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Finding Aid for the Japanese American Citizens League Pacific Southwest District Office Records

Collection number: 2000.403.8

Japanese American National Museum
Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Japanese American Citizens League Pacific Southwest District Office records
Dates: 1942-1998
Languages: English, Japanese
Collection number: 2000.403.8
Creator: Japanese American Citizens League, Pacific Southwest District Office
Collection Size: 11 linear feet, 1 flat box
Repository: Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Los Angeles, California 90012

Abstract: The Pacific Southwest Region of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) served as the political voice for the Japanese American community and sponsored a variety of social and educational activities. Records include: administrative files, meeting minutes and agendas, reference files, publications, a scrapbook, various Japanese language items and redress claims.

Physical location: Japanese American National Museum 100 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Access
By appointment only. Please Contact the Collections Management and Access Unit by email (collections@janm.org) or telephone (213-830-5615).

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Preferred Citation

Project Information
This finding aid was created as part of a project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project started in 2007. Project Director was Yoko Shimojo and Project Archivist was Marlon Romero.

Biography / Administrative History
Founded in 1929, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is a national organization dedicated to securing and maintaining the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others who have been victimized by prejudice and injustice. The JACL has four regional offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle, and one legislative office in Washington DC. The organization recognizes 110 chapters in the United States and Japan. The JACL also publishes a newsletter, The Pacific Citizen.

The Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) regional office is based in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo and represents 32 JACL chapters throughout the southwest of the U.S. including all counties in California south of Kern and Monterey Counties, the State of Arizona and Southwestern portion of Nevada.

Scope and Content of Collection
This collection contains items created or collected by the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) office. The records are comprised of seven series including: Administrative Files, Meeting Minutes and Agenda, Topical Files, Publications, Photographs, Japanese Language Items and Redress Claims. Each series has a detailed scope and content note. For clarity, the sub-series of Administrative Files and Topical Files have detailed scope and content notes as well. Due to the filing system of the Pacific Southwest office, some duplication within folders does occur. The series have been arranged alphabetically and chronologically, with efforts to remain intact the original order of the files. The collection is organized into seven series.

Series 1: Administrative Files, 1942-1998

These files include papers generated by or received by the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) office. Memoranda, correspondence, press releases, accounting files, and membership information comprise the bulk of this series. While the collection's inclusive dates are 1942-1998, the majority of these files were created in two distinct time periods, 1965-1980 and 1990-1998 with minor overlapping between the two. The two time periods represented are reflected in the sub-series designations.

Systems for organizing the administrative files varied greatly with the fluctuation in office staff. In order to maintain the original order of the collection, these various systems are reflected in the sub-series designations. Due to the nature of the types of filing systems, item duplication does occur among the sub-series.

At creation, the administrative files were maintained in reverse chronological order, with the oldest items at the end of the file. The original order of files has been maintained even when "mistakes" in the reverse chronology have been detected.

The sub-series, Named Files include administrative files generated by or received by the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) office. Each file contains papers created by or received by the named individual, with the types of papers varying greatly depending upon the position of the individual. For example, the office manager's file contains information on membership and accounting, while the national president's file contains memoranda regarding decision making and correspondence with the community at large. The individuals included in this sub series are staff of the PSWD office, the leadership of various PSWD chapters, and the leadership of JACL nationally.

Throughout the years, certain individuals held various positions within JACL. Each named file contains information on the various positions an individual held. Notable individuals in this series include: PSWD office manager Angela Alcaraz, Pacific Citizen editor Harry Honda, and JACL national president Masamune Kojima.

The sub-series, Dated Files includes administrative files generated by or received by the PSWD office during a particular time frame. Various individuals are reflected in these files. Due to the nature of these filing systems, duplication of items does occur between the dated files and the named files.

The sub-series, Category Files represent the types of papers found within the named or dated files, such as correspondence, press releases and memoranda. Due to this, there is duplication of items among the sub-series.

Series 2: Meeting Minutes and Agenda, 1942-1988

This series includes meeting minutes and agenda from various levels of JACL and other organizations. In order to clarify the sub-series in this series, a breakdown of the JACL hierarchy follows: National, District, and Chapter.

The Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) Office created the information in the district sub-series, collected information from annual national meetings in the national series, and collected information from annual Los Angeles Chapter meetings in the chapter series.


These files include reference (subject) files, biography files and case files collected by the PSWD office from 1964-1998.

The sub-series, Reference Files reflects collected information such as newspaper clippings, correspondence and literature regarding issues pertinent to the JACL and the Asian American community at large. Major subject areas include: atomic bomb survivors, hate crimes, discrimination, internment camps, public perception of Asian Americans, redress and relations between Asian Americans and other ethnicities.

The sub-series, Case Files includes information regarding the JACL's involvement in the legal or employment discrimination cases of various individuals. Legal documents, employee memoranda, JACL correspondence and newspaper clippings are represented in these files.

The sub-series, Biography Files include newspaper clippings, literature and correspondence regarding prominent Asian Americans or other individuals involved with the Asian American community.


This series includes various types of publications from government or private sources collected by the PSWD office. The publications are in Japanese, English or a combination of both.
Series 5: Photographs, 1957
The scrapbook contains photographs from various JACL Los Angeles Chapter events during 1957.

Series 6: Japanese Language Items
These items possibly belonged to Danzo Kiyamara. At present, Kiyamara's affiliation with JACL is unknown. The diaries include personal writings, business cards and newspaper clippings in Japanese.

Series 7: Redress Claims
These include several handwritten pages of redress claims. It is unknown whether JACL or another organization compiled the claims, as no identifying information is included.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog:
Japanese American Citizens' League. Pacific Southwest District
Japanese Americans
Politics and government
Los Angeles (calif.)
Redress

Box 1-5
Series 1 Administrative Files 1942-1998
Series Scope and Content Summary
These files include papers generated by or received by the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) office. Memoranda, correspondence, press releases, accounting files, and membership information comprise the bulk of this series. While the collection's inclusive dates are 1942-1998, the majority of these files were created in two distinct time periods, 1965-1980 and 1990-1998 with minor overlapping between the two. The two time periods represented are reflected in the sub-subseries designations.

Subseries 1.1 Named Files
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
Named Files include administrative files generated by or received by the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) office. Each file contains papers created by or received by the named individual, with the types of papers varying greatly depending upon the position of the individual.

1965-1988
1979-1998

Subseries 1.2 Dated Files 1970-1978
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
Dated Files includes administrative files generated by or received by the PSWD office during a particular time frame. Various individuals are reflected in these files. Due to the nature of these filing systems, duplication of items does occur between the dated files and the named files.

Subseries 1.3 Category Files
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
Category Files represent the types of papers found within the named or dated files, such as correspondence, press releases and memoranda. Due to this, there is duplication of items among the sub-series.

1964-1987
1989-1995
Box 5-6
Series 2 Meeting Minutes and Agenda 1942-1988
Series Scope and Content Summary
This series includes meeting minutes and agenda from various levels of JACL and other organizations. In order to clarify the sub-series in this series, a breakdown of the JACL hierarchy follows: National, District, and Chapter.

Subseries 2.1 District

Pacific Southwest District Chapter Rosters
Pacific Southwest District Quarterly Meetings
Pacific Southwest District Board Meetings

Subseries 2.2 National

National Board Meetings

Subseries 2.3 Chapter

Annual Chapter Clinic Handbooks

Subseries 2.4 Other

Japanese American Citizens League
Other Organization’s Meeting Agenda Handbooks

Box 6-10
Series 3 Topical Files 1964-1998
Series Scope and Content Summary
These files include reference (subject) files, biography files and case files collected by the PSWD office from 1964-1998.

Subseries 3.1 Reference Files
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
Reference Files reflects collected information such as newspaper clippings, correspondence and literature regarding issues pertinent to the JACL and the Asian American community at large. Major subject areas include: atomic bomb survivors, hate crimes, discrimination, internment camps, public perception of Asian Americans, redress and relations between Asian Americans and other ethnicities.

1964-1998
1984-1996

Subseries 3.2 Case Files
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
Case Files includes information regarding the JACL’s involvement in the legal or employment discrimination cases of various individuals. Legal documents, employee memoranda, JACL correspondence and newspaper clippings are represented in these files.
Subseries 3.3 Biography Files
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
Biography Files include newspaper clippings, literature and correspondence regarding prominent Asian Americans or other individuals involved with the Asian American community.

1968-1982
1990-1995

Box 11 Series 4 Publications 1915-1982
Series Scope and Content Summary
This series includes various types of publications from government or private sources collected by the PSWD office. The publications are in Japanese, English or a combination of both.

Subseries 4.1 Directories

Subseries 4.2 General Publications

Subseries 4.3 Government Publications

Subseries 4.4 Reports

Box 12 Series 5 Photographs 1957
Series Scope and Content Summary
The scrapbook contains photographs from various JACL Los Angeles Chapter events during 1957.

Box 11 Series 6 Japanese Language Items
Series Scope and Content Summary
These items possibly belonged to Danzo Kiyamara. At present, Kiyamara's affiliation with JACL is unknown. The diaries include personal writings, business cards and newspaper clippings in Japanese.

Subseries 6.1 Books

Subseries 6.2 Diaries

Subseries 6.3 Correspondence

Box 11 Series 7 Redress Claims
Series Scope and Content Summary
These include several handwritten pages of redress claims. It is unknown whether JACL or another organization compiled the claims, as no identifying information is included.