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Ralph Rogers Wheeler Papers: Finding Aid

Bethany Latham

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Ralph Rogers Wheeler Papers | Finding Aid

Summary Information

Repository

Houston Cole Library
Alabama Gallery, 10th Floor
700 Pelham Road North
Jacksonville, AL 36265-1602
256.782.8195

Creator

Houston Cole Library

Title

Ralph Rogers Wheeler Papers

Dates

1936-2010

Extent

1 box, 4 folders, 52 total items

Background Information

Scope and Content Note

This collection (Bib #2283748) contains photographic prints, newspaper clippings, conference programs, photocopies from various sources, military records, booklets, original essays, and more most likely compiled by Ralph Rogers Wheeler (1918-2004), an Alabama native. Items relate to Wheeler's life and especially his military service and time as a Japanese prisoner of war. Beginning in 1942, he was first housed in a prison camp in the Philippines, and then sent via ship to a prison camp near Osaka, Japan. He was rescued in 1945 after Japan's surrender. Supplementary materials appear to be related to research he did into Bataan and Corregidor, as well as his membership in POW organizations, such as the Cheaha Chapter of American Ex-POWs and the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor.

Wheeler was a veteran of both WWII and Korea. He enlisted in the US Army in 1936 and re-enlisted in the Air Force in 1947, retiring in 1961. He was a member of Jacksonville First Presbyterian Church and is buried in Jacksonville City Cemetery.

(Sources: Information found in the materials and Ralph Rogers Wheeler obituary published in the *Birmingham News*, 29 January 2004.)

Arrangement

This collection is arranged by type of material:

- Box 1
 - *Folder 1: Essays, Correspondence & Bibliographies*

- *Folder 2: Photographs*
- *Folder 3: Pamphlets, Newsletters, Programs, & Miscellaneous Publications*
- *Folder 4: Newspaper Clippings, Photocopies, Computer Printouts & Miscellaneous Documents*

Administrative Information

Access and Use

This collection is open to researchers under the guidelines set out in the *Houston Cole Library Policy and Procedures Manual*, Alabama Gallery section. Please consult the policy for specific instructions.

Preferred citation

Ralph Rogers Wheeler Papers, Houston Cole Library.

Provenance

The provenance of these items is unknown, as is their original order. It is likely they were left in the care of Linda Louise Cain, History & Geography Librarian, in the late 1990s or early 2000s. A bibliography compiled by Ms. Cain is included with the papers; it is likely they were cleaned out of her office upon her retirement in 2015.

Processing Information

Arranged and described by Bethany Latham, 2021.

Physical Condition

Most items are in good condition, a few have loose covers, etc.

Container Contents and Collection Inventory

BOX 1, Folder 1 | Essays, Correspondence & Bibliographies

<i>Item</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	First Enlistment, as told by Ralph Wheeler. Wheeler describes his background, enlistment in 1936, basic training, time in the Signal Corps at Fort Bragg, and re-enlistment in Coast Artillery in the Philippines.	1936-1939 compilation date unknown
2	Paradise, as told by Ralph Wheeler. Wheeler recounts his re-enlistment and stationing in the Philippines to E. Battery, 59 th Coast Artillery. He describes the bombing of Corregidor, its surrender, and his transfer as a prisoner of war to Bilibid Prison.	1940-1942 compilation date unknown
3	Paradise Lost, To Hell and Back, as told by Ralph Wheeler. Wheeler details his time first in Bilibid Prison in Manila and later at another prison camp near Osaka, Japan. He was liberated in September 1945 with Japan's surrender and describes his recovery and return home to Alabama.	1942-1946 compilation date unknown
4	The American Holocaust, submitted by Curt Norris. Norris, a journalist, discusses pacifism and the Japanese during World War II, including Corregidor, the use of the atomic bomb, and prisoner of war camps.	1980s
5	Letter regarding Sgt. C.C. Gallegos. Unsigned letter probably authored by Ralph Rogers Wheeler detailing his time with Gallegos as a prisoner of war at Tanagawa Japan.	20 Aug 1981
6	A Different World, But in Many Ways, the Best of Times. Unsigned essay or possibly reunion speech regarding life in the 1930s.	Unknown
7	Bibliography: Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Bibliography compiled by Linda Louise Cain	Unknown

BOX 1, Folder 2 | Photographs

<i>Item</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Photograph of the staff and officers that operated Osaka camp in Japan. Caption with photograph includes information "picture of the staff of Japanese officers and men that operated the atrocious Osaka Japanese prison camp...the picture was obtained by Willis Dixon who was a prisoner for 42 months...they were all placed on trial for their lives...and are all now dead except two who still are at large."	circa 1942
2	Photograph of three US Air Force soldiers. Two soldiers shake hands while a third stands in the background. Stamp on photograph reverse notes "Official Photograph United States Air Force, Photography Branch, Holloman Air Force Base." The soldier in the background may be Ralph Rogers Wheeler.	circa 1950- 1960
3	Photograph of General Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, Commander of Allied Forces in the Philippines during World War II, with an unidentified man. General Wainwright shakes hands with an unidentified man. Post-It Note originally attached to photograph states, "Gen. 'Skinny' Wainwright at reunion at Lake Fontana. Man on right is unknown." Stamp on reverse of photograph notes, "Please credit Vivienne Roberts, Photographer."	circa 1950- 1960

4	Photograph of three US Air Force soldiers in the desert near Holloman Air Force Base. Three soldiers stand near wreckage, possibly of a plane; soldier in middle may be Ralph Rogers Wheeler. Notation on reverse of photograph reads "1960, Holloman AFB, NM." Stamp on reverse of photograph reads "Official Photograph United States Air Force, Photographic Section, Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico."	1960
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BOX 1, Folder 3 | Pamphlets, Newsletters, Programs & Miscellaneous Publications

<i>Item</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Ex-Pow Bulletin, Golden Anniversary Edition, Vol. 49, No. 4, April 1992.	April 1992
2	Angel Island Association Herald, Winter 1992.	1992
3	Angel Island Association Herald, Winter 1992.	1992
4	America's Young Warriors: Official Publication of the Veterans of Underage Military Service, July-August 1999	Jul-Aug 1999
5	Prisoner of War by Benjamin Charles Steele. Exhibition documentation for 80 drawings and three paintings in the Northcutt Gallery of Art at Eastern Montana College, Billings, Montana by artist and POW Benjamin Charles Steele. The exhibition originally ran 17 Sept to 16 October 1986.	1986
6	The Story of Andersonville Prison and American Prisoners of War. Published 1987 by Eastern National Park & Monument Association. Handwritten note inside reads "To Susan Wheeler, from Bill Herold, American Defenders Bataan & Corregidor."	1987
7	The Japanese Story. Packet #10, American Ex-POW National Medical Research Commission. Compiled by Stan Sommers, survivor of Bataan and Corregidor.	1980
8	Extracts from the AEB SWPA Leyte Report. Folder labeled "Top Secret" and later declassified, memos and communications regarding operations in the Leyte Gulf of the Philippines during World War II.	circa 1942-1944
9	Christmas Dinner 1940, 59th Coast Artillery, Fort Drum, Philippines. [photocopy] Contains a history of the Battery plus a Battery roster by rank.	1940
10	Thanksgiving Day Menu, Ben Guerir Air Base, French Morocco, 24 November 1955. Includes commanders roster, menu, and Thanksgiving prayer.	24 Nov 1955
11	Christmas Menu, 3926 Air Base Group, Ben Guerir, French Morocco. Contains Christmas message from Colonel George P. Cole and menu.	Dec 1955
12	42nd National Convention, American Defends of Bataan & Corregidor. Convention banquet program; convention held at The Pointe, Squaw Peak, Phoenix, Arizona, 24-31 May 1987. Handwritten notes on program list table number and people at the table: Walter B. and Helen P. Helhowski, Alfred and Lena Galler, Elsie and Ralph Wheeler, Talmade and Rose Bridges, Bill and Ruth Wallace.	29 May 1987
13	The Trials and Tribulations of Our Capture, 1942-1992. Cheaha Chapter of Alabama American Ex-Prisoners of War members share their stories of imprisonment during World War II.	1992
14	A Summary of Veterans Administration Benefits. VA Pamphlet 27-82-2 Revised, published June 1984 by the Department of Veterans Benefits.	June 1984

15	VA Fact Sheet: VA Benefits for Former Prisoners of War. Two-page sheet detailing compensation and medical care for former POWs, as well as specific compensation for ischemic heart disease.	Aug 1993
16	Ex-POW Bulletin, August 1998	Aug 1998
17	General Headquarters Memo, US Army Forces, Pacific, 18 September 1945. Memo with list of servicemen appointed to the rank of corporal and technical sergeant, including Ralph Wheeler [photocopy]	18 Sept 1945

BOX 1, Folder 4 | Newspaper Clippings, Photocopies, Computer Printouts & Miscellaneous Documents

<i>Item</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Chilling, But It's Not the Bataan Death March. Lens Blog from the <i>New York Times</i> , blog posting by David W. Dunlap, 18 March 2010 [printout]	18 March 2010
2	Artillery battery photograph, Corregidor, September 1945. Handwritten note taped to photocopy reads "Looks like Battery Smith to me, or it could be Battery Hearn?" [photocopy]	Sept 1945
3	Blasting of Ft. Drum. [photocopy]	circa 1940s
4	Bataan-Corregidor Survivors Meet, Compare Memories. Newspaper article by Stanton Samuelson in the <i>San Francisco Examiner</i> , 14 May 1992 [photocopy]	14 May 1992
5	Corregidor Eternal Memory. Article by William H. Bartsch. [photocopy]	Unknown
6	Philippines: When Bataan Fell. Article by Cornelius C. Gallegos in <i>Veterans of Foreign Wars</i> publication, April 1982. [photocopy]	April 1982
7	Saga of the Concrete Battleship in Manila Bay that Would Not Quite Until Ordered. Article by William R. Trotter in <i>Armament</i> magazine. [photocopy]	Unknown
8	Photo album of images from Fort Drum, Philippines. [printout]	Photos circa 1930s-1940s Accessed 9 Dec 2000
9	Armament on Forts Hughes, Drum and Frank. [photocopy]	Unknown
10	Information regarding citation of distinction for those in the Philippines in 1942, along with photographs. [photocopy]	Unknown
11	Little-known Atrocity of World War II Recalled. Newspaper clipping from the <i>August Herald</i> , 15 December 1988 regarding the massacre at Palawan, Philippines.	15 Dec 1988
12-19	Manila envelope labeled "Take to Lake Fontana, Corregidor & Fort Drum." Contains: 1) Photocopy of staff of officers that operated Osaka camp in Japan 2) Photocopy of <i>Goodhue Invader</i> , Vol. II, No. 22 3) Photocopy of <i>Pair-o-Dice World News XI Corps</i> newsletter published 11 September 1945 4) Photocopy of Ripley's <i>Believe it or Not</i> concrete battleship 5) Photocopy of information regarding citation of distinction for those serving in the Philippines in 1942 6) Photocopy of <i>The Ethical Dilemma of Surrender</i> by Major Matthew S. Klimow, <i>Military Review</i> , October 1990 7) Photocopy of information on El Fraile (Fort Drum) 8) Photocopy of map showing the Philippines	1940s-1990s
20	Pearl Remembered, but What About Clark Field? Article in <i>The Washington Post</i> by John G. Leyden [photocopy]	unknown

21	Anniston Star newspaper, D-Day Memories issue, 6 June 1994	6 Jun 1994
22	Ralph Wheeler newspaper clipping	circa 1945
23	William R. Wheeler newspaper clipping	circa 1942
24	Richard Cator, Saks, newspaper clipping from Anniston Star	circa 1980s