Guide to the Tomoo Ogita Photograph Albums

Processed by Cyndi Shein; machine-readable finding aid created by Cyndi Shein
Special Collections and Archives
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Tomoo Ogita photograph albums
Date: circa 1920s-1973,
Date (bulk): bulk 1935-1957
Collection Number: MS-M033
Creator: Ogita, Tomoo
Extent: 3 linear feet (7 boxes)
Languages: The collection is in Japanese and English.
Repository: University of California, Irvine. Library. Special Collections and Archives.
Irvine, California 92623-9557

Abstract: The collection comprises photograph albums created by Tomoo Ogita, a Japanese American who was born and raised in Los Angeles, California in the 1920s and 1930s. He was associated with Granada Relocation Center in the 1940s and served as special language and psychological consultant to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey in Hiroshima during the allied occupation of Japan. The albums span several decades, reflecting the dramatic life changes experienced by many Japanese Americans during World War II. The collection contains over 5000 images.

Access

The collection is open for research. Although the loose photographs have been sleeved, photographs in albums are unprotected; researchers must wear gloves when using this collection.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation


For the benefit of current and future researchers, please cite any additional information about sources consulted in this collection, including permanent URLs, item or folder descriptions, and box/folder locations.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Tomoo Ogita’s widow, Toshiko Ogita, through her brother, Bob Oda in 2008.

Processing History

Processed by Cyndi Shein in 2008.

Biography

Tomoo Ogita was born in Los Angeles, California on February 23, 1924 to Japanese-born parents. During his youth he attended public school in Los Angeles and was also educated at a private Japanese language school. He attended classes at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor where he also taught Japanese in the Oriental Language Department. Photographic evidence places him at the Granada Relocation Center in Amache, Colorado in 1943. Whether or not Tomoo Ogita was interned or was simply assisting with the resettlement is uncertain, but his family appears to have been interned. In September 1945 Ogita was sent to Hiroshima as part of the Allied occupation of Japan where he served as special language and psychological consultant to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. Following that project, he was assigned to the Civil Information and Education Section of General Headquarters, Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in Tokyo as researcher of cultural assets. At the close of his government career he worked in Korea for the U.S. Army’s 7th Psychological Operations Group. While working in Asia, Ogita also formally studied the art and cultures of the Far East, learned Chinese and Korean, and served as the English language editor of the Journal of Japanese Archaeology.

In 1968 Tomoo Ogita resigned from government service and returned from the Far East to his native California. He authored books and articles, lectured on Oriental art history at various California universities, and established Asia Art Associates, a business through which he appraised and authenticated art objects. Ogita was also an avid photographer and ceramicist. He lived in California with his second wife, Toshiko Ogita (née Oda) until his death in December 1983.

Collection Scope and Content Summary

The collection primarily comprises photograph albums created by Tomoo Ogita and contains over 5000 images. The albums span several decades, reflecting the dramatic life changes experienced by many Japanese Americans during World War II. Album 1 contains photographs of Ogita’s childhood and youth in Los Angeles. Albums 2 and 3 contain photographs of Ogita and his family at Granada Relocation Center in Amache, Colorado. Albums 3, 4, and 5 contain photographs of Japan,
including the ruins of Tokyo and Hiroshima. Album 6 contains portraits taken by Ogita. Albums 7, 8, 9, and 10 contain proof prints cut from contact sheets, depicting weddings, parties, sightseeing, funerals, co-workers and cultural events in Japan. Albums 11 and 12 contain photographs of the Philippines, Hawaii, the Far East, and South East Asia that predate Ogita's residency in Asia. These albums were collected by Tomoo Ogita, rather than created by him. They were likely created by friends he met in Asia who gave the albums to him because of his passion for photography and Asian culture. Also included in the collection are loose photographs, biographical information on Tomoo Ogita and his brother Yoshiaki, and two letters received by Ogita during the 1960s.

**Collection Arrangement**
This collection is arranged by format.

**Separation Note**
Several publications were removed from this collection and cataloged separately in Special Collections and Archives' catalog, ANTPAC.

**Processing Note**
The adhesive corners on some album pages are failing and some photographs have become dislodged. These photographs have been left in the context of the albums during processing and have not been removed to the "Loose photographs" box. Use care when handling.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**
Tomoo, Ogita -- Archives.
Japanese Americans -- Photographs.
Hiroshima-shi (Japan) -- Photographs -- 1940-1950.
Tokyo (Japan) -- Photographs -- 1940-1950.
Granada Relocation Center -- Photographs -- 1940-1950.

**Genres and Formats of Materials**
Photographic prints -- 20th century.
Photograph albums -- 20th century.

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**Biographical and family**

**Tomoo Ogita**

- **Box : Folder 1 : 1**
  - Portraits 1947, undated

- **Box : Folder 1 : 2**
  - Resume and biographical sketch 1973, undated

- **Box : Folder 1 : 3**
  - Yoshiaki Ogita portraits, clippings, and event program 1945, undated

**Scope and Content Note**
Contains formal portraits of Tomoo's brother, Yoshiaki, a commencement program Military Intelligence Service Language School, and clippings about the commencement, where Yoshiaki was presented with the Faculty Award for an Outstanding Student.

- **Box : Folder 1 : 4**
  - Correspondence 1965, 1967

**Scope and Content Note**
Comprises two incoming letters received by Ogita while in Japan and Korea.

**Loose photographs**

- **Box : Folder 1 : 5**
  - Photographs laid in Album 1 circa 1920s-early 1940s
    - Physical Description: 18 images

- **Box : Folder 1 : 6**
  - Photographs laid in Album 3 circa 1943-1946
    - Physical Description: 13 images
General circa 1946-1962, undated

- Physical Description: 194 images
- Scope and Content Note
  These photographs are largely unidentified and were not associated with any particular album. Photographs include a wedding (circa 1946) and extensive photographs of a traditional Japanese funeral service (1955).

Photograph albums

Box : 2

Album 1. Early photographs of the Ogita Family circa 1920s-early 1940s

- Physical Description: 446 images
- Scope and Content Note
  Contains the earliest photographs of Tomoo Ogita and family members, primarily in California. Photographs span Ogita's youth, from infancy to high school. Early photographs include portraits that probably pre-date Ogita's birth (1924). Later photographs include shots of family outings, football games, track meets, and classmates.

Box : 3

Album 2. Classmates and relocation center 1944, undated

- Physical Description: 104 images
- Scope and Content Note
  Contains photographs of university classmates (probably in Michigan), friends, and events at the Granada Relocation Center in Amache, Colorado.

Box : 3

Album 3. Relocation center and Hiroshima 1943-1946, undated

- Physical Description: 252 images
- Scope and Content Note
  Contains photographs of Ogita family members at Granada Relocation Center in Amache, Colorado, 20 photographs (3 x 4 inch) of the ruins of Hiroshima, and photographs of Tomoo and Yoshiaki in U.S. government uniforms. Also contains various friends and family in the U.S. and in Japan, including photographs of Ogita's first wedding.

Box : 4


- Physical Description: 74 images
- Scope and Content Note
  Primarily contains 2 1/4 x 1 3/4 inch prints of friends and landmarks. Includes 3 snapshots of Tokyo ruins. Also includes larger portraits of young women. Album is annotated in English and Japanese. Volume II was not received by UCI.

Box : 2

Album 5. "Memories of Japan, volume III" 1945-1946

- Physical Description: 242 images
- Scope and Content Note
  Primarily contains 2 1/4 x 1 3/4 inch prints of friends and landmarks. Includes 2 1/4 x 1 3/4 inch prints of the same 20 images of Hiroshima that are described in Album 3. Also includes a map of Kanato, Japan. Album is annotated in English and Japanese.

Box : 5


- Physical Description: 30 images
- Scope and Content Note
  Primarily contains black-and-white portraits (8 x 10 inch) taken by Tomoo Ogita. Also includes two photographs of Ogita.
Box : 5

**Album 7. Proof prints 1956-1957**

Physical Description: 633 images

Scope and Content Note
Contains black-and-white proof prints (2 x 2 inches) cut from contact sheets. Images include friends, U.S. government events in Japan, cultural events, and the production of Japanese arts and crafts, including weaving, pottery, and painting.

Box : 6

**Album 8. Proof prints 1956-1957**

Physical Description: 1445 images

Scope and Content Note
Contains strips of small black-and-white proof prints (1 x 1 1/2 inches) cut from contact sheets. Images include family, friends, theatrical performances, and scenic shots of Japan, including Iwappara ski resort, Yuzawa, Tokyo, Nagano, and Mt. Asama. Some photographs are labeled.

Box : 6

**Album 9. Proof prints 1957 January**

Physical Description: 103 images

Scope and Content Note
Contains black-and-white proof prints (1 x 1 1/2 inches and 2 x 2 inches) cut from contact sheets. Images appear to be of a single event that consisted of speeches, a ceremony, and a traditional Japanese meal. Also includes 5 group portraits (5 x 6 1/2 inch).

Box : 6

**Album 10. Proof prints 1961**

Physical Description: 1219 images

Scope and Content Note
Contains strips of small black-and-white proof prints (1 x 1 1/2 inches) cut from contact sheets. Images include Sumo wrestling, a picnic, funeral, award ceremony, farewell party, weddings, coworkers, and scenic views of Japan, including Tokyo Bay. Some photographs are labeled.

Box : Folder 4 : 1-10

**Album 11. Postcards and photographs undated**

Physical Description: 202 images (postcards and photographic prints)

Scope and Content Note
This album does not appear to have been created by Ogita. It contains postcards of Honolulu; surfing in Hawaii; Philippines; and Kyoto, Japan. Photographs primarily include the native peoples and scenic views of Hawaii; Philippines; Mt. Fuji, Japan; and other locations in Japan. Many of the photographs are commercially produced and include the location stamped in ink on the verso.

Processing/Project Information
Album pages had loosened from the binding and were placed in folders for preservation purposes.
Box : Folder 7 : 1-10

**Album 12. Postcards and photographs 1935-1936**

Physical Description: 590 images (postcards and photographic prints)

Scope and Content Note

This album was not created by Ogita. It contains postcards and photographs of Shanghai; Hong Kong; and Penang, Peking, and the Great Wall in China; Also includes one small Chinese folk painting and a photograph of broken feet that have been traditionally bound. Singapore; Ceylon; Thailand; Malaysia; and many other sites. Some of the photographs are commercially produced rather than original work. Most of the photographs are labeled.

Processing/Project Information

Album pages had loosened from the binding and were placed in folders for preservation purposes.