WakamatsuFest150

Commemorative Festival Program

June 6th to 9th, 2019

941 Cold Springs Road, Placerville, CA 95667 • 530-621-1224

Come and Make History With Us!

2019 marks a milestone for both American River Conservancy (ARC) and Wakamatsu Farm. ARC is celebrating its 30th year of preserving rivers and land for life. This year also marks the 150th anniversary of Japanese immigration to the United States.

On June 8, 1869, a group of Japanese colonists from Aizu-Wakamatsu, Japan, arrived in Gold Hill, California, to start a tea and silk farm. The site of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony is California Registered Historic Landmark #815, and the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance. It is the birthplace of the first birthright Japanese American citizen, Mary Schnell, who was born in 1870. It is also the burial site of Okei-san, the first Japanese woman and immigrant laid to rest in the United States in 1871.

The indigenous people of this region, the Nisenan and Miwok, inhabited this site and the nearby river canyons for millennia. Their way of life changed forever with the discovery of gold in nearby Coloma, and the resulting Gold Rush of 1849 brought people from all over the world to California. El Dorado County's pioneering agriculturalists valued the Gold Hill region's rich, fertile soil. The Veerkamp Family farmed the land for nearly 140 years while maintaining Okei-san's grave, which helped keep the Wakamatsu Colony story alive.

American River Conservancy purchased the 272-acre Wakamatsu Farm in 2010 to preserve the site's unique historical and natural resources. Since then, ARC has been working diligently with our many partners to improve infrastructure and restore elements of this historic site and to preserve the Farm for posterity. We hope to break ground on a new outdoor classroom in 2019, which will provide much-needed space for engaging students of all ages who come to the farm to learn about everything from local history to gardening with native plants. Local farms, Free Hand Farm and Fog Dog Farm, provide healthy fresh food for the community while managing the land in a sustainable way. As the stewards of Wakamatsu Farm, it is our duty to provide a connection to the past and present through public engagement and place-based education. The Wakamatsu Farm story is one that captures the hearts and minds of all who hear it. ARC is committed to broadly sharing this important immigrant story with the world.

It is with great honor and respect that we host the four-day sesquicentennial celebration of the arrival of the Wakamatsu Colony during WakamatsuFest150 from June 6 through 9, 2019. We invite you to join us at this one-time-only event to celebrate the vanguard of Japanese immigration to the United States, and to honor the diverse cultural legacy that the Wakamatsu story represents. WakamatsuFest150 is the result of many years of planning, preparation and most importantly, support from the many partners, volunteers, and sponsors who have so generously donated their time and money to its success. On behalf of American River Conservancy, I offer my deepest gratitude. ❖

Goshien hontou-ni arigatou gozaimasu!

Elena DeLacy, Executive Director
American River Conservancy

Dates: June 6, 7, 8, 9 of 2019

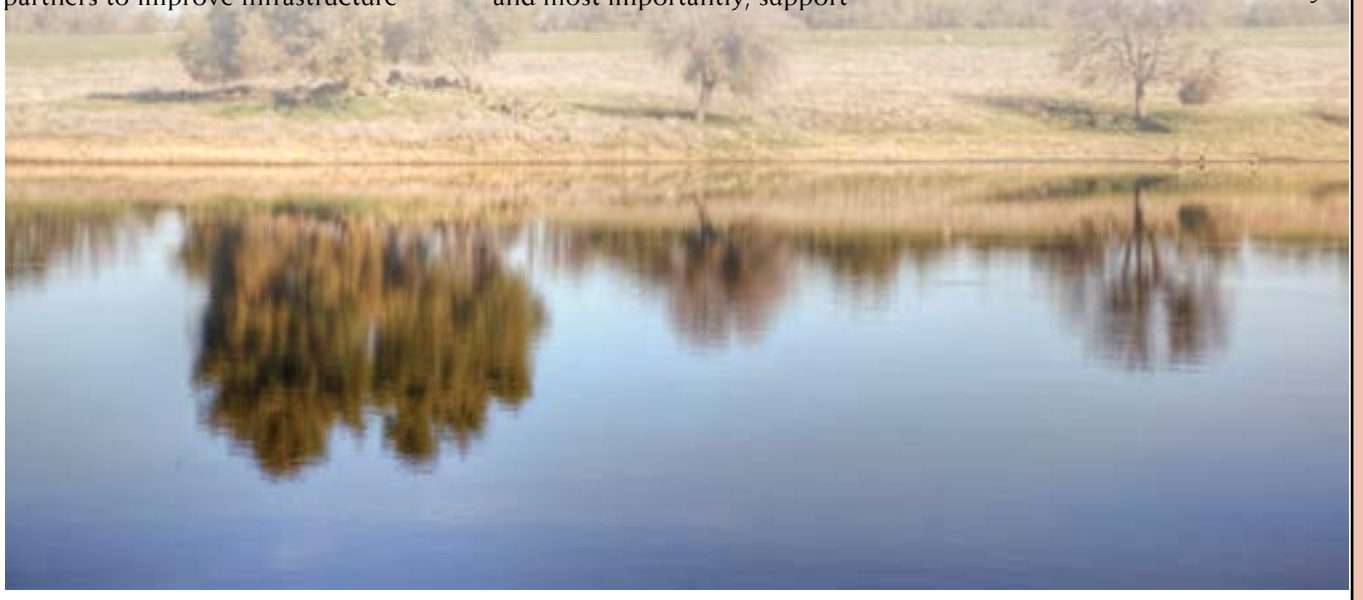
Times: 10:00am to 4:00pm

VIP Event: Saturday, June 8 from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Location: 941 Cold Springs Road, Placerville, CA 95667

Festival Theme: Celebrating 150 years of Japanese American heritage, arts, and cuisine

Parking: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma



Umbrella photo by Betty Sederquist, Wakamatsu Farm pond photo courtesy of Paul

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History of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony

By American River Conservancy

On November 1, 2010, the American River Conservancy (ARC) purchased a 272-acre property called the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony. Wakamatsu Farm is approximately two miles south of Coloma and the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. The physical address is 941 Cold Springs Road, Placerville, California.

Within the American River watershed, Wakamatsu Farm is prime agricultural land with a mosaic of springs, streams, wetlands, and woodlands of blue and live oak. Ponds on the Farm attract wildlife, particularly migratory waterfowl during the winter and early spring. But the most compelling feature of the land is its Japanese cultural history. In 1869, the first Japanese emigrants to America arrived on this property. They were samurai, farmers, craftsmen, their families, and a 17-year-old girl named Okei Ito. Fleeing from Japan, they brought from home 1000s of mulberry trees, tea plant seed, fruit tree saplings, paper and oil plants, rice, bamboo, and other crops to establish their Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony.

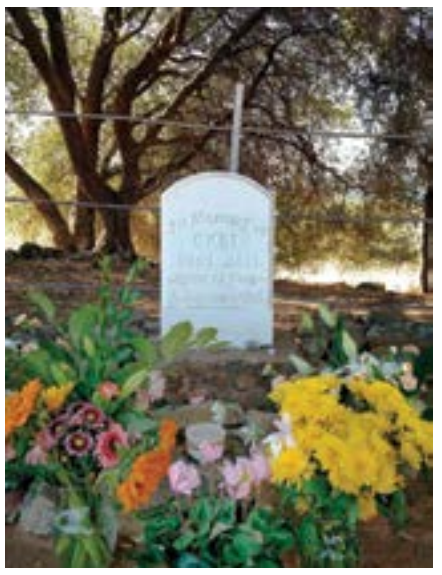
To understand the significance of the Colony, it is important to highlight the context of Japanese society that the Wakamatsu colonists were fleeing. Beginning in the early 17th century, Tokugawa shogunates emphasized cultural isolation and prohibited Japanese citizens from traveling abroad. This isolationist doctrine remained in place for over 250 years until Commodore William Perry, acting for the United States, forced open several Japanese ports to U.S. trade during the years of 1853 and 1854.

By the 1860s, cultural isolation in Japan was faltering. The daimyo (local lord) of the Aizu Wakamatsu province was Matsudaira Katamori (1835-1893), who was related by marriage to the Tokugawa family. Matsudaira disagreed with the Tokugawa policy of isolation, and he instead chose to walk the fine political line between "Eastern ethics and Western science." John Henry Schnell, an early member of the Prussian embassy, also dabbled in merchandising European weapons. Matsudaira was one of Schnell's best customers.

Schnell trained Matsudaira's samurai in the use of firearms. Schnell was given a Japanese name, samurai status as a "general," and he was allowed to marry a Japanese samurai-class woman named Jou to further strengthen his ties to Japanese society. Strife between the Tokugawa faction and those who propped up the Emperor for their own benefit resulted in civil war, ultimately leading to the Mejii Restoration and the dramatic defeat of Matsudaira's force of 4,000 samurai by over 20,000 of the emperor's soldiers at Aizu, Wakamatsu, in 1868.

After Matsudaira surrendered, Schnell's life was in jeopardy. With Matsudaira's blessing and funding in April of 1869, Schnell booked passage on the PMSS *China*, a side-wheel steamer rigged for sail. This mail ship carried Schnell, his wife, and their young daughter, along with Okei Ito and the other Wakamatsu colonists to America. Their arrival in San Francisco on May 20th caught the attention of the San Francisco *Alta Daily News*, which noted that the colonists brought the means for their agricultural productivity with them, including "50,000 three-year-old kuwa (mulberry) trees" used for the cultivation of silk worms and six million tea seeds. The newspaper praised their Japanese work ethic, as well as Jou Schnell's beauty and grace.

Okei-san grave, Wakamatsu



— Photo by Melissa Lobach

In June of 1869 John Henry Schnell purchased approximately 200 acres, a farmhouse, and farm outbuildings from Charles Graner, who had settled the Gold Hill Ranch during the early 1850s. Graner had become prosperous by making wine and brandy to sell to the miners. Applying the farming skills they brought with them from Japan, the new colonists quickly went to work planting mulberry trees, tea plants, and other crops. Schnell successfully displayed silk cocoons, tea, and other plants at the 1869 California State Agricultural Fair in Sacramento then also the 1870 Horticultural Fair in San Francisco.

Unfortunately, the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm was destined to be short–lived. Soon after their first planting, there was a serious drought. The colony arranged for diversion of water from a mining ditch to irrigate the Farm. However, the water was contaminated with iron sulfate. This chemical coated and strangled the tea plants. In addition, the financial support from Matsudaira ended. When the new Mejii government pardoned Lord Matsudaira, he chose to become a Shinto priest and remain in Japan, effectively cutting off the main source of financial support for the Wakamatsu colony.

The fate of only a few Wakamatsu colonists is currently known. In Coloma during 1877, Colonist Kuninosuke Masumizu married Carrie Wilson, an African and Native American descendant. Kuninosuke died in 1915, and his family still lives in the Sacramento region. Colonist Matsunosuke Sakurai, believed to be a samurai, worked for the remainder of his long life for the Francis Veerkamp family, who formally purchased the land in 1873. The Schnell's nursemaid, Colonist Okei Ito, also remained with the Veerkamps until her untimely death at the age of 19 in 1871. Okei-san is recognized as the first Japanese woman and immigrant buried on American soil where she still rests in peace today at Wakamatsu Farm.

In 2014, ARC was contacted by a young student from Tokyo, Japan, who had discovered one of her paternal ancestors was a Wakamatsu colonist while she was researching her family roots. Further research by ARC confirmed that her ancestor, Matsugoro Ofuji, was a carpenter with the Wakamatsu Colony. This discovery was the first proof that some of the colonists had returned to Japan after the colony dispersed.

Although short-lived, the Wakamatsu Tea & Silk Farm Colony represents the beginning of permanent Issei migration to the United States. By 1900, more than 10% of all California Farm products were produced by Japanese-Americans. In 1969, then Governor Ronald Reagan proclaimed the Wakamatsu Farm site to be California Registered Historical Landmark No. 815. At the same time, the Japanese American community designated 1969 as the Japanese American centennial. The celebrations were attended by dignitaries from both America and Japan.

For about 140 years, the Veerkamp family was principally responsible for maintaining the agricultural nature of the property and preserving its cultural heritage. In late 2007, the Veerkamp Farm heirs approached ARC seeking to sell the property at fair market value while ensuring public access its historical features and restoration of the old farmhouse. In 2010, guided by the leadership, vision, and perseverance of Alan Ehrgott, ARC purchased the property and continues to manage it today.

Because the property contains excellent agricultural soils, ARC also supports organic projects and farming operations at Wakamatsu Farm. Onsite is a budding native plant nursery, bountiful giving garden, and beautiful 1.5-mile wheelchair accessible trail around the small lake. Two farming businesses lease land and buildings at Wakamatsu Farm.

Wakamatsu Farm is now growing and changing as private property owned by ARC. The Farm is not a public park, so unscheduled drop-ins are not appropriate. The public can access Wakamatsu Farm though many year-round public and private tours and events, including special events like WakamatsuFest150! Visitors can find all dates to visit by viewing ARC's event calendar at www.ARConservancy.org/wakamatsu. Becoming a regular volunteer is the best way to connect to the glorious landscape at the Farm, and ARC offers many types of volunteer programs for people of all ages and abilities.

Today and tomorrow, the Conservancy offers Wakamatsu Farm as a community place to experience natural resources, sustainable agriculture, and cultural history. ARC will always welcome new ideas about using this very special place in innovative and sustainable ways that maintain the integrity of the land, honor the ecosystem, and remain beneficial to our community and all parties involved.

Please support Wakamatsu Farm, and please share its unique story with the world. ❖

Wakamatsufest150
Made Possible by the Staff and Board of American River Conservancy

Staff:

- *Elena DeLacy, Executive Director*
- *Melissa Lobach, Campaign and Communications Manager; Festival Planning*
- *Dylan Andert, Forest Technician; Site Preparation*
- *Julie Andert, Operations Manager; Ticketing Services*
- *Taylor Faye Benedict, Stewardship Coordinator; Volunteer Coordination*
- *Dillon Brook, Stewardship Manager; Site Management*
- *Kelly Croffoot, Chili Bar Park Manager; Site Preparation and Stage Sound*
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With a very special thank you to Mr. Alan Ehrgott, Executive Director of American River Conservancy from 1989 to 2018.

Welcome!

The American River Conservancy especially welcomes all Japanese-speaking visitors to WakamatsuFest150 at Wakamatsu Farm. If you need help in Japanese, please ask a volunteer or staff member to direct you to a translator.

We hope you enjoy our sesquicentennial festival honoring Japanese American heritage, arts, and cuisine. WakamatsuFest150 celebrates the legacy of Japanese Americans since the original Issei established their colony at the site of this festival exactly 150 years ago on June 8, 1869.

In 2010, the American River Conservancy purchased the 272-acre historic location of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony. Wakamatsu Farm is a place of first honors: 1) Site of the first Japanese colony in America; 2) Birthplace of the first Japanese American; 3) Resting place of the first Japanese immigrant and woman. At the age of 19, Okei Ito died on the property in 1871. For many decades, Japanese and American visitors have been paying their respects to Okei-san.

Wakamatsu Farm is now a community place to experience natural resources, sustainable agriculture, and cultural history. The Conservancy invites the public to share the abundant resources now available at landmark Wakamatsu Farm. We hope you enjoy your visit at this special time, and we hope you will return soon to Wakamatsu Farm. ❖

— Osoreirimasu,
Melissa Lobach, Festival Planner / Campaign & Communication Manager
American River Conservancy

皆さま

アメリカンリバー自然保護協会は、若松 ファームでの 「若松１５０年祭」に日本の方を心よりお迎えします。 日本語での通訳やお手伝いのボランテアスタッフがおりますので、必要の場合はいつでもお知らせ下さい。

貴重な日系アメリカ人の文化遺産や芸術・食文化を紹介する、私たちの１５０年祭をお楽しみいただきたいと思います。

若松１５０年祭は、ちょうど１５０年前の１８６９年６月８日にこの祭典の地に、最初に日系アメリカ人の一世達が入植したことを遺産としてお祝いします。

２０１０年、アメリカンリバー自然保護協会は２７２エーカーに及ぶ、歴史的地「絹とお茶の若松農地コロニー」を購入しました。「若松ファーム」は次の点において最初の名誉ある場所です。１）アメリカにおける最初の日本人による入植地　２）最初の日系アメリカ人が生まれた地　３）最初の日本人女性移住者の眠る地。伊藤おけいは１８７１年に１９歳でこの地で亡くなりました。長い間日本人やアメリカ人が訪れて、おけいさんのお墓を守って来ました。

「若松ファーム」は今は、天然資源や、持続可能な農業、文化的歴史を体験する場となっています。アメリカンリバー自然保護協会は「若松ファーム」におけるこの豊富な資源を公共に共有してお招きします。私たちは皆様に、この特別な祭典の日の訪問を楽しんでいただけることを願っています。そしてまたこの「若松ファーム」に再度訪れていただけることをお待ちしております。

Festival Parking

Onsite parking during the festival is extremely limited. Visitor parking is located in the large field behind the park museum at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma, approximately 2 miles north of the Farm. Onsite parking at Wakamatsu Farm during the festival is reserved for disabled drivers only. Vehicle access during festival hours is limited to parking shuttles, guest drop off, and emergency services. Please plan your visit accordingly. ❖

Buy Tickets online at

ARConservancy.org/wakafest150

Early BirdTicket Prices
(Ticket Prices to Increase in May)

One-Day Ticket Prices
$15 adults or $7 kids (6 to 16 yrs) – Thursday or Friday
$20 adults or $10 kids (6 to 16 yrs) – Saturday or Sunday
$40 after-hours VIP event – Saturday, June 8 only, 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Festival Pass Prices
$30 adults or $15 kids for any two days
$60 adults or $25 kids for all four days
– All days are free for kids ages 5 and under.
– Online sales include optional ARC membership (additional cost).
– $5 discount for advance sales of festival passes only

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park Helps Share the Wakamatsu Farm Story

By Jerrie Beard

In Coloma, California, the discovery of gold during January 1848 set off one of the largest mass migrations of humanity in the history of the world. Once home to a population of Native Americans, the valley was overrun by people from all over the world hoping to get rich quick. Vast wealth alluded most, so they moved on. Those who stayed soon realized that the rush for gold had only scratched the surface of the valley's riches. The true treasure was the soil itself; the soil and climate in the Coloma Valley and surrounding hills were ideal for agriculture and viticulture.

Of all the gold-seekers who converged in California during the rush, none were from Japan. It was not until 1869 that the first Japanese immigrants came to California and founded the Wakamatsu Tea & Silk Farm Colony on a parcel of land just 2.2 miles from the gold discovery site. They, too, came for the rich soil and the promise of a new life.

The colony was short-lived. Drought, polluted water from mining ditches, and a lack of funding led to the disbanding of the Colony. The Veerkamp family purchased the land and eventually donated the Wakamatsu banner and tanto (small samurai sword) to California State Parks in 2001. With the financial backing of the Gold Discovery Park Association (GDPA), which is the cooperating association of Marshall Gold Discovery SHP, the banner and tanto have been restored and placed in display cases. Both will be on exhibit at Wakamatsu Farm during WakamatsuFest150. Afterwards, they will be in the Marshall Gold Discovery SHP museum.

Marshall Gold Discovery SHP and the American River Conservancy continue to work together to keep the story of the Wakamatsu Colony alive. Both organizations partnered to locate the grave of Wakamatsu Colonist Matsunosuke Sakurai, who remained in America after the colony disbanded. In the spring of 2018, both organizations hosted a graveside ceremony to place a new marker on his grave. Matsu is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery at Marshall Gold Discovery SHP where the public is welcome to visit his honored grave. ❖

[Jerrie works at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park where staff and volunteers are looking forward to assisting with WakamatsuFest150 in 2019.]

Bottom: Wakamatsu banner front and rear. Right: grave of Wakamatsu colonist Matsunosuke Sakurai, Pioneer Cemetery, Coloma.

Distinguished Visitors at Wakamatsu Farm

By Herb Tanimoto & Melissa Lobach

On October 28th, 2018, American River Conservancy hosted distinguished visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Iehiro Tokugawa. The son of Tsunenari Tokugawa, Mr. Iehiro Tokugawa is the 19th heir of the famous shogunal branch of the Tokugawa family. Notably, he is also the great, great grandson of Matsudaira Katamori (1836-93), who was the last ruling daimyo of the Aizu Clan, which provided coastal patrols during Commodore Perry's mission.

Clan Lord Matsudaira of Aizu-Wakamatsu held fast as the last samurai stronghold, which lost the last battle of the Boshin War (1868-69). A month of heavy bombardment by Imperial forces brutally forced the surrender of Aizu's Tsuruga Castle in late 1868. After the defeat, John Henry Schnell brought the first Wakamatsu refugees across the ocean to begin their new life in America, where they landed at Wakamatsu Farm on June 8, 1869. One newspaper account indicated the Farm may serve as refuge for Lord Matsudaira in later years. In this way, one might say Wakamatsu Farm could be considered one of the last outposts of the Tokugawa era and an exciting new frontier, if only the Wakamatsu Colony had remained successful.

The Tokugawa family rule of Japan began in 1603 when Tokugawa Ieyasu consolidated power and unified Japan, thereby putting an end to the "Warring States Period". His rule as the first shogun began the Edo period. Over time, a total of 15 shoguns ruled over Japan until 1868, when Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837-1913) abdicated power. The ultimate fall of Tsuruga Castle in present-day Fukushima Prefeture signaled the end of 265 years of shogunal control over Japan.

Another distinguished visitor joined Mr. and Mrs. Tokugawa during their tour, Prof. M. Antoni J. Ucerler, S.J., who is the Director of the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco. He is scheduled to speak during WakamatsuFest150.

The authors of this article led the tour as the group visited the Graner farmhouse occupied by the Colonists along with the Keyaki tree they planted 150 years ago. The group hiked the property where Japanese settlers first attempted to raise tea and silk in a beautiful faraway land. The group paid their respects at Okei-san's grave, as so many visitors have for decades. The visit was most befitting of the current Tokugawa heir and Shogunate descendant, who himself is a living link between centuries of Japanese history and the Wakamatsu Colony on the other side of the Pacific. ❖

[Mr. and Mrs. Iehiro Tokugawa near the Graner House and keyaki tree at Wakamatsu Farm, October 2018.]

— Photo by Melissa Lobach

The historic Coloma School was one of seven schools that were consolidated in 1957 into the present Gold Trail School District. Gold Trail School is adjacent to Wakamatsu Farm.

— Photo by Betty Sederquist

The Gold Trail School Connection

By Stephany Rewick

Seven schools dating back to 1858 were joined in 1957 to create the Gold Trail School campus. Since then, a sense of history and excellence in education has been preserved for over a century and a half. Sharing much more than an old fence that kept cattle off the playground, Wakamatsu Farm and Gold Trail School connect history with the present through the personal relationships of school children.

As part of the 50th-anniversary celebration of the school, an outdoor mural depicting the rich history of the valley was painted on the Gold Trail School gymnasium. On this mural, you will note its various images. You see the clouded face of Okei-san, represented at the request of the district's children who helped to create the mural as a valued part of their story. It would be unusual to find a child of the Gold Hill area who does not know her story: a girl far from Japan, her native land, sitting under the trees on the hill which now cradles her grave, gazing longingly towards home. These children climbed that hill, experienced that story, and recognized connections with their own lives.

Throughout the years, Gold Trail School and Higashiyama Elementary School in Aizu Wakamatsu, Japan, have developed a sister school relationship. This connection and understanding has been nourished by student, teacher, and administrator visits, gifts, works of art, and letters shared between both countries. Still today and in beautiful display, the library at Gold Trail School preserves these artifacts. The school continues to add to the collection, which connects stories of the past and the present. ❖

[Stephany Rewick was the principal of Gold Trail School between the years of 2005-2012 where she enjoyed helping her students learn about their special relationship and shared history with the students of the Higashiyama Elementary School in Aizu Wakamatsu, Japan. The Gold Trail School library will be open during select festival days.]

—Wakamatsu Farm pond photo courtesy of Paul Cockrell

Gold Hill Samurai: The Making of a World Premiere Play

By Tiffany Van Camp

Gold Hill Samurai is an original play based on the history of the Wakamatsu Tea & Silk Colony and the life of Okei-san. In 2018, American River Conservancy commissioned See The Elephant Theatre & Dance Company to create this play for the 150th Anniversary Festival. See The Elephant's mission is to make performance more accessible to our region by providing professional artistic opportunities and building partnerships that foster deeper engagement. This partnership is a wonderful opportunity to unite the Arts with some of the lesser discussed cultural histories of our community.

To create *Gold Hill Samurai*, Artistic Director Jamie Van Camp collaborated with ARC docents and the Japanese American community. Together they set to work researching the history and creating a theatrical re-telling that would highlight the struggles and triumphs at the heart of the Aizu people's migration to California. Okei-san is the reason why we know this story; she has become a legend. But it took all the characters together to make this story come to life. Learning about these figures and their real lives helped to create a deeper understanding of just how much they needed each other on their journey.

Working on this script was a great privilege. Jamie is thankful for the immense help and feedback from all the people involved helping to tell this story in a way that honors and respects the history, making sure the heart of it stays intact.

After the script was written, Jamie and Tiffany Van Camp assembled a truly exceptional cast of actors to represent the characters in the most authentic way possible. Not all the actors are of Japanese heritage, but many of them have stories that mirror the struggles and difficulties of these characters. The multiple perspectives working on this project helped communicate important historical themes and messages.

We found in this play a story of courageous people who give us a glimpse into history. We hope this play is a window into what it took to make difficult choices to come to America and start over. See The Elephant is honored to offer *Gold Hill Samurai* during its world premiere at WakamatsuFest150. We hope you enjoy this theatrical performance of our collective history. ❖

[Each day of WakamatsuFest150, festival-goers can watch **Gold Hill Samurai** *in its entirety. Please contact the American River Conservancy to find out about producing this play in your town.]*

Celebrating 45 Years of the El Dorado County – Warabi People to People International Exchange

By Myrna Hanses

In 1974, El Dorado County, California Chapter of People to People International (PTPI) was established as part of the National 1976 Bicentennial Celebration. Our county Board of Supervisors chose to share our historical connection to Japan by highlighting the establishment of the Wakamatsu Colony within our county borders during 1869. The Board also hoped to rekindle that early connection by initiating a Japanese Sister City relationship as part of our celebration.

Sister City Charter Members, Myrna Hanses of PTPI El Dorado Chapter and Ryosuke Imai of the Warabi Sister City Association, visit Mount Seaburi in Japan.

Choosing a town to receive the invitation was made quickly once they learned that a 4-H group would be hosted in Japan for six weeks that summer. The group included 121 high school-aged students and 12 adult advisors from all over the United States. From El Dorado County, one student and I were willing to carry the invitation to my host family in Warabi, Japan, which is a suburb of Tokyo.

Our newly formed PTPI Chapter was eager to be involved in the project in support of President Eisenhower's belief that the best way to gain world peace is to develop friendships and encourage exchanges between ordinary people from different countries. Our Chapter has been supporting this mission for 45 years with tremendous personal benefits and joy. Around 1000 travelers have made the trip to or from either country throughout the years.

We involve our entire community by supporting other service organizations, such as El Dorado County Schools and the American River Conservancy. We plan to continue indefinitely. During WakamatsuFest150, our valued visitors from Warabi, Japan, here this year, will partner with their friends and host families to run a booth and share information about our PTPI 45-year history. For more information online, visit edcpeopletopeople.org. ❖

[Myrna is one of eight founders of this international exchange program. She has visited her host family in Japan eight times.]

PPTI member Pat Monzo greeting local citizens from sister city in Warabi, Japan, during Cultural Day Parade.

— All photos courtesy of Laurie Edwards.

Like her final resting place in Gold Hill, Okei's headstone in Japan is on top of a hill overlooking a valley.

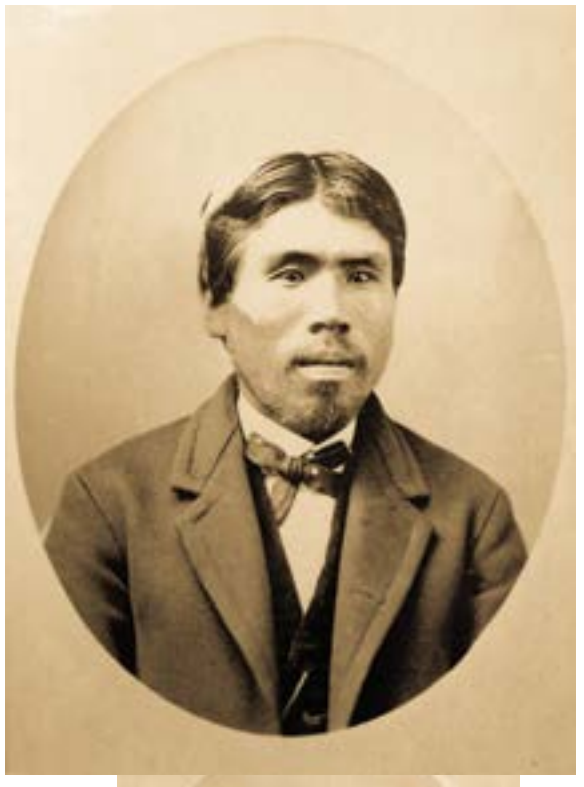
2015 Japan Trip

In 2015, 38 members of People to People International – El Dorado County Chapter (PTPI-EDCC) traveled to Japan to celebrate the 40th anniversary of El Dorado County – Warabi Sister Cityhood. Approximately two square miles with 71,000 residents, Warabi is in the Saitama Prefecture about ten miles northwest of Tokyo.

In addition to participating in activities in Warabi city, guests went on side trips with host families. Citizens from Aizu Wakamatsu took the group the top of Mount Seaburi to pay respects to Okei-san at a grave site that is similar to her final resting place in Gold Hill, El Dorado County.

PTPI-EDCC is hosting citizens from Warabi during the WakamatsuFest150. ❖

In addition to participating in activities in Warabi city, guests went on side trips with host families. Citizens from Aizu Wakamatsu took the group to Mount Seaburi to visit and to pay respect to Okei at a replica monument in tribute to her final resting place in Gold Hill, El Dorado County.



We may never know all the identities of the colonists depicted in these evocative old photos. Enlargements of these images are on display in the Graner House at Wakamatsu Farm.

Colonist portraits preserved by the Veerkamp family.

Evidence of the Land's History Today

By Herb Tanimoto

The Wakamatsu Colonists were on the land for only two years, and very few items remain from that time period. Most evident are the historic Graner farmhouse, Keyaki tree, and Okei-san's grave.

The farmhouse was John Henry Schnell's residence and headquarters as well as the living quarters for the most important members of the colony. The Keyaki tree (*Zelkova serrata* or Japanese elm) is the only known living reminder of the colony. It was probably planted as a symbol of the homeland that they had left behind. The most significant reminder of the pioneers is Okei's grave, the resting place of the first Japanese woman and immigrant buried on American soil.

At the California State Park's Statewide Museum Collections Center is the beautiful gold and white silk banner with the Tokugawa Shogunate emblem along with the Colonist's tanto sword made in 1354. These items were left behind with the Veerkamp family when the colony disbanded in 1871. The Veerkamps donated these items to California State Parks in 2001. These priceless artifacts are brought back to the farm during festivals and other special occasions, such as WakamatsuFest150, so the public can view and appreciate these precious symbols of the past.

Also donated to California State Parks by the Veerkamp family are eleven portrait photographs taken at the Placerville studio of George Gilbert. Most likely, they are images of the Wakamatsu colonists from around 1870. They are among the oldest known photographs of Japanese pioneers in America.

Enlargements of the Colonists' portraits are on the walls of the Graner farmhouse for display. The original carte de visité images, just 2 ½ x 4 inches in size, were kept by the Veerkamps in an envelope for over 140 years before they were donated to California State Parks in 2017.

The American River Conservancy made enlargements of the originals to help tell the Colonists' story. The historic portraits show ten men, four women, and three children. No names were associated with any of the photos. A European appearing man in two of the portraits is believed to be Prussian colony leader, John Henry Schnell.

One Colonist portrait of Kuninosuke Masumizu was identified by his descendants who live in the greater Sacramento area. "Kuni "married the daughter of an African-American man and a Native-American woman. Some of their descendants have visited Wakamatsu Farm in recent years, and they are expected to join WakamatsuFest150.

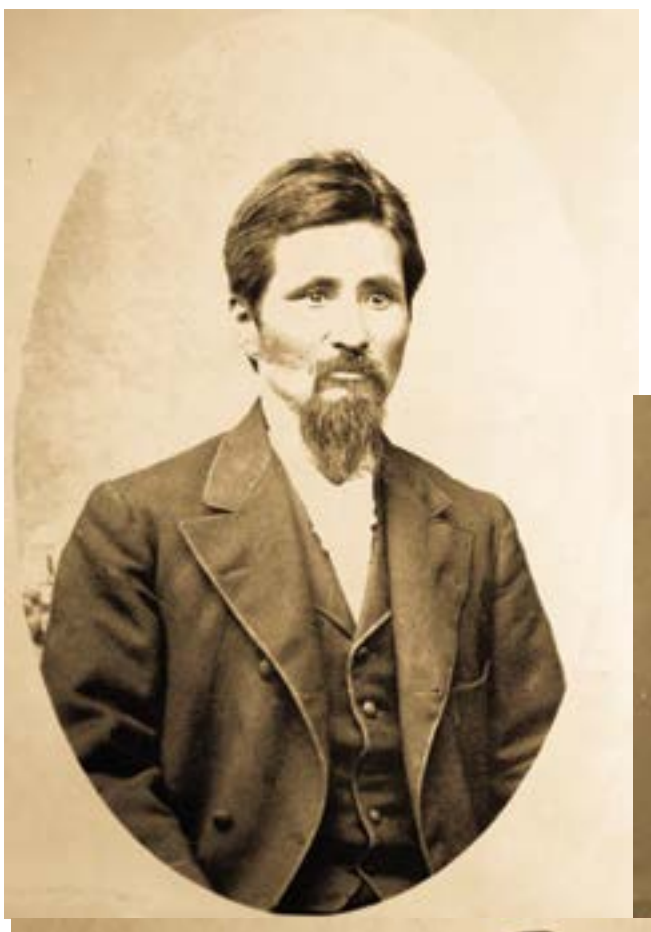
This tiny Japanese doll may have belonged to a young member of the Japanese colony.

A photo of an older couple with an infant could be colony carpenter Matsugoro Oto, based on information from a Tokyo Junior High School student who contacted ARC after completing a summer school paper about her family roots. Matsugoro returned to Japan around 1874 where he helped pioneer the Japanese wine industry in Yamanashi.

A young man who appears in two of the photos might be Tomoki Nishikawa. He was an Aizu samurai who later joined the Iwakura Mission that traveled from Japan to Washington DC in 1872.

A small Japanese doll donated by historian Sally Takeda may have belonged to a young member of the Wakamatsu Colony. The doll was found in a trunk by Veerkamp descendants and donated to American River Conservancy. ARC has an original wedding portrait of colonist Kuni Masumizu that was donated by a Japanese historian. Cut foundation stones discovered around the farmhouse might have been used for Japanese style houses in which the laborers resided. ❖

[Herb Tanimoto is a dedicated Wakamatsu docent, proficient historian, curator, speaker, and the author of Keiko's Kimono, *which is a historical fiction based on the Wakamatsu Colony story.]*



Left: The man depicted in the photo is identified as John Henry Schnell.

Nisenan Native Americans settled this land for thousands of years before the California Gold Rush, and later, the arrival of the Japanese colonists. Evidence of their lives here is revealed in acorn grinding rocks and arrowheads, per the photos shown below.

WakamatsuFest150 Participant Highlights

Please enjoy a sample of the individuals, groups, and organizations offering their talents, services, and merchandise during the festival. Closer to the festival dates, the daily performance schedule will be posted at AR-Conservancy.org/wakafest150. An insert describing the daily schedule will be available to all visitors who join the festival.

Tea & Silk
Wakamatsu Farm was the site of the first Japanese tea and silk farm established on June 8, 1869. Each festival day, the fascinating topic of tea will be explored through ceremonies, tastings, vendors, and speakers. Friday, June 7 is dedicated to the topic of Japanese tea and tea culture. Sericulture (silk farming) along with silk spinning and weaving will be demonstrated on select festival dates.

Senkakukan Sword Club
senkakukan.com
This pioneering dojo provides training in Japanese sword techniques as well as other martial studies. Learn more about Bud, or the "martial way". Senkakukan serves Northern California from Folsom, California.

Bakuhatsu Taiko Dan
bakuhatsutaikodan.weebly.com
This drum group offers passionate performances designed to share the experience, knowledge, and enjoyment of the traditional Japanese art of taiko. Bakuhatsu Taiko Dan is located in Davis, California. Along with many other performance groups, this taiko group will play on the Main Stage.

Ikebana International, Sacramento Chapter #26
ikebanasacramento.org/ikebanasacramento.org/Welcome.html
This Japanese art of flower arranging creates beautiful and well-crafted art pieces that strive to bring humanity and nature together. This Ikebana International chapter is based in Sacramento, California.

Hokka Minyo Tanoshimi Kai
facebook.com/Minyo-Tanoshimi-Kai-351570053254
This non-profit was established to preserve and celebrate Minyo, the art of traditional Japanese Folk dancing. This art captures regional differences and uniqueness. Minyo Tanoshimi Kai is located in Lodi, California.

Keith Little & Kazuhiro Inaba
keithlittle.com
The award-winning musical artists Kazuhiro Inaba will be joining Keith Little and the Little Band to perform bluegrass music. This international collaboration is bringing together talented and extraordinary performers together. Kazuhiro Inaba is located in Japan and Keith Little is located in California near Wakamatsu Farm.

Kado's Food Truck
kadosasiangrill.com
This food truck offers a variety of Japanese American and Hawaiian inspired cuisine that reflect the roots and heritage of Chef Dawn Kado. Enjoy rice bowls, Kado's Special Chicken, and many other Asian inspired foods.

Hooverville Orchards
hoovervilleorchards.com
Hooverville Orchards is a 72-acre authentic, diverse orchard with enough fruit trees to harvest year-round. They offer fruit, jams, jellies, and freshly baked pies. Hooverville Orchards are located in Placerville, California, between downtown and Wakamatsu Farm.

Hug a Sumo
hugasumo.com
This booth offers original, Japanese themed gifts and apparel. Find the perfect gift for your friends and family, or treat yourself to something special. View the catalog and order online, or visit Hug a Sumo at events throughout Northern California.

Midori McKeon, Professor of Japanese, San Francisco State University
mll.sfsu.edu
Professor Midori McKeon will deliver a lecture on the general history of tea consumption and the development of chanoyu (Japanese tea ceremony). Following her lecture will be a demonstration of the Japanese Omotesenke-ryu tea ceremony.

Marco Lienhard
marcolienhard.com
Marco Lienhard is the director of both Taikoza and East Winds Ensemble since 1995. He is a master of taiko, noh flute, shakuhachi, and shinobue.

New Man's Karate
newmanskarate.com
This martial arts studio demonstration team will perform a high-energy, fast-paced, and entertaining show featuring Japanese/Okinawan hard-style karate and jujitsu. The New Man's Karate facility is located in Placerville, California and offers a variety of classes.

Motoshi Kosako, Harpist
harpmusician.com
Motoshi Kosako is an international jazz harpist, composer, and improviser. He will be performing various styles of music ranging from jazz to blues to traditional music. He runs a small farm in Northern California and draws inspiration from his land there.

Brian Hayes and Sarah Murray Pottery
facebook.com/hayesandmurraypottery
This husband and wife pottery team make Japanese-inspired stoneware pottery in their studio near Wakamatsu Farm.

Robin French
Robin is a temari artisan and instructor. Temari is embroidery "in the round." A thread covered ball is decorated with embroidered patterns. This centuries-old Japanese folk art/craft is colorful and intriguing. Traditional temari designs invoke sentimental feelings while symbolizing beauty and the appreciation of nature.

Hokka Nichibeikai
nichibeikai.org
Also known as JAANC (Japanese American Association of Northern California), this organization was established in 1895, to help relations between the people of American and Japan This group also supports various disciplines of Japanese culture. They will serve Japanese Usu-cha tea for festival goers.

National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc.
njahs.org
NJAHS is dedicated to the collection, preservation, authentic interpretation, and sharing of historical information of the Japanese American experience for the diverse broader national and global community.

Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto Koto Studio
skmkoto.com
A dedicated musician for over 50 years, Shirley involves diverse genres of art and music into her performances. She teaches private students, and she has offered classes in koto music at public schools and universities. She incorporates storytelling, poetry, hip-hop, gospel, bluegrass, jazz, European classical into her music.

Capturing Wakamatsu Poetry Workshop
facebook.com/ElDoradoCountyPoetry
Led by El Dorado County Poet Laureate Taylor Graham, this ongoing festival feature will invite the public to write poems inspired by nature, history, and any other topics.

Social Media

Web: ARConservancy.org/wakafest150

Facebook: facebook.com/events/1029959103852609/

Instagram: instagram.com/wakafest150

Twitter: twitter.com/WakaFest150

Please use hashtag #wakafest150

Throughout the festival, poets will provide readings at the Okeisan Stage. The massive blue oak tree will be transformed into a "wishing tree" for festival goers to post their poems and wishes throughout the festival.

American River Conservancy
530-621-1224
348 Hwy 49, P.O Box 562, Coloma, CA 95613
ARConservancy.org
ARConservancy.org/wakamatsu
wakamatsu@ARConservancy.org

Katharine P. Burnett, Ph.D.
globaltea.ucdavis.edu
Dr. Burnett is the founding director of UC Davis's Global Tea Initiative for the Study of Tea Culture and Science at the University of California, Davis. Along with many other lecturers, Katherine is scheduled to speak at the Keyaki Stage.

Gold Hill Samurai
seetheelephant.net
Each day of WakamatsuFest150, festival-goers will be treated to the world premiere play, Gold Hill Samurai. This new production tells the story of the Wakamatsu Colony and Okei-san from their journey to American in 1869 to their disbanding in 1871.

Daniel A. Metraux, Ph.D.
Dr. Metreaux is a professor emeritus and adjunct professor of Asian studies at Mary Baldwin University in Staunton, Virginia. Dr. Métraux has written many books, book chapters, and articles on Japanese and East Asian history, religion, and culture including the newly published *The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm and the Creation of Japanese America*.

Frames of Anime
tyghu.webs.com
Gigi T. Hu is an East Asian Studies scholar and anime/manga collector. She will sell items from her personal collection. Other items in her booth will be on display for curatorial and conversational purposes. Ms. Hu is supporting the public Manga/Anime Contest during WakamatsuFest150 found at ARConservancy.org/wakamangacontest.org.

Each WakamatsuFest150 day, enjoy performers, docents, speakers, demonstrators, vendors, and many others celebrating the Japanese American experience during the past 150 years. Around mid-day, watch the world premiere live action play, *Gold Hill Samurai,* telling the Wakamatsu Colony story.

Festival days center on the following themes with some overlap each day:

Thursday, June 6 – Kids Explore Japanese American Culture

Friday, June 7 – Japanese Tea Culture

Saturday, June 8 – THE BIG DAY* – Wakamatsu History

Sunday, June 9 – Wakamatsu Authors and Japanese American Farmers

Kids' activities, tea, history, authors, food, and vendors will be available each festival day.

**The Wakamatsu Colonists arrived at the Farm on June 8, 1869. Saturday, June 8, 2019 is exactly 150 years later and the most auspicious day of WakamatsuFest150.*

— Photos on this page by Betty Sederquist

Arts and Culture El Dorado

By Terry LeMoncheck

Arts and Culture El Dorado's mission to promote, connect, and empower arts and culture throughout the county is achieved by targeted programs and services, a vibrant gallery exhibition series, and a focus on initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the region. We are very pleased to be supporting the 150th anniversary of Wakamatsu Farm with activities that showcase the beauty and diversity of Japanese arts and culture, supported in part by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. As part of WakamatsuFest150, Arts and Culture El Dorado will also present a special documentary film series at the Placerville Library that focuses on the Japanese experience in California.

Arts and Culture El Dorado (formerly El Dorado Arts Council) is celebrating the first year of its new name, but the 35th year since the organization was founded to support the arts in El Dorado County. In a new home on Main Street, with offices in the Emigrant Jane building and an exhibition space next door in Confidence Hall, Arts and Culture El Dorado envisions a vibrant Cultural District in Historic Downtown Placerville. ❖

[Terry LeMoncheck leads Arts and Culture El Dorado, which has a new name, new home, and new vision.]

150 Years of Transpacific Migration from Japan

By Miya Shichinohe-Suga, Ph.D.

On December 2, 2017, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Japanese Overseas Migration Museum in Yokohama hosted a symposium focusing on the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony of California. The members of the research project "150 Years of Transpacific Migration from Japan," partially funded by JICA Japanese Overseas Migration Museum, presented their initial research findings at this symposium.

The American River Conservancy contacted the symposium's organizer, Miya Shichinohe-Suga, to correlate information on Wakamatsu Colony in America and Japan, especially in view of the upcoming WakamatsuFest150. The exchange between the two parties has produced interesting results. The Conservancy is honored to host several of these scholars (Masako Iino, Miya Shichinohe-Suga, and Michiyo Kitawaki) during the festival when they will share their research concerning the history of Wakamatsu pioneers. The project members hope to publish their updated findings soon.

The research project "150 Years of Transpacific Migration from Japan" explores the complex nature of Japanese migration from the 1860s to the turn of the 20th century, in a broader context of global migration history. The project is conducted by a team of seven scholars (myself, Miya Shichinohe-Suga, also Masako Iino, Hisami Hasegawa, Michiyo Kitawaki, Teruko Kumei, Tomoko Ozawa, Tomomi Iino) whose main academic discipline is American history and immigration/migration history.

The project team has discovered new historical facts by examining a vast amount of newspaper articles, manuscript schedules of the United States Census, and early visa/passports written in old-style Japanese, among other sources. Regarding the "Wakamatsu Colony," one of the ongoing objectives is to deepen academic analysis by finding and linking various primary sources, both in English and Japanese. Another purpose is to scrutinize the ways in which "nonfiction novels" have been widely shared and appreciated for over a century.

Furthermore, the project focuses on migration from/to/within Japan in relation to historical forces existing on both sides of the Pacific in the mid-19th Century, i.e. the opening of Japanese ports by the Tokugawa government, the ending of institutional slavery in the U.S., the American Civil War, and the Japanese civil war, Boshin War. By using and linking various primary sources, along with a comprehensive look at these events, the findings will shed new light on the "Wakamatsu Colony" and the diverse meanings of early Japanese migration. ❖

WAKAMATSU
American River Conservancy

CORTI BROTHERS

WAKAMATSU
American River Conservancy

Corti Brothers would like to honor
our Japanese and Japanese-American friends and customers.

Hiroko, Reiko, Scott, Noriko, Masa, Chieko, Tom, Mineko, Saburo, Sharon, Toshiya, Seiichi, Liz, Hideaki, Tadashi, Yukihiro, Dennis, David, Keith, Yumiko, Aysushi, Gaetano, Amy, Yotsukawa, Christina, Dale, Leslie, Sa, Luanne, Makiko, Trent, Karen, Taka, Aron, Peter, Malia, Patty, Yayoi, Joe, Cindy, Russ, Sharman, Maria, Derek, Donna, Maggie, Lara, Mary, Edward, Robert, Debbie, Gary, Glenn, Judy, John, Cheryl, Scott, Todd, Karen, Nancy, Dean, Kirk, Stacey, Dale, Thomas, Robert, Alan, Ron, Frank, Jeff, Layne, Ray, Darryl, Ted, Steve, Martin, Duane, Rimban Bob, Patty-sensei, Kondo-sensei, Sussumu, Kazuki, Margo, Susie, Brian.

Rice in California: The Japanese Connection

By Tim Johnson

The saga of the Gold Rush in California was a story of struggle – a great labor to extract precious metal from the streams and rock of the Sierra. It was also when a rich milieu of cultures came together by way of fortune – many with names that still speak to the places they mined and settled. In our region, we have Chili Bar and Mormon Island named after emigrants so closely associated with these places.

The chronicle of rice in the Sacramento Valley is linked inextricably with this state-defining event and the cultures who rely on this unassuming grain that feeds half of the world's population every day.

The first rice arrived in California on schooners into San Francisco Bay —thousands of bags destined for the Chinese emigrants and miners toiling in the gold fields and later the railroads.

As it often happens, those that were unsuccessful at mining returned to their roots. They realized that if you couldn't find gold, you could loosen that precious metal from the miner pockets by growing food. Such was the case for rice.

Early records indicate an impressive effort to grow rice in California reaching back as far as 1856. Attempts were made to grow it in the water-rich San Joaquin Delta. Failing there, rice paddies were tried as far afield as Redding and Los Angeles. While those early farmers could get the plant to grow, the grain never formed.

For 50 years farmers tried to grow rice, as the demand increased and ships continued to unload their grain, sack by sack.

Finally, in 1908, seeds from a different place were tried. A short grain rice from Japan called Kiushu was tried. Planted at the Crane farm in the northern Sacramento Valley town of Biggs, it thrived where the long grain rice, previously planted up and down the state, had failed.

Scientists later learned that the japonica short and medium grain rice was ideally suited for our Mediterranean climate.

In the 1960s, rice received another boost from Japan, in the form of sushi. In Little Tokyo, Japanese and gaijin alike could try this traditional cuisine made with fresh local ingredients and high-quality rice from the Sacramento Valley. To say that it caught fire may be the culinary understatement of the century, as sushi came to define our state.

From those beginnings, the kernel of an industry began, an industry that today encompasses half a million acres in the Sacramento Valley, dozens of rice mills and rice shipped to over 40 countries. What's more, nearly every piece of sushi in the United States is made from rice grown in California – rice that traces its roots directly back to that first Japanese variety.

While records on rice farming at the Wakamatsu Colony are scant, I certainly believe an effort was made to grow this most important food crop. How could it be otherwise? More successful with mulberry for silk production and wax trees and tea seedlings, the colony showcased these unique crops and made them the focus of their farm.

However, without the colonists' expeditionary spirit and contributions to the pioneering of California, that first fateful rice seed from Japan may never have been planted in the soils of the Sacramento Valley. ❖

[Tim Johnson is President and CEO of the California Rice Commission. With shared values for conservation and education, the California Rice Commission is a long-time, valued supporter of Wakamatsu Farm.]

— Photo by Brian Baer, California Rice Commission

California rice is an important ingredient in sushi.

—Photo by Betty Sederquist

Collaboration with California State Parks

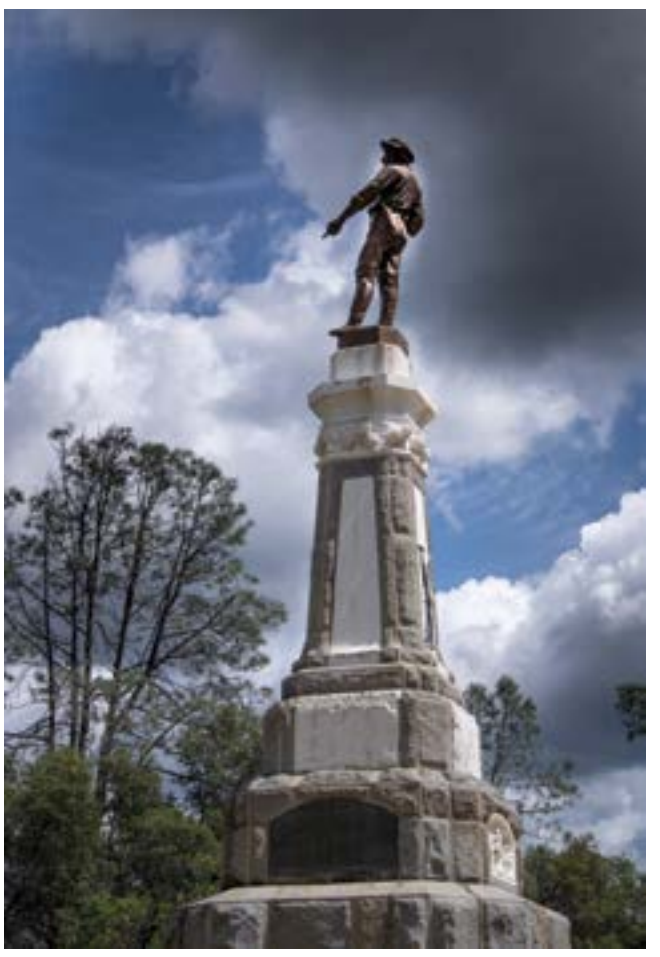
The Mission of California State Parks is, "to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation."

The Interpretation and Education Division guides interpretation of natural and cultural resources across 280 park units by providing leadership, coordination, and support through training, resources, input, distance learning, and advocacy. The Cultural Resources Division offers leadership and guidance on acquiring, conserving, and managing cultural resources to preserve California's heritage. Both of these divisions focus on connecting California's diverse, rich history to the people of today.

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park interprets multiple facets of life in what is now Coloma and the surrounding area. This includes the stories of indigenous peoples, Gold Rush history, the changing life and economics post-Gold Rush, and the many cultures that contributed to the rich tapestry of the area's history. The Japanese colonists at Wakamatsu are one of the many cultural groups highlighted at Marshall Gold Discovery.

Among the many Wakamatsu artifacts in Marshall Gold Discovery SHP collection are the banner and tanto the colonists brought to Coloma, and the daguerreotype images taken of the colonists while residents in Coloma. Through collaboration with the American River Conservancy, look for these artifacts at the WakamatsuFest150. Visit our website for more information: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=484. ❖

[This article was a team effort from California State Park's staff who have collaborated with the American River Conservancy for the success of WakamatsuFest150. Steve Hilton is the Cultural Resources Supervisor and Jena Peterson is a Museum Curator I with the Cultural Resources Division. Heather Holm is a State Park Interpreter III with the Interpretation and Education Division, and Holly Thane is an Interpreter I with Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.]



On a hill overlooking Coloma, a statue of gold discoverer James Marshall points to the spot where he discovered gold, sparking the California Gold Rush.

—Photo by Betty Sederquist

Brief History of Japanese American Farming in California

By Ed Nodohara

Gateway to Western Farming: 1880s

Farm land is scarce and in the Japanese tradition, and the eldest son inherits the farm. Since the second subsequent sons are left with nothing, new opportunities beckoned them to the new world. Land was cheap and abundant in America. One could work and amass enough money to buy and own a farm.

Life was not easy in the new country. Horse and mule drawn wagons transferred material on the farm. This was extra work as the animals required water, feeding, and a barn. Tractors were a luxury purchase after farmers became financially self-sustaining.

World War II: 1940s

Ten relocation camps were established to incarcerate 122,000 individuals, of which 77,000 were US citizens. They included Nisei (second generation) Japanese Americans. Barbed wire was hung along the perimeter and guard towers with machine guns. According to the government, the machine guns were to protect the incarcerated. According to internees, the guns were pointed inward.

Post War: 1950s to 1980s

In the foothills of the gold country, Japanese American orchard farmers took their produce to towns where fruit exchanges existed. These exchanges collected the crates of fruit, then packed them into refrigerated train cars to ship across the nation. Fruit from Placer County drew top dollar due to the high quality and sugar content.

Current State of Japanese American Farmers

Japanese American farmers are fading from the future. Many have stopped cultivation or sold their land. Maintaining a family farm means the next generation must be willing to keep up the hard labor of running a farm in modern times. Many have sold their farms to small organic farmers who sell their products at higher prices with less chemical costs. Small farmers who can change crops rapidly to satisfy the public desires can survive current times.

❖

[Ed Nodohara's forefathers successfully operated Nestle Nook and Pleasant Hill Farm located in Lincoln, California, for over 70 years.]

Japanese families in transit on a cold day at Manzanar, a relocation camp on the east side of the Sierra Nevadas. 122,000 individuals of Japnese descent were incarcerated during World War II at ten reelocation camps.

—Ansel Adams, Library of Congress

Below: Super sweet mandarins have been a prized fruit in nearby Placer County for generations.

— Photo by Betty Sederquist

this land enriches
us with golden fruits of earth
and spirit – tend it

—Taylor Graham

— Photo by Betty Sederquist

*This Japanese elm tree (*Zelkova serrata*), also called "Keyaki" in Japan, is the only known living remnant of the Wakamatsu Colony. The tree was planted at the southeast corner of the Graner House by Japanese colonists 150 years ago. The largest Japanese elm in California, it has been labeled a "champion tree" per the California Big Tree Registry.*

The 1969 Centennial Dedication

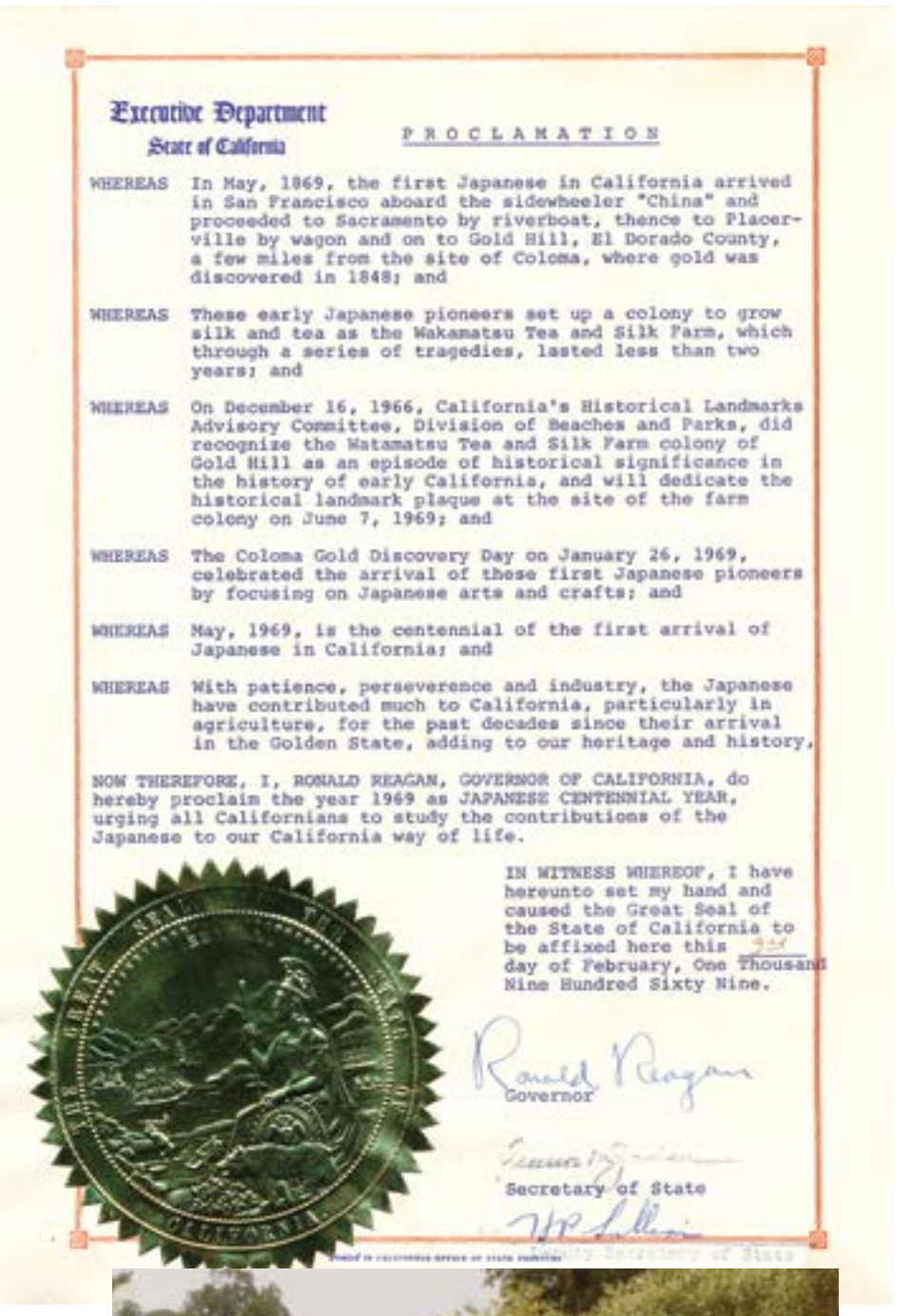
By Herb Tanimoto

Fifty years ago on June 7, 1969, a ceremony was held to dedicate California Registered Historic Landmark #815 at the present site of Wakamatsu Farm. The large monument and plaque unveiled during the ceremony honors the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony, who arrived 100 years prior as the "first agricultural settlement of pioneer Japanese immigrants." The event aligned with the centennial celebration to commemorate 100 years of economic and cultural advancement provided by Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Now 150 years later, the Colonists' legacy continues enriching both Californian and American lives.

The dedication at Gold Trail School was attended by 2,500 vistors. It featured teriyaki chicken, displays, demonstrations, music, and dancing. Highlights included a children's chorus dressed in kimonos who sang "Okei's Lullaby." Then Governor Ronald Reagan provided the keynote address. "The descendants," Reagan said, "brought the genius of farming, made the deserts bloom and marshlands blossom to make California the nation's most productive agricultural state."

Assemblyman Eugene Chappie acted as emcee. With the help of school children, they unveiled the new bronze plaque. A letter from President Richard Nixon was read by National JACL President Jerry Enomoto. Then Japan Consul General Seiichi Shima noted that the spirit of the Wakamatsu Colonists would be at peace if they could see what their children had accomplished in America. Many current residents of El Dorado County still fondly recall the dedication ceremony. Some are even treasured volunteers at Wakamatsu Farm today. ❖

[Herb Tanimoto is a dedicated Wakamatsu docent, proficient historian, curator, speaker, and the author of Keiko's Kimono, *which is a historical fiction based on the Wakamatsu Colony story.]*



Executive Department
State of California

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS In May, 1869, the first Japanese in California arrived in San Francisco aboard the sidewheeler "China" and proceeded to Sacramento by riverboat, thence to Placerville by wagon and on to Gold Hill, El Dorado County, a few miles from the site of Coloma, where gold was discovered in 1848; and

WHEREAS These early Japanese pioneers set up a colony to grow silk and tea as the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm, which through a series of tragedies, lasted less than two years; and

WHEREAS On December 16, 1966, California's Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee, Division of Beaches and Parks, did recognize the Watamatsu Tea and Silk Farm colony of Gold Hill as an episode of historical significance in the history of early California, and will dedicate the historical landmark plaque at the site of the farm colony on June 7, 1969; and

WHEREAS The Coloma Gold Discovery Day on January 26, 1969, celebrated the arrival of these first Japanese pioneers by focusing on Japanese arts and crafts; and

WHEREAS May, 1969, is the centennial of the first arrival of Japanese in California; and

WHEREAS With patience, perseverence and industry, the Japanese have contributed much to California, particularly in agriculture, for the past decades since their arrival in the Golden State, adding to our heritage and history,

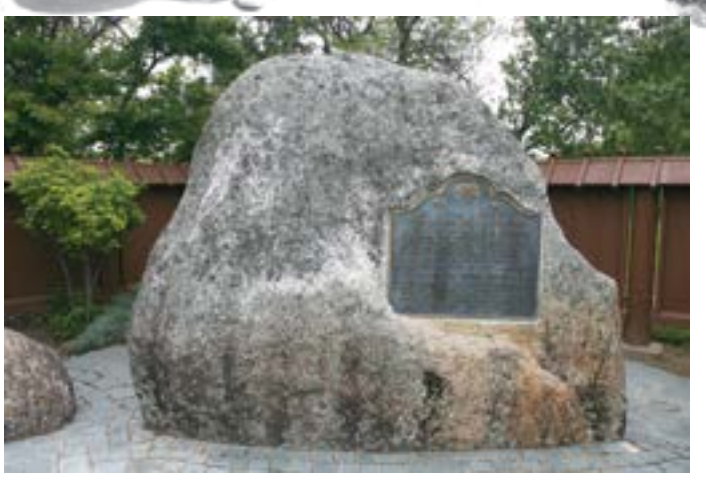
NOW THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA, do hereby proclaim the year 1969 as JAPANESE CENTENNIAL YEAR, urging all Californians to study the contributions of the Japanese to our California way of life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed here this 3rd day of February, One Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Nine.

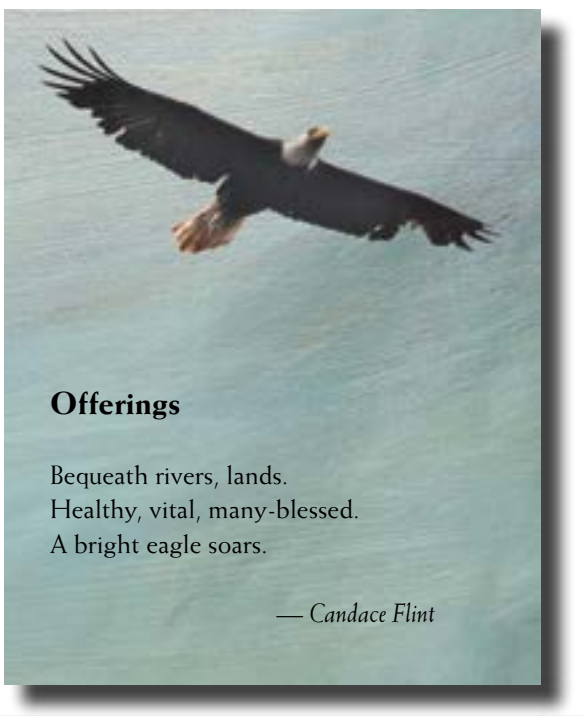
Ronald Reagan
Governor

Secretary of State

Top left: Musicians entertain the assembly with traditional Japanese music. Middle left: Governor Ronald Reagan stands with dignitaries and children. On the far left is Japan Consul General Seiichi Shima. On the far right is Assemblyman and MC Eugene Chappie.
Below left, the marker today. Top right: 1969 Proclamation from Ronald Reagan. Above: Unveiling of the Wakamatsu marker.



WAKAMATSU
American River Conservancy



Offerings

Bequeath rivers, lands.
Healthy, vital, many-blessed.
A bright eagle soars.

— Candace Flint

Tenured Farmers at Wakamatsu Farm

By Melissa Tregilgas

Free Hand Farm is owned and run by Spencer and Melissa Tregilgas, with help from their four daughters. The farm produces raw milk, grass-fed lamb, grass-fed beef, vegetable-tanned sheepskins and wool products.

Spencer and Melissa use planned grazing to provide ecological services on the Wakamatsu property. These services include building soil organic matter, encouraging plant and wildlife diversity, and reducing fuel load in strategic areas.

If you would like to know more about Free Hand Farm and their products, please call 530-295-9458 or email at freehandfarm@gmail.com. ❖

[During April 2015, the Tregilgas family moved in at Wakamatsu Farm where their business and family have grown together.]

The Global Tea Initiative at University of California, Davis

By Katharine P. Burnett, Ph.D

The Global Tea Initiative for the Study of Tea Culture and Science (GTI) is committed to producing tea research with a global perspective and supporting research on tea from anywhere in the world, in any discipline, and with any methodology. The mission of the initiative is to promote the understanding of *Camellia sinensis* through evidence-based research. Although *Camellia sinensis* is the primary focus, GTI scholars acknowledge not only that many things are consumed as tea, but also many diverse tea cultures exist around the world. All merit study.

GTI grew out of a campus initiative to join research in the arts and humanities to that in the sciences. Because UC Davis is the most comprehensive of the University of California's ten campuses, with over 100 different undergraduate majors and 99 graduate programs. As it grows, GTI can draw on the expertise of scholars in all of these areas. GTI is leveraging the significant resources of UC Davis to study tea in a comprehensive way.

When GTI becomes an institute, we envision a dedicated building with tearooms and gardens, exhibition space for narrating the stories of tea culture and science around the world, meeting and teaching space, a sensory theater, and more.

The time was right to initiate this project. As is well known, tea is the number one prepared beverage in the world—only water is consumed more. Approximately four in five of all world consumers drink tea. No less important, cultural exchange and goodwill, medicine and nutrition, trade and commerce, plant sciences, humanities, social sciences, agriculture, and the arts all come together in this extraordinary beverage.

What is not well known is that there is no other single research institute anywhere that comprehensively trains students about tea across the disciplines and with a global perspective. GTI at UCD is the first and only. ❖

[Katharine P. Burnett, Ph.D., is Founding Director of UC Davis's Global Tea Initiative for the Study of Tea Culture and Science at the University of California, Davis. Her research focuses on Chinese art and culture. ARC is very grateful for Katharine's partnership while planning the Japanese tea and tea culture connections throughout WakamatsuFest150.]

Wakamatsu Farm and Golden Feather Tea

By Mike Fritts

It was 1869, during the time that the first Japanese colony on the West Coast arrived at Gold Hill, California. John Henry Schnell, who assisted the colonists' passage, made friends with folks in the Sierra Nevada gold mining community. He learned about locally grown food and supported the colony's efforts to grow tea because coffee was in scarce supply. Despite two years of effort, the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony disbanded due to drought and other problems. The remaining tea plants were to be sold.

One of Mr. Schnell's friends was Anthony Chabot, who was initially involved in water usage for gold mining. As time went on, however, Mr. Chabot changed his mind about how to use water. He began a water conservation movement and designed reservoirs. He created Lake Chabot and became a horticulturist, developing an agricultural homestead for experimentation in rare plants.

History indicates that just as Anthony Chabot planted 10,000 tea plants on his estate in Oakland, California, John Henry Schnell was selling 10,000 tea plants. Coincidence? Then in 1885, Mr. Chabot invited the Domoto Brothers from Japan to help him process his mature tea plants. Why did he invite people from Japan?

Join me at my Golden Feather Tea space to hear the rest of the story, the full circle of this special cultivar of *Camellia sinensis*. ❖

[Mike and Donna Fritts are owners of Golden Feather Tea, a Northern California tea farm that produces fine tea from plants that may have originated with the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony.]

Near Okei-san's grave stands this massive blue oak tree (Quercus douglasii). Now more than 250 years old, this California native would have been over 100 years old when it likely shaded Okei-san as she sat upon her favorite knoll gazing westward to her homeland of Japan.

—Photo by Betty Sederquist

Oak Secrets

Ancient Oak's secret,
Red-winged Blackbird nest on high,
Nestlings wait to fledge.

— Sue Crisp

WakamatsuFest150 Sponsors

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Sacramento JACL

Japanese American Citizens League

By Janice Yamaoka Luszczak

Founded in 1929, the JACL is the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) monitors and responds to issues that enhance or threaten the civil and human rights of all Americans and implements strategies to effect positive social change, particularly to the Asian Pacific American community. In addition, we work on educating the general public about our unique history of immigration, including challenges due to discrimination, exclusion, and denial of civil rights.

Sacramento, Placer, and Florin chapters of the JACL have joined with the American River Conservancy to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants from Aizu Wakamatsu in 1869. Although many of the specifics of the colony are still unknown, it has been wonderful to learn of milestones such as the first birth-right citizen of Japanese ancestry who was born at the colony, and the descendants of one of the colonists, Masumizu Kuninosuke, who still reside in Northern California.

The Festival is also supported by the Northern California, Western Nevada, Pacific District Council of the JACL, which represents all JACL chapters in that area. At the bi-annual NCWNP District Gala, held on April 6, 2019, funds were raised for WakamatsuFest150.

All of us at JACL are excited to participate in this opportunity to share our cultural history and to mark this historic milestone. We thank the American River Conservancy for its work to preserve this part of American history. ❖

[Janice Yamaoka Luszczak is the President of the Sacramento Chapter JACL, and she is a valued supporter of Wakamatsu Farm.]

—Photos by Melissa Lobach

The Wall of Honor

From our neighbors in El Dorado County all the way to Aizu Wakamatsu in Japan, the Conservancy has sought and found support for Wakamatsu Farm. To recognize all supporters who donate $1000 or more specifically to the Farm, ARC offers an engraved plaque on the Donor Wall of Honor. Individuals, businesses, and organizations anywhere in the world are welcome to contact ARC about their own engraved plaque on the Wall of Honor at Wakamatsu Farm.

Thank You Very Much - Arigatou Gozaimasu

- All Travelers from Japan
- Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, especially Mr. Tomochika Uyama
- Japanese American Citizens League, National and Local Chapters, especially Ms. Janice Yamaoka Luszczak
- California State Parks and Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, especially Mr. Barry Smith
- Gold Trail Union School District, especially Mr. Scott Lyons, Ms. Len Holler, and Mr. Boyd Holler
- Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, especially the Court of 2019
- Global Tea Initiative, especially Ms. Katharine Burnett
- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, especially Ms. Lori Parlin, and Mr. Brian Veerkamp
- El Dorado Chamber of Commerce, especially Ms. Jody Franklin
- El Dorado County/Warabi People to People Sister City Association
- See the Elephant, especially Mr. Jamie Van Camp
- Free Hand Farm and Fog Dog Farm
- Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership
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- Mr. Greg Carlson
- Mr. Rick Frost-Hurzel
- Mr. Darel Noceti
- Mrs. Alyssa Brook
- Wakamatsu Farm Volunteers, Planning Team, Gardeners and Docents

We hope to see you again soon at Wakamatsu Farm.

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