

## *From the Director: Tom Ikeda*

Over the last few weeks Densho staff has been thinking a lot about creating a reference website about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. We want it to be educational, useful, simple to use, and able to expand and grow into the future. Our planning concept is an encyclopedia format. We will seek grant funding for this project.

I am excited about doing an online encyclopedia because 22 years ago I enjoyed working on the development of an early electronic encyclopedia called Microsoft Encarta. It was a huge undertaking but worthwhile, as it helped launch the multimedia industry. My hope for the new Densho encyclopedia is that it will launch an era of collaboration among Japanese American history scholars to help write the reference. I also hope the reference will create discussion and understanding in classrooms and around kitchen tables about what happened to Japanese Americans during World War II, and most important, help our country act thoughtfully when future crises of national security and civil liberties arise. Drop me a line at [tom.ikeda@densho.org](mailto:tom.ikeda@densho.org) and let me know what you think.



### IN THIS ISSUE

From the Archive  
Densho News  
Archive Spotlight  
National News and Events

## *From the Archive*

### **Japanese American Women Remember the World War II Incarceration**

*"We were asserting ourselves, letting the broader community know that we're not going to be just meek, intimidated."*

-- Lillian Nakano

Last month's eNews article tackled the difficult topic of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and its role in promoting a sanitized version of the World War II incarceration. In keeping with the theme of power and the historical record, this month's article concerns the marginalization of Japanese American women's voices in the archive. Japanese American history, with its emphasis on military service and, recently, draft resistance, leaves little room for the stories and experiences of women. Based on a series of oral history interviews, this article explores how memories of the incarceration shaped the lives of four Japanese American women in the years following World War II, illuminating the central, though largely unacknowledged, role of women in postwar Japanese American history. Far from silent, these women, in various ways, all drew on their experiences as a source of empowerment and means for enacting social change.

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

[to top](#)



## *Densho News*

### **Progress Report: Japanese American Confinement Sites Interviews**



Densho is hard at work collecting 40 new video life histories around the country as our interview team completes a \$112,500 grant from the Japanese American Confinement Sites program, administered by the National Park Service. Last week Executive Director Tom Ikeda and Production Manager Dana Hoshide conducted 5 interviews in Los Angeles. Those will be added to another 12 produced in 2009 with this grant funding in California. The balance of the Confinement Sites interviews will be recorded in Hawaii among other locations. (Additional new Densho interviews are supported by different funding sources.) The Confinement Sites interviews will round out the geographic and demographic diversity of the collection, and capture stories of less documented detention sites, such as the Department of Justice internment camps at Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Bismarck, North Dakota.

>> [Read about the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program](#)



## Oral History on HistoryLink

HistoryLink, the free online encyclopedia for Washington State, has begun to add audio oral histories to selected biographical articles. Densho donated audio clips from our 1998 interview with Floyd Schmoe, a lifelong pacifist who worked tirelessly to help those afflicted by war and injustice. We interviewed him one year before his death at the age of 103. A sixth-generation Quaker, Floyd helped war victims in France as a conscientious objector in World War I, and during World War II, he dedicated his full-time efforts to assisting Japanese Americans who were sent to what he called concentration camps. After the bombing of Hiroshima, the "rabid pacifist," as the FBI designated him, raised money and traveled to Japan to build houses for homeless victims of the atomic bomb.

>> [Go to the HistoryLink essay](#)



[to top](#)

## Archive Spotlight

### Cedric Shimo: "I'll Die Fighting for Defending the Camps"

A recent Densho interview is with Cedric Shimo, an Army veteran who had been promoted to corporal before being demoted to private for an act of protest. After receiving a draft notice one day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he joined the Military Intelligence Service. Cedric was denied furlough to visit his mother in the Manzanar, California, incarceration camp because the territory was off limits to Japanese Americans. In anger, Cedric refused to be deployed overseas with his unit until civil liberties were restored. For punishment, he was placed in the 1800 Engineering Battalion, made up of Japanese, German and Italian Americans considered "suspect" by the U.S. government. After World War II, Cedric became the vice president of the export division for Honda, and dedicated much of his time to promoting better trade relations between the U.S. and Japan. In the excerpt from his interview, Cedric gives a surprising answer to a security clearance question.

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



[to top](#)

## National News and Events

### Casting Call for Japanese Mini-Series

In March, Japanese TV producers will hold auditions in Seattle for a couple of minor roles in a mini-series to be broadcast in



Japan. Shooting is scheduled for May 16 in Seattle. The drama follows a Japanese American family from their immigration to the United States, through hardships during World War II, to their lives today.

Audition Dates: March 8 (Mon.) and March 9 (Tues.)

Union Status: This is a non-union job.

Shoot Date: May 16 (Sun.) in Seattle, subject to change

Role: Japanese American Boy

Age: 15-17

Skill: English speaking, conversational Japanese a plus

Role: Japanese American Girl

Age: 12-15

Skill: English speaking, conversational Japanese a plus

Please send your resume and headshots and indicate which date you are available to audition.

Email photos and information to [jaminitv@gmail.com](mailto:jaminitv@gmail.com)



## The Art of Gaman: Exhibition at Renwick Gallery

The Smithsonian American Art Museum presents *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942-1946* at its branch museum for craft and decorative arts, the Renwick Gallery, from March 5 through January 30, 2011. The exhibition features more than 120 handcrafted objects made by Japanese Americans while held in detention camps during World War II. These objects--tools, teapots, furniture, toys and games, musical instruments, pendants and pins, purses and ornamental displays--are physical manifestations of *gaman*, meaning "to bear the seemingly unbearable with dignity and patience." The exhibition presents historical context through archival photographs, artifacts, and documentary films. The exhibition is organized by San Francisco-based author and guest curator Delphine Hirasuna, and is based on her 2005 book *The Art of Gaman*.

>> [See more information](#)



[to top](#)

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