Finding aid for the Ikemura Family Papers

Collection number: 2014.8, 96.478, 2007.69

Descriptive Summary
Title: Ikemura family papers
Dates: 1915-2003
Collection number: 2014.8, 96.478, 2007.69
Collection Size: 5.2 linear feet (4 boxes, 10 film reels, 1 flag)
Repository: Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Los Angeles, California 90012
Creator: Ikemura, Maruo
Creator: Ikemura, Kim
Creator: Ikemura, Bonnie
Creator: Ikemura, Tojiro
Abstract: This collection contains the materials related to the Ikemura family dating from 1915 to 2003. The contents are primarily official documents (birth, marriage, and death certificates), army documents, photographs, films, and mementos.
Access
By appointment only. Please contact the Collections Management and Access Unit (collections@janm.org). Advanced notice is required.
Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in this collection must be submitted to the Collections Management and Access Unit at the Japanese American National Museum (collections@janm.org).
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Ikemura Family Papers. 2014.8 [and/or 96.478 and 2007.69 if appropriate], Japanese American National Museum. Los Angeles, CA.
Acquisition Information
The family documents were acquired in 2014 as a gift of Bonnie Ikemura. The burial flag, photo albums, home movies, and cat vase were acquired in 1996 and 2007 as a gift of Kim Ikemura.
Processing Information
Items were inventoried and a finding aid was created in 2017 by Jamie Henricks. Items in the 2007.69 accession were cataloged by museum staff in 2008.
Biographical Note
Maruo Ikemura (4/5/1915-7/10/1965) was born in Los Angeles, to parents Tojiro and Tsuru Ikemura. He had three siblings (Tsutomo, Toshiko, and Teruko), and picked up carpentry skills from his father. Maruo attended Marshall High School and drove trucks before the war.
Maeye Kimiyo “Kim” Okizaki (2/19/1914-1/8/2003) was born in San Gabriel, the daughter of farmers. She had five siblings (John, Margaret, Susan, Eddie, and Betty), graduated from Alhambra High School in 1932, and worked as a seamstress.
Maruo and Kim married September 21, 1939 at the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist temple in downtown Los Angeles. Maruo, Kim, and Maruo’s sister Teruko were sent to Manzanar Relocation Center, and Maruo’s parents were sent to Poston Relocation Center. Maruo was older than most members of the 442nd regiment, and was drafted into another segment of the army to use his experience with radios. He joined the 192nd Signal Repair Company as the only Japanese American in his unit, and was eventually sent to Germany, France, and Italy. He had his own camera, and wartime photos are included in the family’s collection. Kim left Manzanar to work on a farm in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Maruo eventually joined her there after he was discharged from the army in 1946.
The family moved back to Los Angeles, where they lived in the Boyle Heights neighborhood. Their only child, Bonnie, was born in 1950. The family lived briefly in Delano (1952) and San Diego (1953-1954, where Maruo was a fisherman), before returning to Los Angeles in 1955. Kim’s parents returned to Japan in 1953 to retire, as they hadn’t been home in 60 years. Maruo became a television repairman in 1960 until his death in 1965. Kim worked as a secretary and cleaner until she
retired in 1976. The Ikemuras bought one of the first Datsun cars imported into the US, which Kim later sold in 1996 to a buyer in Japan who took photographs for a magazine. Kim passed away in 2003.

Scope and Content
This collection contains the materials related to the Ikemura family (Maruo, Kim, and Bonnie) dating from 1915 to 2003. The contents are primarily official documents (birth, marriage, and death certificates), funeral and death announcements, army and veterans administration documents, family photographs and slides, and mementos. Also included are two large photo albums with photos dating from the 1930s to 1980s, including family and friend photos, pictures of Manzanar (including construction), and photos from Maruo’s service in the signal corps during World War II in Europe. Supposedly, one included portrait is the wedding photo of the famous photographer Toyo Miyatake. The flag that covered Maruo’s coffin at his funeral service is part of the collection, as well as 10 reels of family films (some unidentified, others of fishing and family events). A vase with cat motifs carved by Maruo’s father, Tojiro, at Poston Relocation Center, is also included.

Related Materials
A hand-made mat for rolling sushi made by Maruo’s father, Tojiro, was donated to the museum by Maruo’s sister, Toshiko (item 96.56.1).

Arrangement
Original arrangement was preserved.

Indexing Terms
Japanese Americans—Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
Manzanar War Relocation Center
World War, 1939-1945
United States. Army. Signal Corps