

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

RESEARCH GUIDES

JAPANESE AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA



[VISIT US](#)

California History Section

900 N Street Room 200

9:30-4 Monday-Friday

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Are you researching your Japanese American ancestry? Are you curious about the Japanese contribution to California's farming industry? Maybe you're writing a paper on the Japanese American internment in California. Regardless of your interests, you can explore the extensive history of Japanese Americans in California via the [California History Section's](#) rich collections!

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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!

DIGITIZED RESOURCES

Can't come to the library just yet? No worries! There are a number of online resources you can explore related to California's Japanese Americans!



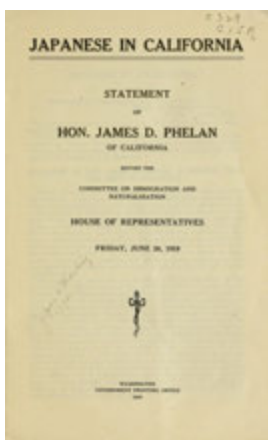
[Digitized Images](#)

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including images related to California's Japanese Americans. You can see them on Calisphere!



URL: <https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/>

Type in Subject Box: Japanese



[Digitized Publications](#)

A few years ago we digitized some of our more fragile resources on California's Japanese Americans. You can see them on Internet Archive!

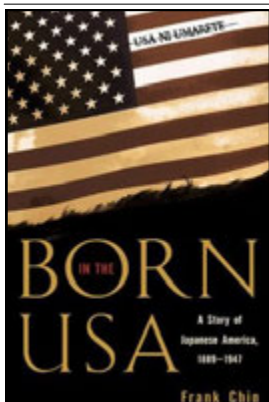


URL: <https://archive.org/>

Type in Search Box: Japanese AND collection:(californiastatelibrary)&sin=TEXT
Select Option: "Search full text of books"

BOOKS

Unsure about where to start? Consult a book! These works provide overviews of Japanese American history in California as well as period-specific information.



Chin, F. (2002). [Born in the USA](#). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

How does a community deal with injustice? This edited collection of primary sources and oral histories documents the different ways in which Japanese Americans and community organizations wrestled with prejudice and the outright denial of civil rights over a fifty year period.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001211726



O'Brien, D., & Fugita, S. (1991). [The Japanese American experience](#). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

A high level overview of Japanese-American history, this book covers everything from the early large-scale Japanese migrations to America in the 1880's through to affirmative action in the 1980's.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000594779



Hosokawa, B. (1969). [Nisei: The quiet Americans](#). New York: W. Morrow.

This older book relates the history of second generation Japanese Americans from the days of the Wakamatsu colony, through internment and up to the 1960s.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000968077

BOOKS

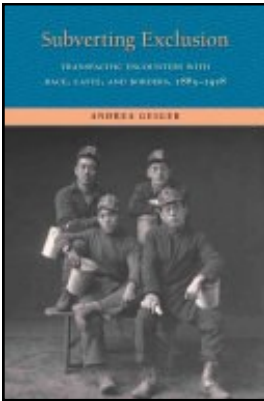


Dempster, B., et. al. (2011). [Making home from war : Stories of Japanese American exile and resettlement.](#) Berkeley: Heyday.

How does one rebuild a life interrupted? This edited collection of memoirs reveals how Japanese -Americans faced and overcame the immense challenges of starting over after internment.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001445708



Geiger, A. (2011). [Subverting exclusion : Transpacific encounters with race, caste, and borders, 1885-1928.](#) New Haven: Yale University Press.

A look at early Japanese immigration to America from the perspective of caste, this book discusses how Japanese cultural mores both informed and complicated the manner in which the Issei dealt with xenophobia.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001453919



Daniels, R. (1989). [American concentration camps.](#) New York: Garland.

This 9 volume set contains a carefully edited collection of documents showing the evolution of government policy on the Japanese-American internment from 1941-1945.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000542906

PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS

Want real-time accounts of Japanese-California history? At our library, you can read newspapers and periodicals documenting California history from a Japanese American point of view!



[Nikkan shinsekai = Japanese daily new world.](#)

A turn-of-the-century Japanese language newspaper, this publication is filled with information that was of interest to the Japanese-American community in Oakland at that time.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001002195



[Internment Camp Newspapers](#)

A vital source of information, our extensive collection of internment camp newspapers document ordinary life for people trapped in circumstances that were far from ordinary.



URL: [http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=WSU=\(newspapers evacuation\)](http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=WSU=(newspapers%20evacuation))



[Asian Week](#)

A pan-Asian periodical, this magazine covers over 30 years worth of topics of interest to both the Japanese American community in California as well as the broader Asian American community.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000136743

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

In addition to periodicals, we have manuscript collections that focus specifically on Japanese American history. Here are some selected collections at the State Library.



[Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu papers.](#)

A ground-breaking legal case, this collection documents Fred Korematsu's legal challenge of the government's ability to target an ethnic group for internment and the eventual overturning of his conviction.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001550701



[Tule Lake Collections](#)

Three separate collections all related to the Tule Lake internment camp, these papers include ephemera, art, official notices, block activity documents and even photographs.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D000544794 OR SYS%3D000557855 OR SYS%3D000972269



[James Purcell Collection](#)

A lawyer who represented several Japanese-Americans who fought the internment in various ways including Mitsuye Endo and Fred Korematsu, this collection contains several boxes related to internment litigation.



URL: http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=SYS%3D001517880

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

In addition to its other resources, the California History Section has several special collections devoted to aspects of Japanese American history and culture. Here are three stand-out ones:



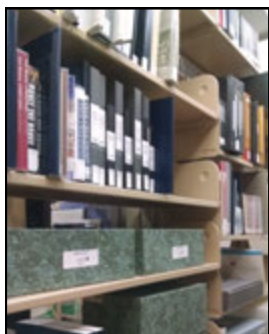
[Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records](#)

With documentation on several camps and assembly centers, as well as information regarding public opinion, this extensive albeit challenging to use microfilm set is a must-see.



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-b-0>

Type in Search Box: “Japanese Evacuation and Resettlement Records”



[California Civil Liberties Public Education Program](#)

The results of a grant funded project designed to document and educate the public about the Japanese internment, this collection contains a large number of oral histories.



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-b-0>

Type in Search Box: “California Civil Liberties”



[Japanese Pamphlets](#)

A set of primary source pamphlets documenting the controversy over Japanese immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These papers reveal the attitudes that Japanese Americans encountered when they came to California. The collection is also available on Internet Archive.



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-a-0>

Type in Title Box: Japanese Pamphlets

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS

While many of our materials are online, even more are only in hard-copy. You can use the following resources to learn about our books, articles, and manuscripts on Japanese Americans



[Catalog](#)

If you are looking for [images](#), [books](#) and [articles](#) on Japanese Americans, your best source is our [catalog](#).



URL: <http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/?func=find-b-0>

Type in Subject Box: (Japanese)

Limit: By place



[California Information File II](#)

Sometimes the catalog doesn't provide as much detail as you might like. This is why we created the California Information File II. In this resource, you can find catalog records on individual articles, pamphlets and more.




URL: http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm

Type in Subject Box: Japanese

For a narrower search: Add a place to your keyword search

GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS



The screenshot shows a search interface for "City and County Directories". It includes a header with the title and a background image of a city skyline. Below the header, there is a search instruction: "Enter one or more search terms. The more terms you enter, the fewer results you will get." and a tip: "To search for a range of years, type a colon between the years, e.g., 1940-1950." The search form contains several fields: "County", "City", "Year", "Title", "Author", "Publisher", and "Material type". Each field has a small "x" icon to the right. At the bottom, there are "Advanced Search" and "Search" buttons, and a help icon.

City Directories

Looking for a person? You can trace this information via our city directories! See what we have by checking our specialized database.



URL: http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCityDir.htm

Type in Search Box:

1. Location



The screenshot shows a search interface for "Telephone Directories". It includes a header with the title and a background image of a telephone keypad. Below the header, there is a search instruction: "Type in the city or county. If you get too many results, add the year to your search." and a tip: "To search for a date range, type a colon between the first and last years, e.g., 1940-1950." The search form contains several fields: "Location-White Pages", "Location-Yellow Pages", "Year", and "Material type". Each field has a small "x" icon to the right. At the bottom, there are "Advanced Search" and "Search" buttons, and a help icon.

Telephone Books

Are you not finding what you need in our city directory collection? No worries, you might find it in our telephone book collection. See what we have by checking our phone book database.



URL: http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryPhonebk.htm

Type in Search Box:

1. Location

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

California's Japanese Americans contribute in a myriad of ways to this state. While these catalog links barely scrape the surface of this history, they provide a good overview.



COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Researching Japanese American history in a specific region?
While these catalog links don't list all that the California History
Section has, they are a good starting point.



ON-SITE RESEARCH RESOURCES

Our collection predates computers and so do some of our access points! If you are in the library, be sure to check the following analog files for leads on more resources.



California Information File

In the library? Check the California Information File before you do anything else! This file indexes over 130 years of California articles, books, and manuscript collections related to individuals active in California.



Subject Headings:

- Japanese in California



Photographic File

Sometimes a picture is worth a 1000 words and not all of our pictures are online. To check the rest of the collection, search our picture file.



Subject Headings:

- Portraits: Individuals by Name
- Japanese in California

OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about any information related to Japanese Americans in the following files:



Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including Japanese Americans. You can check them for information on organizations, event pamphlets and more.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians.



Postcard Files

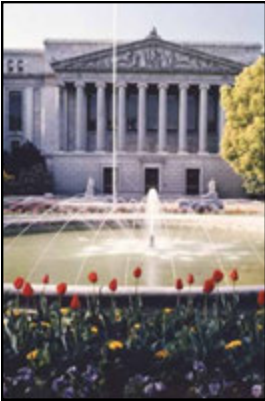
Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images of Japanese Americans. Most are not online.



Subject Headings: Check with librarians

OTHER PLACES TO LOOK

Of course the California History Section doesn't have everything, so we suggest that in addition to looking at our collections, you contact the following organizations



Other California State Library Sections

[Government Publications Section](#)
[Witkin Law Library](#)
[Sutro Library](#)
[General Information](#)



URLs:

- <http://www.library.ca.gov/government-publications/>
 - <http://www.library.ca.gov/law/>
 - <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/>
 - <http://www.library.ca.gov/services>
-



Other Government Agencies

[California State Archives](#)
[California Museum](#)
[California State Parks](#)

Local California libraries or archives



URLs:

- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
 - <http://www.californiamuseum.org/>
 - <https://www.parks.ca.gov/>
-



Other Organizations

[Japanese American Citizens League](#)
[Japanese American National Museum](#)
[Japanese American History Archives](#)



URLs:

- <https://jacl.org/>
 - <http://www.janm.org/visit/>
 - <http://amacord.com/fillmore/museum/jt/jaha/jaha.html>
-



CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

California History Section
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This guide is also available online at:
<http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/>