Inventory of the Gordan K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service Collection

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Gordan K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service

Collection number: GTU 2002-9-01

Graduate Theological Union Archives
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Berkeley, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service
Dates: 1941-1947
Collection number: GTU 2002-9-01
Collector: Chapman, Gordon K.
Collection Size: 1 record box and 4 half boxes
3 linear ft.
Repository: The Graduate Theological Union. Library.
Berkeley, CA 94709

Abstract: The Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service was set-up in response to Executive Order 9066 ordering all Japanese-American citizens and aliens evacuated from the U.S. West Coast and relocated to centers in the interior. The Commission acted as a conduit of information among the camp churches, various denominational headquarters, and the wider American culture. Toward the end of the War, the Commission's main activity was to aid returning evacuees, clergy in resuming their interrupted ministries, and lay people with their lives. Gordon K. Chapman, a Presbyterian minister with extensive Japanese missionary experience, was the Executive Director from start to finish.

Physical location: Shelf Location 3/I/top
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

Acquisition Information
Received in 2000 as part of the Lester Suzuki Collection (GTU 2000-11-02). Four additional boxes from San Francisco Theological Seminary were added in May 2015 to bring the two related collections together at the main library.

Biography/Administrative History
The Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service was set up in response to Executive Order 9066 ordering all Japanese-American citizens and aliens evacuated from the U.S. West Coast and relocated to centers in the interior. It was first named the Western Area Protestant Church Commission for Wartime Japanese Service. The majority of the members were Protestant ministers who had served as missionaries in Japan for considerable amounts of time, several from about
1900 on.
The Commission was headquartered in Berkeley, California, for the first few months during 1941-42. It then moved to San Francisco. As the government evacuation orders were being enforced, Japanese and Japanese-American ministers, working with their congregations in the assembly centers (transit camps), appealed to their Caucasian colleagues for assistance. The Commission was formed for the purpose of assisting the Japanese and Japanese-American ministers with their pastoral duties in the relocation centers (commonly known as camps).

The U.S. War Relocation Authority authorized church activities, but would give no monetary or material assistance. As the internees were relocated from the assembly centers to the camps, various Protestant churches and denominations came together to lend assistance. These activities included: 1) staffing stationary camp churches, 2) designing and building churches, 3) setting up preaching missions to the camp churches, 4) assisting returning missionaries from Japan to seek employment in the camp churches, or with the WRA as teachers or social workers, 5) setting up denominational conferences for ministers in the camps, and 6) other activities such as funding drives, and providing Bibles and other religious tracts.

As the War continued, the Commission acted as a conduit of information among the camp churches, various denominational headquarters, and the wider American culture. Toward the end of the War, the Commission's main activity was to aid returning evacuees, clergy in resuming their interrupted ministries, lay people their lives. Discussions centered on whether or not it was better for returnees to be integrated as members of the local congregations or form separate ethnic congregations as they had been prior to the War. During the spring and summer of 1945 as the camps were being emptied, the Commission recruited divinity students as volunteers to minister to the dwindling numbers of internees. The Commission ceased operation in late 1945.

Gordon K. Chapman, a Presbyterian minister with extensive Japanese missionary experience, was the Executive Director from start to finish. There was one paid secretary. All expenses were borne by the various Protestant Churches through monetary allocations, in-kind loan of ministers, or sponsoring fund raising activities.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service was set-up in response to Executive Order 9066 ordering all Japanese-American citizens and aliens evacuated from the U.S. West Coast and relocated to centers in the interior. The Commission acted as a conduit of information among the camp churches, various denominational headquarters, and the wider American culture. Toward the end of the War, the Commission's main activity was to aid returning evacuees, clergy in resuming their interrupted ministries, and lay people with their lives. Gordon K. Chapman, a Presbyterian minister with extensive Japanese missionary experience, was the Executive Director from start to finish.

Mrs. Lester Suzuki, donor of the Lester Suzuki Collection reported that Gordon Chapman gave the collection to Rev. Suzuki when Suzuki was working on his Doctor of Ministry thesis, Ministry in the Japanese Assembly Centers and Relocation Centers of World War II (San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, CA, 1975). The thesis was later published: Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II (Berkeley, Calif.: Yardbird Publishing Co., 1979), GTU Library Call No. BR563 J35 S89.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
Japanese Americans--Evacuation and Relocation, 1942-1945--History--Sources
Japanese Americans--Evacuation and Relocation, 1942-1945--Churches
Church Work with Asian Americans--History--Sources
Japanese Americans--Religious life
Bovenkerk, Henry George, 1904-
Burnett, Clyde J.
Cobb, John B.
Evans, Elizabeth M.
Fisher, Galen Merriam, 1873-1955
Fisher, Royal H.
French, Holland
Gillett, Clarence S.
Hawes, Hampton B.
Hannaford, Howard Dunlop, 1887-1973
Long, Ward Willis, 1880-
Noble, Douglas W.
Reifsnider, Charles S.
Smith, Frank Herron
Sugioka, James
Unoura, Kijiro
Wickizer, Willard, M., 1899-1974

Note
Related Collections in the Graduate Theological Union Archives
• J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books Collection, GTU 2001-3-01.
• Japanese-American Internment Camp Worship Bulletins and Newsletters Collection, GTU 94-9-02.
• Lester E. Suzuki Collection, GTU 2000-11-02
• The Sunday Before: Sermons by Pacific Coast Pastors of the Japanese Race on the Sunday Before Evacuation to Assembly Centers in the Late Spring of 1942, GTU 97-5-02.

Note
Related Collection at the University of California at Los Angeles
• The Clarence Gillett Papers, 1942-45, Collection number 130, UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections, Manuscripts Division.

Series 1 Commissioners' and Churches' Program Correspondence 1941-1947

Physical Description: 19 folders
Series Scope and Content Summary
This Series contains the Commission's official correspondence. Commission meeting minutes are scattered through the series (see Miscellaneous series). Most of the correspondence is concerned with the following tasks: how to get various ministers and traveling preachers assigned to the camps; seeking approval from both the congregations and the WRA; how to get suitable housing and accommodations for Caucasian ministers; and making and securing travel arrangements. Most of these folders contain extensive personal and personnel information on ministers, as well as others seeking various employment opportunities. Individual denominations requested the assistance of the Commission to place their ministers. Of special note - in the beginning, the U.S. Army and the WRA were reluctant to allow religious workers in the camps.
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.

box-folder 1:1 Bovenkerk, Henry G. (Hiene), Presbyterian 1941-1945
box-folder 1:2 Burnett, Clyde J., Free Methodist 1943-45
box-folder 1:3 Chapman, E.N., Presbyterian 1945
box-folder 1:4 Cobb, John B., Methodist 1945-1946
box-folder 1:5 Evans, Elizabeth M., Presbyterian 1942-1943
box-folder 1:6 Fisher, Galen M., YMCA 1942-1945
box-folder 1:7 Fisher, Royal H. (Roy), Baptist 1943-1945
box-folder 1:8 French, Holland, Salvation Army 1942-1943
box-folder 1:9 Gillett, Clarence S., Congregational 1942-1947
box-folder 1:10 Hawes, Hampton B., Presbyterian 1945
box-folder 1:11 Hannaford, Howard D., Presbyterian 1942-1945
box-folder 1:12 Long, Ward Willis, Presbyterian 1944
box-folder 1:13 Noble, Douglas W., Presbyterian 1945
box-folder 1:14-15 Reifsnider, Charles S., Episcopal 1942-1946
box-folder 1:16 Sutaw, Masao, YMCA 1943-1945
box-folder 1:17 Smith, Dr. Frank Herron, Methodist 1942-1945
box-folder 1:18 Sugioka, James and Wickizer, Willard, Disciples of Christ 1942-1945
box-folder 1:19 Unoura, Kijiro 1942-1945
Series 2  **Organizational Correspondence 1942-1947**

Physical Description: 24 folders  
Series Scope and Content Summary  
The over-riding concern of the churches and the individuals was getting employment in the camps. Many of the Caucasian missionaries returned on the Swedish exchange ship SS Gripsholm. Some of the other topics covered in this correspondence are: differences in missionary work among the Japanese and Japanese-Americans, placement of women ministers or teachers in the camps, and congregational integration or separation issues at the end of the War. Women teachers' and ministers' resumes are scattered throughout the series.  
Most folders consist of two parts: first, correspondence with denominational headquarters or local congregations, and second, individual ministers and individual men and women seeking employment opportunities in the camps.  
Arrangement  
Arranged in alphabetical order by denomination.

| box-folder 1:20 | Assembly of God 1942 |
| box-folder 1:21 | Baptist 1944-1945 |
| box-folder 1:22-23 | Congregational 1942 1943 1945 |
| box-folder 1:24-25 | Disciples of Christ 1942-1944 |
| box-folder 1:26-27 | Episcopal 1942-1945 |
| box-folder 1:28 | Evangelical Reformed 1942-1944 |
| box-folder 1:29 | Methodist 1942 |
| box-folder 1:30 | Friends 1942-1944 |
| box-folder 1:31 | Holiness 1943-1944 |
| box-folder 1:32 | Independents 1942-1945 |
| box-folder 1:33 | Japan Evangelical Band 1942-1944 |
| box-folder 1:34 | Lutheran 1943-1947 |
| box-folder 1:35-36 | Methodist 1942-1943 |
| box-folder 1:37 | Oriental Missionary Society 1942 |
| box-folder 1:38 | Presbyterian Board, Foreign Missions 1942-1947 |
| box-folder 1:39 | Presbyterian 1941-1944 |
| box-folder 1:40 | Reformed Church of America (Dutch) 1942-1943 |
| box-folder 1:41 | Salvation Army 1942 1945 |
| box-folder 1:42 | Southern Baptist 1942 |
| box-folder 1:43 | Southern Presbyterian 1942 |
| box-folder 1:44 | YMCA and YWCA 1942-1945 |

Series 3  **Internal Commission Administration Correspondence 1942-45**

Physical Description: 10 folders  
Series Scope and Content Summary  
These records highlight the Commission's internal workings. The main subjects are: the design and building of churches in the camps, setting up preaching missions (included are prayers in English and Japanese), equipment and book requests for the camps, correspondence from concerned people in the wider community, requests for information from school children and teachers, conferences for ministers, and Summer Students Services in 1945.  
Arrangement  
Arranged in alphabetical order by subject.

| box-folder 1:45 | Other Boards 1945 |
| box-folder 1:46 | Preaching Missions (Bader) 1943-1944 |
| box-folder 1:47 | Bibles 1944-1945 |
| box-folder 1:48 | Center Churches (War Relocation Authority) 1942-1943 |
| box-folder 1:49 | Requests for Publicity Materials 1943-1945 |
| box-folder 1:50 | Equipment 1942-1945 |
| box-folder 1:51 | Church Buildings (WRA) 1942-1943 |
Series 3 Internal Commission Administration Correspondence 1942-45

box-folder 1:52 Conferences 1943
box-folder 1:53 Student Summer Services Relocation Centers 1945
box-folder 1:54 Theological Library Project 1942-1945
box-folder 1:55 Tracts and Publishers 1944-1945

Series 4 Relocation Correspondence 1942-45

Physical Description: 14 folders

box-folder 2:1 Japanese-American Presbyterians Students, A-I 1942-45
box-folder 2:2 Japanese-American Presbyterians Students, K-N 1942-45
box-folder 2:3 Japanese-American Presbyterians Students, O-Z 1942-45
box-folder 2:5 Japanese-American, Various States, M-N 1942-45
box-folder 2:6 Japanese-American, Various States, O-W 1942-45
box-folder 2:7 Asajiro Kanegai in New Mexico 1942-45
box-folder 2:8 Japanese-American, Relocation 1942-45
box-folder 2:9 Correspondence relocation students, A-H 1943-46
box-folder 2:10 Correspondence relocation students, I 1943-46
box-folder 2:11 Correspondence relocation students, K 1943-46
box-folder 2:12 Correspondence relocation students, M-N 1943-46
box-folder 2:13 Correspondence relocation students, O 1943-46
box-folder 2:14 Correspondence relocation students, S-Y 1943-46

Series 5 Miscellaneous Materials 1942-45

Physical Description: 25 folders

box-folder 3:1 Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, Minutes 1942
box-folder 3:2 Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, Minutes 1943
box-folder 3:3 Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, Minutes 1944-45
box-folder 3:4 Correspondence on behalf of Japanese Americans 1942-45
box-folder 3:5 Heart Mountain Relocation Center 1943
box-folder 3:6 Newspaper clippings (Lynn T. White Collection) 1943-47
box-folder 3:7 Newspaper clippings (Lynn T. White Collection) 1943-44
box-folder 3:8 Relocation correspondence 1942-44
box-folder 3:9 Bulletins and reports 1942-45
box-folder 3:10 Commission papers 1967
box-folder 3:11 Non-Presbyterian Settlers 1943-44
box-folder 3:12 Relocation newsletters 1945
box-folder 3:13 Resettlement 1943-45
box-folder 4:1 Church bulletins 1943-44
box-folder 4:2 Presbyterian missions to Japan 1904-2007
box-folder 4:3 Work with Japanese Americans 1926-1945
box-folder 4:4 Presbyterians in Utah 1944-48
box-folder 4:5 Newsprint 1944
box-folder 4:6 Photograph, Japanese American Group Undated
box-folder 4:7 Photographs, Presbyterian missions in Japan Undated
box-folder 4:8 Letter regarding orphanage in Japan 1896
box-folder 4:10 Paul M. Nagano, Identity and Pluralism from an Asian American Perspective 1989
box-folder 4:12 Lester Suzuki, Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II 1979