Finding aid for the Hugo W. Wolter Papers

Collection number: 97.329

Descriptive Summary
Title: Hugo W. Wolter papers  
Dates (inclusive): 1943-1964  
Dates (bulk): 1943-1945  
Collection number: 97.329  
Collection Size: .8 linear feet (2 boxes, plus objects)  
Repository: Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
Creator: Wolter, Hugo W.  

Abstract: This collection contains documents, objects, and ephemera from the War Relocation Authority (primarily at the Gila River Relocation Center), collected and/or written by Hugo Wolter. Items date primarily from 1943-1945, and include office papers, correspondence, reports, yearbooks, pamphlets and programs, and other objects.


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  

Acquisition Information  
Acquired in 1997 as a gift in memory of Hugo W. Wolter.

Processing Information  
Items were listed with one set of numbers initially, and then later cataloged at the item level with a new set of numbers. Original numbers may be on the fronts of documents at the top right corner. New numbers are on the back of documents at the bottom right corner. The second set of numbers and original arrangement were preserved, with the exception of documents that were accidentally split up which were reunited during re-processing. The collection was re-processed and a finding aid written in 2016 by Jamie Henricks. A few items may be missing, and are noted in the container list (a downloadable PDF at the bottom of this page).

Biographical Note  
Hugo W. Wolter worked for the War Relocation Authority (WRA) in multiple roles. He was Assistant Project Director in the Community Management Division at the Gila River Relocation Center from March 1943 to August 1944, and later moved back to Virginia to work in Washington D.C. where he was the Head of the Center Liaison Section in the Relocation Division. Before working for the WRA, Wolter worked in community management for the United Seamen’s Service. When the United Seamen’s Service budget was cut dramatically after policy conflicts, Wolter moved to work for the WRA at the request of John Provine. Relocation efforts were just beginning, and his experience in community management and relations was deemed useful. Wolter arrived at Gila River Relocation Center on March 3, 1943 and was made Assistant Director for Community Management on July 1, 1943. His wife Doris and daughter Sally lived with him at Gila, and Doris briefly worked as a nurse when the camp was short-staffed. The family returned to the Washington D.C. area when Wolter transferred to the Center Liaison Section August 16, 1944.

Scope and Content  
The collection is divided into documents, and objects and ephemera. Most of the documents relate to the War Relocation Authority (WRA), and most commonly to the Gila River Relocation Center.

The documents include articles; office documents (such as meeting minutes, notices, forms, and personnel papers); correspondence and memos; pamphlets; reports (including camp visit and trend reports, Community Management Division
weekly reports, and many assessments of relocation); and speeches. Some of the documents include letters to and from camp residents requesting information or thanking Wolter for his help and advice. Reports, letters, and handwritten notes about relocation show both the government’s thoughts about barriers to relocation and ways to speed the process, as well as camp residents’ fears and tentative plans for post-camp life. One report written by Wolter, “A Report of Experiences in WRA Gila River Center: A Staff Member’s Viewpoint,” gives approximately 20 pages of narrative with his personal thoughts and experience at Gila River after moving back to the Washington D.C. area. Charts and tables are included for unexpected pieces of information, including a breakdown of age differences between marriage partners of each generation.

The objects and ephemera include a pair of geta, camp school yearbooks, posters, maps, programs, two small paintings, and a collection of illustrations about the Japanese experience before and during World War II.

**Related Materials**
The museum holds collections of other camp administrators, including the collection of Marion and Lorne Bell (Topaz Relocation Center).

**Arrangement**
Items remain in their physical arrangement as originally processed. A new item list was created for intellectual arrangement, with documents arranged chronologically, and objects and ephemera listed last. The item list is available as a downloadable PDF at the bottom of this page.

**Indexing Terms**
Wolter, Hugo W.
Japanese Americans—Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
Gila River Relocation Center
United States. War Relocation Authority

[Item list for the Hugo W. Wolter papers.](#)