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Conner family collection, 1945-1959

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Conner, Dale & Kathryn, Collection, MS 163

Dale & Kathryn Conner Collection

Collection Number	MS 163
Title	The Dale & Kathryn Conner Collection
Name and Location of Repository	Pittsburg State University, Special Collections & University Archives, Pittsburg, Kansas
Dates	1945 – 1959
Collection Size	2 linear feet
Creator	Dale & Kathryn Conner

Scope and Content This collection is comprised of personal correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, and a calendar, all during the World War II years. The correspondence makes up the majority of the collection with approximately 600 letters between Dale & Kathryn Woods Conner written from April 1943 through December 1945. The photographs include a composite of the July 19, 1944 graduation class of the Naval Reserve Midshipmen School.

Access Restrictions This collection is open for access

Languages English

Biographical Note Dale McClellan Conner entered the U. S. Naval Reserve in 1943 and attended the Navy V-12 program at Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas (now Pittsburg State University). He took pre-midshipman's training at Asbury Park, New Jersey and subsequently transferred to Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois to attend midshipman's school. He was commissioned as ensign on July 19, 1944 and was assigned to the Amphibious Training Base (ATB) in the San Diego, California area. In 1945 he served aboard the USS Freestone (APA 167), which patrolled islands in the Pacific Ocean. When the war ended he was transferred to the USS Brock (APD 93) and helped transport troops and officers to other stations until he was honorably discharged in 1946.

While enrolled in the Navy V-12 program in Pittsburg, he met Kathryn Woods, also a student. Kathryn received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree in August 3, 1944. Through their correspondence their relationship grew and they were engaged September 1944.

Following graduation Kathryn moved to Planeview, Kansas (in southeast Wichita) and taught sixth grade for several months at Planeview Elementary School. In December 1944 she was employed as a file clerk at Beech Aircraft Corporation (now Beechcraft) in Wichita for several months prior to moving to Los Angeles, California where she worked as a service representative for the Southern California Telephone Company. In November 1945 she began teaching at a nursery school in the Los Angeles area and continued in this position until Dale's discharge.

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Dale and Kathryn were married August 7, 1945 in Seattle, Washington while he was on a short leave.

Following his discharge, Dale and Kathryn moved back to Pittsburg so he could finish his bachelor's degree. Dale received his Bachelor of Science in Education degree May 29, 1947. He was a teacher and coach at Buhler, Kansas for four years before he and Kathryn returned to Pittsburg in 1952 so he could teach and coach at Pittsburg High School and begin work on his master's degree. He received his Master of Science degree May 28, 1953. In 1956 he entered a career in the insurance business and later formed Conner Real Estate Agency.

Kathryn taught school in the Pittsburg and Carl Junction, Missouri school districts for 12 years prior to working with Dale in their real estate business.

They had a son, Gary, and a daughter, Bonnie. Dale died July 22, 2003 and Kathryn died November 13, 2005. They are both buried in Highland Park Cemetery in Pittsburg.

Series The collection is arranged into four series:
Correspondence; Photographs; News Clippings; and Miscellaneous.

The **Correspondence** series includes letters written by Dale McClellan Conner and Kathryn Louise (Katie Lou) Woods during World War II while Dale was serving in the United States Naval Reserve.

The **Photograph** series contains several photographs including a large-sized photo of the July 19, 1944 graduation class of the U. S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen School, photos of Dale and a shipmate, the USS Brock (APD 93), and a bombed section of Hiroshima, Japan.

The **News Clippings** series includes a limerick poem entitled "Limerick in Blue" that was composed by Kay Woods and published in *The Collegio*, circa 1943-44. There is a photo clipping, circa 1959, of Kansas Governor George Docking signing the bill that changed the name of Kansas State Teachers College to Kansas State College of Pittsburg. Also pictured in this photo news clipping are: State Senator F. O. Doty, Representative E. E. Stonecipher, Dale Conner, president of the alumni association, Professor Robert Hart, President of the college, Leonard H. Axe, Hubert Brighton, secretary of the Kansas Board of Regents, and James Daniel, student body president. Of particular interest in this series is a clipping entitled, "Millions Poised to Invade as Japs Quits," that gave an overview of Operations Olympic and Contour and planned for November 1945 but cancelled due to the surrender of Imperial Japan.

The **Miscellaneous** series includes an advertisement calendar for February-April, 1961.

Folder List

Box 1

Correspondence Series

- f. 1 April-September 1943 (15 letters)
- f. 2 March 1944 (20 letters)

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- f. 3 March 1944 (21 letters)
- f. 4 April 1944 (14 letters)
- f. 5 April 1944 (17 letters)
- f. 6 May 1944 (18 letters)
- f. 7 May 1944 (18 letters)
- f. 8 June 1944 (13 letters)
- f. 9 June 1944 (14 letters)
- f. 10 July 1944 (10 letters)
- f. 11 July 1944 (9 letters)
- f. 12 August 1944 (14 letters)
- f. 13 August 1944 (15 letters)
- f. 14 August 1944 (13 letters)
- f. 15 August 1944 (14 letters)
- f. 16 September 1944 (17 letters)
- f. 17 September 1944 (20 letters)
- f. 18 October 1944 (21 letters)
- f. 19 October 1944 (21 letters)
- f. 20 November 1944 (20 letters)
- f. 21 December 1944 (5 letters)

Box 2

Correspondence Series (continued)

- f. 22 January 1945 (14 letters)
- f. 23 February 1945 (19 letters)
- f. 24 March 1945 (17 letters)
- f. 25 April 1945 (11 letters)
- f. 26 May 1945 (16 letters)
- f. 27 June 1945 (17 letters)
- f. 28 June 1945 (16 letters)
- f. 29 July 1945 (14 letters)
- f. 30 July 1945 (13 letters)
- f. 31 August 1945 (16 letters)
- f. 32 September 1945 (13 letters)
- f. 33 September 1945 (14 letters)
- f. 34 September 1945 (14 letters)
- f. 35 October 1945 (14 letters)
- f. 36 October 1945 (13 letters)
- f. 37 October 1945 (13 letters)
- f. 38 November 1945 (18 letters)
- f. 39 November 1945 (18 letters)
- f. 40 December 1945 (16 letters)

Photograph Series

- f. 41 U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School, Fourteenth Company, July 19, 1944.
Four photos: Willie "Rip" Collins and Dale Conner; Dale Conner; Island natives.

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Included in July 15, 1945 letter from Dale to Kathryn, postmarked July 18, 1945. Andy Collins, son of Willie and Eunice Collins. Included in September 20, 1945 letter, postmarked, September 26, 1945.

Two photos: USS Brock (APD 93) and a photo of a bombed section of Hiroshima, Japan. Included in November 28, 1945 letter from Dale to Kathryn, postmarked November 29, 1945.

News Clippings Series

- f. 42 "Limerick in Blue." Poem by Kay Woods. *The Collegio*. Circa 1943-1944.
"The Beech Log." (Included in January 3, 1945 letter from Kathryn to Dale, postmarked January, 3, 1945.)
"Nautically Speaking." (Included in June 5, 1945 letter from Dale to Kathryn, postmarked June 6, 1945.)
"Freestone Takes Flag." Circa September 1945. (Included in September 18, 1945 letter from Dale to Kathryn, postmarked September 26, 1945.)
"Millions Posed To Invade As Japs Quit." Circa October 1945. (Included in October 14, 1945 letter from Dale to Kathryn, postmarked October 15, 1945.)
"New Name for K. S. T. C." *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*. 1959.

Miscellaneous Series

- f. 43 Advertisement Calendar. The Union Central Life Insurance Company. A note is written on the back of the calendar to Dale Conner from his daughter, Bonnie.