

# The AACCP Newsletter

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## Here, In America?

### An Update Interview With Grace Shimizu & Elinor Davis

Interviewed by Leonard D. Chan

Back on April 8th and 9th of 2005, an Assembly on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (AWRIC) was held in San Francisco. AWRIC was a grassroots public education event to present and document little known first-person accounts of U.S. government human rights violations during World War II and post-9/11.

The Assembly expanded on the work of the Congressional commission hearings of 1981 which led to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 and reparations for over 82,000 Japanese American internees. The Assembly focused on the hidden stories of the immigrants, US citizens, and Latin Americans of German, Italian and Japanese ancestry who had not yet received proper acknowledgment or redress for the violation of their rights.

Grace Shimizu & Elinor Davis were two of the organizers of this event. You can read our previous informative interview with them by going to <http://asianamericanbooks.com/newslets/nl0405.htm#interview>.

#### **Give us an update on your efforts since the April 8-9, 2005 Assembly on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (AWRIC).**

The AWRIC public testimonial event involved more than 64 participants, scores of staff and volunteers, and over 23 community organizations. We had tapes of the testimonies from the two-day event transcribed and then journalist Helen Zia wrote an introduction and coordinated the process of editing them for the report called *Here, In America? Immigrants as the Enemy During World War II and Today*. The background text introducing each section is a condensed version of the narrative that Elinor Davis wrote and edited for the traveling exhibit, *The Enemy Alien Files: Hidden Stories of WWII*, on the same subject matter.

The 84-page illustrated AWRIC report, which was beautifully put together by graphic designer Noreen Rei Fukumori, was published last year along with a 15-minute DVD of AWRIC highlights produced by documentary filmmaker Casey Peek. The report and DVD can be ordered from the National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS) [www.njahs.org](http://www.njahs.org) (also through AACCP: see new book section).

In May 2006, a delegation of nine AWRIC participants and supporters went to Washington, DC, to deliver the AWRIC report and DVD to members of the US Congress, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and international human rights organizations, for their reference when considering pending and future policies, legislation or litigation.

We are continuing public distribution of the AWRIC Report and DVD, often as part of educational programming associated with the *Enemy Aliens Files* exhibit or community events. Venues where we distributed these materials and organized screenings of the DVD and/or panel presentations included: showing of the *Enemy Alien Files* exhibit at the National Park Service Manzanar Historical Site (June-August 2006), Tule Lake Pilgrimage (July 2006), Oakland Museum of California (July 2006), 43rd annual Islamic Society of North America convention in Chicago (September 2006), Perukai Reunion of former Japanese Peruvian internees in Honolulu (October 2006), and Day of Remembrance events (February 2007).

#### **Has the collection of oral and written personal histories continued?**

During the AWRIC, the personal testimonies of 50 witnesses were recorded: 26 witnesses presented in person; 20 witnesses submitted written statements which were presented by readers; 4 written statements were edited from interviews of deceased internees and presented by readers. We're always interested in hearing from former internees and their families. But our work goes beyond conducting or collecting personal histories and can also include translation, transcription, editing and archiving the interviews and supporting documents and artifacts. It's a lot of work, but we are very fortunate to have the support of the National Japanese American Historical Society. We welcome all the help volunteers can give.

#### **We have the report booklet from the conference. Is anyone working on a more complete book of your collection?**

We would love to do a longer book on this material and have applied for grants to help fund such a project. There is a journalist interested in writing a book on the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project (JPOHP) research and of course there are the books we used for the *Enemy Alien Files* exhibit - *Enemies: World War II Alien Internment* by John Christgau, *Una Storia Segreta: When Italian Americans were Enemy Aliens* edited by Larry DiStasi, *Adios to Tears* by former Japanese Peruvian internee Seiichi Higashide and several by Stephen Fox and Arnold Kramer. We also support or have contributed to the work of AWRIC participants and other writers, researchers and filmmakers. Last year, former German Costa Rican internee Heidi Gurcke Donald published her family's story, *"We Were Not the Enemy: Remembering the US' Latin-American Civilian Internment Program of WWII."* Filmmakers Kiku Lani Iwata and Kimi Iwata Romming are working on a unique documentary, *"Stolen Lives,"* focusing on the WWII experiences of the German, Italian and Japanese communities in the US and Latin America through the  
(Continued on page 3)

## Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at -  
aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

### Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACCP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
Feb. 18 5:30pm	The 27th Annual San Jose Day of Remembrance 2007 In Good Conscience	Betsuin Bud. Church 640 N 5th St. San Jose, CA
Feb. 24-25	Reading the World IX	USF - 2350 Turk Blvd. San Francisco, CA
Mar. 2-4	California Council for the Social Studies Conference	Marriott Oakland City Center Oakland, CA
Mar. 4 11am-5:30pm	Chinese New Year's Celebration	Stockton Civic Aud. 525 N. Center St. Stockton, CA
Mar. 8-11	Intravarsity Christian Fellowship	Marriott SM San Mateo, CA
Mar. 24	Shinenkai N. CA JA Seniors	Union City, CA
Mar. 24	4th Annual Academic Success Day	SC Office of Educ. Santa Clara, CA
Mar. 24-25	127th Bok Kai Festival, Parade, and Bomb Day	3rd & D St. Marysville, CA
Mar. 24-25 10am-5pm	The Chinese American Museum of N. CA Grand Opening Lectures and discussion with Profs. Gordon Chang, Ling-chi Wang, Judy Yung, Gregory Mark and others	232 1st St. Marysville, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACCP May Not Attend		
Jan. 13- Mar. 18	If They Came For Me Today: The Japanese American Internment Project Exhibit	SF Main Lib. San Francisco, CA
Feb. 10- Mar. 4	Chinese New Year Celebration Events in SF	Chinatown San Francisco, CA
Feb. 17 2pm	San Francisco Day of Remembrance	JCCCN 1840 Sutter St. San Francisco, CA
Feb. 18 10am-6pm	Vietnamese Spring Festival & Parade Parade 11am-1pm	Parkside Hall 180 Park Ave. San Jose, CA
Mar. 3 5:30pm	Chinese New Year Parade	San Francisco, CA
Mar. 4 2-3:30pm	The Wisdom of Humor A Japanese American Cartoonist's Internment Camp Story Cartoonist: Jack Matsuoka, Storyteller: Megumi	SJSU Room 189 1 Washington Sq. San Jose, CA
Mar. 15-25	25th San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival	San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, CA
Mar. 16-18	Conference for the Teaching of Chinese Language and Culture (K-12)	UCSF at Mission Bay 1675 Owens Street San Francisco, CA
Mar. 17-19	Association for Asian American Studies National Conference	Anaheim Con. Center Anaheim, CA
Mar. 22-24	Nat. Assoc. for Ethnic Studies Conference	St. Univ. of NY New Paltz, NY
April 4-8	Association for Asian American Studies National Conference	Park Ave. Grand Hyatt NY, NY

## Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year - Lunar New Year this time! According to the Chinese Zodiac, February 18 is the first day of the year of the boar or pig.

February 19 also happens to be the 65th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, which resulted in the internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans. This date is also commonly called the Day of Remembrance and is officially commemorated through a congressional act each year.

One interest and slightly related story I'd like to mention - I was recently sitting in the lobby of an office building, not far from Japantown in San Francisco, reading the book *Impounded* (see below). A person sat next to me who looked to be in his fifties or older and asked what I was reading. I told him it was about the famous photographer Dorothea Lange and her pictures of the Internment. He looked at me in complete ignorance and I continued to explain a little more about the Japanese Internment and Lange during World War II. Either in denial or embarrassment or both, he blurted out something like "I'm sure there were no Japanese in America then. Does it have anything about 1947?" he exclaimed. "That's when they killed babies." Then he walked away in a huff.

I had no idea what he was talking about and I got the sense that he was still in denial. Having worked with AACCP for a number of years I am always surrounded by people that were actually interned or were very knowledgeable of the Internment. This was one of my first encounters in awhile with someone other than a child that didn't have any idea about these WWII injustices. If the rest of the US populace, not in my immediate circle, was as uninformed as this gentleman, then we have a lot of work still to do.

Thank you Grace and Elinor for the work that you are doing to help educate the public and for doing another interview with us. We wish you much success in all your efforts.

Thank you William Poy Lee for sending the review copy of your book. Sorry that it took me so long to get to it. Other authors out there, feel free to send us your review copies - just have patience with us :).

Thank you Adam Chow for giving me a review of the *Year of the Pig*. We hope that this will be the start of a series of independent reviews by you and other volunteer reviewers. If others of you are interested in helping, write to me and we'll get you started.

Hope to see you at one of the upcoming events. Take care and have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Leonard Chan  
**Executive Editor**

US enemy alien program. AWRIC participant Irum Shiekh (post-doctoral fellow at UCLA) is finishing up two books for publication, "*Racial Profiling and 9/11 Detainees*" and "*Speaking Out: Voices of Individuals Arrested and Deported in Connection with 9/11 Attacks*." In the past two years, interviews have also been conducted by Tsukimi Kai of Nikkei in Cuba and their WWII experiences.

**Tell us about the current legislation in Congress - what are some of the details of the bill or bills being introduced?**

A bill was introduced in the new Congress just three weeks ago - the "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act of 2007" by Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) in the Senate (S.381) and Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA) in the House of Representatives (HR662). It would establish a federal commission to study and make recommendations regarding the violations committed by the US government against Japanese Latin Americans during WWII. There's background information about this at [www.campaignforjusticejla.org](http://www.campaignforjusticejla.org)

**Do you think the chances of passage have increased any with the changes in congress?**

The Commission Study bill provides a way to educate members of Congress and the public about this still little-known episode in our country's history. We are hoping that this process of investigation will lead to proper acknowledgment, apology and redress for violations which are war crimes and crimes against humanity. For some, this is seen as a step backward with the hope of moving two steps forward. Since our redress legislation had been languishing in Congress since 2000, we feel that a commission study is a necessary step. It's a test of our democratic institutions and processes, a challenge for our elected officials to do the "right thing" before all our people pass away. I would like to think chances of passage have improved, but passage still requires bipartisan support.

**Has President Bush given any indications of his support or opposition of the bill/bills?**

Not that I'm aware of.

**Not to editorialize too much, but do you think President Bush's record of current similar abuses of individual's civil rights may have any bearing on whether he will support this legislation or not? Individuals that may have caused harm will sometimes take positive aggressive actions to compensate for their misdeeds. Do you see it happening in this situation?**

Leadership exerted by the President of the United States would be a significant development, not only in securing justice for those scapegoated as "the enemy" during WWII, but also in clarifying the scope and severity of the violations arising from improper government actions and policies, which included kidnapping, indefinite detention without charge or trial, forced labor, deportation, and hostage exchange.

**What about the Germans and Italians that were incarcerated during WWII by the US Government- will this legislation help their cause any and if not, is there any other legislation being proposed for them?**

Yes, I hope so. A bill called the Wartime Treatment Study Act, supported by an organization of former internees and their

families, the German American Internee Coalition ([www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info)), would establish commissions to review the facts and circumstances surrounding injustices suffered by European Americans, European Latin Americans, and Jewish refugees during World War II. For several years, it has been pending in both houses of Congress.

The first federal legislation to pass which specifically acknowledged the internment of German Americans and Latin Americans was introduced by Rep. Mike Honda as House Resolution 56. It passed in March 2004. It called for a National Day of Remembrance on February 19, the date of the signing of Executive Order 9066. The National Day of Remembrance would serve to commend and acknowledge the efforts of the Japanese, German and Italian American communities to commemorate the wartime treatment of certain members of those communities during World War II. Every year since 2004, a similar House resolution regarding a National Day of Remembrance has been passed.

In 2000, the Wartime Violation of Italian American Civil Liberties Act was signed into law. It acknowledged that injustices had been committed against Italian Americans and authorized a Department of Justice investigation and report, which has been issued. However, no apology has been granted to the former relocatees or internees and their families. Nor has there been adequate education funding to educate the public and government officials about this shameful episode in our country's history.

**Has any progress been made with your cause through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)?**

The IACHR determined it has jurisdiction and accepted the petition of the Shibayama brothers, three former Japanese Peruvian internees. They are seeking to hold the US government accountable for the ongoing failure to provide redress for war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated during WWII. We expect a ruling soon. If the Commission rules in our favor, it will be an important precedent under international law and a moral victory. It is not clear, however, whether the Bush administration will abide by such a ruling of international law.

**What are some of the things you are currently working on to educate the public?**

There will be two events in San Mateo dealing with the treatment of enemy aliens during WWII, both on Saturday, April 28, 2007. The first is *Hidden Stories of World War II: A Conference on Enemy Alien Restrictions and Internment* from 1 - 4 p.m. at the San Mateo Public Library. Writers and internment scholars will be joined by former WWII internees or their family members from the Japanese, German and Italian communities to tell their stories. Many also participated in the AWRIC.

The second event, at the Little Theater of Hillsdale High School, is called *Freedom Lost: Three One-Act Plays on Enemy Aliens in World War II*. Each of the plays, written by Bay Area author John Christgau, focuses on one of the ethnic communities affected by WWII alien internment (German, Italian and Japanese Peruvian). Both events are free. They mark the appearance of the "Enemy Alien Files" exhibit at the San Mateo Public Library for the whole month of May. This exhibit was created by a consortium of

organizations representing the communities affected by the WWII Alien Enemy Control Program and it has been traveling all over the country since September 2001.

We have also submitted proposals to the Oral History Association for panel presentations on the AWRIC and JPOHP activities. Their national conference will be held in Oakland in October 2007.

**Are the Bush administration's similar civil liberty violations an ominous sign that we've failed in our efforts to prevent such occurrences from happening again?**

Times of crisis, especially war (whether declared by Congress or not), test our belief in and commitment to rule of law (both domestic and international), our Constitution and our democratic principles, institutions and processes - whether we are citizens or non-citizens, elected representatives or appointed officials. We felt the weight of that challenge and responsibility in WWII and we feel it with today's "war on terrorism." Every generation must inform itself about our Constitutional rights and renew its own calls for justice, building on previous experiences. Now is the time for all individuals of conscience to come to the defense of our Constitution, our democracy and international law. And such defense requires the accountability of officials in all three branches of our government.

Proper acknowledgment, full disclosure, apology and redress for the violations suffered by enemy aliens during WWII are unfinished business over sixty years due. And today the

Arab/Muslim/South Asian American communities are enduring government actions and policies similar to, and worse than, what our Issei and other enemy aliens endured. As we come to better understand the resistance to resolving issues from WWII, to scrutinize the repetition of past government misconduct and to draw lessons for current day concerns, we should reconsider the mainstream and community historical narratives of Japanese American internment and the "victory" of Japanese American redress.

**With the number of Japanese, German, and Italian individuals that were interned during WWII dwindling, who will carry the torch to remind future generations that this is something that should be prevented?**

NJAHS and the third, fourth and fifth generation Japanese Americans, the GAIC, the American Italian Historical Association and the JPOHP will continue to document on film and in writing the experiences of those who suffered injustices during WWII. Their families, their grandchildren have not forgotten and will tell the stories of those who are already gone. But these stories are not the "property" of these families or their communities. All of us have the basis to relate, to understand and to embrace this history as our own, because it is a part of US history. It is the responsibility of all people of conscience in the US to learn this history, to internalize it, to keep it alive...because what is at stake is our future as a country, our Constitution, our civil and human rights, our democratic institutions and processes.

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The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end March 12, 2007.



**Here, in America?  
Immigrants as "The Enemy" During WWII and Today  
Report of The Assembly on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians  
April 8-9 - San Francisco, California**

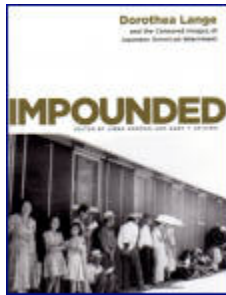
By Helen Zia and Elinor Davis  
2006, 80 pages, Paperback.

The question asked in the title of this booklet conveys a sense of shock. You could almost hear the follow on question from the uninformed person saying, "This couldn't really have happen here, could it?" It did and that's what the Assembly on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians set out to expose and record.

The oral histories recorded in this report tell the stories of individuals that were interned during World War II and today, and that are not as well know as the Japanese Americans that were interned by the United States' Wartime Relocation Authority (WRA). Many of these histories document the kidnapping of Latin American Japanese, German, and Italian civilians by the US government and the Latin American governments of their origin, to the United States. These individuals were interned and used as prisoner of war trade material.

See the interviews in this newsletter and the AACP April 2005 newsletter for more information.

Item #3443, Normally \$20.00 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$16.00**



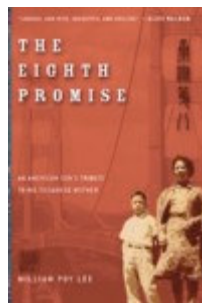
## **Impounded** **Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment**

Edited by Linda Gordon and Gary Y. Okihiro  
2006, 205 pages, Hardback.

Dorothea Lange, one of the 20th century's premier documentary photographers, helped chronicle the Japanese American World War II Internment for the US government. When she took these photos, they were so revealing of the internment experience, an army major labeled them as impounded and kept them from release for the duration of the war. As a result many of the approximately 760 Lange photos remained in relative obscurity at the National Archives until now.

Along with over 100 of Dorothea Lange's revealing and moving photos collected for this book, Impounded includes an informative biography of Dorothea Lange and a short history of the Internment.

Item #3439, Normally \$29.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$23.96**



## **The Eighth Promise** **An American Son's Tribute to His Toisanese China-Born Mother**

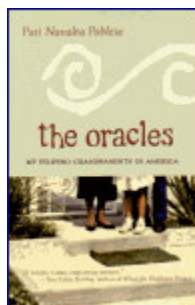
By William Poy Lee  
2007, 288 pages, Hardback.

There are some accounts that say there are more overseas Chinese, that can trace their roots to Toisan China, than the number of people that are still living in this region. This is probably the first Chinese American book to sheds light on the disappearing culture and language of Toisan through the perspective of a mother-son memoir.

In a world where many languages and cultures are quickly vanishing, William Poy Lee's book is a wonderful and needed time capsule containing personal snapshots of what it was like to be Toisanese and living in China and then San Francisco Chinatown during the 1930s through 80s.

Having had some similar experiences with Toisanese culture and Chinatown history as the author, it was fascinating to see his interpretations and perspective of the language and culture, and of all the Chinatown history that I did not witness.

Item #3442, Normally \$23.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$19.16**

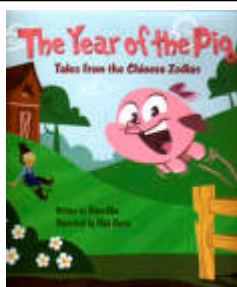


## **The Oracles** **My Filipino Grandparents In America**

By Pati Navalta Poblete  
2006, 125 pages, Paperback.

Like The Eighth Promise, The Oracles is another wonderfully insightful book that sheds light on a culture through a personal memoir. Journalist Pati Poblete's engaging writings, of her early years growing up with her four grandparents, gives the reader multiple personal perspectives of Filipino culture and of a Filipino American girl's life growing up in the suburbs of San Francisco.

Item #3441, Normally \$13.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$11.16**



## **The Year of the Pig**

By Oliver Chin  
Illustrated by Miah Alcorn  
2006, 33 pages, Hardback.

A newborn baby pig named Patty grows and learns life lessons from the other farm animals, which conflict with her own instincts as a pig. Patty's own instincts win in the end.

The story is a cute concept with all of the animals bonding and being friends. It flows well, as Patty's innate abilities help farmer Wu find his ring. The Chinese zodiac information at the beginning and end of the book is informative and will help children understand the title.

Item #3440, Normally \$15.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$12.76

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