

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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Preserving California's Japantowns Symposium – “Documenting Our Communities, History, Culture, Stories, & Sites” Workshop

SAN FRANCISCO (June 2, 2006) – Preserving California's Japantowns, the first statewide project to document historic resources from the numerous pre-World War II Japantowns, will be presented at the “Preserving California's Japantowns Symposium” to be held on June 9th at the Miyako Hotel in San Francisco. Historians and cultural planners, Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves, will lead efforts to document historic buildings and landscapes, broaden public awareness and encourage the preservation of places and memories significant to historic Japanese American communities across California. *Preserving California's Japantowns* is sponsored by the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJACLC) with funding provided by the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP).

In various Japanese American directories from the early 1940's and historic archival sources, over 100 Japanese American communities are cited. In consultation with an expert advisory committee, a list of 43 communities has been selected for the project research. Ensuring that regional and distinctive economic characteristics and cultural features associated with diverse Japantowns are represented, the following communities have been identified:

Alameda; Bakersfield; Berkeley; Brawley; Cortez; El Centro; Florin;
Fowler; Fresno; Gardena; Gilroy; Glendale; Guadalupe; Isleton;
Livingston; Lodi; Lompoc; Long Beach; Marysville; Monterey; Mountain
View; Oakland; Oxnard; Pasadena; Sebastopol/Petaluma; Riverside;
Sacramento; Salinas; San Diego; San Mateo; San Pedro; Santa Ana;
Santa Barbara; Santa Maria; Santa Monica; Sawtelle; Stockton; Terminal
Island; Vacaville; Venice; Visalia; Walnut Grove; Watsonville

Gathering Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) memories, especially from those who experienced these pre-WWII communities, and connecting them to the full range of California's Japantowns is an urgent task, and a central purpose of *Preserving California's Japantowns*.

Donna Graves and Gail Dubrow are co-authors of *Sento at Sixth and Main: Preserving Landmarks of Japanese American Heritage*, a defining critical publication on the preservation of ethnic communities. "*This work rediscovered early Japanese American culture and presents an indisputable case for the preservation of ten key landmarks in California and Washington,*" states Alan Nishio, chairperson of California Japantowns Preservation Committee of CJACLC.

Donna Graves has nearly twenty years experience developing public history projects throughout California that document and interpret our state's diverse history. Most recently, she served as Project Director for the City of Richmond's *Rosie the Riveter Memorial*, and worked with the City and National Park Service to initiate, plan and implement the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park, which includes an interpretive exhibit about the experience of local Japanese Americans and Italian Americans.

For the past two decades, Gail Dubrow has led numerous projects documenting historic sites and buildings for the National Park Service as well as state and local government. These projects have included a Draft National Study of Japanese American Cultural Resources, a study documenting the Historic Context for the Protection of Asian/Pacific American Resources in Washington State, and a Plan for the Protection of Asian/Pacific American Heritage in King County, Washington. More recently, her work has focused on the preservation of cultural resources in historic Japantowns, including a community charrette, "Restoring a Sense of Place in Seattle's Nihonmachi," and contributions to Carey & Company's recent study of San Jose's Japantown.

Graves and Dubrow will provide an overview of *Preserving California's Japantowns* as part of the CCLPEP 2006 Project presentations. For the afternoon workshop entitled "Documenting Our Communities, History, Culture, Stories, & Sites", *Preserving California's Japantowns* team, Graves, Dubrow, and project manager Jill Shiraki, will facilitate a roundtable discussion to share methodologies and tools for documenting community history, culture, stories, and sites. Interested individuals, community representatives, and coordinators of related community projects are encouraged to

attend. For those interested in participating in the workshop, please contact Project Manager Jill Shiraki at (510) 277-2164 or pcj@californiajapantowns.org

In collaboration with “Birth of A Community: 100th Anniversary of San Francisco’s Japantown”, a project of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, **California Japantowns**, an interactive website to engage new audiences and educate visitors on the historic legacies of Japantown communities across the state and the vibrant communities of the three remaining Japantowns in California, is being developed. To preview the first phase of the website, visit www.californiajapantowns.org

The *Preserving California’s Japantowns Symposium* is organized by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) in partnership with the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJAACL) and the support of the California Cultural & Historical Endowment, California Preservation Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Nichi Bei Times.

Join us in engaging our communities to learn about the cultural and historic preservation of our Japantowns. Symposium fees are \$40 general registration (by June 5), and \$10 student/senior registration. Registration fees include a continental breakfast, box lunch, and buffet reception.

For general information or questions, contact Naomi Funahashi at nfunahashi@jcccnc.org or (415) 567-5505. For registration, call JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505 or visit www.californiajapantowns.org.

About JCCCNC

Envisioned by the Japanese American community, JCCCNC will be an everlasting foundation of our Japanese American ancestry, cultural heritage, histories and traditions. The JCCCNC strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community through programs, affordable services and administrative support and facilities for other local service organizations. The JCCCNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center based in San Francisco.

About CJAACL

California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJAACL) is the leading state organization helping to preserve and bring new recognition to the three remaining historic Japantowns in California, located in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Jose.

CJACLC was established in 1998 through a grant from the Sumitomo Global Foundation to organize and coordinate statewide issues concerning the Japanese American community. CJACLC is the sponsoring organizations for *Preserving California Japantowns*.

About CCLPEP

The California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) was created in 1999 as the result of the passage of the California Civil Liberties Public Education Act (AB1914 and AB1915) sponsored by Assemblymember Mike Honda. The legislation creates the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, CCLPEP. Its purpose is to provide competitive grants for public educational activities and the development of educational materials to ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal and incarceration of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered and so that causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood. The CCLPEP has funded \$5.5 million over the past six years in more than 160 projects. For more information about the CCLPEP, visit www.library.ca.gov/cclpep.

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