
Charles Palmerlee Papers

Finding aid created by Keiko Nishimoto.

Japanese American National Museum

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Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Finding aid for the Charles Palmerlee Papers

Collection number: 96.47

Descriptive Summary

Title: Charles Palmerlee papers

Dates (inclusive): 1942-1993

Dates (bulk): 1942-1945

Collection number: 96.47

Creator: Palmerlee, Charles S.

Collection Size: 0.5 linear feet of textual material, 6 monographs, 2 film reels, and 14 artifacts

Repository: Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Los Angeles, California 90012

Abstract: Charles Palmerlee was a high school teacher at the Tule Lake War Relocation Authority center in Newell, California, during World War II. This collection contains correspondence, booklets, news clippings, ephemera, and typescript. It also contains images, moving images, a color photograph, an album, and artifacts. The collection documents Palmerlee's life at Tule Lake and includes a personal account of his experiences written later in his life.

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 (collections@janm.org). Advanced notice is required.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Charles Palmerlee papers. 96.47, Japanese American National Museum. Los Angeles, CA.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Mrs. Joy Palmerlee Apra.

Biographical Note

Charles Seward Palmerlee was born February 27, 1919, in Oregon. Shortly after he was born, his family moved to North Sacramento, California, where they lived until moving to Rio Linda, California, in 1931. After high school, Palmerlee attended Sacramento Junior College, eventually matriculating at the University of California, Berkeley and earning a Bachelor of Arts in 1942. Palmerlee continued his enrollment in university with the intention of earning his General Secondary Teaching Credential, but after hearing of opportunities to teach for the War Relocation Authority, applied and was accepted to a teaching position at Tule Lake's Tri-State High School. From February to November 1943, Palmerlee was a mathematics teacher at Tri-State. He was also an advisor to the senior class from February until their high school culmination in July.

Tri-State High School opened in September 1942. During its first year, school buildings consisted of 20 barracks in which 2,400 students in grades 7 through 12 attended classes. The school faculty was composed of both interned Japanese Americans and other Americans, like Palmerlee, who taught and lived at Tule Lake. During his time at Tule Lake, Palmerlee recorded still and moving images of life at the camp using a Brownie camera and an 8mm Bell and Howard Sportster.

After leaving Tule Lake, Palmerlee attended the Pacific School of Religion, where he enrolled in the Post-War Rehabilitation School and received training for post war rehabilitation work. Charles Palmerlee died on April 29, 1990, in Alameda, California.

Scope and Content

This collection documents Palmerlee's life at Tule Lake. It consists of correspondence, booklets, news clippings, ephemera, an assortment of typescript, one color photograph, an album of photographs, and two movies of Tule Lake filmed by Palmerlee. It also contains artifacts.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into four series by type of material: artifacts, monographs, moving images, and documents.

Indexing Terms

Palmerlee, Charles S.

High school teachers

Japanese Americans--Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945

Amateur films

Tri-State High School (Newell, Calif.)

Tule Lake Relocation Center (Calif.)

Series 1 Artifacts ca. 1943

Physical Description: 14 items

Scope and Content

This series contains artifacts made by incarcerated Japanese Americans and some used by Palmerlee at Tule Lake. It also contains one album with 41 black and white photographs of Palmerlee's family and of Japanese Americans at Tule Lake.

Series 2 Monographs 1945-1977

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content

This series contains five books on the subject of persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States. It also contains three news clippings.

Series 3 Moving Images 1943

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content

This series contains two 200 ft. reels of silent color 8mm home movies of Tule Lake. VHS access copies available at Hirasaki National Resource Center and online at Discover Nikkei (www.discovernikkei.org); original negatives stored at Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Series 4 Documents 1943-1993 (bulk 1943)

Physical Description: 6 folders

Scope and Content

This series contains textual material and images, including correspondence to and from Palmerlee, booklets, and news clippings. It also includes a color photograph from the 50th reunion of the Tri-State High School class of 1943, a 1943 Tri-State High School yearbook, and two copies of Tule Lake Interlude, a publication of the Tule Lake newspaper, the Tulean Dispatch.