

The Filson Historical Society
White, Novia James, 1919-2013
Papers, 1916-2012 (bulk: 1936-1946)

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the Curator of Special Collections.

Size of Collection:
2 cu. ft. and 1 ovsz. fldr.

Location Number:
Mss. A W586b

**White, Novia James, 1919-2013
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Scope and Content Note

The Novia J. White Papers contain letters and ephemera relating to the life and military service of Novia J. White, a navigator on a B-29 Bomber during World War II who served in the South Pacific. The collection contains letters between himself and his wife, Nannette von Siebenthal, before they were married in 1939 and after they married while he served overseas. The collection contains some of his workbooks and manuals from navigation school and as well as documents related to his military service. There are also veteran newsletters and other military ephemera in the collection which document his post-active duty connection to the military and his former comrades. The collection also documents White's education, such as a yearbook from duPont Manual High School in 1937 along with his schedules and information from his college career.

Folders 1 through 15 contain letters between White and his then fiancée, Nannette von Siebenthal. The letters date from July 1936 through June 1938 when White was living in Los Angeles, California and Nannette was living in Louisville, Kentucky.

Folders 16 through 28 contain letters between White and his wife Nannette while he was training and then serving in the military during World War II. The letters date from August 1943 through August 1946 while White was stationed in the South Pacific and Nannette was in Pennsylvania.

Folder 29 contains information about White's education, such as report cards, a yearbook, and programs for the commencement ceremony in 1937 from duPont Manual High School in Louisville, Kentucky. The folder also contains a program from the 55 year reunion for the class of 1937.

Folder 30 contains documents from White's training as a navigator. The folder also contains programs from his graduation from navigation school in 1945, pocket-sized manuals and handbooks, and some of the songs used as cadences for the Army Air Corps.

Folders 31 through 33 contain White's training manuals and handbooks from navigation school. Some of these books are the instruction manuals the Army supplied and others are White's notebooks where he worked on his equations and charts, etc.

Folder 34 contains documents and items from White's active duty service during the war and his post-war work abroad. These documents include flight logs, his official power of attorney signed by himself and his wife, documents about White's work on the bases, and some Filipino and Japanese currency.

Folder 35 contains White's post-war ephemera such as images of the B-29 Bomber, articles about veterans and Hiroshima, and a short biography of White. There is also a roster and list of deceased members of the 40th Bomb Group Association that was current until October 2008.

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Scope and Content Note (continued)

Folder 36 contains several veteran newsletters from the 20th Air Force dated from 1999 to the winter of 2003-2004. The folder also contains newsletters from the 40th Bomb Group Association from the summer of 2004 and the spring of 2005.

Folder 37 contains printed scans of photographs showing White and his flight crew in front of their B-29 Bomber, images of B-29 Bombers in flight, the landscape they flew over, and other images of White's fellow crew members [original photos have been separated; see Separate Note].

Folder 38 contains programs from the church services White attended while he was in the service. They are dated October 1943 through August 1946 and are from his training bases and his overseas stations. [Additional church programs and bulletins are located throughout White's correspondence.]

Folder 39 contains miscellaneous items such as a tax return from 1942, newspaper clippings, and two of White's letters of resignation, one to a newspaper in Atlanta and the second to Independent Life Insurance. There is also a newsletter that mentions White and his wife's golden anniversary. The folder dates from 1916 through 1984 and some of the items are undated.

Folder 40 (Oversized) contains oversized maps and aeronautical charts White used during his training and active duty during World War II. There are cloth items that detail how to survive after bailing out of a plane over water, cloth maps, and some large paper maps.

Separation Note

Photographs have been separated to the Novia James White Photograph Collection, 013PC53.

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Biographical Note

Novia James White was born in 1919 in Lebanon, Kentucky to parents Bird C. and Elizabeth White. He graduated from duPont Manual High School in Louisville, Kentucky in 1937 and then attended the University of Wisconsin for one year before he transferred to the University of California, Los Angeles. After one semester at UCLA, White dropped out to get a job in the newspaper industry, delivering papers and collecting bills. Shortly after he dropped out of college, his fiancée, Nannette von Siebenthal came out to Los Angeles; they married in the summer of 1939. Together they had three children, one of which was born before the war. He worked in newspapers until he enlisted in the air cadets in the Army Air Corps in 1943.

He trained as a navigator for a B-24 Liberator and then transferred to the B-29 Bomber, called the Superfortress, before he was sent to the South Pacific. He was part of the 40th Bomb Group, 58th Bomb Wing, 20th Air Force. He was stationed on Tinian, an island in the northern part of the Mariana Islands, where he flew three missions before the official surrender of the Japanese Army. Following the Japanese surrender, White was stationed on Tinian and then transferred to the Philippines, where he served as a mess officer, earning an Army commendation for his work. He was honorably discharged in October 1946. After the war, White worked in newspapers in Philadelphia and Atlanta before he joined the Independent Life and Accident Insurance Company. He retired from there as Vice President in 1984. White passed away in May of 2013.

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Folder List

Folder 1: Correspondence, July 1936-November 1937
Folder 2: Correspondence, January 1938-June 1938
Folder 3: Correspondence, July 1938
Folder 4: Correspondence, August 1-15, 1938
Folder 5: Correspondence, August 17-31, 1938
Folder 6: Correspondence, September 1938
Folder 7: Correspondence, October 1938
Folder 8: Correspondence, November 1938
Folder 9: Correspondence, December 1938
Folder 10: Correspondence, January 1939
Folder 11: Correspondence, February 1939
Folder 12: Correspondence, March 1939
Folder 13: Correspondence, April 1939
Folder 14: Correspondence, May 1939
Folder 15: Correspondence, June 1939
Folder 16: Correspondence, August 1943-October 1944
Folder 17: Correspondence, August 1945
Folder 18: Correspondence, September 1945
Folder 19: Correspondence, October 1945
Folder 20: Correspondence, November 1945
Folder 21: Correspondence, December 1945
Folder 22: Correspondence, January 1946
Folder 23: Correspondence, February 1946
Folder 24: Correspondence, March 1946
Folder 25: Correspondence, April 1946
Folder 26: Correspondence, May 1946
Folder 27: Correspondence, June 1946
Folder 28: Correspondence, July-August 1946
Folder 29: Education, 1935-1938
Folder 30: Military Training, August 1943-June 1945
Folder 31: Military Training: Notes and Workbook, 1944
Folder 32: Military Training: Manuals/Handbooks, 1943-1944, undated
Folder 33: Military Training: Workbooks, 1944, undated
Folder 34: Military Active Duty and Post-war Service, 1945-1946
Folder 35: Post-war Military Ephemera, 2008-2012, undated
Folder 36: Veteran Newsletters, 1999-2005
Folder 37: Printed Photograph Scans, 1945-1946
Folder 38: Church Bulletins/Religious Service Programs, October 1943 – August 1946

Folder 39: Miscellaneous, 1916-1984, undated

Folder 40 (Oversized): Oversize Maps, Aeronautical Charts, and Cloth Items, 1943-1945

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Added Entries

20th Air Force Association (U.S.)
United States. Army Air Forces. Bombardment Group (VH), 40th.
Aeronautical charts.
Aids to air navigation.
B-29 (Bomber)
Church bulletins.
Churchill Downs (Louisville, Ky. : Racetrack)
Courtship.
DuPont Manual High School (Louisville, Ky.)
Florida – Description and travel.
Los Angeles (Calif.) – Social life and customs.
Louisville (Ky.) – Social life and customs.
Love letters.
Mariana Islands.
Military life.
Military maps.
Navigation – Study and teaching.
Newspapers.
Officers' clubs.
Philippines – History – 1898-1946.
Philippines – Manila.
Post cards.
Santa Anita Park (Arcadia, Calif.)
Santa Catalina Island (Calif.)
Tinian (Northern Mariana Islands)
United States. Army Air Forces – Commissariat.
University of California, Los Angeles.
University of Wisconsin – Madison.
United Service Organization (U.S.)
Weddings.
White, Nannette von Siebenthal, 1921-
World War, 1939-1945.
World War, 1939-1945 – Aerial operations, American.
World War, 1939-1945 – Maps.
World War, 1939-1945 – Pacific Area.
World War, 1939-1945 – Veterans.