



TITLE: Gila River War Relocation Center Project Attorney records

DATE RANGE: 1923-1948 (bulk 1942-1945)

CALL NUMBER: MS 1490

LOCATION: Arizona History Museum, 949 E Second St, Tucson, AZ 85719

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 8 linear feet (19 boxes)

PROVENANCE: Donated in 2015 by Dr. Stephen Terry, son of James Hedrick Terry.

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PREFERRED CITATION: Arizona Historical Society, Gila River War Relocation Center Project Attorney records, MS 1490

PROCESSED BY: Richard Jones, 2017. Revised by Leonard Coombs, 2019.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: James Hedrick Terry (1899-1976), a New York lawyer, served as the Project Lawyer for the Gila River War Relocation Center from 1942 to 1945. Terry, his wife Theodosia Hatch Terry (1902-1988), and their three sons (James, Jr., Anthony and Stephen) moved from New York City to the Gila River War Relocation Center at Rivers, Arizona, located just south of Sacaton. The family lived at the center and the younger boys went to school there, as well as prep schools away from the center.

Prior to accepting the post, Terry had been a well-regarded lawyer in New York City. His father, Professor Charles Thaddeus Terry, was on the faculty of Columbia Law School for many years and was a colleague of Harlan Stone, who went on to serve in the U.S. Supreme Court. James began his legal career as a criminal prosecutor and worked alongside U.S. Attorney Thomas E. Dewey, who later became Governor of New York and a Republican Presidential Candidate. Terry, who never lost a case while working as a federal prosecutor, tried many prohibition-related defendants including Waxey Gordon. He later left government work for a private law firm.

After President Roosevelt's exclusion order requiring relocation and detention of people of Japanese descent, Terry sought out a position with the newly formed War Relocation Authority as a project attorney at a relocation center. As Project Attorney, Terry and his small staff served many of the legal needs of those confined at the Center. The office

provided standard legal services such as wills, divorces, tax problems, contracts, and insurance claims. They also helped with problems unique to detainees, such as resisting attempts by state governments to confiscate detainee property. Terry was involved in the camp clearances process, which allowed a detainee to leave the camp, and with the resettlement process, which allowed a detainee to move from the camp to non-exclusion zones for employment or school. Terry monitored legislation and court cases impacting detainee rights. He also served as legal advisor to the Administration and the Project Director. Despite the wide variety of services, a significant portion of Terry's work involved detainee property protection and resettlement arrangements.

After completing his duties as Project Attorney, Terry served briefly on the Repatriation Review Board, a panel charged with reviewing repatriation cases of detainees remaining in War Relocation Authority custody after the war as either loyalist Japanese citizens or renunciants (those who renounced their American citizenship). Many "loyalists" disputed that categorization and many "renunciants" recanted their wartime renunciations. The hearings considered the cases of those defending themselves against repatriation to Japan.

Afterwards, the family relocated to Tucson, Arizona where Terry resumed private practice. Terry and his wife lived in Tucson for the remainder of their lives. Their son James H. Terry, Jr. became a physician in New York, and sons Anthony and Stephen had long careers in Tucson as a lawyer and a physician, respectively.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The Gila River War Relocation Center was located within the Gila River Reservation on irrigated agricultural land leased by the War Relocation Authority from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Center was organized into two separate camps, Butte and Canal. It quickly grew to its maximum population of 13,348, making it the fourth largest city in Arizona, behind Phoenix, Tucson, and the Colorado River Relocation Center near Poston (17,814).

The two camps at the Gila River Center contained hundreds of buildings. Most were residential, but others included administrative offices, a hospital, a library, a post office, churches, warehouses, athletic fields, and schools, including a high school in each camp. Industries included a camouflage net factory and a model ship fabrication shop; as well as extensive farming activities with packing sheds, an ice house, and 7,000 cultivated acres.

Gila River had a reputation as one of the more sympathetic centers in the War Relocation Authority system. The perimeter fences and the single guard tower were removed soon after construction. Nevertheless, the two camps at Gila River were still detention camps. The residents were not free to leave.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: This collection is arranged in five series:

- Series I** James H. Terry.
- Series II** Project Attorney Duties & Services.
- Series III** Relocation Center Activities & Information.
- Series IV** War Relocation Authority.
- Series V** Repatriation Hearing Board.

Series I. James H. Terry: consists primarily of Terry's personal correspondence including his early legal career as a Prohibition prosecutor and the sale of his New York apartment after moving to Arizona. There are also clippings on family marriages, publicized criminal prosecutions, and Japanese-American relocation issues.

Series II. Project Attorney Duties & Services: consists mainly of correspondence and notes related to the legal services offered by the Project Attorney's Office. Of interest would be Mr. Terry's work in detainee property issues. Detainees suffered significant losses caused by relocation far from their homes, poor federal government management and storage of their property, and punitive state laws regarding detainee property.

This series also contains a transcript of the battle between the Gila River Center and the Arizona Corporation Commission. The Project Attorney had incorporated the farm cooperative, the Gila River Cooperative Enterprises, Inc., so it could contract with the Center to sell its produce to the Center. Arizona farming interests combined with the State's anti-Japanese sympathies to cause the Arizona Corporation Commission to revoke the license, arguing that a "Japanese corporation" could not do business in Arizona. At the end of the hearing the Cooperative offered to limit its business to the camp and to disband immediately after exclusion was lifted. Along with the hearing transcript is a campaign brochure by one of the commissioners touting his "courageous" actions in fighting the War Relocation Authority and in restricting the Japanese detainees.

The War Relocation Authority established a leave program, often referred to as resettlement, which allowed detainees deemed "loyal" to resettle in non-exclusion areas for purposes of certain types of employment or to attend school. There is extensive correspondence, sometimes involving both Mr. and Mrs. Terry, often with wealthy East Coast families looking for young women to do domestic work. Mrs. Elia Kazan, the wife of the film director, sought out such domestic help. One ill-fated pairing involved Mrs. Grosvenor Allen and Sachiye Sato. Mrs. Allen felt Sachiye undermined the morale of the other young women, former detainees, working for her.

There is also a series of correspondence involving unsuccessful attempts to obtain leave for Dr. George Iki to serve as a physician in the military. Terry even reached out to Eleanor Roosevelt, whom he had met during her visit to Gila River on April 23, 1943, to assist. Mrs. Roosevelt's signed response, on White House stationery, states that she had spoken to Secretary McCloy about Dr. Iki's situation. A follow up letter from the War Department states that they were no longer recruiting civilian physicians.

Also found in this series is a carbon copy typescript of an anonymous personal recounting of the relocation experience, written by a woman who had lived in Pasadena, CA before being relocated with her family to the Tulare Assembly Center. Most of the detainees at Tulare were sent to Gila River Relocation Center, but the document ends before that.

Series III. Relocation Center Activities & Information: consists of materials regarding the nature of the camp, camp maps, a bus schedule between camps, English lesson materials, correspondence denying a request for Japanese language lessons, notices related to camp closure, correspondence and program brochure regarding Distinguished Service Cross presentation to Kazuo Otani, and two pamphlets reflecting on the first and the second year at the camp and summarizing camp organization and activities. School related materials include high school yearbooks, notes regarding activities, an illustrated calendar, and a student poetry book.

Also included is a copy of the Loyalty Questionnaire, a declaration required of the detainees. How they answered Questions 27 & 28 would often impact how they were later treated within the War Relocation Authority system and by the Selective Service.

One folder of photographs includes portraits of six camp residents, inscribed to Terry.

Materials also include a nearly complete run of the Gila News-Courier, a newspaper run by Gila River detainees (“Gilans”) for detainees. It was generally published three days and week and ran from September 12, 1942 until September 5, 1945, the day after the Army ended all individual exclusion orders. The newspaper’s replacement publication, the Gila Bulletin, ran just two months and concerned itself mainly with logistics of removing people and closing the camp.

Series IV. War Relocation Authority: The War Relocation Authority was created a month after President Roosevelt’s exclusion order to build and administer the relocation centers. This series consists primarily of War Relocation Authority correspondence, pamphlets, memoranda, reports, manuals & handbooks, community analysis, press releases, press reviews, news & information digests, and an index/digest of agency opinions. Of note, there are studies and analyses of Japanese culture and the Japanese-American experience that were used as “background” for War Relocation Authority administrators.

As the War Relocation Authority wound down operations, it published a series of nine reports regarding various aspects of relocation, the detention centers, and the impact on the detainees. The reports are titled: *Wartime Exile: The Exclusion of the Japanese Americans From the West Coast*; *Impounded People: Japanese Americans in the Relocation Centers*; *The Relocation Program*; *The Wartime Handling of Evacuee Property*; *Administrative Highlights of the War Relocation Authority Program*; *Community Government in War Relocation Centers*; *Legal and Constitutional Phases of the War Relocation Authority Program*; *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description*; and *Token Shipment: The Story of America’s War Refugee Shelter*.

The War Agency Liquidation Unit, the successor agency to the War Relocation Authority, had responsibility to complete unfinished War Relocation Authority matters. Its final report, *People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans*, considered the initial phases of detainees' transition to a life beyond forced relocation and involuntary detention.

Series V. Repatriation Hearing Board: The Repatriation Review Board, a division of the Department of Justice, was a hearing panel charged with reviewing repatriation cases of detainees remaining in War Relocation Authority custody after the war as either loyalist Japanese citizens or renunciants. Many "loyalists" disputed that categorization and many "renunciants" recanted their wartime renunciations. Many of these people resisted repatriation. The hearings considered the cases of those defending themselves against repatriation to Japan. James Terry served on this panel for several months after leaving the Gila River Center. This series contains Repatriation Hearing Board correspondence, memoranda, handwritten notes, hearing transcripts, and panel decisions.

RELATED MATERIALS: Frances and Mary Montgomery Papers, FMS 007; Poston Relocation Camp Printed Materials, MS 0985; Tucson Committee for Interracial Understanding records, 1943-1945, MS 0904; Wade Head Collection, FMS 118.

CONTAINER LIST:

Series I. James H. Terry			
Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	Correspondence: Early Career	1925-1942
	2	Correspondence: Personal	1942
	3	Correspondence: Personal	1943
	4	Correspondence: Personal	1944
	5	Correspondence: Personal	1945
	6	Correspondence: Personal	1946
	7	Correspondence: Personal	Undated
	8	Correspondence: NY Apt. Sale	1943-1944
	9	Correspondence: NY Bar	1942-1947
	10	Correspondence: AZ Bar	1945
	11	Correspondence: College Alumnus	1945, 1946
2	1	Clippings: Early Career	1929-1933
	2	Clippings: Personal	1923-1932
	3	Clippings: Personal	1942-1945
	4	Clippings: Relocation Issues	1942-1945
	5	Election Materials	1948
	6	Personal Items	Undated
Series II. Project Attorney Duties & Services			
3	1	ACC Hearing	1943
	2	Attorney Meeting Notes	1943
	3	Camp Dietician Correspondence	1944
	4	Citizenship Research	Undated
	5	Clearance Correspondence	1943-1945
	6	Clearance Materials	1943-1944
	7	Clearance Opinions	1944
	8	Congressional Appropriations Hearings	1943, 1944
4	1	Congressional Hearing Reports	1943, 1944
	2	Correspondence: Co-Op & Industries	1943, 1944
	3	Court Briefs: Relocation Issue	1942, 1944
	4	Drivers Licenses	1943, 1944
	5	Internal Security	1944
	6	Law Review Articles	1943, 1945, 1947
	7	Legal Services – General	1942-1943
5	1	Legal Services – General	1944-1945
	2	Office Items	Undated
	3	Personal Description of Relocation Experience	1942
	4	Property Correspondence & Memos	1942-1943
Box	Folder	Title	Dates
	5	Property Correspondence & Memos	1944

	6	Property Notes	Undated
	7	Resettlement Correspondence	1943
	8	Resettlement Correspondence	1943
	9	Resettlement Correspondence	1943
6	1	Resettlement Correspondence	1944
	2	Resettlement Correspondence	1944
	3	Resettlement Correspondence	1944
	4	Resettlement Correspondence	1944
7	1	Resettlement Correspondence	1945
	2	Resettlement Correspondence: Allen/ Sato	1942-1944
	3	Resettlement Correspondence: Dr. George Iki	1944
	4	Resettlement Correspondence: Mrs. Elia Kazan	1942-1944
	5	Resettlement Correspondence: Student	1944
	6	Resettlement Information	1943-1944
	7	Resettlement Notes	Undated
	8	Terry, Postscript as Project Attorney	1945
	9	Terry, Public Speaking	1943-1945
	10	Terry, Project Attorney Appointment	1942-1943
	11	Transportation	1944
Series III: Relocation Center Activities & Information			
8	1	Anniversary Booklet: "A Year at Gila" pamphlet	1943
	2	Anniversary Booklet: "2nd Year at Gila" pamphlet	1944
	3	Butte High School Yearbook	1944
	4	Butte High School Yearbook	1945
	5	Camp Closing Information	1945
	6	Camp High School Graduation Program & Notes	1944, 1945
	7	Camp Industries Conference Program	1944
	8	Camp Information	1942-1945
	9	Camp Map/Bus Schedule	1944
	10	Canal High School Yearbook	1944
	11	English Lesson Materials	Undated
9	1	Gila Bulletin	1945
	2	Gila Co-Op News	1945
	3	Gila News-Courier	1942
	4	Gila News-Courier	1943
	5	Gila News-Courier	1943
	6	Gila News-Courier	1943
	7	Gila News-Courier	1943
10	1	Gila News-Courier	1944
	2	Gila News Courier	1944
	3	Gila News Courier	1944
Box	Folder	Title	Dates
	4	Gila News Courier	1944
11	1	Gila News Courier	1945
	2	Gila News Courier	1945

	3	Gila News Courier	1945
	4	Gila River Illustrated Calendar	1943
	5	Japanese Lessons: Correspondence	1944
	6	Kazuo Otani Distinguished Service Cross Program	1945
	7	Loyalty Question Hearing Transcripts	Undated
	8	Loyalty Statement – Selective Service	Undated
	9	Pacific Citizen - Japanese American Citizens League	1942-1945
	10	Photographs: Portraits from/of Some Residents	Undated
	11	School Activities	Undated
	12	Staff Christmas Program	1943
	13	Student Poetry Book	1944
Series IV: War Relocation Authority			
12	1	Administrative Manual, Part A	1944
	2	Administrative Manual, Part B	1944
	3	House Un-American Activities Committee	1942, 1943
	4	Community Analysis	1943
	5	Community Analysis	1944
	6	Community Analysis	1945
13	1	Correspondence	1942
	2	Correspondence	1943
	3	Correspondence	1944
	4	Correspondence	1945
	5	Daily News Digest	1944
	6	Daily News Digest	1945
	7	Daily News Digest	1945
	8	Digests of Congressional Hearings	1944
	9	Documents from Other Camps	1944, 1945
14	1	Education Handbook, Part A	1943
	2	Education Handbook, Part B	1943
	3	Favorable Clippings	1944, 1945
	4	Final Reports, Part A	1946
15	1	Final Reports, Part B	1946
	2	Information Digests	1942, 1943
	3	Information Digests	1944, 1945
	4	Japanese-American Background Materials	1942-1945
	5	Japanese Tourism Promotion	1935
	6	Memos	1943
16	1	Memos	1944
	2	Memos	1945
Box	Folder	Title	Dates
	3	Military Publications	1943, 1944, 1945
	4	National Defense Migration Hearings	1942
	5	News Coverage	1943-1945
	6	Office of Budget & Finance Reports	1944

17	1	Opinion Index-Digest, Part A	1942-1943
	2	Opinion Index-Digest, Part B	1943-1945
	3	Outside Organization Publications	1943, 1944, 1945
	4	Post Exclusion Bulletins	1945
	5	Press Releases	1942
	6	Press Releases	1943
	7	Press Releases	1944, 1945
	8	Quarterly Reports	1942
	9	Semi-Annual Reports	1943, 1944
18	1	War Agency Liquidation Unit Report	1947
	2	Weekly Press Reviews	1943
	3	Weekly Press Reviews	1943
	4	Weekly Press Reviews	1944
	5	Weekly Press Reviews	1944
	6	Weekly Reports and Related Correspondence	1942
19	1	Weekly Reports and Related Correspondence	1943
	2	Weekly Reports and Related Correspondence	1944
	3	Weekly Reports and Related Correspondence	1944
	4	Weekly Reports and Related Correspondence	1945
Series V: Repatriation Hearing Board			
19	5	Correspondence	1945-1946
	6	Findings	1945
	7	Hearing Transcripts	1945
	8	Memos	1945-1946
	9	Notes	1945-1946
	10	Procedures	1945
	11	Telegrams	1945-1946