

April 2020

## From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear friends,

I hope this message finds you safe and well.

During these uncertain and difficult times, I find myself drawn to stories of hardship and resiliency to gain perspective. Faced with the crisis of the WWII removal and incarceration, Japanese Americans found ways to navigate the challenges facing them. I find inspiration from the many who were able to improve the harsh conditions of their confinement by planting gardens, building furniture, or sewing clothes. I also find comfort in knowing that my family and other members of the Japanese American community formed friendships and lifelong bonds while helping each other.

So that you can find your own inspiration, we created a Densho YouTube channel with over 150 video clips from oral history interviews. From this channel you can view a wide range of what Japanese Americans experienced. As a start, [here is a link](#) to stories of Japanese Americans while confined. Also look below for links to online articles, curriculum, films, and other resources that foster insights and learning about the WWII Japanese American incarceration.

Please be safe. What we are going through today is a moment of extreme strife, but we will make it through now, as Japanese Americans did during WWII, by supporting one another. We are stronger together. Please reach out to me at [tom.ikeda@densho.org](mailto:tom.ikeda@densho.org) to let me know how you are doing, especially if you need a helping hand.

In peace and solidarity,  
Tom

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## Teaching Japanese American History at Home

**Please help us spread the word about these resources by sharing them with teachers and home educators!**

**[5 Ways To Learn Japanese American History From the Comfort of your Home](#)**



As we navigate this new world of mandatory home time, many of us are finding ourselves suddenly having to set up makeshift schools for our kiddos, engage students online, or maybe brush up on our own history education to fill the extra time on our hands. We compiled some resources from Densho and a few of our partners to help you do just that.

>> [Read more.](#)



### 'It was my first grown-up feeling of responsibility': Student Views of Life in a Japanese American Concentration Camp

We're fortunate today to have access to hundreds of testimonies from Nisei elders who were incarcerated as children during WWII. But the perspective captured in these oral histories is that of an adult looking back on decades-old memories, rather than a child or teen

describing contemporaneous experiences. The journals and writing assignments they left behind, however — composed while they were students in concentration camp schools — offer a unique glimpse at how Japanese American youth thought and felt about their life behind barbed wire.

>> [Read more.](#)

**Help Densho honor  
our commitment to  
our elders.**



For 24 years, our elders have entrusted us to preserve and share their stories so that what happened to them during WWII does not happen to anyone else. Holding our community's history with care and trust, amplifying unheard voices and untold stories, and connecting past and present to activate that history is both a privilege and a responsibility. But ultimately it's your support that allows us to continue this important work.

Please GiveBIG (or small — we're grateful for donations of any size!) to Densho between now and May 6th to help us keep Japanese American history alive for future generations.

[Give to  
Densho](#)



## Oral History Spotlight: Lawson Sakai

Lawson Sakai grew up in a farming family in Montebello, California. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, his family moved to Colorado to avoid mass removal. In 1943, Sakai volunteered for the army and joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team — although he had at first tried to join the navy. In this clip, he describes being rejected as a volunteer for the navy because of his Japanese ancestry.

>> [Watch the clip.](#)



## Densho in the News: NPR's Code Switch

Using data from the 1940 census, the U.S. military knew exactly where to find Japanese American families when the Army began removing 120,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast in 1942. Densho Executive Director Tom Ikeda explains these historic roots to contemporary fears around the misuse of Census data—particularly when it comes to immigrants and communities of color.

>> [Listen to the episode.](#)

EVERY FAMILY HAS A STORY. DISCOVER YOURS.

# FINDING YOUR NIKKEI ROOTS IN THE U.S. AND JAPAN

DIGITAL GENEALOGY SERIES WITH  
LINDA HARMS OKAZAKI AND DENSHO

Densho is pleased to announce a new digital genealogy series with Linda Harms Okazaki, noted expert in Japanese American genealogy. The first in the series of ten online sessions will be held on April 30, 2020 from 10 to 11a.m. PST. The entire series will be held on Zoom and advance registration is required for each session.

>> [Learn more and register.](#)

The San Jose JACL presents a

# Virtual Pilgrimage to Manzanar



The [51st Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage has been postponed](#) and the 2nd San Jose JACL Pilgrimage to Manzanar has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but on April 25th San Jose JACL will host a virtual journey to learn about the Japanese American World War II incarceration. The event will be entirely online and is free and open to the public.

>> [Learn more and register.](#)



OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE  
SEATTLE

## Thank you, City of Seattle!

Throughout the years The Seattle Office of Arts & Culture has provided support for Densho's monthly eNews, local events, and other core programs. The OAC continues to help local arts and culture organizations provide public benefit in creative and innovative ways as we all navigate these challenging times. A huge "Thank You" from all of us at Densho for this vital support!

>> [Learn more about the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture](#)

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