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Friends of Minidoka Receives Mellon Foundation Grant for *Beyond the Barbed Wire: Japanese American Stories of the Pacific Northwest*

Inclusive storytelling project will highlight the Japanese American experience

Boise, Idaho – [Friends of Minidoka](#) is pleased to announce funding from the [Mellon Foundation's Monuments Project Initiative](#) for a three year project, *Beyond the Barbed Wire: Japanese American Stories of the Pacific Northwest*.

Beyond the Barbed Wire is a series of tours that tells the full and complex story of the Japanese American experience. Two tours will be developed over a 3 year period and told through a mobile app and a website platform with narration, oral histories, and visual content. These tours will identify landmarks related to the Japanese American experience, which may be known, unknown, or unmarked, thus becoming “monuments” through the telling of these stories. This is a pilot proof of concept project to build the infrastructure and processes which will allow for expansion of the project with additional tours. A project website landing page will link to the mobile and web platform tours which can be used in person at the sites or remotely.

The first tour will tell the story of those who resisted Japanese American incarceration during WWII. This tour is expected to launch in Fall 2024 to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Minidoka draft resister trials in Boise, Idaho. Advisory group members for *Resisters of the Pacific Northwest* include the [Japanese American Museum of Oregon](#), [Wing Luke Museum of the Asian American Experience](#), and [Minidoka National Historic Site](#).

“Japanese American incarceration during WWII was a gross violation of civil liberties and is a critical lesson about the fragility of democracy in our country,” stated Robyn Achilles, Executive Director for Friends of Minidoka. “Friends of Minidoka believes it is important to expand public understanding about the Japanese American experience beyond the Minidoka incarceration site to pre- and post- Minidoka years to fully understand why incarceration occurred and its enduring legacy.”

Achilles added, “Through a series of tours, we will address themes such as the systemic racist policies which undermined the power of the community, the economic exploitation of a marginalized group of people, the erasure of physical communities, and how the legacy of incarceration continues to resonate in our society today through the Japanese American diaspora. We also want to tell stories of courage, resilience, and challenges while claiming our place in American history. Finally, we want to connect the patterns of forced removal, economic exploitation, and discrimination suffered by communities of color through formal or informal policies throughout history.”

Friends of Minidoka is hiring a Project Manager and a Graduate Research Fellow for *Beyond the Barbed Wire*. For full position announcements and application deadlines, visit: www.minidoka.org/careers-internships.

The \$1,152,000 grant funds the full scope of the project and is the largest award received by Friends of Minidoka.

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About Friends of Minidoka

Friends of Minidoka engages in and supports education, research and historic preservation of the WWII incarceration experience. We strive to pass on the history, legacy, and lessons of civil liberties through transforming and inspiring experiences for the general public and those with personal and familial ties to Minidoka. We are committed to working with partners, including the National Park Service, to accomplish these goals. Learn more at minidoka.org.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.