

The Filson Historical Society
Van Stockum, Ronald Reginald, 1916-
Diaries, 1926-1937

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Size of Collection:
.33 cu. ft.

Location Number:
Mss. A V217c / 1-9

Van Stockum, Ronald Reginald, 1916- Diaries, 1926-1937

Scope and Content Note

This collection of diaries documents the adolescence of Marine Brigadier-General Ronald R. Van Stockum while he lived in Bellingham, Yakima, and Seattle Washington, from 1926-1937. Van Stockum's diaries reflect the thoughts, feelings, and activities of a middle class American youth of the era. The entries contain numerous references to his parents, friends, pets, hobbies, interests, and activities at both home and school. An avid reader, young van Stockum also enjoyed playing marbles, collecting stamps, riding his bicycle, playing games, fishing, swimming, and other childhood activities. He also records his activities as a paper boy as well as his membership in the Boy Scouts. A number of references record his step-father's business activities and participation in both the American Legion, a veterans' organization, and the U.S. Army Reserve. He makes frequent references to favorite radio programs including *Two Black Crows*, *The Circus*, *Amos n Andy* and the early sitcom *Joe and Vi*. He also listened to sporting and political events as well as celebrity interviews on *Voices from Filmland* and Grantland Rice's sports program.

Every diary contains numerous entries reflecting his interest in motion pictures. His diaries reflect the evolution of film from the close of the silent era to the advent of "talkies" and color film. Most entries are extremely brief; however, he occasionally records his comments on certain features. He found *King Kong* (1933) to be far more funny than frightening. Numerous other entries reflect his interest in sports at the local, state and national level, including baseball, football and boxing. Still others reveal his keen interest in aviation, especially air shows, air derbys, endurance flights and tragic accidents.

Later entries describe his attendance at the University of Washington in Seattle, and include references to courses, participation in the R.O.T.C, social life, dating, and summer employment at a saw mill. Notable entries refer to the Student Peace Movement of the 1930s and the 1935 timber industry strike in Washington.

His diaries from 1933 to 1936 contain numerous references to his relationship with Margaret Jeanne Houghton (1915-2011) of Bellingham, WA. He mentions correspondence, phone calls, swim dates, auto rides, parking, and other dating activities that emerged in the early 20th century. Some passages bearing on their relationship were written in Spanish (April-June, 1934) or afterwards crossed out. His diary for 1937 contains several entries regarding his new relationship with Florence Daphne Epler (1910-2012) of Seattle. (Note: Florence Daphne Epler Huntington later became a well known California artist.) The diaries conclude with his graduation from college in 1937 and enlistment in the Marine Corps.

No diary exists for the year 1927. Many of the diaries include newspaper clippings, drawings, and other ephemera along with the handwritten entries. The collection also includes a "Daily

Reminder" book (1928-1932) which includes diary entries from November 28 through December 31, 1928, but was mainly used for newspaper clippings and drawings, and random notes and lists kept by Van Stockum, including information about his education, time as School Club president (February 1929), earnings from selling newspapers, 1929-1932, and lists of books he was reading.

Folder 9 in the collection includes a 1925 letter to Van Stockum from his parents and an address book (circa 1937).

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Biographical Note

The son of Reginald George Bareham (1894-1916) and Florence Rosetta Freestone (1894-2005), Ronald Reginald Van Stockum was born on 8 July 1916 in Cambridge, England. After his father was killed in action in World War I, his widowed mother married Anton William Van Stockum (1890-1988) who adopted Ronald and raised him as his own son. Raised in Washington, he graduated from the University of Washington in Seattle in 1937. He attended Marine Officers School and served in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters in World War II.

General Van Stockum retired from active duty with the rank of Brigadier-General in 1969 and moved to Shelbyville, Kentucky. He worked for the University of Louisville and served as interim director of The Filson Historical Society in 1992-1993.

Related Collections:

Ronald Reginald Van Stockum Papers, 1937-2001 [Mss. A V217]

Ronald Reginald Van Stockum Historical Writings and Research Papers [Mss. A V217b]

**Van Stockum, Ronald Reginald, 1916-
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Container List

Volume 1: Diary, 1926
Volume 2: Diary, 1928
Volume 3: Diary, 1929
Volume 4: Diary, 1930
Volume 5: Diary, 1931
Volume 6: Diary, 1932
Volume 7: Diary, 1933-1937
Volume 8: "Daily Reminder" Book, 1928-1932
Folder 9: Letter, July 1925 and Address Book, circa 1937

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Subject Headings

Adolescence – United States
American chronicles (Series)
American Legion
Armed Forces day
Ballroom dancing – United States
Bareham, Reginald G., 1894-1916
Boxing matches
Boy Scouts
Brockway, Fenner, 1888-1988
Burke, Fred "Killer", 1893-1940
Byrd, Richard Evelyn, 1888-1957
Dating (Social Customs)
Diaries
Depressions – 1929
Endurance flights
Flight
Friendship in adolescence
Graf Zeppelin (Airship)
Hearst, William Randolph, 1863-1951
Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964
London Naval Conference
Louis, Joe, 1914-1981
Madison, Helene, 1913-1970
Meany, Edmond S., 1862-1935
Motion pictures – Social aspects
Nye, Gerald P. (Gerald Prentice), 1892-1971
Paperboys
Peace movements
Powder Puff Derby
Presidents – United States – Election – 1932
Presidents – United States – Election – 1936
Radio programs
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945
Ruth, Babe, 1895-1948
Spain – History – Civil War, 1936-1939
Sports – United States
Stamp collecting
Strikes and lockouts

Tennis

United States. Army Reserve

United States. Army. Reserve Officers' Training Corps

United States. Marine Corps

University of Washington.

Van Stockum, Anton William, 1890-1988

Van Stockum, Florence Rosetta Freestone Bareham, 1894-2005

Washington (State) – Travel and description