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**University of Memphis Libraries
Preservation and Special Collections Department**

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J. Jack Gates papers

Title: J. Jack Gates papers
Collection No: MSS.442
Extent: 1 cubic foot
Inclusive Dates: 1935-1993

Abstract: The collection comprises the papers of J. Jack Gates (1914-2001), a lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Force, related to his experience as a prisoner of war in the Philippines and Japan from 1942 to 1945.

Donor: J. Jack Gates, Memphis, Tennessee, April 1994; Marilyn Meeks, Memphis, Tennessee, June 2016.

Processed by: James E. Montague, April 2006; Gerald Chaudron, July 2014.

Access: Open to all researchers.

Language: English

Preferred Citation: J. Jack Gates papers, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: July 2014

Biographical information

Julian Jack Gates was born in Lonoke, Arkansas, on November 3, 1914, to David and Nettie Witherspoon Gates. His brothers were Lemuel Leon (1908-1971), David, and Meyer W. Gates attended the West Tennessee State Teachers College (now University of Memphis) from 1936 and after two-years training taught in a one-room school house in Widener, Arkansas, and then became principal of the Madison Public School. In 1940, he enlisted in the Army Air Force and, after flight training in Texas, was sent to the Philippines in June 1941 and assigned to the 20th Pursuit Squadron. Captured during the Japanese invasion in 1942, Second Lieutenant Gates survived the march from Bataan to Camp O'Donnell and was kept there and at the Cabanatuan prisoner of war camp until he was sent to Japan in November 1942. His first Japanese camp was Yodogawa, Osaka, and then he was sent to Zentsuji on Shikoku Island. He was in Rokuroshi Prison Camp, Fukui Prefecture, when the war ended and returned to the United States in October 1945.

After his discharge, Gates went into the lumber business and married Eula Mai Numa (1919-2014) of Memphis, whom he had met at the West Tennessee State Teachers College. The couple had two children: J. Jack, Jr., and Marilyn. Gates was commander of the Mid-South Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, and received the Memphis Senior Citizen of the Year award in 1986 for his work with various charity organizations. He died on September 14, 2001.

Scope and contents

The collection comprises correspondence, photographs, diaries, and a three-ring binder of laminated pages entitled "My Diary of Three and One Half Years As a Japanese P.O.W." compiled by J. Jack Gates. Much of the correspondence relates to broadcasts made by Gates, or referring to him, while he was a prisoner of war in Japan in 1944. People who listened to the short wave radio broadcasts wrote letters to Gates' family informing them of what information they had heard. Some made recordings of the broadcasts and sent those also. The most important materials in the collection are four notebooks and a Bible which Gates used as diaries to record his life as a prisoner of war.

The binder contains photographs and newspaper and magazine clippings, as well as copies of clippings, documenting Gates experience, including a transcription of the diaries. There is also a transcription of a report he and other officers made to the commanding general of the U.S. Army in Japan in August 1945 documenting their treatment in the prisoner of war camps. In addition, the binder contains a transcript of an interview with Gates which formed the basis of a 1993 article in the University of Memphis alumni magazine.

Related materials

MSS.484. Oral History collection. Recollections of World War II by Mid-Southerners: J. Jack Gates, Sr. interview, 1984 November 20.

Subject terms

Gates, J. Jack (Julian Jack), 1914-2001.

Prisoner of war camps—Japan.

World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners and prisons, Japanese.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 List of officers in 20th Pursuit Squadron, The Philippines, and their fate, 1942 October 12 (photocopy). Includes note by Gates, 1975 August 1.
Correspondence:
- 2 Gates family, 1935-1948.
- 3 To J. Jack Gates from friends and family, 1943-1945.
- 4 To Mrs. Nettie Gates from friends and acquaintances, 1942-1948.
- 5 Re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcast, 1944 January 8.
- 6 Re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcast, 1944 January 13, 1.
- 7 Re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcast, 1944 January 13, 2.
- 8 Re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcast, 1944 January 13, 3.
- 9 Re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcast, 1944 January 13, 4.
- 10 Re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcast, 1944 January 30.
- 11 Official telegrams re: Japanese prisoner of war radio broadcasts, 1944 January 8-30.
- 12 Homer M. Adkins, Governor of Arkansas, to Mrs. Nettie Gates, Lonoke, Ark., 1943 September 30. Re: prisoners of war; Harry S. Truman to repatriated servicemen, 1945 October. Re: thanks for wartime service.
- 13 Miscellany, 1945 and undated. Included list of Red Cross parcels, Japanese military postcards.
- 14 Photographs, 1940-1945. Includes images of gates, Randolph Field, Texas, Clark Field, The Philippines, and Rokuroshi prisoner of war camp, Japan.
- 15 Bible. Given to Gates by his mother on his birthday, 1940 November 3. Contains diary entries, 1942 April 25-1943 March 1.
Diary notebooks:
- 16 1942 September 19-1943 August 26.
- 17 1943 August 29-1944 April 9.

- 18 1944 March 14-September 11.
19 1944 September 14-1945 September 2.
OS Newspaper:
Forrest City Times-Herald, Forrest City, Ark., 1944 January 19; 1945 May 28.
Includes reports on Gates.

Box 2

Unfolded Binder: "My Diary of Three and One Half Years As a Japanese P.O.W." by J. Jack Gates, Sr., undated.

Contents:

- Black and white photographs (4) of Gates in uniform, undated.
- "A Prisoner of War" by Lt. R. Hastings, Australian Imperial Forces, 1943 September 15.
- Transcript: Gates' notebook before he started his diary, 1 p., 1942 September.
- Transcript: Portion of diary written in Gates' Bible, 2 pp., 1943 April 25-September 1.
- Transcript: Gates, J. Jack, "My Diary", 74 pp., 1942 September 19-1945 September 9.
- Newspaper clippings (copy): "Letter of Former Memphian Gets through from Bataan", undated (1942); untitled, undated (1942).
- Newspaper clipping (copy): "Thanksgiving Day 10 Years Ago, He was a POW from Bataan", undated (1952).
- "Fall of Bataan", Quotations on the event compiled by Gates, 1 p., undated.
- Advertisement: Tape of radio program entitled "Ten Who Escaped from Tojo", originally broadcast in 1944, reproduced by Radio Gems, Brookings, South Dakota, 1986.
- Newspaper clipping (copy): Newcomb, Richard F., "25 Years Hasn't Erased Brutal Horror of Bataan Death March", *The Commercial Appeal*, 1967 March 26.
- Gates, J. Jack, "A Death", remembering death of Lt. Doyle King in 1943, undated.
- Transcript: Radio broadcast Gates made to his family from Japan on his birthday, 1943 November 3.
- "Reports of deaths of American POWs and statement of general condition in Yodogawa sub-camp, Osaka district, Japan, from November 26, 1942 to July 31, 1943".
Copy of report to Commanding General, U.S. Army, by officers at Rokuroshi Prisoner of War Camp, Fukui Prefecture, Japan, 5 pp., 1945 August 27.
- Newspaper clipping (copy): "Jap War Criminal Faints When Court Metes Out Sentence", undated.
- List of material recorded in the diary but not included in the typed version.
- Timeline.
- List of Red Cross parcels issued.
- Newspaper clipping (original): Martin, Robert. "Memphian Remembers Missed Boat", *The Commercial Appeal*, 1967 March 30.
- Gates, J. Jack, "My Talk about my P.O.W. Experience", 6 pp., undated.
- Newspaper clipping (original): Color photograph with caption: "J. Jack Gates, commander of the Mid- South Chapter of American ex-POWs, listens to Col. James Evans' keynote speech during POW/MIA Recognition Day", *The Commercial Appeal*, 1986 September 20.
- Newspaper clipping (original): Thomas, William, "Survival Salute: Ex-POW recalls ordeal of 50 years ago", *The Commercial Appeal*, 1992 April 9.

Magazine clipping (original): Davis, Virginia M., "Days of Anguish, Days of Hope",
Memphis State Magazine, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1993 Winter, pp.11-13.

Transcript of interview with Gates by Virginia M. Davis, Media Relations
Representative, Memphis State University, for *Memphis State Magazine* article,
undated.

Separated materials

The following material has been separated from the collection and disposed of as follows:

Phonograph record:

Recordings of radio broadcast made by Jack Gates as a prisoner of war in Japan,
1944 (3).

Transferred to Special Collections audio/video collection.