

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

Workshop 8: Preserving Your Family History
with Densho



Webinar Schedule

What to Preserve: Caitlin Oiye Coon, Digital Archivist

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How to Preserve: Micah Merryman, Digitization Technician

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How to Digitize: Sara Beckman, Assistant Digital Archivist

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Questions & Answers



What to Preserve: Myth vs Fact

➤ Myths:

- You have to keep everything
- It has to be old to be worthy of preservation

➤ Facts:

- Weeding helps find and preserve what is most important
- Your story today is your descendants' history tomorrow

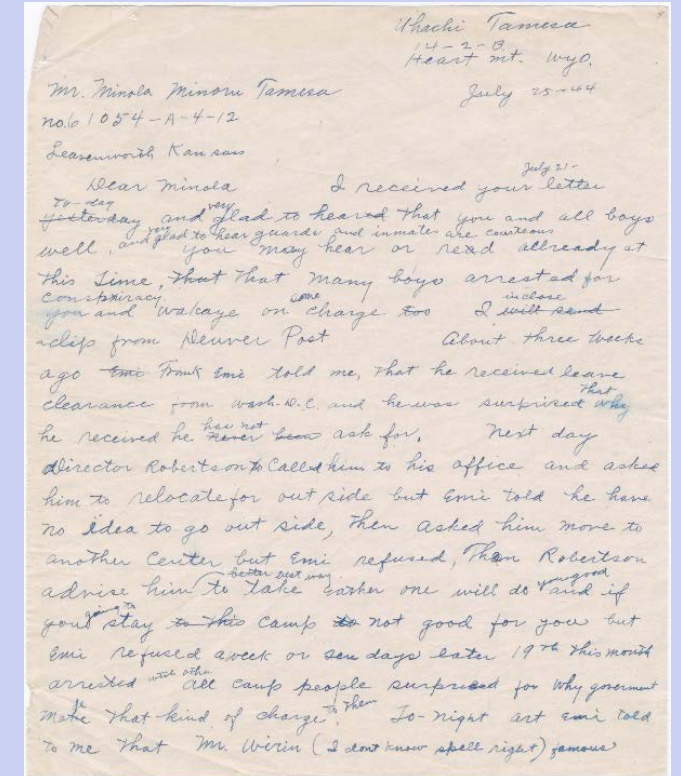


Courtesy of the Konishi Family, Densho
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What to Preserve: Materials

➤ Materials that are often kept:

- Photos, albums
- Scrapbooks
- Diaries
- Letters
- Important documents (ex. birth, death, marriage records, *koseki*, immigration records, etc.)
- Written family histories
- Born-digital photos and documents (ex. phone photos, email, blogs)
- Anything else that tells the story of your family



Courtesy of the Min & Uchichi Tamesa Collection, Densho
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What to Preserve: Options

- Four options to keep in mind with family archives:
 - Scan and keep
 - Scan and toss
 - Don't scan but keep
 - Don't scan and toss



Courtesy of the Fujii and Mori Families, Densho
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What to Preserve: ABCS of Sorting Photos

- A is for “album-worthy” – these are photos to be saved, digitized, backed-up, and shared with other relatives for safe-keeping.
- B is for “box” – these are photos that you save for the future in a container, such as acid-free boxes that protect against mold and moisture. These photos are not quite as important as “album-worthy” but still hold meaning or value to you and your family.
- C is for “can” – these are photos that can be trashed; often duplicates, blurry images, or photos with little impactful meaning (ex. food, unknown scenery, reminders).
- S is for “story” – these are photos that illustrate a significant memory. These photos should be put in a special container for later review. And make sure to write the story on a separate piece of paper before it is forgotten.

What to Preserve: Donation or Loan

➤ Thinking about donating family materials to collecting organizations?

- Each organization has its own requirements
- Each collection is evaluated on a case-by-case basis
- Resource for families thinking of donating materials

<https://www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures/donating-familyrecs>

- Densho is always looking for family collections to digitize

<https://densho.org/share-your-collections/>



Courtesy of Densho

How to Preserve: Storage, Part 1

- Store in a dark, temperature and humidity stable environment
 - Avoid attics, basements, crawl spaces, and garages
 - Store around 65 F and 50% relative humidity
- Light, moisture, and pests are the enemy of preservation
- Use lidded boxes to store belongings to easily keep them in the dark

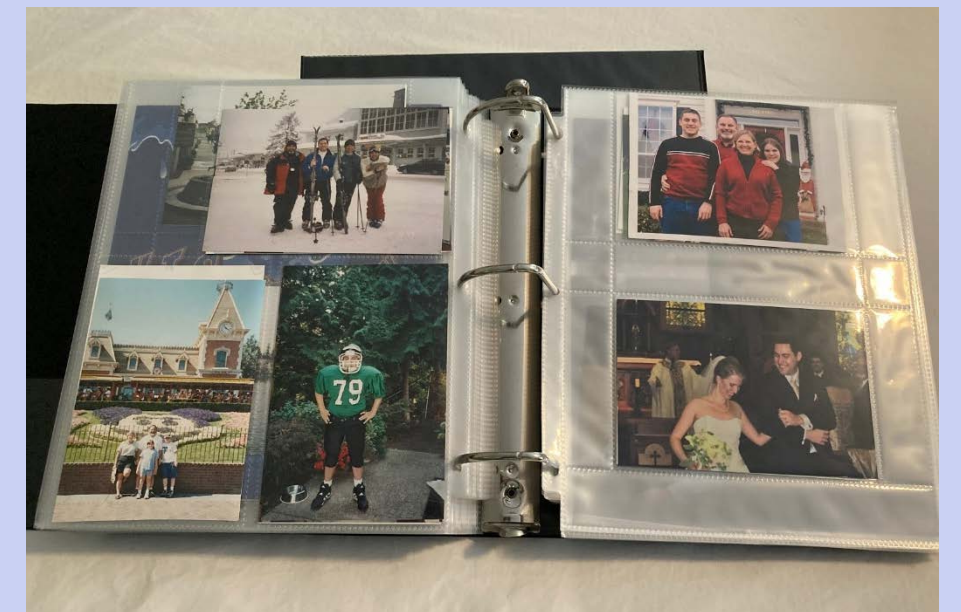


<https://www.archivalmethods.com/blog/preventing-light-damage/>

Accessed 24 Jul 2020

How to Preserve: Storage, Part 2

- Use acid-free, lignin-free materials as much as possible
 - Plastic sleeves in binders is a great alternative to folders and boxes
 - Look for materials made of polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polystyrene, acrylic, or inert polyester



How to Preserve: Storage, Part 3

- When storing 2D objects, make sure to store them flat, unfolded, and unrolled (if possible)
 - Remove all paper clips, staples, rubber bands, nails, etc.
 - Do not use any adhesives



Example of paper clip damage



<https://www.universityproducts.com/archival-storage/archival-storage-boxes>

Accessed 24 Jul 2020

How to Preserve: Storage, Part 4

➤ Photo albums

- Old photo albums should be stored flat, ideally in an acid-free, lidded box
- When making new albums, avoid adhesives and look for ones with acid-free pages



<https://www.archivalmethods.com/blog/preserving-photo-albums/>

Accessed 24 Jul 2020

How to Preserve: Handling

- Make sure the area you are working on is clean and the area free of dirt, pests, food, and liquids
- Wash your hands before, during and after handling materials
- Use gloves when handling photographs or negatives
 - Cotton, latex, or nitrile gloves are all great options and easily available
- Do not wear gloves when handling paper materials, just wash and dry your hands well before handling



Courtesy of the Kanzaki Family, Densho
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How to Preserve: Organization

- Sort by type, date, or subject
- Identify places, people, dates, and stories when able



Photo identification project, Japanese American Museum of Oregon, c. Oct 2013

<https://www.facebook.com/OregonNikkeiLegacyCenter/photos/a.10151844559329086/10151844566209086>

- Do not alter the documents or images, you can write on the back of photographs with a soft pencil (do not use ink)
- Do not use post-its, the adhesive is bad for the object and it will unstick in the long run
- Do use another sheet of paper to build your own catalog!

How to Digitize

- Plan your digitization project
 - Choose materials to scan
 - Equipment to use
 - Scanning standards to go by
 - Storing your digital content



Courtesy of the Konishi Family, Densho
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How to Digitize: Equipment



Courtesy of Amazon.com

How to Digitize: Standards

➤ While Scanning

- Scan in Color
- DPI – dots per inch

➤ Saving Files

- File types – TIFF, PDF, JPEG
- Use descriptive file & folder names



Courtesy of the Tamura Family, Densho
ddr-densho-124-21

How to Digitize: Editing Software



Photoshop



GIMP



Adobe Acrobat

How to Digitize: Storage

- Three copies – at least one in a different location



Questions?

