# Research & Archiving: Keeping Family Stories Alive

Recording an interview is just the beginning. To make sure your family stories live on for future generations, you'll want to **research, organize, and safely archive** what you collect. This doesn't need to feel overwhelming — here's a simple path to follow.

## 1. Start With What You Know

- **Talk to family first**: Write down names, dates, and stories from parents, grandparents, or siblings.
- **Capture small details**: Even everyday memories (favorite foods, pets, hobbies, accidents, travels) help paint a fuller picture.
- **Choose one ancestor at a time**: Focus on building their story before moving to another.

## 2. Build a Family Story Map

- Create a **family tree** (paper, Google Slides, Canva, or a genealogy app).
- Add in what you already know: names, places, life events.
- Leave blanks for missing information — these become clues for your research.
- Tip: Use photos whenever you can. Seeing faces alongside names makes history come alive.

## 3. Expand With Archives & Records

There are many places to find missing pieces. Each can confirm dates, places, or uncover new stories.

Key Resources for Japanese Canadian families:

- Landscapes of Injustice Digital Database – wartime property and internment records.
- Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre – photos, documents, and artifacts (many online).
- Royal BC Museum Archives – birth, marriage, and death records.
- Library & Archives Canada – immigration, census, and citizenship files.
- UBC Geographic Information Centre – aerial photographs of communities that may no longer exist.
- Genealogy Quebec, Bibliothèque Québec, McGill Archives – especially useful for postwar families in Quebec.
- Ancestry.ca and FindAGrave.com – broader family history records (with caution about accuracy).

## 4. Cross-Check With Oral Stories

- Match records to memories: Does a census or archive confirm what your family has always said?
- Notice contradictions: Different spellings, dates, or places are common. Write them all down.
- Verify with family: Ask relatives to help confirm spellings of names and places.

## 5. Save + Share for the Future

- Transcribe interviews: Write them out — this makes stories searchable and easier to pass on.
- Label files clearly: Use LastName_FirstName_Year/Date_Topic

  ex: "Yada_Saraya_2025_ChildhoodMemories.mp4."
- Store safely: Keep copies on your computer, a USB stick, and in cloud storage (Google Drive, Dropbox).
- Give back: Always send a copy to the person you interviewed.
- Decide on sharing:
  - Family only (private).
  - Local museums or archives.
  - Online platforms like YouTube.
  - Discover Nikkei / Nikkei Album for the wider Japanese Canadian community.

## 6. Tips for Common Challenges

- Name changes/misspellings: Search different spellings and English versions of Japanese names.
- Missing neighborhoods: Some historic Japanese Canadian communities no longer exist. Look at local archives or aerial photos.
- Gaps in census records: People may not appear if they moved or were absent during the count.

## 7. Make It Personal

Remember: the "official record" is not the whole story. The little details — the family dog, a favorite hobby, a hidden medal, a garden planted in camp — are what make history real. Your family's stories matter, even if they don't appear in government files.