

From the Director: Tom Ikeda

Happy New Year!

The year 2009 was a busy, productive time for Densho. We stepped up our interview program and added 72 professionally conducted video oral histories to our website, a 70% increase from 2008. To broaden the content and geographic scope of our interviews, we significantly increased our travel to communities in California, Hawaii, Minnesota, and within Washington State. Densho will continue this momentum into 2010 so that we can offer close to 500 interviews for viewing in our online archive by the end of the year.

We also became more focused and intentional with our education program in 2009 by spending time with classroom teachers to learn how our materials can be made more effective for students. The results of these assessments will be a new teacher-resource CD featuring primary source materials and classroom activities around issues of the Constitution, critical thinking, and immigration. This CD will be given free of charge to thousands of teachers in 2010.

The coming year will also be a time for us to assess and redesign the Densho website. Our website was originally conceived and designed 10 years ago and continues to serve users well. However, much has changed with web technology and we want to improve how people find our materials; view video, photos, and documents; and share what they've learned with social networking tools. Our goal is to create a world-class reference and resource on the Japanese American experience that will serve generations to come.

Thank you to all our supporters and donors! Please drop me a line at tom.ikeda@densho.org if you have any questions, ideas, or comments about what we are doing. I enjoy and welcome the input.



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From the Archive

Beyond the Divide: Japanese American Responses to the "Loyalty Questionnaire"

"The government is asking... a father and a son who have different situations the same question, and on the basis of your answer your family might be broken up."

-- Frank Isamu Kikuchi

One of the most divisive legacies of the World War II incarceration remains the issue of loyalty. The loyal/disloyal divide continues to haunt the memory and interpretation of Japanese American history, as many in the community still grapple with what has become such a stigmatized and controversial label. This month we examine what scholar Eric Muller calls the "loyalty bureaucracy" - the registration and segregation program implemented within the camps to measure the "loyalty" of the imprisoned population. While Muller and other scholars have done important work in highlighting the absurdity of this premise, less explored are the varying ways in which Japanese Americans reacted to the



government's efforts. This article looks at the wrenching decisions Japanese Americans were forced to make during this time, understanding that these decisions were not expressions of "loyalty" or "disloyalty," but measured responses to difficult and often extreme circumstances.

>> [Read more of this article](#)

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Densho News

Technology Upgrade for Densho

Densho has been awarded a \$35,000 Heritage Facilities grant from 4Culture that will allow us to purchase and install two new computer servers to replace ten older, obsolete servers. This equipment controls the digital processing, organizing, and publishing of all of Densho's materials. The new computer servers will streamline our overall operation, greatly reduce our vulnerability to hardware failure, and bring us up-to-date with current technology. The machines take up less space and operate faster and more efficiently while consuming much less power. Thank you to 4Culture for helping Densho run a little greener.

>> [Learn more about 4Culture](#)



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Archive Spotlight

Chiyoko Yano: Kind Neighbors and a Full House

In an interview Densho recently conducted for the Topaz Museum, Chiyoko Yano recalls how her family fared better than many others when the order came to leave their home in spring 1942. In Berkeley, they were renting from an Italian family who felt sorry for their plight and let Chiyoko's father buy the house for a low price. Then their neighbors helped them pack and watched over the house for the nearly four years the family was detained at Topaz, Utah. At one point, as many as thirty people lived in their house, working different shifts at the shipyard. When Chiyoko's family was released, a neighbor met them at the station and brought them home. Unlike many returning Japanese Americans, they found the only damage to their possessions was normal wear and tear on the furniture. When Chiyoko moved away with her husband, her parents invited homeless Japanese Americans to live with them, even to stay for several years. In an excerpt from her interview, Chiyoko recalls her "very nice" neighbors.

>> [See the featured sample from the Densho Digital Archive](#)

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Recommended Resource

History Matters: Website for Educators

The website History Matters serves as a gateway to web resources and offers useful materials for teaching U.S. history. It was developed by the American Social History Project/Center for Media & Learning, City University of New York, and the Center for History and New Media, George Mason University. Over the past several years, History Matters has become a highly regarded reference tool and repository of teaching aids, first-person primary documents, and guides to analyzing historical evidence for high school and college students and teachers of American history. Densho has contributed a dozen



selections from our collection that are now included in the History Matters "Many Pasts" section of primary sources.

>> Visit the History Matters website

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