

Friendraising events replace annual gala

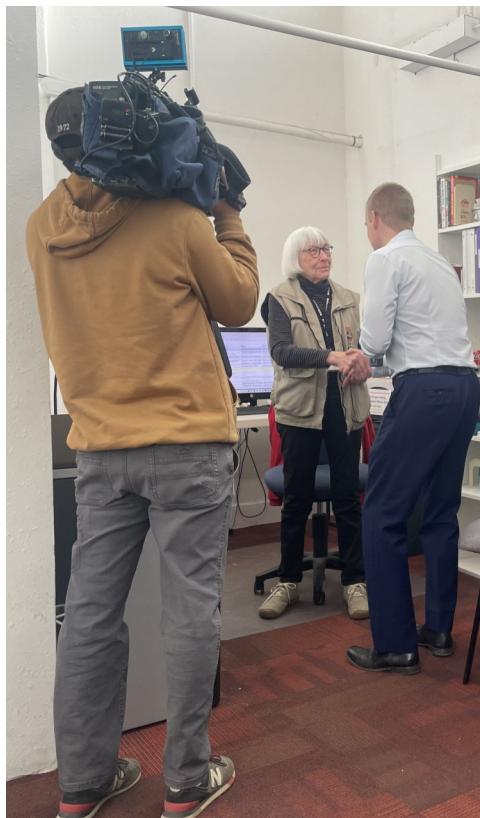
A new series of friendraising events in the museum is expected to start in April.

Instead of our traditional annual gala, we invite you to join us for interesting and informative monthly gatherings that will showcase various aspects of our unique museum, including our permanent exhibits, student-created exhibits, our treasured collections, and more.

see Annual gala, page 2

“Pay it 4ward”

Longtime employee awarded KOB-4 certificate



“Twenty years ago, I landed right where I belonged,” she said recently. That’s museum employee Lyn Berner speaking with volunteers Peggy Shurban and John Cornish. It was Peggy who suggested Lyn as a candidate for KOB’s *pay it4ward* honor and it was John who wrote the winning narrative. They checked with and had the full support of the rest of the staff: Camelia Caton-Garcia, Alexander King, and Lewis Twite.

So, one Thursday late in December, news anchor Trevor Thompson, with cameraman in tow, presented a certificate to a “supposed-to-be surprised” 79-year-old who sounded like a broken record. “I’m still here because of the mission,” she said repeatedly when too tongue tied to answer Trevor’s in-depth questions.

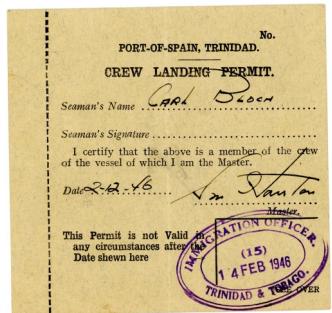
Actually, Lyn’s time at the museum now surpasses her 19 years as a school public relations practitioner in Pennsylvania. In earlier jobs, she was a newspaper reporter in Reading, PA and Staten Island, NY. In her next life, she threatens to be a standup comic.

Respecting the concept of paying it forward, the \$400 check that came with the honor was immediately donated to the museum.

Archives *Alive!*

Sometimes even the smallest documents have a story to tell. This landing permit was issued to Carl B. Blake (Bloch) on February 12, 1946 and listed Carl as a crew-member of the coffee freighter he and his family were aboard on their immigration journey to the US from Brazil.

The Blakes were an Austrian Jewish family who fled Vienna in 1938 at the beginning of Nazi occupation. They spent the remaining war years in Rio de Janeiro. They immigrated to the United States in 1946 and this document was part of that journey. Carl was not a crewmember but a passenger and this permit allowed him to disembark at Port of Spain, the capital of the Caribbean nations of Trinidad and Tobago. It is franked with an "Immigration Officer. Trinidad & Tobago" stamp dated February 14, 1946. Although we don't know the



Small packages yield lifelong stories

exact circumstances of Carl's trip onto the island, we do know that the

ship he, wife Lita Heiber Blake, and daughter Yara Blake (later Pitchford) were traveling on was headed to Ellis Island. It was here that the family would begin the process of becoming US citizens, adopting their new name Blake.



Lita & Carl in Brazil

Carl continued his work as a chemist, holding positions at international printing companies and patenting new types of ink. He retired to Florida where he died in 1973. His wife, Lita Heiber Blake, would later move to Santa Fe to be near her daughter, Yara, who gifted NMHIM the extraordinary collection that contains this and many more documents related to their journeys as survivors.

Find out more about the Dr. Carl B. Blake and Lita Heiber Blake Collection here: <https://nmholocaustmuseum.catalogaccess.com/archives/5113>

(Do you have something to share? Are you interested in setting up a research visit to our archives? Email nmhim-collections@nmhim.org)

Staff reorganizes file management system and more

by Lewis Twite

From December 20 to January 22, staff closed the museum and focused on a number of internal organizational projects.

- Repairing the HVAC to regulate temperature at the front desk, shampooing the carpeting, replacing light bulbs in the exhibit gallery and installing LED fixtures in the first floor office and lunch room.
- Organizing our internal file management system and standardizing file naming conventions.
- Updating the docent handbook and exhibit guide, with help from volunteer John Cornish.
- Working with contractor Sarah Welsh, an Arizona historian and educator, on lesson plans based on the collections items in our museum.
- Holding several strategic planning meetings with board members and volunteers, discussing future programming and exhibit ideas.
- Kicking off a new semester of the student exhibit design program, this time at Technology Leadership High School.

In addition, volunteers Peggy Shurban and Melissa Loudat started sorting our large collection of VHS tapes, and Melissa started cataloguing the notes left by visitors in the *Hate in America* exhibit.

Since reopening January 22, we've welcomed over 50 visitors from New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Colorado, and hosted tours for Albuquerque Oasis, CNM, Sandia High School, Mountain Mahogany Community School, and Santa Fe Indian School. Seven more tours are scheduled in February.

Annual gala fundraiser replaced by friendraisers

continued from first page

Each event will feature delicious bites from local restaurants. Our goal is to bring our community together, encourage meaningful conversations, and support NMHIM.

We are committed to building a legacy of understanding, empathy, and positive change, making New Mexico and the world a better place for everyone. Your participation will truly make a difference. As we finalize the details, we will keep you informed about the dates and times.

Versatile volunteer promotes kindness

by Lewis Twite

“Be kind to one another,” says Melissa Loudat, a front desk volunteer at the museum. Since May of 2025, Melissa has been greeting visitors on Thursdays with a welcoming smile. Whether she’s sitting up front and folding brochures, helping organize school students on field trips, or sorting through piles of old VHS tapes, Melissa is always willing to lend a hand, no matter the project. Her favorite part of the position is connecting with visitors, learning about their lives and their stories.

When she’s not helping out at the museum, Melissa enjoys spending time with her “fur family,” taking long walks through the foothills, and visiting the many historic sites throughout our beautiful state.

A native of Roswell, Melissa served 20 years in the Air National Guard, retiring as a Master Sergeant. Throughout her service, she worked as a medical technician and trained for aeromedical evacuation in emergency situations. As a civilian, she worked as a commercial real estate appraiser, a job that took her throughout the state. Now retired, Melissa remains interested in history and the lessons the past holds for our current times. “After decades of considering myself knowledgeable of the Holocaust,” she says, “I was shocked after learning of all the countless genocides of various groups around the world throughout history.”

Our wonderful volunteers like Melissa keep this museum open, ensuring that everyone has the chance to learn this vital history.



NMHIM welcomes a new intern from UNM

by Alexander King

NMHIM is excited to welcome a new intern from UNM to the team. Cali Deprest is a senior at UNM and as part of her studies is doing a semester long practicum at NMHIM. Cali will be assisting Alexander (King) and Lewis (Twite) in the education department, going to schools to work with students and helping us create new curricula and lesson plans.



When asked what she would like to accomplish while she is with us, Cali said,

“I love to use resources written about the Holocaust, use the tools that I have learned throughout my time at the University of New Mexico and use that to further educate those who want to know more about the Holocaust and intolerance. I am very passionate about education, especially education of our youth, and I want to be able to help with further knowledge of the history of the Holocaust and intolerances.”

If you see Cali in the museum or at any museum events, please give her a warm NMHIM welcome. We are very glad to have her helping us this spring!

Reaching teachers across the state

Supported by funding from the Mid-Region Council of Governments, our professional development conference scheduled for Saturday, February 28 in the CNM Workforce Training Center will be attended by more than 80 New Mexico school teachers.

DIVERSE APPROACHES TO HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Different ways to teach the vast, complex topic of the Holocaust in today’s classrooms will be highlighted.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The keynote speaker, Arizona teacher and historian **Sarah Welsh**, will examine the genocide of Romani people through the memoirs of two child survivors.

WORKSHOPS

Erika Lowery at the Institute for Curriculum Studies will explore how primary sources give students multiple perspectives on important topics of the past.

Jake Newsome with the Pink Triangle Legacies Project will equip educators with the knowledge and tools they need to confidently teach about how and why the Nazi regime targeted LGBTQ+ people during the era of the Holocaust. Participants will receive exclusive access to digital educator resource packets curated by the Pink Triangle Legacies Project.

The conference was organized by education coordinator Alexander King and research & development manager Lewis Twite.

THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED
ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28.

Japanese-American experience in the US: the best and the worst

American Dream American Nightmare



Note on Terms:
You may see some new or unfamiliar terms in this exhibit, below are definitions.

Nikkei - Japanese emigrants and their descendants living outside Japan

Issei - The first generation of Japanese-emigrants

Internment/Confinement/Incarceration/Concentration camp - refers to the series of prison camps that held people of Japanese-Ancestry during WWII. Different organizations may refer to the camps using different terminology.

NOW ON DISPLAY

Researched, developed and designed by high school students of the New America Charter School, this exhibit takes a close look at Japanese and Japanese-American incarceration in World War II New Mexico.

CONNECTING DOTS

While researching, students made connections between this history and what they see happening today with ICE.

Japanese Internment Camps in New Mexico

The Empire of Japan joined the Axis powers by signing the Tripartite Pact on September 27, 1940. The United States and its allies declared war on Japan after the Japanese attacked the naval base at Pearl Harbor shortly prior to the Empire of Japan declaring war on the US. In response to the attack on Pearl Harbor and US involvement in the war, the US government began to intern Japanese citizens and Japanese-Americans in concentration camps starting on February 19, 1942.

Starting in the spring of 1942, approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans who had not volunteered were later forcibly removed and taken to assembly centers. War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps began accepting incoming Japanese-American prisoners on March 26, 1942.

The Start of Internment

Most Japanese-Americans interned in the US were of the approximately 200,000 people interned, two-thirds were American citizens. For many years to come, Japanese-Americans had been under surveillance and monitored by the FBI, the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Office of Strategic Services, the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Office of the Provost Marshal General, and the Office of Naval Intelligence. The WRA, the War Relocation Authority, was the agency that managed the camps. The camps managed by the civilian WRA, all of the camps in New Mexico were run by the US Army or the DCO.



Camp Locations

Most of the camps were located in the western region of the United States. The New Mexico internment camps were located in Lordsburg, Fort Stanton, and Santa Fe. Camps were placed in remote locations to isolate or coerce and make escape less likely.



Camp Locations

Starting in 1943, prisoners who were considered "trustworthy" by the US government were allowed to leave the camp for the interior of the country. In 1945, the US government began to close the camps across the US. slowly began to close.



Camp Locations

- Santa Fe Internment Camp -



Santa Fe Internment Camp

The Santa Fe Internment camp was established in March of 1942 and was open until April of 1946. It was used to hold Japanese, German and Italian internees. Most of the internees were Japanese descent. An estimated 4,650 internees went through this camp during its operation. Many of the Japanese prisoners were fathers and community leaders. Santa Fe held the largest number of Japanese-American internees out of all the New Mexico internment camps.

Initial view of Santa Fe Internment Camp c. 1942

Aerial view of Santa Fe Internment Camp c. 1942

Internees lived under restricted conditions, separated from their families and communities, and had their rights violated within the process. Despite the harsh living conditions, internees worked to maintain dignity and community through cultural, educational, and religious activities. Examples of the many activities inside the camps were sports such as baseball, tennis, and sumo wrestling. Arts and crafts such as wood carving, painting, and pottery were also common ways for internees to escape the painful bonds of everyday life in camp. Internees could also work while at Santa Fe, although they were paid less than minimum wage for their labor. Today, the camp is remembered through a monument placed on a nearby hill, documentaries and museum exhibits.

Lordsburg Camp

Camp Lordsburg was the largest U.S. Army run Japanese internment camp in America. Lordsburg operated as an internment camp from June 1942 to October 1945, holding about 1,200 Japanese Americans, most of whom were from the continental United States. Internees faced difficult conditions at Lordsburg battling insects, inclement weather, and rampant sand storms.

Conflict at Camp Lordsburg

Shortly after internees arrived in June, camp administrator Lieutenant Colonel Clyde Lundy ordered internees to begin doing hard manual labor outside in the hot sun during the middle of the day. This order violated the Geneva Convention requirements for safe working conditions, and led to a general strike amongst the men. As a result, those on strike were denied privileges such as access to the camp canteen, lights after dark, and the freedom to leave their barracks. Lundy was eventually forced to rescind the order due to appeals from the Spanish consulate. As a result of the war, Spain had been forced to close its consulate in New Mexico, and the US had to rely on the US Consulate in the United States. Six months after the order Lundy was relieved of command by another officer. In the early morning hours of July 27, 1942, a group of 150 men were transported by train to Lordsburg for imprisonment. Guards forced the men from the train station to the camp on the outskirts of town. Two of the prisoners, Torisoh Kobata and Hirota Isomura, lagged behind the rest. Both of the men were elderly and suffered from mobility issues. Torisoh Kobata struggled with complications from tuberculosis he contracted 10 years before war started, while Hirota Isomura suffered from a spinal injury he received prior to internment. As the two men slowly made their way to camp both were shot in the back by Private Clarence Burleson, the man guarding them. The resulting military tribunal would find Private Burleson innocent of manslaughter after he claimed the two men were attempting to flee.

FORT STANTON INTERNMENT CAMP



WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

In January of 1942, the internment camp opened in Fort Stanton to hold prisoners of war, initially held captured German sailors and merchant marines. In 1945, 10 Japanese "double-crossers" were taken from Santa Fe and moved to Fort Stanton.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Fort Stanton became one of the largest Japanese internment camps in the country, holding over 12,000 people on Japanese descent.

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

Fort Stanton was selected for its remote location and isolation from large population centers. The U.S. government wanted to keep "enemy aliens" away from non-Japanese U.S. citizens and cities because they could be potential targets of sabotage during war.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

The camp was first used to imprison Japanese-Americans in 1942 and was later used for building supplies of the camp including construction and the prison.

CLOVIS

Home to the oldest Chinatown in the US, Clovis, New Mexico became the largest segregated community of Asian railroad workers and their families. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor the town of Clovis ordinary families were extensively segregated. On the night of January 25, 1942, prompted by threats of violence and exploitation from the Clovis community, the local Board of Education would remove all of the Japanese (including 12 young children) from their homes in Clovis. The Japanese families were first taken to Fort Stanton before being transferred to the nearby Old Raton Ranch (also called the "Japanese Ranch") where they stayed until 1945. In 2004 the town of Clovis dedicated its annual Pioneer Day Parade to the Japanese-American citizens who had been driven out of town and issued an apology on the behalf of the families. Roy Eshara, Fred Kimura, and Lillian Kimura Ryukawa, three of the children removed in the middle of the night in 1942, were invited back to Clovis to serve as grand marshals in the 2004 Pioneer Days Parade.

Visitor feedback all good

While many visitors in groups are middle and high school students, we also welcome Road Scholars, life plan and 55+ communities, book clubs, and friends. Recently *Albuquerque Oasis* brought almost 40 adults in late January, many of whom had feedback for us. We share two comments here:

"Everyone should visit this museum! Such an important part of our history to be remembered. One of the instructor's personal connection was especially meaningful."

"The museum is a treasure. Both speakers were excellent. I had studied the Holocaust but learned even more today."

SCHEDULE A GROUP VISIT ONLINE AT NMHIM.ORG

JACL HELP & ADVICE

Nikki Nojima Louis, PhD and other members of the Japanese-American Citizens League assisted by presenting lectures, offering advice, and bringing in guest speakers to enrich the students' experience.