the “Exclusion Zone” on the West Coast, but suspicion and restrictions were felt all over the U.S., including Utah. 80 Years later, Helen Yamasaki who lived in Tremonton, remembers how the authorities froze their family bank accounts and confiscated their radios and guns.
- The “Loyalty Questionnaire” was a document of 28 questions that people of Japanese descent had to sign to prove their loyalty to the U.S. government. Question 28 reads: “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?” Question 29 reads: “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?”
- Nisei were excluded from the draft in 1942, but by 1943 the War Department formed and trained an all-Nisei regiment to fight in Europe. They were the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Hiroyuki Kano was drafted into service during WWII in the Military Intelligence Services. Like many Japanese American soldiers, Hiroyuki’s family was incarcerated in Topaz (Utah) **while** he served.

## The No-No Boys

The colloquial term for men who answered “no” to questions 27 and 28 on the Loyalty Questionnaire

Check out the National Archives to read the Executive Order:  
[www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9066](http://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9066)

Watch a Video on Executive Order 9066:  
<https://youtu.be/O-iVxs2xuYc?si=3qgaXyu7Gt-cVf5l>

### What do you know?

Bushnell Military Hospital opened in Brigham City, Utah in 1942 to treat injured WWII soldiers, including those from the 442nd Regiment.

13,000 patients were treated there during the war. What else do you know about the history of Brigham City?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Imagine your family was arrested, all of your possessions confiscated, and you were forced to live in wood shacks behind a barbed-wire fence. If you were given the Loyalty Questionnaire, how would you answer? Would it feel like a trap?
- How would you feel if the government took away your television and cell phone?
- Young men were drafted and served for the U.S. Army **WHILE** their families were incarcerated. Do you think you could fight for a country that held your family prisoner? Why did they?

### Section 3: Community

- The budding community of Japanese American Issei in Brigham City found strength as they healed together. They built churches, sports clubs, civic groups, and businesses. These establishments became even more important as parents tried to keep the Japanese culture alive for their Nisei children.
- Many Issei pioneers did not speak English and felt isolated from the wider community because of the language barrier. However, joining sports teams helped to build friendships and a sense of belonging.
- A favorite Japanese New Year's tradition includes making Mochitsuki. It is the process of making Mochi rice cakes by pounding hot, sweet rice with a Kine (mallet) in an Usu (mortar).

#### What do you know?

The Japanese American community in Brigham City has been well-represented since 1950. You can learn about Japanese American mayors, civic leaders, professors, and sports heroes here at the museum, at the library, or at the local government offices!

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Do you have traditional foods that you only eat on special occasions? Where does that tradition come from?
- What traditions do you have in your family or culture that are similar to those you learned about today?
- Are you part of a team? How does working as a team help to strengthen relationships between participants and in the wider community?
- How can playing a sport together help people overcome a language barrier?

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#### Want to learn more? Check out these amazing books!

##### Picture Books

Barbed Wire Baseball by Marissa Moss  
Baseball Saved Us by Ken Mochizuki  
Fish for Jimmy by Katie Yamasaki  
My Lost Freedom by George Takei  
Wat Kept Playing by Emily Nouye Huey

##### Graphic Novels/Novels

Displacement by Kiku Hughes  
This Light Between Us by Andrew Fukuda  
They Called Us Enemy by George Takei  
Paper Wishes by Lois Sepahban  
We Are Not Free by Traci Chee  
Journey to Topaz by Yoshiko Uchida  
Imprisoned by Martin Sandler  
Enemy Child by Andrea Warren  
Gaijin: American Prisoner of War by Matt Faulkner  
Beneath the Wide Silk Sky by Emily Inouye Huey  
We Hereby Refuse by Frank Abe Tamiko Nimura  
Those Who Helped Us by Ken Mochizuki & Kiku Hughes