INVENTORY OF THE NINOMIYA PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO COLLECTION, 1949-1970

Finding aid prepared by Karen Clemons  
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URL: http://www4.csudh.edu/libarchives/index  
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Descriptive Summary
Title: Ninomiya Photography Studio Collection
Dates: 1949-1970
Date (bulk): 1950-1959
Collection Number: Consult repository.
Creator: Ninomiya Family
Extent: 30 linear ft.
Repository: California State University, Dominguez Hills Archives and Special Collections

Abstract: This collection contains 30 linear feet photographs from the Ninomiya Photography Studio that was located in the Little Tokyo district of downtown Los Angeles, California. Consisting of both prints and negatives, this collection contains images that document Japanese American communities in the aftermath of World War II. Images include: family and individual portraits, passport photographs, images of the architecture of Los Angeles and Little Tokyo including cityscapes and the surrounding landscapes, images of parades in Little Tokyo, community groups and activities such as conventions and meetings, Nisei Week, images of members of the military, church and Buddhist temple groups, beauty queen contestants, women in traditional Japanese clothing, sporting events such as judo, and images taken at weddings and funerals. Also included are copy negatives of older photographs from the pre-war era in Los Angeles, scenes capturing businesses in Little Tokyo, and businessmen having discussions.

Language: Collection material is in English
Access
There are no access restrictions on this collection.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[Title of item], NINOMIYA PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO COLLECTION, Courtesy of the Department of Archives and Special Collections. University Library. California State University, Dominguez Hills

Acquisition Information
Donated by Michael Risner in 2016.

History
The Ninomiya Photograph Studio was founded by Kinso Ninomiya (1894-1966) during the 1920s in the thriving immigrant community of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles. Kinso came from Hiroshima prior to World War I, married Kiyo Ninomiya (b. 1907) in the late 1920s and had four children before 1940. With the onset of World War II and the anti-Japanese sentiment in California and the U.S., the Ninomiya Family was sent to the War Relocation Authority Incarceration camp in Poston Arizona. The studio was shuttered and disappeared. During World War II, African Americans with few options for housing moved into Little Tokyo and it became known as Bronzeville. After the war, many Japanese Americans came back to Little Tokyo and built the enclave into a functioning community, but it did not thrive as much as it had in the 1930s. Nonetheless, the presence of an array of businesses and restaurants in the area continued to draw Japanese Americans and others to Little Tokyo, even if they had settled elsewhere in the Greater Los Angeles area after incarceration.

The Ninomiya Family returned to Little Tokyo after the war and revived their family photograph business. Elwin Ichiro Ninomiya (1929-2009) operated the photo studio with his father, Kinso. The former Ninomiya storefront located at 353 East 1st Street, is less than a block away from the Japanese American National Museum, the Go For Broke National Education Center, and the Go For Broke Monument dedicated to Japanese Americans who fought in World War II.

Scope and Content
This collection contains 30 linear feet photographs from the Ninomiya Photography Studio that was located in the Little Tokyo district of downtown Los Angeles, California. Consisting of both prints and negatives, this collection contains images that document Japanese American communities in the aftermath of World War II. Images include: family and individual portraits, passport photographs, images of Los Angeles and Little Tokyo’s architecture including cityscapes and the surrounding landscapes, images of parades in Little Tokyo, community groups and activities such as conventions and meetings, Nisei Week, images of members of the military, church and Buddhist temple groups, beauty queen contestants, women in traditional Japanese clothing, sporting events such as judo, and images taken at weddings and funerals. Also included are some copy negatives of photographs from and of pre-war Japan and pre-war Los Angeles, scenes capturing businesses in Little Tokyo, and businessmen having discussions.

This collection also includes 28 circuit film negatives or panoramic negatives featuring images of family gatherings at funerals.

Subjects
Japanese Americans
Japanese American families
Japanese Americans-California
Japanese Americans-Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
Japanese Americans-California-Los Angeles-1940-1950

Personal Names
Ninomiya, Kinso
Ninomiya, Elwin

Geographic Areas
Little Tokyo (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Los Angeles (Calif.)

Related Material
A collection of Ninomiya family correspondence regarding their experiences in the United States during 1920-1945.