



# RIVERSIDE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## *EXHIBIT TELLS THE STORY OF A JAPANESE AMERICAN FAMILY'S QUEST FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM*

*The Harada Family's struggle with civil and individual rights, democracy, immigration,  
assimilation, and citizenship*

**RIVERSIDE, CA** – When the Haradas arrived in California in 1905 they were accompanied by a wave of Pan-Asian immigrants seeking the riches promised by the American dream. However, institutionalized racism evidenced by the federal Chinese Exclusion Acts and the 1913 California Alien Land Law welcomed them to a very different reality. ***Reading the Walls: The Struggle of the Haradas, a Japanese American Family*** tells the nearly 100 year history of one immigrant Japanese family and their quest for the American Dream on display at the Riverside Metropolitan Museum from January 29, 2009 until January 3, 2010.

Under the stewardship of the Riverside Metropolitan Museum, the National Historic Landmark Harada House is among the most significant and powerful civil rights landmarks in California. This site and the story of the Harada family embody local, state, national, and international issues of civil and individual rights, democracy, immigration, assimilation, and citizenship.

After arriving in California in 1905, The Harada family patriarch, Jukichi Harada purchased a home on Lemon Street in Riverside, CA in the names of his American-born children. Several neighbors in their predominantly Caucasian neighborhood formed a committee to persuade Jukichi to sell his home but he refused. The home ownership was contested in court in the landmark *State of California vs. Jukichi Harada, et al.* The Riverside County Superior Court upheld the children's ownership under the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution, essentially proclaiming that as natural-born citizens of America they had every right to own property.

Until 1941, the Haradas prospered, operating a series of restaurants and boarding houses in Riverside. Jukichi Harada and his wife Ken watched proudly as their seven children grew and worked and went to school and began families of their own. The realization of their dream was shattered in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and the advent of World War II. With the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin Roosevelt, 120,000 Japanese Americans were dispossessed of property and stripped of their civil rights. Like so many other Japanese families, the Haradas were forced to abandon their home. As son Harold and his sister made final preparations to evacuate from the house, a teenage Harold "Shig" Harada took a pencil and scribbled a note on the wall of his bedroom, "Evacuated on May 23, 1942 Sat.

7am HH Shig”. His words still stand out in vivid relief on a background of fading plaster, freezing in time the instant when the comforting walls of home gave way to the prison walls of the internment camp.

Their story is a California story and a truly American story. It is a saga of hardship and struggle to achieve the American promise of freedom, citizenship, and a better life. For more information: (951) 826-5273 or [www.riversideca.gov/museum](http://www.riversideca.gov/museum).

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### **Calendar Editors Please Note:**

**What:** *Reading the Walls: The Struggle of the Haradas, a Japanese American Family Exhibit*

**Where:** Riverside Metropolitan Museum

**When:** January 31, 2009 – January 3, 2010

#### **Related Events**

November 6, from 6 – 9 pm during Riverside Arts Walk, the Museum will feature a special reception that will include a discussion by Author and Camp Anza Historian, Frank Teurlay. The event is free and open to the public.

#### **Opening Reception**

Thursday, February 5, 2009, Arts Walk  
6:00 – 9:00 pm, Free  
Taiko Drum Performance by TaikoMix  
Sushi Demonstration by Oishii  
Ikebana (Japanese Floral Arranging)

#### **First Sunday: Reading the Walls**

Sunday, March 1, 2009  
1:00 – 4:00 pm, Free

Learn how Japanese American families in Riverside lived during the time of World War II through the story of the Harada Family. First Sunday is a monthly series of family programs that feature activities for children and families.

#### **Arts Walk: The Art of Origami**

Thursday, March 5, 2009  
6:00 – 9:00 pm, Free

Learn the art of Japanese paper folding and make a crane for the Paper Crane Peace Memorial Project.

**Cost:** Exhibit and Events are Free and Open to the Public. Donations accepted.

**Public Information:** Riverside Metropolitan Museum, 3580 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside, CA 92501, (951) 826-5273, [www.riversideca.gov/museum](http://www.riversideca.gov/museum); Museum open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9 am – 5 pm, Thursday 9 am – 9 pm, Saturday 10 am – 5 pm, Sunday 11 pm – 5 pm.