

Collection #
M 1491

**JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE
HOOSIER CHAPTER COLLECTION, 1964-2018**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 6 manuscript boxes, 1 half size manuscript box, 1 folder cold storage color photographs, 1 PAC album, 5 cassette tapes, 1 printed item

COLLECTION DATES: 1964-2018

PROVENANCE: Gift of the Hoosier JACL, c/o Anne Chieko Moore, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2017.0144; 2019.0061; 2020.0033

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), founded in 1929 by existing Nisei generation organizations in California and Washington coming together as one, is the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. The mission of the organization is to secure and maintain the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others who are victims of injustice and bigotry. The JACL also works to promote and preserve the cultural heritage, social values, and education of the Japanese American community. The Constitution for the Hoosier Chapter of the JACL (Hoosier JACL) was written in December 1975, with the founding members mostly looking to create a venue for social interactions between Japanese Americans in Indiana. The first meeting took place on Saturday, January 24, 1976 at the Heritage House Smorgasbord in Indianapolis, Indiana and was presided over by the chapter's first president, Dr. George Umemura. The Hoosier JACL was the first new chapter added to the Midwest District Council in almost thirty years and was chartered as the 94th chapter of JACL. The mainstays of the Hoosier JACL over the years have been gatherings for summer picnics and Christmas parties, hosting educational events like films, speakers, and kabuki performances, and participating in cultural arts (food, dance, crafts) in conjunction with the Nationalities Council and the International Center of Indianapolis.

While the Hoosier JACL is nonpartisan and nonsectarian, the JACL does engage in political advocacy for the Japanese American community, Asian Americans, and generally on human rights issues. Most notably, the Hoosier JACL, along with the regional and national components of JACL, beginning in 1978, raised funds and engaged in political advocacy efforts within their state's Congressional delegation in the movement for redress. The redress movement was an effort by the Japanese American community to request a formal apology and reparations from the United States government for damages inflicted upon the community due to Executive Order 9066, issued on February 19, 1942, which resulted in the involuntary relocation and incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens, from the West Coast into internment camps or War Relocation Centers (WRC). WRCs were located in Arkansas (Jerome and Rohwer), Arizona (Gila River and Poston), California (Manzanar and Tule Lake), Colorado (Granada), Idaho (Minidoka), Utah (Topaz), and Wyoming (Heart Mountain). After ten years of advocacy by the JACL and the community at large, in 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act which included a formal apology and allowed for \$20,000 to be paid to each survivor of this atrocity. In addition to supporting the national advocacy efforts, the Hoosier JACL was successful in their campaign in 1979 to get the mayor of the city of Indianapolis, William Hudnut III and the governor of Indiana, Otis R. Bowen, to issue proclamations acknowledging Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Members of the Hoosier JACL also penned letters to the editor and called out instances of racism towards Japanese Americans that occurred in the media or within businesses and institutions.

As of the time of writing this collection guide in September 2021, the Hoosier JACL continues to be an active organization with regular gatherings and the continued production of their newsletter, *Bamboo Heritage*.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

Rosario, Isabella, "The Unlikely Story Behind Japanese Americans' Campaign for Reparations." Code Switch. 24 March 2020.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/03/24/820181127/the-unlikely-story-behind-japanese-americans-campaign-for-reparations>

"JACL." <https://jacl.org/mission>

"Hoosier JACL." <https://hoosierjacl.wordpress.com/about/>

Conner, Nancy Nakano. "Forming a Japanese American Community- The Hoosier JACL."

<https://hoosierjacl.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/hoosierjacl2.pdf>

"Executive Order 9066: Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese (1942)"

<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=74>

"Nisei" <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nisei>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains records, publications, and photographs documenting the activities of the Japanese American Citizens League, specifically the Hoosier Chapter, but it also documents the Hoosier Chapter's interactions with the Midwest District Council, Midwest Regional Office, and the National organization. The collection has been divided into three series and folders are arranged chronologically within each series. Series 1 contains correspondence, the *Bamboo Heritage* newsletter, board minutes, administrative notebooks kept by former presidents and secretaries of the Hoosier Chapter, photographs of chapter activities, and information on chapter events and programs. Series 2 contains information from Midwest Regional meetings and documents the formation of the Human Rights Committee in the Midwest region. Series 3 is mostly made up of correspondence from the national JACL organization communicating to individual regions and chapters about the Japanese American Redress movement in the late 1970s and 1980s, but also contains general correspondence from the national organization.

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