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Finding aid for the Gorman F. Kelley Papers

Collection number: 91.149, 94.296, 96.103

Japanese American National Museum
Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Gorman F. Kelley papers

Dates: 1941-1943

Collection number: 91.149, 94.296, 96.103

Creator: Kelley, Gorman F.

Collection Size: .25 linear feet

Repository: Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Los Angeles, California 90012

Abstract: Gorman F. Kelley worked for the War Relocation Authority during World War II. This collection is largely comprised of letters written from Kelley during his four month employment at Tule Lake to his family in Los Angeles.

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

[Identification of item], Gorman F. Kelley papers. 91.149, 94.296, 96.103, Japanese American National Museum. Los Angeles, CA.

Alternative Forms of Material Available

The collection has been scanned and made available through Densho (<http://ddr.densho.org/collections/#ddr-janm>).

Biography / Administrative History

Gorman F. Kelley was born on August 19, 1892 in Iowa and eventually made his way to Los Angeles, California, where he married and had children. He fought in World War I and later worked as a government employee with the War Relocation Authority during World War II. For four months (May, June, July, August 1942) Kelley was temporarily assigned to Tulelake and Tule Lake War Relocation Center in Northern California while his family remained in Los Angeles before receiving his permanent assignment in the Corp of Engineers. Tulelake neighbored the Tule Lake Relocation Center but differed in purpose. Originally built in 1933 as a work relief program in conjunction with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, Tulelake camp became a prison for Japanese American dissidents and housed German and Italian prisoners of war during World War II. In March 1943, more than 100 men from the Tule Lake Relocation Center were arrested and taken to Tulelake (renamed Camp Tulelake) after refusing to answer or answering "no-no" for questions 27 and 28 on the loyalty questionnaire. These prisoners completed repair work on the abandoned buildings while imprisoned at Tulelake. After several months they were either released back into Tule Lake Relocation Center or transferred to other Department of Justice Camps. In addition, Camp Tulelake also sheltered Japanese Americans brought from other concentration camps to help the WRA undermine strikes at Tule Lake. Although Kelley worked at both Tulelake and Tule Lake it is important to note

as Kelley's letters often reflect the negative attitude towards Japanese Americans during World War II.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection is primarily made up of letters written by Kelley to his family, who remained in Los Angeles during his temporary assignment in Tule Lake. They are important in illustrating the general viewpoints of government employees towards the Japanese Americans during World War II and provide daily insights to his work with the WRA. In addition to the letters written by Kelley, there are also letters written to Kelley, WRA documents (pamphlets, timecards), newspapers and newspaper clippings, and invitations to various WRA-related events. These items show a small snippet of a government official's daily life as tensions were high in the earlier war years.

Arrangement

The collection has been broken down into the following series: Series 1: Correspondence Series 2: Invitations Series 3: Newspapers and Clippings Series 4: Documents

Individual donations have been kept together based on their object identification number within the larger collection.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Kelley, Gorman F.

Tule Lake Relocation Center

United States. War Relocation Authority

World War II

Japanese Americans—Evacuation and Relocation, 1942-1945
