

C White, Richard Drace (1877-1953), Papers, 1895-1953
3624 .5 linear feet

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INTRODUCTION

Unpublished autobiography, correspondence, photographs and newspaper clippings of a Missourian who graduated from the United States Naval Academy, spent forty years on active duty in the Navy, was made a Rear Admiral, and served in the diplomatic corps.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by the Gupton Family through Mrs. L.J. Vogt on 14 October 1970 (Accession No. 719).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Drace White was a native of Danville, Missouri, and at age 18 was appointed to the Naval Academy by Congressman Champ Clark. He was a member of the class of 1899, but was graduated in 1898 so he could participate in the Spanish-American War. He commanded many ships, served in World War I as executive officer on the U.S.S. Seattle, and later commanded the U.S.S. Orizaba until he was wounded in an explosion at Brest. He was retired for disabilities but recalled to active duty in World War II, during which time he served as naval attaché and attaché for air in Lisbon and Madrid.

Other posts included those of assistant inspector of target practice under Admiral Sims, supervisor of the New York Harbor, flag lieutenant to the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet, and naval attaché in Rome and Vienna.

White invented several fire control devices that were eventually incorporated into Navy ships and authorized several articles on naval warfare. Awards received by Admiral White included the Navy Cross, the Legion of Honor (French), and the Order of Naval Merit (Spanish). He died in 1953 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers have been arranged into the following four series: **Autobiography**, **Correspondence**, **Miscellaneous**, and **Photographs**.

The **Autobiography** series makes up the bulk of the collection and consists of materials related to White's unpublished autobiography, "Of the Sea and Me," including a heavily corrected manuscript, outline, notes, and photographs. The manuscript provides very detailed descriptions of the U.S. Naval Academy at the end of the nineteenth century; naval life and vessels, especially naval gunnery, during the early part of this century; naval warfare in the Spanish-American War; and World War II political and diplomatic activities in Spain and Portugal. The descriptions of ports in Central and South America, the Mediterranean, and Asia and the Spanish and Portuguese countryside are particularly well done.

The **Correspondence** series mainly contains letters written by White to his family during the period 1895-1905 describing life at the Naval Academy, service in the Spanish-American War, and various duty stations. Official Navy correspondence concerning Admiral White, 1918-1923, and a small amount of personal correspondence scattered through the period 1930-1953 is also included.

The **Miscellaneous** series includes newspaper clippings, information on White's inventions, and memorabilia.

Most of the **Photographs** were collected by White to be used in his published autobiography.

FOLDER LIST

Autobiography Series

- f. 1-14 Rough draft of the life and career of Richard Drace White, written by himself
 - f. 1 Birth, antecedents, and environment
 - f. 2 Official, periodic grade cards sent to his parents while a cadet at U.S. Naval Academy, 1895-1898
 - f. 3 Service in Spanish-American War
 - f. 4-6 Duty on and command of U.S. naval vessels
 - f. 7 Service in diplomatic corps
 - f. 8-10 Service in World War I
 - f. 11-12 Travels abroad after retirement from the Navy
 - f. 13-14 Miscellaneous handwritten notes on subjects to be covered in autobiography

Correspondence Series

- f. 15 1895-1899
- f. 16 1900-1905
- f. 17 1930
- f. 18 Miscellaneous family members, 1903-1941, n.d.
- f. 19 Navy, 1918-1923; Personal, 1947-1952
- f. 20 Personal, 1952-1953
- f. 21 Postcards, 1933-1953, n.d.

Miscellaneous Series

- f. 22 Daybook, 1942
- f. 23-24 Memorabilia
- f. 25 Newspaper clippings
- f. 26 Inventions

Photographs Series

- f. 27 Arch H. White, father of Richard Drace White
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