



William W. Rhodes Letters (CG0086)

Collection Number: CG0086

Collection Title: William W. Rhodes Letters

Dates: 1950-1952

Creator: Rhodes, William W. (1930-2013)

Abstract: This collection contains 52 letters from William W. Rhodes (1930-2013) to his parents in Chaffee, Missouri while serving in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, 1950-1953. Letters are dated from September 28, 1950 to January 24, 1952.

Collection Size: 0.2 cubic feet
(7 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Cape Girardeau. If you would like more information, please contact us at capegirardeau@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: Specific item; box number; folder number] *William W. Rhodes Letters* (CG0086); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Cape Girardeau [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Cape Girardeau].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Jon E. Rhodes on December 19, 2025 (Accession No. CGA0080).

Processed by: Processed by Morgan Lake, 2026.

Note: This collection includes some outdated and potentially offensive language that reflects the attitudes and prejudices of the time period in which the records were created. SHSMO archivists

have retained the original language to ensure historical accuracy and to provide insight into the context of the materials. The personal letters written to family members may offer researchers the opportunity to examine attitudes and issues of race in American society during the Korean War 1950-1953.

Historical Note:

William W. "Bill" Rhodes was born on August 13, 1930 in Puxico, Missouri to John Cornelius and Margaret Hope Hickman Rhodes. He attended Chaffee High School and graduated in 1948.

Bill entered the U.S. Marine Corps on November 30, 1948. He was called up from the Marine Corps Reserves in 1950 to join the 1st 90 Millimeter Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion and arrived at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina on September 26, 1950. Bill was stationed in Busan (then spelled "Pusan"), South Korea from August 31, 1951 until January 28, 1952.

After returning home, Bill married Alice Ann Mosley on January 30, 1953. She preceded him in death on February 22, 1993. They had five children. He then married Shirley Jones Gardner on August 20, 1994. He worked as an engineer for the Frisco Railroad and The Burlington Northern Railroad in Chaffee for forty years, retiring in 1992. He passed away on July 14, 2013 and was buried at the Puxico City Cemetery with full military honors.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged chronologically into a single series.

Scope and Content Note:

William W. Rhodes (1930-2013) wrote letters to his family in Chaffee, Missouri while serving in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, 1950-1952. Letters are dated from September 28, 1950 to January 24, 1952, and give voice to the experiences of a young man from southeast Missouri while serving his country during the Korean War period.

Bill entered the U.S. Marine Corps on November 30, 1948. He was called up from the Marine Corps Reserves in 1950 to join the 1st 90 Millimeter Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion and arrived at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina on September 26, 1950. On August 8, 1951, he traveled by train from Camp Lejeune to San Francisco, California. During the trek from North Carolina to California, the troops suffered a catastrophic train crash in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana. Bill escaped unharmed but writes about his friends that were killed and critically injured. His regiment departed the U.S. on August 15 and was transported to Japan aboard the *U.S.S. General M.C. Meigs*, arriving in Kobe, Japan on August 29, 1951. Bill was stationed in Busan, South Korea from August 31, 1951, until January 28, 1952.

Container List:

- f. 1 Letters from Camp Lejeune, NC, 1950
- f. 2 Letters from Camp Lejeune, NC, 1951
- f. 3 Letters from South Korea, August – September 1951
- f. 4 Letters from South Korea, October 1951
- f. 5 Letters from South Korea, November 1951

- f. 6 Letters from South Korea, December 1951
- f. 7 Letters from South Korea, January 1952

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