

Friday, December 22, 2006 - 12:00 AM

Permission to reprint or copy this article or photo, other than personal use, must be obtained from The Seattle Times. Call 206-464-3113 or e-mail resale@seattletimes.com with your request.



JOHN LOK / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Densho is the brainchild of Tom Ikeda, a former Microsoft executive.

Editorial Saving Densho memories

History is stored mostly in books or behind glass enclosures, but an equally important part can be found in the memories of the people who lived it.

Capturing the oral tradition of history is the beauty of Densho, a digital storybook chronicling the Japanese-American internment during World War II. This is a project worth cheering and lending a helping hand.

Densho has amassed a huge digital archive of interviews and photographs of Japanese Americans during their incarceration. These firsthand accounts educate us. Because of the intimate nature of storytelling, they serve as an emotional connection between past and present.

The "sites of shame" Web site includes 69 facilities in the United States used to detain Japanese Americans during World War II.

The Densho Web site attracts 60,000 visitors annually and includes more than 4,000 photos, 400 hours of recordings, an educational curriculum and a multimedia exhibit in English and Japanese.

Densho is the brainchild of Tom Ikeda, a former Microsoft executive who in 1992 combined the emerging Internet with a desire to archive the experiences of Japanese Americans.

Ikeda and the cadre of volunteers at Densho have a goal to complete its visual history collection, including conducting 250 more interviews across the nation.

Memories fade. People grow old and die. The stories of one of America's most pivotal periods should not be lost forever.

Densho is the Japanese word meaning "to pass on to the future." By supporting this project, these stories can be passed on to future generations.

[Copyright © 2006 The Seattle Times Company](#)