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
What to Preserve: Materials

- 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
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
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.

Developed by Cathi Nelson, CEO Association of Personal Photo Organizers (APPO), [https://www.cathinelson.com](https://www.cathinelson.com)
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/
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

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
How to Preserve: Organization

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

- 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
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
How to Digitize: Editing Software

Photoshop

GIMP

Adobe Acrobat

Courtesy of Wikipedia
How to Digitize: Storage

➢ Three copies – at least one in a different location
Questions?