



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Chiura Obata Papers, 1891-2000, bulk 1942-1945, in the Archives of American Art

Rayna Andrews and Rihoko Ueno

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by  
the Terra Foundation for American Art and the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

2019/01/07

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Chiura Obata papers
<b>Date:</b>	1891-2000 (bulk 1942-1945)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.obatchiu
<b>Creator:</b>	Obata, Chiura
<b>Extent:</b>	3.7 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English and Japanese.
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The papers of Japanese-American artist and educator Chiura Obata measure 3.7 linear feet and date from circa 1891 to 2000 with the bulk of the material dating from 1942 to 1945. The collection contains biographical material primarily related to Obata's family's forced relocation from Berkeley to Tanforan detention center and incarceration at the Topaz Relocation center; correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues; writings by Chiura Obata and others; material related to the art schools Obata established at Tanforan and Topaz; teaching files and professional activities; exhibition files; printed material, including <i>TREK</i>, and <i>Topaz Moon: Chiura Obata's Art of Internment</i>; photographic material; and sketches and sketchbooks. There is a 0.1 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2021 that includes drawings, sketches and few files about Obata's period of incarceration at Tanforan assembly center and Topaz relocation center. Materials date from circa 1930-1960.</p>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Chiura Obata papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2018, 2020 and 2021 by Kimi Kodani Hill, Mia Kodani Brill, and Kei Kodani, Chiura Obata's grandchildren.

### Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2019 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

### Processing Information

The collection was minimally processed and a finding aid prepared by Rayna Andrews in 2019. The collection was fully processed, prepared for digitization, and described in a finding aid by Rihoko Ueno in 2019 with funding provided by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

Two small additions to the collection donated in 2020 and 2021 that were processed and the finding aid was updated by Rihoko Ueno.

## Preferred Citation

Chiura Obata papers, circa 1891-2000. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

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## Biographical / Historical

Chiura Obata (1885-1975) was a Japanese-American artist and educator. Born Zoroku Sato in Okayama prefecture in Japan, Obata showed artistic talent early in life. He joined the artist group Nihon Bijutsuin (the Japan Art Institute) and apprenticed with Tanryo Murata. Obata also trained in Western and modern Japanese art.

In 1903 Obata immigrated to the United States. He worked as a commercial designer and as an illustrator for newspapers including the *New World* and the *Japanese American*, San Francisco's two Japanese newspapers. In 1921 he co-founded the East West Art Society in San Francisco. He had his first exhibition for American audiences in 1928 and began teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1932.

In April of 1942, as a result of Executive Order 9066, Chiura Obata and his family were forcibly relocated from Berkeley to Tanforan detention center. By May he and fellow artists had established an art school with over 900 students. The school was successful and they were able to hold an exhibition outside of the camp in July. In September of 1942, the Obatas were moved to the Topaz War Relocation center, where Obata founded the Topaz Art School.

In the spring of 1943 in the wake of the controversy over loyalty oaths, Obata was attacked by another prisoner who considered him to be a spy. After recovering in Topaz's hospital, he was released for his own safety. He and his family moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where his son Gyo was attending architecture school.

In 1945 Obata was reinstated as an instructor at the University of California, Berkeley. He continued to exhibit his artwork and went on sketching and painting trips with the Sierra Club. In 1954 he became a naturalized citizen.

After his retirement from the University of California, Berkeley in 1953, Obata and his wife, Haruko, led tours to Japan to see Japanese gardens and art. He also gave lectures and demonstrations on Japanese brush painting and led tours through California. In 1965 Obata received the Order of the Sacred Treasure Emperor's Award for promoting good will and cultural understanding between the United States and Japan. Chiura Obata died in 1975 at the age of 90.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of Japanese-American artist and educator Chiura Obata measure 3.7 linear feet and date from circa 1891 to 2000 with the bulk of the material dating from 1942 to 1945. The collection contains biographical material primarily related to Obata's family's forced relocation from Berkeley to Tanforan detention center and incarceration at the Topaz Relocation center; correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues; writings by Chiura Obata and others; material related to the art schools Obata established at Tanforan and Topaz; teaching files and professional activities;

exhibition files; printed material, including *TREK*, and *Topaz Moon: Chiura Obata's Art of Internment*; photographic material; and sketches and sketchbooks. There is a 0.1 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2021 that includes drawings, sketches and few files about Obata's period of incarceration at Tanforan assembly center and Topaz relocation center. Materials date from circa 1930-1960.

Biographical material includes Chiura Obata's school diplomas and resumes, as well as material related to his family's forced relocation and incarceration at Tanforan and Topaz, and eventual resettlement. There is a small amount of biographical material on others, such as biographical information for George and Hisako Hibi, records of memorial meetings held for Perham Nahl, and material related to the forced relocation of Hiro Niwa.

The correspondence series consists of letters between Chiura Obata and family, friends, and colleagues, primarily while he was incarcerated at Tanforan and Topaz. Notable correspondents include John Boylin, Monroe Deutsch, Dorothy Parker, Miné Okubo, and Ruth Kingman. There are also letters of appreciation from students who attended the art schools established by Chiura Obata at Tanforan and Topaz. Of note are a series of letters Obata wrote to his wife during his trip to the Sierra Mountains in 1927.

Writings include diaries, lecture drafts, notes, and essays. Most of the writings are about art, but some are about Obata's experiences at Tanforan and Topaz. Also included in this series are translations of captions for Obata's paintings and poems and writings by others on various subjects.

The professional activities series contains materials related to Obata's work as an artist and educator from his time teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, to the Tanforan and Topaz Art Schools he founded. Most of the series consists of teaching files, but there are other files on projects, commissions, inventory lists, and art donations.

Exhibition files include a range of materials related to group and solo exhibitions of Chiura Obata's paintings. There are exhibition lists, price lists, catalogs, photographs, correspondence, loan forms, clippings, printed material, and one guest register.

Printed material includes exhibition announcements, catalogs, magazines, newspapers, clippings and calendars. Noteworthy items include copies of *TREK*, which were published by the Japanese Americans incarcerated at Topaz; printed material related to Miné Okubo; and copies of *Topaz Moon: Chiura Obata's Art of Internment*. There are also brochures for annual tours of Japan led by Chiura and Haruko Obata.

Photographic material includes an album from the Pan Pacific International Exposition and photographs of the Obata family's forced relocation from Berkeley, the Tanforan Art School, and their home in Webster Groves, Missouri, after they left the incarceration camps. There are also photographs used in the book *Topaz Moon* and photographs by the War Relocation Authority.

Artwork consists of a few watercolors, sketchbooks, and sketches, some of which were created during Obata's incarceration at Tanforan and Topaz. There is also a mockup of a Topaz magazine called *Shinsei* with pasted-in drawings. Other sketches were done for commercial work in St. Louis. There is an autograph book containing sketches and paintings by others.

Researchers should note that the term "evacuation" has been replaced in original folder titles with "forced relocation" for more accurate historical representation.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 8 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1894-1898, 1935-circa 1975 (Boxes 1, 6, OV 4; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1925-1992 (Boxes 1, 6; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings, 1924-circa 1964, circa 1986 (Boxes 1, 6; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 4: Professional Activities, 1913, 1924-1967 (Boxes 1-2, 6, OV 4; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 5: Exhibition Files, 1922-1953 (Boxes 2, 6, OV 4; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1901-circa 1906, 1925-2000 (Boxes 2, 6, OV 5; 1.3 linear feet)

- Series 7: Photographic Material, circa 1891-1969 (Boxes 3, 6; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 8: Artwork, 1917-circa 1945 (Boxes 3, 6, OVs 5, 7; 0.2 linear feet)

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

Asian American art  
Asian American artists  
Asian American educators  
Asian American painters  
Japanese American art  
Japanese American artists  
Japanese Americans -- Forced removal and internment -- 1942-1945  
World War, 1939-1945 -- Japanese Americans

### Types of Materials:

Diaries  
Drawings  
Sketchbooks

### Names:

Central Utah Relocation Center  
Obata, Gyo, 1923-  
Okubo, Miné, 1912-2001  
Tanforan Assembly Center (San Bruno, Calif.)

### Occupations:

Artists -- California  
Educators  
Painters -- California -- Berkeley

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1894-1898, 1935-circa 1975

#### 0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 6, OV 4)

**Scope and Contents:** Included in this series are Chiura Obata's biographical sketches and chronologies, school diplomas and resumes, and an interview transcript, as well as material related to his family's forced relocation and eventual resettlement. Also included is material related to another prisoner's attack on him while incarcerated in Topaz in 1943. There is a small amount of biographical material on other people, such as documents related to memorial meetings held for Perham Nahl, a friend, artist and Berkeley art professor; and material related to the forced relocation of Hiro Niwa, a fellow Japanese American who was also incarcerated at Tanforan and Topaz along with the Obata family during World War II; and George and Hisako Hibi, who were also at Topaz and Tanforan, George Hibi also helped found the Topaz art school alongside Obata.

**Arrangement:** A biographical sketch and chronologies on Chiura Obata are at the beginning of the series; the rest of the material is in chronological order.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages of notebooks and duplicates. A few publications have only had their covers and relevant pages digitized.

Box 6, Folder 1      [Biographical Chronology \(Partial\), \(bulk circa 1942-circa 1950\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 1      [Biographical Sketch and Chronology Excerpt, circa 1947-circa 1975](#)

Box OV 4, Folder 1      [Zoroku Sato \(Chiura Obata\) School Diplomas, 1894-1898](#)

Box 1, Folder 2      [Memorial Meetings for Perham W. Nahl, 1935-1939](#)

Box 1, Folder 3      [Forced Relocation of Obata Family, Applications for Certificate of Identification, 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 4      [Forced Relocation of Obata Family, Notebooks of Items Packed or Sold, 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 5      [Forced Relocation of Hiro Niwa and Material from Tanforan and Topaz, 1942-1945](#)

Box 1, Folder 6      [Tanforan Camp Visitor's Slip, 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 7      [Attack in Topaz and Hospitalization, 1943-1944](#)

Box 1, Folder 8      [Resettlement from Topaz to St. Louis and Return to Berkeley, 1943-1945](#)

Box 6, Folder 2      [Materials Related to George and Hisako Hibi, circa 1943-1963](#)

Box 6, Folder 3      [Lists of Art Supplies Expenses, circa 1946](#)

Box 6, Folder 4

[Voice of America Transcript of Obata Interview, 1949](#)

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1925-1992

### 0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 6)

**Scope and Contents:** This series includes correspondence between Obata and family, friends, and colleagues, primarily while he was incarcerated at Tanforan and Topaz. Occasional letters addressed to his family members are also included. Notable correspondents include John Boylin, Dorothea Lange, Monroe Deutsch, Dorothy Parker, Miné Okubo, and Ruth Kingman. Much of the correspondence in this series is in Japanese, including letters of appreciation from students who attended the art schools established by Chiura Obata at Tanforan and Topaz. Some correspondence includes explanatory notes summarizing letter contents or providing context, written by either Kimi Kodani Hill or Mia Kodani Brill, Obata's grandchildren who donated the collection to the archives. Noteworthy material includes a series of letters Obata wrote to his wife Haruko during his 1927 trip to the Sierras in California.

**Arrangement:** Chiura Obata letter drafts to unidentified correspondents are at the beginning of the series, followed by one folder of alphabetically arranged correspondence from a late addition to the collection. The rest of the correspondence in the series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Letters and comments from students and Christmas and greeting cards are housed at the end of the series.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates.

Box 1, Folder 9	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Letter Drafts to Unidentified Correspondents, circa 1942-circa 1945</a>
Box 6, Folder 5	<a href="#">Alphabetical Correspondence from Addition to Papers, B-W, 1929-1992</a>
Box 1, Folder 10	<a href="#">Adams, Ansel and Virginia, circa 1944</a>
Box 1, Folder 11	<a href="#">Blake, Beth, 1935-1943, 1975</a> Notes: This file includes notes from an interview with Kim Kodani and Beth Blake, a transcript of Beth Blake's oral history, and a profile of Blake in the February 1939 <i>California Monthly</i> .
Box 1, Folder 12	<a href="#">Boylin, John "Jack", 1942-1944</a>
Box 1, Folder 13	<a href="#">Breed, Eleanor, 1942-1943</a> Notes: Includes a photocopy of typescript "Eleanor Breed Church Diary."
Box 1, Folder 14	<a href="#">Buckham, Margaret, 1942-1943</a>
Box 1, Folder 15	<a href="#">B, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943</a>
Box 1, Folder 16	<a href="#">C, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943</a>
Box 6, Folder 6	<a href="#">Deutsch, Monroe E. (University of California, Berkeley), 1934-1939</a>
Box 1, Folder 17	<a href="#">Deutsch, Monroe E. (University of California, Berkeley), 1942-1945</a>
Box 1, Folder 18	<a href="#">Dungan, H. L., 1942-1945</a>

Box 1, Folder 19	D, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 20	Emery, Edwin, 1941-1942
Box 1, Folder 21	Fisher, Galen M., 1942-1945
Box 1, Folder 22	Frederick, Mrs. Clarence J., 1943-1944
Box 1, Folder 23	F, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 24	G, Miscellaneous, 1942
Box 1, Folder 25	Haack, Arnold J., 1943
Box 1, Folder 26	Heinz, Doris Hale, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 27	H, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 28	Itow, Sashima, 1943-1944
Box 1, Folder 29	I-J, Miscellaneous, 1942-1944
Box 6, Folder 7	Kerr, Clark, 1964
Box 1, Folder 30	Kingman, Ruth, 1942-1944, 1986 Notes: Includes a transcript of Ruth King's oral history.
Box 1, Folder 31	K, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 32	Lange, Dorothea (Taylor), 1942
Box 1, Folder 33	Mission Board, 1939-1943
Box 1, Folder 34	M, Miscellaneous, 1942-1944
Box 1, Folder 35	N, Miscellaneous, 1925-1943
Box 1, Folder 36	Obata, Gyo and Kimio, 1943
Box 1, Folder 37	Obata, Haruko (to Chiura Obata in St. Louis), 1943
Box 1, Folder 38	Obata, Kané, 1943
Box 1, Folder 39	Okubo, Miné, 1948-1954, 1975
Box 1, Folder 40	O, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943

Box 1, Folder 41	Parker, Dorothy, 1942-1944
Box 1, Folder 42	P, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943
Box 6, Folder 8	Revue Des Arts, circa 1937
Box 1, Folder 43	Roosevelt, Eleanor and Correspondence About Painting Moonlight Over Topaz, Utah, 1942-1943, 1962, 1986-1992 Notes: Also includes clippings.
Box 1, Folder 44	Russell Sage Foundation, 1946-1947
Box 1, Folder 45	R, Miscellaneous, 1927, 1942-1949
Box 1, Folder 46	Santa Fe School Students, 1938
Box 1, Folder 47	Schenkofsky, Henry D., 1942-1943
Box 6, Folder 9	Sierra Trip Letters from Chiura Obata to Haruko Obata, 1927 June 20-26 Notes: Includes Japanese original and English translations.
Box 6, Folder 10	Sierra Trip Letters from Chiura Obata to Haruko Obata, 1927 June 29-30 Notes: Includes Japanese original and English translations.
Box 6, Folder 11	Sierra Trip Letters from Chiura Obata to Haruko Obata, 1927 July 1-12 Notes: Includes Japanese original and English translations.
Box 6, Folder 12	Sierra Trip Letters from Chiura Obata to Haruko Obata, 1927 July 16-25 Notes: Includes Japanese original and English translations.
Box 6, Folder 13	Sierra Trip Letters from Chiura Obata to Haruko Obata, 1927 July 26-30 Notes: Includes Japanese original and English translations.
Box 1, Folder 48	Simmons, Dorothy, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 49	S, Miscellaneous, 1941-1944
Box 1, Folder 50	Tanforan Wartime Civil Control Administration, 1942
Box 1, Folder 51	Topaz Art School, 1942-1943 Notes: Letters written by Chiura Obata on behalf of Topaz Art School to Topaz Center administration.
Box 1, Folder 52	Topaz War Relocation Authority, 1943-1945
Box 1, Folder 53	T, Miscellaneous, 1942-1943

Box 1, Folder 54	<a href="#">University of California, Berkeley, 1941-1950</a>
Box 1, Folder 55	<a href="#">University of North Carolina, 1937-1938</a> Notes: Includes a list of paintings exhibited at the University of North Carolina, as well as a letter from Kalamazoo Institute of Art regarding the UNC exhibition.
Box 1, Folder 56	<a href="#">University of Redlands, 1941</a>
Box 1, Folder 57	<a href="#">U, Miscellaneous, 1943-1944</a>
Box 1, Folder 58	<a href="#">Washington University, 1942-1945</a>
Box 1, Folder 59	<a href="#">Weidman, Merle and Herald, 1942</a>
Box 1, Folder 60	<a href="#">W-Y, Miscellaneous, 1942</a>
Box 1, Folder 61	<a href="#">Unidentified Correspondent, circa 1945</a>
Box 1, Folder 62	<a href="#">Letters and Comments from California Students, 1933-1934</a>
Box 1, Folder 63	<a href="#">Letters of Appreciation from Tanforan and Topaz Art School Students, 1942-1943</a>
Box 1, Folder 64	<a href="#">Christmas and Greeting Cards, A-H, circa 1943-circa 1944</a>
Box 1, Folder 65	<a href="#">Christmas and Greeting Cards, K-Y, and Unidentified Correspondents, 1943-1944</a>

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## Series 3: Writings, 1924-circa 1964, circa 1986

### 0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 6)

**Scope and Contents:** This series contains writings by Chiura Obata, including 3 diaries, mostly from his time at Topaz incarceration camp; handwritten and typescript drafts of lectures; notes; and essays. Most of the writings, especially the lectures, are about art, but there are some writings about his experience inside the incarceration camps. Some writings were probably delivered to classes, but it is not clear if they were lectures or essays. There is a batch of Japanese and English translations of captions for a series of paintings by Obata. Also included in this series are writings by others on issues related to second generation Japanese Americans, as well as translations of the Japanese text accompanying Obata's paintings. Many of the writings are in Japanese.

**Arrangement:** The diaries are at the beginning of the series, followed by writings in alphabetical order by title. The remainder of the series is loosely arranged by type of writing such as captions for paintings, lectures, notes, reports, and writings by others.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, and duplicates.

Box 1, Folder 66	<a href="#">Diary 1 from Topaz, circa 1943</a>
Box 1, Folder 67	<a href="#">Diary 2 from Topaz, 1943</a>
Box 1, Folder 68	<a href="#">Diary from Topaz and St. Louis Resettlement, circa 1943</a>
Box 1, Folder 69	<a href="#">"Art and Individuality" Lecture Notes for University of California Student Exhibition, 1933</a>
Box 1, Folder 70	<a href="#">"Boku-ga" and Explanations of Other Painting Techniques, circa 1930-circa 1950</a>
Box 1, Folder 71	<a href="#">"Dots and Lines", circa 1933-circa 1935</a>
Box 1, Folder 72	<a href="#">"Individuality and Painting", 1933</a>
Box 1, Folder 73	<a href="#">"Japanese Architecture and Its Original Background", 1933</a>
Box 1, Folder 74	<a href="#">"Kiin-Seido: The Fundamental Idea of Japanese Painting", circa 1933-1935</a>
Box 1, Folder 75	<a href="#">"Lecture on Japanese Painting", circa 1930-circa 1950</a>
Box 1, Folder 76	<a href="#">"Natural Rhythm and Its Harmony," Address at California School of Fine Art San Francisco Society of Women Artists, 1933</a>
Box 1, Folder 77	<a href="#">"Nature of California As I See It", 1928</a>
Box 1, Folder 78	<a href="#">"Self-Reflection in Art", 1935</a>
Box 1, Folder 79	<a href="#">"Sumi (Ink-Stick) and the Oriental Arts" and "Bokushoku, Sumi Iro", 1935</a>

Box 1, Folder 80	"Three Fundamental Strokes", circa 1930-circa 1950
Box 1, Folder 81	"The Three Great Essentials in Art Production", circa 1933-circa 1935
Box 1, Folder 82	"Two Methods of Gyotaku", 1956 Notes: Also includes correspondence.
Box 1, Folder 83	"Wood Block Prints", circa 1936
Box 1, Folder 84	"'Ye-fude' Japanese Painting Brushes", circa 1930-circa 1950
Box 6, Folder 14	Captions for Paintings (Undated), circa 1960-circa 1965
Box 6, Folder 15	Captions for Series of 105 Paintings by Obata (Japanese text), 1960
Box 6, Folder 16	Captions for Series of 105 Paintings by Obata (English Translation), 1960
Box 6, Folder 17	Captions for Series of 12 Paintings by Obata (Japanese and English), 1965
Box 1, Folder 85	Lecture Notes, 1933-1938
Box 1, Folder 86	Lecture Series on Perham W. Nahl and Ukiyoe Artists, 1936
Box 1, Folder 87	Lectures, Speeches, and Other Writings from Topaz, circa 1942-circa 1943
Box 6, Folder 18	Miscellaneous Notes, Artist Statements, Writings, circa 1927-circa 1935
Box 1, Folder 88	Notes and Outlines for Materials and Pigments in Japanese Painting, circa 1930-circa 1950
Box 1, Folder 89	Notes, Lists, and License Related to Gyotaku (Fishing), 1924, 1945-circa 1964
Box 1, Folder 90	"Report to Mayor C. W. Culp", circa 1943
Box 1, Folder 91	Statement on Forced Relocation and Activities (Incomplete), circa 1945-circa 1960
Box 1, Folder 92	Translation of Tanforan and Topaz Paintings and Poems, circa 1986 Notes: Translation from Japanese to Romaji and English. Romanji refers to the romanization of Japanese using Latin script. This file also includes some English translations.
Box 1, Folder 93	Writings About Topaz Relocation Center and School, circa 1942-circa 1943
Box 6, Folder 19	Writings by Others - "America that Yumeji Saw" by Unknown, circa 1995
Box 1, Folder 94	Writings by Others - Excerpt of Essay on Sumi by D. T. Suzuki, circa 1930s

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|------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 95 | <a href="#">Writings by Others - Lectures on Japanese Art by Unknown, circa 1930-circa 1935</a><br>Notes:           Lectures possibly by Perham Nahl. |
| Box 1, Folder 96 | <a href="#">Writings by Others - Notes on Chiura Obata's Lectures by Beth Blake, 1934</a>   |
| Box 1, Folder 97 | <a href="#">Writings by Others - Writings on the Nisei (2nd Generation Japanese Americans) by Various Authors, circa 1935-circa 1942</a>              |

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## Series 4: Professional Activities, 1913, 1924-1967

### 0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2, 6, OV 4)

**Scope and Contents:** The professional activities series contains materials related to Obata's work as an artist and art educator, including records from his time teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, to the Tanforan and Topaz Art Schools he established, and documents about other activities within the relocation centers. Most of the series consists of teaching files, but there are other files on projects and commissions such as his set design for *Madame Butterfly*, art inventory lists, and the donation of a painting to the Japanese American Citizens League.

**Arrangement:** This series is arranged in chronological order.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, duplicates, and student grades. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.

Box 1, Folder 98	<a href="#">Portola Festival - Union Square, 1913</a>
Box 1, Folder 99	<a href="#">Certificate of Copyright Registration, Telephone Directory Covers, 1924</a>
Box 1, Folder 100	<a href="#">Madame Butterfly Opera Set, 1924</a>
Box 1, Folder 101	<a href="#">Chiura Obata School of Painting Course List, circa 1932</a>
Box 1, Folder 102	<a href="#">University of California Course Outlines, 1932-1936</a>
Box 6, Folder 20	<a href="#">University of California Memos and Letters of Appointment, 1932-1941</a>
Box 6, Folder 21	<a href="#">University of California Course Outlines and Student Grades, 1936-1941</a>
Box 6, Folder 22	<a href="#">University of California Course Catalogs, 1938-1941</a>
Box 1, Folder 103	<a href="#">Yosemite Outdoor Sketching Course List of Materials, 1938</a>
Box 1, Folder 104	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Art Inventory and Price Lists at Best's Studio, 1938-1941</a>
Box 1, Folder 105	<a href="#">California Monthly Covers for California's Colorful Campuses, 1939-1940 (Painting Portfolio), 1939-1947</a>
Box 1, Folder 106	<a href="#">Obata Studio Blank Letterhead and Invoice Forms, 1939-circa 1942</a>
Box 1, Folder 107	<a href="#">Tanforan Art School - Clippings, 1942</a>
Box OV 4, Folder 2	<a href="#">Tanforan Art School - Clippings, 1942</a>
Box 1, Folder 108	<a href="#">Tanforan Art School - Exhibition List of Art by Students and Teachers, circa 1942</a> Notes: Work by students and teachers at Tanforan shown in traveling exhibition at Berkeley and Pasadena Art Institute



Box 1, Folder 109	Tanforan Art School - Letter of Intent to Establish Art School, 1942
Box 1, Folder 110	Tanforan Art School - Record Book, 1942
Box 1, Folder 111	Tanforan Art School - "Survey of Obata Art Project" and "Proposed Project", 1942
Box 2, Folder 1	Topaz Art School - "Adult Education Program Guide", 1943
Box 2, Folder 2	Topaz Art School - Art School and High School Commencement, circa 1943
Box OV 4, Folder 3	Topaz Art School - Clippings, 1942-1943
Box 2, Folder 3	Topaz Art School - "History and Development of Topaz Art School" by Matsusaburo Hibi, circa 1942
Box 2, Folder 4	Topaz Art School - Materials Related to Exhibits and Student Art, 1942-1943
Box 2, Folder 5	Topaz Art School - Student Roster for Sewing and Knitting Classes, circa 1943
Box 2, Folder 6	Lectures and Demonstrations in Salt Lake City, Utah, 1943
Box 6, Folder 23	University of California Student Grades, 1945-1946
Box 2, Folder 7	University of California Course Outlines, 1946
Box 6, Folder 24	University of California Miscellaneous Course Notes, circa 1946-circa 1950
Box 6, Folder 25	University of California Course Catalog, 1947
Box 6, Folder 26	University of New Mexico Course Outline and Student Grades, 1949
Box 6, Folder 27	University of California Student Grades, 1950-1954
Box 2, Folder 8	Donation of Glorious Struggle to the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), 1965-1967

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## Series 5: Exhibition Files, 1922-1953

### 0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 2, 6, OV 4)

**Scope and Contents:** This series includes a range of materials related to group and solo exhibitions of Chiura Obata's work. There are exhibition lists, price lists, catalogs, photographs, correspondence, loan forms, clippings, printed material, and one guest register.

**Arrangement:** The exhibitions files are arranged in chronological order.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.

Box 6, Folder 28	East West Art Society Second Exhibition - San Francisco Museum of Art (1922), 1922-1923
Box 2, Folder 9	Chiura Obata Exhibition in Los Angeles - Guest Register (1925), circa 1925
Box 6, Folder 29	Chiura Obata Paintings Exhibition - East West Gallery (1928), 1928
Box 2, Folder 10	Exhibition and Presentation of Painting - Pescadero Union High School (1928), 1928, 1978 Notes: Includes letters of appreciation and gratitude from students.
Box 2, Folder 11	Sendai Library Exhibition (1929), 1929
Box OV 4, Folder 4	Sendai Library Exhibition (1929), 1929
Box 2, Folder 12	Brush and Sumi Exhibition - Golden Gate Institute (1934 March-April), 1934
Box 2, Folder 13	Chiura Obata Exhibition - Tilly Polak, Inc. (1935), 1935
Box OV 4, Folder 5	Chiura Obata Exhibition - Tilly Pollak, Inc. (1935), 1935
Box 2, Folder 14	Chiura Obata Paintings Exhibition - University of California Art Gallery (1937), 1937
Box OV 4, Folder 6	Chiura Obata Paintings Exhibition - University of California Art Gallery (1937), 1937
Box 2, Folder 15	Chiura Obata Exhibition - Greensboro Federal Art Center (1937-1938), 1938
Box 2, Folder 16	Chiura Obata Paintings Exhibition - E.B. Crocker Art Gallery (1938), 1938
Box OV 4, Folder 7	Chiura Obata Paintings Exhibition - E.B. Crocker Art Gallery (1938), 1938
Box 2, Folder 17	Golden Gate International Exposition (1939), 1939-1940
Box 2, Folder 18	Chiura Obata Silk Paintings Exhibition - Santa Barbara State College (1941), 1941
Box 2, Folder 19	Relocation Center Art Exhibit - Friends Center (1943), 1943

Box 2, Folder 20	<a href="#">Veteran's Exhibition - University of California, Berkeley (1946), 1943, 1946</a>
Box 2, Folder 21	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Exhibition - Raymond and Raymond Galleries (1946), 1946</a>
Box 2, Folder 22	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Exhibition - University of Southern California (1946), 1946</a>
Box 2, Folder 23	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Exhibitions - Maxwell's Gallery (1947), 1947-1956</a> Notes: Includes paintings inventory and list of artworks sold over the course of several years.
Box OV 4, Folder 8	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Exhibition - Maxwell's Gallery (1948), 1948</a>
Box 2, Folder 24	<a href="#">Chiura Obata Painting Exhibition - Doll and Richards, Inc. (1950), 1950-1951</a>
Box 6, Folder 30	<a href="#">"Thirty Five Views of California" by Chiura Obata - Miami University (1953), circa 1931, 1953</a>
Box 6, Folder 31	<a href="#">Miscellaneous Exhibition Lists, circa 1938-circa 1953</a>

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## Series 6: Printed Material, 1901-circa 1906, 1925-2000

### 1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 2, 6, OV 5)

**Scope and Contents:** Printed material includes exhibition announcements, catalogs, magazines, newspapers, and clippings, and calendars. Noteworthy items include brochures for tours of Japan led by Chiura and Haruko Obata; copies of *TREK* and *Topaz Times* which were published by Japanese Americans incarcerated at Topaz; copies of *California Monthly* with covers by Obata; material from the War Relocation Authority; a copy of the 1948 *Sierra Club Base Camp*; printed material related to Miné Okubo; and copies of books by and about Obata.

**Arrangement:** For the most part, the contents of this series are arranged by publication type such as books, exhibition catalogs, magazines, newspapers clippings, etc. However, there are a few folders which are arranged by subject, which reflect the order in which they were arranged when donated to the archives.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.

Box 2, Folder 25	<a href="#">Book - The Four Immigrants Manga: A Japanese Experience in San Francisco, 1904-1924 by Henry Kiyama, 1999</a>
Box 2, Folder 26	<a href="#">Book - The Second Generation Problem: Some Suggestions Toward Its Solution by Roy Hidemichi Akagi, 1926</a>
Box 2, Folder 27	<a href="#">Book - Sierra Club Base Camp, 1948</a>
Box 6, Folder 32	<a href="#">Book - Sumie by Chiura Obata, 1967</a>
Box 2, Folder 28	<a href="#">Book - Topaz Moon: Chiura Obata's Art of Internment, Edited with Text by Kimi Kodani Hill, 2000</a>
Box 2, Folder 29	<a href="#">Book - University of California - In Memoriam, 1978 September</a>
Box 6, Folder 33	<a href="#">Brochures of Japan Tours Led by the Obatas, 1950-1956</a>
Box 6, Folder 34	<a href="#">Brochures of Japan Tours Led by the Obatas, 1957-1959</a>
Box 6, Folder 35	<a href="#">Brochures of Japan Tours Led by the Obatas, 1960-1962</a>
Box 6, Folder 36	<a href="#">Brochures of Japan Tours Led by the Obatas, 1963-1965</a>
Box 6, Folder 37	<a href="#">Brochures of Japan Tours Led by the Obatas, 1966-1968</a>
Box 6, Folder 38	<a href="#">Brochures of Japan Tours Led by the Obatas, 1969-1974</a>
Box 2, Folder 30	<a href="#">Calendar With Reproductions of Chiura Obata Work, 1996</a>
Box 2, Folder 31	<a href="#">Engagement Calendar for University of California with Paintings by Chiura Obata, 1948</a>

Image(s): University of California Engagement Calendar with Paintings by Chiura Obata

Box 6, Folder 39	Exhibition Announcement, 1927
Box 2, Folder 32	Exhibition Announcements, circa 1930-1953
Box 6, Folder 40	Exhibition Catalog, 1924
Box 2, Folder 33	Exhibition Catalogs, 1925-1933
Box 2, Folder 34	Exhibition Catalogs, 1933-1934
Box 2, Folder 35	Exhibition Catalogs, 1935
Box 2, Folder 36	Exhibition Catalogs, 1936-1942, 1952
Box 2, Folder 37	Magazines and Journals, 1934-1939
Box 2, Folder 38	Magazines and Journals, 1943-1948
Box 2, Folder 39	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1938-1939, 1945
Box 6, Folder 41	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1939
Box 6, Folder 42	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1940 January-March
Box 6, Folder 43	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1940 April-June
Box 6, Folder 44	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1946
Box 6, Folder 45	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1947 January-March
Box 6, Folder 46	Magazines and Journals - California Monthly, 1947 April-June
Box 2, Folder 40	Magazines and Journals - TREK, 1942-1943
Box 6, Folder 47	Newspaper - Topaz Times, 1942-1943
Box OV 5, Folder 1	Newspaper Clippings, 1901-1903
Box 6, Folder 48	Newspaper Clippings, 1928-1938
Box 2, Folder 41	Newspaper Clippings, 1932-1940
Box 6, Folder 49	Newspaper Clippings, 1940-circa 1942

Box 2, Folder 42	Newspaper Clippings, 1942-1945
Box OV 5, Folder 2	Newspaper Clippings, 1942-1945
Box 2, Folder 43	Newspaper Clippings, 1946-1987
Box OV 5, Folder 3	Newspaper Clippings, 1946-1987
Box 6, Folder 50	Newspaper Clippings, 1965-1995
Box 2, Folder 44	Printed Material on 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, circa 1906
Box 6, Folder 51	Printed Material on 1927 Sierra Trip, 1927-circa 1960
Box 2, Folder 45	Printed Material on Charles Christian Nahl and Nahl Family, 1937
Box 2, Folder 46	Printed Material on Miné Okubo, 1972-1978
Box OV 5, Folder 4	Printed Material on Miné Okubo, 1965-1966
Box 2, Folder 47	Printed Material on Forced Relocation and War Relocation Authority Publications, 1934, 1942-1945 Notes: Includes a typed copy of <i>Americans in Concentration Camps</i> by Harry Paxton Howard from the September 1942 issue of <i>The Crisis</i> . Also included is <i>New Homes for the Issei</i> , 1945, a WRA publication, in Japanese.
Box 2, Folder 48	Printed Material on Forced Relocation and War Relocation Authority Publications, circa 1978-1995

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## Series 7: Photographic Material, circa 1891-1969

### 0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 3, 6)

**Scope and Contents:** Included in this series are photographs for the book *Topaz Moon: Chiura Obata's Art of Internment*, photographs of the Obata family's forced relocation from Berkeley, photos from the War Relocation Authority, and photographs of their home in Webster Groves, Missouri. Also included are photos of works of art and a photograph album from the Pan Pacific International Exposition. There are only a few photographs of Chiura Obata scattered throughout the series.

**Arrangement:** The photographs used in the book *Topaz Moon* are at the beginning of the series. The rest of the series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank versos of photographs and duplicates.

Box 6, Folder 52      [Chiura Obata and Family, 1963, 2017](#)  
Notes:                Includes one snapshot of Obata, the rest are printouts of digital images.

Box 3, Folder 1      [Photographs for the Book, Topaz Moon \(2000\), circa 1891-circa 1943](#)  
Notes:                Includes photographs of Chiura Obata and family, photographs of Tanforan Art School and students taken by Dorothea Lange, and photographs of Obata's artwork.

Box 3, Folder 2      [Before Singing, Portrait of Talia Savanieva \(Thalia Sabanieva\) by Chiura Obata, circa 1924](#)

Box 3, Folder 3      [Forced Relocation From Berkeley, 1942](#)  
Notes:                Includes 2 photocopies of photographs of Chiura Obata and his wife Haruko.

Box 3, Folder 4      [Gyosei Hall Exhibition, San Francisco, 1930 November](#)

Box 3, Folder 5      [Hawai'i and Fruit Industry, circa 1953](#)

Box 3, Folder 6      [Home in Webster Groves, Missouri, 1945](#)

Box 3, Folder 7      [Photograph Album of Pan Pacific International Exposition, 1915](#)

Box 3, Folder 8      [San Francisco After 1906 Earthquake, circa 1906](#)

Box 3, Folder 9      [S.S. Shinyo Maru Trip, 1928 November](#)  
Notes:                Includes steamship company booklet in Japanese.

Box 3, Folder 10     [Uesugi Kenshin Portrait \(1903\) by Chiura Obata, 1969](#)

Box 6, Folder 53     [Untitled Painting of a Woman, circa 1931](#)

Box 3, Folder 11     [War Relocation Authority Photographs, circa 1944-circa 1945](#)

Notes: Includes photographs of Chiura Obata and family, photographs of an exhibition of art by Japanese Americans during their incarceration, and photocopies of images held at the National Archives and associated catalog records.

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## Series 8: Artwork, 1917-circa 1945

### 0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 3, 6, OV5 5, 7)

**Scope and Contents:** This series contains sketches and two sketchbooks, some of which were created during Obata's incarceration at Tanforan and Topaz. There is also a mockup of a Topaz magazine titled *Shinsei*, which includes several pasted-in drawings by Obata. There are a few watercolor drawings based on a trip to Hawaii (see Hawaii images in photographic material series). Also included is an autograph book containing sketches and paintings by others and sketches Obata created for commercial work in St. Louis.

**Arrangement:** The bulk of the material in this series is in alphabetical order by folder title. The sketches and a few drawings are grouped in chronological order in order to keep the material from Tanforan and Topaz together.

**Available Formats:** The bulk of this series has been digitized. Blank pages of sketchbooks have not been digitized.

Box 3, Folder 12	<a href="#">Autograph Book With Sketches and Notes From Others, 1917-1927</a>
Box 3, Folder 13	<a href="#">Hawaii Watercolor Drawings, circa 1935</a>
Box 3, Folder 14	<a href="#">Modern Dance Sketches, circa 1933-1934</a>
Box 3, Folder 15	<a href="#">Sketch on Verso of Letter Draft to Dorothy Swaine Thomas, circa 1943</a>
Box 3, Folder 16	<a href="#">Sketchbook, 1943</a>
Box 3, Folder 17	<a href="#">Sketchbook, 1943-1944</a>
Oversize 7, Folder 1	<a href="#">Sketches from Berkeley Forced Relocation, 1942 April 25-28</a>
Box 6, Folder 54	<a href="#">Sketches from Berkeley Forced Relocation, 1942 April 30</a> Notes: Sketches depict people boarding buses and loading Belkin trucks for forced relocation to camps.
Box 6, Folder 55	<a href="#">Sketches from Tanforan, circa 1942</a>
Oversize 7, Folder 2	<a href="#">Drawings for Tanforan Class Demonstrations, circa 1942</a> Notes: Ink and watercolor drawings of flowers and birds.
Box 6, Folder 56	<a href="#">Drawings for Mockup of Topaz Magazine Shinsei, 1943</a>
Box 6, Folder 57	<a href="#">Sketches from Topaz, 1943</a> Notes: Sketches depict Topaz landscape, barracks, and figures.
Box 3, Folder 18	<a href="#">Sketches Created While in Topaz, 1942-circa 1943</a> Notes: Does not appear to consist of sketches of Topaz Relocation Center.
Box 3, Folder 19	<a href="#">Sketches for Commercial Work in St. Louis, circa 1945</a>

Box OV 5, Folder 5

[Sketches for Commercial Work in St. Louis, circa 1945](#)

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