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National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Gerald Lamboley Collection of Japanese-American Letters

NMAH.AC.0450

Jamie T. Ravenscraft

1992

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Gerald Lamboley Collection of Japanese-American Letters
Date:	1942-1943
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0450
Creator:	Sato, Sanji (student) Satow, R. (student) Satow, Susama Paul (student) Lamboley, E. Gerald Sato, Kiyo (student) Komata, Tomi (student)
Extent:	0.12 Cubic feet (1 folder, 6 letters)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Letters from students of Japanese-American ancestry to Miss Cox, their former teacher at the Edward Kelley School in Sacramento, California. This teacher has been identified as Mary Aline Cox by Ms. Colleen Zoller, January 13, 2009.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Gerald Lamboley Collection of Japanese-American Letters

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by E. Gerald Lamboley, June 2, 1992.

Provenance

E. Gerald Lamboley, after attending the University of Wisconsin, arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1940 to work as an attorney for the Department of Labor. As World War II began, however, Gerald Lamboley was drafted and became a master sergeant in G 2, military intelligence, stationed in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Salt Lake City. He investigated the lives and reviewed the records of mostly young male Japanese internees, who sought to leave the internment centers.

One of his sources of information was a Miss Cox, a teacher at the Edward Kelley School in Sacramento, California. Many of her former students were Japanese American evacuees, and throughout the war they maintained contact with her by mail. She, in turn, offered Lamboley letters written to her by some of the young men he was investigating. Those that were not pertinent to his investigations were retained as personal possessions by Lamboley. Though he held an estimated fifty to sixty personal letters at one time, all but six that appealed to him personally were discarded over the years. He donated those remaining six to the Archives Center of the National Museum of American History on June 6, 1992.

Materials in Other Organizations

Materials at Other organizations

War Relocation Authority, Record Group 210, or those of the United States Commands, 1947 ,
Record Group 338, National Archives and records Administration

National Headquarters of the Japanese American Citizens League in San Francisco, California

Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California

Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Japanese American Documentary Collection, 1905-1945 (AC0305)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Jamie T. Ravenscraft, 1992

Preferred Citation

Gerald Lamboley Collection of Japanese-American Letters, 1942-1943, Archives Center,
National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Usage or copyright restrictions. Contact repository for further information.

Biographical / Historical

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 to bar "any and all persons" from certain sections of the United States for purposes of national defense. A reaction to the "yellow peril" "demonstrated" by the attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, the Executive Order would mean that all Japanese immigrants and Americans of Japanese ancestry would be required to "evacuate" the West Coast of the United States. By the end of this policy in 1946, over 120,000 men, women, and children had been forcefully relocated to various types of internment camps.

Not only had the possessions and lives of these people been disrupted, their privacy and Constitutional rights were ignored as the government thoroughly investigated their lives, looking for any signs of disloyalty to America. Early in 1943, tests were made of their "loyalty" as they were asked to forswear allegiance to the emperor of Japan, swear allegiance to the United States, and volunteer for military service.

Through programs established by the War Relocation Authority (WRA), internees were permitted to leave the camps permanently, provided they had a job or attended a college or university and passed additional government investigations. By 1943, 17,000 people had left the camps in this manner. Others left by joining the military. By 1946, the last permanent camp was dismantled.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains six letters dated 1942-1943 from former students of Japanese American ancestry to Miss Cox, a teacher at the Edward Kelley School in Sacramento, California. Three letters were written from inside a camp, while the others were written from outside of camp. The letters are arranged chronologically. Sanji Sato, a young male not yet out of high school, penned both Letters 1 and 3. The first dated June 12, 1942 was written from Pinedale "A.C." [Assembly Center]. This letter contains a brief description of the center, one of many used to keep internees until the ten more permanent camps were prepared to receive them, and its physical surroundings, as well a mention of the medical examination and vaccinations the evacuees underwent.

Letter 3, more lengthy in nature, covers the dates January 1, 1943, to March 6, 1943. Sent from Poston, Arizona (location of the largest relocation camp), Sato indicated the block and barrack numbers of his lodgings. The camp is defined by the arid surroundings, temperature, flora and fauna, and natural landmarks; its

inhabitants are defined by their New Year's Exhibition and Boy Scout Troops. Pertinent to the historian are Sato's opinion of the "loyalty" forms, why Japanese Americans should fight in World War II, and the behavior of other Poston residents. Also of interest are his personal discussions of his former life on the farm, his passion for the American flag, and remembrance of his dog.

Letter 2 was written by a student identified as "Kiyō" on December 26, 1942, in Garrett, Indiana while on vacation from college (later identified as Ms. Kiyō Sato). A former internee at Poston Relocation Center, she wrote of her reaction to school and dorm life, as well as her reaction, as a person of Japanese ancestry, to a Midwestern town. She expressed hope of ending any misconceptions and of the evacuees returning home "in one piece." Letter 4 is signed "R. Satow and family" and dated April 19, 1943. A year after leaving the relocation center, the writer, having reached Keenesburg, Colorado, thanks Miss Cox for her assistance. The writer's surroundings are reported in addition to updates on other former internees' activities.

The Poston Relocation Center was also the home of Susuma Paul Satow, writer of Letter 5. Satow displayed the belief that his volunteering in the army benefited the government and reflected well on Japanese Americans. Another topic discussed the regret that some "No No Boys" experienced and Satow's personal lack of empathy for them. The writer voiced concern about anti Japanese American discrimination in Sacramento, and, thus, his hesitancy to return.

Letter 6, from Tomi Komata, was undated and meant to inform Miss Cox of his life in college (possibly Downer College). "Released and happy," Komata announced the lack of expected discrimination and the racial tension that did exist, as well as his scorn of those in camp who listened to rumors of prejudice. Mentions of the WRA and how internees should be more willing to embrace its programs are included.

Arrangement

1 series. Not arranged.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Concentration camps -- United States
- Internees -- Japanese Americans -- 1940-1950
- Japanese Americans -- Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
- Students -- 1940-1950
- Teachers -- 1940-1950
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Evacuation of civilians
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Japanese Americans

Types of Materials:

- Biographies
- Correspondence -- 1940-1950
- Transcripts
- Typescripts -- 1940-1950

Names:

Cox, Mary Aline, 1890-1972 (teacher)
Edward Kelley School (Sacramento (Cal.))
Pinedale Assembly Camp.
Poston Relocation Camp
War Relocation Authority

Places:

Pinedale (Calif.) -- Correspondence -- 1940-1950
Poston (Ariz.) -- Correspondence -- 1940-1950
Sacramento (Calif.) -- Correspondence -- 1940-1950

Container Listing

Folder 1

Letter 1, 1942-06-12 - 1942-06-12

Notes: June 12, 1942

A 28 3 Pinedale A.C. Pinedale, Cal.

Dear Miss Cox,

I know you are still energetic so you would be in good health. Well, I'm not. I'm having [typhoid] shot and the heat is getting me. We sure have to wait for dinner without no shade. Maybe that's what gave me that awful stomach ache. Anyway I'm getting tired and homesick. My brother wrote a letter and is said he read a book called "How Green Was My Valley," which brought tears to his eyes. I never read that book but still tears came to my eyes as I read that title because there is not one tree to give us shade in this A.C.. We can't expect more though. When we left that valley, most every place was green. And now I would be bending my back picking young berries and strawberries. There isn't much thing to do so I once in awhile reads the history book but I'm in no such mood to keep on reading for hours and hours. One thing I enjoyed while coming here by train was the scene. Most of them was the beautiful scenery of creeks, rivers, and ponds. All their colors meets the sky and graceful cranes flying around was one scene I'll never forget. At the North of the camp is a bare field and a factory at the East side with fig on both South and West. But someday we shall meet, While wandering toward success. (unfinished)

Once your Pupil

Sanji Sato

Folder 1

Letter 2, 1942-12-26 - 1942-12-26

Notes: Garrett, Indiana Dec. 26, 1942

Dear Miss Cox,

I often think of you and the Edward Kelley School. I hope you are well. Has the school changed? I wish I can be back there.

I am having my [vacation] in Garrett at the Nicholson's, and what a change it is from the dormitory life! It took a lot of studying to catch on up on the three weeks that I had missed. So far I haven't made a "C" anyway and I'm glad of that. But the trouble is that I've got only one "A" and that in Spanish. The rest were all "B"s. I'm trying my best to do better.

I am taking sociology, psychology, religion, English literature, and Spanish. My reading speed is a great handicap in all my courses. I am trying very hard to increase my speed by timing and reading easy material as fast as I can. I can't understand how I was able to read so many books in grammar school. It takes me hours and hours to digest a chapter in sociology.

I really enjoy staying in a dormitory because it gives me so much time to study. I couldn't do that at home. I spend most all of my

time studying. At this rate I should make nothing but "A"s. The students and the professors are very kind. My stay has been very pleasant. But the people in town stare at me whenever I go shopping. I hope they get used to seeing me around.

You know how much I hate to speak before people. I was asked to speak to a ladies group and I feel that I should. They don't know a thing about this evacuation. They even thought that I had come from Japan. As they asked for it , I feel it would make them understand even a little if I spoke. I am surprised at myself for not refusing to talk. At this rate it's going to take me three hours to finish this letter. It's about three years since I took typing and that was for a semester. I'm trying to polish up during vacation.

It rained so much yesterday that all the snow have melted. It is good to see the green grass again. But how I miss the sunshine! The gloomy days are going to make a gloomy long faced lady out of me. The few times that the sun did shine, it was so uplifting that I sang and hummed all through the "duration". I can hardly wait until spring. Sunny California is certainly a good place. Too much sunshine in Poston and too little in the states out here. I really miss home and I think of it too much but home isn't home anymore. I wonder when all this will be over and when the people will be able to be in their homes in one piece.

I've spent so much time on this letter, I think I'd better quit now.

Lovingly yours,

Kiyo

Seiji is doing pretty well in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I'm glad he's there instead of being in camp. He is an assistant boxing coach and first class private. Remember Makoto? He is getting along very well. He is a corporal. Tayeko is in Arkansas camp. I know she is having a hard time with 2 step parents to take care of. I owe much to you, Miss Cox, for my being here.

Kiyo.

[Letter to Miiss Cox : typescript], [Dec. 26, 1942.]

1 Item (Ink on paper.)

Author: Sato, Kiyo (student)

Language: English.

Notes: AC0450-0000001.tif (AC Scan No.)

Typescript with hand-written P.S.

Names: Cox, Mary Aline, 1890-1972 (teacher)

Topic: Students -- 1940-1950

Concentration camps -- United States

World War, 1939-1945 -- Japanese Americans

Place: Garrett (Ind.)

Indiana -- 20th century

Genre/Form: Correspondence -- 1940-1950

Typescripts -- 1940-1950

Culture: Japanese Americans -- Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945

Folder 1

Letter 3, 1943-01 - 1943-02

Notes: Poston Arizona

Blk. 229 Brk. 11A

Valley of the Desert Queen. (interior)

1943 Dear Miss Cox,

Desert Queen are the mesquite trees which grows in low valley around us. In storm and in heat it grow as though all was the same, because it have its great foundation. (Root of mesquite tree is 40' to 60' deep.)

January 1, 2, & 3

We, the residents of Poston had a very successful New Year's Exhibition. We had an Industrial Building, Agricultural Building, Educational Building, and Arts and Craft Building. The Arts and Craft [building] were so crowded and extend to the outside that I didn't have the chance of going in. We even had the zoo. Most of the animals were a branch of the mesquite tree which was fixed a little. There [were] some animals and reptiles as the rattlesnake, lizards, Gila monster, birds, fish, turtle, and coyote which are all the inhabitant of the region.

January 16, 17, 18, & 19

It has been quite cold recently though it wasn't this cold. It usually become warm for 10:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. This morning there was about 1/2 inch of ice and it never melted. On January 19 we had an educational movie in the Mess Hall of our school block. And in the Mess Hall was 1/2 inch of ice on the floor and it was very slippery. On the 20th it began to get cloudy and we had rain 21, and on the 22nd. It really was muddy.

As I looked into the sky and at the gray morning winter cloud, I thought of the creek which flooded every winter when a storm came, and where my mother and I has desperately struggled against the flood that swept through our field on January 1942. That year my father was away to make a winter earning and as usual a flood came and flood the field which yield our spring income. We worked with our boots filled with water to surround the low land with mud bank. After working in the cold, beating rain, our work was accomplished, yet there was fear of water rising. Oh, but those days are gone forever, those days when we had our fun by working in the mud, water, and soil, where I have spent my childhood days. But that we are in camp know, there is no work on Saturday, Sunday, and after school. But now we have the privilege of studying for the future days that is to come, for America, and to make this a better world.

Person who has little faith worries more than those who have faith. (I mean that they worries about the future). No one person can make this a world but through cooperation from all and faithfulness can make this into a better world. January 26, 1943

It rain today and because of the rain and muddyness of road, we couldn't go to school. Even if it rain here in this valley, there

is no wind. I read that Sacramento had a severe storm recently. I hope it isn't as bad as the news paper says.

A thought came to me as I thought of the dog we had, though a police took him away the day we left. A forlorn, shivering dog cuddled under a honey suckle vine. His tail no more stood high, but it hung low. The rib bones were visible and his head was drooping down. A gust of wind struck him and the rain spattered on him but the dog never moved from where he was. A shrill cry broke the silence followed by a two short barks. It was the dog's cry, crying for its master who never came to see for many many month. He stood there by the door day after day for his beloved master to feed and to greet him. The dog was dreaming of the days they had live together. Of when his friend came running out to play with him on a bright cheery morning, but now that day never came because the house was deserted. The master was evacuated to a land he will never know. He crouched there whimpering with a lonesome eyes that no one will forget of how a faithful dog waits patiently for its ever lasting master.

When I was at Pinedale, I frequently strolled to the fence of our camp and stood there with a far off looking eye, staring at the Sierra far far away. Was this the remnant of that dear dear land? As I thought of home, tears filled my eyes. I stood [there] pondering about the home I left and the Flag that so gracefully sailed high into the sky so blue with few clouds drifting by. The Flag was the Flag that so proudly sailed in the yard of the little school house in the countryside, which to me was more like a home. Sometime Someday I will be home on a farm again on the [?] that I long for and for the Flag that I will more often see. But somehow the world will be changed and the [environment] of the place I used to live will be changed.

One thing that is lacking in our campus is a Flag. We have a little one on a pole in every room. Maybe because the school room we are using now is just temporary.

Jan. 30

Today as I went to school, in middle of the campus or the block was a flag pole standing majestically above us. The pole seemed to kiss the heaven above so high and the passing cloud. It seemed as though it was the highest in the world which we can be proud of but the flag wasn't there no the pole so that it will brighten up the blue morning sky.

I sometime really get disgusted with what I hear. Lot of the people in this camp doesn't have the opinion we have. Of course I can't say my father's and mine is always right. One thing that others lack is common sense and they believe awfully lot what others say and believe in too much rumor. I hope someday everything will be smoothed out evenly.

Peace I leave unto you, peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto to you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid. John 14:27 And Jesus said I am the light of the world. (John)

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believes in me shall never thirst. John 6:35

Feb. 18, 1943

Yesterday, all male above seventeen of age went to register for the drafting. This registering is a test to find out if he is an royal citizen or not. Some folks says, "Why, we don't have an freedom as the other American does. Why should we join the arm force then." Before we was evacuated, I pondered over this evacuation subject and said to myself thinking of what the pilgrims did. They came to the New World in want of Freedom and they made a New Flag, though they, like us and Japanese of Japan had the same faces. They also had lot of close relative in the Old World. But when the colonies discovered that they must fight, they fought against it Mother Country. Many of them (mostly Spanish) came for riches in material. It was the same with us today that we can fight against the same face and do our best. Some might go to the battle front but others can help in other ways. Now that we are in camp I think it is our duty to not say we are in camp but to do the best and to show that we are Americans.

Subject 1st quarter 2nd quarter Semester Grade

1&2 Core Studies B+ A A 3 P.E. 4 Algebra C C C

5&6 Agriculture A A A

7 Biology B A A

8 Study Hall

Last semester, we did not have Physical Education and Study Hall. They may arrange things better so I will not have to go to eighth period Study Hall.

It is said that we will get only 10 credit in the 2 hours of work we do in our agriculture class. My teacher is fighting his way through for us to get 20 credit.

Feb. 27, 1943

We had a Boy Scout's Father and Son Banquet. It was preceded by Court of Honor and we recieved our Second Class bandage. Our Troop number is 125. There is 17 person of our own block in this troop. The attends of our Troop were 100%. For this, we are going to [receive] a semophore(?) Flag. ("We" are our troop). It is getting quite hot now. Even a little walk makes us sweat.

March 6, 1943

Today being Saturday, few of the Boy Scouts and I made a interesting trip to the Plateau which is about 6

or 7 miles far. I felt wonderful to breathe the cool air and to look at the low land and the far off camp. Because of the misty fog which hung low on the surface of the Colorado River, we couldn't see it. Others didn't realize the change of the plateau

since we came last time as much as I did. They just came for one purpose. To pass the First Class Requirement for a 14 mile hike. I was very much rushed in going home but few of the changes were mostly that of plants. Some were blooming in that vast land of heating dryness. [There] were dwarf lupine which was not yet blooming. I took down some notes on the color of flower, amount of stamen, pistol, petal, sepal etc. Next time I will take a magazine and press them down.

Now days I feel so tired and sleepy and can't go to sleep when I go to bed that I said this to one of my teacher. He said maybe I didn't get enough vitamins. I don't believe that. He said why I didn't go see the doctor. I know the doctor will give me too much limitation so I don't believe in that too, so I guess, after all, I'm O.K. I heard that our former home has been damaged. I believe that there is quite a change their now. My Father is taking violin lesson. He say it is hard so I told him that's the same way I used to feel about my piano lesson.

Best regard from all. Sincerely yours

Sanji Sato The End.

Folder 1

Letter 4, 1943-04-19 - 1943-04-19

Notes: April 19, 1943.

Dear Miss Cox,

We reached Keenesburg on April 16 after a very long and tiresome trip. It is certainly wonderful to live a normal life after almost a year of camp life. As you probably know we don't have an electricity or running water. It certainly is inconvenient after living in a place where we did not give one thought to them. We learned to appreciate the little things that makes a great deal of difference once we are cut off from them. Of course, this isn't true of all the farms in this vicinity but it is true as one gets further east of the county. It is wonderful to view the scenery here. We see miles and miles of hills and plains some of them [alfalfa] and others where beets were planted just recently. No mountains are in view except on a very clear day. We saw one high peak (It might have been Pike Peak) covered with snow. The scenery is wonderful coming up for Colo. Springs to Denver. I noticed that most of the lands in Arizona and N. Mex. are wasted. There seem to be no life at all around in those regions except a few adobe shacks inhabited probably by Indians or Mexicans. Nothing like good old Calif. Once one draws away from the state can one appreciated the goodness that is in it.

You might be interested to know that Frank Kitada is also here in Colorado. The family will probably move in the near future.

We certainly appreciated all the things that you have done for us to resettle here in Colorado. Lots of luck to you. Love,

R. Satow & family

Folder 1

Letter 5, 1943-04-14 - 1943-04-14

Notes: May 14, 1943

Poston, Arizona

Dear Miss Cox,

One does not mean to be so dilatory about writing letters, but such past discouraging times, one cannot help feeling so miserable; and, in a way, mad at the whole world.

Perhaps you have already heard that I've become a volunteer. I believe that the decision will be for the best for Uncle Sam and for the Japanese American. And I mean the "loyal" ones. Your former pupils are turning out good records in this camp. I can't say the same for the other pupils of adjacent schools tho'. And the credits through your kind efforts. I remember back in Ed. Kelley where I saw [children] drawing Japanese flags. I was discouraged then, but as time went on there minds slowly changed. Now they are truly an American. For instance, Takeo Toguchi is now a volunteer.

Some of the people here are very sorry they didn't pledge loyalty to the stars and stripes; for they have followed the orders of their parents and pro Axis elements. But a boy of seventeen and over, should be able to think and choose for himself, and it's only his fault for the mistake.

School will soon be over, wouldn't it? I imagine there is only a few pupil there now. Many a times I do wonder how every thing is back in Sac'to. On my furlough before being inducted in the Army I was thinking of going back to Sac'to, but with such high atmosphere of the people against the Japanese American I've changed my mind. I expect to be in Salt Lake sometime next week. The best of health to you. I will drop in a line when I'm in Camp Shelby. Sincerely

Susuma Paul Satow

P.S. Excuse the mistakes. I like to rewrite it, but I'm in the war against "waste" too

Folder 1

Letter 6, undated

Notes: Tuesday

Dear Miss Cox:

First of all I want to express my thanks to you for your kindness and writing a fine letter of recommendation. Finally, I am released and happy; so please do not be too concerned. How have you been Miss Cox and how is everything with you? Do hope that you are enjoying good health and things well.

I am in a congenial home and in mid west in general are receiving the Americans of Japanese ancestry well. There seem to be no discrimination. Those traveling on the train did not mistreat us, but were like those back in California pre war.

And I am glad I was able to get release instead of living with unnecessary fear and exaggerated news toward us in camp and former coast (west) people of [Japanese] origin. So I am encouraging others to take opportunity of outside employment

approved by W.R.A. for those in camp and mingle with others and let them see for themselves they are not too different instead of having others just believe of what they read. The Downer College is a block away and Downer seminary two blocks. The lake is beautiful and reminds me of the ocean from San Francisco. No doubt you have seen much of these cities so I need not write further. I am told that Milwaukee is not a city despite its large population but an overgrown town.

How is my dear Edward Kelley School?

With every wish that you are in good health and best wishes always, Miss Cox. With all the help I have received during my school days from you, Miss Cox, I shall forever hold. In words I can't express my gratitude. Respectfully,

Tomi Kobata