

**Dates:** 1941-1945

**Size:** 2.5 linear feet (5 boxes)

**Abstract:**

An artificial collection consisting primarily of copies of letters written to Miss Clara Breed during World War II from Japanese-American internees. Also included are writings by her sister, Eleanor and internee letters to San Diego librarian, Helen McNary.

**Biographical/Historical Notes:**

Clara Breed was born March 19, 1906 in Fort Dodge, Iowa. The family moved to San Diego in 1921 after the death of her father. From 1923-1927, she attended Pomona College where she obtained a BA degree. A subsequent article in the *"Library Journal"* titled *"All But Blind"* discussed racial prejudice against Japanese and others in the US.

Prior to World War II, Japanese immigrants living in San Diego had thrived economically despite facing both restrictions on land ownership and the inability to gain citizenship. Four months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the US government ordered the forced relocation and incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese heritage from along the West Coast. During this time, Clara Breed was the Children's Librarian at the San Diego Public Library in downtown San Diego and had become close to many of the Japanese-American children who frequented the library. Devastated at the news of the forced internment, Miss Breed met the children at the Santa Fe Depot on the day that they were due to depart, handing out hundreds of stamped and pre-addressed postcards asking them to stay in touch.

Many children did correspond with Miss Breed, sending letters initially from the Assembly Center at the Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia, California, and then from Poston internment camp near Parker, Arizona. Along with her letters, Miss Breed would send the children books and trinkets, while many would ask her to send them small items they could not obtain in camp.

Later in her life she gave most of the letters she had received to Liz (Kikuchi) Yamada who in turn donated them to the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles.

Eleanor Breed was born on July 29, 1902, and is the older sister of Clara Breed. She lived in Berkeley, California for most of her life.

Helen McNary worked as Clara Breed's assistant at the San Diego Public Library.

Clara Breed became Head Librarian at the San Diego Public Library in 1946, and died in 1994 at the age of 88.

**Scope and Content:**

An artificial collection consisting primarily of copies of letters written to Miss Clara Breed during World War II from Japanese-American internees. Also included are writings by her sister, Eleanor and internee letters to San Diego librarian, Helen McNary.

The letters within this collection offer insight into the daily life of the internment camps as well as the children's thoughts on their situation. In addition to the letters written by the internees, there is also correspondence between Clara Breed and US government officials related to her request for information about internment and specific internees. It also contains Clara's pass for her visit to the Santa Anita Assembly Center.

Several original letters are included in this collection. Of specific interest is a letter from Tets Hirasaki from September 1942 where he describes in detail the recent events in camp including a raid by the "Interior Police" and tensions between the police and the internees. He also sketches drawings of the camp layout.

The writings by her sister Eleanor include letters to her family, a paper discussing the members and alumni of Berkeley International House affected by Wartime Civilian Control Administration's evacuation orders, and a letter concerning the Committee on American Principles of Fair Play. The letters to San Diego librarian, Helen, McNary were also sent by internees and were related to life in camp.

The collection also includes a video series complete with teacher's guides intended to teach elementary and secondary students about the camp experience.

**Arrangement:**

The collection is arranged by series:

Series I: Letters to Clara Breed (by date)

Arranged chronologically.

Series II: Letters to Clara Breed (by sender)

Arranged alphabetically

Series III: Letters to Clara Breed (by JANM catalog #)

Arranged according to JANM's alpha-numerical order but have been rearranged by date.

Series IV: Clara Breed Papers

Arranged chronologically

Series V: Miscellanea

**Condition and Preservation:**

The copies are in primarily good condition. However, on some of them there are marks or unclear text caused by the copying process. Additionally, the original handwriting is sometimes poorly written and difficult to read.

**Citation:**

AC 13, Clara Breed Collection, Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego Archives, San Diego, CA.

**Collection Access Restrictions:**

The collection is open for research.

**Collection Use Restrictions:**

Copyright restrictions may apply.

**Language of Materials:**

English

**Processing Information:**

Katrina Limson, November 2019

**Provenance:**

Most of the original letters are at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, California. These copies and the few original letters were obtained by the Japanese-American Historical Society of San Diego from various sources.

**Related Collections and Other Resources:**

The Clara Breed Collection, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA

**Series I: Letters to Clara Breed (by date)**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title/Subjects</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
1	1	Letters from:  Tets Hirasaki; Fusa Tsumagari; Anna Kikuchi; Chiyomatsu Hirasaki; Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara); Margaret Arakawa; Katherine Tasaki; Elizabeth Kikuchi; Louise Ogawa; David Kikuchi; Lillian Yuriko Kawasaki; Florence Ishino; Margaret Ishino; Shizuye Kubo; Mizue Himaka	1942, April
1	2	Letters from:  Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara); Katherine Tasaki; Elizabeth Kikuchi; Anna Kikuchi; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Mizue Himaka; Jack Watanabe; Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari; Tets Hirasaki; Lillian Yuriko Kawasaki	1942, May
1	3	Letters from:  Katherine Tasaki; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Fusa Tsumagari; Mizue Himaka; Louise Ogawa	1942, June
1	4	Letters from:  Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Katherine Tasaki; Louise Ogawa; William Watanabe; Fusa Tsumagari; Tets Hirasaki	1942, July
1	5	Letters from:  Louise Ogawa; Chiyomatsu Hirasaki; Tets Hirasaki;	1942, August

		Fusa Tsumagari; Yukio Tsumagari; Yaeko Hirasaki; Katherine Tasaki; Mizue Himaka; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Jack Watanabe; Margaret Arakawa	
1	6	Letters from:  Louise Ogawa; Tets Hirasaki; Katherine Tasaki; Chiyomatsu Hirasaki; Fusa Tsumagari; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Yaeko Hirasaki; Elizabeth Kikuchi; Lillian Yuriko Kawasaki	1942, September
1	7	Letters from:  Tets Hirasaki; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Jack Watanabe; Fusa Tsumagari; Katherine Tasaki; Louise Ogawa	1942, October
1	8	Letters from:  Louise Ogawa; Tets Hirasaki; Fusa Tsumagari; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino	1942, November
1	9	Letters from:  Tets Hirasaki; Jack Watanabe; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Hisako Watanabe; Fusa Tsumagari; Jack Watanabe	1942, December
1	10	Letters from:  Margaret Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Hisako Watanabe; Florence Ishino; William Watanabe; Katherine Tasaki; Fusa Tsumagari	1943, January
1	11	Letters from:  Margaret Ishino; Hisaki Watanabe; Tets Hirasaki; Katherine Tasaki	1943, February
1	12	Letters from:  Tets Hirasaki; Margaret Arakawa; Margaret Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Florence Ishino	1943, March

1	13	Letters from:  Margaret Ishino; Tets Hirasaki; Louise Ogawa; Katherine Tasaki	1943, April
1	14	Letters from:  Fusa Tsumagari; Tets Hirasaki; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Katherine Tasaki; Hisako Watanabe	1943, May
1	15	Letters from:  Hisako Watanabe; Tets Hirasaki; Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari	1943, June
1	16	Letters from:  Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Hisako Watanabe	1943, July
1	17	Letters from:  Katherine Tasaki; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari; Tets Hirasaki	1943, August
1	18	Letters from:  Louise Ogawa; Katherine Tasaki; Fusa Tsumagari	1943, September
1	19	Letters from:  Hisako Watanabe; Louise Ogawa; Fusatoshi Fujimoto; Tets Hirasaki	1943, October
2	1	Letters from:  Tets Hirasaki; Katherine Tasaki; Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari; Hisako Watanabe	1943, November
2	2	Letters from:  Katherine Tasaki; Tets Hirasaki; Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara); Louise Ogawa; The Kikuchi family; The Ishino family;	1943, December

		Hisako Watanabe; Yaeko Hirasaki; Fusa Tsumagari	
2	3	Letters from: Katherine Tasaki; Fusa Tsumagari	1944, January
2	4	Letters from: Katherine Tasaki; Louise Ogawa	1944, February
2	5	Letters from: Margaret Ishino; Katherine Tasaki	1944, March
2	6	Letters from: Fusa Tsumagari; Louise Ogawa	1944, April
2	7	Letters from: Fusa Tsumagari; Tets Hirasaki; Aiko Kubo	1944, June
2	8	Letters from: Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari	1944, July
2	9	Letters from: Hisako Watanabe	1944, August
2	10	Letters from: Louise Ogawa	1944, October
2	11	Letters from: William Watanabe; Jack Watanabe	1944, November
2	12	Letters from: Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari; Tets Hirasaki; Katherine Tasaki	1944, December
2	13	Letters from:	1945, January

		Fusa Tsumagari	
2	14	Letters from: Tets Hirasaki	194?, September

**Series II: Letters to Clara Breed (by sender)**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title/Subjects</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
2	15	Letters from: Margaret Arakawa	1942-1943
2	16	Letters from: Fusatoshi Fujimoto	1943
2	17	Letters from: Mizue Himaka	1942
2	18	Letters from: Chiyomatsu Hirasaki	1942
2	19	Letters from: Tets Hirasaki	1942
2	20	Letters from: Tets Hirasaki	1943-1944
2	21	Letters from: Yaeko Hirasaki	1942-1943
2	22	Letters from: Florence and Margaret Ishino	1942
2	23	Letters from: Florence and Margaret Ishino	1943-1944
2	24	Letters from: Lillian Yuriko Kawasaki	1942
2	25	Letters from: David Kikuchi	1942-1943
2	26	Letters from: Elizabeth Kikuchi	1942-1943
2	27	Letters from: Shizuye Kubo	1942-1944
2	28	Letters from: Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara)	1942-1943
3	1	Letters from: Louise Ogawa	1942
3	2	Letters from: Louise Ogawa	1943-1944

3	3	Letters from: Katherine Tasaki	1942-1944
3	4	Letters from: Fusa Tsumagari	1942-1945
3	5	Letters from: Yukio Tsumagari	1942
3	6	Letters from: Hisako Watanabe	1942-1944
3	7	Letters from: Jack Watanabe	1942-1944
3	8	Letters from: William Watanabe	1943-1944
3	9	Letters from: Ted Yagade	1942
3	10	Letters (3) from: Chiyomatsu Hirasaki – originals and copies	1942
3	11	Letters (4) from: Tets Hirasaki – originals and copies	1942
3	12	Letter from: Misako Ishida – original and copy	1943
3	13	Letter from: Fusa Tsumagari – original and copy	1942

**Series III: Letters to Clara Breed (by JANM catalog #)**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title/Subjects</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
4	1	93.75.31 A / Letters from:  Fusa Tsumagari; Louise Ogawa; Tets Hirasaki; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino	1942-194?
4	2	93.75.31 AA / Letters from:  Louise Ogawa; Margaret Ishino; Mizue Himaka; Fusa Tsumagari; Florence Ishino; Tets Hirasaki; Aiko Kubo; Katherine Tasaki  Also includes letters from:  Fusa Tsumagari to Helen McNary; Katherine Tasaki to Helen McNary;	1942-1944



		Letter from Committee on American Principles and Fair Play; Louise Ogawa to Helen McNary	
4	3	93.75.31 BA / Letters from:  David Kikuchi; Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara); Hisako Watanabe; Louise Ogawa; Margaret Arakawa; Elizabeth Kikuchi; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Mizue Himaka; Anna Yamada; Tets Hirasaki; Fusa Tsumagari  Also includes letters from:  T.Z. Shiota; Margaret Ishino to Helen McNary; Louise Ogawa to Helen McNary; Eleanor Breed	1942-
4	4	93.75.31 CA / Letters from:  Eleanor Breed; Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara); Tets Hirasaki; Mizue Himaka; Jack Watanabe; William Watanabe; Shizuye Kubo; Margaret Arakawa; Katherine Tasaki; Anna Kikuchi; Elizabeth Kikuchi; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Fusa Tsumagari; Lillian Yuriko Kawasaki; Fusatoshi Fujimoto; Yaeko Hirasaki	1941-1943
4	5	93.75.31 DA / Letters from:  Katherine Tasaki; Margaret Arakawa; Jack Watanabe; Hisako Watanabe; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Ethel Manning	1942-1944
4	6	93.75.31 EA / Letters from:  Eleanor Breed; Louise Ogawa; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Katherine Tasaki; Fusa Tsumagari; Margaret Arakawa  Also includes letters from: Louise Ogawa to Helen McNary; Margaret Ishino to Helen McNary	1942-1944
4	7	93.75.31 FA / Letters from:  Katherine Tasaki; Tets Hirasaki; Margaret Ishino;	1942-1943

		<p>Florence Ishino; Fusa Tsumagari; Eleanor Breed; WRA; William Watanabe; Louise Ogawa; U.S. Department of the Interior; Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara)</p> <p>Also includes:</p> <p>Western Union telegram; Letter from American Library Association</p>	
4	8	<p>93.75.31 GA / Letters from:</p> <p>Eleanor Breed; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Tets Hirasaki; Yaeko Hirasaki; William Watanabe; Margaret Arakawa; The White House</p> <p>Also includes letters from:</p> <p>Louise Ogawa to Helen McNary; Norio Ozaki; Fusa Tsumagari to Helen McNary; The Ishino Family to Helen McNary; Article by Eleanor Breed</p>	1942-1988
4	9	<p>93.75.31 HA / Letters from:</p> <p>Fusa Tsumagari; Katherine Tasaki; Anna Kikuchi; Elizabeth Kikuchi; Florence Ishino; Margaret Ishino; Lillian Yuriko Kawasaki; Yoshiko Kubo (Kihara); Louise Ogawa; David Kikuchi; Mizue Himaka; Ted Yagade</p> <p>Also includes letter from:</p> <p>Jack Watanabe to Helen McNary</p>	1942
4	10	<p>93.75.31 IA / Letters from:</p> <p>Margaret Ishino; Helen McNary; Margaret Arakawa; Katherine Tasaki; Fusa Tsumagari; Louise Ogawa; Yukio Tsumagari; Yaeko Hirasaki; Tets Hirasaki</p> <p>Also includes letters from:</p> <p>Louise Ogawa to Helen McNary; The Ishino family to Helen McNary</p>	1942-1944

4	11	93.75.31 JA / Letters from:  Fusa Tsumagari; Margaret Ishino; Florence Ishino; Hisako Watanabe; Tets Hirasaki; Louise Ogawa	1942-1944
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**Series IV: Clara Breed Papers**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title/Subjects</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
5	1	<p>Correspondence / Letters from:</p> <p>John C. Baker (Chief of Office of Reports, WRA), regarding the conditions and available facilities of Relocation Center school buildings - includes copy of report regarding Granada War Relocation Center's/Camp Amache's library and school children, written by an evacuee high school student;</p> <p>Anna Yamada, Head Librarian, Poston 3 Public Library, explaining the camp library system and informing her that all the books she has sent have been going to Camp 1 Library and not to those at Camp 2 and 3.</p> <p>R. B. Cozzens (Assistant Director, WRA), informing Clara Breed of new information regarding the policies and programs of WRA with attached document "War Department Views on Japanese Returning to Pacific Coast"</p> <p>D. S. Myer (Director, WRA), asking for a character reference regarding Yaeko Hirasaki, who wishes to leave the relocation center;</p> <p>John W. Powell (Acting Chief of Community Services, Office of Indian Affairs), inviting Clara Breed to visit Poston, Arizona;</p> <p>Clara Breed to William Fleet Palmer (U.S. Attorney), petitioning for Chiyomatsu Hirasaki—interned at Bismarck, North Dakota after F.B.I. arrest—to join</p>	1942-1988

		<p>daughter Yaeko and son Tets at Santa Anita Assembly Center;</p> <p>Clara Breed to a Mr. Kohler, asking Kohler to testify on Chiyomatsu Hirasaki’s character to the government;</p> <p>Anne Higgins (Special Assistant to the President and Director of Correspondence, The White House), thanking Clara Breed for her message to President Reagan regarding H.R. 442/S. 1009, legislation that would disburse a payment of \$20,000 to Japanese-American survivors of WWII internment program</p>	
5	2	<p>Official permit distributed by Wartime Civil Control Administration at Santa Anita Assembly Center, allowing Clara Breed to visit facility from 1:30-2:00pm on July 7, 1942 (FRAGILE)</p>	1942
5	3	<p>Writings by Eleanor Breed (sister):</p> <p>Paper discussing the members and alumni of Berkeley International House affected by Wartime Civilian Control Administration’s evacuation orders in 1942. Includes letter excerpts from Mine Okubo and Fumiko Makino, regarding their experiences during the transition</p> <p>Article regarding WRA’s arrangements for those interned to find employment or to continue their studies - includes replies from Japanese-Americans within Berkeley Alumni Association employed or studying outside of relocation centers;</p> <p>Letter to Clara and their mother the day after Pearl Harbor attack, expressing her feelings regarding the event as well as reactions within her community;</p> <p>Letter to Clara and their mother detailing her week of August 10, 1942, including events regarding Berkeley International House, plans for a publicity program for the WRA, and fear regarding the current state of war;</p> <p>Letter to Clara Breed of excerpts written by Japanese-Americans interned at the various relocation camps,</p>	1941-1943

		<p>describing their daily life and thoughts on their internment;</p> <p>Letter addressed to unknown, notifying them that Committee on American Principles of Fair Play will meet on January 25, 1943 - includes copies of "Policies of the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play" and "Proposed Plan of Organization of Committee on American Principles of Fair Play";</p> <p>Letter from Marii to Eleanor Breed, thanking Eleanor for her character reference during a routine job clearance carried out by FBI and WRA, as well as a request for a reference on Yei Isoda - includes copy of Marii's letter to Washington expressing her interest in volunteering for the armed services, as well as a copy of a petition sent to Washington by a group of Issei</p>	
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**Series V: Miscellanea**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title/Subjects</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
5	4	<p>Copy of an article in The Poston Chronicle on August 21, 1943, regarding Clara Breed's donation of 72 books to the Poston I Community Free Library;</p> <p>Pamphlet of JANM's exhibition "Dear Miss Breed: Letters from Camp," which took place from January 14-April 13, 1997;</p> <p>"Cricket Magazine" article highlighting Clara Breed's friendship with the children she knew at the relocation camps during and after WWII;</p>	1943 - 2005
5	5	<p>VHS tapes:</p> <p>"Interactions" for "Once Upon a Camp" classroom series for elementary and secondary school students, which</p>	2000

		<p>chronicles four high school students as they discover what life was like for teenagers in camp during WWII;</p> <p>“The Bracelet” for “Once Upon a Camp” classroom series, which is a video presentation of Yoshiko Uchida’s children’s book about friends separated by the war</p>	
5	6	<p>VHS tape:</p> <p>“Dear Miss Breed” for “Once Upon a Camp” classroom series, which recounts Clara Breed’s story as well as shows visuals of actual camp life documented by rare home movies</p>	2000
5	7	<p>Teacher’s Guidebook:</p> <p>“The Bracelet” for “Once Upon a Camp” classroom series, which acts as a supplement for the VHS of the same name and includes a lesson plan, a break-down of the video, activities, worksheets, and additional historical information</p>	2000
5	8	<p>Teacher’s Guidebook:</p> <p>“Dear Miss Breed” for “Once Upon a Camp” classroom series, which acts as a supplement for the VHS tape of the same name and includes a lesson plan, a break-down of the video, activities, worksheets, and additional historical information</p>	2000
5	9	<p>Letters to Helen McNary from:</p> <p>Jack Watanabe; Margaret Ishino; Louise Ogawa; Fusa Tsumagari; Florence Ishino; Katherine Tasaki</p>	1942-1943
5	10	<p>Letter to Mitsue (?) from her father regarding life in Poston, including a mention of young men in the relocation center who have volunteered as soldiers and are awaiting their induction to the army</p>	1943