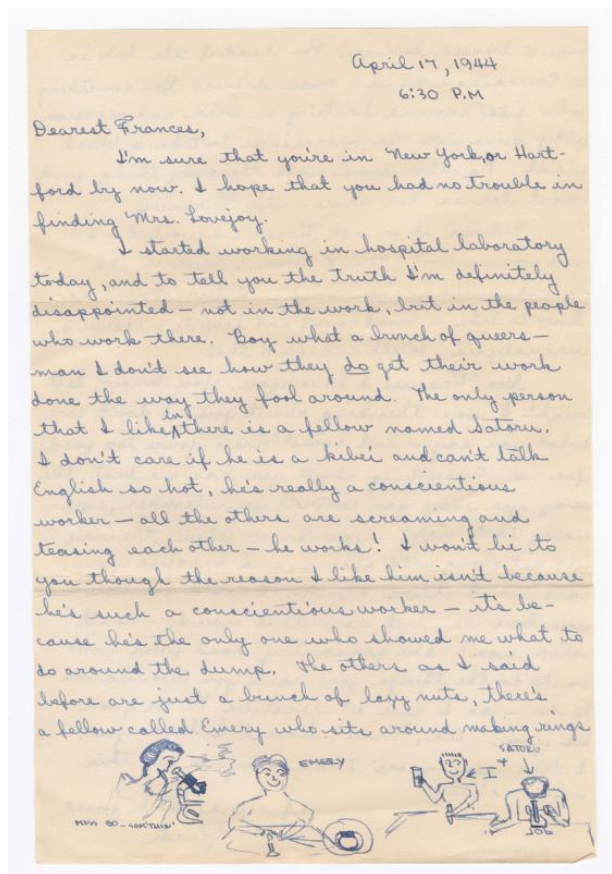


# Basic Detail Report



## Letters from Richard DeQueiroz to Frances Sasano

### Date

1944-1949

### Medium

paper, pen, pencil, envelope

### Description

42 letters from Richard DeQueiroz to Frances Sasano are from 1944-1949. These letters start after Frances leaves Amache early to go study in Connecticut while Richard was still at Amache. The letters continue throughout their post-incarceration experience as they are trying to shape their individual and joint futures. These letters detail Richard's moving process out of Amache, how much he cherished the time he and Frances shared together there, the difficulties of both of their paths through pursuing higher education and Richard's time in the Army. A more detailed description of Richard's path is below: Richard at the age of 14 was first incarcerated at Santa Anita Assembly Center when Executive Order 9066 authorized the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. He and his family left Santa Anita on September 21st, 1942 to go to Granada (Amache) Relocation Center in Colorado where he met Frances Sasano. He and Frances Sasano attended Amache High School and were set to graduate in the spring of 1944. He asked her to go to prom with him in 1943, and their relationship started. They dated for another

year in camp, until Frances had the opportunity to leave Amache to attend Hartford Junior College in Hartford, Connecticut, through a program where she could have housing and attend school in exchange for babysitting services. Frances left Amache on April 15th, 1944 where Richard dropped her off at the station. They decided they would continue their love, writing to each other every single day, sometimes multiple times a day as they continued their lives in and out of camp. Richard stayed in camp for four more months until August 22nd, when he and his family left for Chicago. Here, he met the challenging realities of reintegrating into mainstream society or life after camp. Richard's first night in Chicago was nearly spent at the YMCA, until his mother secured a dirty apartment with two tiny "four by two" rooms; Richard swore one "could put four of these rooms in an 'A' unit," recalling camp as "paradise compared to this dump." As they struggled with life after incarceration, both he and Frances expressed how much they missed camp, the familiarity of community, spots they were safe to run around, and of course the time they spent together. Richard resettled in Chicago but reunited with Frances for Christmas, when they both made the journey back to Amache to see each other. On December 19th, Frances and Richard secretly became engaged "to be married on June 22nd, 1948 or 9" and exchanged rings. Richard returned to Chicago to prepare for schooling in Rolla, Missouri where he would attend the Missouri School of Mines. In his first letter to Frances from Missouri, Richard noted how friendly and unprejudiced the environment was. Richard is attending school in Missouri and Frances is attending school in Connecticut; They hold off their engagement so they can both finish school and start a life together. Frances is trying to find community and Richard urges her to not attend Nisei teas, gatherings in which Nisei would get together and drink tea, sometimes proving their loyalty through public speeches. He is tired of having to prove themselves as Americans not only to other white people, but to themselves as well. Expressively, Richard exclaims, "Sure Niseis are loyal Americans, -- so what! So are 130,000,000 other people. Why in the Hideaki don't Nisei just forget they're Nisei-- that'd be fine. Sure we're loyal etc., but darnit we're Nisei -- who cares!" They wrote to each other throughout their time in school and struggled to define their commitments to each other, expressing how they both wanted to stray from their relationship to test their love for each other. Richard is in ROTC in school and decided to enlist in the army, further postponing his marriage to Frances. Frances goes back to Amache in July of 1945 to help her family move out and back to Los Angeles. After a few months of missed communication, their relationship is on the rocks and Richard called it quits in mid-January of 1946. He is struggling personally, not passing his Army Physical, delaying his enlistment and is not in communication with his father. In April 1946, he wrote to Frances, checking in and telling her that he is failing school, quitting engineering, and going for his Army Physical again soon. On June 2nd, 1946, Richard is back in Chicago and is prepared to leave for the Army. On June 10th, he sent a five-page

letter the day before he was to leave for the Army expressing his undying love and commitment to Frances and that he would like to see her for his first furlough in the fall. He is first stationed at Fort Sheridan in Illinois. He is then sent to Fort McClellan in Alabama, writing to Frances about how the housing reminds him of Amache, and of course the love he met and grew there. In October, Richard leaves Alabama for Monterey, California in which he is to be a student at the Military Intelligence School. He has a few day break on his way to Monterey and he decides to make a trip out to Los Angeles to see Frances. Things are great after their visit together and he continues to write to her from school in Monterey. Things are fine into 1947, as June 22nd marks their four year anniversary. Communication between Frances and Richard was sparse until January 20, 1948 when he writes to her after no letters for three months, noting that he believes that "everything happens for the best for us." He also notes in this letter that there is still two and a half years until they can be together. Communication throughout 1948 is sparse and the last communication, dated February 1st, 1949, postmarked February 3rd, 1950, is much less flowery than the love letters that came before it, possibly marking the end of their relationship. Frances never married and Richard later married, but the cause and time of the end of their romantic relationship is unclear.