

# 大和

## The Yamato Colony of South Florida



## Observe

Look at the images on the front cover with a hand-lens.



Circle 5 or more important details you observe in the images on the front cover.

## Reflect

**Draw a line** from a **detail** that makes you think to the **blank margin**.

Write a few words that make a connection between that detail and something you ***infer*** or ***know***.

Create 3 reflections.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

*Stick to what you physically see in the image.*

What do you notice first?  
What is something small and interesting?  
What if any words do you see?  
What do you notice that you didn't expect?  
What do you notice that you can't explain?  
What do you notice that you think someone else might miss?

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

*Support your reflection with evidence you see in the image.*

What do you think was happening when this was made?  
Why do you think this image was made?  
What do you think is the most important detail?  
What is missing from this image?  
Why do you think this image is important?  
What can you learn from this image?

## Hypothesize

## Wonder

Generate a hypothesis about these images based on evidence you ***see*** and what you ***know***.

**When do you think these images were made?**

Write a question you have for someone in these images.

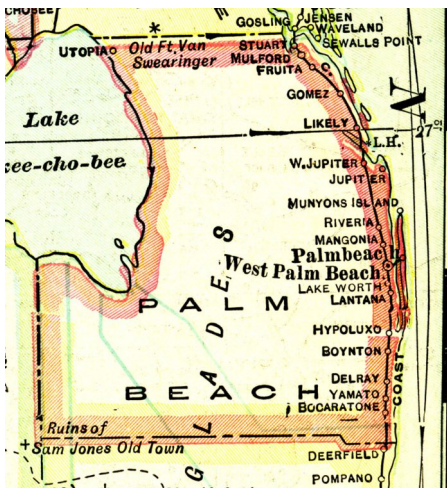
I hypothesize this image was made because

## TRAVEL: From Japan to Yamato in 1906

Sukeji Morikami (*SUH-dgee more-i-KAH-mee*) was 19 years old when he accepted a ticket to board a ship and **immigrate** from Japan to Florida. In Florida, he would join 17 Japanese farming families in a little colony called Yamato. **Yamato** means “Great Peace” and was an ancient name for Japan.

The **immigrants** were recruited by Jo Sakai, a graduate of New York University who was from an influential **samurai** family. Jo Sakai was an **entrepreneur** who saw an opportunity to **profit** in lush Florida.

Find and mark the **Yamato Colony**, the **Everglades**, **Lake Okeechobee**, and the **Atlantic Ocean** on the map.



### Immigrant-

person who moves from one country to another country in order to settle permanently.

**Samurai** – powerful military class in feudal Japan. The samurai lost power in 1871 AD when feudalism ended.

### Entrepreneur –

person who starts a new business, not knowing if it will succeed.

**Profit** – money left over after paying for business expenses

**Risk** – the chance of loss or harm, the possibility of something bad happening

What risk does Sukeji Morikami face?

As a leader, what different risks might Jo Sakai face?

*This is a  
Japanese  
map from  
1816.*

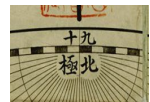
Find Japan



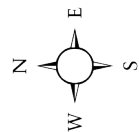
Find  
Florida



Find the  
North



Which  
direction will  
Morikami be  
traveling?



**Draw a route to help Morikami travel from Japan to Yamato.**



# Modes of Transportation

Identify the modes of transportation Sukeji Morikami may have used on each part of his journey.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ Across the Pacific Ocean
2. \_\_\_\_\_ From California to New York
3. \_\_\_\_\_ From New York to Florida
4. \_\_\_\_\_ From the station (*see the title page*) to the Colony

A.  
Schooner



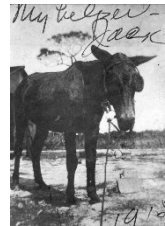
B.  
Train



C.  
Canoe



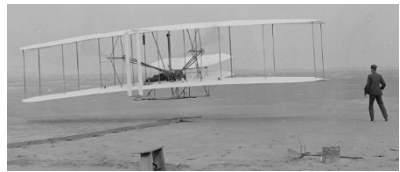
D. Mule  
or on foot



E.  
Automobile (1920)



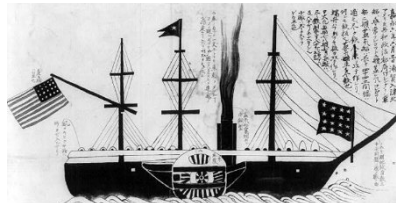
F.  
Aircraft (1903)



G.  
Conestoga Wagon



H.  
Paddle Wheel Steamship



## Why Travel To Florida in 1906?

In 1904, **Russia** was trying to expand its territory and stationed many soldiers near Japan. **Japan** asked Russia to move them; Russia said “no.” A war began. This war - as well as the **Meiji Period's** (1868 – 1912) changes to make Japan more “modern”- led to widespread poverty and unhappiness.

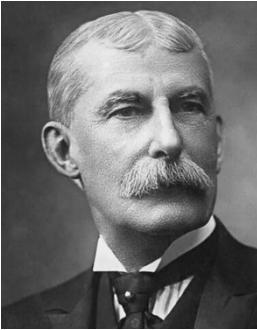


**Nicolas II**  
Tsar of Russia

**Theodor Roosevelt**  
U.S. President (1901-1909)

**Meiji**  
Emperor of Japan

1. What do you think is happening here?
2. Based on this image, who won the **Russo-Japanese War** (1904-1905)? Support your hypothesis with evidence.
3. How do you think this **shocking military victory** would affect the relationship between the **USA** and its trading-partner **Japan**?



**Henry Flagler** (top left) was one of the richest men in America during the **Gilded Age**. He was an **entrepreneur** who had made over \$100 million dollars.

When his wife, Mary, became sick they moved to Florida's warmer climate to help her health. Even though Florida was **fertile**, it was unpopular because it had difficult roads and no fancy hotels.

Flagler set to work **developing** his new home. He made **St. Augustine** his new headquarters. He built **resorts** that used electricity and a system of railways (top middle) that brought in tourists. He recruited **entrepreneurs** like **Jo Sakai** (top right) who created businesses in Florida that would use his railways.

**Gilded Age (1870-1900)** – “Gilded” means covered in gold. It was a time of great wealth and industry.

*\$100 million dollars in 1906  
= \$12.5 billion dollars in 2025.*

**Fertile** – able to grow many things

**Develop** -to cause to grow into something stronger, more advanced or more modern

**St. Augustine** – The oldest city in America

**Resort** – a popular vacation spot

4. What **motivated** Henry Flagler to come and invest in Florida?

5. What **motivated** Jo Sakai to come and invest in Florida?

## Letter from FL East Coast Railway (founded by Flagler):

### Florida East Coast Railway.

Office of the Third Vice-President.  
(LANDS AND INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES.)

J. INGRAHAM,  
Third Vice-President.

St. Augustine, Fla. August 1, 1904.

Mr. T. M. Rickards or Mr. Jim Rickards,  
Boca Raton, Fla.

Dear Sir:

There are two Japs coming from Mr. Sakai whom he says sailed on the last steamer prior to June 6th. They should be here shortly. I had a letter from him on yesterday in which he says these men have started and others will shortly follow. They are coming as students, as he had difficulty in getting passports under other conditions. He says that quite a number will come, a few at a time. I wish you would see that these two are taken care of at Boca Raton, even if we have to go to some little expense for the purpose, so that they will not be discouraged. It is unfortunate that you are away at this time, as much depends on their first impression, but perhaps you can arrange this all right.

Yours truly,

*J. Ingraham*  
3rd Vice-President.







*Yamato  
Colonists at  
the beach  
near  
Yamato  
Rock  
  
Oscar  
Kobayashi  
fishing*



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STATIONARY DESK FAN MOTOR

A small, light running, noiseless and inexpensive, solid base desk fan is almost as essential in summer for private residences as a Telephone. Fort Wayne fan motors are portable and light in weight and can be set in any convenient place. They are Quality fan motors, first, last and all the time. They look right, run right and wear right.

An 8-inch Fort Wayne fan motor will run for five hours at a cost of only one cent for current. Summer Comfort could not be more reasonably obtained.

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No Belts—Friction Drive—No Resistance  
Any Number of Impressions per Hour  
A Money Maker for the Printer and a Business Getter for You

Prices Right. Send for Booklet X.  
WE MAKE FORGED BLOWERS TOO.  
**GUARANTEE ELECTRIC CO. CHICAGO**

## 6. Based on the letter and the images on p. 8 and 9:

What role did **Henry Flagler** play in the **Yamato Colony**?

What role did **Henry Flagler** play in the **development of Florida**?

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## 7. How did life in Florida change after **new technology** like electricity and railroads were introduced?

## Postcard From 1908

Sukeji Morikami (1886-1975) came to Yamato in 1906. On the start of the new year, he would often send a postcard **like this one** to **a woman** from **Miyazu**, his home-village in Japan. Sukeji Morikami never married.



*Engraving by Tsukioka (1888)*

## “The Legend of the Bamboo Cutter”

One of Japan’s oldest legends tells the story of a bamboo cutter who discovered a beautiful baby, Princess Kaguya, in a glowing bamboo. When she grew up many **suitors** - including the emperor - asked to marry her. She set them impossible tasks. Sadly, no one could complete these tasks.

Finally, she was taken to a palace on the moon, far away from those who loved her.

7. What might have motivated Morikami to come to Florida?

What evidence supports this hypothesis?

Use the Glossary (right) and pages 6-10 to answer the questions.

Circle the correct answer(s).

8. Which is a **primary** source?
  - a. The ENGRAVING
  - b. The POSTCARD
  - c. The LEGEND
  
9. Which is a **secondary** source?
  - a. The ENGRAVING
  - b. The POSTCARD
  - c. The LEGEND
  
10. The following are **push and pull factors** that may have motivated Sukeji Morikami to **immigrate** to Florida in 1906.

## GLOSSARY

### Primary Source –

Original document or object that was created at the time under study.

### Secondary Source –

Interprets, analyzes, or summarizes events after they happen.

### Push Factor –

A bad thing that makes people want to leave.

### Pull Factor –

A good thing that makes people want to come to a new place.

### Unrequited –

Not returned

Put a check mark in the correct box for each **FACTOR**.

Factor	Push Factor	Pull Factor
Florida is fertile		
Russo-Japanese War		
Possibility to Profit		
New Rail System Made Travel Possible		
Unrequited Love		



## LIFE in the Colony

When Sukeji Morikami arrived in the United States, he changed his first name to “George.”

He and many other Yamato Colonists joined the Delray Methodist (Christian) Church and enrolled in schools to learn English.

1. Which grade did George attend?

REPORT TO PATRONS  
Brevard County Public Schools  
MONTHLY REPORT OF  
George Morikami  
Grade, for the School Term of 1909 19  
Principal  
Assistant  
Assistant  
Assistant  
PARENTS SIGNATURE  
First month  
Second month  
Third month  
Fourth month  
Fifth month  
Sixth month  
Seventh month  
Eighth month  
Ninety per cent is excellent; 85 average; 75 good; 65 poor; less than 50 lowest place in grade.



2. Use a hand lens to observe these photographs of Yamato Colonists in **Japan** (far left) and **Florida** (center, far right).

### Image Similarities

### Image Differences

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Many Yamato colonists came from **Miyazu, Japan** (see below).

3.

How was their  
new environment  
different from  
Miyazu, Japan?



*This is what they encountered in the  
**Yamato Colony, Florida (USA).***

4.

What **technology**  
would be needed  
to clear this land  
and get it ready  
for farming?



## Excerpts from letters George Morikami wrote in 1950 to his sister-in-law back in Japan:

May 1950 (**Showa 25**),

To Mitsue Okamoto

Today, I was busy picking eggplants with three other black people all day. We shipped nearly 100 boxes in total, weighing about 500 jin [660 pounds] by train and truck to a market in the northern United States. The market price isn't very good right now.

It's starting to feel like summer in Florida. The indoor temperature is close to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, but it drops to about 75 degrees ...

I haven't spoken or written Japanese for a long time, so it's hard for me to write a letter. I'm sure it's difficult to read. ... I'll start by confessing my life's experiences.

Time flies, and it's already May again this year. Looking back, I arrived here at 9:15 p.m. on May 4, 1906 ... it was actually a solo journey of 8,000 ri (over 18,000 miles), where I didn't know what to see or hear, and couldn't speak a word. When I think back on those days, I am overcome with emotion.

... I hope we can invite you to our country. It won't be long before we, our **compatriots** in

**Showa Period (1926-1989) –**

In Japan, years are numbered based on the reign of the emperor.

**Showa 25**

is the 25<sup>th</sup> year

Emperor Hirohito

(see below) was in office.



**Compatriots –**

Fellow citizens  
friends

**What skills and traits did Morikami need in order to succeed in Florida?**

the United States, will be granted the right to **naturalize**. Once that happens, everything will become easier.

I have ordered the items you requested from a reputable **mail-order house** in Chicago.

### Another Letter from 1950

At [lonely] times like this, I sometimes talk to my cats. I currently have five cats, but Sweetie, the oldest, understands what I'm saying very well. He meows back at every word I say. He's quite a clever cat.

### Another Letter from 1950

This year, there have been a lot of westerly winds, and therefore a lot of mosquitoes, which can be a **nuisance** even during the day. I've heard that there are about six species of mosquitoes. They originate in the swamps in the western part of the area ... The larger ones are about the size of a dragonfly and ... [make] a sound like an airplane.

### Another Letter from 1950

I have about six neighbors. They are carpenters, plasterers, milkmen, etc. They are all nice people and are very kind to me. No matter what country people are from, they are all very kind.

### **Naturalize –**

Become an American citizen

### **Mail-Order House –**

A business that sends out a catalog. Customers select and buy items that the business mails out. **Sears Roebuck** had the most famous catalog (pictured below).



*Do you know of a modern "mail-order house"?*

### **Nuisance –**

Annoying or inconvenient

### **What skills did Morikami need to learn?**

## **5. What challenges did Yamato Colonists face?**

## CULTIVATING Tomatoes & Pineapples

*The Yamato Colony intended to develop a silk industry in Florida. When that idea did not work, they demonstrated **resilience** by **cultivating** these **cash crops**.*

Trace the 90 day life cycle of a **tomato** from (1) **seed**, to (2) **sprout**, to (3) **seedling**, to (4) **yellow flowers** (on a mature plant), to (5) **fruit**. Put the correct word in each box.

*Each flower can produce one fruit.*

*Tomato plants have many flowers.*

### Cultivate –

Prepare and use land to grow crops

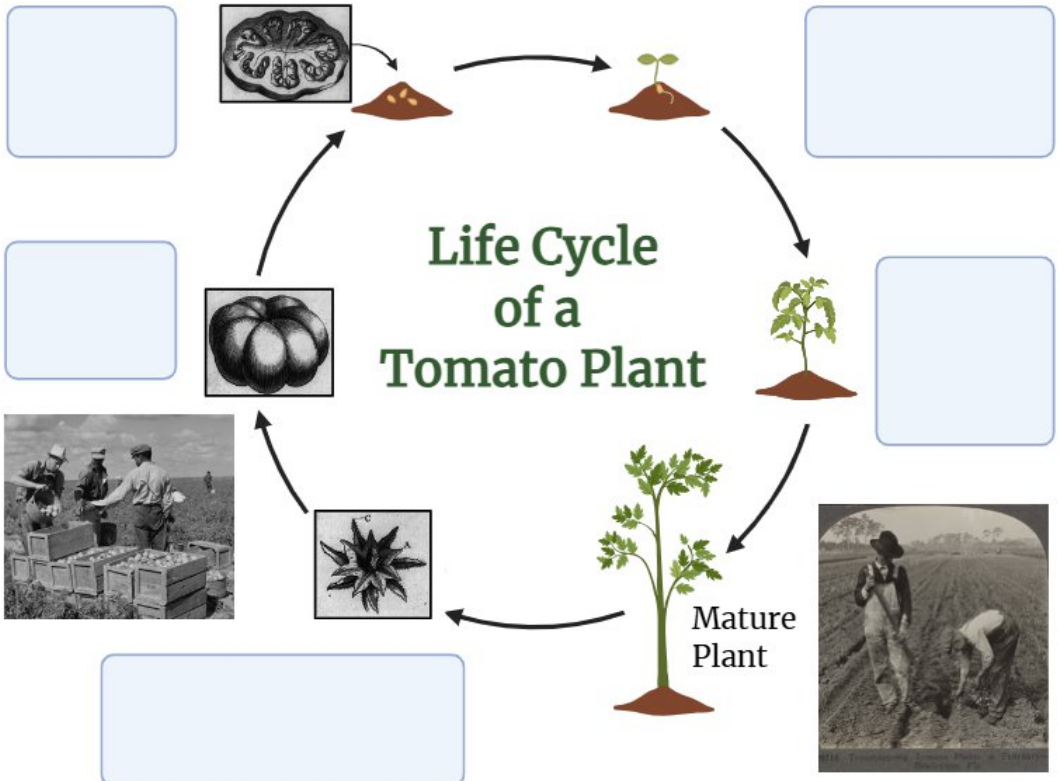
### Cash Crop –

grown for profit

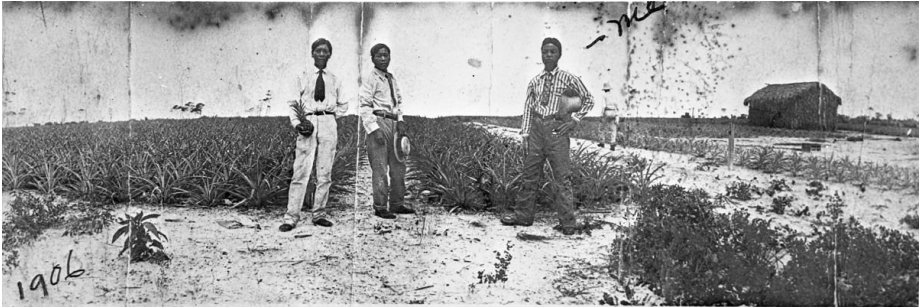
### Export –

Send to another country for sale.

*Lycopersicon. Apples of Love.*







George Morikami decided to **cultivate pineapples** - commonly called “pines”. Pineapples were a **cash crop** Florida **exported** around the world.



First, the top of a fruit was cut off. The “**cutting**” was planted. Later, many tiny pinkish-purple flowers bloomed in the center of the plant. Finally, **one pineapple** fruit emerged on a long stem and was harvested. This process took 18 months or more.



*He cultivated pineapples for the rest of his life.*

How are the **life cycles** of tomatoes and pineapples  
Similar? Different?

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**Use a hand-lens to examine this image.**

**Homestead, Florida (1938)** <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017799942>



**Observe:**

What do you notice about the people who are working together on this project?

**Reflect:**

Are these workers harvesting tomatoes or pineapples?  
What evidence supports your thinking?

## Explore Yamato Produce

Observe the following images on p. 20-21. Use all 5 senses by exploring a physical pineapple and a physical tomato. Use **adjectives** or **analogies** (“smells like...”) in your description.



### Word Bank of Adjectives

**Tastes:** sweet, sour, salty, bland, bitter, acidic, burnt, metallic, minty, peppery, citrusy, fruity, lemony, tangy, tart, creamy, sharp, smoky, nutty, crisp, juicy, strong, delicious

**Smells:** sweet, pungent, earthy, fruity, savory, strong, subtle, odorless

**Textures:** smooth, soft, hard, bumpy, gritty, silky, rough, stringy, delicate, scaly, sticky

**Shapes:** round, square, rectangular, oblong, triangular, hexagonal

### EXTENSION:

Do a rubbing of a pineapple skin on paper with crayon. Describe what you see.

		Tomato	Pineapple
Smell	Before Cut		
	After Cut		
Texture	Outside		
	Inside		
Shapes			
Taste			
Sketch or describe your answer.			
Where does the <b>fruit</b> connect to the <b>plant</b> ?			
<b>UP or DOWN:</b> Which way does the fruit “hang” from the stem?			



## “Grow Your Own” Activity:



1. Cut off the **crown** of the pineapple carefully.
2. Put it in water in a clear container (see below right) and watch the roots form.



1. Cut a center slice from one of the tomatoes.
2. Place it on top of soil.
3. Sprinkle a little soil on the top to cover the tomato slice.
4. Water once every 3 days and watch for a seed to sprout.





## George's Dilemma \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Identify:</b> Who are the different people involved in the dilemma?	<b>Feel:</b> What do you think each person in the dilemma is feeling?
<b>Imagine:</b> List 3 ways George could deal with this situation.  HIGHLIGHT the OPTION that will lead to the BEST outcome where the most people feel good or feel taken care of.	<b>Say:</b> Regarding the OPTION you have chosen, what could the people involved say?

### Resilient:

Being **resilient** is being able to “bounce back” from a challenge.

**What could help George show resilience in this dilemma?**

### Contribution:

A **contribution** is a gift, a payment or a service you give.

**What is a contribution a Japanese immigrants made to their neighbors or to Florida as a whole?**



### Dilemma 3:

In 1928, the **Okeechobee Hurricane** hit close to the colony. Over 2,500 people died. George, the other colonists, and many African American neighbors sheltered in the Kamiya's house during the storm.

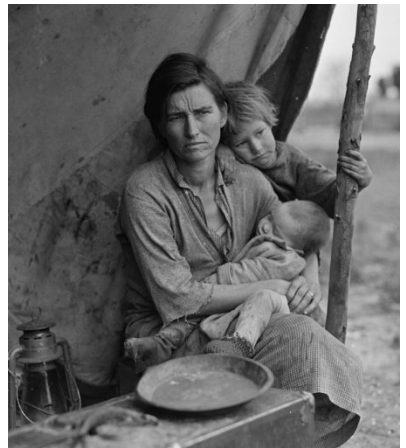


The hurricane destroyed houses and flooded their farmland.



### Dilemma 4:

In 1929, George had made a fortune from farming his land. His money was in the bank when the **Stock Market** crashed on October 24, 1929 ("Black Thursday"). The bank failed and all the people using that bank lost their money.



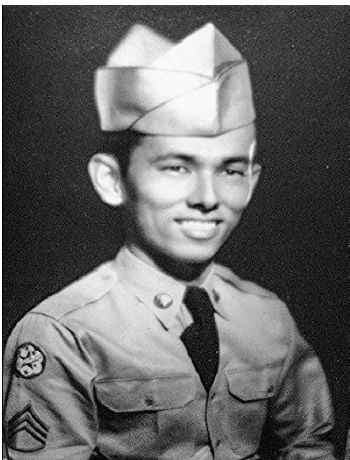
## Dilemma 5:

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbor and the **U.S.A. entered World War 2.** Posters began to emerge.



Some Yamato Colonists like **Tom Kobayashi** (below left) joined the U.S. army. Some Yamato Colonists who had moved back to California were sent to **Internment Camps** (below right)– prisons for families with Japanese ancestry – for 3 years.

In Florida, a National Guardsmen was assigned to live with Yamato Colonists and watch them while they farmed. George's bank account was frozen for 3 months. He could not buy anything.





## Dilemma 6:

In 1950, George wrote to his sister-in-law in Japan:

“The cold wave we were all worried about finally hit last Friday night, with winds gusting at nearly 50 miles per hour ... The remaining millions of tomato and pepper seedlings had only just sprouted, so they're practically dead. This cold wave was record-breaking, with snow falling across central Florida ...

Five thousand head of cattle froze to death on ranches fifty miles northwest of our city. ... I am working hard, even giving my last dollar. ... I have done my best. I will not cry or bear any grudges.”



## Dilemma 7:

In the 1967, George finally became an American citizen. He was the last member of the Yamato Colony. By the 1970s, he was a millionaire again. George wanted to donate his land to Palm Beach County as a “thank you gift”. He thought it would be a good place for a public park or a museum.

The county refused the gift. They said the plot of land was too small and too far away from the cities. They didn't think people would visit.

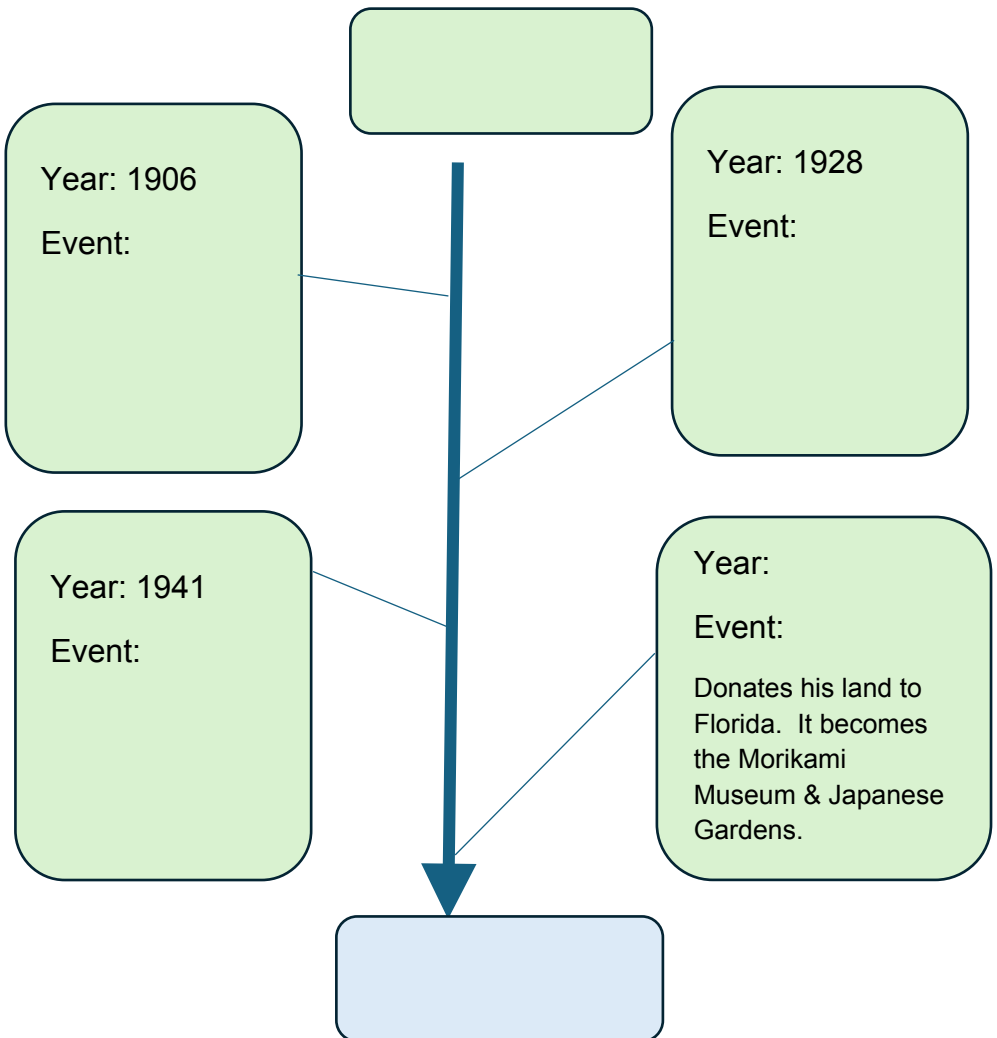


## Extension 1: Timeline Scavenger Hunt

Complete the timeline of **George Morikami's life** using information from the booklet.

In the top and bottom box, include his birth and death (p. 10).

Fill in important events from his life.



## Extension 2: The Legacy of Yamato Colony

**Legacy** – something that is a result of events in the past

“I am 80 years old and yet I plant trees. People may laugh at my foolishness. Although I might be foolish, this is my life’s desire, my dream. If I can plant something today, I will have no regrets I die tomorrow.”

**- George Morikami**

(**Morikami** means “Forest Ascending” in Japanese)



if

The land George donated became the **Morikami Museum** and **Japanese Gardens** – the largest in Florida.

George’s **legacy** is a special place dedicated to “building a bridge of understanding between his two homelands” (Morikami Museum).

What do you want your **legacy** to be?

### Extension 3: Background Music

The Yamato Colonists were familiar with Japanese folk-music like this. Listen to the woman playing the **shamisen** – a 3 stringed plucked instrument.



Tokiwazu Modoribashi (1902)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-326857/>

*During the early 1900s, American musicians were creating jazz and ragtime. This **syncopated** music was popular. It combined African folk music, a dance-hall orchestra, and quick classical ballroom dances like the foxtrot.*

**Listen for the banjo, bass clarinet, piano, trombone, cymbals, and even a washboard!**

Somebody Stole My Gal (1923)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-46183/>

*American artists, intrigued by Japanese music, added their own interpretation and fused it with ragtime and jazz pieces.*

**Listen for patterns or instruments the artists use that give an impression of Japanese music.**

Japanese Moon (1922)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-64516/>

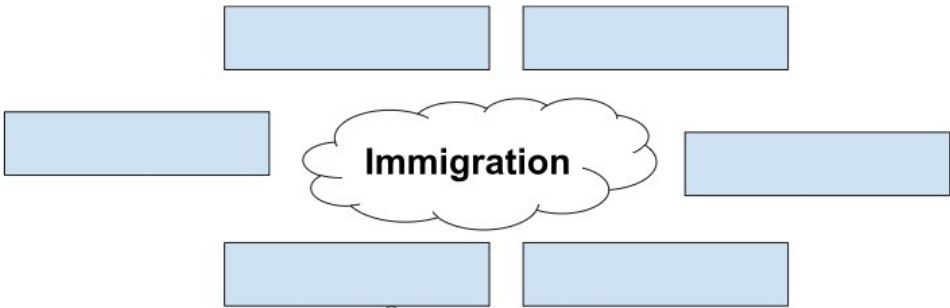
How are the **American** patterns/instruments different from the traditional **Japanese** patterns/instruments?



## Extension 4: Projecting Across Time

**Immigration:** traveling to a different country  
in order to settle there permanently.

1. **Mind Map** – What ideas come to mind when you hear the word “**immigration.**”



2. **Remember The Past:** Based on Sukeji “George” Morikami’s story, how did **immigration** impact Florida 100 years ago?
3. **Project The Future:** How might **immigration** play out - 100 years from now?
4. How do you view the topic of **immigration** now?

## Glossary

**Cash Crop** – plant grown for profit

**Colony** – settlement made by people of another land

**Compatriots** – friends, fellow citizens

**Cultivate** – to prepare and use land to grow crops

**Develop** –to cause to grow into something stronger,  
more advanced, or more modern

**Entrepreneur** – person who starts a new business  
not knowing if it will succeed.

**Export** – to send to another country for sale

**Fertile** – able to grow many things

**Gilded** – covered in gold

**Immigrant** – person who moves from one country to  
another country in order to settle permanently.

**Import** – to bring from another country to buy

**Internment Camp** – (mid1942-1945) prisons for families with  
Japanese ancestry used during WW2 in the USA.

**Land Boom** – railroads, electricity and resorts led to people  
willing to buy land in Florida in the early 1920s  
for high prices.

**Legacy** – something that is the result of events in the past

**Naturalize** – to become an American citizen

**Nuisance** – annoying or inconvenient

**Patron** – person who promises to take care of the debts and pay for another person's expenses.

**Primary Source** – original document or object that was created in the time under study

**Profit** – money left over after paying for business expenses

**Pull Factor** – a good thing that makes people want to come to a new place.

**Push Factor** – a bad thing that makes people want to leave

**Resort** – a popular vacation spot

**Risk** – the chance of loss or harm, the possibility something bad will happen

**Samurai** – Japanese military class that lost power during the Meiji Period (1868-1912)

**Secondary Source** – interprets, analyzes, or summarizes events after they happen

**St. Augustine** – oldest city in Florida and the United States

**Stock Market** – big marketplace where people buy pieces of ownership in other people's businesses

**Syncopated** – “off beat” or clapping between the beats

**Unrequited** – not returned

**Yamato** – “Great Peace” in Japanese, ancient name of Japan

## Image References

- Cover Page: Yamato Train Car (1912), Boca Raton Historical Society, CN2010.060.004
- Cover Page: Ladies Lunch at the Beach (1910), Boca Raton Historical Society, CN2016.044.011
- Page 3: Palm Beach County Map (1921), <https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/maps/pages/100/f173/f173.htm>
- Page 4: Revised World Map by Kageyasu (1816), Library of Congress CN2021668274
- Page 5a: Revised World Map focus on the United States by Kageyasu (1816), Library of Congress CN2021668274
- Page 5b: Free trade & free lands of Magdalena. The Al clipper schooner Sarah...is now loading (1870), Library of Congress CN 202779184
- Page 5c: Railroad locomotive (1909), Library of Congress CN2016823055
- Page 5d: Indians canoeing on Miami River (1904), Library of Congress CN00650881
- Page 5e: George Morikami's Mule- Yamato, FL (1915), Florida Memory PR13765
- Page 5f: Fredericksburg Tour, Jordan Car (1920), Library of Congress CN2016828090
- Page 5g: First flight, 120 feet in 12 seconds (1903), Library of Congress CN00652085
- Page 5h: American scenery-the inn on the roadside (1872), Library of Congress CN2006678348
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