

From the Director: Tom Ikeda

I am so grateful for the work and commitment of social studies teachers. Through their creativity and efforts, students can look at historical events to gain perspective and insight for current events. For example, after 9/11, social studies teachers wanted to explore the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans to help students examine how our country might react to a national threat. We started seeing a handful of teachers visit our site, and gradually through outreach, word of mouth, and reputation we now have hundreds of teachers who visit our website every month to use our free primary sources and curricula.

A strategic goal of Densho is to make our materials more valuable, more accessible, and more engaging for teachers to use in the classroom. We want thousands of educators to visit our site every month. We believe teachers are the critical link to help students grapple with difficult, controversial issues. So say "thank you" the next time you meet a social studies teacher, and please tell them about Densho. Their guidance of students to analyze and think critically about issues helps to advance our democracy.

Late-breaking news -- President Obama signed this week an omnibus lands bill that authorizes a special resources study of the Tule Lake Segregation Center. The study is to determine the feasibility of establishing Tule Lake as a unit of the National Park Service. This is the same process that eventually led to establishing Manzanar and Minidoka as National Historic Sites. Thank you to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein for her work to make this happen.



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From the Archive

Incalculable Losses: Japanese American Financial Damages

"I got a thousand dollars for things that I lost, but that is such a small amount for the loss that I had, because I lost everything."

-- Peggie Nishimura Bain

In these times of economic woes, we stop to reflect on how much better Japanese Americans would fare in a recession if their families had not suffered such severe economic losses during World War II. While former detainees succeeded remarkably well at gaining financial security, despite the years of setbacks, stories in Densho's archives raise example after example of potential fortunes lost. Prosperous malls, condos, and suburban developments stand on land once farmed by Japanese Americans. Densho narrators ruefully remind us of how the property changed hands.

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

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Densho News

Densho Poll: Focusing on Education



This month's Densho survey invites you to share your education priorities and suggestions. In past focus groups and casual conversations, supporters have told us that beyond preserving life stories of Japanese Americans, Densho should reach out and educate the public about the injustices they endured during World War II. Education has always been at the core of our work. This year we are evaluating the social studies lessons we've created. We recruited a dozen elementary, middle, and high school teachers from eight Washington school districts to teach and assess three social studies curriculum units: on constitutional issues, immigration conflicts, and media analysis. The feedback and student work they submit at the end of this school year will help us improve the Densho civil liberties curriculum for future classroom use.

Here are the results for the March poll on favorite Japanese American actors:

"Paving the Way"

1. Pat Morita
2. Mako
- 3 Jack Soo

"Going Strong"

1. George Takei
2. Tamlyn Tomita
3. James Shigeta

"Fresh Faces"

1. Masi Oka
2. Suzy Nakamura
3. Christine Toy Johnson

A characteristic response to the question as to whether Asian American actors have escaped stereotyping is this: "Racial stereotypes in the entertainment industry die hard. The women are still cast as exotic sex objects and the men are nerdy brainiacs." We hope the younger generation of Japanese American actors will see a richer choice of roles.

>> [Take the education survey](#)



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New to the Archive

Look inside the Archive: A Traumatic Memory

This month's sample of the Densho Digital Archive is excerpted from a recent interview with Aya Uenishi Medrud. Raised in Seattle, Aya relocated to Utica, New York, after being released from the Minidoka incarceration center. She worked in Japan for the U.S. Army of Occupation, and for the Tokyo General Army Hospital during the Korean War. As a Quaker and pacifist, Aya now does community work with civic organizations in Boulder, Colorado. In the clip featured on the "About the Archive" webpage, Aya describes a traumatic episode she experienced after visiting wounded Nisei soldiers.

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



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National News and Events

"Outside Inside" Lectures at University of Oregon

The University of Oregon, Eugene, will present the Joel Yamauchi Lecture Series "Outside Inside." Four talks will examine the legal, social, and cultural implications of the Japanese American incarceration in the Pacific Northwest. Lecture dates are April 8, April 15, May 6, and June 3. The



speakers are Tetsuden Kashima, Professor of American Ethnic Studies, University of Washington; Peggy Nagae, lead attorney in *Yasui v. United States*; three Nisei alumni of the University of Oregon and a 442nd veteran; and Wendy Janssen, National Park Service Superintendent, Minidoka National Historic Site. The events are free and members of the general public are welcome.

>> [Read more about the lectures](#)



Founding Event: Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality

On Saturday, April 18, Seattle University School of Law will host an all-day conference, "Looking Back, Reaching Forward," to celebrate the founding of its new Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality. The center advocates for social equity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, disability, age, and religion. Participants in the event will include members of the Korematsu family and the legal teams for the Korematsu, Hirabayashi, and Yasui *coram nobis* cases. The sessions will look back on the historic struggle for equality, focusing on the World War II Japanese American incarceration cases, and will bring together advocacy groups and academics to forge partnerships in pursuit of equality. Reservations are required; please respond by April 8.

>> [Read more and make a reservation](#)



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