

Arkansas State Archives

Arkansas Digital Archives

Japanese American internment in Arkansas

Online exhibits

Letter, Mike Masaoka to A. Clark Stratton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/exhibits-online-japanese-american-internment>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Letter, Mike Masaoka to A. Clark Stratton, Joseph Boone Hunter collection, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Use and reproduction of images held by the Arkansas State Archives without prior written permission is prohibited. For information on reproducing images held by the Arkansas State Archives, please call 501-682-6900 or email at state.archives@arkansas.gov.

WASHINGTON OFFICE

JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

919 EIGHTEENTH STREET, NORTHWEST

WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

MIKE MASAOKA
WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, JAACL
MASAO SATOW, NATIONAL DIRECTOR
1634 POST STREET
SAN FRANCISCO 15, CALIFORNIA

April 24, 1964

C
O
P
Y

Mr. A. Clark Stratton
Associate Director
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Stratton:

First of all, may I on behalf of Rev. Joseph B. Hunter and myself thank you for your courtesy in discussing with us yesterday afternoon the possibility that the Rohwer Center Cemetery and Nisei GI Memorial may qualify for jurisdiction and maintenance by your National Park Service.

As we reported to you, during World War II, some 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, most of whom were American citizens, were evacuated from their West Coast homes and associations and "relocated" in some ten so-called Relocation Centers under the administration of the War Relocation Authority, an agency which in its later years was under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

Today, the cemetery at the former Rohwer Relocation Center near Pine Bluff, Desha County, Arkansas, is the only cemetery as such where former WRA evacuees are interred. Featured in this particular cemetery is a shaft and a monument dedicated to some 31 Americans of Japanese ancestry who volunteered for combat duty from this particular Relocation Center and who died in action against the German enemy. All of the Nisei war heroes whose names are inscribed on this memorial served with the now famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

As you are so well aware, the evacuation of those of Japanese ancestry during World War II is an act unprecedented in American military history. Unprecedented too is that Americans suspect by their own Government and interned in camps volunteered to fight and to die for our country in order to prove our loyalty.

We believe that this particular plot of land, whose deed is now held, we understand, in the name of the Rohwer Center Cemetery Association, Mr. Mickey Nakamura, Secretary, Route 1, Box 89, Scott, Arkansas, should be preserved and maintained by our Federal Government in order that all Americans may remember what happened to a group of fellow Americans of Japanese ancestry in World War II. It is a history of democracy in action and of faith in our country unparalleled in our history.

Mr. A. Clark Stratton

- 2 -

April 24, 1964

As we understand it, this particular site might qualify as a "Historic Landmark", a "National Historic Site", and/or a "National Monument".

Through this letter, may we respectfully request that your Service look into this matter as to whether this particular Rohwer Cemetery and Nisei Memorial qualify under existing laws and regulations.

Following our meeting with you, we met with Senator William Fulbright and were advised that he would be willing to consider appropriate legislation, if necessary, to bring this particular site into your National Park Service.

May we, accordingly, be kept informed of the progress of any investigation that may be carried out by your Service.

Incidentally, for informational purposes, we are enclosing two reprints from the "Congressional Record" which relate to the military activities of those of Japanese ancestry in World War II. We thought that you might find these interesting.

Thank you again for your courtesy in seeing us.

Sincerely,

Mike Masack
Washington Representative

MM:mt
Enclosures

cc: Rev. Joseph B. Hunter ✓
Senator William Fulbright
Mickey Nakamura
K. Patrick O'Leary, National President, Omaha, Nebraska
Masao W. Satow, National Director, San Francisco, California
Akiji Yoshimura, Chairman, National Public Relations Committee, Colusa,
California
Joe Sagami, Past President, Chicago JACL
Dr. James Takao, Chairman, Midwest District Council, Cincinnati, Ohio