

It'll be a place for his grandchildren to come

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A family member traces a name from a brick on the memorial wall at Sunday's dedication ceremony.

SEATTLE - A construction project of a different kind finally had a formal unveiling Sunday. It is believed to be the only one in the United States that honors Japanese Americans who were interned in all the camps during World War II.

The moving ceremony and dedication in Seattle's International District brought memories. With the sounds of jazz in the background - some took a minute to etch a moment in time. The names of a community torn apart during the war are displayed on thousands of bricks that make up this one-of-a-kind wall.

The ceremony brought together many to remember those who sacrificed. "That's my father," says Janey Tiffany of Redmond, as she etched the name of one of the bricks. "It'll be a place for his grandchildren to come."

For some children and grandchildren, it is a way to remember what their elders rarely spoke about - when the Japanese American community was uprooted and put into internment camps during World War II.

"They struggled a lot, and the few words my mom would tell me about was how hard times were when she was there and what they had to live without," says Susanne Umeda, whose parents were interned.

The wall is a way to remember those who lived through it all - in camps, or who served in the U.S. military.

"For all the government took from us during World War II, 60 years later, I took a piece of black basalt," says Larry Matsuda, who read from a poem he wrote about the internments.

It was not only a day marked with poetry, but an afternoon remembered with pictures. "I'm grateful that there is this group and a lot of other organizations now that are trying to capture the history," Umeda says.

Capturing history, carved in granite, forming a legacy for generations to come.

The memorial has about 3,000 bricks. Nearly 60 percent were installed by families who bought the bricks and another 1,000 are expected to be installed in the coming year.