

**Ms 91**

**NIGUMA, Rose, papers. 1.2 1.f.**

**Abstract:** Rose Niguma, a Japanese-American artist and art educator, was interned at the War Relocation Authority camp at Minidoka, ID, 1942-1945.

**Biography:** Rose Nabuko Niguma (1916-) was born in Hood River, OR, the daughter of Motoji Niguma (1881-1966) and Chikano nee Shioishi. She moved to Portland, OR and attended Franklin High School, graduating in 1933. Niguma exhibited an early talent for and interest in art. She attended the Portland [Art] Museum School, but her education was interrupted by the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan and the subsequent removal of Americans of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast.

Niguma, her mother, and two brothers (the parents having separated or divorced) were interned in the War Relocation Authority camp at Minidoka, ID in mid-1942. While in the camp, she taught art in the nursery school. Her brothers served in the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, composed entirely of Japanese-Americans. After the war, Rose and her mother returned to Portland.

Niguma enrolled in the Pacific Northwest College of Art (then known as the Art Museum School), graduating with a BFA in 1979. In the ensuing years she experimented with various techniques and genres. In 1983 she described her work as “Abstract Expressionism.” “The colors are bright, optimistic and positive. Oftentimes, the paintings extend beyond the present into the space future.” Niguma was represented in numerous small art exhibits in the Portland area.

**Scope and content:** The bulk of the collection consists of Niguma’s incoming correspondence. It provides an intimate picture of the life of a young Japanese-American female in that period just prior to and during World War II., all reflected in the letters she received.

Of particular interest is the correspondence received from young men serving in the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, which was composed entirely of Japanese-Americans. These letters are often lengthy, some are introspective, and all bring news of Army life with its trials and tribulations. Many seem to entertain thoughts of romance, but Niguma was having none of it. All of the correspondents had been interned in one or more of the WRA camps and life at the camps is discussed, at least in passing. Life, love, religion, being Japanese-Americans, the military, and prejudice, are among the many topics in the correspondence. Eddie Sato, an artist from Seattle, often includes drew cartoons in his letters.

Another interesting series includes correspondence from Niguma’s girl friends, especially Mary and Rose Sakai from the Los Angeles area. These pre-war letters include a wide range of topics of interest to teenage girls—growing up Japanese-American, dating, leisure time activities, and by 1939-40, the growing prospect of war between Japan and the United States, and then the move to the internment camps.

The series of WRA Minidoka files documents some aspects of life in the camp, particularly the role of the nursery school teacher. Included are internal memoranda, Nigumas's various notes, and preliminary student evaluations.

Niguma's development as an artist is not well documented, although her philosophy of art and discussion of her own work occurs in her correspondence with Philip Zimmerman.

Also included are a small number of nursery school art class works in various media—crayon, pastel chalk, and water-based paints. Only the children's first names are written, so it is impossible to designate the creator of each piece.

There is a substantial, but broken, run of the 1944 *Minidoka Irrigator*, the camp newspaper, containing extensive news about the camp and the young men serving in the military.

Identified photographs have been separated from the collection and catalogued under 2004.61

**Inclusive dates:** 1928-1992 (bulk 1936-1946)

**Restrictions:** None

**Volume:** 1.2 1.f.

**Accession number:** 2004.61.1.1

## **Box 1 Correspondence**

### **Folder Contents**

- 1** Amatatsu, Kay. 1944. In Ogden, UT working in agriculture. Boss's wife tried to boss all of the Japanese around, but after a complaint to the WRA, conditions improved. 2 letters.
- 2** Armstrong, M. J., 1931-33. From Tacoma, WA, corresponding with many Japanese friends. Tells her not to worry if there is a war, they still will be friends. 3 letters.
- 3** Batchelder, Bernice, 1944-45. Supervisor of Student Teaching at Minidoka. Inquires about Niguma's illness, home life, and teaching at the camp. 5 letters.
- 4** Campbell, Mrs. D.S., 1944. Superintendent of the primary department of the Methodist Church at Buhl, ID, writes to RN about crafts, Hunt [ID], etc. 1 letter.
- 5** Christmas cards, I. Cards mainly from Issei and other Nisei, 1936-1940. 21

cards. Some include brief notes.

- 6 Christmas cards, II. Cards mainly from Issei and other Nisei, 1936-1940. 16 cards. Some include brief notes.
- 6A Funatake, Tomiko, 1937-1940. High school graduation invitation and Christmas card. 2 items.
- 7 Hamada, Hatsumi, 1943-44. Relocated to Allenton, MI from Minidoka via Grand Junction, CO and Olathe, KS, life away from the camp, young Japanese girls around Denver “Smoke, drink,, no ambition. Isn’t it this a sad stories [sic], who are victim because of war?” W.R.A. won’t let them seek other work. Marriage advice to RN. General news of Japanese community, soldiers, etc. 8 letters.
- 8 Hashimoto, Don & Bob, 1943. Mostly news of school in Ontario, OR. 1 letter.
- 9 Harry, 1944. Working painting toys in a toy factory in Ontario, OR. Likes the work, although it doesn’t pay much. Describes Ontario. 1 letter.
- 10 Hempsted, Ethel, 1943. Secretary of the Religious Education Council of the Federated Church, Twin Falls, ID. Advises RN that she needs to impose more discipline on the children and “teaching in the right way.” 1 letter, 1 page of council minutes.
- 11 Higashiyama, Fumiko, 1943. Working in a cannery in Brigham, UT. Describes work, living conditions, friendliness of people in Ogden and Brigham toward Japanese people. 5 letters.
- 12 Hoshida, Ki, 1943. Former teacher at Minidoka working in Salt Lake City. Freedom outside of the camps. Criticizes Miss Dirksen’s running of the Minidoka nursery school, believes her procedures are “more suitable to Americans living in large cities. It seems that it couldn’t work satisfactorily with Japanese in camp. You know camp life isn’t natural, so could one expect a child to be natural?” W.A.A.C. recruiting in camp. 2 letters.
- 13 Hungerford, Mary, 1942. Writes to Rose at Relocation Assembly Center, North Portland. News of Rose’s cats, now in the care of Mrs. Hungerford. Offers to procure supplies for the kindergarten at the assembly center. Notes that her son has been sent to a conscientious objector’s camp and she keeps a spare room for those who come into Portland for the weekends. 5 letters.
- 14 Itami, Ruth, 1936, 1940. thanks RN for gifts. 2 letters.
- 15 Katakawa, Hatsumi, 1942. Writes from Burley, ID Enjoying life. 1 letter.

- 16 Kawahata, Hattie, 1944. Attending Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA. Has chosen a thesis topic, "Comparison of the ideas and forces motivating international organizations in the last war with those in the present conflict." 1 letter.
- 17 Kobayashi, Emi, 1943. Christmas card.
- 18 Lil, 1944. Working topping and thinning sugar beets near Brigham, UT. Very hard work and the mosquitoes are terrible. 2 letters.
- 19 MacFarland, Marcia, 1942-43. Watched the jeeps taking things into the relocation center. Tells RN to "keep her chin up, this can't last forever." 2 letters.
- 20 Maruhachi, Miyuki, 1944. Working making dress alterations in a shop in Spokane, WA. Likes it, is pregnant. 2 letters.
- 21 Meals, Geraldine, 1935, 37. Letter from RN to GM thanking her for a gift. Invitation to Meals' wedding.
- 22 Minoru (cousin), 1931. RN to Minoru in Japan. Speculates on changes in Japan since her parents left 21 years before. Describes Japanese baseball team that played in Portland and won. 1 letter.
- 23 Mori, Jane, 1943. To RN in hospital, describing improvements in the nursery school. 1 letter.
- 24 Murakami, Roy D. (1919-1989), 1944. Murakami was serving with the 232<sup>nd</sup> Combat Engineers as part of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, composed entirely of Japanese-American men. Great detail about life in the Army and military action encountered in Italy and France. Describes the Italian and French people, hostility between the Hawaiian and "mainland" Japanese-American soldiers, general philosophy, etc. A substantial portion of the letters are "V Mail" and undated. 44 letters.
- 25 Niguma, George (1913-2002), 1944. RN's older brother writes from Camp Hood, TX.. Mainly news about Army life. 2 letters.
- 26 Niguma, Marie (m. Uchida) (1920-1994), 1945. Writes a very curt letter to RN about life and RN's high expectations. 1 letter.
- 27 Niguma, Motoji (1881-1966), 1937, 1938. RN's father writes to his wife after their divorce or separation. In Japanese. Three photographs of him. 1 letter.

- 28 Okada, Charles (1923-1979), 1943-44. From Camp Hale, CO of army life, proposal of marriage, and copy of RN's letter declining. 7 letters.
- 29 "Pee," 1944. Writing from Milwaukee, WI about the trip from Minidoka, daily life, news, etc. 3 letters.
- 30 Price, Mabel, 1942-44. RN's old neighbor from Portland writes news of her family and the neighborhood, she "truly hopes there will be no more war ever." 8 letters.
- 31 Sakai, Mary, 1931-38. Lengthy, chatty letters from RN's contemporary living in the Los Angeles, CA area. Discusses life for young Japanese women growing up American, being Japanese, social life, etc. 30 letters.
- 32 Sakai, Mary, 1939-1942. Letters continue, discussing war looming on horizon, uncertainty about the future, after December 7, 1941, conditions in relocation camps, etc. 20 letters.
- 33 Sakai, Rose (m. Fukuhara), 1936-42. Sister of Mary also writes of life as a young Japanese woman in the Los Angeles area, preparation for and life after marriage, FBI raids on Japanese Chamber of Commerce, possibility of internment. 38 letters.
- 34 Saiki, Mary, 1945. Has resettled in Portland, surly treatment, general news. 1 letter.
- 35 Sasaki, Margaret., 1936. Describes illness, visiting other Japanese, family news. 1 letter.
- 36 Sato, Eddie (1923-2005), 1943. Seattle Japanese-American artist in the 232<sup>nd</sup> Combat Engineers of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment writing from training at Camp Shelby, MS. Details of camp life, religious belief, being Japanese-American, poetic and philosophical. 6 letters.
- 37 Sato, Eddie, 1944 January-April. Finishing training, getting ready to ship out for Europe, religious thoughts. 20 letters.
- 38 Sato, Eddie, 1944 May-December. Departure for Europe, seasickness, conditions in Italy, impressions of Italians, battles, sent to France, impressions of the French, cold, diseases, much detail. 40 letters.
- 39 Sato, Eddie, 1945 January. New Year's greetings hoping for a brighter year. 1 letter
- 40 Sato, Eddie, 1986. RN to ES, discussing "ethnic" artists, issue of redress from

- WW II, artist Roger Shimomura, other issues. Lengthy two-page letter copied by hand. 1 letter
- 41 Shin, 1943. From Camp Hale, CO, describing fight between whites and Japanese-Americans, being called “Jap”, etc. 1 letter
- 42 Shioshi, Chicalo, 1944. Wedding announcement and RN’s letter of congratulation and discussion of the draft. 2 letters.
- 42A Shioshi, Margaret, 1940, 1942, 1944. Selling everything, buying \$11, 323.00 worth of Defense Bonds, preparing to leave for relocation center, trying to remain cheerful. 3 letters.
- 43 Shioshi, Sam (1915-1992), 1942, 1944. Written from Camp Joseph T. Robinson (1942) and Ft. Benjamin Harrison (1944), asks about the relocation assembly center, family matters. 2 letters.
- 44 Shoji, Chiseo, 1942-1944. Resettled in Chicago and working as a bell hop, doesn’t like Chicago, still intends to pursue his artistic interests. 5 letters.
- 45 Soldier [identification removed], 1942-1943. RN has removed return addresses, dates, and writer’s name.. Writes a bit about army life, treatment and payment of Japanese and Caucasians in army. 5 letters.
- 46 Sunamoto, Michi, 1944. Working in a cannery in Roy, UT, many Japanese-Americans from other camps there. 2 letters.
- 47 Takemoto, T., 1944. Camp Shelby, MS, thanking RN for her hospitality and indicating the profound sadness he experienced in leaving Minidoka and returning to the army. 1 letter.
- 48 Tymmi[?], 1988. From RN, Retin-A treatment, some art discussions. Hand-written copies of correspondence. 2 letters.
- 49 Vana, George and Clara, 1942. To RN in the North Portland assembly center. News of their lives and questions about life at the center. 2 letters.
- 50 Y\_\_, Rose, 1943. Writes from Chicago and Otsego, NY about jobs, there are Negroes who are worse off than she, repeated efforts to enlist in the Women’s Army Corps, describes her job in a nursery school in Otsego, NY, sloppiness of other workers, etc. 6 letters.
- 51 Yasui, Minoru, 1942. RN to Yasui of the Japanese-American Citizen’s League defending the Portland, OR curfew on Nisei, noting that loyalty

requires acceptance of curtailing of some rights. RN signs it, "A Nisei."  
It is unclear if she sent a copy of the letter as the original, addressed is included. 1 letter

- 52 Zimmerman, Philip, 1986-87. Handwritten copies of RN's correspondence to PZ. Discusses issues of art, creativity, marketing, being an "ethnic" artist, health, shows, etc. 13 letters.
- 53 Zimmerman, Philip, 1988. Handwritten copies of RN's correspondence to PZ. 22 letters.
- 54 Miscellaneous, 1928-1988. Cards, form letters, etc. 14 items.
- 55 Miscellaneous. Unidentified correspondence, fragments.
- 56 Miscellaneous, undated. Letters in Japanese. 3 letters.
- 57 Notice to Aliens, 1942. "Notice to aliens of foreign nationalities, certificates of identification." Form notice.
- 58 War Relocation Authority, 1942. Registration form and instructions.
- 59 War Relocation Authority, [1942]. The Relocation Program (in Japanese).
- 60 War Relocation Authority, 1942. "Attention Japanese Workers." Notice for Japanese at the Portland Relocation Center interested in traveling to Malheur County to work in the sugar beets.
- 61 War Relocation Authority, September 7, 1942. "Information bulletin, Minidoka Project, Eden, Idaho." Instructions to new arrivals, also referred to as "colonists."
- 62 War Relocation Authority, 1942-43. Various form letters: To RN, leave clearance approval; Chikano Niguma notifying her that her housing is too large for her family size and she will be relocated to a smaller unit; to RN, notifying her that her household goods and personal belongings will be forwarded.
- 63 War Relocation Authority. Minidoka Nursery School, student records (preliminary). Registration records with student's name and birth date, usually parent's names and birth dates, occupations, birth place, Minidoka housing location, and miscellaneous information:

Fukuda, Takeko (Jeanette)  
Fukui, Hiroshi (David)  
Goto, Takashi (David)

Hayashida, Hiroshi  
Hayashida, Kayo  
Hayashida, Mamoru (Neal)

Hayashida, Tokoyo  
 Hayatsu, Kenji “Kenbo”  
 (Richard)  
 Ishihara, Frank  
 Ishihara, Setsuko (Marlene)  
 Itami, Jefferson  
 Iwami, Frank  
 Kanetomi, Teruko (Martha)

Kawamoto, Eiko  
 Kawamura, Theodore  
 Kikuchi, Norio (Fred)  
 Kitamoto, Yoshikazu  
 (Frank)  
 Kiuchi, Kiyoe  
 Kono, Kiyoko  
 Kono, Tazue

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Mayetani, Raymond  
 Miyazaki, Kazumi  
 (Richard)  
 Mori, Yukio (David)  
 Nakashima, Edward  
 Nakashima, Mariye  
 Niiyama, Jerry  
 Numoto, Chiyoko (Ellen)  
 Ohashi, Hiroshi (Donald)  
 Ohashi, Etsuko (Peggy)  
 Okamoto, Chiye  
 Otani, Masami  
 Saito, Mitsue  
 Sasaki, Mineko (Susanne)  
 Sakurai, Michie (Judy)  
 Shigaki, Shikibu (“Dodo”)  
 Torigoe, Kiyomi (Joyce)

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Sugihara, Gerry Allen  
 Tajiri, Sadanobu  
 Teraoka, Masaru (George)  
 Tokita, Yasuo  
 Tokita, Yuzo  
 Toyooka, Shigeki (Henry)  
 Tsutsumi, Ryoko  
 Tsutsumi, Shigeru  
 Tsutsumi, Susumu  
 Uyeda, Yasuo (Paul)  
 Yamamura, Ichiro (Henry)  
 Yamasaki, Yoshio (George)  
 Yoshida, Mamoru  
 Yoshimura, Terushi (Bruce)  
 Yoshimura, Akihira (Irwin)

- 64 War Relocation Authority, 1944. Minidoka Nursery School, random notes on students, new, re-enrolled, dropped.
- 65 War Relocation Authority, 1944. Minidoka Nursery School, compensation, notice of termination due to prolonged absence.
- 66 War Relocation Authority, 1943. Minidoka Nursery School, guest book.
- 67 War Relocation Authority, 1942-44. Minidoka Nursery School, miscellaneous internal memos, forms, etc.
- 68 War Relocation Authority, [1942-44]. Minidoka Nursery School, RN’s notebooks of miscellaneous notes for teaching. Includes rhymes, suggestions, etc.
- 69 War Relocation Authority, [1942-44]. RN’s notes about teaching. Difficult to discern if they are lecture notes or notes taken from texts.

- 70 War Relocation Authority, 1943. Art exhibit catalogue of work done by Minidoka residents.
- 71 War Relocation Authority, 1945. "Mass meeting of the residents with Mr. Dillon S. Myer, National Director, War Relocation Authority in Minidoka Project auditorium, February 19, 1945." Speech concerning closing of the Minidoka camp.
- 72 War Relocation Authority, 1945. Report, "On the 19<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1945, the Minidoka Community Council and the Block Commissioners met with Mr. Dillon S. Myer, the WRA National Director, at the Community Council Chambers to discuss the questions pertinent to the center closure. Following is a condensed official record of this 170-minutes meeting."
- 73 Miscellaneous envelopes to RN, mainly at Minidoka. Representative examples.
- 74 Miscellaneous financial records, RN, 1942-43. Bank statements, receipts for mail order goods, etc.

**Box 2      Miscellaneous**

- 1 Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, undated. Relating to Japanese-Americans, civil rights, etc. 4 items.
- 2 Miscellaneous. "Child guidance in Christian Living," April 1943. Apparently used in conjunction with RN's Sunday School nursery school teaching duties in Minidoka.
- 3 Miscellaneous. "Brutus, the shallow idealist," "My idea of a true sportsman," "Elizabethan theater," "Why I like dogs," "Company manners," essays by RN for English class at Franklin High School, Portland, 1931-32.
- 4 Miscellaneous. Resumes, art submissions, 1981-86.
- 5 Miscellaneous. Wedding invitations, 1947-48. Nisei marriages.
- 6 Miscellaneous. Franklin High School annuals, January 1932, May 1933.
- 7 Miscellaneous. Art exhibition announcements, 1989-92. RN participation.
- 8 Miscellaneous. Sketches and doodles.
- 9 Miscellaneous. Chikano Niguma, [1941]. Biographical information. RN's mother. Probably compiled for alien registration.

- 10 Miscellaneous photographs, mostly unidentified snapshots taken at Minidoka of servicemen, friends, etc.
- 11 Miscellaneous photographs, mostly unidentified snapshots taken at Minidoka of servicemen, friends, etc.

**Box 3 Flat Oversize      Nursery School Art work**

**Box 4 Flat Oversize      Newspapers**

**Minidoka Irrigator**

Vol.	No.	Date	Vol.	No.	Date
III	41	12/4/43			
II [sic.]	46	1/8/44			
II	47	1/15/44			
II	50	2/5/44			
II	51	2/12/44			
II	52	2/19/44			
IV	1	2/26/44	IV	25[sic.]	8/12/44
IV	2	3/4/44	IV	27	8/26/44
IV	3	3/11/44	IV	28	9/2/44
IV	4	3/18/44	IV	28[sic.]	9/16/44
IV	5	3/25/44	IV	28	9/16/44
IV	6	4/1/44	IV	30	9/23/44
IV	7	4/8/44	IV	32	10/7/44
IV	8	4/15/44	IV	33	10/14/44
IV	9	4/22/44	IV	34	10/24/44
IV	10	4/29/44	IV	34	10/24/44
IV	11	5/6/44	IV	35	11/4/44
IV	13	5/20/44	IV	36	11/11/44
IV	16	6/10/44	IV	37	11/18/44
IV	21	7/8/44	IV	38	11/25/44
IV	22	7/15/44	IV	39	12/2/44
IV	23	7/22/44			
IV	24	7/29/44			
IV	25	8/5/44			

**Box 5 Flat Oversize      Newspapers**

			IV	43	1/6/45
IV	40	12/9/44	IV	44	1/13/45
IV	41A	12/18/44	IV	45	1/20/45
IV	42	12/23/44			
IV	42	12/23/44	IV	46	1/27/45
IV	42	12/23/44	IV	47	2/3/45

IV	50	2/10/45	V	3	3/17/45
IV	51	2/17/45	V	4	3/24/45
V	1	3/3/45			

### **Pacific Citizen**

Date	Date	Date
8/6/42	9/24/42	1/29/44
8/13/42	10/8/42	4/8/44
9/17/42	1/8/44	7/15/44
		12/9/44

### **Minidoka Herald**

Special Edition February 1944

### **Photographs, identified and catalogued.**

- .2 Bon Odori, Seattle, ca. 1911
- .3 Japanese apple pickers, Hood River, OR, ca. 1906
- .4 Japanese horse-drawn float, Portland, OR, Rose Festival, 1906
- .5 Japanese mountain climbers on Mt. Hood, OR, ca. 1913
- .6 Japanese railroad workers, OWR&N, Telocaset, OR, ca. 1908
- .8.1 Pvt. Charles Okada in uniform, WWII
- .8.2 Pvt. Charles Okada in uniform, WWII
- .8.3 Pvt. Charles Okada in uniform, WWII
- .8.4 Pvt. Charles Okada in uniform, WWII
- .8.5 Pvt. Charles Okada in uniform, WWII
- .9 Pvt. Charles Okada and Misao Okada
- .10 Pvt. Charles Okada
- .11 The Album, annual of Camp Shelby, MS. Staff photo, Larry Mizuno, Larry Sakamoto, Chap Higuchi, Sam Sasai, ca. 1943-44
- .12 Interior of 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment chapel, Ft. Shelby, MS, decorated for Christmas
- .13 Rose Niguma in kimono and mother (seated), 193-
- .14 Yoshiko Miura
- .16 Pvt. Charles Okada
- .17 Pvt. Charles Okada, Ft. Riley, KS
- .18 Kay Niguma and Paula Camden, Chicago
- .19 Paula Camden, Chicago
- .20 Kay Niguma in combat uniform
- .22 Wedding party, Los Angeles, CA
- .23 Rose Niguma, Minidoka, ID

- .24 Mary (Marie) Niguma, Chicago, IL (sister)
- .25 Shigeko Mori
- .26 Bride and groom
- .27 Mary & May
- .28 May
- .29 Kay Niguma, ca. 1944
- .30 Wedding photograph, George & Florence
- .31 Kay Niguma and three others, taken at Jack and Jill's *Elations*, Portland, OR