



Kenneth E. Griffis Papers (SP0138)

Collection Number: SP0138

Collection Title: Kenneth E. Griffis Papers

Dates: 1903-2003

Creator: Griffis, Kenneth Eugene, 1925-2008

Abstract: The Kenneth E. Griffis Papers contain military records, personal papers, and photographs of Kenneth Eugene Griffis from 1903 to 2003. The military records include correspondence, ephemera, Seabees materials, and service records throughout World War II. The photographs predominately feature Kenneth and his family, but also include extended family members of the Brown, Cole, Eagan, Emhoff, Ferguson, Peterson, and Winn families of Greene County, Missouri.

Collection Size: 1.6 cubic feet
(62 folders, 732 photographs)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at springfield@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the Society all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Kenneth E. Griffis Papers* (SP0138); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Alan Griffis on September 16, 2026 (Accession No. SPA0168).

Processed by: Processed by Elayna Eastin, October 20, 2026

Historical Note:

Kenneth Eugene Griffis was born July 12, 1925, to James Thomas Griffis and Anna Elizabeth Peterson Cole in Bristow, Oklahoma. He attended Pipkin Junior High School in Springfield, Missouri before relocating to Phoenix, Arizona to attend the John H. Francis Polytechnic High School, where he graduated from in 1943. Following his graduation, he enlisted in the United States Navy and served in the 23rd U.S. Naval Construction Battalion, later re-established as a unit of the U.S. Navy Seabees. During his service, he was deployed to the Aleutian Islands and Guam and discharged on March 18, 1946.

Nora Mae Emhoff was born July 12, 1925, to Lot E. and Mable Labelle Brown Emhoff in Republic, Missouri. She attended schools in Willard, Missouri, throughout her adolescence, graduating from Willard High School in 1943 and later attending the Southwest Missouri State Teachers College in Springfield, Missouri. During World War II, she worked as a clerk at the O'Reilly General Hospital and maintained correspondence with a few soldiers overseas, including Kenneth.

Following Kenneth's discharge from the U.S. Navy in 1946, he and Nora married in Phoenix, Arizona on May 10th of that same year and later relocated to Reseda, California. There were three children born of the union: Steven in 1947, Alan in 1952, and Kathy in 1958. Kenneth Eugene Griffis preceded Nora in death, passing in 2008, and Nora Mae Emhoff Griffis passed in 2015.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 3 series and 2 subseries:

- Military
- Personal Papers
- Photographs
 - Emhoff family
 - Griffis family

Scope and Content Note:

Military

This series contains the military records of Kenneth Eugene Griffis throughout his service during World War II, including correspondence, ephemera, newspapers, photographs, religious service pamphlets, Seabees materials, and service records. The correspondence includes letters and cards sent to Kenneth throughout 1941 to 1946 from Nora Mae Emhoff, his siblings, Ruby, Emery,

Mable, and Saliene, and his parents James T. and Beatrice Griffis. A few of Nora's letters detail her time spent working at the O'Reilly General Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, the music she was listening to, and the activities she did with her roommates. This series also contains ephemera, including military medals Kenneth received for his service in the war and temporary tattoos of pin-up girls Nora sent to Kenneth while he was overseas.

Of particular note are the religious service pamphlets and Seabees material included in this series. The pamphlets detail the religious services being held for the 23rd U.S. Naval Construction Battalion, later re-established as a reserve unit of the U.S. Navy Seabees, while they were stationed in Guam. These services included traditional Sunday church services, as well as special holiday services for the units. The Seabees materials include an official brief itinerary of all the organized U.S. Naval Construction Battalions of the Seabees, two souvenir editions of the Seabees newspapers from October of 1945, and sheet music for the "The Song of the Seabees." Both the official itinerary and newspapers include maps, descriptions, and images of the Seabees operations and units during World War II. This series has been arranged by subject and then chronologically.

Personal Papers

This series contains the personal papers of Kenneth Eugene Griffis, including address books, journals, vital records, educational materials, records for Nora Emhoff Griffis, and family histories. The educational materials include student records and grade reports for Kenneth from Pipkin Junior High School and John H. Francis Polytechnic High School, as well as fabric patches for both schools. The records for Nora also include educational records from her time at Willard High School in Willard, Missouri and Southwest Missouri State Teachers College, now known as Missouri State University, in Springfield, Missouri. It also contains her birth certificate, diploma, scholarship certificate and course cards from the Teachers College, and reports from Pierce College in Los Angeles, California. This series has been arranged by subject and then chronologically.

Photographs

This series contains photographs of both the Emhoff and Griffis families, as well as family homes and pets. The Emhoff family subseries includes direct and extended family members from 1906 to 1981, including the Brown, Eagan, Ferguson, and Winn family members, as well as friends of Nora Mae's, Gladys Kindig and Zora Sue Wingo. Most of the photos highlight Nora Mae's mother, Mable Labelle Brown Emhoff, and Mable's family, including her sisters, Myrtle Brown Ramsey, Edna Brown Eagan, and Edith Brown Martin, but also include Nora Mae's father, Lot Emhoff, and his family as well. Some of these photos were also taken in Willard, Missouri at the Emhoff family's farm. This subseries has been arranged by subject and then chronologically.

The Griffis family subseries predominately features Kenneth, Nora Mae, and their children, Steven, Alan, and Kathy, but also include direct and extended family members as well. This includes Kenneth's siblings, Ruby, Clarence, Saliene, Emery, Opal, and Mabel, Kenneth's parents, James T. Griffis and Anna Peterson Griffis Cole, and extended members of the Cole,

Kelton, and Peterson families. The photographs of Nora Mae encompass her childhood and her adulthood, ranging from 1926 to 1996. This subseries has been arranged by subject and then chronologically.

This series also contains photographs of two of the family homes, Pearl Harbor, pets, postcards, and unidentified family photos. The family homes include the Emhoff family's farm in Willard, Missouri, and Kenneth and Nora's home in Reseda, California. There are also photos of Pearl Harbor from 1973. The unidentified photographs have been separated into unidentified individuals and unidentified locations, including some family vacations. This series has been arranged by subject and then chronologically.

Container List:

Military

Box 001	f. 1-5	Correspondence, 1941-1946, no date
	f. 6	Medals, no date
	f. 7	Temporary tattoos, no date
	f. 8	Newspapers, 1944-1945, no date
	f. 9	Photographs, no date
	f. 10	Religious service pamphlets, 1944-1945
	f. 11	Seabees, 1945, no date
	f. 12	Service records, 1943-1947, no date

Personal Papers

f. 13	Records, 1938-1988, no date
f. 14	Address books and journals, 1940, no date
f. 15-17	Education, 1931, 1940-1946, no date
f. 18-19	Family histories, 1913, 1948, 2003, no date
f. 20	Nora Emhoff Griffis papers, 1925-1971

Photographs

f. 21-34	Emhoff Family
f. 21	Emhoff family, 1917-1981, no date
f. 22	Brown family, 1922, 1957, no date
f. 23	Eagan family, 1939-1943, no date
f. 24	Ferguson family, 1906, no date
f. 25	Gladys Kindig, 1943, no date
f. 26	Lot Emhoff, 1918, no date
f. 27	Lot and Mable Emhoff, 1917, 1948, no date
f. 28	Mable Brown Emhoff, 1906-1907, 1945-1979
f. 29	Michael Emhoff, no date
f. 30	Nora Viola Emhoff, no date
f. 31	William Henry Brown, no date

	f. 32	William "Wig" Emhoff, 1930-1973
	f. 33	Winn family, 1903, 1939-1973
	f. 34	Zora Sue Wingo, 1939-1943, no date
Box 002	f. 35-55	Griffis Family
	f. 35	Griffis family, 1914, 1946-1981, no date
	f. 36	Alan Lot Griffis, 1952-1972, no date
	f. 37	Anna Peterson Griffis Cole, no date
	f. 38	Cole family, 1947, 1952, no date
	f. 39	Delphine Griffis, no date
	f. 40	Emery Griffis, no date
	f. 41	Family friends, no date
	f. 42	James Thomas Griffis, no date
	f. 43	Kathy Griffis, 1958-1966, no date
	f. 44	Kelton family, 1945, no date
	f. 45	Kenneth Eugene Griffis, 1928, no date
	f. 46	Kenneth & family, 1952-1958, no date
	f. 47	Kenneth & others, 1944, no date
	f. 48	Mabel Griffis, 1923, no date
	f. 49	Nora Emhoff Griffis, 1926-1996
	f. 50	Nora & Kenneth Griffis, 1946, no date
	f. 51	Peterson family, no date
	f. 52	Saliene Griffis, no date
	f. 53	Steven Griffis, 1947-1958, no date
	f. 54	Steven & Alan Griffis, 1952-1958, no date
	f. 55	Steven & Kathy Griffis, 1958
	f. 56	Willard, Missouri, home, no date
	f. 57	Reseda, California, home, 1949-1953
	f. 58	Pearl Harbor, 1973
	f. 59	Pets, no date
	f. 60	Postcards, no date
	f. 61	Unidentified individuals, 1912, 1945, no date
	f. 62	Unidentified locations, 1957-1958, 1986

Index:

Index Terms	Folder	Image
Address books	14	
Brown family	21-22, 31	Yes
Brown, William Henry, 1865-1933	21-22, 31	Yes
Carthage (Mo.)	61	Yes
Christian, Mabel L. Griffis, 1916-	1, 3, 5, 13, 18, 48	Yes
Church bulletins	10	
Cole family	3, 12-13, 18, 35, 37-38	Yes
Cole, Anna Peterson Griffis, 1886-1966	3, 12-13, 18, 35, 37-38	Yes

Index Terms	Folder	Image
Correspondence	1-5	
Davidson, George S.	1-2	
Death registers	13	
Dilts, Delphine	1, 35, 39	Yes
Dilts, Opal Marie Griffis Short, 1909-1980	1, 18, 35	Yes
Eagan family	21-23, 33	Yes
Eagan, Edna Brown, 1896-1991	21-23, 33, 35	Yes
Eagan, Gary Lee, 1943-2011	21, 23	Yes
Eagan, Howard Lee "Wormey," 1921-2010	21, 23	Yes
Eagan, Jo Ann Sellers, 1920-2014	21, 23	Yes
Eagan, S. Van "Small, 1898-1966	21	Yes
Emhoff family	2-3, 17, 20-34, 56	Yes
Emhoff, Bertha Mae Ferguson Brown, 1870-1952	21-22, 24	Yes
Emhoff, Floyd Mason, 1885-1963	21	Yes
Emhoff, Guy Emmett, 1888-1960	21	Yes
Emhoff, Lot E., 1893-1958	21, 26-27	Yes
Emhoff, Mable Labelle Brown, 1893-1988	17, 21-22, 27-28, 33, 35	Yes
Emhoff, Michael "Mike"	21, 29	Yes
Emhoff, Michael Meyer, 1857-1928	21	Yes
Emhoff, Nora Viola Vanskike, 1867-1941	21, 30	Yes
Emhoff, William L. "Wig," 1921-2007	3, 21, 32	Yes
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Ferguson, John, 1867-1953	21	Yes
Ferguson, Nellie Greenfield, 1848-1910	24	Yes
Ferguson, Samuel, 1836-1918	24	Yes
Greene County (Mo.)	1-4, 13, 15-17, 18, 20-21, 27, 29, 32, 34, 49, 56	Yes
Greene County Public Schools (Greene County, Mo.)	20	
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Griffis, Alan Lot, 1952-	13, 18, 21, 35-36, 46, 54	Yes
Griffis, Beatrice Louise Roberts, 1900-1982	1-2, 5, 35, 42	Yes
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Griffis, Emery Robert, 1921-1999	1-2, 18, 35, 40	Yes

Index Terms	Folder	Image
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Griffis, Kathleen "Kathy," 1958-	13, 33, 35-36, 43, 46, 55	Yes
Griffis, Kenneth Eugene, 1925-2008	1-62	Yes
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Kelton, Ruby Rosetta Griffis, 1904-1992	1, 3, 18, 35, 44	Yes
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Martin, Reta Elizabeth, 1916-1925	21-22, 28	Yes
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Index Terms	Folder	Image
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United States--History--World War, 1939-1945	1-12, 32, 47	Yes
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Winn, Nellie Plasy Ferguson, 1882-1971	21, 33, 43	Yes