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2020

## William M. Rigdon papers

Zach S. Henderson Library Special Collections

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*Henderson Library and Lane Library*

## WILLIAM M. RIGDON PAPERS FINDING AID

### OVERVIEW OF COLLECTION

**Title:** William M. Rigdon papers

**Date:** 1930-1982, bulk 1941-1962

**Extent:** 16 linear feet (16 boxes)

**Creator:** Rigdon, William McKinley, 1904-1991

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Zach S. Henderson Library Special Collections, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA. [specolle@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:specolle@georgiasouthern.edu). 912-478-7819. [library.georgiasouthern.edu](http://library.georgiasouthern.edu).

**Processing Note:** Finding Aid revised in 2020.

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### INFORMATION FOR USE OF COLLECTION

**Conditions Governing Access:** The collection is open for research use.

**Physical Access:** Materials must be viewed in the Special Collections Reading Room under the supervision of Special Collections staff.

**Technical Access:** Special equipment may be needed to view audiovisual materials..

#### **Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:**

In order to protect the materials from inadvertent damage, all reproduction services are performed by the Special Collections staff. All requests for reproduction must be submitted using the Reproduction Request Form. Requests to publish from the collection must be submitted using the Publication Request Form. Special Collections does not claim to control the rights to all materials in its collection. In all instances, it is the researcher's responsibility to obtain permission from the holders of any rights in the material being quoted, reproduced or published.

**Preferred Citation:** [Item Identification], William McKinley Rigdon Papers, Zach S. Henderson Library Special Collections, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA

**Related Collections:**

[William M. Rigdon Papers, 1943-1945 \(New York State Historical Documents\)](#)

[William M. Rigdon Papers, 1945-1953 \(Harry S. Truman Library\)](#)

Other materials at the Truman Library relating to William M. Rigdon and his duties as Assistant Naval Aide include oral history interviews with Commander William M. Rigdon and Donald J. MacDonald, the Leo W. Roberts Papers, the Robert Dennison Papers, and the President's Travel Logs, which were prepared by Rigdon

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**ABOUT THE COLLECTION**

**Biographical History:** Commander William M. Rigdon was born in Statesboro, Georgia in 1904. He enlisted in the Navy in 1923 and eventually became a Commander under President Truman. He served as Assistant Naval Aide in the White House from 1942 to 1953. On August 1, 1953 he retired from the Navy after 20 years of service. After retiring from the Navy, Rigdon attended the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University from 1953-1954 and became the Executive Secretary of the Virginia Hotel Company in July 1954. In 1964, he published the *White House Sailor*, which was an account of his career during the Franklin and Truman Presidencies.

**Scope and Content:** This collection consists of correspondence, official military records, clippings, press releases, reports, memoranda, photographs, printed material, two unpublished manuscripts, and a diary (1941) recording William M. Rigdon's naval service as the United States entered World War II. The materials pertain to Rigdon's naval service, particularly as the Assistant Naval Aide (1942-1953) to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, and after his retirement from the Navy, as Executive Manager of the Virginia Hotel Company. Topics documented by the collection include descriptions of Manila before and during World War II, the Potsdam Conference, and the origins of the Democratic Club in Washington, D.C.

**System of Arrangement:** This collection is arranged according to document type and chronologically when appropriate.

**Box 1:** 0200103505687

**Box 2:** 0200103505695

**Box 3:** 0200103505703

**Box 4:** 0200103505711

**Box 5:** 0200105030841

**Box 6:** 0200105030858

**Box 7:** 0200105030866

**Box 8:** 0200105030643

**Box 9:** 0200105030650  
**Box 10:** 0200105030668  
**Box 11:** 0200105030445  
**Box 12:** 0200105030452

**Box 13:** 0200105030460  
**Box 14:** 0200105030247  
**Box 15:** 0200105030254  
**Box 16:** 0200106672708

**Acquisitions Info:** Gift of Commander William M. Rigdon.

**Access Points:**

United States. Navy  
 Virginia Hotel Company  
 Democratic Club (Washington, D.C.)  
 United States. President (1933-1945 : Roosevelt)  
 United States. President (1945-1953 : Truman)  
 United States. Navy  
 Virginia Hotel Company  
 Potsdam Conference (1945 : Potsdam, Germany)  
 Potsdam Conference  
 World War (1939-1945)  
 Presidents -- United States -- Staff  
 Sailors -- United States  
 World War, 1939-1945 -- Philippines  
 Politics and government

Presidents -- Staff  
 Sailors  
 Manila (Philippines)  
 United States -- Politics and government -- 1933-1953  
 Philippines  
 Philippines -- Manila  
 United States  
 1933-1953  
 Video recordings  
 Records (Documents)  
 Photographs  
 Personal correspondence  
 Diaries  
 Business correspondence  
 Albums (Books)

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**CONTAINER LISTING**

**Box 1:** 0200103505687

<b>The following folders contain items listed in Dr. Robert David Ward's <i>A Guide to the William McKinley Rigdon Papers</i>. They are arranged in the order given by the Guide, chronologically.</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
1930-1940	1	1
1941	1	2
1942-1943	1	3
1944-March 1945	1	4

March-August 1945	1	5
September-December 1945	1	6
1946	1	7
1947	1	8
1948-1949	1	9
1950-1951	1	10
1952-1953	1	11
1954-1957	1	12
1958-1960	1	13
1961-May 1962	1	14
June-December 1962	1	15

**Box 2:** 0200103505695

<b>The following folders contain items listed in Dr. Ward's Guide.</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
1963-1964	2	1
1965-1967	2	2
1968-1982	2	3
Additional Documents 1930s-1940s	2	4
Additional Documents 1950s-1980s	2	5
Accessioned Items (Not listed in the Guide)	2	6
<p>The Seapack Saga</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This folder contains correspondence from the years 1945-1946 concerning the Hartmann Seapack, a type of luggage used by the U. S. Navy as well as President Truman. Apparently, some of Truman's associates saw his luggage and wanted to know where they could find some like it. Rigdon corresponded with the company which made the Seapacks concerning the availability of the luggage.</li> </ul>	2	7

Notes On People	2	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This folder (Accession Number 290) contains notes on some historical figures with whom Rigdon worked, probably for his book. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Admiral Robert Dennison</li> <li>○ Admiral Robert Foskett</li> <li>○ Clark Clifford</li> <li>○ Admiral Sidney Souers</li> <li>○ General Harry Vaughan</li> <li>○ Admiral Wilson Brown</li> <li>○ Fleet Admiral George Leahy</li> <li>○ Harry Hopkins</li> <li>○ P. Watson</li> <li>○ James Byrnes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Notes on Ships, Stations, and Early Career	2	9
Scrapbook (loose items dealing with Commander Rigdon's Book <i>White House Sailor</i> .)	2	10
Contemporary Articles on Pacific battlefronts	2	11
Battle of the Java Sea notes and clippings	2	12
Invitations	2	13
Programs and Menus	2	14
Ration Cards (This folder contains ration cards from the World War II era)	2	15
Name Cards and Dinner Tickets	2	16
(Travel Brochures and Information) United kingdom	2	17
France	2	18
Spain	2	19
Germany and Austria	2	20
Iraq	2	21
Italy	2	22
Mexico	2	23
Canada	2	24

Arizona	2	25
California	2	26
Colorado	2	27
District of Columbia	2	28
Florida	2	29
Georgia	2	30
Maine	2	31
New York	2	32
Pennsylvania	2	33
Virginia	2	34
Washington	2	35
Wyoming	2	36

**Box 3:** 0200103505703

	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Addresses	3	1
Australia	3	2
The Philippines	3	3
The White House	3	4
Camp Shangri-La	3	5
Maps	3	6
The Tale of the Hawk	3	7
The Hawk Talk	3	8
Miscellaneous (3) USS Black Hawk notes	3	9
Miscellaneous (4) USS Black Hawk Documents and info	3	10

Miscellaneous (5) Naval Reservist (Oct 1970)	3	11
Miscellaneous (6) Navy Publications	3	12
Miscellaneous (7) Navy Publications	3	13
Ships other than the Balck Hawk: Articles	3	14
Clippings and Brief Research Notes	3	15
Military Science and Procedures	3	16
Presidential yachts, especially USS Williamsburg	3	17
Reviews of the White House Sailor	3	18
Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin Correspondence	3	19
Miscellaneous Travel maps and information	3	20
White House Articles	3	21
Personal Information and CV's	3	22
Oral History Interview with Commander Rigdon (Truman Library)	3	
Oral History Interview Photocopy	3	

**Box 4:** 0200103505711

<b>Bound Volume</b> -Presidential Travel Logs, Photographs, Presidential Travel Logs 1937-1945 (Individual logs listed underneath)	<b>Box Number</b>	<b>Folder Number</b>
Berlin Conference	4	1
Vacation Cruise	4	2
Key West	4	3
Key West 3/47	4	4
Rio Janeiro	4	5
Key West 12/47	4	6
Puerto Rico, Virgin islands, guantanamo Bay, Key West	4	7
Chesapeake and Delaware Bays	4	8



Key West 11/48	4	9
Key West and Orlando	4	10
Key West 11-12/49	4	11
Key West 3-4/50	4	12
Wake Island	4	13
Key West and Ft. Jefferson	4	14
Key West 11-12/51	4	15
Key West 3/52	4	16
Williamsburg Cruise	4	17
Canberra Cruise	4	18
News Clippings, etc. (Photocopies)	4	19
Periodical Issues owned by Rigdon	4	20
Paul Janofsky	4	
Signed Photographs	4	
Labeled Photographs (1)	4	
Labeled Photographs (2)	4	
Unlabeled Photographs (1)	4	
Unlabeled Photographs (2)	4	

**Box 5:** 0200105030841

<b>Photographs</b>	<b><u>Box</u> <u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u> <u>Number</u></b>
Rigdon: Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, & Panama Canal 1927	5	1
FDR: Trip to Monterrey, Mexico/ April & May 1943	5	2
FDR: Quebec Conference/ August 1943	5	3
FDR: Trip to Cairo and Teheran? Nov.-Dec. 1943	5	4

FDR: Trip to Hawaii and the Aleutians/ July-August 1944	5	5
FDR: Trip to Yalta/ January- February 1945	5	6
FDR: Funeral/ April, 1945	5	7
FDR: Miscellaneous Photos	5	8
Truman's Trip to Berlin/ Potsdam/ July- August 1945	5	9
Japanese Surrender: September 2, 1945	5	10
Truman: Navy Day Celebrations/ New York, NY/ October 27, 1945	5	11
Truman in Key West (undated)	5	12
Truman: Vacation Cruise to Bermuda/ Aug, 16-Sept. 2 1946; Truman in Key West/ First Trip/ November 17-23, 1946	5	13 13b
Truman's Trip to Rio de Janeiro / August -September 1947	5	14
Truman in Key West: 4 th trip/Feb. 20-Mar. 5, 1948	5	15
Truman in Key West: 5 th trip/Nov 7-21, 1948	5	16
Truman in Key West: 6 th trip/ Mar. 6-9, 1949	5	17
Truman in Key West: 7 th trip/ Nov. 28-Dec 20, 1949	5	18

**Box 6:** 0200105030858

<b>Photographs continued from box 5; Scrapbooks</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Truman in Key West: 8 th Trip/March 12-April 10, 1950	6	19
Truman: "Non-Political" Tour/ May 7-16, 1950	6	20
Camp David/ Shangri-La Photographs: September, 1950	6	21
Truman: Army & Navy Game/ November 29, 1952	6	22
Truman in Key West: 9 th Trip/ March 2-22, 1951	6	23
Truman in Key West: 10 th Trip/ Nov. 8-Dec 9, 1951	6	24
Truman and Churchill: aboard the Williamsburg/ Jan. 5, 1952	6	25
Truman in Key West: 11 th Trip/ March 7-27, 1952	6	26

Truman: Independence, Missouri/ Truman Library & Home	6	27
Commander W.M. Rigdon: Retirement Party/ July 31, 1953	6	28
Rigdon: Miscellaneous Photographs	6	29
Presidential Photographs (includes King George IV & the Royal Family)	6	30
Unidentified Photographs	6	31
Signed Photographs	6	32
Rigdon Formal Portrait in Uniform	6	33

**Box 7:** 0200105030866

	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
<b>Oversized Photographs</b>		
33 Photographs	7	

**Box 8:** 0200105030643

	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
<b>Oversized Photographs</b>		
8 Larger Oversized Photographs	8	1
1 map of Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet	8	2

**Box 9:** 0200105030650

	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
<b>16mm. Films</b>		
Yalta (2)	9	1
Hawaii - Alaska (2)	9	2
Vacation. Fall 1946	9	3
Our Vacation trip. July 1948	9	4
Cairo- Tehran- Malta. December 1943	9	5
German Orphan Home. Mohegan Island	9	6
Truman's Western Trip. June 1948 (6)	9	7

Europe (4)	9	8
Bethesda, Shangri-La	9	9
Shangri-La, Lake Louise, Tacoma	9	10
Truman's Trip to Annapolis (same as #14) [on 10-1/2 in. diameter reel; all others 7 inches]	9	11

**Box 10:** 0200105030668

<b>16mm. Films Continued</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Trip to Canada, 1943-1944, 1947 (2)	10	9
Visit with the Webb's, N.C. (Nags Head, Mantua)	10	10
Silver Spring, Skyline Drive	10	11
"Hobcaw". April- May 1944	10	12
Bermuda Cruise 1946	10	13
Trip to Annapolis, Maryland. August 1948	10	14
Trip to Mexico 1947 (2)	10	15
Washington, Mount Vernon (2)	10	16
Trip to Rio (5)	10	17
Campaign Trip 1952. Duluth-Hibbing, Mount Shasta, Royal Gorge. (4)	10	18
Key West Trips. March 1947 (5)	10	19

**Box 11:** 0200105030445

<b>16mm Films Continued (20-23) U-Matic Video Recordings (24-30)</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Trip to Caribbean and Key West March 1948 (3)	11	20
Trip to Key West. November 1948 (3)	11	21
Drive from Key West to Miami. 1950	11	22
Key West. March 1952	11	23

"Hoban" April & May 1944	11	24
Trip to Mexico. 1947	11	25
Cairo, Tehran, Malta. December 1943.	11	26
Canada. 1943-44	11	27
Trip to Mexico. 1947	11	28
The President's Tour of the Pacific. July-August 1944	11	29
Family Vacation. 1946	11	30

**Box 12:** 0200105030452

<b>U-Matic (¾ in) Video Recordings</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Campaign 1952	12	1
1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd Trips to Key West (2)	12	2
Trip to Caribbean and Key West. March 1948 (3)	12	3
Our Vacation Trip. July 1948	12	4
Trip to Key West. November & December 1948	12	5
Key West 1950	12	6
German Orphan Home	12	7
Key West 1950	12	8
Europe	12	9
Bethesda, Shangri-La	12	10
Bermuda Cruise	12	11

**Box 13:** 0200105030460

<b>U-Matic Video recordings continued</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
The President's Trip to the Crimea and the Middle East	13	1
Rio (2)	13	2

Shangri-La, Lake Louise, Tacoma	13	3
Silver Spring	13	4
Trip to Annapolis	13	5
Trip to Grand Coulee, Washington	13	6
Trip to the Caribbean and Key West	13	7
Truman's Western Trip (3 videos; 2 copies of tape 1)	13	8

**Box 14:** 0200105030247

<b>U-Matic Video recordings cont. Most have multiple subjects</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Visit with the Webb's	14	1
Visit with the Webb's, Silver Spring, Hobcaw (April-May 1944), Bermuda Cruise, and Trip to Annapolis	14	2
Cairo- Tehran – Malta – Dec '43, German Orphan Home	14	3
Key West 1950, Key West	14	4
The President's Trip to Crimea & Mid East, the President's Tour of the Pacific, Family Vacation 1946, and Our Vacation Trip July 1948	14	5
Trip to Grand Coulee, Washington, Campaign 1952	14	6
Trip to Caribbean & Key West, Trip to Key West, Nov & Dec 1948	14	7
Truman's Western Trip (Tape 2), Europe, Canada (1943-44)	14	8

**Box 15:** 0200105030254

<b>VHS Tapes - Multiple Subjects on Each tape</b>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Truman's Western Trip (Europe & Canada (1943-44))	15	1
The Webb's, Silver Springs, Hobcaw April-May 1944, Bermuda Cruise, Trip to Annapolis	15	2
Truman's Western Trip- tape 1	15	3
Trip to Mexico 1947	15	4

Trip to Grand Coulee, Washington - Campaign 1952	15	5
Rio	15	6
Cairo – Tehran – Malta December 1943, German Orphan Home	15	7
Trip to Caribbean & Key West, Trip to Key West, Nov & Dec 1948	15	8
The President's Trip to the Crimea & Middle East, The President's Tour of the Pacific Vacations 1946 & 1948	15	9
Key West 1950, Key West	15	10

**Box 16:** 0200106672708

<i>Note: Material was donated by Junie Brown, goddaughter of Jeanne Rigdon who was Bill's wife. These items were among some of the very few items that Jeanne Rigdon kept with her at the nursing home before she died.</i>	<b><u>Box Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Miscellaneous Documents	16	1
American Cancer Society Donation letter (of gratitude) to Jeanne Rigdon	16	1
Letter from Betsy, Sandy, Sandra, John & Paul	16	1
Birth Certificate of Agnella Jeannie Vasilis	16	1
Washington State Bureau of Health Affidavit for Correction of Records	16	1
Funeral Service for William McKinley Rigdon outline	16	1
Arlington National Cemetery pamphlet	16	1
Photo Album of Bill's Last Year of life	16	Loose
Funeral Address book	16	Loose
Department of the Navy Continuous Service Certificate	16	Loose
Wooden album titled "Rigdon"	16	Loose
3 Scrapbooks	16	Loose