



Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Pedro Supelana papers

MSS 147

Summary Information

Repository:

Historical Society of Pennsylvania
1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-732-6200

Creator: Pedro Supelana

Title: Pedro Supelana papers

Collection number: MSS 147

Dates: 1971-1992

Extent: 1.4 linear feet; 4 boxes, 1 flat file

Language: English

Abstract: Pedro Supelana was born in the Philippines in 1929. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1954 to 1964 and became a U.S. citizen in 1964. In 1967 he moved to Philadelphia, where he worked as an advertising manager. Supelana held leadership positions in a number of Filipino-American and Asian-American community organizations in Philadelphia and elsewhere, and supported national efforts to win Filipino veterans equal rights to benefits and the right to naturalize as U.S. citizens. The collection encompasses papers related to community organizations, veteran's organizations, and a few personal records, including correspondence, minutes, flyers, printed materials, and other items.

Conditions governing access: The collection is open for research.

Immediate source of acquisition: Gift of Pedro Supelana, 1992.

Accession number: M92-114.

Register for the
PEDRO SUPELANA PAPERS
1971-1992

MSS147
(M92-114)

PG 375

Patricia Parkman
Archives and Manuscripts Intern

July 1999

The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies
18 South Seventh Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

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3 ½ Hollinger boxes of mss.
1 folder of oversize materials
(approx 1 ¾ linear feet altogether)

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Photographs are in PG 375

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PROVENANCE

This collection was donated to the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies by Mr. Supelana in December 1992. It came in as one accession, M92-114.

The papers were badly damaged by water and have been replaced by photocopies except for a few items in OS 1. Some completely illegible material was not retained. Some items which do appear in the collection are incomplete or largely illegible because of damage to the originals.

The papers were processed in July, 1999 by Patricia Parkman, archives and manuscripts intern, after some preliminary organization by Sandy VanDoren, archivist for the Balch Institute.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Pedro B. Supelana was born in Rapu-Rapu, Albay, Philippines, on May 23, 1929. He received a bachelor of arts degree with a major in Political Science from Abad Santos Educational Institution, Manila, in 1954. He then enlisted in the United States Navy and was sent to San Diego, California for Boot Camp Training.

Supelana served in the U.S. Navy for ten years, during which he remained resident in the United States and worked part-time for an insurance company in Washington, DC, from 1958 to 1968. However, he was not eligible for naturalization as a U.S. citizen because he had not entered as an immigrant, a problem faced by many Filipinos in the U.S. armed services. He finally won a court battle for the right to be naturalized and became a United States citizen on August 31, 1964.

Supelana left the U.S. Navy in September, 1964, and three years later moved with his employer, the Colonial Penn Group, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1967 he also became the manager of Hawthorne Advertising, Inc., a subsidiary of the Colonial Penn Group engaged in direct mail advertising. In 1978 he started his own mailhouse, advertising, and personnel recruiting business, Cosmopolitan Advertising, Inc. in Philadelphia.

Supelana became active in Filipino American community organizations almost as soon as he arrived in the United States: he was vice president of the United Filipino Organization in Washington in 1965-66. In 1973 he became president of the Filipino-American Association of Philadelphia, PA, Inc., and while continuing in this position for some years also became president of the Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia, an alliance of seven Filipino organizations, when it was founded in 1975. He also organized the Filipino American Society of South Jersey, where he lived, in 1974 and served as vice president of the Philippine Community Executive Council of the Eastern Seaboard in 1973-77. He was active in a Filipino-American affiliate of Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Private Thomas Claudio Post, and supported national organized efforts to obtain equal rights to benefits and the right to naturalization as U.S. citizens for Filipino veterans.

Beyond the Filipino community, Pedro Supelana was a founder and the first president of the Asian American Council of Greater Philadelphia in 1972, and continued in other positions thereafter. Records of the Pan Asian Association of Greater Philadelphia, founded in 1982, show him as a member of its Advisory Council from 1989 through 1992. He was appointed to the Mayor's Asian American Advisory Board when it was created in 1988.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection arrived as a heterogeneous assemblage of correspondence and other records, printed programs, brochures, flyers, newsletters, and a few larger publications, as well as posters and photos. Business cards and post-it notes were often attached, and many papers carry handwritten notes, presumably Mr. Supelana's, which may or may not be related to the subject of the printed item. There are also many pages of handwritten notes, originally on lined yellow paper, including a run of minutes of Private Thomas Claudio VFW post meetings.

The textual material spans the years 1971-1992. It has been divided into papers related to community organizations, veterans' organizations; and personal records. Minutes, financial records, and programs have been arranged in separate folders only when there is a significant number of items; otherwise they are included in correspondence and other materials. Papers within folders are arranged chronologically (with a few exceptions noted in the series descriptions), with undated material at the end of each category.

This collection is a particularly valuable source of information about organizations of Asian Americans in the Philadelphia area (and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere), Asian American business activities, and the concerns of Asian Americans in relation to city services and public policy. It also shows the ties between Filipino Americans and the government of the Philippines, maintained primarily by the Philippine Embassy and Consulates, and contains a surprising amount of information about the Philippines and U.S.-Philippine relations.

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RECORDS SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES I: COMMUNITY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EVENTS, 1971-1992,
Boxes 1-4 and OS 1 (1 ½ linear feet)

Subseries A: COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND EVENTS, 1971-1992, Boxes 1-3

The bulk of material in this subseries relates to the activities of Filipino American and Asian American organizations in the greater Philadelphia area. Documents are arranged alphabetically by organization name, interspersed with one folder of correspondence with the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission, and one containing material about Asian Pacific American Heritage Week not related to any Philadelphia organization. Material from organizations represented only by a single piece or a few items, including some outside the Philadelphia area, are arranged by organization name in the Asian American Organizations, Various and Filipino American Organizations, Various folders.

The principal subject matter of most organizational records is the effort that went into elaborate special events, such as the annual commemorations of Asian American Heritage Week and of the death of Jose P. Rizal, a hero of the Filipino struggle for independence from Spain, which was the focus of a major social celebration.

Broader concerns of Asian Americans, which are occasionally represented in the papers of the ethnic organizations, constitute the major focus of the records of the Mayor's Asian American Advisory Board, renamed Philadelphia Commission on Asian-American Affairs in 1990. These documents provide a wealth of information about problems Asian Americans experienced in Philadelphia and what they wanted from the city. The subjects the Advisory Board looked into are reflected in a detailed report produced in its first year, followed by reactions from the city agencies about which the Board wrote and the Board's reactions to the reactions. Some historical background information of varying dates has been placed at the beginning of the first folder of correspondence and other material.

Subseries B: VETERANS' AFFAIRS, 1983-1992, Boxes 3-4

This subseries is divided between material related to the activities of national Filipino veterans' organizations and records of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Filipino veterans' activities focused on winning equal benefits for Filipino veterans of the United States armed forces (and veterans of Philippines armed forces during World War II when the Philippine Islands still belonged to the United States) and their right to be naturalized as U.S. citizens. The bulk of the documents in VFW folders reflect the activities of the Private Thomas Claudio Post, but some items from the national and state organizations are included.

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SERIES II.: PERSONAL RECORDS, 1971-1992, Box 4 (approximately ¼ linear foot)

This small series contains Mr. Supelana's college transcript and several undated drafts of biographical information, personal and business correspondence, and a few flyers and programs which seemed to belong with personal rather than organizational records. It also includes a folder of material from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, which was a Filipino government organization and thus [^]did belong among community organizations.

not

The listing "OS" in the box list refers to the oversize folder.
An index to the records follows the box list.

The guide for the photographs can be found with PG 375.

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BOX LIST

SERIES I: COMMUNITY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EVENTS, 1971-1992,
Boxes 1-4 and OS 1

Subseries A: Community Affairs and Events, 1971-1992, Boxes 1-3 and OS 1

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>		
		Asian American Congress (AAC)	
1	1	By-Laws	n.d.
	2	Correspondence & other materials	1976-92
1	3	Asian American Council of Greater Philadelphia (AACGP): Correspondence & other materials	1974-84
	4	Asian Pacific American Heritage Week: Publicity materials	1979-89
	5	Congress of Filipino American Citizens (CFAC): Correspondence & other materials	1980
		Filipino-American Association of Philadelphia, Inc. (FAAPI)	
	6	By-Laws	n.d.
OS1	7-9 1 item	Correspondence & other materials	1973-92
1	10-12	Programs	1973-88
	13	Filipino-American Lions Club: Directory	1983-84

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SERIES I: COMMUNITY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EVENTS, 1971-1992

Subseries A: Community Affairs and Events, 1971-1992

Box Folder

Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia,
Inc./Executive Council of the Delaware Valley, Inc.
(FECGP)

1	14	Constitution and By-Laws	1975, 1989 & n.d.
OS1	15-19 2 items	Correspondence & other materials	1975-89
2	1-3	Correspondence & other materials	1990-92
	4	Minutes	1975-90
		Mayor's Asian American Advisory Board/ Philadelphia Commission on Asian American Affairs	
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	10	Minutes	1988-90
		Pan Asian Association of Greater Philadelphia (PAA)	
	11	Asian/Pacific American Directory	1990
	12	By-Laws	1987
	13-14	Correspondence & other materials	1986-92
	15	Financial Records	1988-1990
	16	Programs	1988-90

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SERIES I: COMMUNITY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EVENTS, 1971-1992

Subseries A: Community Affairs and Events, 1971-1992

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>		
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		Philippines Center Foundation	
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	3	Correspondence	1980-83 & n.d.
	4	Asian American Organizations, Various: Correspondence & other materials	1988-91 & n.d.
	5	Filipino American Organizations, Various: Correspondence & other materials	1981-90
	6-9	Reference	1971-91 & n.d.
	10	Reference: Newspaper Clippings	1988-92 & n.d.
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SERIES I: COMMUNITY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EVENTS, 1971-1992

Subseries B: Veterans' Affairs, 1983-92

Box Folder

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

3	12	Conference Manual	1991
	13-16	Correspondence & other materials	1983-92
4	1	Minutes	1986-87
	2	Roster	1988-89
	3	Reference	1985-90 & n.d.

SERIES II.: PERSONAL RECORDS, 1971-1992, Box 4 and OS 1

4	4	Biographical/Education	1971 & n.d.
	5	Commission on Filipinos Overseas: Correspondence & other materials	1988-1991
OS1	6-10 1 item	Personal correspondence & other material	1974-92 & n.d.
4	11	Writings/Speeches	1990 & n.d.

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