

# UNDER THE GUARD TOWER

## — MODULE SEVEN — ORAL HISTORIES

*Duration: 30 minutes*

**Learning Objective:** Engage with oral histories and visual artworks to deepen understanding of daily life in the Topaz incarceration camp, and to understand how lived experience, memory, and resilience are communicated through multiple forms of storytelling.

Densho, meaning "to pass on to future generations," is a non-profit organization dedicated to "sharing the history of the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans to promote equity and justice today." Densho has collected first-hand materials and oral accounts to preserve the voices and memories of people who were interned.



Chikaji Kawakami, *The Grandstands*, 1942

→ Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page to visit the [Densho website](https://densho.org) and select three oral accounts from people who experienced internment at Topaz. Listen carefully, taking notes.

→ Reflect on the following questions:

1. What new information or perspectives did you gain from these accounts?
2. What details felt most vivid or surprising, and why?

→ Revisit one or more of Chikaji Kawakami's paintings in the exhibition. In small groups, answer the following questions:

1. In what ways do Kawakami's paintings visually echo, expand upon, or contrast with the experiences described in the oral histories?
2. How do oral testimony and visual art work together to preserve memory and convey lived experience?
3. How do different forms of storytelling shape empathy, understanding, and historical memory?

