Guide to the Warren Jay Terhune Papers M2132

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Title: Warren Jay Terhune papers
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Date (inclusive): 1898-1955
Abstract: Warren Jay Terhune (1869-1920) was a Commander in the United States Navy and the 13th Governor of American Samoa who committed suicide while in office.
This collection was purchased by Stanford University, Special Collections in 2016.

Content Description
The collection contains correspondence, documents, ephemera, and photographs. Much material post-dates Terhune himself and involves his widow Josephine Lee Terhune and son John A. Terhune, who was a Lieutenant in the Navy at the time of his father’s death and continued a naval career through World War Two. Included are letters of condolence from Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, two documents of support for Terhune from Samoan District Governors, as well as letters concerning Warren’s interment and Josephine’s pension. John also wrote to his mother while stationed at Pearl Harbor in 1940. Also present is a diary Warren Terhune kept while serving on the U.S.S. Atlanta in the 1890s which features detailed entries on his travels, as well as photographs and sketches of ships and scenery.

Conditions Governing Access
Open for research. Note that material must be requested at least 36 hours in advance of intended use.

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Preferred Citation
[identification of item], Warren Jay Terhune papers (M2132). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.

Biography
Warren Jay Terhune was born in New Jersey on May 3, 1869. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1889 and was subsequently was stationed in a variety of ships and locations, including Florida, Europe and South America. He served in the Spanish-American War in Cuba and Puerto Rico. When President William Howard Taft ordered the Marine Corps to Nicaragua in an attempt to quell a rebellion primarily out of Managua, Terhune commanded the USS Annapolis, which landed hundreds of troops to protect American civilians and property. During World War I Terhune was an instructor at the Naval Academy. On June 10, 1919, Terhune was appointed Governor of American Samoa. His administration was controversial, and in the midst of various power struggles Terhune took his life on November 3, 1920 two days before a Naval Board of Inquiry arrived to investigate the situation. Terhune is interred at Arlington National Cemetery. His ghost is rumored to walk the Government House's grounds at night.

Historical Background
Warren Jay Terhune (1869-1920) was a Commander in the United States Navy and the 13th Governor of American Samoa who committed suicide while in office.
Political unrest in American Samoa during this period mostly centered on the handling of taxes on copra (dried coconut), the buying and selling of land, and the ways in which the system infringed on fa’a Samoa customs and protocols. While the Western Samoan Mau resistance movement had begun around the turn of the century, in the East the Mau grew out of a series of fono (meetings) in early 1920. Terhune had tried to ban these meetings because they had begun to take on the air of protests. Some attendees were reported to show up armed. However, the Mau movement was non-violent. Rather than advocate for independence, the Mau reacted to “arbitrary Navy rule” and pushed for more autonomy and financial transparency. Terhune’s attitude towards native Samoans was generally patronizing if not disdainful, and he enacted many divisive and restrictive rules, particularly the outlawing of interracial marriage.
Lt. Commander Creed H. Boucher, who was Terhune’s first executive officer, began to be vocally critical of the administration and even expressed an interest in the governorship himself. Boucher was joined by civilian journalist Arthur Greene, whose wife was related to Mau leader Samuel Ripley. At first, Boucher approached Terhune with the suggestion that he be hired to manage the copra tax. At the same time, both Boucher and Greene were trying to stimulate
anti-imperialist feelings among the Samoans.

After Terhune dismissed him for insubordinance and other offenses, Boucher made a formal report to Naval authorities in California, accusing him of incompetence, misappropriation of funds, and native abuse. Boucher was replaced as Captain of the Yard by Commander Arthur C. Kail, who also supported the move to oust Terhune. Kail received a petition signed by 178 chiefs asking for a new governor, as well as an end to the marriage ban, improved financial reporting, better schools and roads, printing of all laws in Samoan, more frequent fono with legal power, and the creation of a chief-based advisory council. Kail subsequently tried to persuade the post’s surgeon to declare Terhune insane. A copy of Kail’s letter to the doctor was found in Terhune’s quarters after his death.

Meanwhile, a Naval Board of Inquiry was formed in response to Boucher’s formal complaint. Two days before the Board arrived on the battleship Kansas, Terhune, depressed, in poor health, and frustrated by his inability to handle the crisis effectively, committed suicide by shooting himself through the heart on November 3, 1920.

The Inquiry proceeded, exonerating Terhune and his administration of any wrong-doing. The copra tax process was also declared above board. However, the Board also found that Terhune “while financially honest, lacked tact and firmness, due to his mental and physical condition, as indicated by his failure to correct the feeling of unrest and discontent by immediate and effective action.” Boucher was subsequently court-martialed and found guilty of encouraging Samoan dissidence. Greene was deported, and Kail was reprimanded. Captain Waldo Evans, who led the Board, became the next governor of American Samoa.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
American Samoa
United States. Navy -- History
Terhune, Warren Jay
Terhune, Josephine
Terhune, John A.

Box 2

W.J. Terhune - U.S.S. Atlanta journal/scrapbook 1890s
Scope and Contents
A diary Terhune kept while serving on the U.S.S. Atlanta in the 1890s. The Atlanta was a protected cruiser and one of the first steel warships of the “New Navy” of the 1880s. The diary, whose first entry is dated 1/20/90 in Spain, contains 85 handwritten pages of detailed entries of the ships travels, including Brazil, Haiti, Malta, St. Lucia, Spain, and Algiers. There are 10 photogravures of ships and scenery pasted in as well as technical drawings and sketches. Please note that the journal’s binding has deteriorated, and many of the photographs have faded significantly.

box 1, folder 1
Clippings re: Spanish-American War 1898
box 1, folder 2
Photographs of Warren & Josephine Terhune
box 1, folder 3
Governor [Terhune] Remarks, Fono Day 1919
box 1, folder 4
Clippings re: Samoa unrest c.1919-1920
box 1, folder 5
Clippings re: Board of Inquiry & exoneration 1920-1921
box 1, folder 6
Other clippings 1920-1921
box 1, folder 7
Statements by District Governors and U.S. Navy enlisted men 1920
Scope and Contents
One letter of condolence for Mrs. Terhune in Samoan with English translation, and one letter in English translation addressed to the Board of Investigation on Conditions in American Samoa, both of which were written by a group of District Governors in American Samoa. The third document is a statement from U.S. Naval Station enlisted men, officers and civilians honoring Terhune.

box 1, folder 8
Photo postcards: Terhune military funeral ceremony in Tutuila, Samoa 1920
box 1, folder 9
Correspondence re: burial & pension 1920-1950
Scope and Contents
Josephine Terhune had to prove that her husband’s death was in the line of duty in order to qualify for a pension, which she did successfully.

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<td>Josephine Terhune correspondence 1920-1924</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, 11</td>
<td>Josephine Terhune correspondence 1943-1955</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, 12</td>
<td>Josephine Terhune holiday cards</td>
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<td>Scope and Contents</td>
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<td>Also includes one card sent to the Terhunes in Samoa in December 1919.</td>
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<td>1, 13</td>
<td>Josephine Terhune miscellaneous</td>
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<td>1, 14</td>
<td>John A. Terhune correspondence to Josephine Terhune 1940</td>
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<td>Scope and Contents</td>
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<td>Commander John Terhune was stationed at Pearl Harbor on the USS Altair at the time.</td>
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<td>John A. Terhune miscellaneous c.1912-1955</td>
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<td>Pamphlet recording text of speeches from Siamese Defense Force and U.S. Navy officers in English and Thai 10/15/1935 ; Annual Report of the Secretary and Treasurer of the Navy Mutual Aid Association 1/1/1938</td>
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<td>1, 18</td>
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