The records of the St. Louis Japanese American Citizens League were donated by Herm Smith of the UM-St. Louis sociology department on June 3, 1992.

Smith and co-researchers Roy Grob and Mary Burrows started collecting the St. Louis Japanese American Citizen's League records as part of an oral history project in June 1987. They began the project to document the history of the Japanese-American community in St. Louis. The St. Louis JACL provided a $2000 grant to begin the project in October 1987, intended to collect oral histories with the few remaining first generation Japanese immigrants (issei) and their second generation progeny (nisei).

The earliest records of Japanese in St. Louis date to the 1904 World's Fair, which led to the permanent settlement of Japanese families. One official from the Fair's Japanese pavilion settled in St. Louis to continue selling remaining souvenirs from Japan. By the beginning of the second World War, St. Louis had eleven Japanese families and a small number of ethnic Japanese students at local colleges.

During World War II, the US government confiscated the property of most ethnic Japanese and Japanese Americans and relocated them to internment camps in Arkansas, California, Utah and Wyoming. Upon their release after the war, many of these immigrants and citizens decided to resettle in areas other than those from which they had been relocated. Three hundred and fifty of these families settled in St. Louis. From 1952 to 1960, a hundred and fifty US servicemen settled in St. Louis with their Japanese wives.

The order to close the relocation camps came on December 15, 1945, requiring the incarcerated Japanese American citizens to find new homes. The detainees fleeing the camps in Rohwer and Jerome, Arkansas, arrived in large groups by train at St. Louis' Union Station, on their way back to the west coast. Previously in St. Louis, an 'Inter-American House' at the Bishop Tuttle Memorial building in Christ Church Cathedral held social events and made athletic facilities available to nisei Japanese. From that and a similar situation at the YWCA, an informal committee of nisei formed to sponsor social events and organize resettlement possibilities. Members of that committee helped form the JACL.

The St. Louis Japanese American Citizens League held its first organizational meeting on July 26, 1946 and its first executive committee meeting on August 17th of that year. The group held its earliest executive meetings at the Grace Methodist Church on Skinker and thereafter at the homes of its members. The JACL's first officers included president Henry Tani, Susan Yamashita, Fusa Doi, Grace Kawachi, Jean Otani, Rose Ogino, Dr. Jakson Eto, Robert Kratky, Fred Oshima and Al Morioka.
The group espouses to promote and protect equal rights for Americans of Japanese descent. Its constitution asserts that such citizens 'must develop the capacity to defend ourselves against and to thwart individual and collective deprivations should it not be able to forestall such threats through the achievement of its other goals.' Those other goals include promoting equal rights for all American citizens; providing social services, scholarships, legal services and other programs for its membership; and preserving the ethnic identity and history of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records of the Japanese American Citizens League document the experience of Japanese Americans relocated into internment camps as well as the history of the organization. It includes tapes and transcripts of the oral history interviews conducted as part of Herm Smith's documentation project begun in 1987. It also includes newsclippings and scrapbooks reflective of the Japanese experience in America going back to 1906. It primarily consists of material on the internment camps of World War II, including several books donated by project participants. The records of the JACL date mostly from the late 1950s and include newsletters, newsclippings and financial ledgers, with many minutes, correspondence and publications dating from the 1970s.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1 - Records, 1906-1988, folders 1-60
Series 3 - Oversize, 1904-1988, 6 newslipping volume
Series 4 - Tapes, 1987-1988, T682.1-T682.14
Series 5 - Photographs, 1910-1988, 1032 images

FOLDER LIST

BOX 1 (042106)

Series 1 - Records, 1906-1988

1. 'Better Americans for a Better America'
2. Etchugami sen nanga ('southern painting')
3. Hasegawa Family Tree
4. 'Japanese as a class, one step above slave.'
5. JACL Goals and Objectives
6. Interviewing Materials
7. Japanese and Oriental Pottery by Hazel H. Gorham
8. Japanese in Hawaii
9. Stationery
10. Newscipping, 1906
11. Booklets, 1919-1924
12. Tule Lake Relocation/Segregation Center, Newell, CA, 1942-1946
13. Civilian Exclusion Order, 4/1/42
14. Booklets, 1943-1945
15. Life at Tulelake article, 5/27/43
16. Tulelake Audit, 12/31/43
17. Melodies of Japanese Folk Songs, 1950
18. Orientation for Japanese and Ryukyuan, 1950
19. The Japanese Times, 1957
22. JACL 'Shutter Bugs' Financial Ledger, 1962-1969
23. JACL 'Shutter Bugs' Financial Ledger, 1969-1978
24. Full Moon Festival, 1961-1965
27. Asian Studies Classroom Materials, 1969

BOX 2 (042107)
29. Correspondence, 1973
30. JACL Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 1973
31. Newsletters, 1973
32. Manzamar Pilgrimage, 1974
33. Memoranda, 1976-1977
34. JACL Council Meeting, 6/78
35. Hasegawa Family, 1/14/80
37. 12th Biennial Midwest and Eastern District JACL Convention, 1981
38. Rohwer Center Memorial, 1982
39. Peter Morimoto interview, 10/12/81
40. Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Association Research Center Review, 1982
41. Project Proposal, 1984-1988
42. Project Proposal, 1984-1988
43. Project Proposal, 1984-1988
44. Project Proposal, 1984-1988
45. Correspondence, 1985
46. Newsletters, 1986
47. Newsletters, 1987
48. Richard T. Henmi, 2/10/87
49. 'In and Out of Tule Lake'' Montana, Spring 1987
50. Sakaguchi Tape Transcript, 11/24/87
51. Paul Maruyama Interview, 12/3/87
52. Paul Maruyama Interview, 12/3/87
53. Paul Maruyama Interview, 12/3/87, 2nd copy
54. JACL Inaugural Dinner, 1988
55. Michael Hosokawa Interview, 1988

BOX 3 (042108)
56. JACP Catalog, 1988
57. Names List, 1988
58. Oral History, 1988
59. Pauline Sakawara interview, 3/5/88
60. Mae Marshall Interview, 3/6/88


Atsuta Jingu
Executive Order 9066: The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans by Maisie and Richard Conrat, 1972 (first and second printings)
The Politics of Prejudice by Roger Daniels, 1962
From Japs to Japanese: The Evolution of Japanese-American Stereotypes by Dennis Ogawa, 1971

BOX 4 (042109)

Series 4 - Tapes, 1987-1988

682.1 Sister Prince, 10/22/87 (two cassettes)
682.2 Irene Cortinovis, Doing Oral Histories, 11/23/87
682.3 George Sakaguchi, 11/24/87 (two cassettes)
682.4 George Sakaguchi, 12/1/88 (two cassettes)
682.5 Paul Maruyama, 12/3/87 (two cassettes)
682.6 Paul Maruyama, 12/8/87 (two cassettes)
682.7 Paul Maruyama, 1/3/87 (two cassettes)
682.8 Dick Henmi, 2/21/88
682.9 Pauline Sakahara, 3/5/88 (two cassettes)
682.10 Mae Marshall, 3/6/88
682.11 Michael Hosokawa, 3/14/88 (two cassettes)
682.12 Pauline Sakahara, 3/21/88
682.13 Mae Marshall, 5/23/88
682.14 Pauline Sakahara, 10/3/88

Japanese in the United States Newsclippings Scrapbook

Volume 1. 1913-1920
Volume 2. 1920
Volume 3. 1920
Volume 4. 1920
Volume 5. 1920
Volume 6. 1920

'Cleveland's Japanese Americans,' Sunday Plain Dealer, 9/19/76
'Yelloe Pearl' portfolio
The Japan Times and Mail, 10/1/24
Map: Number of Japanese by Counties of the United States, 1970
Poster: 13th Annual Japanese Festival, 8/27/88
Poster: Full Moon Festival, 10/15/60
Oversize photocopies:
Hokubei Mainichi North American Daily 5/25/45
San Francisco Chronicle, 5/26/43
Tulean Dispatch Daily (Farewell edition of newsletter), Newell, California, 9/43
Poster: 'Instructions To All Persons of Japanese Descent'
Newscippings of Prince Fushimi's visit to the World's Fair, 1904

BOX 5 (061216)
"Japanese Americans in St. Louis" Student-prepared exhibit at WHMC-St. Louis

INDEX

Immigration
Internment
Japanese Americans
Relocation Camps
St. Louis Japanese American Citizens League
World War II