

## **New exhibit presents rarely seen photographs of Japanese American farm labor camps during World War II**

The Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission is proud to present *Uprooted: Japanese American Farm Labor Camps During World War II*. The Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, 121 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Portland, will host the exhibit February 11<sup>th</sup> to June 19<sup>th</sup>.

During a period of extreme paranoia and heightened racism following the attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese warplanes, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. It authorized the forced removal and incarceration of more than 120,000 U.S. residents of Japanese ancestry (Nikkei)--nearly two-thirds U.S. citizens--from the West Coast to concentration camps. Between 1942 and 1944, some 33,000 individual contracts were issued for seasonal farm labor, with many incarcerated Japanese Americans working in the sugar beet industry. This exhibit introduces their story.

*Uprooted* features a selection of photographs from Russell Lee's documentation of Japanese American farm labor camps near the towns of Nyssa, Oregon and Rupert, Shelley, and Twin Falls, Idaho. This is the first time many of these images have been exhibited. As a photographer for the Farm Security Administration (FSA), Lee captured nearly six hundred images of the Nikkei wartime experience. From 1935 to 1944, the FSA's documentary photography program produced approximately 175,000 black-and-white film negatives and 1,600 color images.

Visitors will learn about Japanese American farm labor camps through Lee's photographs, interpretative text panels, and a short documentary film featuring firsthand accounts about life in the camps. The exhibit's website – [www.uprootedexhibit.com](http://www.uprootedexhibit.com) - includes additional photographs, historic documents, video clips and transcripts from oral history interviews, and lesson plans.

This exhibit was supported by grants from the National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Preservation Program; the Idaho Humanities Council, a State-based Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Fred W. Fields Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation; the Malheur County Cultural Trust; and the Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust.

For more information on this project please contact the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission. For questions regarding the JACS grant program, please contact Kara Miyagishima, Program Manager, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, NPS, at 303-969-2885.

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