Finding aid for the Hiroshi Kaneko Papers

Collection number: 95.234

Descriptive Summary
Title: Hiroshi Kaneko papers
Dates: 1942-1945
Collection number: 95.234
Collection Size: 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository: Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Los Angeles, California 90012
Collector: Kaneko, Hiroshi

Abstract: This collection contains items related to relocation of Japanese Americans, primarily items from Tule Lake, California from 1942 to 1945. The majority of the collection is newspapers and printed material, but correspondence, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, art, and other materials are also included.


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], Hiroshi Kaneko Papers. 95.234, Japanese American National Museum. Los Angeles, CA.

Acquisition Information
Acquired in 1995 as a gift of the Hiroshi Kaneko family.

Processing Information
The collection was processed at an earlier date by museum staff, and a finding aid was created in 2017 by Jamie Henricks.

Biographical Note
Biographical information taken from the finding aid for the Kaneko collection held at the Japanese American Service Committee:

Dorothy Morita Kaneko (b. November 20, 1920 - d. December 3, 2006) was born in Hood River, Oregon. She was the oldest child of Mototsugu and Masano Morita. She had eight siblings (from oldest to youngest): Fumiko (Laura) Morita Terada, Ruth Morita Hidaka, Paul Morita, Claude Morita, Mototsugu (Junior) Morita, Flora Morita Hidaka, Betty Morita Shibayama, and Diana Morita Cole. She grew up on a farm family and she graduated from Odell High School in Hood River in 1939.

Hiroshi Kaneko (b. March 27, 1917 - d. June 3, 2012) was born in Beaver Hill, Oregon. He was the oldest son of Yagaro and Yori Kaneko. He had six siblings (from oldest to youngest): Mary Kaneko Koida, (Hiroshi), Midori Kaneko, Roy Kaneko, Harry Kaneko, Lilly Kaneko Takaki, and Rulie Kaneko Yamamoto. At the time of his birth, Hiroshi’s father was working as a miner. At the age of three, Hiroshi’s father took him and his two sisters to live with their grandparents in Japan after his father lost his job when the local mine closed. Ten years later Hiroshi returned to Oregon to live with his parents and by then four other siblings. He attended school in Salem. After high school, he helped his family make a living by farming near Salem as part of a farming cooperative of other Japanese American farmers.

Both Dorothy and Hiroshi were active in the youth groups of the Christian churches in their communities. In 1941, they met through a mutual friend and began dating. They married on March 15, 1942 in Salem, Oregon during the upheaval of the start of World War II. Initially, the U.S. military was going to draft Hiroshi. He secured a deferment because he was set to marry soon. After he and Dorothy married, during 1942 to early 1943, the U.S. government temporarily decided against drafting a segregated, all-Japanese Americans combat force.

In June 1942, the U.S. government removed Dorothy and Hiroshi from Salem and placed them directly into Tule Lake Relocation Center near Tulelake, California without going first to a temporary assembly center. In internment camp, Dorothy worked in the mess hall and Hiroshi did carpentry. Dorothy’s family (the Moritas) was sent to Pinedale Assembly
By July 1943, Dorothy and Hiroshi had secured jobs and were allowed out of internment camp to work as domestics for a wealthy couple in Barrington, Illinois, a far northern suburb of Chicago. After Dorothy became pregnant with their first child, they decided to move into Chicago. After much difficulty finding a place to live due to a housing shortage and facing discrimination, the Kanekos rented an apartment at 6404 S. Ellis in the Woodlawn neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. Hiroshi’s parents were released from internment camp and joined them in Chicago in 1944.

Together with his father, Hiroshi and Dorothy decided to lease a large apartment building and annex at 1039 N. LaSalle and 119-127 W. Maple Street in Chicago in June 1944. These buildings, called LaSalle Mansion and Annex, became a vital community apartment house where many Japanese Americans coming out of internment camp were able to secure housing. In addition, Hiroshi and his parents purchased a nearby farm in Argos, Indiana to grow Japanese produce. Hiroshi’s parents lived on the farm in the spring and summer to cultivate the produce and would bring it into the city to sell it at local Japanese American grocery stores. Meanwhile, Hiroshi and Dorothy operated LaSalle Mansion. At the same time, Hiroshi worked for Firestone Tire Company and often returned to the suburbs to help his previous employer with their gardens.

Eventually in 1945, Hiroshi’s father and brother opened their own grocery store at Clark and Division Streets near LaSalle Mansion to sell their produce.

From approximately 1948 to 1962, the Kanekos purchased and lived in a six-flat building at 1020-1022 N. Clark in Chicago very near LaSalle Mansion. They rented out two apartments, two stores on the first level, and lived in one apartment while Dorothy’s parents lived in the other apartment. Hiroshi worked throughout the north side of the city doing carpentry work and restoring old mansions. Dorothy worked at home raising their three children: Donna (b. 1944), Cheryl (b. 1947, called “Cherie”), and Kevin (b. 1950). Their children attended Ogden Elementary School and then their daughters attended Lane Technical High School. Dorothy was active with the Ogden School Parent-Teacher Association. Both Donna and Cherie graduated from Oberlin College, obtained Master’s degrees, and attended universities in Tokyo, Japan. Donna studied at International Christian University and Cherie studied at Waseda University.

From approximately 1962 to 2000, the couple lived at 1226 W. Argyle in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago. Dorothy and Hiroshi were active members of Christian Fellowship Church. This church eventually merged with Ravenswood Fellowship United Methodist Church. From 1972 to 1985, Dorothy worked at the JASC. She started a program for elders in the Japanese American community to keep them active and healthy with activities such as restaurant visits and cultural outings, and with services such as home delivered meals. Presently, the JASC is regarded as offering one of the first adult day service programs for seniors in the city of Chicago begun with, among others, Dorothy’s efforts and ideas.

Hiroshi later sold Japanese antiques and made kites, and Dorothy and Hiroshi dedicated much of their time to the Ravenswood Fellowship United Methodist Church. Because of their dedication to the community, they were selected as the Japanese American Community Service Awardees at the Asian American Coalition Lunar New Year celebration in 2001.

Scope and Content
This collection contains items collected by Hiroshi Kaneko related to relocation of Japanese Americans, primarily items from Tule Lake, California from 1942 to 1945. Approximately half the collection is camp newsletters, including large runs of the Tulean Dispatch and Newell Star, and a handful of issues of the Christian News Letter, Pacific Cable, Pinedale Logger, and Tule Lake Cooperator. The rest of the collection includes correspondence, printed materials and pamphlets, newspaper clippings, art, and other materials. Some of the items relate to the 2nd Semi-Annual Young People’s Christian Conference (YPCC). The art includes a watercolor by Hal Takahashi, and poems in Japanese in ink and paint on oversized strips of paper.

Related Materials
There is a collection of personal materials of Hiroshi and Dorothy Kaneko at the Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) (a finding aid is online at http://gencat.eloquent-systems.com/customers/jasc/Dorothy_and_Hiroshi_Kaneko_Papers/Dorothy_and_Hiroshi_Kaneko_Papersd.html). There is also an oral history with Hiroshi Kaneko as part of a larger project, the REgenerations Oral History Project, online through Calisphere. The transcript is under the ‘interviews’ tab, under Hiroshi Kaneko.

Arrangement
Materials are organized by subject.

Indexing Terms
Japanese Americans--Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
Tule Lake Relocation Center
Tulean Dispatch
Newell Star

Container list for the Hiroshi Kaneko papers.