

Jeanne Sakata collection

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



**Asian American Pacific Islander Collection
Asian Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2012**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.asian/asian.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/2013584981>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.asian/eadasian.ad015001>

Prepared by Pang Xiong

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Collection Summary

Title: Jeanne Sakata collection

Span Dates: 1942-2010

Bulk Dates: (bulk 2007-2010)

ID No.: AAPI584981

Creator: Sakata, Jeanne, 1954-

Extent: 116 items and 3 DVDs

Extent: 1 container

Extent: 0.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2013584981>

Summary: Actress and playwright. Articles, correspondence, DVDs, essays, flyers, programs, scripts, research materials, and transcripts of oral history interviews relating to the struggles of Japanese American Gordan Hirabayashi during World War II for Jeanne Sakata's play *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordan Hirabayashi*. The play was eventually re-titled *Hold These Truths*. Subjects include Asian American theater and the civil rights and internment of Japanese Americans, particularly Gordan Hirabayashi, during World War II.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Hirabayashi, Gordon K.

Sakata, Jeanne, 1954-

Organizations

Asian American Pacific Islander Collection (Library of Congress)

Subjects

Asian American theater.

Japanese Americans--Civil rights.

Japanese Americans--Forced removal and internment, 1942-1945.

World War, 1939-1945--Japanese Americans.

Occupations

Actresses.

Playwrights.

Provenance

The collection of Jeanne Sakata, actress and playwright, was compiled as research for the play *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordan Hirabayashi*. The collection was given to the Library of Congress in July 2011.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the writings of Jeanne Sakata is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.). Consult the Asian Division for more information.

Access and Restrictions

The Jeanne Sakata collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Asian Division prior to visiting. Advance notice is needed because collections must be retrieved for researchers.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: The Jeanne Sakata collection, Folder Title, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Jeanne Sakata was born in Watsonville, California on April 8, 1954 and raised in a Japanese American farming family in the Pajaro Valley. She holds a Bachelor's of Art in English Literature from the University of California, Los Angeles. Sakata has been a professional actress since the early 1980's and has performed across the country. She makes her home in Los Angeles, California with her husband.

Sakata made her playwriting debut with *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi*, and it premiered in 2007 at East West Players in Los Angeles, California. The play was an interpretation of events that led Gordon Hirabayashi, a Japanese American college student at the University of Washington, to defy Executive Order 9066. In 1942, the United States government imposed a curfew and evacuation order for all Japanese on the west coast under Executive Order 9066. Hirabayashi felt this violated his constitutional rights and defied the orders.

After the Japanese were removed from Seattle, Washington, Hirabayashi turned himself into the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He was tried and convicted in the Federal District Court of Seattle. In 1943, in the case of *Hirabayashi v. United States*, the Supreme Court upheld the conviction that the curfew was constitutional and Hirabayashi was sentenced to serve three months in a prison in Arizona. After the war, Hirabayashi became a sociologist and taught at American University in Beirut, American University in Cairo, and the University of Alberta. In the 1980's, Peter Irons and Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga discovered evidence that had been withheld from the Office of Naval Intelligence. In 1986 and 1987, Hirabayashi's original exclusion and curfew convictions were overturned. On January 2, 2012, he died in Edmonton, Alberta. On May 29, 2012, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Hirabayashi the Medal of Freedom.

Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi was invited by the New York Theatre Workshop to be showcased at their 2009 Dartmouth Residency. The play has also been performed at Chicago's Pritzker Pavilion as part of the 2011 In the Works New Plays Series; in Epic Theatre Ensemble's 2010 Passion Play Festival with the John Jay College of Criminal Justice; at the University of California at Riverside; at the 16th Annual Conference of the Japan Studies Association in Honolulu; and at the Japanese American Citizens League Day of Remembrance events in Sacramento and Salinas, California. At the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, it was the inspiration and theatrical centerpiece of the civil rights symposium *Civil Liberties, National Security and the Legacies of the Japanese Removal and Incarceration*. With the East West Players Theatre for Youth program, Sakata's play has twice toured high schools and junior high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 2008 and 2010. In 2012, Epic Theatre Ensemble produced Sakata's re-titled play *Hold These Truths* into a one-character play that was staged off-Broadway.

As a professional actor, Sakata has performed in various plays including *Calligraphy* by Velina Hasu Houston at L.A. Theater Center, *A Cage of Fireflies* at the Sundance Institute Theatre Lab in New York, *Seven* at the University of Southern California, Julia Cho's *The Language of Archive* at East West Players, and in *Red Flamboyant* at the Ojai Playwrights Festival in Ojai, California. With Antaeus Company in Los Angeles, she played the title role in George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* in the 2012 Classics Fest.

Sakata received the LA Ovation Award Winner for Best Lead Actress for her cross-gender portrayal of Master Hua in Chay Yew's *Red* at East West Players in Los Angeles, California. She also received a StageScene "Best of 2007" Outstanding Performance mention for her performance as Maria Callas in East West Players Master Class, an Entertainment Today Award for Best Supporting Actress in Chay Yew's *A Winter People* at Theatre @ Boston Court, and a DramaLogue Award for her work in Jean Genet's *The Maids* at East West Players. In 2011, Sakata was honored with an Outstanding Artist Award for her career achievements by Los Angeles' Asian Pacific American Friends of the Theatre.

Scope and Content Note

The Jeanne Sakata collection spans the years from 1942 to 2011 with the bulk of material dating between 2007 to 2011. The collection consists of research material, articles, essays, programs, flyers, a documentary produced and directed by John de Graff and sponsored by the United States Bicentennial Commission, correspondence between Hirabayashi and the Ring family, and correspondence between Sakata and Hirabayashi from 1995. A published and unpublished script for the play is included in this collection along with Sakata's transcribed oral history interviews with Gordon Hirabayashi. The collection also contains a DVD copy of Sakata and actor Ryun Yu's interview with KPFK Radio in Los Angeles. Of particular importance is that the play's title changed from *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi* to *Hold These Truths*. The play was chosen for the New York Theatre Workshop and selected for a collaborative public reading by Epic Theatre Ensemble and the Lark Play Development Center. All supporting material for these events are housed in this collection.

Organization of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by format or subject. Most folders were labeled according to Sakata's original folder titles.

Container List

Container	Contents
FOLDER 1	Finding Aid and Biographical Note
FOLDER 2	Graduate Essays, 2007
FOLDER 3	KPFK Radio Interview with Jeanne Sakata and Ryun Yu, 2007
FOLDER 4	Materials Related to East West Players, 2008-2010, undated
FOLDER 5	Materials Related to New York Theatre Workshop's Dartmouth Residency Program, 2009
FOLDER 6	Materials Related to Northern California Time of Remembrance Performance, 2010
FOLDER 7	Materials Related to University of California at Riverside, Performing Arts Series, 2009
FOLDER 8	Materials Related to University of Tennessee Civil Liberties Symposium, 2009
FOLDER 9	Press Article by Tom Provenzano, 2007
FOLDER 10	Press Article by Emily Roxworthy, 2008
FOLDER 11	Press Article by Steven Stanley, 2010
FOLDER 12	Press Packet for East West Players World Premiere of Dawn's Light, 2007-2008
FOLDER 13	Research Article by Gordan Hirabayashi, 1985
FOLDER 14	Research Article by Gordan Hirabayashi, 1988
FOLDER 15	Research Article by Peter Irons, 1988
FOLDER 16	Research from the University of Washington Special Collections, 1942-1945 , 1995-1998
FOLDER 17	Research Material – Correspondence between Jeanne Sakata and Gordan Hirabayashi, 1942 , 1995
FOLDER 18	Research Material – Documentary on Gordan Hirabayashi, 1992
FOLDER 19	Research Material – Gordan Hirabayashi Interview Transcripts, 1994-1995
FOLDER 20	Research Material – Letters from Gordan Hirabayashi from the Ring Family Papers, 1942-1944
FOLDER 21	Script – <i>Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordan Hirabayashi</i> , 2007-2010
FOLDER 22	Script (Published) – <i>Hold These Truths</i> (formerly <i>Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordan Hirabayashi</i>), 2010