



PARTNERS AND NEIGHBORS

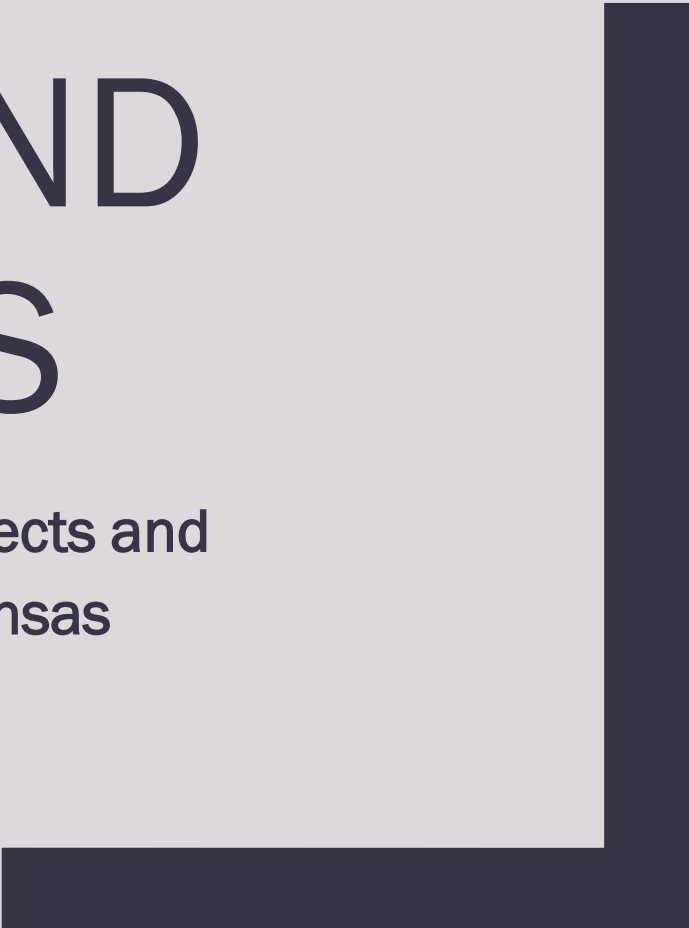
Reparative and Inclusive Description Projects and
Partnerships at the University of Arkansas

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University of Arkansas Special Collections



“[...]PROBLEMS THAT TOOK YEARS TO BUILD ARE NOT OFTEN
DISMANTLED IN AN HOUR. THERE ARE BEAMS OF HARM
STRETCHING OUT ACROSS THE ORDER OF THESE
COLLECTIONS, THEIR PROVENANCE, AND THEIR DESCRIPTION.
IT IS HARD TO KNOW WHICH PART OF THE SHAKY
FOUNDATION WILL UNSTEADY A PATRON AND PUSH THEM
OUT, BUT IT’S EVEN HARDER WHEN WE WANT TO JUMP OVER
THE HARM AND MOVE STRAIGHT TO SOLUTIONS.”

- Dorothy Berry, “The House Archives Built,” up/root 22 June 2021,
<https://www.uproot.space/features/the-house-archives-built>

Preparing for the work: Professional development and education

- Processing Team engaged in a series of readings and discussions throughout 2021 to prepare for implementing a pilot project

Q1-Q2- exploring what inclusive, respectful, anti-racist archival description looks like (or doesn't look like), and how it can be achieved

Q3- exploring case studies and projects by other institutions; beginning to plan a pilot project(s) of our own

Q4- planning and beginning edits to our Processing Manual to lay out philosophy and/or guidance; finalizing pilot project(s) plan

- Special Collections and Critical Librarianship Reading Group was formed in 2023

Pilot Project: Japanese-American Incarceration during World War II

- Why start here?
 - Arkansas collecting ties: Rohwer and Jerome; longtime Arkansas law school Dean Robert A. Leflar was an attorney for the War Relocation Authority from 1942-1944
 - Fewer collections overall, but very visible, including exhibitions and a resource guide



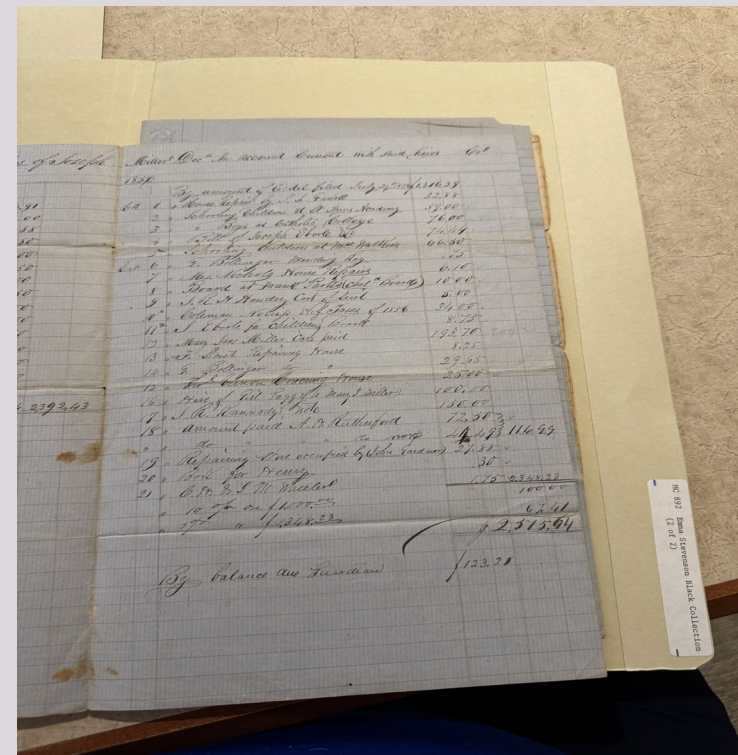
Picture from Special Collections Resource Guide "Japanese American Incarceration Archives in Special Collections, accessed at <https://uark.libguides.com/JapaneseAmericanIncarceration>

Process

- Pilot group first identified keywords that can in turn identify collections for editing, in addition to developing more accurate terms
- Using the keyword list, pilot group then identified collections through a search of finding aids
- Identified collections were apportioned out to the project committee, where individual members made initial suggestions for revisions. Some identified collections might not have needed revisions
- Revisions then evaluated by committee
- If approved or modified but then approved, initial member was responsible for editing finding aid while documenting the changes.

2023 Project: Materials related to enslaved persons

- Arkansas has many collections due to its history as an enslaver state and former Confederate state.
- Repeated the process used in the pilot project to both identify collections and revise description
- Identified collections were also physically reviewed for mentions of enslaved persons to be noted on the finding aid



Ledger from MC 892, Emma Stevenson Black Collection, Folder 2

2023 Project continued

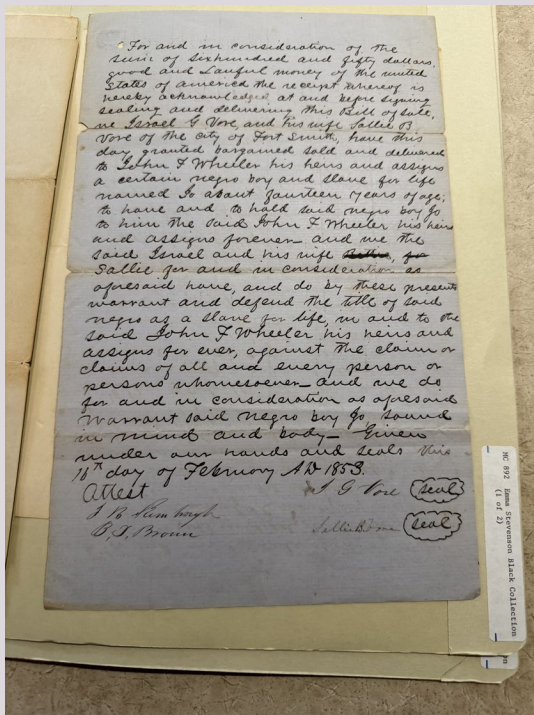
■ Committee discoveries:

- Many identified collections contained limited to no mention of the enslaved persons mentioned within in addition to the euphemistic language common in legacy finding aids
- Some legacy purchased collections retained vendor-provided descriptions

■ Follow up:

- Research guide developed in 2024 documenting collections and other materials related to enslaved persons within Arkansas' holdings
- Accessed at <https://uark.libguides.com/en-slavedpersons>

2024 Project: Indigenous persons and nations



- Project identified because of the number of collections related to nations both indigenous to Arkansas or who had been forcibly relocated to Oklahoma
- Process repeated as earlier, but some older collections that had been identified, particularly those with Antebellum materials were discovered to also contain materials related to enslaved persons.
- Volume of collections ultimately reviewed was larger than anticipated, pushing completion back into 2025.

Bill of sale for "Jo," a fourteen-year-old enslaved Black male, dated in 1853, from MC 892, Emma Stevenson Black Collection, Folder 1

Community-driven feedback

- Inclusive description statement on public-facing ArchivesSpace site invites feedback
- "Ask Us" button on finding aids went live in October 2024
- First community feedback request for reparative edits was received in December 2024
- Workflows developed for future requests as well as how to implement them.

Assessment

- Project wrap-ups
- Applying the Maturity Model for Reparative Description
 - Categories of assessment
 - Leadership
 - Process
 - Implementation
 - Documentation
 - Metrics and Impact
 - Community Relationships
 - Sustainability
 - Support
 - Each project helps inform the next one

Leadership

The people or entities who initiate and/or assume responsibility for reparative description efforts

1	2	3	4	5
The work is being led by one or two dedicated or enthusiastic people. If these individuals left the institution, the work would slow or stop.	There has been a concerted effort to create committees or task forces that will lead the work, but there is a lack of clear leadership and no or few processes to approve projects and decisions.	There are committees with clear leadership that have established their position, purpose, and processes as well as defined mechanisms to approve projects and decisions within or across departments.	There are committees with clear leadership that have established their position, purpose, and processes within the organization.	There are committees with clear leadership that have established their position, purpose, and processes within the organization at-large and within the larger community.

Process

The nature of processes and workflows that govern, plan, and direct reparative description efforts

1	2	3	4	5
Processes, workflows, and priorities are reactive and driven primarily through need, particularly user feedback.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are reactive and driven primarily through need, particularly feedback from users and internal stakeholders, such as affiliated departments or content providers.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are driven through a combination of need and strategic design. While feedback may continue to determine the majority of the work, there is basic short-term project planning that allows for a more systematic approach.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are driven primarily through strategic design. There are short-term and medium-term project plans for the work. There is consideration for sustainability, but no clear long-term solutions.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are driven through strategic design. Institutional and community partnerships inform the work through long-term project plans that give thoughtful consideration for the persistence and sustainability of the work.

“A Maturity Model for Reparative Description (MMRD)” by Stephanie M. Luke and Sharon Mizota. Version 1, updated April 2024. <https://github.com/stephanieluke/Maturity-Model-for-Reparative-Description>

Accountability and transparency

- Revisions are noted within both revision notes and as an addition to processing notes
- Copy of original, unedited finding aid is retained in project records

“Making sense of a given finding aid—understanding what it tells us and knowing how much to trust it—requires recognizing it as the (provisional) outcome of a complex history, sometimes a multistage evolution spanning decades. A finding aid that documents its own complex history will be informative in ways unachievable by a finding aid that obscures its history.”

- Owen C. King, “Archival Meta-metadata: Revision History and Positionality of Finding Aids.” *Archival Science* 24 (2024): 509-529.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-024-09443-z>

Reparative Description is the Mission of the University Libraries

The mission of the University of Arkansas Libraries is to provide access to information that will support and foster creativity, study, teaching, and research.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the University of Arkansas logo, the text "University Libraries Special Collections", a "QUICKLINKS" button, and a search bar. Below the navigation bar is a horizontal menu with links for "Collections", "Research", "Programs", "Donate", "Visit", "Contact", and "My Aeon Account". A yellow banner below the menu contains text about the Special Collections Reading Room's location and hours. Below the banner is a link to "View instructions for scheduling an appointment". A search section follows, with tabs for "Archives", "Digital Collections", "Print Materials", and "Index Arkansas". The "Archives" tab is selected, showing a search form with a "Keyword" dropdown, a "Search all record types" dropdown, a "Years" range selector, and a "Search" button. Below the search section is a blue banner with text about the Special Collections' mission. At the bottom, there are two columns: "Special Collections News" and "Recently Added Books". The "Special Collections News" column contains links to "Take a Study Break With the University Libraries" and "Spring 2025 Community Scholars Training Program to Be Held in Dardanelle". The "Recently Added Books" column contains links to "Private landowners assessments of feral hogs and UAS applications in Arkansas pilot counties...", "Centennial history of Arkansas", "One hundred years of Fayetteville, 1828-1928", "Washington County, Arkansas", "Tom Lutz...", "Petticoat torque...", and a link to "More recently added books".

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS University Libraries Special Collections QUICKLINKS Search this site

Collections Research Programs Donate Visit Contact My Aeon Account

The Special Collections Reading Room is currently located on the third floor of Mullins Library in room 329 and open by appointment only. Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday - Friday. Please note that the Reading Room is closed daily from noon to 1 p.m.

[View instructions for scheduling an appointment](#) in the Special Collections reading room.

Archives Digital Collections Print Materials Index Arkansas

Keyword Enter your search terms Search

Search all record types Years: From To To

Special Collections supports the research, teaching, and learning mission of the University of Arkansas by collecting, preserving, and providing access to unique and rare materials. [Get started with your Special Collections research.](#)

Special Collections News

[Take a Study Break With the University Libraries](#)

Study Breaks begin April 28! Relax and refuel with food, drinks, and activities sponsored by the Libraries and our partners across campus. ... [Continue Reading](#)

[Spring 2025 Community Scholars Training Program to Be Held in Dardanelle](#)

The next installment of the Arkansas Folk and Traditional Arts Community Scholars Training Program - a free training opportunity for Arkansans interested in finding, documenting and

Recently Added Books

[Private landowners assessments of feral hogs and UAS applications in Arkansas pilot counties...](#)

[Centennial history of Arkansas](#)

[One hundred years of Fayetteville, 1828-1928](#)

[Washington County, Arkansas](#)

[Tom Lutz...](#)

[Petticoat torque...](#)

[More recently added books](#)

Challenging Times

- But then aren't they always—important to remember the stories
- Division and University missions are focused on access and preserving the history and culture of the entire State of Arkansas
- Focus on administrative alignment and continuing the work improving what we do
- Performance, Advocacy, Assessment, THEN Adapt as needed

The screenshot shows the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections website. The header includes the University of Arkansas logo, the text "University Libraries Special Collections", a "LINKS" icon, and a search bar labeled "Search this site". A navigation menu contains links for Collections, Research, Programs, Donate, Visit, Contact, and My Aeon Account. A large banner image features a medieval manuscript illustration with a text box overlay stating: "The Special Collections Reading Room is currently located on the third floor of Mullins Library in room 329 and open **by appointment only**. Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday - Friday. Please note that the Reading Room is closed daily from noon to 1 p.m." Below the banner, a left sidebar contains a menu with links to Collections, Research, Programs, Visit, and Contact, along with a "Give to the Libraries" button. The main content area is titled "About Special Collections" and includes a breadcrumb trail: "Libraries Home / Special Collections / About Special Collections". The text describes the mission of Special Collections, its public access, and its history since 1967. It includes links to "Learn more about doing research in Special Collections", "strategic plan", "the collections", and "collection development policy". A "Note" box at the bottom states: "Many collections are stored offsite and require advance notice to access. To ensure materials are available for your use, please [contact Special Collections](#) two weeks in advance on your visit."

Legislative State

- [HB1646](#), To Require Certain Materials To Be Stored In Locked Compartments Within A Designated Area. Notification that HB1646 is now Act 917. Signed/Enacted/Adopted.
- [HB1977](#), To Create The Protecting Childhood Innocence In Libraries Act. In Committee.
- [SB184](#), To Transfer The Powers And Duties Of The Arkansas Educational Television Commission And The State Library Board To The Department Of Education, Crossed Over.
- [SB536](#), To Abolish And Transfer The Arkansas State Library And The State Library Board; And To Declare An Emergency, Crossed Over
- [SB640](#), To Reconstitute The State Library Board. Now Act 903, Signed/Enacted/Adopted

Evolving Policies

- Public university, Division within a large and complex college (administrative unit)
- University policies on non-discrimination evolving
- Extended to funds for student support and communications such as footers
- System and campus leadership focused on external challenges
- Limited discussion already about website content, including guides and finding aids

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS | University Policies and Handbooks [LINKS](#)

Academic Policy Series Fayetteville Policies and Procedures Search All Policies Handbooks

Section 1
Section 2
Section 3
Section 4
Section 5
Archived Handbooks

Non-Discrimination; Equal Opportunity

[U of A](#) / [Search Policies and Handbooks](#) / [Faculty Handbook](#)
/ [Policies on Employment, Student Records, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment](#)
/ Non-Discrimination; Equal Opportunity

It is the policy of the University of Arkansas to provide an educational and work environment in which thought, creativity, and growth are stimulated, and in which individuals are free to realize their full potential through equal opportunity. The University should be a place of work and study, which is free of all forms of discrimination and exploitation. Therefore, it is the policy of the University of Arkansas, to prohibit discrimination and to make every effort to eliminate discrimination within the university community.

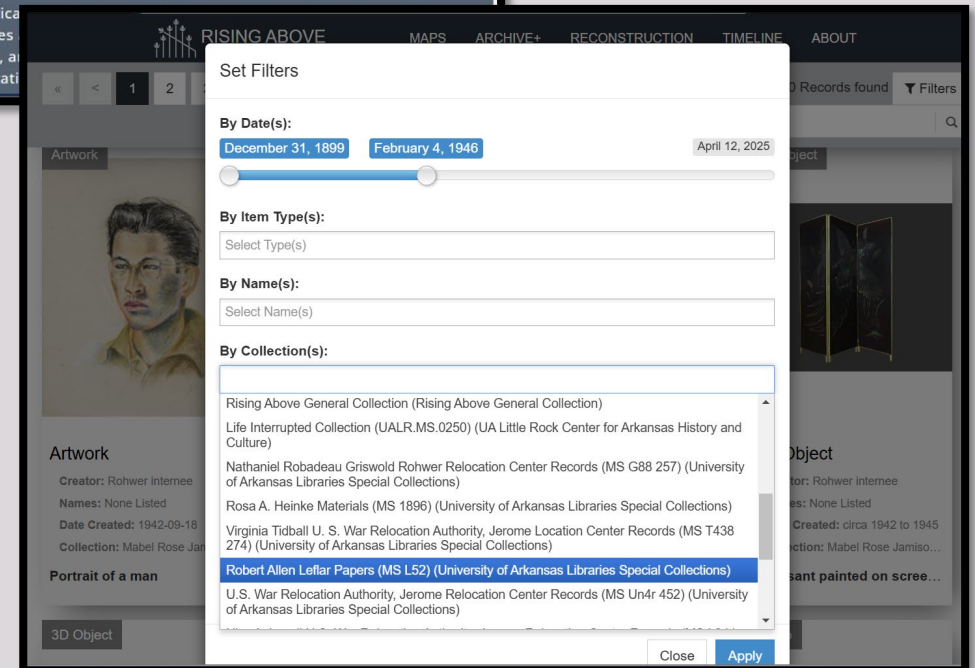
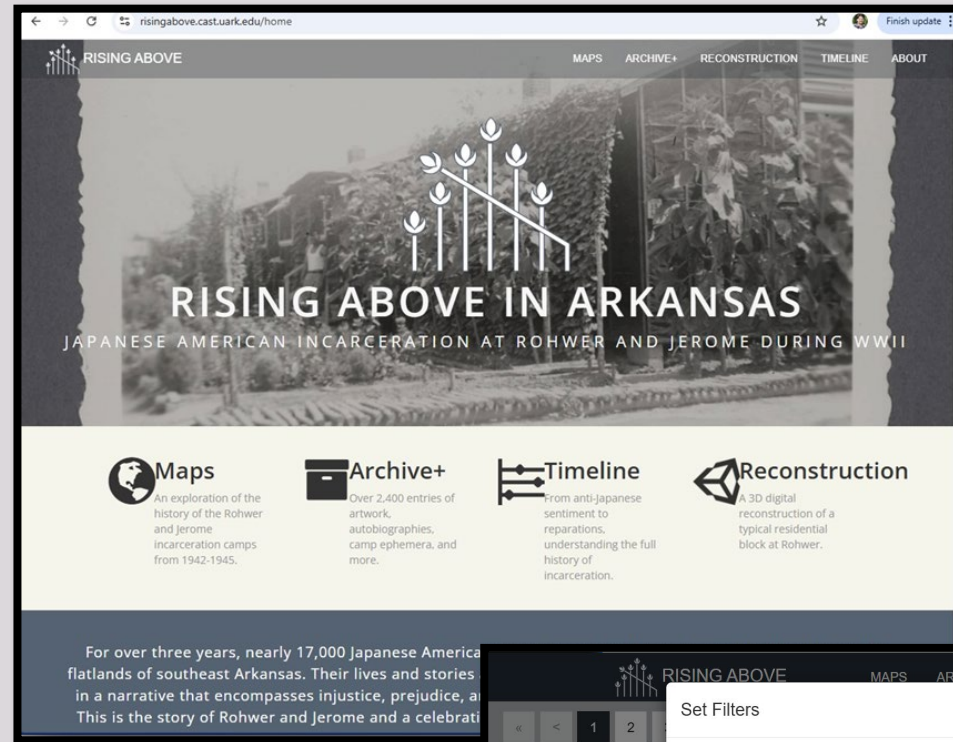
Therefore, the University of Arkansas is committed to providing equal opportunity for all students and applicants for admission and for all employees and applicants for employment regardless

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



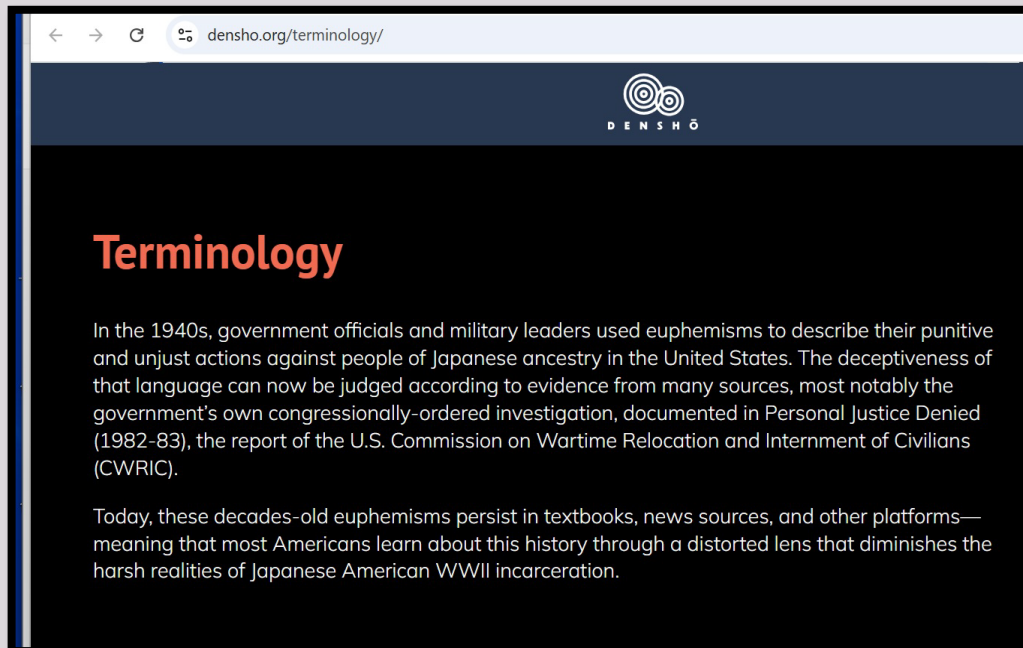
"Rising Above"

- Project dovetails with other Division projects
- Grant supported collaboration: University's Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST), Special Collections, statewide archives
- Robust and forward looking approach to Digital Humanities AND opening collections to creative interpretations and amazing research possibilities
- Fate of Japanese American Confinements Sites (JACS) funding is in doubt



Aligned Standards and Pushing Progress

- Coordinated with Densho independent community-led project, JANM, and others since beginning
- Densho metadata scheme which has evolved
- Library of Congress was late to change but descriptions reflect adjustments
- Rising Above now catching up
- Alignment with UARK Special Collections intended to encourage other archives in the state



The screenshot shows the Densho website's terminology page. The URL is densho.org/terminology/. The page has a dark blue header with the Densho logo. The main content area is white with the title "Terminology" in orange. The text explains that in the 1940s, government officials and military leaders used euphemisms to describe punitive and unjust actions against people of Japanese ancestry in the United States. It mentions the government's own congressionally-ordered investigation, documented in Personal Justice Denied (1982-83), the report of the U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC). The text concludes by stating that today, these decades-old euphemisms persist in textbooks, news sources, and other platforms, meaning that most Americans learn about this history through a distorted lens that diminishes the harsh realities of Japanese American WWII incarceration.

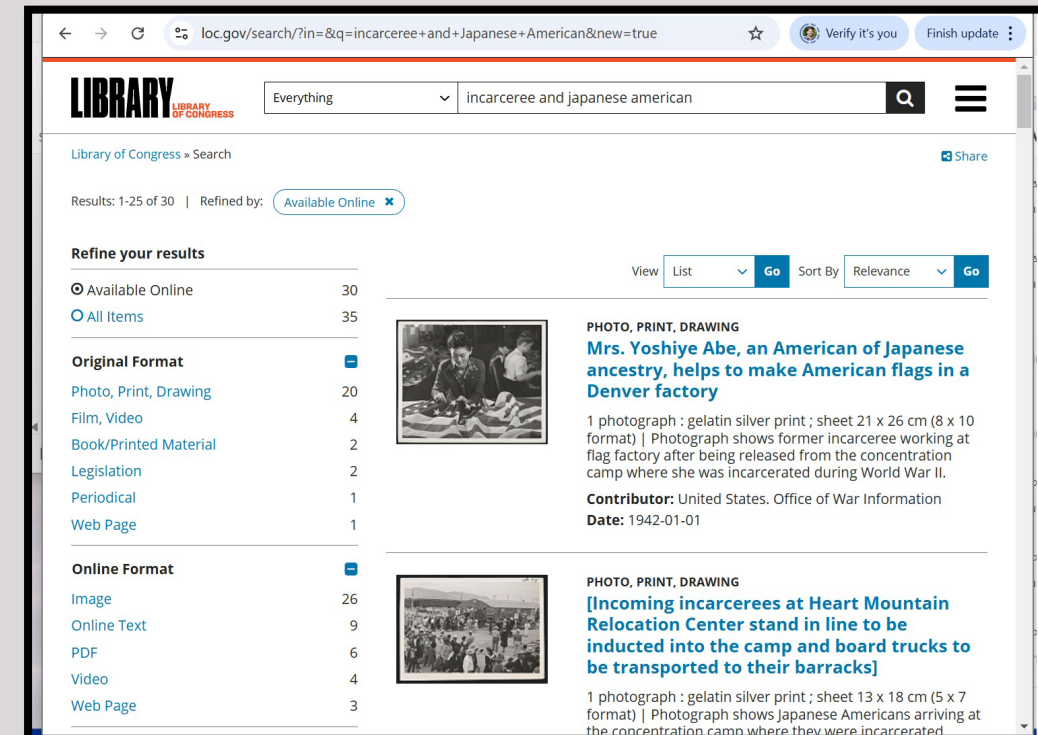
Forced Removal vs. Evacuation

In early 1942, Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from the West Coast and forbidden to return. The government called this an "evacuation," implying the forced move was a precaution for Japanese Americans' own safety, as in a natural disaster. In reality, this was a targeted exile of a single ethnic minority—carried out by armed soldiers, enforced by lawmakers and elected officials, and motivated, in part, by a desire to reap economic gains from the farmland and property Japanese Americans were forced to leave behind. "Exclusion" and "mass removal" are therefore more apt than euphemisms such as "evacuation" and "relocation," because Japanese Americans were expelled from the West Coast and **subject to arrest** if they returned.

Incarceration vs. Internment

The commonly used term "internment" fails to accurately describe what happened to Japanese Americans during WWII. "Internment" refers to the legally permissible, though morally questionable, detention of "enemy aliens" in time of war. There were approximately 8,000 Issei ("first generation") arrested as enemy aliens and subjected to what could be described as "internment" in a separate set of camps run by the Army or Department of Justice.* This term becomes a misleading, othering euphemism when applied to American citizens detained by their own government; yet two-thirds of Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII were U.S. citizens by birth and right.

Although "internment" is a recognized and widely used term, we encourage the use of "incarceration."



The screenshot shows the Library of Congress search results page for the query "incarceree and japanese american". The URL is loc.gov/search/?in=&q=incarceree+and+japanese+american&new=true. The page displays search results for "Library of Congress » Search". The results are refined by "Available Online" (1-25 of 30). The results are sorted by "Relevance". The page shows two results, each with a thumbnail image and a description.

Original Format	Count
Photo, Print, Drawing	20
Film, Video	4
Book/Printed Material	2
Legislation	2
Periodical	1
Web Page	1

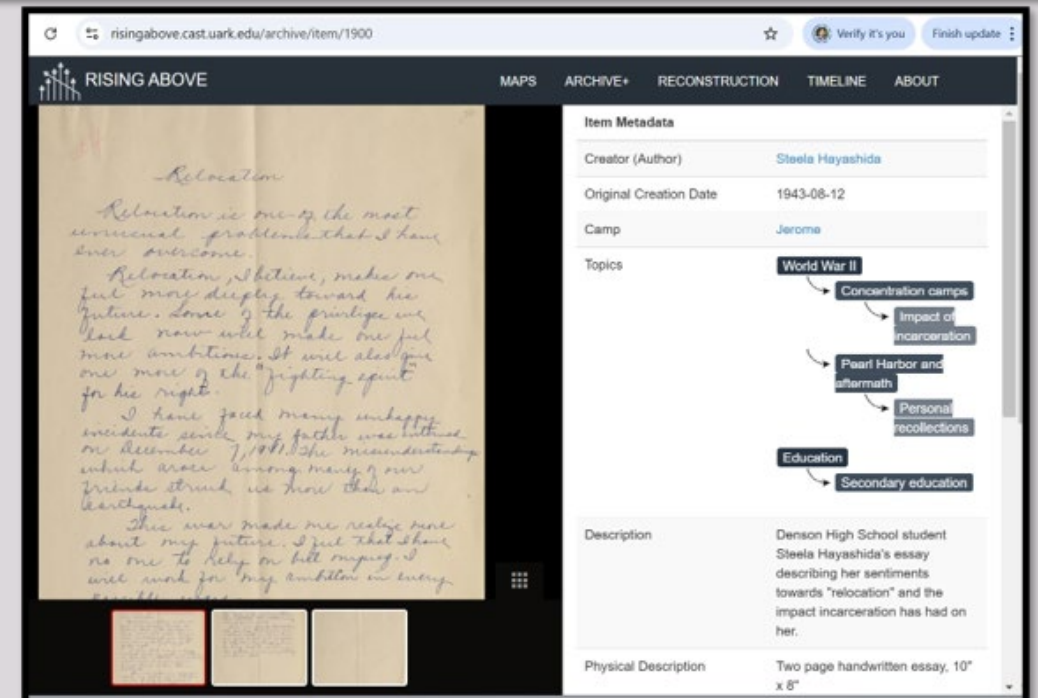
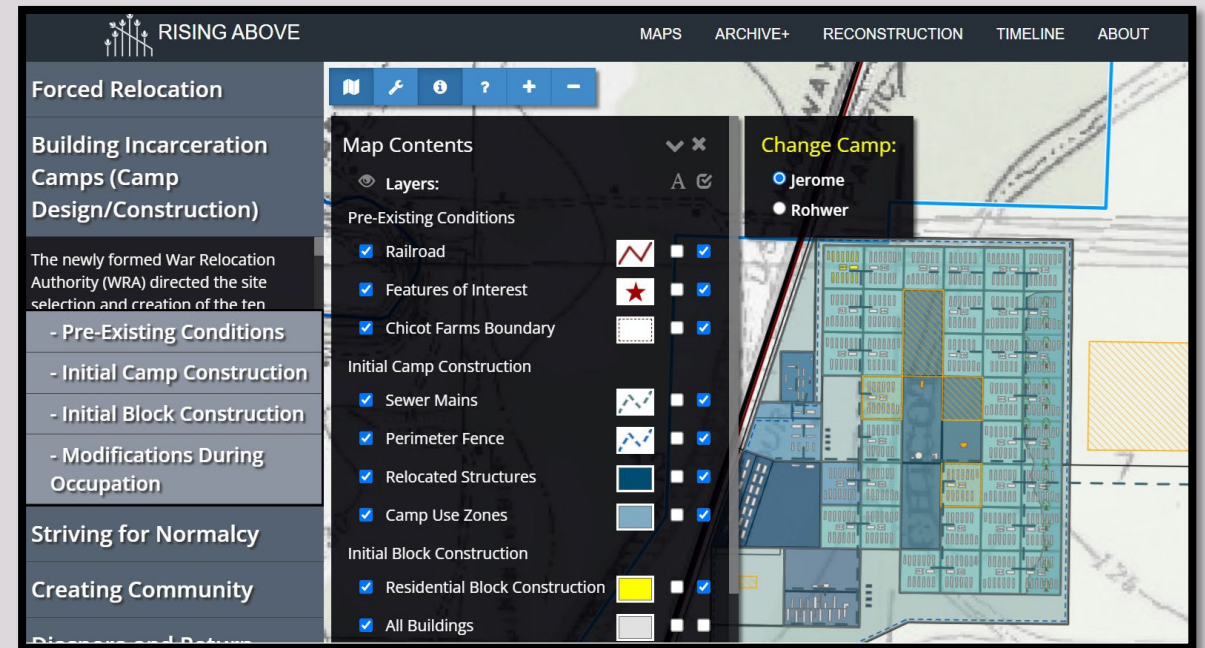
Online Format	Count
Image	26
Online Text	9
PDF	6
Video	4
Web Page	3

PHOTO, PRINT, DRAWING
Mrs. Yoshiye Abe, an American of Japanese ancestry, helps to make American flags in a Denver factory
1 photograph : gelatin silver print ; sheet 21 x 26 cm (8 x 10 format) | Photograph shows former incarcerated working at flag factory after being released from the concentration camp where she was incarcerated during World War II.
Contributor: United States. Office of War Information
Date: 1942-01-01

PHOTO, PRINT, DRAWING
[Incoming incarcerated at Heart Mountain Relocation Center stand in line to be inducted into the camp and board trucks to be transported to their barracks]
1 photograph : gelatin silver print ; sheet 13 x 18 cm (5 x 7 format) | Photograph shows Japanese Americans arriving at the concentration camp where they were incarcerated.

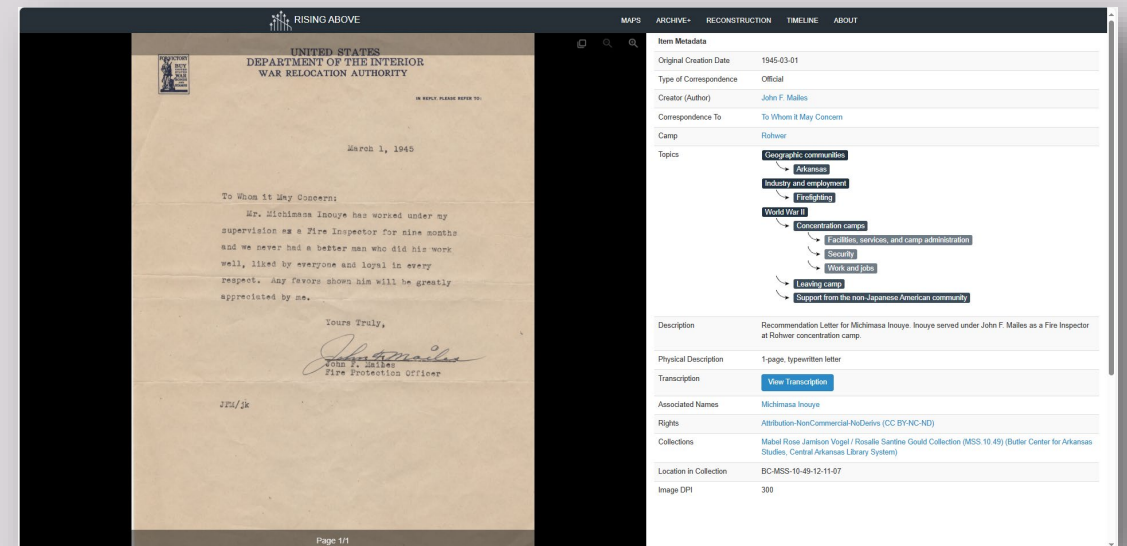
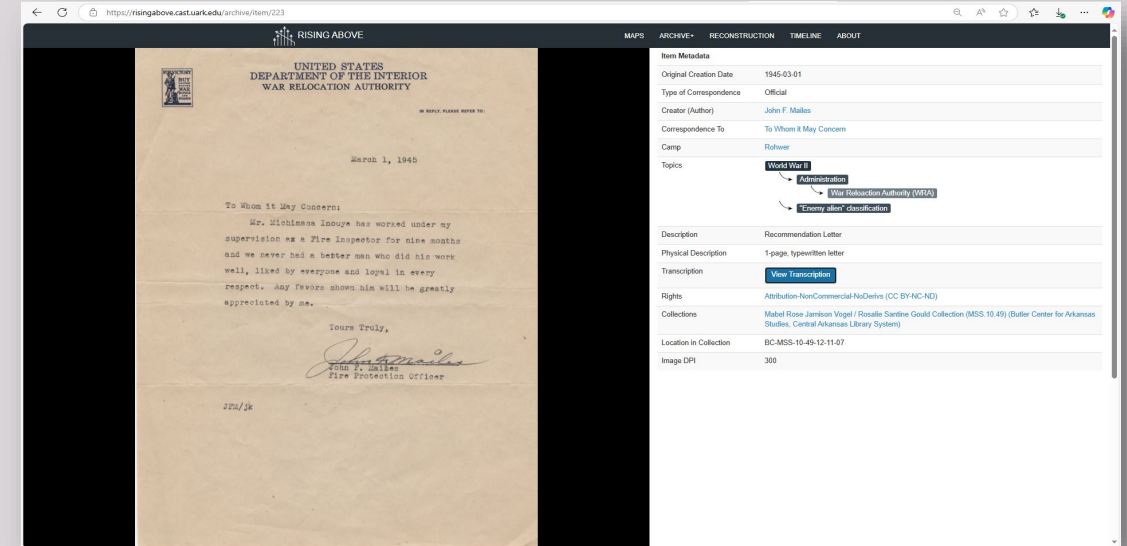
Latest Phase

- Adding public contributions and extending beyond Arkansas
- Latest cycle, awarded Fall 2024, focused on education resources and community memory
- Reparative description, discussed with Japanese American stakeholders earlier
- Project staff already making great progress.



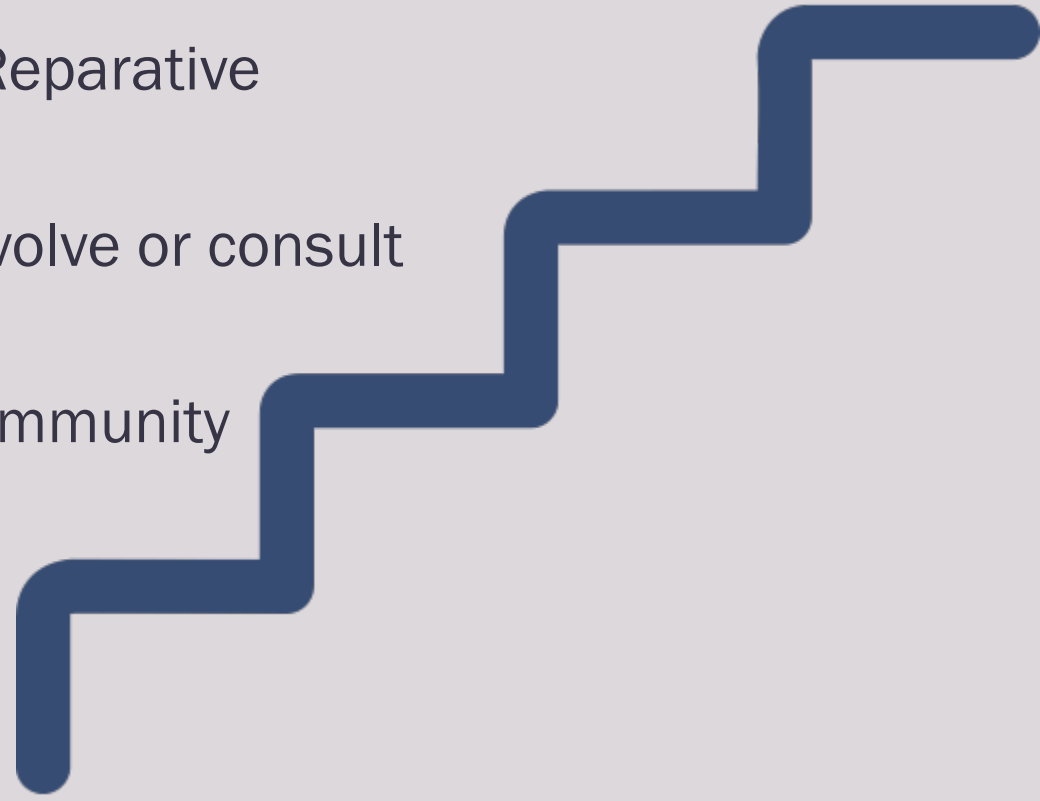
Future Project Support

- Endowed funds to support fellows
- Student and temporary work dedicated to the project
- Sustainable approaches to ensure updating and future iterations



What's next for the Processing Team's work

- Other topical projects, to be determined based on Team member suggestions and/or community feedback
- Trying out the University of Utah's Marriott Reparative metadata assessment tool (MaRMAT)
- Considering ways we might more directly involve or consult with subject and creator communities
- Continuing to respond to researcher and community feedback as we receive it



QUESTIONS?

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