

Anthony Campano Papers

1956-2007 (*Bulk:* 1956-1957)

3 boxes (1.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 617

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Anthony "Tony" Campano and Shizuko Shirai met by chance in January 1955 as Tony was passing through Yokohama en route to his new post in Akiya. Recently transferred to Japan, Tony enlisted in the U.S. Army a little over a year earlier, serving first in Korea. As their relationship blossomed, Tony and Shizuko set up housekeeping until his enlistment ended and he returned home to Boston. Determined to get back to Japan quickly and marry Shizuko, the two continued their courtship by mail, sending letters through Conrad Totman and Albert Braggs, both stationed in Japan. By the summer of 1956, Tony re-enlisted in the Army, this time stationed in the Medical Battalion of the 24th Division located in Seoul, Korea. There he remained until August 1957 when he was finally able to secure official authorization to marry Shizuko. Cutting their honeymoon short to deal with her medical emergency, Tony returned to his post in Korea. The couple reunited in November of that year after Tony secured a new assignment in Yokohama.

The letters of Tony Campano to Shizuko Shirai during the year or more they were separated document their unlikely romance. Soon after Tony returned home when his first enlistment ended, friends and family tried to discourage him from pursuing a relationship with Shizuko. Despite their age difference—Shizuko was eleven years older—and the language barrier, the two ultimately married. In addition to the couple's long-distance courtship letters, the collection also contains about 100 letters exchanged between Campano and Conrad Totman, dating from their early days in the U.S. Army to the present; taken together they document a friendship of more than fifty years.

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Japan
Military

Background on Anthony Campano

Antonio Pellegrino Campano was born January 24, 1935 in Boston, Massachusetts, the eldest of three sons born to Frank and Mary Campano. After enduring the death of his father at the age of nine and growing up in a modest single-parent household in Boston's West End, Campano enlisted in the United States Army in 1953. While stationed at Camp Coe in Yokohama, Japan he fell in love with a Japanese woman named Shizuko Shirai. Eleven years his senior, Shirai was born on July 7, 1924 in Niigata, Japan, the second of nine children born to Shirai Shōgo and his wife (née Egawa) Yoshino. Campano and Shirai met in 1955 at a Yokohama bar where she worked and he spent his leisure time. Their courtship was a whirlwind romance; the couple set up housekeeping three months after meeting when Campano was assigned a new post in Akiya, Japan. Despite the language barrier--Shirai did not yet speak English fluently--and the considerable age difference, an enduring love began to blossom.

In 1955, Campano was reassigned to the 207th Preventative Medicine Survey Detachment in Tokyo where he met Conrad D. Totman. Totman was born on January 5, 1934 on a dairy farm in Conway, Massachusetts, the second of four children born to Raymond and Mildred Totman. He spent his early years in Conway and later attended college at UMass Amherst and graduate school at Harvard University in East Asian studies. Totman enlisted in the United States Army in 1953 where he met Campano. The two worked together as sanitary inspectors until Campano was discharged from the Army in 1956.

Campano's discharge meant he had to leave the home he shared with Shirai in Akiya and return to the United States alone. The couple parted with a promise to continue their long-distance romance, to soon reunite, and to one day marry. After his discharge, Campano returned to Boston to live with his mother and Shirai returned to the home of her parents in Senju. Together they continued their courtship by mail, sending letters through Totman and another Army comrade, Albert Baggs, both still stationed in Japan.

Desperate to reunite with Shirai, Campano pursued reenlisting in the Army in hopes of returning to Japan. After three months Campano reenlisted, but was not stationed in Japan as he and Shirai hoped. Stationed instead in Korea, Campano coordinated the arduous legal processes necessary for an interracial military marriage during the post World War II era. In the face of scrutiny, Campano and Shirai continued their relationship and frequently reminded friends, family, and necessary military officials of their enduring love and dedication to marry.

The couple finally wed at the U.S. Consulate in Tokyo on September 3, 1957, and again in a religious ceremony at a Catholic church in Japan on September 18th. Illness concluded their honeymoon early when Shirai entered a Tokyo U.S. Army Hospital where she underwent surgery to remove an enlarged ovary and two large gall stones. Early in November 1957, Shirai returned to her family home in Senju to recuperate where she was joined by Campano upon his reassignment to Japan.

The Campano family grew when Tony and Shizuko had a son, Anthony James Campano, born May 8, 1959. Campano continued to serve in the United States Army until his final discharge in 1973. He began a career in home remodeling while his wife took up work at the Deborah Heart and Lung Hospital. In the early 1980s Campano accepted a position working for the Trenton GMF Postal Facility and retired in 1992. Throughout the years the Campanos continued a friendship with Connie and his wife Michiko (Ikegami) Totman.

Scope of collection

The papers of Anthony Campano chronicle his courtship with Shizuko Shirai. The couple met while Tony was stationed in Japan and soon after set up housekeeping. In 1956, more than a year after their initial meeting, Campano was discharged from the Army in Fort Dix, New Jersey and returned to his mother's home in Boston. It is during this time that they continued their long-distance relationship via correspondence. Despite the fact that family and friends discouraged Campano from reenlisting and pursuing his relationship with Shirai, Tony's commitment did not waiver. In his letters he expresses his unwavering devotion to



Campano family, 1967

Shirai, his loneliness without her, and his efforts to reenlist and re-join her in Japan.

Letters written by Campano to Shirai were addressed to two of Tony's friends both still stationed in Japan: Conrad D. Totman or Albert E. Braggs. In order to make it clear which letters were intended for Shirai, Tony swapped out the recipient's middle initial with the letters "S"; letter marked thus were passed onto Shirai often by Michiko Ikegami, who helped her read the letters and write replies.

In addition to the letters of courtship, the collection contains approximately 100 letters that document the lifelong friendship of Campano and Conrad Totman. These letters, written chiefly during Campano's career in the U.S. Army, chronicle his service in Germany, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Both sets of letters were given to Totman and he transcribed them. The transcriptions along with a few photographs and other accompanying materials, including a copy of the Shirai family register, Tony and Shizuko's marriage documents, the book *The Beginning* written by Campano under the pseudonym T. Ogesan, an issue of the *West Ender Newspaper* edited and published by James Campano are also part of the collection.

Inventory

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Mar

Box 1: 1

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Apr

Box 1: 2

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 May

Box 1: 3

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 June

Box 1: 4

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 July

Box 1: 5

Two letters have been removed and are restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Aug

Box 1: 6

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Sept

Box 1: 7

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Oct

Box 1: 8

One letter was removed and is restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Nov

Box 1: 9

Two letters have been removed and are restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1956 Dec

Box 1: 10

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 Jan

Box 1: 11

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 Feb

Box 1: 12

One letter was removed and is restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 Mar

Box 1: 13

One letter was removed and is restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 Apr

Box 1: 14

Two letters have been removed and are restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 May

Box 1: 15

One letter was removed and is restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 June

Box 1: 16

Three letters have been removed and are restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 July

Box 1: 17

One letter was removed and is restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Shirai, Shizuko

1957 Aug

Box 1: 18

One letter was removed and is restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Campano, Shizuko (Shirai)

1957 Sept

Box 1: 19

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Campano, Shizuko (Shirai)

1957 Oct 1-16

Box 1: 20

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Campano, Shizuko (Shirai)

1957 Oct 17-31

Box 1: 21

Four letters have been removed and are restricted until 2019.

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Campano, Shizuko (Shirai)

1957 Nov

Box 1: 22

Totman, Conrad: Totman, Conrad: Correspondence of Anthony P. Campano and Shizuko (Shirai) Campano

1956-1957

p. 1-107

Box 1: 23

Totman, Conrad: Totman, Conrad: Correspondence of Anthony P. Campano and Shizuko (Shirai) Campano

1956-1957

p. 108-247

Box 2: 1

Correspondence : Campano, Anthony with Baggs, Albert

1956 June

Box 2: 2

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad

1956

Box 2: 3

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad

1958

Box 2: 4

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad

1959

Box 2: 5

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1960-1964

Box 2: 6

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1966

Box 2: 7

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1967 Jan-June

Box 2: 8

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1967 July-Dec

Box 2: 9

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1968

Box 2: 10

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1969-1979

Box 2: 11

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1981-1987

Box 2: 12

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
1991-1999

Box 2: 13

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
2000-2006

Box 2: 14

Correspondence: Campano, Anthony with Totman, Conrad
2007

Box 2: 15

Totman, Conrad: Correspondence of Anthony P. Campano and Conrad D. Totman
1957-2007

Box 2: 16

Totman, Conrad: Correspondence of Anthony P. Campano and Conrad D. Totman
1957-1957

Box 2: 17

Correspondence: Pepperbox Pistol
1957-1982

Box 2: 18

Marriage Documents

1956

Box 2: 19

Ogesan, T.: *The Beginning*

1993

Box 3: 1

A book by Anthony Campano written under a pseudonym.

Photographs: Campano Family

1959

Box 3: 2

Photographs: Campano Family

1967

Box 3: 3

Photographs: Campano Family

1991

Box 3: 4

Photographs: Campano Family

1994

Box 3: 5

Photographs: Campano Family

1997

Box 3: 6

Photographs: Campano Family

1998

Box 3: 7

Photographs: Pepperbox Pistol

2007

Box 3: 8

Shirai Family Register

1956

Box 3: 9

West Ender Newspaper

2007 Sept

Box 3: 10

Newspaper for the West End neighborhood of Boston; edited and published by James Campano.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Select letters exchanged between Tony and Shizuko have been removed and restricted until the year 2019.

Provenance

Acquired by donation from Conrad D. Totman, 2009.

Custodial history: The 170 items that comprise the materials exchanged between Tony Campano and Shizuko (Shirai) Campano, the bulk of which are correspondence sent between 1956-1957, were meticulously preserved by Shizuko. Very few letters are missing and most are accompanied by their original envelopes. The 100-plus items, chiefly letters, exchanged between Campano and Totman between 1957-2007 were also saved. Between 2006-2007 Totman collected all the letters in both sets of correspondence and compiled, described, and transcribed them as a memento of their enduring friendship. Once the project was complete, Totman donated the materials to the UMass Special Collections and University Archives in 2009.

Processing Information

Processed by Brianna Haskins, 2009.

Related Material

For material related to Conrad Totman, see:

Conrad D. Totman Papers (MS 447)

Ruth J. Totman Papers (FS 97)

For material related to Conrad Totman at other repositories, see:

Raymond T. Drew (AC1949) Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections

Language:

English

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Search terms

The following terms represent persons, organizations, and topics documented in this collection. Use these headings to search for additional materials on this web site, in the Five College Library Catalog, or in other library catalogs and databases.

Subjects

Interracial marriage--United States

Japan--Social life and customs--1945-

Totman, Michiko Ikegami

United States. Army--Non-commissioned officers--Correspondence

Contributors

Campano, Anthony [\[main entry\]](#)

Baggs, Albert

Campano, Anthony

Campano, Shizuko Shirai

Totman, Conrad

Genres and formats

Correspondence

Photographs

Link to similar SCUA collections

[Japan](#)

[Military](#)



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