

HOURLONG TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY TO TELL STORY OF THE HEART MOUNTAIN RESISTANCE

This is a story of **resistance and betrayal** in World War II. At the height of the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans, 85 young men refused to be drafted out of the American concentration camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, until their rights as American citizens were first restored and their parents released from camp.

It was the largest organized resistance inside an American concentration camp, leading to the largest mass trial in Wyoming history. Yet for fifty years the story of the **Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee** has been obscured by the more widely-told story of Japanese American service in the U.S. Army. Two generations have come to adulthood believing Japanese America endured the loss of all their civil rights, and three years in camp, without protest or resistance.

This television program uses the original words and pictures of the 1940's to contrast the resistance of the Fair Play Committee with the Japanese American leadership that favored a program of postwar acceptance through military service. Our cameras have interviewed the surviving resisters and captured their reconciliation with the community at ceremonial homecomings in San Jose and Los Angeles, and at the Japanese American Citizens League's 1994 convention in Salt Lake City.

This program, with the working title, **Years of Infamy**, breaks new ground and should lead to a fundamental reconsideration of what constituted Japanese American integrity in World War II. The Heart Mountain draft resisters never believed they would be recognized for their principles in their lifetime. Now, with your help, we can bring their story to the general public.

Produced by FRANK ABE

Directed by FRANK CHIN

Narrated by LAWSON FUSAO INADA

with the voices of MAKO, GEORGE TAKEI, and others

Much of our photography is complete, but we still need help to finish the program for television. If you agree this is important, please return the coupon on the reverse. All donors will receive a letter of thanks signed by one of the original members of the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee.

"Here is the World War II story of draft-age Americans behind barbed wire, who refused to cooperate any further with the U.S. government in violating their Constitution and its established principles of justice and democracy. When the Army came after these men for a discriminatorily-formed fighting unit, they saw through the illegalities; they united and demanded first the restoration of their rights.

"This is the story of Americans standing fast as Americans -- as a matter of conscience and of duty. Walter and I have fully supported this project through the years. We would like to see it completed so that this inspiring story can win wide exposure on TV and in classrooms everywhere."

-- Michi Nishiura Weglyn, author of *Years of Infamy*

If you would like to see this kind of programming on television, please show your support by making a tax-deductible contribution to our fiscal sponsor, the "Before Columbus Foundation," and mail to:

**Resisters Video Project
c/o 3811 S. Horton St.
Seattle, WA 98144**

or you may call: **producer Frank Abe at (206) 722-3482 or
Fair Play Committee co-founder Frank Emi at (818) 282-8808**

Resisters Video Project, c/o 3811 S. Horton St., Seattle, WA 98144

Yes, I want to be a part of this exciting next step in Japanese American history.

☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ other _____

Name _____

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Telephone _____

Please make tax-deductible checks payable to the "Before Columbus Foundation"



YEARS
OF INFAMY

3811 South Horton Street Seattle, WA 98144 (206) 722-3482

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

At the height of the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans, 85 young men refused to be drafted out of the American concentration camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, until their rights as American citizens were first restored and their parents released from camp.

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This one-hour television program uses the original words and pictures of the 1940's to contrast the resistance of the Fair Play Committee with the Japanese American leadership that favored a program of postwar acceptance through military service. Our cameras have interviewed the surviving resisters and captured their reconciliation with the community at ceremonial homecomings in San Jose and Los Angeles, and at the Japanese American Citizens League's 1994 convention in Salt Lake City.

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The program is narrated by poet Lawson Fusao Inada, widely regarded as the poet laureate of Japanese America. Internationally-known actors Mako, George Takei, and others will voice excerpts from the letters and documents of the government, the Japanese American camp leadership, and the resisters. Musician and folklorist Charlie Chin will create a score that twists musical genres, for example using a Japanese shakuhachi and a fiddle and bass to reinterpret the Western swing most heard on the radio in 1940's Wyoming.

To corroborate the documents and comment on the suppression of the resistance by both the government and Japanese American leadership we will interview renowned historians Michi Nishiura Weglyn and Roger Daniels. Weglyn authored the landmark history, **Years of Infamy**, which lends its title to this program. Her research in the National Archives provides much of the new information that informs our script.

For 50 years America has subscribed to the stereotype that Japanese Americans submitted passively to their wartime incarceration out of a mixture of blind loyalty and patient resignation. This documentary proves the stereotypes wrong. Japanese America did resist.

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Director and Co-Writer FRANK CHIN is internationally known for his gifts as a storyteller and his boldness of vision in the recovery of Asian American history, literature and culture. His plays, **The Chickencoop Chinaman** and **Year of the Dragon** were the first by an Asian American to be produced off-Broadway in New York. **Dragon** was produced on PBS in 1975 as part of its "Theater in America" series.

Chin founded the Asian American Theater Workshop in San Francisco in 1973. His extensive television experience includes 3 years as director, writer, and producer of documentaries at King Screen Productions in Seattle. Chin wrote and reported an hour-long documentary on New York Chinatown, **Chinaman's Chance**, for WNET-TV.

Chin is co-editor of the 1974 literary declaration of independence, **AIIEEEEE!: An Anthology of Asian American Writers**, and author of two novels, **Gunga Din Highway** (1994) and **Donald Duk** (1991), and a collection of short stories, **The Chinaman Pacific & Frisco R.R. Co.** (1988). He has won awards from the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lannan Foundation, and the Before Columbus Foundation.

Producer and Co-Writer FRANK ABE is an award-winning broadcast journalist with 14-years experience at KIRO Radio and TV, the CBS affiliates in Seattle. He produced a weekly series featuring American writers of color, "**Other Voices**." He is a former national officer of the Asian American Journalists Association.

Narrator and Co-Writer LAWSON FUSAO INADA is the first Japanese American to have a book of poetry, **Before the War** (1971), published by a major American firm. He is a Professor of English at Southern Oregon State College, and has himself been the subject of a documentary film sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

Videographer and Editor PHIL STURHOLM is one of first American TV photographers to enter the People's Republic of China for the documentary **Reflections of China** (1979), for which he won a National Press Photographers Award. He followed American Vietnam Vets in their emotional return to Vietnam in **Two Decades & A Wakeup** (1991) and in **Kontum Diary** (1995), the latter an ITVS-funded project offered to PBS this year.

Music Composer and Arranger CHARLIE CHIN is an accomplished folk, classical, jazz and rock musician honored by the Smithsonian Institute as a "Community Folklore Scholar" for his work as an oral historian and theatrical and musical artist in New York's Chinatown.

Voice talent MAKU was nominated for an Academy Award for his supporting role in Robert Wise's 1966 film, **The Sand Pebbles**, and played the lead in Steven Sondheim's 1974 Broadway musical, **Pacific Overtures**. Mako founded **East/West Players** of Los Angeles.

Voice talent GEORGE TAKEI is known world-wide as "Mr. Sulu" of the **Star Trek** movies and Trek-classic TV series. He appeared on PBS' Exxon "Theater in America" series as a bitter Chinatown tour guide in Frank Chin's **Year of the Dragon**.