

Joseph Morris Alcatraz Occupation Collection

Title

Joseph Morris Alcatraz Occupation Collection

Dates

1969-1999

Collection Number

Catalog number GOGA 35283

(Accession numbers GOGA-2403, -2528, -2615, -2680, -2704, -2808, -2887)

(Previous catalog numbers GOGA 7646, 18262, 18622, 18866, 18868, 40059)

Volume/Extent /Cumulation

48 items

Description

Documents, diaries, audio recordings, posters and other memorabilia produced and collected by Joseph “Indian Joe” Morris, during and after his involvement in the Indian Occupation of Alcatraz, November 1969 to June 1971. The collection documents his experiences and recollections of the occupation and contains many unique items, such as his ID card and a blank island pass. In addition to his diary, which gives his personal background as well as a colorful history of the movement, this collection includes the “Alcatraz Spare Changer,” the Indians of all Tribes accounting ledger which records donations and payouts. The collection also reflects the life of a contemporary Native American, especially Morris’s account of his life and that of his daughter Linda. See item list for detailed inventory.

History/Provenance

Joseph “Indian Joe” Morris was born on 2 February 1921 in East Glacier, Montana, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. His Indian name is Meta-wa-wakee, which means Lonewalker. He grew up in Montana on the Reservation, attending the Cut Bank Indian Boarding School as well as the local schools in Browning, Montana. He also attended the Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon, where he met his future wife, Eva Trombley.

Morris learned to play the trombone in high school, which led to a career playing in various bands throughout the Pacific Northwest. He traveled for much of his life, working various jobs including fisherman, carpenter, farmworker, lumberjack and longshoreman. During his travels he learned from the various tribes he met. Morris worked as a longshoreman in ports up and down the Pacific Coast as a member of the International Labor Workers Union, but considered San Francisco his home port.

In November 1969, he read about the Indian students who had taken over Alcatraz and quickly became involved in the movement. He became the coordinator of the Alcatraz

depot at Pier Forty, arranging for the shipment of goods to the island as well as handling some of the financial proceedings. He created many pieces of art related to the occupation that are a part of the GOGA 3-D collection.

Morris's wife Eva died in 1995 and his daughter Linda died in 1997. Both were also a part of the Indian Occupation of Alcatraz.

Preferred Citation

"Joseph Morris Alcatraz Occupation Collection, GOGA 35283, Golden Gate National Recreation Area."

Index/Added Entries

Alcatraz Island (Calif.)

Alcatraz Island (Calif.)--History

Alcatraz Island (Calif.)--History--Indian Occupation, 1969-1971

Indians of All Tribes, Inc.

Indians of North America--California--Alcatraz Island--History--20th century

Johnson, Troy R.

Morris, Joseph

Formats

Books

Clippings

Ephemera

Identity cards

Ledgers (account books)

Magazines (periodicals)

Manuscripts

Photocopies

Posters

Processing Information

Processed by Kirsten Kvam

Completed in July 2004

Item List

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title/Item
		INDIAN JOE MORRIS DOCUMENTS
1	1	Alcatraz Permanent Residence Card, c.1969-1971 Alcatraz Receiving Depot Island Pass, c. 1969-1971 Agreement to not sue for any injury sustained on or in transport to the island, c. 1969-1971 (photocopy) Letter to the general membership of Alcatraz Island, re: perceived wrongdoings, 11 June 1970 (photocopy)
	2	OCCUPATION-RELATED DOCUMENTS Flyer about Alcatraz occupation needs, c. 1969-1971 (photocopy) License to use storage space, issued to Joe Morris from San Francisco Port Commission (photocopy) 17 February 1970 Letter from SF Port Commission re: misuse of space at Pier 40, 23 December 1970 (photocopy) Letter of introduction for Joe Morris from the Indians of all Tribes, signed by Richard Oakes (photocopy) 9 December 1969 Sheet Music, "Alcatraz Water Run," by Joe Morris, c. 1971 Sheet Music, "14 Feathers Over Alcatraz," by Joe Morris, c.1971 Signatures collected at All Indian Gala Variety Show, 26 September 1971 (photocopy) Plea to end violence within the ILWU (International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union) c. 1969-1971 (photocopy)
	3	Various mailings from the Indians of All Tribes, c. 1969-1970 Various letterhead and envelopes from the Indians of All Tribes, c. 1969-1970
	4	Indians of All Tribes Newsletter, February 1970
	5	Indian Magazine, with a statement from the occupation on Alcatraz c. 1970-71
	6	Audio cassette – recording of Joe Morris singing "14 Feathers over Alcatraz" and "Alcatraz Water Run" n.d.
2	6	Indians of All Tribes Ledger "Spare Changer" pages, c. 1969-1971
	7	Indians of All Tribes Ledger "Spare Changer" cover, c. 1969-1971
		CLIPPINGS
1	7	Three newspaper clippings about Joe Morris, n.d.
2	5	"A Right to Walk Like Men," story from The Dispatcher, 11 March 1970
		POST OCCUPATION DOCUMENTS

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title/Item
1	8	Alcatraz Indian Occupation Diary, by Joe Morris and edited by Dr. Troy Johnson, bound, 1998. Handwritten inscription by Joe Morris.
	9	Alcatraz Indian Occupation Diary, by Joe Morris and edited by Dr. Troy Johnson, spiral-bound, 1996. 2 copies, handwritten inscription by Joe Morris on each.
	10	Manuscript on Linda C. Morris by Joe Morris, 1997. With pink "Deceased" ribbon and handwritten inscription by Joe Morris
	11	Linda Morris photograph and memorial, 1997
	12	GGNPA Postcard of "Modern Militant Indian," 1997 [2 copies]
2		POSTERS
	1	"Alcatraz Proved a Point" color poster, of male figure kneeling on Alcatraz and honoring the buffalo running in the sky above the Golden Gate Bridge. Mounted on cardboard. 1 b/w negative.
	2	"Jim Blackhorse – 'Chief' Richard Oakes – 'Indian Joe' Morris" color poster, with a male chief in headress straddling island holding two peace pipes, 15 April 1970. Mounted on cardboard.
	3	"1973" color poster of male figure on horse holding American flag, by Jim Blackhorse? Mounted on cardboard.
Map Folder	4	"See Glacier National Park, Browning, Montana" b/w poster by Joe Morris, c.1990s. Mounted on cardboard.
	1	"30 th Anniversary of the Occupation" 11 1/4" x 17" laminated poster, 20 November 1999, 2 copies
		"Alcatraz Proved A Point" 18" x 24" color poster, mounted on board
	2	"Alcatraz Proved A Point" 18" x 24" color poster
		"Indians of All Tribes 1 st Anniversary Celebration" b/w poster, Nov. 15. Signed by "Indian Joe" Morris.
	"Alcatraz Proved A Point" b/w poster, similar to color poster, 27 March 1972. Two copies – 20" x 25 1/4"; 23" x 29" larger size stamped with All Tribes Arts and Craft stamp.	
	"Alcatraz Indianland" 23" x 32" yellow poster showing map of Alcatraz with overlay showing the impact of the Indian occupation. c. 1971-1972. 3 copies, one stamped with All Tribes Arts and Craft stamp.	