Tell Your Story: Curate a (mini) Collection

Take inspiration from the storytelling in JANM's exhibition,* Common Ground: The Heart of Community*, to choose and display objects, images, and documents that hold meaning to you and your family's story.

Kristine Aono, Relics from Camp *(detail) installation with artifacts from the Esaki, Weglyn and Makino family collections.*

Collection Connection

JANM was founded by community leaders who realized the importance of sharing the history, story, and lessons of the Japanese American experience. Now, over 30 years later, curators at the Japanese American National Museum share these stories not just with words—but with photographs and artifacts that are significant and carry meaning.

In this detail from artist Kristine Aono's *Relics from Camp* installation, we can learn about life in the Gila River, AZ concentration camp through close observation. The artifacts inside occasionally change based on where it is installed. This photograph was taken in 2020 at JANM, where the piece is currently on display. Notice the camp ID, street sign, engraved wood, handmade jewelry, and even a 1st place medal from a sporting tournament. All these artifacts are placed on soil from the Arizona desert where the camp was located, which adds even more meaning to the composition. Without any written text, this image conveys great significance.

Now it's your turn!

Find between five and seven objects in your house or room that tell a story when you put them together—they can be things that remind you of your family, things that are special just to you, or things that bring back memories. Once you've selected your objects, decide how to arrange them with impact so that the viewer understands a little more about who you are.

Share your creations with us on social media using the hashtag ***#JANMinspired***