Jeanne Sakata Papers
A Finding Aid to the Papers in the Asian American Pacific Islander Collection in the
Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2024

Contact information: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2023086655

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms023026

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff
Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2024
Revised 2024 February
Collection Summary
Title: Jeanne Sakata Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1942-2010
Bulk Dates: 2007-2010
ID No.: MSS86655
Creator: Sakata, Jeanne, 1954-
Extent: 125 items
Extent: 1 container
Extent: 0.5 linear feet
Extent: 47 digital files (2.63 GB)
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2023086655

Acquisition Information
The papers of Jeanne Sakata were given to the Library of Congress by Sakata in 2011.

Custodial History
The papers of Jeanne Sakata were part of the Asian American Pacific Islander Collection in the Library of Congress's Asian Division. In 2023, the collection was transferred from the Asian Division to the Manuscript Division.

Processing History
The papers of Jeanne Sakata were arranged and described by Pang Xiong in 2012 while in the custody of the Asian Division and encoded in 2015 as ad015001. The finding aid was revised and the digital media processed in 2024 upon transfer to the Manuscript Division by Katherine S. Madison and Andrea J. Briggs.

Digital files were received as part of the Jeanne Sakata Papers on a variety of storage media, which were assigned unique digital ID numbers. Use the digital ID number to request access copies of the files associated with each media. A description of the standard processes taken on all born digital records can be found in the Processing History Note: Born Digital Collection Material at https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.digital.

Other Repositories
Other material related to Gordon Hirabayashi relevant to this collection can be found in the University of Washington Libraries' Special Collections.

Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Jeanne Sakata is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).
Access and Restrictions

The papers of Jeanne Sakata are open to research. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use. Access to digital content is available onsite only in the Manuscript Reading Room and requires advanced notice. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting.

Technical Requirements

Digital files were created in a Windows operating system, version unknown. The content is primarily audiovisual files in .vob format, and image files in .jpg format. Disk images were created of media containing .vob moving image files for preservation and accessibility.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or digital ID number, Jeanne Sakata Papers, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Jeanne Sakata

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 B.A. in English literature from the University of California, Los Angeles. Sakata has been a professional actress since the early 1980s and has performed in film, television, and theater. She made her playwriting debut with *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi* in 2007.

Gordon Hirabayashi

Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabayashi was born in Seattle, Washington, on April 23, 1918. In 1942, during World War II, the United States government imposed a curfew and evacuation order for all Japanese Americans on the west coast under Executive Order 9066. Hirabayashi felt this violated his constitutional rights and defied the order. After the Japanese population was removed from Seattle, 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 *Hirabayashi v. United States*, the United States Supreme Court upheld the conviction declaring the curfew constitutional, and Hirabayashi was sentenced to serve three months in an Arizona prison. 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 1980s, Peter Irons and Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga discovered evidence relevant to Hirabayashi's case 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, Barack Obama posthumously awarded Hirabayashi the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Jeanne Sakata span the years 1942-2010, with the bulk of the material dating between 2007 and 2010. The collection documents her debut play, *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi*, later retitled *Hold These Truths*. Material in the collection includes articles, correspondence, essays, flyers, programs, scripts, research materials, and transcripts of oral history interviews.

*Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi* was an interpretation of events that led Gordon Hirabayashi, a Japanese American college student at the University of Washington, to defy Executive Order 9066 during World War II. Material included in the collection consists of primarily research undertaken by Sakata in writing *Dawn's Light* as well as press and publicity material related to the initial production and several subsequent stagings of the play. Included are a documentary produced and directed by John de Graff and sponsored by the United States Bicentennial Commission about *Hirabayashi*.
v. United States, correspondence between Hirabayashi and the Ring family, and correspondence between Sakata and Hirabayashi from 1995. Published and unpublished scripts for the play are included in this collection along with Sakata's transcribed oral history interviews with Hirabayashi. The collection also contains a digital copy of Sakata and actor Ryun Yu's 2007 interview with KPFK Radio in Los Angeles.

Dawn's Light premiered in 2007 at East West Players in Los Angeles, California. It 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, 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, 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 retitled play Hold These Truths as a one-character play staged off-Broadway. Material related to many of these stagings is present in the collection.

Arrangement of the Collection
This collection is arranged alphabetically by format or subject, primarily labeled as received.

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.
Hirabayashi, Gordon K.--Correspondence.
Hirabayashi, Gordon K.--Trials, litigation, etc.
Sakata, Jeanne, 1954-

Organizations
Asian American Pacific Islander Collection (Library of Congress)

Subjects
Asian American theater.
Japanese Americans--Civil rights.
Japanese Americans--Social conditions.
World War, 1939-1945--United States.

Places
United States--Trials, litigation, etc.

Titles
Ring family--Correspondence.

Occupations
Actresses.
Playwrights.
# Container List

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