

Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by Clarencetta Jelks



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R.
Gardner, 2010

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Collection Summary

Title: Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett Papers

Span Dates: 1818-1936

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1911-1936)

ID No.: MSS52803

Creator: Burnett, Frances Hawks Cameron

Extent: 700 items; 5 containers plus 2 oversize; 2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and Japanese

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Author, poet, and wife of Charles Burnett, United States military attaché in Japan.

Correspondence, subject files, speeches, poems and other writings in Japanese, newspaper clippings, printed materials, drawings, and memorabilia relating primarily to Burnett's associations and activities in Japan. Documents the founding of the Nippon Jindo Kai (Japan Humane Society), Burnett's work with the Nippon Renmei Shonendan (Boy Scouts of Japan), social life in Tokyo and at the Imperial Court, and her general interest in furthering relations between the United States and Japan.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Burnett, Frances Hawks Cameron.

Kaneko, Kentarō, 1853-1942--Correspondence.

Katō, Yasumichi, 1879-1942?--Correspondence.

Kujō, Takeko, 1887-1928--Correspondence.

Makino, Nobuaki, 1861-1949--Correspondence.

Saitō, Hiroshi, 1886-1939.

Saitō, Miyoko--Correspondence.

Shibusawa, Eiichi, 1840-1939--Correspondence.

Organizations

Nippon Jindo Kai.

Nippon Renmei Shonendan.

Subjects

American literature--Japan.

Poetry.

Places

Japan--Relations--United States.

Tokyo (Japan)--Social life and customs.

United States--Relations--Japan.

Occupations

Authors.

Poets.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett, author, poet, and wife of Charles Burnett, United States military attaché in Japan, were given to the Library of Congress by Captain and Mrs. A. S. C. Wadsworth in 1974.

Processing History

The Burnett Papers were processed in 1982. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Photographs and prints have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. Books have been transferred to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1884, Feb. 6	Born near Selma, Ala.
1905	Married Charles Burnett (died 1939)
1911-1929	Resided in Tokyo, Japan, where her husband was military attaché at the American embassy
1921	Received fourth place honor in the Annual Imperial Poetry Reading Competition, first foreigner to receive the honor
1927	Founded Nippon Jindo Kai (Japan Humane Society) Appointed honorary councilor of the Nippon Renmei Shonendan (Boy Scouts of Japan)
1928	Frances Burnett mercy shelter dedicated Tokyo Chairman, Board of Directors, Nippon Jindo Kai

1957, Oct. 10 Died, Alexandria, La.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Frances Hawks Cameron Burnett, wife of Charles Burnett (1887-1939), United States military attaché in Japan, 1911-1914, 1919-1924, and 1925-1929, span the years 1818-1936, with the bulk from 1911 to 1936. The collection consists of correspondence, speeches, articles, poems, drawings, writings, practice books, newspapers clippings, and memorabilia. Approximately one-third of the material is in the Japanese language with English translations of some speeches, poems, and correspondence. The poems are written in polite-colloquial Japanese. The earliest item in the collection is an 1818 letter of Francis Lister Hawks (1798-1866), orator, author of several state histories, compiler of Matthew C. Perry's *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan* (1856), and an ancestor of Frances Burnett. The remainder of the material is dated from 1911 to 1936 and relates chiefly to Burnett's involvement with Japanese society and culture when she accompanied her husband on his assignments to that country and to her later efforts in the United States to arrest the decline of American-Japanese relations. The collection is organized in five series: [Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [Correspondence](#) series is divided into two sections, family and general. Letters to and from Mrs. Burnett's husband, Charles, her mother, F. H. Cameron, and her adopted father, Japanese statesman Kentaro Kanekō, make up the family correspondence. The 1925 correspondence from Kanekō includes his resignation as president of the Japan-American Society stating, as his reason, his disapproval of the immigration Act of 1924, which banned the immigration of people from East Asia, and also the anti-Japanese activities on the West Coast of the United States.

[General correspondence](#) and the [Speeches and Writings File](#) constitute the bulk of the collection and document Burnett's close association with prominent and influential members of Japanese society. Among her correspondents were Nobuake Makino, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal; Viscount Yasumichi Katō, Master of Ceremonies at the Imperial Court of Japan; Viscount Eiichi Shibusawa, prominent business leader of the Meiji and Taisho eras; Miyoko Saitō (wife of Japan's ambassador to the United States, Hiroshi Saitō) from 1934 to 1939; and Takeko Kujō, prominent Japanese poetess.

Burnett's primary interest was in Japanese classical arts and literature. Her efforts to master the language, particularly polite-colloquial and written Japanese, were awarded when, in 1921, she competed with distinguished Japanese poets in the annual New Year's poetry party at the Imperial Palace and was awarded fourth place. The title of her poem was "Before the Shrine of Ise at Dawn." The writings file represents her poetic accomplishments in the Japanese language, including poems dedicated to the Japanese Imperial family that commemorate specific dates and events (e.g., wedding of Prince Regent Hirohito and Princess Nagako Kuni and birthdays of various members of the Imperial family). Original drawings and a manuscript entitled "Kumo No Kaoiji" (My Greatest Treasure) are part of the writings file and demonstrate the quality of Burnett's composition, style, and calligraphy in the Japanese language.

An advocate of humane treatment of animals, Frances Burnett founded the Nippon Jindo Kai (Japan Humane Society). She served for a time as president of the society, traveling throughout the country, making speeches and writings articles on the subject. Coinciding with this activity was her interest in the Boy Scouts of Japan. In April 1927, she was appointed honorary councilor of the Nippon Renmei Shonendan (Boy Scouts of Japan) by the mayor of Tokyo. On her return to the United States in 1929, she continued her affiliation with both organizations and worked on ameliorating strained relations between American and Japan through the Humane Society and Boy Scouts in the two countries. In addition to the speeches and articles relating to these activities in

the collection, there are also subject files for the Japan and American Humane Societies and the Boy Scouts of Japan, documenting her activity in this area.

Clippings in the Miscellany series, 1913-1936, contain miscellaneous information on the activities of the Burnetts, particularly Frances Burnett, on the Japanese Imperial family, and on the many events of historical significance to Japan during the years specified. Many of the clippings are from the English supplement of the *Japan Gazette* and *The Japan Times and Mail*. Clippings after 1929 highlight the Burnett's activities in fostering Japanese-American relations in the United States.

The Miscellany series also holds memorabilia collected by Frances Burnett during her years in Japan and includes such items as invitations from the Imperial Palace, honorary certificates, and poems and writings by others (some dedicated to Burnett).

There is a minimal amount of material on Charles Burnett, including two speeches and miscellaneous correspondence.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- Correspondence, 1818-1936
- Subject File, 1927-1936
- Speeches and Writings File, 1911-1935
- Miscellany, 1913-1936
- Oversize, 1928

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1	<u>Correspondence, 1818-1936</u> Family and general correspondence. Organized in separate groups and arranged alphabetically therein by name of correspondent.
BOX 2	<u>Subject File, 1927-1936</u> Correspondence, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically within folders.
BOX 2-3	<u>Speeches and Writings File, 1911-1935</u> Handwritten, typewritten, and printed copies of speeches, articles, and poetry. Organized by type of material and arranged chronologically therein, with undated and untitled material at the end.
BOX 4-5	<u>Miscellany, 1913-1936</u> Clippings, greeting cards, invitations, memorabilia, printed matter, and writings by others. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX OV 1-OV 2	<u>Oversize, 1928</u> Printed matter and memorabilia. Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1818-1936 Family and general correspondence. Organized in separate groups and arranged alphabetically therein by name of correspondent.
BOX 1	Family correspondence, 1818-1933, undated
BOX 1	Burnett, Charles (husband), 1926, undated
BOX 1	Cameron, Frances H. (mother), 1918-1928
BOX 1	Kaneko, Kentaro (adopted father), 1925-1933, undated
BOX 1	Hawks, Francis Lister, 1818
BOX 1	General correspondence
BOX 1	Burnett, Charles, 1921-1935
BOX 1	Burnett, Frances Hawks Cameron
BOX 1	Gardiner, Lillian ("Cheebee"), 1930-1935
BOX 1	Kujō, Takeko, undated
BOX 1	Makino, Nobuaki (Count), 1933-1936
BOX 1	Miscellaneous, A-Z , 1913-1936 (7 folders)
BOX 1	Unidentified fragments
BOX 2	Subject File, 1927-1936 Correspondence, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically within folders.
BOX 2	American Humane Association, 1928, 1934-1936
BOX 2	Boy Scouts of Japan, 1928-1932
BOX 2	Japan Humane Society, 1927-1936
BOX 2-3	Speeches and Writings File, 1911-1935 Handwritten, typewritten, and printed copies of speeches, articles, and poetry. Organized by type of material and arranged chronologically therein, with undated and untitled material at the end.
BOX 2	Speeches
BOX 2	Burnett, Charles
BOX 2	Vermont Commandery Loyal Legion, May 12, 1931
BOX 2	Presentation of medals, Japan, Dec. 18, 1927
BOX 2	Burnett, Frances Hawks Cameron
BOX 2	Japan-American Society, Tokyo, Japan, Jan. 15, 1924
BOX 2	SakuraKwai meeting, Tokyo, Japan, Apr. 22, 1926
BOX 2	Pan-Pacific Club, Tokyo, Japan, May 27, 1927

Speeches and Writings File, 1911-1935

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 2	"Vivisection Morally Indefensible," Keio Hospital, Tokyo, Japan, June 17, 1927
BOX 2	"Tokyo Rebuilt," Tokyo, Japan, Apr. 29, 1928
BOX 2	"The Star of Fixed and Loftiest Height Is That of Goodness," Third Higher School, Kyota, Japan, Nov. 13, 1928
BOX 2	"Speaking of the Japanese," Church of the Pilgrim, Washington, D.C., June 17, 1935
BOX 2	"Japanese Poetry," undated
BOX 2	Miscellaneous speeches
BOX 2	Articles
BOX 2	Burnett, Frances Hawks Cameron
BOX 2	"The Sakura in Japan," <i>Sakura</i> , Nov. 1920
BOX 2	"Easter Sunday," 1923
BOX 2	Beautiful Japanese Sakura," <i>Sakura</i> , in English and Japanese, Apr. 1927
BOX 2	"Of Lincoln," interview, Japanese newspaper, Tokyo, Japan, 1929
BOX 2	"I Bury a Dream and "Japan," May 1933, Oct. 8, 1933
BOX 2	About the Japanese Children, undated
BOX 2	"Christmas, The Birthday of a Child," undated
BOX 2	"In the Thoroughfare of Clouds," undated
BOX 2	"An Interlude of Truce," undated
BOX 2	"The Meaning of the National Holidays of Japan and a Story of the Coronation Ceremony," undated
BOX 2	"My Calendar of Flowers," undated
BOX 2	"New Year Congratulations to the Tokyo Yukan Shimpo," undated
BOX 2	Untitled writings, 1927, 1933
BOX 2	Unidentified fragments, undated
BOX 3	Poems
BOX 3	Burnett, Frances Hawks Cameron
BOX 3	For members of the Japanese royal family, in English and Japanese, 1924-1928, undated
BOX 3	Miscellaneous
BOX 3	Titled, in English and Japanese, 1911-1929, undated
BOX 3	Untitled, in English and Japanese
BOX 3	Practice book, 1929
BOX 3	"My Greatest Treasure," Tokyo, Japan, original manuscript and drawings for "Kumo No Kaoiji," 1919-1920 (2 folders)
BOX 3	New Year's poem, in Japanese
BOX 4-5	Miscellany, 1913-1936 Clippings, greeting cards, invitations, memorabilia, printed matter, and writings by others. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 3	Clippings
BOX 3	Japan, 1913-1933, undated (2 folders)

Miscellany, 1913-1936

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 4	Miscellaneous, 1925, 1931-1936, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	<i>Enthronement of the One Hundred Twenty-Fourth Emperor of Japan, Japanese Advertiser</i> , Tokyo, Japan, 1928 <u><i>See Oversize</i></u>
BOX 4	Greeting cards, 1914-1935
BOX 4	Invitations
BOX 4	Memorabilia <u><i>See also Oversize</i></u>
BOX 4	Printed matter (2 folders)
BOX 5	(2 folders)
BOX 5	Writings by others
BOX OV 1-OV 2	Oversize, 1928 Printed matter and memorabilia. Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	<i>Enthronement of the One Hundred Twenty-Fourth Emperor of Japan, Japanese Advertiser</i> , 1928 (Container 4)
BOX OV 2	Memorabilia, 1928, undated (Container 4)