



REEL NIKKEI STORIES: Nikkei Family Legacy Project

A project of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California

REEL NIKKEI STORIES: Nikkei Family Legacy Project (NFLP) is a project designed to empower the Yonsei and younger generations with the confidence, the training and the tools to interview, permanently document and share the untold stories of their parents, grandparents and great grandparents, before their family histories are lost forever.

Included in this CD are instructions on “How To” create your Nikkei Family Legacy Project:

- Interviewing Tips and Sample Questions
- Recoding Sound/Audio for Video
- Lighting for Video
- Using the Camera
- Editing Using iMovie
- Online Resource Guide



You can use both the written documents in this CD, as well as the accompanying DVD instructions to help you create your project.

The instructional videos can also be found online at <http://reelnikkeistories.magnify.net/> along with other completed family history projects. Once you have completed your project, we encourage you to upload your family story to share with others.

If you would like to create or interview a parent or grandparent and do not have access to a video camera, please contact the JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505 or email: programsevents@jcccnc.org.

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For additional information on the NFLP, please contact the JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505 or email programsevents@jcccnc.org



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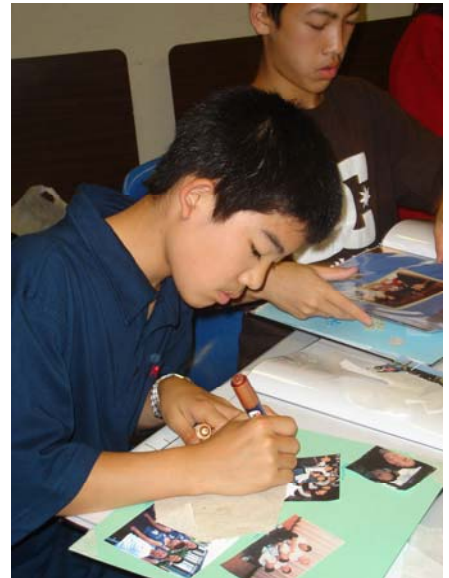
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About the Nikkei Family Legacy Project

As a result of the signing of Executive Order 9066 in 1942, the lives of over 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living in the United States were forever changed. Although many documentaries, books and oral histories have been produced and written to preserve this important piece of history, for thousands of Japanese American families their stories still remain untold and undocumented. These stories are not necessarily of the more famous Nisei, but rather that of the ordinary person: the farmer, the shopkeeper, the housewife, the gardener, the car mechanic, whose experience with being interned remains locked in their memories. In many cases, these stories have not been shared with their own children and grandchildren. By training our youth to interview and document their family's experiences, we will be able to share many untold stories, engage youth to take an active role in learning about their family history, create a dialogue between generations, document the Japanese American experiences and preserve our Nikkei history.

The **NFLP goal** is to enable younger generations of Japanese Americans to capture the stories of their Nisei living relatives now in an effort to gain more understanding and appreciation of our Nikkei history. We have done this by:

1. Creating a user-friendly **toolkit** with interview questions and techniques developed by some of the most prominent Japanese American journalists in the field today.
2. Hosting **workshops** to train young students to conduct personal, culturally sensitive interviews, video their families and create their Nikkei Family Legacy.
3. Creating a NFLP **website** that will give millions of people access to these youth-created videos and the downloadable toolkit for others to use.
4. Hosting a **community event** to screen the youth-made documentaries.



EMPOWERING YOUTH

While the NFLP will provide training, guidance and resources, ultimately the youth will have the creative responsibility to produce their family legacy projects. They will take the initiative to manage, research, film and edit their projects. They will learn about their family history, create a tool that will teach others about this important time in American history, all while gaining technological and leadership skills. In doing so, these young Nikkei will also realize the great responsibility their generation has in perpetuating our Nikkei history.



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SHARING UNTOLD STORIES

What better way to teach the Japanese American experience than to involve younger generations of Japanese Americans in a very personal way. The injustices that were inflicted on the Nisei generation have not been adequately documented; there are thousands of stories waiting to be told. The NFLP will enable us to document these untold stories and create a dialogue between family members, and between generations. By gaining a multitude of perspectives on this experience we will have a better understanding and appreciation for this important time in our history. And more importantly, the Yonsei and Gosei will understand their family history in the context of the wartime experience of all Japanese Americans.



Through the NFLP, hundreds of untold histories will be passed on from one generation to another. Histories untold will become living history and living history will become real history to an entirely new generation. Young Nikkei will learn about their families' experiences and how it impacted their lives. We will have a collection of personal stories told memorialized in a digital format to share and educate generations to come.

If history becomes real to a person, it empowers them and lives through them and then can be passed on from generation to generation.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT

Discovering family history is a great way to teach children and young people history locally, nationally and internationally, it provides a sense that history is real, it's my history!

Maureen Taylor internationally recognized expert on family histories and author of, "Through the Eyes of Your Ancestors"

We are losing hundreds of Nisei history every year. If it is not being captured, it is lost forever. The NFLP hopes to capture the stories that still remain, and teach young people to document and share them. If history becomes real to a person, it empowers them and lives through them and then can be passed on from generation to generation.



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In her book, Through the Eyes of Your Ancestors, internationally recognized expert on family histories Maureen Taylor wrote:

I interviewed professional genealogists and friends to find out about their childhood experiences with family histories. They told me two things. First, that they found family history fascinating as young people but didn't know how to go further with it, and second, that their grandparents played a pivotal role in their future as genealogists. Think of all the interviews that I could have conducted with relatives that are no longer alive. My grandmother never talked about her family, and I've been stuck on her parents for decades. If only I'd known what to ask. Perhaps that brick wall wouldn't exist.

Curious young people hit the "brick wall" because they do not know how to ask the right questions. Currently, there is no method, curriculum, or teaching guide for young people and specifically young Nikkei, who want to learn more about their family history. Often times when Nisei are asked questions about the internment camp experience by their children they respond by saying, "It wasn't that bad," or, "Let's talk about something else." The NFLP will teach young people how to go beyond questions and begin the dialogue on a painful memory, thereby instilling a greater sense of understanding and appreciation of one's history.

THE URGENCY OF THIS PROJECT

According to the U.S. Census data, the Nisei generation comprises the largest aging group of any ethnic group in the United States; most of them are now in their mid 80's. No other ethnic group in American history will lose an entire generation as quickly as the Japanese American community. This is primarily due to the immigration laws that restricted Japanese women from immigrating to America and the California Alien Laws of 1913 and 1920, which essentially halted further immigration until after World War II.

If we fail to document them now, we will lose hundreds of important first-hand stories and generations of Japanese Americans will only know Japanese American history from what they read in books. These Nisei are walking history lessons, they lived through an important chapter in U.S. history and their lives were forever changed by it. They are the last link to our Issei ancestry and Japanese roots.

***We don't have tomorrow;
we must act today before the Nisei stories all but slip away***

