

## **Kondo Family Papers**

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## Kondo Family Papers

### Collection number: 99.334

Japanese American National Museum  
Los Angeles, California

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Kondo Family papers

**Dates:** circa 1912-1980

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1942-1945)

**Collection number:** 99.334

**Creator:** Kondo Family

**Collection Size:** 0.5 linear ft.

**Repository:** Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**Abstract:** This collection contains more than 50 letters written by Yasaku Kondo and his children Henry Kondo and Yuri Kondo Morimoto during World War II. The letters between Henry Kondo and Yasaku Kondo were written from 1943 to 1944, and letters from Yuri Kondo Morimoto to her husband Frank Morimoto were written in 1942. Photographs and ephemera from the pre-war period document life in Pasadena, California and include a number of panoramic images. There are also a number of photographs and postcards from the post-war period. There are several legal documents relating to economic losses stemming from World War II forced incarceration.

**Physical location:** Japanese American National Museum 100 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012

### Access

By appointment only. Please Contact the Collections Management and Access Unit by email ([collections@janm.org](mailto:collections@janm.org)) or telephone (213-830-5615).

### Publication Rights

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### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Kondo Family papers. 99.334, Japanese American National Museum. Los Angeles, CA.

### Biography / Administrative History

Yasaku Kondo (1887-1963) emigrated from Niigata-ken to the United States in 1905 and settled in Pasadena, California, where he lived in a boarding house with other single Japanese men and worked as a laborer packing oranges. He eventually became a strawberry farmer and married Kiyomi Ichise (1899-1983), who immigrated to the United States in 1916. They became florists and continued to make their home in Pasadena, where they raised four children, Yuri (1917- ), Misa (1919- ), Henry (1921-1944) and Harvey Tsuneo (1923-1988).

As a teenager, Yuri Kondo participated in the YWCA Girls Reserve and Adelprians, two social clubs active before the war. She attended Pasadena Junior College (now Pasadena City College) from 1934 to 1935 and planned to attend USC to study music in the hope of becoming a piano teacher. Her studies were curtailed by the wartime removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Yuri married Frank Morimoto (1915-2006) of Monrovia, California, in 1941. Frank's father was the proprietor of a fruit market and Frank was the fifth of eight children.

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Frank Morimoto enlisted in the army before the war and intended to serve for one year. When war broke out, his service was extended to five years. Yuri initially stayed in Pasadena while Frank was in training, and eventually the couple moved to Fort Custer, Michigan, where Frank was stationed for additional training. When Frank was deployed with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in 1944, Yuri took their new baby and joined her parents in Gila River Relocation Center, Arizona. In letters from Yasaku to Henry, it appears that they were the only ones in the family to spend the war at Gila River and that Misa and Harvey also moved elsewhere. Yuri left Gila River as soon as the West Coast reopened to Japanese Americans in 1945.

Henry Kondo volunteered for the army in 1943 and served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He was killed in action in France on October 19th, 1944, liberating Bruyeres and Biffontaine in the Vosges Mountains, days prior to the famed rescue of the "Lost Battalion" of Texans.

Yasaku and Kiyomi Kondo and Frank and Yuri Morimoto eventually returned to Southern California after the war and settled in Monrovia. Frank Morimoto became an aeronautical engineer, building jet engines and delta rockets, while Yuri stayed home and raised their four daughters.

Yuri Morimoto has been a longtime supporter of the museum and has donated correspondence, photographs and ephemera. There are several other collections from Yuri Morimoto in the museum collections. They can be found under the following ID numbers: 89.18, 99.202, 2000.289, 2000.312, 2001.6, 2001.116, 2001.261, 2001.284, 2002.40, 2003.33, and 2004.40.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

This collection contains correspondence, photographs, legal documents and ephemera. It is divided into four series: Correspondence, Legal Documents and Correspondence, Photographs, and Ephemera.

Series 1: Correspondence (2 folders) This series is divided into two subseries. The first contains personal letters between Henry Kondo and his father written from 1943 to 1944, when Henry was in the army and his parents were in Gila River Relocation Center. The second is comprised of personal letters from Yuri Kondo Morimoto to her husband Frank Morimoto, all written in 1942 shortly after Frank joined the army.

Series 2: Legal Documents (1 folder) This series contains a detailed Economic Loss Survey of Pacific Evacuees form, attorney correspondence from 1949, and a copy of the court statement. It also contains several documents and correspondence from the war years relating to monetary compensation and real estate transactions.

Series 3: Photographs (11 folders) This series is divided into three subseries. The first series consists of portraits and photographs given to the family during the pre-war years. The second series consists of pre- and post-war family photographs. Included among these are several formal group photographs from Pasadena Union Presbyterian Church and Altadena Presbyterian, Lincoln Elementary School, and women's clubs. The third series consists of pre-war panoramic photographs documenting groups and activities such as a funeral, Niigata kenjinkai picnic lunches, church anniversaries, and both public school and Japanese school groups.

Series 4: Ephemera This series includes a fan, a wall hanging, books, photocopies of magazine articles and several phonograph records.

### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Kondo Family

Kondo, Yasaku

Kondo, Kiyomi

Kondo, Henry M.

Morimoto, Yuri

Japanese Americans--Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945.

Japanese Americans

World War II

Japanese American soldiers

Camp Shelby (Miss.)

Fort Custer (Mich.)

United States. Army. Regimental Combat Team, 442nd

Gila River Relocation Center

Pasadena (Calif.)

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**Related Material**

Yuri Morimoto has donated several other collections. They can be found under the following ID numbers: 89.18, 99.202, 2000.289, 2000.312, 2001.6, 2001.116, 2001.261, 2001.284, 2002.40, 2003.33, and 2004.40

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